Պատմության լուսավոր իմաստնությունը

ԽՈՐԵՆԻԿԱ

Ուսումնասիրություն ի վերայ
Մովսիսի Խորենացւոյ

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Sapientia Illustris Historiae

KHORENICA

Studies in Moses Khorenatsi

by

Albert A. Stepanyan

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Albert A. Stepanyan
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*In memoriam my students who fought and
fell pro patria.*

Contents

Preface

This monograph is dedicated to the *History of the Armenians* by Moses Khorenatsi, an Early Medieval author whose work played an exceptional role in the intellectual history of Armenia. The monograph presents an investigation consisted of nine research sketches and has been composed during the last ten years. Its various aspects have been published in the form of journal articles, and these were good experiences that helped to formulate the monograph's principal approaches, ideas and concepts. *The second feature* is the interdisciplinary character of the monograph. The data from various areas of humanities are analyzed in order to uncover the more fundamental layers of the *History*. In this regard, we would like to link the idea of interdisciplinarity to the understanding that everything in history is involved in historical time. In this light, it is worth recalling the formula of M. Bloch: "[…] le temps de l'histoire, au contraire, est *le plasma* même où baignent les phénomènes et come le lieu de leur intelligibilité."[1] This is true regarding senses, beliefs, ideas and men, in addition to the plasma of the given historical age. Naturally, the life and creative activity of Moses Khorenatsi are not an exception. Therefore, we cannot comprehend the fundamental values of his *History* without taking into consideration the leading ideas and understandings of his époque. This is the way to adequately interpret the text of Khorenatsi, which, unfortunately, has been overlooked by many modern scholars. Usually, their investigations are based on philological and pragmatic historical methods. As a result, they overshadow the intellectual plasma of the time. In this vein, we decided to pay

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[1] **Bloch**, 1993, 84.

particular attention to the philosophical and theological concepts and comprehensions of the second half of the 5th century AD.

The third feature concerns the hypertextuality of the text of the monograph. First of all, it is designed for the *advanced reader* with intellectual experience in the various fields of ancient, medieval and modern humanities. They are expected to enter into dialogue with Khorenatsi and his intellectual entourage. This implies a meeting of two époques that promises to expand the author's narrative with new descriptions, interpretations and understandings of (even) well–known facts of the *History*. Generally, hypertextuality is connected with the hermeneutic method of analyzing historical texts.

The fourth feature looks at the *History* as a single narrative system with its defined scenario. Formally, it is composed in accordance with the theory of poetry demanding that the texts inform the reader about the past and present through the rhythm of beginning, development and end. This makes up the structure of the *History* patterned also in the anthropomorphic mode: beginning (childhood), development (virility) and end (senility). They can be identified with the three books of the *History*. At all these stages of Armenian history, the conflict of constructive and destructive tendencies is apparent. The settlement of that mostly depends on the social projects and telic actions of outstanding historical actors.

The fifth feature concerns the problem of internal dialogue in the narrative of Khorenatsi. The fact is that the *History* is composed in accordance with different forms of historical comprehension – epic, rationalistic, philosophical and metaphysical. They make up a complicated network of description and interpretation, causation and understanding of the past and present. For Khorenatsi, the problem of the organic combination of these approaches is very real. He has to locate their connections and manage their dialogue. It must be added that dialogicality was also

characteristic for his époque and was aimed at the combination of all intellectual achievements of the Armenians under the Christian system of axiology.

The sixth feature is about the social significance of historical memory and texts. Khorenatsi connects their absence with barbarism – the lowest level of social commonality. On the contrary, civilization implies sound memory and truthful texts. They support order, peace and unity in civilized societies. Moreover, according to the author, they contain paradigms of overcoming the chaotic situations that occur in Armenia from time to time. Therefore, righteous rulers collaborate with skillful intellectuals in order to comprehend this side of history: King Vagharshak – Mar Abas Catina, Trdat the Great – Agathangelos, Vṙamshapuh – Mashtots, Prince Sahak Bagratuni – Moses Khorenatsi. In a word, despite its pure cognitive character, history has an application as well. Paradigms of social reform must be extracted from the lessons we learn from it. This problem was very real in Khorenatsi's time, when Armenia was in an overall decline that is described in the last chapter of the *History*, which is usually called the *Lament*.

The seventh feature touches on the problem of identity on the levels of national and individual self–perception. The reflection on the course of national history and the role of eminent actors provides an opportunity to adequately respond to the challenges of history. In this, the role of *deeds of bravery and wisdom* are especially considered. Khorenatsi believes that their fulfillment could have ended with the total cultivation of Greater Armenia according to the technological devices of the time. Moreover, they make up the nucleus of the optimistic scenario of history, the performance of which depends upon the intellectual potency and creativity of the elite group formed by St. Mashtots. In this way, Khorenatsi comes up to the estimation of his generation of intellectuals. The logic of his narrative system suggests that the mission of this generation must be tracked down in the composition of a new para-

digm of national culture and identity with a view to restore the sovereignty of the country lost in 428. This seems to be an echo of the renowned formula of Polybius that "[…] the soundest training for a life of active politics is the study of history" [Polyb., I, 1, 2].

The last point of the introductory notes concerns one of the most important methods of our research technique. It is comparable with the *collage* well known in modern art theory. Following that, we juxtapose the passages of various primary sources while managing their dialogue. This gives an opportunity of composing new narrative units, which are as much real, pertinent and trustworthy as our research competence facilitates. We believe that this will provide possibilities of describing, interpreting and comprehending historical events and actors, situations and époques in new perspectives and colors.

The task to bring together all these features is the main purpose of this monograph. They have to be balanced in a definite structure with an aim to discuss the themes and subthemes in global and local, cosmic and social, collective and individual coverages. In this regard, we subdivided the text into four sections: *a.* The Author and his Social Theory, *b.* Cosmic Rhythm and Royal Authority, *c.* Aspects of Social Partnership, *d.* Ways of Self–Conception and Identity. In every case, we tried to couple the general notion to the particular example.[2] The following fact must be also taken into consideration: sometimes, we touch on the same subject in various parts of the monograph. This is done with the intention of interpreting them from different points of view. This particularly concerns the kings and the elite, who played an exceptional (positive or negative) role in Armenian history in the Hellenistic and Early Medieval époques. The same is true regarding the concept of history, historiographic method and skills of Khorenatsi.

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[2] Cf. **Sidney**, 1902, 162.

All this is quite consistent with the worldview of the medieval intellectuals who lived contemporaneously, in both the earthly and heavenly dimensions. We also tried not to lose sight of modern intellectuals with their limitless belief in reason and argumentation. The solution of this discrepancy must be looked for in the concept according to which the essence of history is in its endless movement toward the truth. In other words, history must be rewritten from time to time utilizing a point of view influenced by new ideas, concepts and understandings.

This belief has motivated us to commence this investigation focusing on the various aspects of the historical concept of Moses Khorenatsi. The concept that has summarized the results of the previous authors and has widely influenced the future works on the history of Armenia and its adjacent countries. In bringing about this work, we had to cope with numerous difficulties both fundamental and technical in character. The support and encouragement of colleagues has been indispensable. In this regard, we would like to express our heartful gratitude to them – Anne Lunz, Nshan Thomas Kesecker, Helen Peck, Lilit Minasyan, Smbat Hovhannisyan, Tigran Ep'remyan, George Tshagharyan, Julia Ktshanyan, and Nina Hayrapetyan.

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Section 1.

The Author and his Social Theory

"There is, however, no advantage in reflections on the past further than may be of service to the present. For the future we must provide by maintaining what the present gives us and redoubling our efforts."

Thucydides, I, 1, 123.

Chapter One

Moses Khorenatsi and his *History of the Armenians*

Synopsis

Introduction: Khorenatsi, his time and the History

The purpose of this monograph is to shed new light on the work of Moses Khorenatsi – the eminent historian of Early Medieval Armenia. His *History of the Armenians* played an exceptional role in the intellectual history of Armenia and covers the country's history from the Formative Age to the fall of the Armenian Arsacids in 428. Interest in the *History* was (and still remains) indisputable. For many centuries, it was considered a textbook and was included in school curriculums. In addition to learning history, by studying this text, generations of students received knowledge in various fields of the humanities – rhetoric and political science, mythology and moral theory, literature and theology, geography and ethnography.

However, the problem of Moses Khorenatsi is one of the most complicated issues in the Armenian historiography. The fact is that the data of the *History* does not always precisely correspond to those of the antique authors. In many cases, they are based on primary sources little known or even unknown to them – Mar Abas Catina, Manetho, Berosus, Alexander Polyhistor, Abydenus, Labubna, Cephalion, Julius Sextius Africanus, Firmilianus, Bardesan, Barsuma (Ratsohun), Eleazar (Khoṙohbout), and many others.[1] At the same time, Khorenatsi refers (directly or indirectly) to the materi als of the archives of Nineveh,

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[1] **Mahé**, 1993, 36–37; **Musheghyan**, 2007, 14–16.

Edessa, Nisibis, Sinope of Pontus, Ani–Kamakh, Artashat, and Duin.[2] Numerous oral and written myths and historical epic tales of the ancient Armenians cited by him were also unknown to the antique authors. Greek, Aramaic, Urartian, and Akkadian inscriptions must also be included in this list, the records of which some scholars find quite comparable to certain narrative beats of Khorenatsi.[3]

Of course, these facts did not entirely settle the problem of the inconsistencies between Khorenatsi and the antique authors. As a result, some skepticism remains regarding the person and work of Khorenatsi. This skepticism was manifested in the 1870s. It was mainly focused on the passages of the *History* that were thought to have been inorganic for the 5th century, the century to which Khorenatsi constantly related himself. In this vein, the problem of the time of the author took on a particular importance, even overshadowing the other essential aspects of his life and creative activity. Consequently, scholars began to move the date to the 6th, 7th, 8th, and even 9th centuries.

> *The skeptics embarked on ardent criticism by: **a.** rejecting the authenticity of Mar Abas Catina – a crucial source for the History, **b.** denying the reliability of epic tales, **c.** emphasizing the influence of later authors on the text (esp. Silvester, Malala, Anania Shirakatsi, and Ghevond), **d.** discovering in the text a number of toponyms from later times (esp. the Four Hayk's), **e.** detecting a whole lexical (and stylistic) layer irrelevant to the 5th century, **f.** tracing in his Bagratuni bias undeniable proof that he belongs to*

[2] On these archives and the possibility of applying their materials when composing Armenian history, see in detail, **Mahé**, 1993, 35–36; **Traina**, 1997, 349–363.

[3] Regarding these sources, see respectively **Manandyan**, 1946, 27–30; **Sargsyan**, 1966, 184–198; **Sargsyan**, 2006, 46–72; **Adontz**, 1946, 67–68; **Piotrovsky**, 1946, 10; **Hmayakyan**, 1992, 125–132.

> *the epoque of the rise of that princely house to royal dignity, **g.** as a result, declaring the author Pseudo–Moses Khorenatsi.*[4]

However, in order to form such a conclusion, we should estimate the measure of the influence of these passages over the narrative of the *History* as a system entity. Unfortunately, no such work has been done so far. The skeptical approach refuses to recognize these passages as the interpolations of later authors.[5]

The fact is that Khorenatsi, like the other authors of the Medieval Age, compiled an *open text*. We have already described this phenomenon when referring to the theory of interpolations.[6] Scholars usually discuss this in the light

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[4] This was initiated by A. von Gutschmidt in his renowned work "Die Glaubwürdikeit der armenischen Geschichte des Moses von Khoren" (Leipzig, 1877, Druck und Verlag von B. G. Teubner). He had numerous adherents among Western and Armenian scholars, including A. Carriere, F. Maclaire, N. Mar, N. Adontz, N. Akinean, H. Manandyan, C. Toumanoff, R. W. Thomson, N. Garsoïan, R. H. Hewsen, and A. E. Redgate. They even came to the conclusion that Khorenatsi intentionally changed his mask and represented himself as a pupil of Mesrop Mashtots. On this problem, see in detail **Malkhasyants**, 1940, 89–113; **Abeghyan**, 1966, 254–258; **Musheghyan**, 2007, 5–18.

[5] In this regard, the approach of B. B. Piotrovsky seems very relevant: "They (the skeptics) usually overlooked the fact that, in the days of Khorenatsi, historians wrote this way, and the medieval Armenian author could not write otherwise. They did not take this into account because they approached Khorenatsi with the demands of modern scholarship, and not medieval." **Piotrovsky**, 1959, 125.

[6] **Stepanyan**, 2018, 82–83. Modern scholarship links the problem of interpolation with the phenomenon of hypertext – the text open to expanding its borders in accordance with the logic of its semantic and semiotic perspectives. See **Bolter**, 2001, 32–35, 44–46. At the same time, there is also another approach proposed by art theory – the *reverse perspective*. Applied to various aspects of texts, it reveals the mechanisms of their expansion as open and reversible dialogues between

of the principal identity of the author and his intellectual entourage. According to them, this identity was based on the (real or possible) reversibility of these two poles. In other words, the author and his reader could exchange roles.[7] Furthermore, the reader had *free access* to the text of the author and could leave behind *traces* in the form of interpolations. In time, in addition to the contemporaries of Khorenatsi, the intellectuals of other ages could be involved in this circle of reversibility as well – to the 10th century and beyond.[8]

This assumption demands a complex and detailed study of the problem. *A fortiori*, its features are (though vaguely) traceable in some modern studies.[9] This means that the results of the skeptical theory cannot be accepted undoubtedly. At the same time, one thing is beyond suspicion – the skeptical argument engendered numerous (mainly philological) ideas imperative for an authentic understanding of not only Khorenatsi's *History*, but also of Early Medieval Armenian historiography. On the other hand, the results of the traditional approach are not reasoned sufficiently when focusing on the various facts and narrative fragments of the *History*, since they also apply the same philological and pragmatic historical research method.[10]

the author and the observer (or reader). See in detail, **Florensky**, 2006, 213–217. cf. **Barthes**, 1971, 109–112.

[7] **Cerquiglini**, 1989, 111–113.

[8] Both skeptics and traditionalists agree that over the centuries, Armenian historiography preserved perhaps its most significant characteristic – the unity despite diversities of genres and approaches. **Thomson**, 1997, 208–218, 226–231; **van Lint**, 2012, 180–200.

[9] The presence of Khorenatsi's *advanced reader* seems more tangible in the works of B. L. Zekiyan. See in this vein, **Zekiyan**, 1987, 471–485; **Zekiyan**, 2000, 193–204; **Zekiyan**, 2006, 408–427.

[10] Among the traditionalists, most prominent were B. Sargisean, N. Buzandatsi, S. Malkhaseants, M. Abeghyan, E. Ter–Minaseants, G. Kh. Sargsyan, B. L. Zekiyan A. Mat'yevosyan, A. Musheghyan, and

In this regard, the following is very indicative. Both traditional-ists and skeptics use the records of Ghazar Parpetsi – an author of the 5th century – to justify their dating of Khorenatsi. Tra-ditionalists refer to the account relating that the "blessed phi-losopher Moses" was persecuted by ignoramus clerics [Parp., Letter, 167]. As for skeptics, they note the statement of the author who recognizes only three historians in his days – Agathangelos, Faustus Buzand and himself [Parp., III, I, 21, I, 3, 2].

Due to this, it seems quite relevant to argue for a mod-erate solution of the problem proposed by some *moder-ate scholars*. According to them, the nucleus of the *His-tory* was compiled in the 5th century and *enriched* by additional materials in later centuries.[11] Of course, this solution is rather abstruse and cannot be considered definitive. Nevertheless, it contains a rational tendency since tries to bring together the two opposite approaches

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G. Traina. On this problem, the most reasonable bibliographic essays seem to belong to **Malkhasyants**, 1940, 113–130, and **Mushegyan**, 2015, 21–30.

In this regard, we should like to also highlight the investigation of A. S. Matevosyan, who discovered the *Chronicle* of the 6th century author Athanas Tarontsi in Matenadaran manuscripts (No. 2679, p. 162). It contains the following statement: "[year] 474 (ՆՀԴ), Moses Khorenatsi, a philosopher and bibliographer." Cf. **Matevosyan**, 1989, 226. At the same time, A. V. Musheghyan's arguments regarding the problem of the *Four Hayk's* are also impressive. **Musheghyan**, 2006, 87–92, 126–131.

[11] This approach is best formulated in the works of J. P. Mahé. See, for example, **Mahé**, 1992; 121–153. However, its elements are quite appar-ent in the texts of **Malkhasyants**, 1940, 113–130. They are particularly inspired by the text of Anonym's *Primary History of Armenia*, contain-ing identical information about the formative period of Armenia. We think that the same is true about *Ἡ τῶν Ἀρμενίων ἱστορία* mentioned (and cited) by Procopius of Caesarea [Procop., De aedificiis, III, 1, 4–7]. Cf. **Stepanyan**, 2018, 80.

and opens up new (interdisciplinary) research oppor-
tunities.[12] We must keep in mind that historiography (like
every research activity) pursues understanding and not
the bare knowledge of the events of the past and pre-
sent. This concept implies an investigation based on the
continuous cognitive movement towards comprehension
through apparent and intermediate, concrete and abstract
results.[13]

This comprehension of history implies its *lesson*.[14]
This goal can be reached either by re–estimating the nar-
rative blocks of Khorenatsi in the light of new resources
and viewpoints, or by discussing the *History* as a narra-
tive unity (system) and thus trying to uncover its profound
semantic and semiotic layers. We believe that the com-
bination of these approaches could be effective for future
studies. In other words, we propose a hypertextual expan-
sion of the borders of the *History* on the grounds of the
antique, Hellenistic, and Early Medieval historiography
and philosophy, theology and ethics, literature and ethno-
logy. For this purpose, we are going to apply the methods
and results of modern humanities as well.

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[12] We agree with the optimistic expectations of J. P. Mahé: "Un jour
viendra où les progres de toutes ces disciplines apporteront une solution
du problème qui s'imposera définitivement: soit qu'on puisse choisir
entre les différentes dates proposées, soit qu'on s'oriente vers une
hypothèse tout à fait différente, par exemple celle d'un auteur du Ve
siècle remanié utérieurement, comme le furent Agathange, Lazaret de
P'arpi et, dans une certaine mesure, Korioun […]". **Mahé**, 1993, 91.

[13] This basic characteristic of historical study is singled out by numer-
ous modern scholars, see particularly **Bloch**, 1949, 51; **Carr**, 1987,
29–30; **Gaddis**, 2002, X – XI.

[14] **Stepanyan**, 2014, 174–176.

1. Historical background and genres of history writing

In order to explain the properties of this hypertextual expansion, we have to sketch out the process of the development of historical thought in ancient Armenia. Of course, we are going to talk only about the typological side of the problem, focusing our attention on two significant modifications. On the one hand, the historical epic tales, and the historiographical canon adopted from the Western intellectual experience, on the other. Respectively, they represented the two principal conditions of the social life of the ancient Armenians. *The first* was connected with the *nakharar* (clan) system, which modern sociology defines as *traditional patrimony*. *The second* personified the rational arrangement of society under a stable legal system. In modern sociology, it is formulated as *bureaucratic patrimony*. In ancient Armenia, the first form was dominant in the Eruandid (Orontid) age (580–201 BC.).[15] As for the second, it gained strength under the Artaxiads, particularly due to the reforms of its founder, King Artashēs I (189–160 BC.).[16] This political line was continued for about half a millennium, to the 4th century AD. and the Armenian Arsacids – Trdat the Great, Arshak II and Pap. The transition from one system (*mos maiorum*) to the other (*written rational law*) occurred through the impulse of Hellenism introduced in Armenia beginning from the 3rd century BC.[17] Through the centuries, Hel-

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[15] Regarding social structure in the Orontid period, see **Toumanoff**, 1963, 67–74.

[16] We have applied these basic concepts of M. Weber's sociology in order to interpret and understand the essential metamorphoses of Armenian society over time. See **Stepanyan**, 2018, 18–55.

[17] Hellenism in Greater Armenia was a social project brought about by the efforts of the eminent kings and their entourages. This project encouraged the "westernization" of society in different areas – government and military art, urbanization and economy, culture and religion.

lenism took roots and eventually caused the conversion of the country to Christianity (301).[18] Christianity was declared the state religion, and Trdat the Great and Gregory the Illuminator were the principal actors during this crucial historical event.[19]

However, the connection of the two systems was not only diachronic but also synchronic. In other words, after the introduction of Hellenism and strong royal authority, the *nakharar* system continued its existence uninterrupted. It made up the invariable background of the life of Greater Armenia, gaining strength whenever central state power lost efficacy.[20] The 4th century was defined by the clash between these two systems. The conflict went back and forth, but the nakharar opposition gradually gained the upper hand. It had the support of Rome and Sasanian Persia. In some cases, with its opposition to absolute royal authority, the Church also was instrumental throughout this process.[21] This was followed by the partition of Greater Armenia between the superstates in 387 and the fall of the Armenian Arsacids in 428.

On the Armenian version of Hellenism see, **Eremyan**, 1948, 33–73; **Sargsyan**, 1962, 7–18; **Stepanyan**, 2014, 121–167.

[18] **Martirosyan**, 1982, 99–110; **Redgate**, 1998, 116–132; **Shirinyan**, 2005, 70–110;

[19] On the problem of early Christianity in Armenia and the conversion of the country by Trdat the Great and Gregory the Illuminator, see in detail, **Ormanean**, 2001, 82–107; **Stopka**, 2016, 17–34; **Scott**, 2016, 270–275.

[20] **Stepanyan**, 2018, 46–56.

[21] The same situation is apparent in Iran. However, it did not engender a rationalistic canon of interpreting and understanding of the past and present. Actually, from Euphrates border until China this genre of historiography was entirely (or partly) absent. Quite indicatively, the authors of *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, *v. 1, jump* immediately to China after discussing the historiographic traditions of Classical Greece, Rome and the Ancient Near East. Cf. **Wolf**, 2011, XI –XII.

This sketch is based on the common conclusions regarding crucial events of Armenian history of the 4th – 5th centuries. Meanwhile, our principal authors – Agathangelos, Faustus Buzand, Eghishē, Moses Khorenatsi – not infrequently interpret them from the points of view of their sponsors – princely houses of Mamikonean, Artsruni, Bagratuni. And above all, they advocated the viewpoint of the Church.[22] *The title of M. Ormanean's classical work on the history of the Armenian Church – Ազգապատում (National History) – seems to be a distant echo of this approach.*

This long course of history saw the metamorphosis of the Armenian identity from clan organization to political nation (civilization) and Christian covenant. The last phase of this metamorphosis was connected with the invention of the Armenian writing system in 405.[23] This stimulated the unprecedented development of the Armenian culture in differrent areas – education and morality, philosophy and literature, theology and hagiography, history and geography. Three historical actors were crucial to this historic achievement, – the monk Mesrop Mashtots, the catholicos Sahak Partev and the king Vṙamshapuh.[24]

Returning to the problem of history, it must be emphasized that each of the aforementioned social systems worked out its own paradigm of the understanding of history. Typologically, *the first* were the epic tales. Their

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[22] On this problem, see **Malkhasyants**, 1940, 17–18; **Mahé**, 1993, 31–35; **Thomson**, 1997, 211–218; **Redgate**, 1998, 147–149.

[23] On the political and historical context, essence, and results of this crucial event, see in detail **Martirosyan**, 1982, 176–198.

[24] Expressing the official standpoint of the Church, the Armenian historical tradition (particularly, Koriun and Ghazar Parpetsi) overlooks the role of King Vṙamshapuh in this important enterprise. Meanwhile, the logic of events suggest that it would not have been successful without an agreement between the Armenian and Sasanian courts. **Stepanyan**, 2014, 139. Cf. **Martirosyan**, 1982, 191.

unknown authors – the storyteller–*gusan*s – depicted the past as a series of imaginative situations and heroes.[25] Proceeding from their temporal sequence, scholars divide them into two groups – *Primary* and *Secondary* epic tales. They are based on associative links of narrative blocks designed to compile organic narrative units: "[…] as a brick is set in the wall of a structure for the completion of the whole" [Buz., III, 1, 3]. Such an understanding was believed to have resulted from the elaboration of epic tales in accordance with the canons of Hellenistic rhetoric.[26] In this form, they obtained unquestionable authority though their authors remained unknown. One thing is certain – the *History* of Faustus Buzand was the best example of that tradition.

> *Unfortunately, this layer of historical reflection is often referred to without considering its basic elements. We mean first the mode of generalization of historical situations and actors. The fact is that the epical mind identifies them proceeding sometimes from their occasional and secondary features – names, toponyms, personalities, and motives of their activity, etc. This is quite natural, since epical thinking is, as a rule, interested in associative algorithms but not in cause–and–effect chains of concrete events and facts.*[27]

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[25] **Abeghyan**, 1966, 37–45; **Mahé**, 1993, 25–28; **van Lint**, 2012, 181–183, **Margaryan**, 2013, 46–47. On modern theories regarding epic tales (վիպասանք) and the problem of their historicism, see **Stepanyan**, 1991, 53–64; **Stepanyan**, 2018, 91–130.

[26] The influence of ancient rhetoric is apparent in the Armenian literary tradition in various ways. See **Abeghyan**, 1966, 99–103. Abeghyan first refers to the *Web of Chrias* – the rhetorical exercise collection (Հիւսումն պիտոյից) mentioned in Khorenatsi's text [Khor., I, 19, 3]. It consisted of four parts and contained drills of eloquence on different subjects, especially on eminent historical events and actors.

[27] See in detail **Stepanyan**, 1991, 53–60.

The second paradigm of history was altogether under the Western presumptions engendered by Hellenistic sciences and arts. The intermediaries of this innovation in Armenia were the intellectuals who (according to the antique authors) resided in the court of Tigran II (95–55 BC.) and the other kings of the Artaxiad dynasty.[28] They especially encouraged the development of historiography. Here, scholars highlight the role of Metrodorus of Scepsis and King Artavazd II. In Armenia, they introduced two genres of historical writing – pragmatic and tragic. Apart from the obvious divergences, they had a number of common features as well. Above all, this was about the rational understanding of the past and present through cause–and–effect chains of interpretations. Typologically, this assumption is reminiscent of the formula of Polybius about the objective of the historian to find out: "[…] how, why or by what process every event has developed" [Polyb., III, 7, 5].[29] Tragic history added a new nuance to this understanding while requiring the historical narrative to be patterned after a common dramatic scenario in order to give the answer to not only "What has happened?" but also to "What could happen?". In the proper sense, this implies the processing of the *ambiguous past into history*.[30]

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[28] They were under the patronage of the *queen of queens* Cleopatra. The two of them are referred to by Plutarch – Metrodorus of Scepsis and Amphicrates of Athens. One was an eminent philosopher, rhetorician and polymath, the second – a renowned rhetorician of Late Hellenistic age [Plut., Luc., 22, 3–5].

[29] Typologically, this statement could be juxtaposed with the well–known formula of Herodotus seeking the answers to these questions in historical investigation – where, how and why? [Herod. I, 1, 2]. In other words, Herodotus considered himself a sophist with the desire "[…] to create a model of historical thought progressing from the particular to the universal". **Kerferd**, 1981, 24.

[30] **Stepanyan**, 2014, 170–189.

The third paradigm expanded the horizon of perception to introduce the metaphysical aspect of history. This aspect was meant to help uncover the hidden context of history when discussing its events in the light of universal destiny or providence.[31] Such an approach is apparent in the Armenian authors of the 5th century – Agathangelos, Eghishē, and Ghazar Parpetsi. This concerns Moses Khorenatsi as well, and the last few sentences of his *History* reveal this truth most clearly: "There are famines without end and every kind of illness and death. Piety has been forgotten and expectation is for hell. From this may Christ God protect us and all those who worship him in truth. And to him be glory from all creatures" [Khor., III, 68, 44][32].

A close reading reveals that there was a *fourth paradigm* as well. It was based on the intention to bring together the previous paradigms into a narrative entity. Due to this, it is sometimes called *synthetic history*. In the 5th century, such comprehendsion is typical for Eghishē and Moses Khorenatsi, although the former has written the *point history* of the anti–Sasanian revolt of 450–451, while the second tries to cover the entire history of the Armen-

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[31] The similar comprehension of the metaphysical approach is also apparent in Herodotus, especially in rhetorical fragments of his *Histories*. Regarding providence, he states: "[…] the divine forces that work through individual and national characters to shape the course of history" **Murnaghan**, 2001, 59. On the concept of the Omnipotent Divine Substance in Early Medieval Armenian (Hellenising School) mentality see, **Arevshatyan**, **Mirumyan**, 2014, 100–105.

[32] In Classical Greek philosophy, the divine governance of the Cosmos and history is the basic concept of the Stoic intellectual experience. It mostly influenced Christian doctrine through the efforts of Philo of Alexandria, Plotinus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Augustine. In modern times, it has given rise to the philosophy of history of G. W. F. Hegel and curiousely K. Marx. Regarding this development, see **Fritzsimons**, 1973, 386–397.

ians from the formative age to his time.[33] Nevertheless, they both saw their task in combining the epic, rationalistic, and metaphysical approaches in a multidimensional text with a complicated system of historical facts, ideas, and concepts. It must be added that this textual synthesis contained an essential intention to harmonize the three abovementioned paradigms of national identity.

2. Theoretical approach to history: the case of the advanced reader

This monograph is designed to unfold that layer of the *History* that is almost always overlooked by scholars. The fact is that they usually restrict their investigation to the limits of pragmatic historical and philological approaches: concrete historical facts and events, their authenticity and reliability, chronology and textual sequence, interpretation and correlation of the given fragments with the records of other sources, and so on.[34] Meanwhile, it is self–evident that the historians of the 5th century were rather well–acquainted with the philosophical context of the age.[35] Moreover, they applied that for interpreting and understanding the perspective of the past and present. They com-

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[33] The synthetic paradigm of history also took on other forms based on the diversity of perception, interpretation, comprehension, and text organization of the facts and events of the past. Sometimes, it reveals characteristics of pragmatic, sometimes tragic, sometimes apologetic narratives. On these issues, see in detail **Stepanyan**, 2018, 175–232.

[34] **Mahé**, 1993, 90.

[35] The intellectual context of the so–called Golden Age in Armenia was saturated with philosophy and theology. It consisted of translations of Greek authors and original texts. On this phenomenon, see in detail **Arevshatyan**, 1973, 201–217; **Arevshatyan**, **Mirumyan**, 2014, 288–298; **Calzolari**., 2014, 349–376. The research sketch of Calzolari is notable for its excellent bibliography of the problem.

bined the Classical and Hellenistic intellectual experiences with the biblical wisdom.

It is accepted that many works of the so–called *outer* (pagan) authors were translated and interpreted by the first generation of Mashtots' disciples.[36] In this regard, the works of Plato and Aristotle, Porphyrus and Iamblichus, Aphtonius and Dionysus of Thrax were most popular in Armenia.[37] Their ideas and concepts nourished the Armenian mentality through intermediary authors as well. Among them, Philo of Alexandria, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Socrates Scholasticus deserve to be mentioned specifically. This most concerns Philo, who bridged the classical and biblical traditions of mentality. His numerous works were translated and some of them have been preserved only in Armenian.[38]

The tradition of philosophical Christianity was widespread in Armenia, and the works of its eminent representatives – the *inner writers* – were translated into Armenian and interpreted by Armenian intellectuals – Irenaeus and Polycarp, Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea, Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa and Socrates Scholasticus and many others.[39] It must be singled out that these authors mainly referred to Neoplatonism that was designed to bring together the achievements of

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[36] On the *outer* and *inner* writings with their content and style of interpreting and comprehending of the various genres in the literary experience of early Christianity, see in detail **Shirinyan**, 2005, 81–97.

[37] **Arevshatyan**, 1973, 164–166; **Calzolari**, 2014, 349–57.

[38] Philo of Alexandria occupies an exceptional place in the Early Medieval Armenian intellectual experience. This was due to the transitive character of his writings aimed at the combination of biblical and classical achievements in wisdom and philosophy. **Zarbhanalean**, 1889, 735–748; **Terian**, 1995, 36–44; **Vardazaryan**, 2011, 193–199.

[39] On the *outer* and *inner* writings and their significance for the Christian Armenian cultural paradigm, see **Shirinyan**, 1998, 15–27; **Shirinyan**, 2005, 166–187.

the principal philosophical schools of the Classical and Hellenistic ages. We must keep in mind that the new generation of Armenian intellectuals received a full education for the time – the primary course (*progymnasmata*) in Armenia and the high curriculum in the renowned centers of Alexandria, Antioch, and Athens.[40]

This retro–Hellenism made up the intellectual background of the Armenian culture of the 5th century.[41] Without it, an investigation of Armenian historiography cannot be considered complete. Nevertheless, this aspect (with rare exceptions) is commonly overlooked by modern scholarship. We think that contemporary Armenian historiography must fill this lacuna. In a profound sense, this requires a hypertextual (interdisciplinary) elaboration on the crucial terms, ideas, and concepts of the authors of the 5th century. In our previous investigations, we touched on the problem from different points of view.[42] Now, we see our task in focusing attention on the *History* of Moses Khorenatsi.

We proceed from the concept of *universal being* as the fulcrum for a new interpretation of the *History*. Its essential qualities were considered the homogeneity and anthropomorphism of the main levels of life – from heaven to society and the collective consciousness of individuals. From different points of view, this concept was interpreted by the Stoics, Plato, Aristotle, and their Hellenistic

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[40] On the status, subjects, and methods of education of early Christian Armenian schools under Nerses the Great and (particularly) Mesrop Mashtots, see **Aṙakelyan**, 1959, 414–419; **Simonyan**, 2012, 15–21.

[41] By *retro–Hellenism* we mean the formative period of Christian society when the cultural, religious and political paradigms of Hellenistic age were applied to secure the social transition. It was carried out best in the Late Roman Empire and gave birth to Byzantium. See **Stepanyan**, 2014, 145–158.

[42] **Stepanyan**, 1991, 171–189; **Stepanyan**, 2018, 67–86.

and Christian adherents.[43] Philo of Alexandria was one of them, and he was quite precise in his assessment of the so–called *advanced man* – the beginning and end of this universalistic insight: "[…] by his power of contemplation of the heavenly bodies, by which the mind is smitten so as to conceive a love and desire for knowledge on these subjects; owing to which desire, philosophy has sprung up, by which, man, though mortal, is made immortal" [Philo, Op., XXXV, 77].[44] He was also thought of as the ideal adept or reader.

With the viewpoint of this *advanced reader*, we are going to interpret the *History* in terms of the Classical and Hellenistic intellectual traditions, highlighting the algorithms of their well–known ideas and assumptions. Nevertheless, we do not plan to compose a pure philosophical work with precise concepts and ideas, epistemological constructs and moral categories. We see our task in the uncovering of the wisdom of the Armenian version of global history described in the *History* of Moses Khorenatsi. This approach could be called *sapiencia illustris historiae*.

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[43] Anthropomorphism was the basic element in the Stoic philosophical theology that influenced the further intellectual intentions of the Classical and Hellenistic ages. Cosmic emanation (pneuma) was believed to penetrate through all levels of life, including human beings. It circulates in their blood, and due to that a human is thought as a cosmic creature. The direct and reverse connections of men and Cosmos provides a guarantee of completion, morality, and justice in life. See **von Fritz**, 1992, 1015–1016.

[44] This passage is about ascetic ascension of the advanced adept to divine heights. This concept was brought to completion in Neoplatonism [Plot., III, 6, 15–20; V, 8, 35–40; VI, 3, 34–40 etc.]. Christian intellectuals adopted it to demonstrate the possible intimacy of God with a true believer. [Greg. Nyss., Mos., II, 252]. Cf. **Louth**, 2007, 78–94.

3. The structure and semantic code
of the monograph

We have decided to illuminate the problems in a logical sequence and have divided our investigation into four sections consisting of nine chapters. In their unity, they are designed to harmonize the basic values of social behavior and self–reflection mirrored in the Early Medieval Armenian mentality. Specifically, this means the discussion of the facts and events, institutions, and crucial actors of Armenian history on the background of universal ideas and concepts. From the authors of the Golden Age, Moses Khorenatsi best meets these requirements. Therefore, we resolved to dedicate this monograph to the different theoretical aspects of his main work – *History of the Armenians*.

Observed in this context, the semantic shift of ideas and themes are set up along the vertical axis – from heaven to individual and back to heaven. The ideal figure of such an epistemological circle is clearly outlined in the text of the *History*: "Those who pursue science and are skilled in astronomical studies say that the stars receive their light from the moon, and the moon shines from the sun's [light] and the orb of the sun [shines] from the ethereal heaven. Thus, the ether pours its rays into both zones, and each zone shines through the sun according to its order, revolution, and time. In such fashion so too did we, reflecting the grace that continually flows from the intelligible rays of the spiritual fathers […]" [Khor, III, 62, 2–3].[45] This universalism of the coverage and originality of the interpretation of history, let us highlight again, singles out Khorenatsi from the group of renowned historians of Early Medieval Armenia.

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[45] This record contains elements of ontological and epistemological comprehensions of the intellectual situation of Early Medieval Armenia. See in detail **Stepanyan**, 2009, 181–196.

This approach seems to contain the clue to the solution of Parpetsi's contradiction. As it was emphasized above, he does not mention Khorenatsi among the historians of his time because his list is about the authors who worked in conjunction to complete the history of the 5th century. Indeed, each of them represents his "historical present" that Parpetsi views in unity. As for Khorenatsi, he has brought together the "historical presents" of many generations. In other words, his History is aimed at self–sufficiency.

As noted above, the philosophy applied in the *History* is not contemplative (theoretical), which usually concerns the problems of knowledge, skill, prudence, and thought. It is practical reasoning (phronesis) that requires practical wisdom, ethical virtues and actions [cf. Aristot., NE, VI, 2, 1144b, 30–32].[46] It seems Khorenatsi proceeds from this understanding when speaking about the benefit of the study of history at the beginning of his work: "[…] we become informed about the course of the world, and we learn about the political systems (քաղաքականս կարգս) when we peruse such wise discourses and narratives" [Khor., I, 3, 3]. This ideal state of human character and his social activity, and the opposite state (luxurious life), on the other hand, make up the course of history with ups and downs.[47]

Nonetheless, theoretical philosophy is not entirely rejected. Khorenatsi was a true adept of high Christianity whose epistemological grasp was rather precisely defined

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[46] The main purpose of practical reasoning was considered the real action resulting from moral values and relevant actions. See **Thornton**, 1982, 69–73.

[47] These are only two opposite poles of human characters depicted by Khorenatsi. There are also numerous intermediary types in the *portrait gallery* of the *History*. The diversity of their social and private behavior makes up the human context of historical situations where the coherent course of history lies. See in detail, **Stepanyan**, 1991, 137–143.

by Clement of Alexandria, who ranked theology higher than philosophy (in its two aforementioned forms): "Philosophy by itself formerly justified the Greeks – not the justification in the full sense to the attainment of which it helps, but as the first and second steps of a stairway which leads to an upper story, or as the grammarian is of assistance to the philosopher" [Clem., Strom., 1, 20, 99].[48] Certainly, the author is referring to the metaphysical layer that we have defined as the lesson of history.

Nevertheless, let us state again that our investigation is not a pure philosophy of history. As we have noted above, it tries to combine the Classical and Hellenistic approaches with the wisdom of ancient Armenian myths and epic tales, on the one hand, and the biblical intellectual experience on the other. In other words, the research method of the monograph is thought of as synthetic. It is also an endeavor to find a balance between the three significant paradigms of national identity that were active in Early Medieval Armenia – clan (nakharar) patriarchy, political integrity, and God's covenant.

The other characteristic that should be pointed out concerns the form of the narrative of the *History*. In one word, it could be defined as anthropomorphism. The fact is that Khorenatsi has structured the huge amount of historical information after the pattern of human life. This approach was well–known in antique historiography from Herodotus and Thucydides to Polybius.[49] Khorenatsi was probably

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[48] This approach is thought to have laid the foundations of the Christian system of epistemology and education. As a result, philosophy began to be seen as an introductory course to theology: "*It is only when Moses has increased in knowledge that he confesses that he beholds God in the cloud, that is, that he knows that the Divine is by nature something above all knowledge and comprehension.*" [Greg. Nyss., Mos., 2. 164].

[49] This must be recognized as the expression of the ontological anthropomorphism singled out above. It was typical for the classical Greek mentality and influenced historiography. In this vain, the latter showed

acquainted with that, for he has divided the text of the *History* into three books, each one in correspondence with one principal period of human life – childhood, maturity, and senility.[50] The *longue durée* of Armenian history sees the development from the bodily principle to the dominance of, respectively, the affective and intellectual principles. In short, in 4th–5th century Armenia, the intellectual and spiritual elite occupied the leading position, while the former two principles gradually degraded. The following conclusion seems quite natural – this metamorphosis was the essential cause of the loss of Armenia's sovereignty.

However, the end of Khorenatsi's text – the so–called *Lament* – is not as pessimistic as it is often considered. The fact is that its narrative acts as a counterbalance to the text of the *History*. *Antivalues* of basic social units of the *Lament* – country, kings, princes, judges, warriors, clergy, peasants, teachers, pupils, women, etc. – have their positive correlates in the main text of the *History*. In other words, the *Lament* is the organic part of Khorenatsi's narrative system. Moreover, in terms of the balance of values and antivalues, the advanced reader could outline the ways of overcoming the chaos that was dominant in Armenia after the fall of the Arsacids.

The last aspect of the monograph that we would like to consider in this introduction is concerned with the social significance of the craft of history writing (*Geschichtsschreibung*). The fact is that, besides purely informative and cognitive values, history was thought to have an applied value as well. Khorenatsi believed that through its lessons, history was able to help avoid the negative development of events. Therefore, all eminent reformers of Armenian history – Vagharshak Arsacid, Artashēs the Middle, Trdat the Great, and Vṙamshapuh – collaborated

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a kin relationship to theater. On this peculiarity of historical reflection, see **Piettre**, 2018, 201–204.

[50] **Stepanyan**, 1991, 176–182.

with eminent intellectuals.[51] The texts of Mar Abas Catina, Bardesan, Agathangelos, St. Mashtots and others were believed to provide an opportunity to convert the accidents of everyday life into a suitable order of meanings, causes, and effects of history. Khorenatsi himself was also involved in this process and considered this to be the purpose of his *History*. In a word, he composed his narrative for outlining the way leading out of the overall (cosmic and social, national and individual) chaos described in the *Lament* – the last chapter of the *History*.[52]

We plan to look for answers to this and the other important assumptions addressed in this short ouverture. The best final point for this may be the formula of E. H. Carr: "History cannot be written unless the historian can achieve some kind of contact with the mind of those about whom he is writing".[53] Khorenatsi was in contact with the mind of his predecessors and demands the same attitude in regards to himself.

Conclusion

History of the Armenians by Moses Khorenatsi occupies an exceptional place in medieval Armenian historiography. Despite some obvious interpolations of later times (and based on them the modern criticism), it belongs to the 5th century. These interpolations have not tangibly influenced either the structure or the semantic code of this

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[51] In other words, two fields of creation are parallel – reality and text. They are considered to have the ability to influence each other. The impact of the text on reality (deductive movement) is assessed as an important way of reorganizing historical reality in accordance with social projects. See **Beledian**, 1992, 116–124.

[52] On this interpretation of Khorenatsi's History as a complicated system aimed at balance and harmony through the reverse perspective of the advanced reader, see **Stepanyan**, 2006, 248–254.

[53] **Carr**, 1987, 24.

work. It shows obvious bonds with the former stages of historical thought in Armenia beginning from myths and epic tales to the Western canon being introduced with Hellenistic culture. In the 5th century Armenia, the pragmatic, metaphysic and synthetic genres of history were popular. Khorenatsi's pursuit was to combine and balance them in a single narrative texture designed to cover all Armenian history – from the formative period to his time. It sought the answer not only to the question "What happened?", but "What could happen?". In other words, history gained the features of understanding and *taming* of the past, present and (observable) future. Modern scholars trace the purpose of this strategy in the *lesson of history*.

In this vein, the present monograph incorporates all these approaches in order to attain a multidimensional comprehension of the *History*. It is designed for the advanced reader who has experience in the humanities and is ready to collaborate with the author in interpreting the work of Khorenatsi on the background of the traditional Armenian, Classical/Hellenistic, let us add also Zoroastrian, and Christian intellectual experiences. They were the important components of the new wave of Hellenism (retro–Hellenism) which started in Armenia in the 4th – 5th centuries and engendered achievements in various aspects of intellectuality.

Indeed, the author of the monograph is counting on the collaboration with his advanced reader in uncovering those aspects of Khorenatsi's work, which, with rare exceptions[54], are overlooked in modern scholarship.

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[54] Among these exceptions, we should like to single out the works of P.–L. Zekiyan, J.–P. Mahē, and R. W. Thomson.

Chapter Two

Aspects of the Social Theory

Introduction

The social theory of Moses Khorenatsi resulted from three principal sources – traditional Armenian intellectual experience (myths and epic tales), Classical and Hellenistic social philosophy, and biblical wisdom. Their synthesis formed the dominant trend of the 5th century. The author used the key ideas of these sources for his main concern – to trace the logic of Armenian history from the formative period to his days. The idea of composing a coherent course of history from different (and sometimes contradictory) data and facts required a balanced theoretical basis. This aspect of Khorenatsi's work is traditionally overlooked by modern scholars, even though it is quite important for interpreting and understanding the author's concept of history in general and Armenian history in particular. The proposed aspect comes to uncover a range of intellectual activity, where the philosophy of essence, legal theory, sociology of knowledge, and historical theory come together. More figuratively, regarding this layer of discussion, the Stoics and Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, Philo of Alexandria and the Cappadocian Fathers meet. This was the background upon which early Christian culture and (particularly) historiography flourished in Armenia. In other words, the comprehension of historical narratives and texts may hardly be assessed adequate without this intellectual component. We find that this can be most accurately demonstrated through the example of the *History of the Armenians* by Moses Khorenatsi. In this regard, we also decided to proceed from Aristotle's

theory of the *matter and form* for tracing different social conditions in Armenian history, beginning from chaotic wildness and progressing to civilization. Finally, the other concern of this study, which shall be highlighted in this chapter, is about the influence of knowledge, mentality, and concrete projects on social practice. It forms the perspective of history which is understandable by virtue of a historian's professional skills.

1. The chaotic matter

The third chapter of the First book is a *sui generis* theoretical Introduction to the *History of the Armenians*. Unfortunately, scholars have not yet paid due attention to the essential aspects of history and historiography highlighted within it.[55] Meanwhile, even a quick glance leaves no doubt of their close connection with the Classical and Hellenistic intellectual traditions. From this point of view, we decided to scrutinize the initial part of the chapter under consideration. It consists of two definite passages. The first concerns the *intellectual poverty of the ancient Armenians*, while the second shows the *path of overcoming this deficiency*.

> *"I do not wish to leave the unscholarly habits of our first ancestors without a word of censure but to insert here at the very beginning of our work the reason for reprehending them. [...] So then it is clear to us that our kings and other forefathers were negligent toward scholarship (առ ի յիմաստն սիւմարրութիւն) and unconcerned with the life of reason [Khor., I, 3, 2–3]".*

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[55] More correctly, this concerns the first three chapters, the so–called *Introduction* to the *History* where the author formulates the main purpose and research methods of his forthcoming work. About this, see also in the Chapter 9.

The situation, according to the author, was engendered by the lack of knowledge and memory that had resulted from the key deficiency of the ancient Armenians – the imperfection of their *intelligible soul* (*աննատարnւթիւն nգ ւnյն բաննական*).[56] This perception undoubtedly harkened back (most probably, through Philo of Alexandria) to Plato's concept of the tripartite human soul – somatic, affective, and reasonable [Plat., Rep., 436, b – e, 439, d – e, 442a etc]. The role of the last element was appreciated highly since the soul could gain good moral values and lead a man to achievements only under its guidance [Plato, Rep., 441e; cf. Philo, Spec. Leg., IV, 92].[57] Respectively, the individuals and people deprived of that were believed to live according to their desires and passions.[58]

Khorenatsi represents the last case in the context of the private and social life–courses of his antiheroes. Accor-

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[56] This is a manifestation of the well–known Platonic concept (ἡ ψύχη νοητική) brought to completion in Neoplatonist philosophy through the efforts of its founder, Plotinus. See **Stepanyan**, 1999, XXV–XXVII; **Emilsson**, 2005, 373–376; **Rist**, 2006, 721–727. The concept was adopted by Christian intellectuals for explaining God's creation – from cosmos to humanity. In this vein, the Cappadocian Fathers were most effective. Gregory of Nyssa in particular discusses the problem of ascetic spiritual progress of an adept to God. See in detail, **Cadenhead**, 2018, 125–137.

[57] In his numerous works, Philo of Alexandria interprets biblical narratives and ideas in light of the tripartite soul theory of Plato. However, he preferred the Middle Stoic approach due to its efforts to combine the metaphysical and materialistic interpretations of the problem. See in detail **Dillon**, 2010, 163–168.

[58] Christian apologists usually described the pagans as men living in the slavery of passions. Only the Word as Exhorter, Instructor, and Teacher was able to liberate them and lead to the Lord [Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, V, 5, 14–17]. Cf. **Gonzales**, 1987, 191–192. They most probably followed Philo's experience of "spiritual assimilation to God." **Helleman**, 1990, 51–71.

ding to him, they were deprived of stable moral and religious values, as well as laws and institutions. He sometimes depicts such situations as wildness (վայրենութիւն) and colors them with features of extreme asociality.[59] The entourage of the tyrant Bēl is the best example of that: "[…] amid the multitude of infinitely ferocious and strong giants. Each man in his rage had drawn his sword against his neighbor's flank, and they were attempting to dominate each other. This circumstance enabled Bēl to impose his tyranny on the whole land" [Khor., I, 10, 5].

Khorenatsi traces a similar situation in Armenia after the death of the last Haykid ruler, Vahē: "[…] for there was confusion caused by factions, and men rivaled each other for the control of our country" [Khor., I, 31, 15]. The author describes a similar situation in the (alleged) letter of Vagharshak Arsacid to his brother, the Parthian king Arshak the Brave, who had placed him on the throne of Armenia: "For the orders of rank here are quite uncertain, as the cults for the temples. It is not clear which is the first of the lords of this country and which the last, nor is anything else regulated, but all is confused and wild (խառն ի խուռն ամենայն եւ վայրենի)" [Khor., I, 9, 5].[60]

However, the most impressive description of wildness relates to the *foreign race* whom King Vagharshak met and subjugated on the slopes of the Caucasus Mountains:

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[59] Similar asocial utopias were traceable in the Greek mentality beginning from Homer to Herodotus and enjoyed a revitalization in the Hellenistic age in the writings of Iambulus, Euhemerus, Diodorus of Siculus, and (even) Strabo. The axiology of these narratives (negative or positive) depended largely on the viewpoint of the author. See in detail **Mumford**, 1922, 30–56; **Gutorov**, 1989, 9–46.

[60] To be more correct, this was the view from outside, since King Vagharshak had no distinct idea about the social structure, ideology, religion, and customs of the Armenians. The problem was rather in his ignorance than in historical reality. However, Khorenatsi considers it as a fact and includes it in his concept of Armenian history.

"He summoned there the barbarous foreign race (զվայրենի լկասանուն ազգն) that inhabited the northern plain and foothills of the great Caucasus Mountain and the vales or long and deep valleys that descend from the mountain on the south of the great plain. He ordered them to cast off their banditry and assassinations and become subject to royal commands and taxes […]" [Khor., II, 6, 5].[61]

Asocial wildness acquires new features when we discuss it while considering Classical and Hellenistic intellectual traditions. First of all, this concerns Aristotle's theory of the *rough matter* (ἡ ὕλη) – a mass deprived of definite order and characteristics. It is the *potentiality* that expects creative impulses from an outside source: "[…] the primary substratum of each thing, from which it comes to be" [Aristot., Phys., I, 9, 192a, 31–33]. According to the philosopher, the universe had come into being from a primary matter or an underlying thing (πρότον ὑποκείμενον) [Aristot., Metaphys., V, 4, 1014b, 32, 1015a, 7–10].[62]

Only the active form (ἡ μορφή) was able to give the matter definite qualities and nature: "[The matter] has not yet its own nature and does not exist by nature until it receives the form specified in definition. The form indeed is nature rather than matter; for a thing is more properly said to be what it is when it exists in actuality than when it exists potentially" [Aristotle, Phys, II, 1, 193a – 193b,

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[61] The community of Amazons lived to the west of the north–west region of Armenia, Tayk (subjugated by King Vagharshak), in the valley of the Thermodon River, according to Herodotus and Strabo, [Herod., IV, 112, 1; Strabo, XI, 5, 4]. They lived by opposite standards compared to *normal societies*.

[62] In other words, the philosopher followed the theory of *Creatio ex Deo*, considering the divine potency the ultimate creative Form copied in numerous concrete forms of material world. See in detail **Cook**, 1989, 107–112; **Beere**, 2006, 312–316; **Mié**, 2018, 55–74.

2].[63] In other words, the form creates the natural actuality from the indefinite potentiality of the matter. This is true for all levels of being, including various forms of human partnership from family/household to state.[64]

This assumption was adopted by Hellenistic authors, and Philo of Alexandria was eminent among them. He tried to modify it to the fundamental ideas of the Old Testament when emphasizing the parallelism of the primordial Form (Mind) and matter: "Moses […] knows it is most necessary for there to be in beings, one part active cause and a passive object; and that the active Cause is the perfectly pure and unsullied Mind of the universe, transcending virtue, transcending knowledge, transcending the good itself, and the beautiful itself; while the passive part is in itself lifeless and motionless, but when set in motion and shaped and quickened by Mind, changes into the more perfect masterpiece, namely this world" [Philo, Op., 8–9].[65]

However, Christian intellectuals rejected this approach and ended up choosing the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. Respectively, they rejected primordial matter and saw the origin of the universe only in the providence and will of the omnipotent Lord.[66] In this vein, the Cappadocian

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[63] On this substantial transformation and its endless manifestations in the material world, see **Sheldon**, 1984, 179–184; **Blackwell**, 1995, 26–30; **Henning**, 2009, 142–147.

[64] According to Aristotle, every form of partnership is based on two opposite poles. On the biological level of consideration, they figure as the *female* (τὸ θηλῦ) and *male* (τὸ ἄρρεν) principles [Aristot., Gen. Anim., I, 1, 716a, 15]. On the social level, they represent the genders – *woman* and *man*. In both cases, the first corresponds to the matter and the second to the form. See **Kosman**, 2010, 165–167.

[65] In other words, Philo considered the instructions and laws of biblical God as embodiments of the Form of the antique philosophy. At the same time, he had to follow the biblical concept of *creatio ex nihilo*. See in detail **Dillon**, 2005, 97–103; **Gabai**, 2007, 2007, 1–16.

[66] Scholars find that this doctrine was finally ingrained in Christianity in

fathers were most active: "By his wise and powerful will, being capable of everything, He established for the creation of all the things through which matter is constituted; light, heavy, dense, rare, soft, resident, fluid, dry, cold, hot, color, shape, outline, extension. All of these are in themselves thoughts and bare concepts (ἐννόαι καὶ ψίλα νοήματα); none is matter on its own. But when they combine, they turn into matter" [Greg. Nyss., Ap. in Hex., III, 290]. *Creatio ex re* was recognized as the common principle of the material world. Here, the bearers of God's creative potency were the demiurges, starting from craftsmen and artists ending with reformers and lawgivers, philosophers and theologians – all of them were thought to be *images of God* (ἴνδαλμα τοῦ Θεοῦ = պատկեր Աստուծոյ) [cf. Khor., I, I, 5].[67]

2. The realm of natural law

The Armenian *philosophical theology* of the 4th – 5th centuries shared this doctrine. Numerous accounts of the authors of Khorenatsi's age – Agathangelos, Eznik, Eghishē, Ghazar Parpetsi, John Mandakuni, and others – are proof of that. Nevertheless, we are not going to discuss this problem in detail. It has been studied quite sufficiently.[68]

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the 2nd century AD. due to the impact of Hellenistic ideology. It is connected to the essential problem of the relationship between the Father, the Son (Logos), and the Holy Spirit. See in detail **Bethune–Baker**, 1903, 119–137.

[67] Khorenatsi proceeds from the ideal of a Christian. He traces perfection in his close intimacy with God. The tradition of antique philosophy saw the impulse to that in *virtue*, *determination*, and *free will* of a spiritual adept (ἀρετή, σπουδή, προαίρεσις). Covering this spiritual path, the adept became God's image [Greg. Nyss., De perf., 10, 185]. See **Boersma**, 2013, 221–227.

[68] For a more detailed discussion of the problem, see **Calzolari**,

Our present task is the interpretation of Khorenatsi's abovementioned records in the light of Aristotelian theory. Khorenatsi's description of asocial wildness gives grounds for a comparison with the chaotic and passive matter, which is possible to overpass by creative projects and actions. From this point of view, the last phrase of the discussed record is of particular interest; the king provided the *foreign race* of the Caucasus *wise men and overseers* (հանդերձ արամբք իմաստունլթ եւ վերակացուալթ): "[…] so that when he next saw them, he might appoint leaders and princes with proper institutions" [Khor., II, 6, 5]. In other words, the king (with the wise men and overseers) assumed the function of a demiurge in order to turn the asocial *matter* into *nature* with the features of a normal social life.[69]

In fact, this is the basic transformation through all levels of being – from the matter to nature (ὕλη – φύσις). From one pole to the other, it occurs by the activity of the form: "The form indeed is nature rather than matter; for a thing is more properly said to be what it is when it exists in actuality than when it exists potentially" [Aristot., Phys., II, 1, 193b, 2–3]. The nature represents a kind of justice: "[…] there is a certain natural and universal right and wrong, which all men divine, even if they have no intercourse or covenant with each other" [Arist., Rhet., 1373a, 10–15; cf. Nic. Eth., 1134b, 20–21].[70]

2014, 349–376.

[69] In Armenia, a similar political approach was most probably adopted during the reign of Artashēs I (189–160 BC.) through the influence of Hellenistic experience and theory. The king was considered the *savior* (σωτήρ), *benefactor* (εὐεργέτης), and the *animated supreme law* (νόμος ἔμψυχος) of his country and subjects. He was even considered a revealed god (ἐπιφανής). **Stepanyan**, 2018, 24–25.

[70] The Sophists had already formulated the *natural law* with due accuracy. Scholars think the following fragment of the play *Antigone* by Sophocles to be the best manifestation of that: the heroine reproaches King Creon:

Combining this understanding with the Stoic doctrine, Philo states: "For this world is the Great City and it has a single constitution and law, which is the reason of nature, commanding what should be done, and forbidding what should not be done" [Philo, Jos., 29–31].[71] In social partnership, nature operates through unwritten laws, rites, and moral values that make it durable: "For those who keep the divine writing of the law, God grants as a prize the more ancient law of immortal nature, i.e. the begetting of sons and the property of the race" [Philo, Quest. ex., II, 19]. According to Christian intellectuals, through natural law, God directs the world: "In creating man at the beginning, God placed within him a natural law. And what is this natural law? He structured our conscience and made it so that our knowledge of good acts and which are not so, was self–learned" [John. Chrys., De stat., 12, 3].[72]

In this light, the meaning of this renowned quote of Khorenatsi appears quite clear. Relating the benefit of studying history, he highlights the following:

> *"If in truth those kings are worthy of praise who in written accounts fixed and ordered their annals and wise acts and ascribed each one's valor in narratives and histories, then like*

"I did not think your edicts strong enough
To overrule the unwritten unalterable laws
Of God and heaven, you only being a man.
They are not of yesterday or today, but everlasting."
                    [Soph., Ant., 453–457]. Cf. **Burns**, 2002, 546–547.

[71] See **Sazhenakov**, 2013, 69–74. Christianity adapted this concept to its doctrine while formulating the theory of the heavenly city. In this vein, the most prominent is Augustine's theory of the City of God [August., De civ. Dei, XIV, 28].

[72] The Christian Fathers John Chrysostom, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Basil the Great, and Gregory of Nyssa described the way to lead Man to intimacy with God through Natural Law. See **Harakas**, 1979, 43–49.

them the compilers of books of archives, who were occupied
with similar efforts, are worthy of our eulogies. Through these, I
say, when we read their accounts, we gain sagacity in the global
orders." [Khor., I, 3, 3].[73]

Undoubtedly, by *global orders*, the author means the
natural law common for all human beings. It was believed
that, through unwritten laws, they lived in natural har-
mony which is identified through divine guidance. In this
essential desire, Aristotle traced the genesis of social life
in the family/household [Arist., Pol., I, 1, 1252, 25–30].[74]
Respectively, Khorenatsi sees the genesis of Armenia in
the family/household of Hayk, which had a natural desire
for the continuity, security, and liberty of its members. It
expanded in temporal and spatial dimensions – through its
numerous descendants and across the borders of the land
that would make up Armenia.[75] The segmentation of the
original family gave rise to the clan–territorial (nakharar)
system. Typologically, it has parallels with the Aristotelian
village system that integrated family/households: "But the
first community constituted out of several households for
the sake of satisfying needs other than everyday ones is a
village" [Aristot., Polit., I, 2, 1256b, 15]. Natural inspira-
tion was the main driving force in this case as well.

Coming back to Armenia, the following must be
emphasized; household (clan) structure and natural law

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[73] In the phrase "ըստ աշխարհաւրէն կարգաց իմաստնանալ ասիմք,"
we observe a reference to the natural law and translate the adjective as
"global" which is quite appropriate considering the Classical Armenian.
See **NDAL**/ **ՆԲՀԼ**, v. 1, 264.

[74] See in detail **Booth**, 1981, 20–226.

[75] This gave rise to the early national ideology of the Armenians drawn
up in accordance with epic narratives. It was laid in the segmentation
of the primary family/household and its expansion to the far edges of
what would become Armenia. On this ideology, see in detail **Sargsyan**,
2006, 46–54.

began to play an important role in the country. Xenophon's description of the Armenian satrapy (the end of 5th century BC.) is the best proof of this. The country represented an agglomeration of villages which gave rise to the so–called *nakharar* system. In modern scholarship, the latter has been defined as *traditional patrimony*. Furthermore, this system made up a stable layer of the Armenian commonwealth for many centuries.[76] The eminent reformers tried to modify it according to the requirements of their times [Khor., II, 7–8, 47, 84 etc.].

Let us highlight again the fact that the *natural law* was at the heart of the nakharardoms to balance the relationship of *natural rulers and natural subjects*. This was the ideal of the system under consideration. In time, two important documents were drafted – *List of Ranks* (Գահնամակ) and *Military List* (Զաւրանամակ) – to establish the status of each nakharar clan.[77]

3. The realm of positive law

Despite the peculiarity of the natural law, Aristotle traces great diversity of laws and constitutions (πολιτείαι) in real political life [Aristot., Rhet., I, 10, 3]. They resulted from the activity of lawgivers and varied from place to place. At the same time, they have essential common characteristics: "Now a constitution is the arrangement in a state of all, the offices of government, and more espe-

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[76] According to M. Weber, this is about a *patrimonial state*: "We shall speak of a patrimonial state when the prince organizes his political power over extrapatrimonial areas and political subjects – which is not discretionary and enforced by physical coercion – just like the exercise of his patriarchal power." **Weber**, 1963/1968. However, in Armenian studies there is a consistent tradition of calling this system feudalism. See in detail **Adontz**, 1908, 453–479; **Manandyan**, 1934, 46–56; **Toumanoff**, 1963, 108–129.

[77] See in detail **Adontz**, 1908, 249–272.

cially of that one which is sovereign over all. For the Government is everywhere sovereign over the state, and the constitution is really the Government" [Aristot., Pol., III, 6, 1278b, 5–10; cf. IV, 1, 1289a, 15–18]. Their core elements were the laws – written, political, and conditional.[78] As noted above, they were effective only when in balance with the natural law: "Of political justice part is natural, part legal […]" [Aristot., Nic. Eth., II, 1134b, 18]. Philo meant exactly this aspect, emphasizing: "Thus particular constitutions are an addition to the single constitution of nature, and laws of the different states are additions to the right reason of nature" [Philo, De vita Mosis, 2, 48].[79]

This provides the key for interpreting Khorenatsi's passages concerning the reforms of Vagharshak Arsacid, Artashēs the Middle, and Trdat the Great. They were seeking to secure the transition from natural justice to political or legal justice. At the same time, the author frequently identifies this term with *order* (կարգ). In this light, the meaning of his well–known formula becomes quite clear: "[…] and we learn about the political orders (քաղաքականս կարգս) when we peruse such wise discourses and narratives" [Khor., I, 3, 3].[80]

[78] Aristotle uses the so called *conceptual dichotomies* – "natural law political law," "natural justice – political justice," "natural right – positive right." See **Burns**, 1998, 143–160; **Mulgan**, 2011, 13–27.

[79] According to Philo, the Old Testament represented a gradual transition from absolute natural law (God's guidance) to human rights in positive laws. **Horsley**, 1978, 55–57.

[80]   In Classical Greek thought, the order was considered in a series of homogenic ideas such as *harmony* (κόσμος), *justice* (δικαιοσύνη), *beauty* (κάλος), *truth* (ἀλήθεια), and (communal) *good* (ἀγαθός). Their amount engendered the ideals of morality and aesthetics, psychology and politics. They made up the basic principle of the Cosmos – *kalokagathia* (καλοκαγαθία). This theory united all eminent Greek ideas, from the Sophists to Socrates. **Rist**, 1965, 154–166; **Striker**, 1988, 190–197. A man living in this harmony obtained *godliness*.

Generalizing the results of the reign of King Vagharshak, Khorenatsi relates: "He extended his authority over his territories; and as he was able, he fixed the statutes of civil life (կարգս կենցաղականս) for this country" [Khor., II, 3, 3]. Further, he states: "Here there is much to say about the ordering and organization of the houses, families, cities, villages, estates, and in general the entire constitution of the kingdom and whatever is of relevance to the kingdom – the army, generals, provincial governors, and similar matters" [Khor., II, 7, 2–3].[81]

All these reorganizations, let us highlight again, were based on the combination of natural and political laws. On these grounds, a concept was worked out of how to reorganize Armenia as a valid social system. The king and his court were taken as the key elements of that process: "First and foremost the king regulated (արինադրէ) his own person and his house, beginning with himself and the crown" [Khor., II, 7, 4]. The periphery of the system was the ethnic boundaries of the country, which were identified with where the Armenian language was spoken (ի ձայրս հայերէն խաւսից) [Khor., II, 3, 6; 8, 5].

A similar concept of the borders of Armenia is found in Faustus Buzand as well [Buz., IV, 12, 5]. It is also connected to the unification efforts of Artashēs I. While describing Artashēs' territorial acquisitions, Strabo states, "[…] therefore they (peoples) all speak the same language, as we are told" [Strabo, XI, 14, 5]. It must be added that the common language marked the social consensus (ὁμολογία), which the Armenian authors usually represent with the term of overall concord (միաբանութիւն).[82] It must

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Sedley, 1999, 309–328.

[81] The basic element of this passage is *the constitution of the kingdom* (արէն թագաւորութեան) to unite and harmonize all the elements of the social life of the Armenians. It denotes the dominance of conditional (rational) right over divine guidance. Cf. **Stepanyan**, 1991, 147–149.

[82] See **Stepanyan**, 1991, 88–89. It must also be paid attention to the

also be added that modern theory sees in it the impulse of the
symbolic unity of population while forming imaginary political
communities and territorializing the political authority.[83]

Between these two poles – center and periphery –
social institutions operated, whereof we mentioned above.
Besides the nakharar (village) system, the author relates
the following when regarding the high status of city com-
munities: "He (King Vagharshak) ordered that townspeo-
ple (զբաղաբացիս) be more highly esteemed and honored
than the villagers (առաւել քան զեղջկաց) and that villa-
gers should respect the townspeople like princes. But the
townspeople were not to vaunt themselves too much over
the villagers but to live on brotherly terms […]" [Khor.,
II, 8, 41].

The positive law was recognized as an important reg-
ulator of social relations. On these grounds, the king set
up a system of courts to settle different legal cases: "He
appointed judges (իրաւարարս) at court and judges in the
cities and towns" [Khor., II, 8, 40]. We can propose that in
villages, peasants lived according to the natural law and
justice of their natural rulers – nakharars.[84] However, the
eminent reformer Artashēs I, made an attempt to bring the
peasants under royal jurisdiction.

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fact that the language standard (Attic koiné) was considered as one of
basic elements of the Hellenistic network spanning vast space from
Greece and Egypt to India. **Adrados**, 2005, 196–203.

[83] See **Cleassen**, **Skalkin**, 1978, 536; **Andersen**, 2006, 10; **Jossep**,
2006, 113.

[84] The legal dichotomy continued in Armenia with various modes of
intersection with royal power and state structure. Under the Artaxiads,
the positive law prevailed, but under the Arsacids, up until the rule of
Trdat the Great, natural law gained the upper hand. The 4th century saw
the clash of these legal principles personified by absolute royal power
and the mutinous nakharars. **Stepanyan**, 2018, 46–55.

It must be highlighted that, in Khorenatsi's text, we meet Artashēs the Middle, the king who lived in the 2nd century AD. However, he is furnished with features and actions that antique writers (especially, Strabo and Plutarch) attribute to Artashēs I (189–160 BC.). Apparently, Khorenatsi follows the epic tradition that was indifferent to precise historical time. The typological parallels and connections were more important for it. Some scholars, however, think that in very deed Khorenatsi mingled the images of two kings who lived in different ages.[85] For our study, the primary layer of this portrait is of high significance. Therefore, in our text, Artashēs I and Artashēs the Middle are nearly identical.

We refer here to this king's Aramaic inscriptions that guaranteed immunity for communal lands of peasants.[86] In the Classical intellectual tradition, the positive law was associated with sciences and arts. They were present in the social projects of the reformers that were intended to help regulate social life (բարեկարգություն) [Khor., II. 8, 41].[87]

This was especially true for Artashēs. In this study, we are not going to deal with the details of his reforms. It is sufficient to simply quote Khorenatsi's account about their main results: "[…] the order and good customs were established by Vagharshak and other early kings, yet they were neglectful of the noble arts and sciences, being occupied with brigands and invasions" [Khor., II, 58, 3]. Artashēs filled this gap by introducing the "knowledge of arts," and this basically changed the lifestyle of the Armenians: "But it is said that in the time of Artashēs there was no land unworked in Armenia, neither of mountain nor plain, on

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[85] Cf. **Sargsyan**, 1966, 62–67.

[86] For this conclusion, we go off of the argument that this king introduced positive law and a rational governing system in Armenia. Cf. **Eremyan**, 1948, 68–71; **Sargsyan**, 1962, 53–57; **Stepanyan**, 2018, 24–29.

[87] This approach is in the line with the classical Greek ideas about a well–constituted city state. See **Adkins**, 1972, 126–132.

account of the prosperity of the country" [Khor., II, 56, 5].[88] Of course, this is a rhetorical exaggeration, but for our discussion the fiction is as important as the historical reality. According to the concept of Khorenatsi, this was the peak of Armenian history in contrast to the initial and final chaos that bordered it.[89]

4. The realm of canonical law

In the days of Trdat the Great (298–330), with the conversion to Christianity (301), a new form of the Armenian identity was created. The nation was recognized as a *covenant* (nւխun) under the leadership of the omnipotent Lord – the source of all creative potencies, morality, and legal regulations.[90] In this regard, the third step of legal transformation was initiated in Greater Armenia. It established the supremacy of Christian canonical norms over natural and positive laws: "After his conversion to Christ, [Trdat] shone out with every virtue, increasing more and more his acts and words for the cause of Christ. He chided and urged the greatest princes, and at the same time all the mass of the common people to become true Christians so that the deeds of all might bear witness to the faith" [Khor., 92, 6]. By the same logic, Gregory the Illuminator (and all subsequent patriarchs), occupied the office of Great Judge.[91]

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[88] This is a well–known Hellenistic idea that reached back to the concept of Socrates and Aristotle. It traced a correspondence between *political justice* and *knowledge*. **Burns**, 1998, 160–162.

[89] See **Stepanyan**, 2018, 231–233.

[90] Let us highlight again that despite the supremacy of this form of identity, its other forms continued to operate, and the self–awareness of the Armenians was a process rife with *ad hoc possibilities*. Cf. **Areshian**, 2013, 149.

[91] The oldest literal testimony of this office is traceable in the following account of Faustus Buzand. It concerns the chorepiscopus Daniel: "He had been a pupil of the great Gregor and supervisor and head of

This experience was continued by St. Nersēs who convoked the Council of Ashtishat of *bishops in concert with the laity* in 354 and "[…] by canonical constitution (կանոնական սահմանադրութեամբ) established mercy, extirpating the root of inhumanity, which was the natural custom of our land" [Khor., III, 20, 4; cf. Buz., III, 4, 7]. Scholars believe this constitution to be based on Greek and Syrian canonical norms.[92] The other patriarchs, particularly Sahak Partev and John Mandakuni, brought this practice to completion. After Ashtishat, new councils were held in Shahapivan (444), Duin 1 (506), and Duin 2 (554) to work out the position of the Church regarding various doctrinal and social problems. Their decisions and creeds laid the foundation of the canonical legislation of the Armenian church summarized in the *Canonum Ecclesiae Armeniae* (*Կանոնագիրք հայոց*).[93]

In the canonical legislation, the image of *pagan adversaries* was formed. Their manifestations were the Christian heresies – Valentianism, Montanism, Marcionism, Arianism, etc. However, the principal opponent of the Armenian Church was Zoroastrianism. For many centu-

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the churches in the province of Taron the appanage of Gregor. He had the authority of the office of supreme justice in this region […]" [Buz., III, 14, 2]. Cf. **Adontz**, 1908, 447; **Manandyan**, 1934, 76; **Samuelyan**, 1939, 44.

[92] M. Scott finds it quite natural to discuss these reforms in the context of the whole 4th century AD., from China to the Middle East, Greece, and Rome: "[…] investigating the developing relationship of man and god(s), as played out through adoption, adaption and innovation in religious belief". **Scott**, 2016, 8.

[93] It must be taken into consideration that Christianity was now motivated to justify the existing social order. It was the counterweight to the heavenly divine state. Due to that, the dogmas of Holy Script were equated to legal norms. **Hakobyan**, 1964, VII. Kh. Samuelyan formulated this work as *Corpus juris canonici* compiled by the catholicos John Odznetsi in the 10th century. **Samuelyan**, 1939, 48–49.

ries, an Armenian adaptation of Zoroastrianism was predominant.[94] It shaped the basic concepts of the religious, moral, and legal systems of the Armenians. We have discussed different aspects of this impact on the traditional, Hellenistic, and Early Medieval Armenian household/family.[95]

The 4th and 5th centuries saw the transition from one religious system to another, a process that was weighed down by numerous contradictions and clashes. The best manifestations of the theological, ideological, and philosophical aspects of it are traceable in the texts of Agathangelos, Eznik Koghbatsi, and Eghishē. The clash of the two systems ebbed and flowed.

At the Conversion, orthodoxy prevailed on both sides. Due to that, the clash was bloody. Our principal authors, especially Agathangelos, assures that the victory of Christianity was unquestionable. But this statement is far from the historical reality. The resistance of Zoroastrianism was rather strong, combined with numerous uprisings and murders (or expulsions) of Church high officials.[96] To ease the situation, the subsequent kings – Khosrov Kotak and Tiran – decided to mitigate Christian orthodoxy by bringing back some key elements of the former religious practices – sacrifice, funeral lament, polygamy, consanguine marriage, etc.[97] The kings hoped to regain the sympathy of the people.

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[94] Modern scholarship finds that the Armenians followed a local version of Zoroastrianism mixed with their traditional religious ideas and practices. See **Russell**, 1986, 439–440; **de Jong**, 2015, 124–125.

[95] **Stepanyan**, 2019, 30–58; cf. Chapter 5.

[96] Among them, our primary sources mention the patriarchs Aristakes, Vrtanes, Grigoris, Yusik I Partev, and some other hierarchs of the Church. See **Ormanean**, 2001, 129–130, 138–139, 147–149, 159–160; cf. **Redgate**, 1998, 135; **Scott**, 2016, 318–319.

[97] In other words, Christianity also showed a steady tendency to form a local version of religious practices. **Redgate**, 1998, 135; **Stopka**,

However, this experience provoked the opposition of the superstates as well – Sasanian Persia and Rome. One supported orthodox Zoroastrianism, the other – orthodox Christianity. Both sides tried to use religious issues for their geopolitical interests. This increased tension throughout Greater Armenia. Due to this, the reign of Arshak II (354–368) was most typical. In this vein, scholars trace three poles of absolutization – royal power, the Christian church, and Zoroastrianism. The first was directed by King Arshak, the second by the patriarch Nersēs, the third by Meruzhan Artsruni.[98]

The king fell victim to these controversies and his retro–Hellenistic project failed.[99] Part of nobility sided with the patriarch, and another group went with Prince Meruzhan. The third group that initially supported the king, began to abandon him and think about its own liberties, estates, and families.

This was the crucial point of history which soon resulted in the decline and partition of Greater Armenia between Sasanian Persia and Rome in 387. A careful study of the events leads to the conclusion that, in time, the nobility worked out its own plan of action. The events of 428 came to demonstrate it clearly. Despite the resistance of Patriarch Sahak Partev, the nobility decided to dethrone King Artashir/Artashēs and (moreover) do away with royal authority.[100] They accused him of crimes and demanded

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2016, 29–30.

[98] The Armenian historical tradition portrays Prince Meruzhan as a traitor and apostate who acted under his vainglorious efforts to reach royal dignity with the support of Shapuh II. In fact, his opposition had the obvious social and religious grounds to come back to the *ancestral order*. See **Garsoïan**, 1997, 87; **Redgate**, 1998, 135; **Dignas**, **Winter**, 2007, 180; **Daryaee**, 2011, 182–183.

[99] On the essence and possible influence of the Roman experience on Armenian history see in detail **Stepanyan**, 2018, 46–56.

[100] The paper of G. Traina is to be highlighted among the other works

an *impartial trial* from the Sasanian king. According to Ghazar Parpetsi, at the trial, they declared to the Sasanian king: "What need is there any more for a king? Rather, let a Persian prince come to oversee us from time to time, and learning of our loyalty or disloyalty, tell you about it" [Parp., I, 14, 17]. The shah met this demand with delight and soon executed – this was the end of Arsacid rule in Armenia.

In an essential sense, this settlement witnessed the split of the two wings of the legal system – *political* and *canonical*. As a political nation, the Armenians had to concede their sovereignty to the Sasanian king, while as a Christian covenant they hoped to live under the canonical ordinances of their own Church. The powerful families would continue occupying the important state offices. The patriarch would remain the Great Judge. But all of them would be under the supreme authority of the Persian court. The status of Persarmenia was lowered to the level of a Sasanian *marz*.[101]

Scholars formulate this situation as *double allegiance*. In all probability, the Armenian nobility referred to the image of Christ portrayed by St. Matthew: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's" [Matth., 22:21].[102] This was the prevailing attitude during the great uprisings of the 5th century against Sasanian rule – the Vardanants (450–451) and Vahanants (481–484) wars.[103] The fact was that the Sasanian kings considered

on this problem. The balanced approach to the internal affairs and geopolitical issues as well as rich bibliography make it quite remarkable. **Traina**, 2002, 353–372.

[101] **Garsoïan**, 1997, 95–113.

[102] R. W. Thomson is quite accurate in his assessment of the political and religious aspects of this stance in light of Christian doctrine. **Thomson**, 1982, 25; cf. **Stepanyan**, 2018, 202.

[103] On the ups and downs of the two anti–Sasanian uprisings (wars) of the Armenian nobility in the second half of the 5th century, see in detail,

the agreement as a temporary concession on the path to the final extirpation of Christianity in Armenia. However, after the bloody clashes, the wars ended with about the same results. The Sasanian king recognized the autonomy of the Armenians and their Church. In response, the nobility reestablished its obedience and homage to his power.[104]

> *The ideal of the double allegiance is particularly apparent in the text of Ghazar P'arpetsi. Describing the atmosphere of the joy and delight after Nuarsak treaty (484), he states: "Then a marzpan named Andekan came to the country of Armenia, an intelligent, prudent and perspicacious man who could distinguish the wise from the stupid, and the good from the bad. Daily he observed the intelligence of Vahan, Armenia's general and lord of the Mamikoneans, his judicious nature, concern for the welfare of the land, brave–heartedness, appropriateness in everything, total progress; and he also saw that whatever work [Vahan] involved himself in, even though it be difficult, the Lord aided his hand and everything was concluded easily and effortlessly. Seeing daily such God–given wisdom which dwelled in Armenia's general Vahan, lord of the Mamikoneans, and thinking all of it over, Andekan was secretly astonished and rejoiced at his benevolent thought" [Parp., III, 98, 2–3].*

It must be added that this *nakharar* project dominated Armenia in the centuries that followed, and the Arabs adopted its common features.

Yuzbashyan, 1989, 207–210, 243–246.

[104] The following fact must be kept in mind. The Nuarsak peace agreement (484) signed between the Armenian sparapet Vahan Mamikonean and the Persian king Vagharsh was specified by an apotheosis staged in Vagharshapat: "All nakharars of Armenia united, and the other multitude came every day with great rejoice, with psalms, and homilies of the spiritual vardapets of the holy Church. They rejoiced happily with the general of Armenia, Vahan, lord of Mamikoneans, and with each other" [Parp., III, 97, 7]. Cf. **Ormanean**, 2001, 542.

The described forms of social partnership existed in diachronic perspective – from asocial chaos to natural, positive laws and canonical regulations. Nevertheless, this is only half of the truth. In an essential sense, these forms could operate synchronically as well. In other words, history moved as in *reality*, as well as in *possibility*. These poles could change their places depending on the knowledge, intellectual skills, and will of outstanding historical actors.[105]

5. *The realm of knowledge*

For this aspect, let us recall the conduct of King Vagharshak towards the Caucasian wild tribes. He assigned *sages and overseers* to prepare their transition to natural social life. This record is very indicative for demonstrating the aspect of the sociology of Khorenatsi that concerns the impact of outstanding actors on history.

a. From myths and epic tales to epic history. We would like to embark on our investigation with a statement about the parallelism between historical reality and historical narrative.[106] In Khorenatsi's social theory, as it was stated above, the departing point of discussion is *asocial wildness* compatible with the *matter* deprived of structure and positive qualities. The author traces its main peculiarity in lack of knowledge.

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[105] This proceeds from the idea that history is intelligible and its interpretation and understanding gives an individual the chance to influence it. See **Stephenson**, 2000, 291–295.

[106] The form, structure, and semiotic code of the given narrative, in many senses, depend on the author – the organizer of the communicative act. See **Wittman**, 1975, 22–23; **White**, 1984, 16–17. J. Phelan even compares the author with a "beast in the jungle." **Phelan**, 1989, 61–62.

For Khorenatsi, the cultural information of this age is accumulated in oral myths and epic tales. He colors them with features of irrationality.[107] He traces the most typical examples in the Persian tales: "[…] absurd and incoherent Persian tales, notorious for their imbecility". Further, while addressing his benefactor, Sahak Bagratuni, he complains: "What need have you of these false fables; what use are these senseless and stupid (անյարմար եւ անճ) compositions?" [Khor., From the Fables of the Persians, 2]. In Khorenatsi's view, such tales are compiled "out of fancy and not according to the truth" [Khor., I, 22, 24].

> *Among Armenian tales, the most comparable to this is the tale of Turk Angel: "When enemy ships had reached the shore of the Pontus Sea, he rushed upon them; and after they had withdrawn to the deep about eight stadia before he could reach them, they say that he took rocks the size of hills and threw them at them. And not a few ships sank because of the splash, and the height of the waves caused by the splash propelled the remaining ships many miles. O, this tale is too much – it is the tale of tales" [Khor., II, 8, 19–20].*

According to Khorenatsi, in connection with *wildness*, the *matter* made up one of the constant characteristics of Armenian history. It dominated in prehistorical age and reappeared from time to time: "But it seems to me that nowadays, just as in the past, the hatred to wisdom and oral narratives were typical for the Armenians (անսիրելութիւն իմաստութեան եւ երգարանաց բանաւորաց)" [Khor., I, 3, 8]. Due to this, a lack of historical memory was typi-

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[107] In an absolute sense, the *jungle of historical narratives* could be identified with the past, and the problem of historiography would be recognized as the discovery of the paths in it. In this process, certainly, the individuality of the historian plays an important role. Cf. **Gaddis**, 2002, 14–17.

cal for the ancient Armenians.[108] In the author's view, it engendered the absence of credible records about significant historical events: "I do not wish to leave the unscholarly habits of our first ancestors without a word of censure but to insert here at the very beginning of our work the reason for reprehending them" [Khor., I, 3, 2].

However, Khorenatsi believed that the meaningless verbal matter could be radically reshaped in accordance with literal arts – grammar and rhetoric, poetry and hermeneutics. The best patterns of that he saw in Greek fables: "[…] Greek fables, noble and polished, meaningful (պերճ եւ ողորկ հանդերձ պատճառաւ), which have hidden in themselves allegorically the meaning of events" [Khor., From the Fables of the Persians, 5].[109] In other words, the bare *verbal matter* would be modified under active literal forms. During this process, it would undergo rational and allegorical interpretations.[110]

The author found traces of that elaboration in numerous Armenian fables, narratives, and epic tales (առասպելք, զրոյցք, վիպասք). Scholars pay attention to the fact that, before Khorenatsi, they had already been patterned on

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[108] This statement of Khorenatsi finds its real significance in light of the theory of historical memory. It demonstrates three principal levels – family (clan), religious, and nationwide. Khorenatsi's negative attitude concerns the first level, where (according to modern scholarship) the *amnesia of nationwide elements of memory* dominates. Cf. **Kansteiner**, 2002, 179–180.

[109] By this, the author refers to one of the global topics of Greek mentality which contained the transition from *mythos to logos*. It indicated the key achievements of the Greeks in different areas of culture – philosophy and rhetoric, poetry and historiography. The image of Plato was identified with the ideal of the masterly interpretation of myth by rational categories. **Vernant**, 1962, 79–99; **Morgan**, 2000, 30–36; **Flower**, 2011, 45–66.

[110] On antique and modern approaches to the interpretation of myths, see **Honko**, 1972, 12–18.

the canons of Hellenistic rhetoric to find out their hidden essence: "[…] they were collected by some lesser and obscure men from ballads and are found in royal archives" [Khor., I, 14, 22].[111]

This experience is quite obvious in Early Medieval Armenian authors. It was the work of ancient intellectuals who remained anonymous. In modern scholarship, this aspect has been illustrated quite sufficiently, and we are going to limit our discussion to some appropriate examples.

The first stage was the *literal interpretation* of tales. It has been best formalized in the passage of Artavazd the Last [Khor., II, 61…]. The object of it is the evil character of the king. The passage begins with the following statement: "Of him the singers of Goḷt'n tell the following fable (առասպելաբանէն)" (4). In addition, "The old women also tell of him […]" (6). The end of the passage contains the author's consideration: "But the truth is as follows […]" (8).

The second stage represents the *symbolic or allegoric* interpretation.[112] The passage regarding King Artashēs the Middle demonstrates this most obviously. Relating the marriage of the young king to the Alan princess Satinik, Khorenatsi cites the fable of ancient storytellers. The king

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[111] Unfortunately, this aspect of the development of Armenian historiography remains obscure. Moreover, it is unlikely that it will ever be uncovered due to the scarcity of our information. Meanwhile, it is quite obvious that these unknown authors laid the foundations for the first stage of professional historicism in Armenia, paving the way for Metrodorus of Scepsis and Artavazd II. See **Stepanyan**, 1991, 194–195; **Stepanyan**, 2018, 170–171.

[112] This way of interpretation of myth was typical for Greek philosophy of various styles and schools. The adepts of the Sophism, Stoa, Platonism, and Neoplatonism were very active in this regard. See **Tate**, 1929, 142–154; **Bidney**, 1955, 379–380; **Brisson**, 2008, 15–28; 87–106.

kidnapped the maiden on his beautiful, black horse, utilizing a strap of red leather with golden rings. Summarizing the scene, the author emphasizes: "The truth is as follows. Because red leather is greatly prized among the Alans, he gave much lac and gold as payment and received the maiden Satinik – this is the strap of red leather with gold rings" [Khor., II, 50, 12–14].

The third stage looks at the *rational* (and also symbolic) interpretations of ancient oral narratives and reflects the *natural level* of mentality. In time, texts expressing this level were habitual in Armenia. They were aimed at the composition of genealogical stories "from father to son" [Khor., I, 1, 7]. They also contained the possibility of *moralistic* and *instructive* interpretations, which made up the key element of the narratives of ancient bards (gusans). Undoubtedly, the patron of Khorenatsi, the prince Sahak Bagratuni, was an adherent of this genre.[113] Acquiescing to his request, the historian states: "But I am greatly amazed at the fertility of your mind, that from the beginning of our nation up to the present you alone have been found to undertake such a great task and to present us with this request – to write the history of our nation in a long and useful work, to deal accurately with the kings and the princely clans and families: who descended from whom, what each one of them did, which of the various tribes are indigenous and native and which are of foreign origin but naturalized, to set down in writing each one's deeds and times […]" [Khor., I, 3, 10]. We have reason to suppose that eminent noble families also compiled their genealogical histories – the Artsrunis, Bagratunis, Siunis, Mamikoneans, etc. It is

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[113] Developed by modern literary criticism, the concepts of "text", "interdisciplinarity," and "double–voicedness of literary text" seem quite applicable in the case of Khorenatsi. Moreover, this is pertinent for all forms of cultural texts as well. See **Barthes**, 1977, 146–148; **Bakhtin**, 1981, 324–327.

well known that the historiographical traditions of principal houses were laid upon these foundations.[114]

In this vein, modern scholarship finds that the *linear time dimension* was invented to chain separate epic fragments in common narrative units. In parallel, the imaginative sequence of events (and their actors) was introduced. This came to occupy the place of cause–and–effect connections customary for modern historical thinking. In the First book of Khorenatsi's *History*, we find genealogical lists – Noah's descendants, patriarchs of the Jews, Chaldeans, and Armenians – which are the best demonstrations of this genre [Khor., I, 4–5; 19].

Certainly, besides the Armenian experience, the author is also influenced by the biblical tradition where the genealogical principle dominates entirely.[115] It must be added that *natural genealogy* continued to be considered an important mode of historical synthesis and comprehension for many centuries. It must also be added that this type of narrative was performed by ancient bards: "But very frequently the old descendants of Aram make mention of these things in ballads for the lyre and their songs and dances" [Khor., I, 6, 27].[116]

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[114] In the words of R. W. Thomson: "The interests of the great noble families required official spokesmen. Their endemic rivalry played out in the political and social spheres had its echo in the war of words and propaganda". **Thomson**, 1997, 208–209.

[115] Genealogical and annalistic principles of fact–recording made up the basic element of the historicism of the *First and Second Books of Kings* of Old Testament. It is in opposition to the historicism of the prophets aimed at the future and eternity. Cf. **Howard**, 1993, 30–34.

[116] It is a unique testament about the performance of history in ancient Armenia. The gusan performances most probably inspired Artavazd II to stage the Parthian campaign of M. Crassus on the matrix of Euripides' *Bacchae* at the wedding party in Artashat (53 BC). This experience (tragic historicism) contained the king's interpretation of current events. See **Stepanyan**, 2018, 150–170.

b. Annalistic historical writing. Khorenatsi took the next step toward rationalization.[117] In this regard, the following passage is notable: "If in truth those kings are worthy of praise who in written accounts fixed and ordered their times and wise acts and inscribed each one's valor in narratives and histories, then like them the compilers of books of archives who were occupied with similar efforts are worthy of our eulogies" [Khor., I, 3, 3]. The following three key phrases of this passage deserve particular attention. *The first* is concerned with the structure of the current time and its content (կարգեցին զժամանակս, եւ զգործս իմաստութեան եւ զքաջութիւն). *The second* requires the current happenings be formulated as information units written down in historical accounts (ի վէպս եւ ի պատմութիւնս). *The third* distinguishes the figure of the compiler of history (պարապեալքն այսպիսում ճգնութեան). In this regard, for the first time (still vaguely), the author formulates the idea of the collaboration between the king and the historian.[118]

These three components recognized as primary historical information (memory) gave rise to a new genre of intellectual activity – annals. It is recognized that the latter had no special interest in actual motives and causes of events. Its authors pursued the temporal sequence of

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[117] Chronicles and the annalistic method of the presentation of history had a steady tradition in Armenia. On this genre of historiography and its peculiarities through the centuries, see **Margaryan**, 2013, 37–40.

[118] Cf. Chapter 9. As for the epistemological aspect of this problem, it concerns the concept tracing the connection between mind and time in order to escape irrationalism. Cf. **Holmes**, 1991, 32–33. Regarding this phenomenon, see **Carr**, 1967, 24. The observation of P. Ricoeur that, in narrative, the author of actions finds his identity and recognizes himself, is quite applicable for the relationship between historian and king. **Ricoeur**, 1985, 214–215.

events proceeding from the idea that time governs world affairs through divine will (or accident).[119]

It was believed that the records of events and their actors provided kings (and their entourage) with necessary knowledge and governing skills. We have information that the Armenian kings had a special office to set up annual records of significant events. Khorenatsi names the officials in charge of work *the supervisors of memories* (վերակացուք յիշողութեանց) [Khor., I, 21, 12].[120]

There were common features uniting these two primary genres. On the one hand, the lack of individual perception of events, with the indifference to the modulation of time in the perspective of the past, present, and future, on the other. As a result, a third deficiency came to the fore concerning the absence of self–reflection of the authors of these genres.[121]

c. Investigative historical writing. A new genre came about to overcome these deficiencies. This intellectual adventure took place first in classical Greece by the efforts

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[119] Typologically this situation is quite comparable with historical books of the Old Testament. Cf. **Provan**, 1998, 200. By the figurative definition of H. Hōlscher: "In these annals, the events appeared in strict chronological order, like pearls threaded on a chain, but without any other connection". **Hōlscher**, 1997, 317.

[120] In this regard, the following account of Ghazar Parpetsi seems of great importance. Recalling the facts of Mashtots' early life, he states: "He served as a soldier at the court of the Armenian king Khosrov and was established among the group of scribes, as a royal scribe. For in that period the royal scribes treated the affairs of Armenia's kings (զզործ թագաւորացն Հայոց) in Syriac or Greek, as well as decisions and *hrovartaks*" [Parp., I, 10, 1].

[121] However, on closer inspection, a different perception appears. Every annalistic (and chronological) text is a result of preparatory selection of facts, events, and actors. To a large extent, this procedure depends on the point of view (usually, social) of an annalist. See **Vanderputten**, 2001, 143–147.

of Herodotus and Thucydides.[122] It was the birth of the new discipline – historiography. In time, it worked out its own tools of *timing* the raw material of the past.[123] According to Khorenatsi, this metamorphosis happened in Armenia through the initiative of King Vagharshak. The key idea, which the author attributes to him, is that historical narrative is an area of order and balance capable of influencing the events of the present.

Gaining the throne of Armenia, King Vagharshak, as it has been noted above, found the country in chaos. He sent "a certain Syrian, Mar Abas Catina, a man versed in Chaldean and Greek" to examine the royal archives of Nineveh and compile a faithful history of the country [Khor., I, 8, 5].[124] In this way, the king hoped to find out the order of ranks of the Armenians: "[…] which is the first of the lords of this country and which is the last" [Khor., I, 9, 5]. He accepted Catina's compendium as guidance for governing the kingdom and deposited it in his treasury.

For Khorenatsi, history is a field of investigation, the essential task of which he formulates as follows: "But I shall begin to show you our history – *whence* and *how* [it developed]" [Khor., I, 7, 6]. This understanding becomes clear in light of another formula: "[…] there is no true history without *chronology*" [Khor., II, 82, 2]. Together, these features are reminiscent of the well–known antique

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[122] The investigative character of history–writing was developed by Thucydides, based sometimes on the experience of Herodotus. In other words, the process of the establishment of the new field of intellectual activity covered a long period, giving rise to various genres of historiography. **Wecowski**, 2016, 17–32.

[123] Modern scholarship represents this situation in the form of the relationship between the historian and his historical facts: "The historian and facts of history are necessary to one other. The historian without facts is rootless and futile; the facts without historian are dead and meaningless." **Carr**, 1961, 30.

[124] On these archives, see in detail **Traina**, 1997, 349–359.

formula of history designed to answer the question: *how*, *whence*, *and why* (πῶς, πόθεν, διὰ τί) the events of the past and present happen?[125]

This research approach implies the historian's personal responsibility in processing the information of primary sources: "So far as was possible we have avoided superfluous and elaborate accounts and whatever words and conclusions tended to unreliability, and followed to the best of our ability only what was right and true, whether from other sources or from our own [knowledge]. Observing the same principle here, we are keeping the course of our story free from what is unsuitable and what would encourage the introduction of doubt and disbelief" [Khor., II, 64, 9]. It required a particular narrative aesthetic (order) based on brevity and accuracy of information: "Omitting what is least important from our account, we shall speak of what is significant" Khor., I, 21, 2].[126]

Formally, every narrative unit represents a balance (կարգ բանից) of correct statements and inferences, assumptions and speculations aimed at the refutation of false facts and statements. There is also a narrow space left for the author's beliefs and suspicion. Relating the old tale

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[125] According to this theory, historical narrative gains its goal when answering these principal questions. In their unity, they make up the key feature of history–wiring: to reconstruct the past and present through interpretation and understanding of concrete facts, events, and actors. Due to this, a descriptive historical narrative (ἀπόδεξις) becomes an investigation (ἱστορίη). **Demont**, 2009, 179–180. These two sides of the historical text operate in parallel, and, despite its investigative character, history remains descriptive (and plastic) like the texts of arts. Cf. **Kelley**, 1998, 19–24.

[126] These two accounts are about the two kinds of responsibility of a historian – moral and aesthetic. The first is aimed at the truth, the second – at the beauty. Cf. **Gorman**, 2004, 103–108. According to the antique approach, they complement each other, for the truth was unthinkable without aesthetics. **Burns**, 1919, 196–197.

about Zrvan, Khorenatsi states: "Now whether someone else considers these to be fables or whether he reckons them to be the truth, nonetheless as I am persuaded, there is much truth to them" [Khor., I, 6, 16]. And, more radically: "And whether these tales are false or true is of no concern to us" [Khor., I, 6, 27].

The last statement is in obvious parallel with Herodotus's renowned idea: "For myself, my duty is to report all that is said; but I am not obliged to believe it all alike […]" [Herod., VII, 152]. Both sentences contain a suggestion to advanced readers to participate in the defining of the authenticity of the text. It is a particular manifestation of the dialogical character of Khorenatsi's narrative.

As we have demonstrated elsewhere, three dimensions of this narrative are obvious in the *History* of Khorenatsi – the author's self–dialogue, the dialogue with the prince Sahak Bagratuni, and the dialogue with the (real or possible) readers. In fact, all the addressees are the *alter egos* of the author. Their play composes the polyphony of the narrative of the *History*.[127]

Khorenatsi views the atomic elements of history in human actions when united in relevant clusters. This is about the creative ages of history that consist of the *deeds of valor* and *wisdom* of its eminent actors: "[I shall set down] in order whatever deeds of valor and bravery were performed here, the wise actions and ordinances of each one" [Khor., II, 1, 2]. The actions of the heroes of Armenian history – Hayk, Aram, Tigran Eruandean, Vagharshak Arsacid, Artashēs the Middle, Trdat the Great – are comprised of these basic characteristics.

> *On the way to the interpretation and understanding of history, a historian first analyzes the bare description of events, dividing it into significant atomic (for his investigation) units. The second step requires the establishment of their causative and typologi-*

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[127] **Stepanyan**, 1991, 182–183.

cal connections, whereby he comes to the synthesis. The latter opens a door to the interpretation of history. As a result of these operations, history gains its main quality and becomes "[...] a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the past and the present"[128]

The opposite state of history – the ages of decay and destruction – the author connects to cowardice and egoism, cruelty, and ignorance. These features are traceable in the antiheroes – Artavazd the Younger, Eruand the Last, Arshak II, and Pap. There is also the third group of actors characterized by idleness and lack of will – Artavazd the Elder, Tiran the Elder, Tigran the Last – the results of their activity are also ruinous for Armenia.[129]

d. Theoretical historical writing. Khorenatsi sees the task of a historian in uncovering the hidden meanings of history. This process requires the transition from a description of events to their interpretation and understanding. The author considers it a hermeneutic problem aimed at the tracing of the parallelism between historical reality and authentic historical texts: "[…] as was the man and his deeds, so too will be the account of him" [Khor., I, 31, 2].[130] In this way, he proceeds from perceptions to the theoretical deep of history – beyond perceivable events and facts. In Khorenatsi's *History*, this represents the lesson of history. The author inductively summarizes the facts about the

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[128] See **Carr**, 1990, 55.

[129] This group of actors represents the chaotic side of history – the counterweight to creativity. Their interaction uncovers the so–called *Japhetic principle* that highlights the decisive role of positive projects, wills, and actions of outstanding individuals in ambiguity history. Regarding this aspect of Armenian history, see in detail **Stepanyan**, 2016, 34–53; cf. Chapter 7.

[130] New Historicism has worked out a comprehensive formula of the close interaction between history and text: "the textuality of history and the historicity of text". See **Montrose**, 1989, 20.

eminent heroes and antiheroes of his narrative.[131] Tigran
Eruandean: "To give a faithful account of the original and
first Tigran and his various deeds is a task dear to me as
a historian in my narrative concerning Tigran, the son of
Eruand, and may it so be for you too, O reader" [Khor., I,
31, 2]. Artavazd the Elder, on the contrary, "[…] gave no
indication of any other act of nobility or valor and occupied
his time with eating and drinking" [Khor., II, 22, 3].[132]

Khorenatsi summarizes the principal ages of Armenian
history as well. However, in this case he applies the deduc-
tive method of generalization. Consequently, there are ge-
neralizations for each three books of the *History*. They are
sui generis sketches of narrative blocks based on the *deeds
of valor and wisdom* of the principal actors of the Age. *The
first book*: "Therefore I like to name [them] for their valor,
in this order, Hayk, Aram, Tigran. For the descendants of
heroes are heroes; but as for those of second rank, let one
call them what seems to him appropriate" [Khor., I, 31, 3].
The second book: "I shall now write down for you as a
second book the various events of our country, begin- ning
with the reign of Alexander down to the reign of that holy
and valiant Trdat the Great" [Khor., II, 1, 2]. *The third
book*: "[…] composing a third book dealing with events
after Saint Trdat down to the removal of the Arsacid fa-
mily from the throne and of the posterity of Saint Gregory

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[131] Modern scholars frequently identify the lesson of history with the
historical consciousness representing "the intersection between public
memory, citizenship, and history education". See **Seixas**, 2006, 15.

[132]   The *understanding* of history is associated with the *application*
of its principal results in the form of prosopographic series. Namely,
the speculative fragments are formulated in plastic forms. In this vein,
Khorenatsi's narrative returns to its departure point – the description
of events and actors. However, the comeback is ostensible since these
images are already enriched with intellectual content. Therefore, the
History is comparable with a picture gallery designed for intellectual
spectators. Cf. **Stepanyan**, 1991, 137–143.

from the patriarchate" [Khor., III, 1, 3]. The same is true about the whole narrative of the *History*: "[…] from the beginning of our nation to the present" [Khor., I, 3, 10].

In other words, before the compilation the text of the *History*, a deliberate outline of Armenian history had already been worked out. We can propose that the author, Moses Khorenatsi, had come to this understanding through the same system of dialogues which was highlighted above. Now, his task was to endorse it through concrete historical information. This observation gives reason to argue that the text of the *History* resulted from the combination of the two forms of perception – *deductive* and *inductive*.

Their balance required special text aesthetics: "We shall deal with this history in simple terms so that no one may seem attracted to it because of its rhetoric, but rather that desiring truth in our account, people may read carefully and avidly the history of our homeland" [Khor., III, 1, 3]. In fact, the design of the texts was thought of in strict combination with its reliability. Their relationship was intermediated by the concept of *order* (կարգ) synonymous with *justice* – the main principle of structure of cosmos and society, human body and oeuvre, arts and texts. In this view, the description of Prince Smbat Bagratuni seems most relevant:

> *"The stature of his limbs was in proportion to his valor; he pursued virtue of the spirit; he was notable for the beauty of his hair. He had a small blood mark in his eyes, which shone like enamel on gold and [set] in pearl. In addition to being agile of person and body, he was prudent in all things and had a gift for success in battle more than anyone else" [Khor., II, 52, 2–3].*

By the same symmetry, the author describes the beautiful town of Eruandakert; he compares it to the face of a pretty maiden [Khor., II, 42, 2–8]. This symmetry is true about the whole text of the *History* as well. It must be taken into consideration that it also has an anthropomor-

phic structure and consists of somatic, affective, and intel-
ligible (spiritual) elements.[133] As it has been highlighted,
they usually work together under the prevalence of one
of them. Each period of Armenian history was compiled
in accordance with this principle.[134] *The formative period*
(Haykids) is based first of all on the idea of the *bodily
completion* of eminent historical actors. In this regard,
the image of the patriarch Hayk is exemplary: "handsome
and personable, with curly hair sparkling eyes, and strong
arms" [Khor., I, 10, 2]. He represents the *tamed* wild body
turned into nature. Meanwhile, his adversaries – Bēl and
his entourage – are depicted "like an impetuous torrent
pouring down" [Khor., I, 11, 10].

The intermediate period is based on the dominance
of the *affective element*. The three eminent reformers of
the age – Vagharshak Arsacid, Artashēs the Middle, and
Trdat the Great – personify the balance of this principle. It
generates *noble deeds and acts of wise government*, which
reach their peak in the days of Artashēs: "But it is said
that in the time of Artashēs there was no land unworked
in Armenia, neither of mountain, nor plain, on account of
the prosperity of the land" [Khor., II, 56, 5]. This creative
energy comes from the new sciences and arts introduced
in Armenia in his days. As we have singled out, they indi-
cated the positive law and civil life. In the mind of the
author, the Armenian reformers acted in line with the cre-

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[133] This anthropomorphism might be formulated as an attempt of inter-
preting the texts in human terms. It could also be viewed in the temporal
duration of human life – childhood, maturity, and senility. The similar
ideas resulted from the anthropocentric paradigm of the classical period
of Greek mentality "[…] when the training was broad, when arts were
intricately interwoven, and when mind and body moved and thought
together." **Hawhee**, 2004, 4. The initiator of anthropomorphism in
Classical historiography was Thucydides. However, his approach was
founded on *bare somatic medicine*. See **Ehrenberg**, 1973, 365.

[134] See in detail **Stepanyan**, 1998, 289–294.

ative experience of Alexander the Great [Khor., III, 8, 3]. It must be added that a lack of the balance is fraught of decay and decline in this case as well. Khorenatsi demonstrates this by the poor experiences of the kings Artavazd the Elder, Artavazd the Last, Tiran the Elder and many others [Khor., II, 22–23; 61; 62].

In other words, knowledge is considered a guarantee against social degradation. This especially concerns historical knowledge, usually adopted "[…] for the sake of good regulation and life without rancor – which are the causes of stability and peace and similar [blessings]" [Khor., II, 8. 41].[135] To bring about this idea, the collaboration of a king and historian is required. However, only those of them who have followed the *deeds of valor and wisdom*. Such experience is obvious in the second book of the *History* – the narrative area where social welfare depends on positive law and civilization. Khorenatsi recognizes two such pairs of collaboration – Vagharshak Arsacid and Mar Abas Catina, Trdat the Great and Agathangelos. To them must be added the collaboration of the author with the prince Sahak Bagratuni.[136]

The third book of the *History – The Conclusion of the History of Our Fatherland* – represents a new form of national identity of the Armenians. Instead of *political nation*, *God's covenant* came to the fore.[137] It was the main result of the conversion of Greater Armenia to Christianity, a crucial event that, according to the historical tradition, occurred in 301.

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[135] The opposite case is formulated by Herodotus: "Of all miseries the bitterest is this: to know so much and to have control over nothing" [Herod., IX, 16, 5].

[136] On this symmetry, see in detail **Beledian**, 1992, 132–137. Cf. **Stepanyan**, 2014, 157–158.

[137] On this and parallel forms of identity and the modes of their interaction throughout Armenian history, see in detail **Stepanyan**, 2014, 160–167.

However, despite the the Roman (later Byzantine) Empire, the Church in Armenia was in competition with absolute royal authority. Its three eminent leaders – Gregory the Illuminator, Nerses the Great, and Sahak Partev – were a counterbalance to the three reformers of that age Trdat the Great, Arshak II, and Pap. In the course of events, the Church gained influence at the expense of royal power. Consequently, Church ordinances came to replace the positive laws. The state weakened, and the geopolitical situation worsened. The two irreconcilable opponents – Sasanian Persia and the Roman Empire – suddenly came to an agreement regarding the Armenian question. As it was stated above, this resulted in the partition of Greater Armenia (387) and the fall of the Armenian Arsacids (428). The Armenian nobility adopted the stance of *double allegiance*.

In this regard a question arises – is it right to say that the long *experience of taming of the wild historical material* failed in Armenia, and that intellectual efforts did not change the course of history? At first glance, this idea seems quite clear. However, for the final solution, we have to pay attention to the following fact – Khorenatsi was one of the rare representatives of his generation who perceived the fall of the Armenian Arsacids as a tragedy. His renowned *Lament* is the best evidence of that. In it, he describes in detail the destruction of *nature*, *society*, and *human being* and explains it by referring to the end of the second cosmic aiōn – the long duration of universal history. According to common Christian perceptions, it started from the Flood and Noah's salvation and came to its end with the chaos of the 5th century.[138] Most probably, it implied the second coming of Christ: "From this may Christ God protect us and all who worship him in truth. And to him be glory from all creatures. Amen" [Khor.,

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[138] **Mahé**, 1993, 91; **Stepanyan**, 2006, 248–254; **Stepanyan**, 2009, 181–196.

III, 68, 44]. This is the final phrase of the *Lament* and the whole text of the *History*.[139]

> *Eschatological expectations were inherent to Early Christianity, starting from John's Apocalypse. They found a new development in the Christian intellectual tradition of the North Africa under the pen of Julius Africanus, Lactantius, Tyconius, and Augustinus. Most of all, it influenced Arianism, and the impact of the Great Migration of Germanic Peoples and the Fall of Western Roman Empire played a decisive role. Parallelly, the idea of aiōn and eschatological end was active in Eastern Christianity and especially in the works of the Cappadocian Fathers of the 4th century – Basil the Great and Gregory of Nysa.*[140]

In other words, history moves between two poles of chaos. Elsewhere, we have shown this to be an old tradition elaborated by Plato and adopted by Hellenistic and Early Christian intellectuals.[141] In the case of Khorenatsi, the

[139] Intimacy with Christ was recognized as the ultimate point in the ascetic ascent of an individual (and a religious community) on the road to divine observation. See **Cadenhead**, 2018, 147–151.

[140] In the early Christian theology, the social and cosmological aspects of eschatological expectations dominated. Later, the influence of psychological and historical expectations became quite tangible. See **Grant**, 1917, 206–211; **Barton**, 2011, 582–591. At the beginning of the 4th century, these expectations were rather valid. The situation changed under Constantine the Great (307–337). Eusebius of Caesarea mitigated these expectations when declaring "the golden age of Christianity" had come already. **Norderval**, 1988, 113–118. In the West, eschatological expectations were activated again in the 5th century *under the banner* of Arianism. **Brown**, 1989, 122–125. Regarding the Cappadocian Fathers, see **Zukerman**, 1991, 481–486.

[141] **Stepanyan**, 2006, 248–254. The idea of the aiōn was worked out in Greek intellectual tradition as well. Plato distinguished its two opposite meanings – eternity (being) and time (becoming) [Plato, Tim., 37e, 5–8a 10]. It gave him the opportunity to discuss cosmic and earthly

authentic social values of the *middle period* of Armenian history are opposed to the antivalues of the *edge poles*. Let us note again, that the real values were generated by the outstanding actors of Armenian history. If not for their efforts, chaos would have come much earlier.

The historical tradition of the Old Testament recognizes some great *innovators* who brought men out of chaotic situations – Noah, Moses, the Great Prophets. They fulfilled this mission due to their particular relationship to God. Men of this class, according to classical theory, were *God's images* with the ability to perceive the essence of things passing by their bodily features. This was due to the presence of the *divine spark* in their souls – the reason that always seeks for its archetype (սկզբնատիպ) – the omnipotent Lord: "[…] on account of our reason, as it is said, we are the image of God (պատկեր Աստուծոյ)" [Khor., I, 1, 3].[142]

Khorenatsi traces this quality in himself as well. In the Introduction to his *History*, regarding his patron, Prince Sahak Bagratuni, he states: "[…] I have come to know your soul before your body" [Ibid.]. According to the antique and Early Christian experience, this is the main feature of a spiritual trainee. Consequently, there is reason to suggest that his numerous eulogies addressed to his patron contain features of self–estimation as well. In this regard, he also

events on parallel levels. This intention is obvious, particularly in his *Laws* [Plato, 903d–e]. Philo of Alexandria tried to combine the antique and biblical traditions *ad hoc* [Philo, Fug., 57, 5–10; QE, 2. 20, 13]. Cf. **Keizer**, 1999, 206–210.

[142] Most probably, Khorenatsi comes from the tradition of the Neoplatonist Christianity of the Cappadocian Fathers, on whom the influence of Plotinus was tangible. We refer to his concept of αὐτοάνθρωπος – the man who endeavored for perfection in God. [Plot., IV, 4, 20; V, 6, 25 etc.]. The next probable source for the author, Philo of Alexandria, calls him ἴνδαλμα τοῦ θεοῦ – God's image. [Philo, De amp., 36].

thinks quite highly of his forthcoming work – the *History of the Armenians*: "So having received your request with pleasure, I shall labor to bring it to completion in order to leave this as an *immortal memorial* (յամնմաһ յիշատակ) to you and your descendants to come" [I, 1, 7].[143]

Indeed, the essential purpose of the *History* was not only to glorify the prince and his house, but to demonstrate historical paradigms containing plans for overcoming chaotic situations. In this regard, Khorenatsi referred to the relevant examples from biblical and Armenian history. And supposedly, the image of the patriarch Moses inspired him very much, because his main concern also was to lead his people out of the *desert*.[144]

Of course, this is only a supposition, but its probability rises when we discuss it in the context of the metaphysical perception of history. It is aimed at the understanding of not only *what has happened* but also *what could happen*. Moses Khorenatsi outlined the Armenian way of salvation in the textual space and time of his *History*. He comprehended divine providence through theology, philosophy, and sciences and formulated it in the general idea of Armenian history that was understandable for a small group of intellectuals.

Khorenatsi has worked out the concept of *synthetic history* to embrace all ages and genres of Armenian history. It represents a polyphonic paradigm to *reconcile* different approaches of history – epic, rationalistic, allegorical, and metaphysical.[145] In the *reverse perspective* of Khorenatsi

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[143] This aspect of Khorenatsi's auto–reflection requires a special investigation.

[144] **Stepanyan**, 2016, 52–53. This image is important for understanding the intellectual expectations of the 5th century traceable in the narratives of all the eminent authors of the époque. It implied a new cultural and spiritual paradigm. Cf. **Terian**, 1982, 75–84.

[145] This layer of Khorenatsi's historical concept is virtually designed to be comprehended in the reverse perspective of his *advanced reader*. It

 (and his advanced readers), they make up a common axiological network, which focused all his *alter egos*. He believes that only in the case of self–dialogue, is it possible to juxtapose, compare, and (even) identify events, social projects, and actors of different ages. He believes also that only in this light is it possible to work out common (and pertinent) responses to the challenges of history.

We must keep in mind that for the generation of the 5th century, the most serious challenge was the chaos that followed the fall of Arsacid Armenia. It was necessary to find an outlet from this disaster and lay the foundations for a new aiōn of Armenian history. This depended on the intensity of the intellectual and practical efforts of that generation.

Conclusion

Two realities are parallel in the *History* of Moses Khorenatsi – social life and the historical narrative. Despite their differences, they have obvious common features, which can help uncover some principal (but hitherto underestimated) aspects of Early Medieval Armenian mentality. Both forms of reality are patterned on the classical concept of the *thing* brought to completion by Aristotle. The departing point of this concept is the idea of the *matter* (*potentiality*) to be processed by the active *form* (*actuality*) in order to reach its fulfillment. In this way, it goes through metamorphoses and turns into a *natural or artificial thing*.

Khorenatsi shows a similar approach in his interpretation of societies. *First*, they are depicted in the state of potentiality, being identified with wildness (վայրենութիւն) deprived of steady social rules and institutions. Through a series of regulations, they obtain the *natural right* and

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is as real as his intellectual ability to collaborate with the author. On this aspect of the problem, see in detail **Stepanyan**, 2018, 232–233.

become natural societies based on the clan form of integration. It represents the first phase of social actuality. The *second phase* is connected to the *positive right* which gives rise to political institutions and ideology. Khorenatsi identifies it with civilization and associates its successes with the creative efforts of eminent reformers. The *third phase* arose by virtue of Christianity and was based on its values and *legal ordinances*. The role of outstanding persons was exceptional in this case as well. The author finds that all these phases of social integration exist in parallel as well. Consequently, the danger of chaos is always present in a society. It is possible to overcome it through creative projects and efforts.

The historical narrative represents a similar path of development. The primary myths and legends correspond to the level of the matter and asocial wildness. According to Khorenatsi, they are bereft of *profound meaning*. However, they can obtain that by being processed according to antique rhetoric and poetry. This generates historical epic tales ready to reveal their real content through rational, symbolic, or allegoric interpretations. They represent the first phase of the actuality of historical information. The *positivistic perception* of history succeeds in the form of annals, the authors of which – supervisors of memory – state the yearly sequence of events. The aim of their descriptive texts is to demonstrate *what happened*. The third phase marks the theoretical (and metaphysical) aspect of history that looks at the objective of identifying its causal algorithms. It paves the way to the lesson of history – *what could happen*. This approach reached its highs in the *synthetic historical paradigm* with an intention to harmonize various aspects of comprehension of the past and present.

In an essential sense, this was a particular manifestation of Mashtots' experience to develop a new paradigm of Armenian culture. The great reformer saw the solution of the *Armenian problem* in the combination of Christian

universalism with a national idea. This demanded adequate combinations of the different paradigms of national identity and narratives with common features and features ad hoc.

Section 2.

Cosmic Rhythm and Royal Authority

> "[…] the regular movements of the heavenly bodies are the causes of all things that year by year come forth and are produced out on the earth."
>
> ***Philo of Alexandria, Op., XIV, 41.***

Chapter Three

Idea of Cosmic and Social Recurrence in Armenian Intellectual Tradition

(The Epic *Sasna Tsṙer* and Moses Khorenatsi)

Introduction

While interpreting the *Lament* of Moses Khorenatsi, it becomes quite obvious that the author's narrative is based on the concept of the cosmic circle – great year or *aiōn* – the long temporal duration thought to comprise the crucial elements (and events) of both cosmos and human commonality.[1] In the western intellectual tradition, this concept was scrutinized by Hesiod, Heraclites, and the Stoics. Plato developed it in his various treatises, most notably in his *Timaeus* and *Laws*. This philosopher influenced numerous concepts of the Hellenistic and (even) Christian ages.[2] As for the Eastern tradition, the assumption is traceable in many narratives starting from the *Epic of Gilgamesh* to the *Old Testament* and Zoroastrian texts.[3]

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[1] On this approach, see in detail **Stepanyan**, 2006, 248–254.

[2] More precisely, the Greek idea of *aiōn* reaches back to the epic tradition (Homer, Hesiod), the early poetry (Simonides, Pindar), and tragedy (Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides). See in detail, **Keizer**, 1999, 15–58.

[3] The biblical tradition worked out its own term for *aiōn* – *olām*, explicitly mentioned in Genesis, Exodus, and (particularly) in the books of the Prophets. See **Keizer**, 1999, 119–143; **Radice**, 2009, 124–129. As for the Zoroastrian tradition, we are going to discuss its great temporal dimensions in the present chapter – from Bundahišn to Frašegird. See **Kreyenbroek**, 1993, 303–305.

The eminent Jewish philosopher and polymath Philo of Alexandria attempted to reconcile the two intellectual traditions by *translating* the Eastern wisdom into the Western philosophical categories and terms.[4]

As we have noted, Philo was very popular in Early Medieval Armenia, and the concept of the cosmic circle may have been introduced in Armenia through his writings. The formation of the Christian identity of the Armenians was in flux at that time, and a group of intellectuals (the generation of St. Mashtots and his disciples) tried to bridge national values with Christian universalism. This experience was designed to harmonize the main intellectual traditions in Armenia of the time – biblical, Hellenistic, and Armenian. The results of this synthesis were manifested in different areas of intellectual activity – hagiography, rhetoric and poetry, geography, and cosmology.[5] It is quite appropriate to discuss Khorenatsi's experience of introducing the concept of the *aiōn* in the context of this global metamorphosis.

The conceptualization of this problem has determined the essence and structure of our investigation. It is designed to trace the concept of *aiōn* in three intellectual fields – philosophy (Plato), philosophical theology (Philo), and history (Khorenatsi). It obtains new colors and nuances in each field while preserving its main characteristics. The first two areas have been elucidated quite sufficiently in modern studies.[6] We plan to address their principal results to complete our main concern – tracing the concept

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[4] On the problem of Philo's synthesis of Classical, Hellenistic, and biblical traditions, see **Runia**, 1986, 117–119; **Schenck**, 2005, 49–72.

[5] On the modern interpretation of the problems of the   intellectual grasp of the Hellenizing School in Armenia, see in detail **Terian**, 1982, 175–186; **Muradyan**, 2014, 321–348.

[6] On the problem of cosmic eternity and time in Classical Greek philosophy, see **Whittaker**, 1968, 131–144; **Keizer**, 1999, 59–81; **Mohr**, 1982, 41–48.

under consideration in the *History of* the *Armenians* by Khorenatsi.

1. Western intellectual tradition. Plato

Plato evolved the problem of cosmic *aiōns* from a holistic point of view, combining the data of physics, ethics, and logic.[7] According to him, the cosmos was compiled by the great Demiurge after his own image and likeness. For this purpose, he used the primordial elements while establishing balance among them: "The builder built it (cosmos) from all the fire, water, air and earth there was, and left no part or power of any of them out" [Plato, Tim., 32d]. At first, the cosmos existed only in intelligible forms and was under the Demiurge's direct guidance.[8] It was inhabited by perfect spiritual creatures. Afterwards, he abandoned "[…] the steering–oars and retired to his observation–post, and all the gods followed him" [Plato, Leg., 272e]. It gave rise to a cosmic turmoil that caused the destruction of all living things. At last, cosmos "[…] set itself things within it and itself, because it remembered (so far as it could) the teaching of its craftsman and father" [Plato, Leg., 273b].[9]

This new universe differed from the previous one. By the Will of the Cosmic Craftsman, it got rid of *the casual and random bodily element*. He: "[…] gave priority and seniority to the Soul […] to be the body's mistress and rule over it as her subject" [Plato, Tim., 34c].[10] The cos-

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[7] As highlighted above, this assumption was inherent to Greek thought. See **Trompf**, 1979, 62–66.

[8] **Verlinsky**, 2009, 223–225. It is also believed that Plato was directly influenced by Empedocles' theory of cosmic cycles consisting of long periods of increasing Love and increasing Strife. Their extreme opposition caused the End of the Cycle. See **O'Brian**, 1969, 55–62.

[9] **Verlinsky**, 2009, 229.

[10] In other words, the Cosmos came back to its initial condition based

mic Soul engendered all the creatures starting from stars and planets to plants and human beings.[11] However, this cosmic balance is not everlasting; it gets worn out periodically as a result of the predominance of one of the elements. More frequently, it is thought to be connected with the growth of fire or water: "[…] when heat or cold or anything else that possesses powers surrounds a composite body from outside and attacks it, it destroys that body prematurely, brings disease and old age upon it and causes it to waste away" [Plato, Tim., 33a]. In the first case, it causes a universal fire, in the second case a deluge.[12]

All these considerations give the philosopher reason to assert that the universe exists *from one chaos to another*. But the stages of its existence do not only depend upon *the play* of the primary elements. It has profound social and moral causes as well.[13] To prove this theory, Plato relates an *intellectual myth* about one of the cosmic *aiōns*.[14]

The former cosmos perished as a result of the deluge, and water covered all the levels of the Earth. Mankind had been swept away; only small groups of men found refuge on the tops of mountains. They made up ***the first stage***

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on the balance of Mind (God), Soul, and Body. **Hackforth**, 1959, 17–22; **Mohr**, 1982, 43.

[11] It must be remembered that the macrocosm (human being) also consisted of the same fundamental components. Cf. **Blyth**, 1997, 196–199.

[12] Undoubtedly, the philosopher proceeds from the theory of the four primary elements, the balance of which was thought of as the base harmony of Cosmos. He speaks about the destruction of that under the predominance of either fire (heat) or water (cold). Cf. **van der Sluijs**, 2006, 60–62.

[13] **van der Sluijs**, 2006, 64–65; R. Tarnas discussed the concept from the point of view of modern astrological archetypes. See **Tarnas**, 2006, 357–358.

[14] Modern scholarship defines this aspect of interpretation as anthropological (political, cultural) cosmology. See **McEvilley**, 2001, 73–77; **Gumerman**, **Warburton**, 2005, 15–21.

of civilization. These hill shepherds bred flocks of cattle since they had lost all the crafts, skills, and technology of the previous cycle. Nonetheless, they had a good supply of milk, meat, and clothes: "Now the community, in which neither wealth nor poverty exists, will generally produce the finest characters because tendencies to violence and crime and feelings of jealousy and envy do not arise" [Plato, Leg., 679b–c]. They live in family groups or communities led by patriarchs and feel no need for legislation. The ancestral laws are their only guidance. According to the philosopher, *it is the most justifiable of all forms of kingship* [Plato, Leg., 679d].[15]

The second stage was connected with the lowering of water. As a result, the foot–hills become inhabitable, and agriculture became the basic occupation of men. Accordingly, some old technologies were restored or invented again. Small communities entered into large units. Their representatives, working as lawgivers, set up common laws and "[…] create out a sort of aristocracy, or perhaps kingship" [Plato, Leg., 681d].[16]

The third stage began when men descend from the hills to the plains and build their cities "[…] on hills of moderate height near several rivers" [Plato, Leg., 682b]. These inland societies continued living under monarchy but the conditions had essentially been changed. Citizens

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[15] The epic and philosophical tradition of Greeks frequently compared this condition with the Golden Age of Cronus. It was believed that under his rule all creations lived in happiness [Hesiod, Theog., 154–166; Plato, Crat., 420b]. See **Dillon**, 1992, 21–36.

[16] Presumably, each of them was estimated as *a kingly man* (ἀνήρ βασιλικός). Under this term, the authors of the Classical age meant first their moral qualities based on virtue and altruism. This understanding was effective after tyranny; high standards were sought in *admiring others* (Herodotus, Xenophon) and *remote kings* (Aeschylus, Thucydides, Plato) Cf. **Price**, 1997, 371–373; **Mitchell**, 2015, 188–191; **Mitchell**, 2019, 453–464.

were accustomed to a life based on various technologies
and money. Moreover, they lost the memory of the former
catastrophe and *took to ships*. Plato finds these changes
in Troy and the Achaean cities. Their social structure
and political regimes faced serious corruption over time.
The younger generation revolted, giving rise to murder,
massacre, and expulsion for the sake of its material inte-
rests [Plato, Leg., 682e]. In other words, inland societies
became subject to corruption.[17]

Further discussion shows that Plato links this with the
disturbance of social balance when bodily pleasure, mate-
rial goods, and wealth were valued more than self–con-
trol, temperance (φρόνεσις καὶ σωφροσύνη), and other
spiritual values [Plato, Leg., 697b]. In Greece, this opened
the way for the Dorian tribes who invaded from the northern
regions, conquered the Achaean centers and tried to
restore the lost stability. However, this was an impossi-
ble task, and their new states declined again in the face of
corruption.[18]

According to Plato, the Persians were the most typi-
cal example of inland societal corruption. Their state was
founded by Cyrus, who made efforts to combine liberty
and subjugation: "[…] after gaining their freedom they (the
Persians) became the masters of a great number of other
people. As a rule, they granted a degree of liberty to their
subjects and put them on the same footing as themselves"
[Plato, Leg., 694b]. However, this ideal start did not last.
It broke down under the king's successors, and even the
effective reforms of Darius I could not stop the process of
decay. Plato traces the cause of that in the fact that they
were educated in a *womanish manner* and had no ideas

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[17] According to the mentality of the Classical Age, this indicated
the state of tyranny. The tyrants were depicted in a negative light. Cf.
Boesche, 1996, 32–36.

[18] This gave rise to the Dark Age of Greek history. Cf. **Pomeroy**,
Donlan, **Burstein**, **Roberts**, 2004, 36–60.

about justice.[19] Under them, *corruption increased year by year*: "[…] they were too strict in depriving the people of liberty and too energetic in introducing authoritarian government, so that they destroyed all friendship and community in the state" [Plato, Leg., 697]. The decline of Achaemenid Empire was irreversible.

In Plato's mind, amongst inland dwellers, only the Spartans (following the Cretans) were successful in escaping corruption. They established a unique constitution aimed at the balance of the basic components of prosperous societies – property, social ranks, and authority [Plato, Leg., 691d – 692c]. It was particularly motivated by the fact that: "[…] rich man, poor man, commoner and king are held in honor to the same degree and are educated in the same way, without privilege" [Plato, Leg., 695b]. Using this as a basis, they reached the very rare balance of monarchy and liberty.[20] However, Spartan stability had a conservative character and was not inclined to reforms, making their social life vulnerable.

The fourth stage is represented by coastal city–communities. According to Plato's concept: "[Sea] fills the land with wholesaling and retailing, breeds shifty and deceitful habits in man's soul, and makes the citizens distrustful and hostile, not only among themselves, but also in their dealings with the world outside" [Plato, Leg., 705a]. In time, it becomes obvious that such a state has "[…] surrendered itself to the limitless acquisition of wealth and overstepped the boundaries of the necessity" [Plato, Rep.,

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[19] The author speaks about the magi, who occupied high social positions and (in particular) were the teachers of the *kingly art* (τὰ βασιλική). Cf. **Horky**, 2009, 69–73. Scholars believe that *Herodotus*' *Constitutional Debate* (*Herod., III, 80–82*) is the expression of this evolution. Cf. **Linderborg**, 2019, 5–7.

[20] Plato proceeds from a basic concept of ancient political philosophy, seeing in law (νόμος) the balance between *violence and justice* (βία καὶ δική). See **Agamben**, 1998, 24–29.

373e]. Limitlessness engenders tyranny, the worst form of government.[21]

According to the philosopher, the most eminent example of the sea communities was Athens with its democratic regime: "There are two mother–constitutions, so to speak, which you could fairly say have given birth to all of the others. Monarchy is the proper name for the first and democracy for the second. The former has been taken to the extreme by the Persians, the latter by my country [Athens] [Plato, Leg., 693d]".[22] Compared to other forms of social integrity, the sea–communities are corrupted rather easily because the *extreme liberty* is the worst condition for social justice and peace.[23] It is appropriate for everyday life based on various pleasures and affections.

Plato traces isomorphism between the human being and his social commonality. Both of them have a tripartite structure consisting of somatic, affective, and reasoning elements.[24] We have touched upon this problem before while highlighting that the dominance of pleasure gives evidence that reason has already lost its control over the given society. Under this influence, people degrade into a mob, and society shifts from democracy to ochlocracy.[25]

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[21] In his other treatise, *Statesman*, Plato recognizes only two opposite époques of Cronos and of Zeus when highlighting the differences between the golden and human histories. See **Horn**, 2012, 405–413.

[22] Certainly, this is an echo of the same *Constitutional Debate* described by Herodotus. See **Linderborg**, 2018, 125–139. Plato emphasizes the role of the temperance in preserving of the balance between the two extremes. **Domarski**, 2003, 11–12.

[23] Scholars trace this theory from Hesiod's mythical tale about the regress of mankind from the Golden age to the Iron age. Cf. **Dombrowski**, 1981, 142.

[24] This is credited to be one of the fundamental ontological concepts of Plato. Cf. **Ferrari**, 2005, 59–64.

[25] This common shift of society is believed to give rise to the theory of Aristotle of the decline of the correct political forms (ὀρθαί πολιτεῖαι) –

However, the situation is salvageable with good education. Following Socrates, Plato states: "[…] all human actions are motivated by a set of three needs and desires. Give a man a correct education, and these instincts will lead him to virtue, but educate him badly and he'll end up at the other extreme" [Plato, Leg., 682e].[26] Educated men obtain abilities to overcome social disasters by means of innovations: "If it isn't pressures of war that overturn a constitution and rewrite the laws, it is the distress of grinding poverty; and disease too forces us to make a great many innovations, when plagues beset us for years on end and bad weather is frequent and prolonged […]" [Plato, Leg., 709a].[27] Plato believes in the capacity of innovations to influence the course of history and outlines the conditional (*should be*) perspective of the recent period of Greek history. Criticizing extreme democracy, he states: "But if anyone had seen all this then, and had been able to curtail the various offices and produce a single authority out of three, he would have saved all the splendid projects of that age from destruction, and neither the Persians, nor anyone else would ever have sent a fleet to attack Greece, contemptuously supposing that we were a people who counted for very little" [Plato, Leg., 692c].[28]

kingship, aristocracy, and polity, to their anti–forms (tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy). In other words, Aristotle does not consider democracy a correct political regime. [Aristot., Polit., III, 7, 1289a, 38]. Polybius applied this understanding to general world history. [Polyb., VI, 2–11]. Cf. **Walbank**, 1943, 73–89; **Mulgan**, 1977, 60–77.

[26] **McCabe**, 1997, 94–117.

[27] In an essential sense, the isomorphism is traceable between the narratives, citizens, and ideal city structures molded in accordance with the harmony of the three basic functions of the soul. **Saxonhouse**, 1991, 134–135.

[28] As noted above, Plato links the possibility of *improving history* with temperance (σωφροσύνη) – one of the fundamental virtues of true citizens. See **Bury**, 1951, 86–93; **North**, 1966, 195–196.

Although very important, the innovations are however unable to stop the decline of society in absolute sense, for it is a part of the visible cosmos and subject to periodic catastrophes. In other words, total social corruption is inevitable, and it indicates the cyclic growth of universal chaos connected with the movement of the cosmos in opposite directions: "[…] there occur at that time cases of destruction of other living creatures on a very large scale, and humankind itself survives only in small numbers" [Plato, Polit., 270d].[29] This is the end of one cosmic age and the starting point of another. In this way, according to Plato, the Demiurge saves his creatures from evil and gives a chance for the rebirth of the virtuosity of mankind. In other words, the catastrophes are used by the Demiurge to improve the world.[30]

2. Eastern intellectual tradition

a. Philo of Alexandria

We decided to discuss this tradition for the first time within the scope of the intellectual system of Philo of Alexandria who adopted the data of western philosophical thought to interpret the biblical subjects and wisdom.[31] For the present investigation, his treatises *On the Creation*, *On Abraham*, and *On the Life of Moses* are thought of special interest.[32]

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[29] Cf. **Price**, 1997, 371–373.

[30] Plato's theory of cosmic catastrophes has been discussed above. Now, its connection with Natural Law gains importance. See **Price**, 1997, 381–384; cf. **Gill**, 1979, 152–154.

[31] Modern scholars pursue a very old and essential connection between the Eastern and Western traditions concerning the problem of cosmic cycles. In this respect, they see a particular importance in the text of Hurrian epic *Song of Ullikummi*, preserved in Hittite translation. Like Hesiod, it tells about the sequence of the four generations of gods and their cosmic entourages. See **Güterböck**, 1951, 138–140.

[32] On this problem, see **Sterling**, 1993, 97–99; **Runia**, 2009, 133–144.

In his interpretation of Genesis, Philo also tells about the catastrophes in the world history while stating the following: "[…] there are ten thousand other matters also introduced which refer to peace and war, or fertility and barrenness, or hunger and plenty, or to the terrible destructions which have taken place on the earth by the agency of fire and water" [Philo, Abr., I, 1].[33] Two kinds of catastrophes are distinguishable in the text of the author – global and local. The first is exemplified by Deluge, the second by the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. In both cases, the catastrophes are said to be caused by physical, social, and moral corruption.[34]

Proceeding from Platonic concepts, Philo traces apparent parallels between the universe and the social integrity of men: "God, being minded to unite in intimate and loving fellowship the beginning and end of his created things, made heaven the beginning and man the end, the one the most perfect of imperishable objects of sense, the other the noblest of things earthborn and perishable, being, in very truth, a miniature heaven (βραχόν οὐρανῶν)" [Philo, Op., XXVII, 82].[35] Later, the author describes the "heaven–earth" relationship more precisely: "[…] in accordance with a certain natural sympathy, the things of earth depend on the things of heaven […]" [Philo, Op., XL, 117].[36]

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[33] As noted above, before Plato, this concept was elaborated in detail by Heraclites and the Stoics. See **Runia**, 1986, 456–458, 480–484; **White**, 2003, 128–130.

[34] On the parallels between the Greek and biblical comprehensions of cosmology and periodic catastrophes, see **Calabi**, 2007, 7–16; cf. **Runia**, 1986, 80–84.

[35] Like Plato, Philo assumes this due to the renowned concept of the isomorphism of the human being and the cosmos. See **Runia**, 1986, 458–460; **Reydams–Schils**, 2008, 169–196; cf. 181–182.

[36] In this all–incising sympathy, Logos plays the role of divine mediator between the heaven and earth. See in detail, **Winston**, 2010, 241–244.

According to Philo, such an ideal situation is apparent under the guidance of Moses. Through his laws, the biblical patriarch established a *sui generis* balance between Jewish society and Natural Law – *the right order and hierarchy of the universe*. The Mosaic laws were introduced: "[…] under the idea that the law corresponds to the world and world to the law, being, by so doing, a citizen of the world, arranges his actions with reference to the intention of nature, in harmony with which the whole universal world is regulated" [Philo, Op., I, 3].[37] In other words, contrary to the laws of other societies, Mosaic laws were not conventional, and cosmic perspective provided them with the potency to remain forever "[…] firm and lasting from the day on which they were first promulgated to the present one, and there may well be a hope that they will remain to all future time, as being immortal one, as long as the sun and the moon, and whole heaven and the whole world shall endure" [Philo, Mos., III, 14]. This concerns: "[…] not only the Jews, but also almost other nations, and especially those who make the greatest account of virtue, have dedicated themselves to embrace and honor them" [Philo, Mos., II, 4, 17].[38]

Moses represents the ruler's ideal to be emulated by all righteous kings: "It becomes a king to command what ought to be done, and prohibition of what ought not to be done, belongs especially to the law, so that the king is at once a living law (νόμος ἔμψυχος), and the law is a just king" [Philo, Mos., II, 1, 4].[39] Through the Mosaic

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[37] About the interpretation of this fragment on the background of Philo's ontology and legal theory, see **Najman** 1999, 57–65.

[38] On Philo's theory of Natural Law, see **Horsley**, 1978, 37–40.

[39] The concept of the *living law* was very popular in Hellenistic political philosophy. On the principal role of kings in harmonizing Hellenistic society through God's guidance, see **Goodenough**, 1928, 63–65; **Gruen**, 1996, 116–120. On the Philo's experience, see **Runia**, 1988, 53–56; **Oertelt**, 2015, 37–56. See also the Chapter 4.

laws, the kings receive the divine mandate of authority.[40]
According to Philo, this is the principal guarantee for
social peace and prosperity.

The opposite pole is connected with social corruption
that begins with the decline of morality and justice.[41] This
situation usually goes with thorough abundance and luxury.
The most obvious example is Sodom, the country of fertile
soil, well–watered, with an abundance of every kind of fruit.
However, at the same time, it is "[…] full of innumerable
iniquities, and especially of gluttony and debauchery, and all
the great and numerous pleasures of other kinds which have
been built up by men as a fortress" [Philo, Abr., XXVI, 133].
In a word, men live under somatic and affective impulses,
forgetting about high values and ideals. This causes disorder
and anarchy, egoism, and strife paving the way for tyranny
in its various forms. The tyrant "[…] by his own nature is
hostile, is, in the case of cities, a man, but in the case of body
and soul, and all transactions having reference to either, he
is a mind resembling the true beasts, besieging the govern-
ments and authority" [Philo, Agr., XI, 46].[42]

Over time the tyrannical desire envelopes both indi-
viduals and societies, being aimed at "[…] the excessive
indulgence of the body, and some superfluity of external
things" [Philo, Post., XXXIV, 117].[43] This is against the

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[40] In terms of spirituality, they incorporate the virtues of the heavenly
man who is close to God in his thoughts and behavior. See **Wedderburn**,
1973, 304–313.

[41] Social corruption begins from the corruption of the private souls.
It is a private manifestation of the renowned principle of anthropomor-
phism. See **Zeller**, 1995, 21–23.

[42] On the social and moral aspects of tyranny in Hellenistic political
theory and Philo of Alexandria, see **Hart**, 1904, 118–119; **Goodenough**,
1928, 57–59; **Runia**, 2000, 368–369.

[43] Scholars think that the biblical *Ten Commandments* interpreted
in Hellenistic terms were in the reverse perspective of Philo. See
Svebakken, 2012, 71–78.

will of the omnipotent God since: "[…] a father is anxious for the life of his children, and a workman aims at the duration of his works, and employs every device imaginable to ward off everything that is pernicious or injurious, and is desirous by every means in his power to provide everything which is useful or profitable for them" [Philo, Op., II, 10].[44]

There are two ways to prevent this destruction. One of them demands the restoration of social and moral harmony by the means of education.[45] Through the observable motion of stars, God gives signs to men: "[…] what is about to happen, the productiveness or unproductiveness of the crops, the birth or loss of their cattle, fine weather or cloudy weather, calm and violent storms of winds, floods in the rivers or droughts, a tranquil state of the sea and heavy waves […]" [Philo, Op., XIX, 58]. The role of the elite is to understand and interpret these signs. For this purpose, the elite must possess, on the one hand, wisdom: "[…] the knowledge of all divine things and of the respective causes of them" [Philo, Congr., XIV, 79]. On the other hand, it must possess philosophy which is *the path of reason and life in accordance with nature* [Philo, Migr., XXIII, 128]. Divine and human values engender the four basic moral virtues, the guiding principles of both righteous men and societies: wisdom, self–control, courage, and justice.[46]

The other way is instrumental when decay reaches its apex. God's intervention becomes inevitable to save mankind or part of it. He acts through heaven and earth:

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[44] See **Hart**, 1904, 95–97; **Runia**, 1988, 57–63.

[45] Education has the goal of supporting the adept in his ascension to God. Philo sees the best form of it in the combination of Greek wisdom (encyclia) and Jewish spiritual experience (hokhmah yewanit). **Mendelson**, 1982, 68–69; Cf. **Koskenniemi**, 2014, 107–121; **Koskenniemi**, 2019, 17–19.

[46] Philo also names these virtues *the royal road* since they were believed to lead to God. See **Hart**, 1904, 93; **Sterling**, 2014, 153–154.

"[…] both earth and heaven, which are the first princi-
ples of the universe, bore their share in the punishment
of these wicked men, for they had rooted their wicked-
ness in the earth, and extended it up to the sky, raising it
to that vast height" [Philo, Abr., II, 50]. The first visible
result of that, according to the author, is the breach of the
regular sequence of the seasons: "[…] unusual changes
in the seasons of the year when either summer is cold
like winter, or winter warm, or when spring assumes the
temperature of autumn or autumn that of spring" [Philo,
Op., XIX, 58].[47]

This passage should be considered in contrast to the
first generation of men who, by the words of Plato, lived
under god's guidance, while having no political consti-
tution: "[…] they had an abundance of fruits from trees
and other plants, which grew not through cultivation but
because the earth sent them up of its accord […] *for the
blend of the seasons was without painful extremes*" [Plato,
Polit., 272a]. As for the social corruption, it is, on the con-
trary, compared with natural disasters: "[…] when plagues
beset us for years on end and bad weather is frequent and
prolonged" [Plato, Leg., 709a].

As it has been noted above, these changes entail flood
and fire, war and social strife, which are thought to be:
"[…] divinely sent attacks because of their (men's) new
and strange practices or wrongs and all the impieties they
used to commit through their great efforts to demolish
the Law of Nature (νόμος τῆς φυσέως)" [Philo, Spec.,
II, 170]. God's punishment takes the shape of scarcity of
crops and fruits, bodily diseases and wars, destruction of

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[47] More precisely, God acts through the cosmic Logos which in its
turn acts through heaven and earth. **McIver**, 1988, 268–274. On the
cosmos and its repeated rhythms as an *open book* for advanced men to
comprehend God's global mind and will, see **Runia**, 1986, 458–460.
On the influence of this viewpoint on the Khorenatsi's *Lament*, see
Stepanyan, 2006, 250–251; **Stepanyan**, 2009, 184–185.

cities, and enslavement of citizens.[48] They are used by
God to improve men, cities, countries, and nations who:
"[…] shall see no one left of those who destroyed their
grandeur and beauty, but shall behold the market–places
all free from their tumults, and wars, and acts of iniquity,
and full of tranquility, and peace, and justice" [Philo, De
praem., XXVII, 157]. In short, the Creator's plan is to give
a new start to his creations, saving their achievements and
destroying failure and corruption. This emphasizes the
significance of the catastrophes in both local and global
senses.[49]

b. Early Christian intellectuals

Philo exercised an undeniable influence on early
Christian thought. Scholars trace his ideas especially in the
Gospels of John, Mark, Mathew, and the Letters of Paul.[50]
The essential discussion of the problem demonstrates the
concept of cosmic catastrophes worked out by the early
Christian intellectuals in accordance with the doctrine of
the New Testament.

In this regard, a well–known passage of the Gospel of
Mark is frequently cited. Concerning the destruction of the
old world order for the forthcoming Christian era, it states
the following: "[…] the sun will be darkened, and the
moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken" [Mk, 13: 24–26;
cf. Mt, 24: 29; Lk., 21: 25–27]. Other texts of the New

[48] The adequate reward of the Lord is considered the essential
principle of cosmic and social balance. See **Carson**, 1981, 150 158;
Mendelson, 1997, 107–110; **Calabi**, 2007, 113–117.

[49] In other words, Philo entirely shares the concept of the Stoics and
Plato about God's intention to lead the world to perfection. See **Runia**,
1986, 480–484; **Long**, 2008, 127–130.

[50] On the problem of Philo's influence on the New Testament and
its numerous interpretations, see in detail **Morgan**, 1998, 114–128;
Bekken, 2014, 226–237.

Testament repeat the fragment with more or less exactness
[Heb., 1: 10–12; Pet., 3: 5–13; Rev., 20: 11, 21, 1 etc.].[51]

Scholars believe that these texts are based on the *stereo-
types* worked out in prophetic texts of the Old Testament.[52]
And first of all, they exemplify the oracle of Isaiah on the
destruction of Babylon: "See, the day of Lord is coming
[…]. The stars of heaven and their constellations will not
show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and moon
will not give its light, I will punish the world for its evil"
[Is., 13: 9–11].

This and similar texts contain retrospective references
on the global and local destructions of the world order.
Global destruction happened by the will of the Lord who
saw the wickedness of men and decided: "I will wipe man-
kind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth – men
and animals, and creatures that move along the ground,
and birds of the air – for I am grieved that I have made
them" [Ge., 6: 7].[53] However, He caused the Great Flood
not only for punishing and eliminating the old sinful world
but also to give it a new start through Noah and his descen-
dants.[54] As for local destruction, Sodom and Gomorrah
demonstrate a relevant example of that: "Then the Lord
rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah –
from the Lord out of the heaven. Thus, he overthrew those
cities and the entire plain, including all those living in

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[51] On the problem of global catastrophe in the New Testament and its
interpretations, see **Adams**, 2007, 5–7.

[52] The language clichés are considered a repository for composing
an essential unity from the great diversity of biblical texts. Cf. **Caird**,
1980, 253–254.

[53] Paradoxically, destruction narratives make up an important feature
of the prophetic style of thinking aimed at the overcoming of destruc-
tion (historical or imagined). Cf. **Wilson**, 1998, 115–118.

[54] They had to form the *People of God*. On this new interpretation of
the old concept, see **Wright**, 1992, 299–300. However, this assumption
is present in Plato. See **Vidal–Naquet**, 1978, 132–141.

the cities – and also the vegetation in the land" [Ge., 19: 24–25]. Only the righteous Lot and his daughters escaped.

> *Both forms of destruction, let it be noted again, are instrumental for the Lord in improving the world order and mankind. At the same time, they make up the two aspects of the bifocal vision of the prophetic narrative: "With their near sight, they (the prophets) foresaw an imminent historical event. With their long sight, they saw the final end. They imposed one image on the other to produce a synthetic picture".[55] In other words, the eternal and historical dimensions of time are interwoven. Due to that, dualistic cosmology is excluded because God is eternal, whereas his creations (the heaven and earth) undergo corruption and death: "Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same, and your years will never end" [Ps., 102: 26–27]. This makes up the essence of creational monotheism.[56]*

However, before striking the world, the Lord had taken steps to improve the extreme situation of decay and wickedness: "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse" [Mal., 4: 5–6].

The same idea is apparent in the expectations of Jesus' time: "Elijah comes and will restore all things" [Mt., 17: 11]. Righteous men will be the witnesses of the birth of the new heaven and earth: "They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other" [Mt., 24: 30–31].[57] The Lord is beneficent to men: "For we are

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[55] See **Caird**, 1980, 254; cf. **Wright**, 2001, 184–185.

[56] **Wright**, 1999, 9–14.

[57] **Wright**, 1999, 19–21.

God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which He prepared in advance for us to do" [Paul, Ephes., 2: 10]. The heavenly Jerusalem must be the real manifestation of the world's improvement and salvation: "[…] the Jerusalem that is above, is free, and she is our mother" [Paul, Galat., 4: 26].[58]

The apogee of the world's recurrence is believed to be Doom's Day. This concept, adopted from the Zoroastrian eschatology, is designed to define the beginning of the new great cosmic Age.[59] The Lord is the only Lawgiver and Judge: "He will sit and judge all the nations on every side" [Joel, 3: 12], "He will judge the world in righteousness" [Ps., 9: 8], "He will judge the living and the dead" [2 Ti., 4: 1].

The biblical experience has been interpreted in various ways by Christian intellectuals. Scholars highlight the role of Origen of Alexandria.[60] Eusebius of Caesarea is considered his close adherent who, in his turn, greatly influenced the eminent Cappadocian fathers – Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian – who are distinguished for their holistic assumption of the cosmic Age.[61] They exerted an undeniable influence on the Armenian Christian tradition as well. According to it, the cosmic Age is marked with the common cyclic movement from the first Day of Creation

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[58] The early biblical intellectuals elaborated the concept of heavenly Jerusalem to be embodied in the earthly Jerusalem by the collaboration of the Lord and his pious believers. See **Frankfurter**, 1996, 129–131.

[59] On the Zoroastrian eschatological purification in the days of *Frašegird*, see **Dhalla**, 1938, 108–113; **Zaehner**, 1961, 315–321; **Boyce**, 1979, 27. On the Influence of this concept on Christian eschatology, see **Barr**, 1985, 226–235; **Shaked**, 1998, 567–569.

[60] See **Tsamalikos**, 2006, 292–295.

[61] This assumption was in harmonic connection with the worldview system of the Cappadocian fathers and gave it its *stylistic peculiarity*. See **Otis**, 1958, 98–104.

to the last Day of Judgment [Basil, Hex., 2, 8, 35].[62] It demonstrates the common origin, rhythm, and purpose of the cosmos, uniting all the heavenly and earthly, social and biological, astronomical and mineral aspects of life.[63] Two existential transfigurations are noteworthy in the cosmic movement displayed in the two covenants of the Old and New Testaments – Mosaic and Christian. They complement each other when uniting history and cosmos in a single general development [Gr. Naz., Quint. Theol., Ser., 25, 136].[64]

Nevertheless, the Cappadocian intellectuals have overlooked two principal problems of cosmology, while making (sometimes polar) interpretations: *a*. whether the Lord will bring back the world to its exact departing point or will he restore it on a new physical, social, and moral basis?, *b*. who will enjoy the Lord's mercy – the righteous men only, or the wicked men also to repent and have a chance of release from evil and sin?[65]

3. The aiōn *perception in the epic* Sasna Tsṙer

It seems more relevant to begin the illustration of the Armenian aspect from the epic *Sasna Tsṙer* (*Daredevils*

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[62] Between these poles is the historical duration of the universe and mankind, the central event of which is considered to be Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. See **Baghos**, 2010, 88–91.

[63] This concept of Basil reached back to the early natural philosophy of the Greeks, the best manifestation of which is the global system of Heraclites and the Stoics. Emanation of the cosmic potency (Light, Fire, Logos, Pneuma) is credited to be the effective form of connection of all layers of cosmos. See **Castache**, 2010, 27–29.

[64] Scholars think that this continuity was established on the foundation of the Classical and Hellenistic nature–philosophical tradition. Cf. **Baghos**, 2010, 85–86; **Chadwick**, 1996, 122–123.

[65] Cf. **Otis**, 1958, 112–113. To resolve the last contradiction, Christian theology (during centuries) worked out the theory of Purgatory.

of Sassoun). As a heroic epic tale, it was composed in the Middle Ages – in the period of the Arab domination of Armenia, 7th – 9th centuries.[66] However, it contains many details and narrative blocks dating back to remote antiquity. We suppose even motifs of the Proto Indo–European age may be present in it.[67]

The observations of the narrative system of the *Epic* demonstrate that it represents a cyclic movement, the beginning and ending points of which are marked with chaotic situations. In the first case, it is the *Salt Sea*, in the final case, the barren earth unable to bear the weight of heroes.[68] In other words, the rhythm *from chaos to chaos* is dominant in *Sasna Tsṙer*.

The initial chaos is depicted on the occasion of the marriage of the young Armenian princess Tsovinar to the Caliph of Baghdad. Before the wedding, she visits the lovely places of her homeland. After long wandering, she comes to the *Salt Sea*, tired and thirsty. This is the real beginning of the narrative. By God's order, a milk fountain bursts out from a sea rock. The princess enters the sea, comes up to the fountain and drinks two handfuls of water. She conceives and later gives birth to the first generation of Sassoun heroes (saviors) – Sanasar and Baghdasar.

> *This subject shows obvious parallels with the Zoroastrian tradition, according to which the corrupted world will be saved by three saviors of the seed of Zoroaster preserved in Kayansah Lake: "As regards these three sons of Zartosht such as Ushedar,*

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[66] See **DS** (Surmelian), 1964.

[67] More precisely, the problem is to be interpreted in the context of the Near Eastern intellectual experience as well. It is believed that the Armenian experience can be interpreted and explained only in this case. On this aspect, see **Petrosyan**, 2002, 5–48.

[68] Essentially, it is about the two basic elements of the universe – water and earth – which have lost their vital qualities, indicating global destruction. See **Stepanyan**, 1991, 52.

Ushedarmah, and Soshyant, one says, "Before Zartosht wedded,
they had consigned the seed of Zartosht for preservation, in the
sea Kayansah, to the glory of the waters, that is to the Yazad
Anahit." [...] It will so happen that a virgin will go to the water
of Kayansah in order to wash her head; the seed will mingle
with her body, and she will be pregnant. They will one–by–one
be born thus in their own cycle" [Zend Avesta, Bundahishn,
XXXIII, 36–38; cf. Yasht, XIX, 92; Yasna, XLVIII, 11–12].[69]
Apparently, the Zoroastrian texts are about Frašegird, the
period of world's spiritual history when righteous believers
would be judged by Ahura Mazda and obtain their spiritual
body (Pahlavi, tan i pasen).[70]

As for the last form of chaos, according to the Epic, it
comes into being in the days of Meher the Junior, the last
epic hero. As a result of social corruption, cosmic decay
starts when the earth, losing its strength crumbles under
the last hero. The hero and his horse sink in it deeper and
deeper. He does not know what he shall do to escape the
disaster. Despaired, he turns to his dead parents, David and
Khandut, who advise him from the underworld:

"Safe in Raven's Rock. Go to Raven's Rock,
That's the door to knock. Wait till Judgment Day,
The end of this world.
It will be destroyed, and a new world will be built
To support the feet of your horse."[71]

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[69] See **TSSZ (Boyce)**, 1984, 90–91.

[70] On these expectations see **de Yong**, 1997, 327–330; **Hartz**, 1999,
97–99.

[71] **DS (Surmelian)**, 1964, 245. This fragment of the *Epic* attests that
the layer under consideration also reflected eschatological expecta-
tions. Moreover, it mingled Zoroastrian and Christian eschatological
concepts, bridging the spiritual way of the Armenians from one reli-
gious system to the other.

Between the two poles of chaos, the epic narrative develops in strict accordance with a *sociological perception* that shows undeniable parallels with that of Plato. We imply that the aforementioned concept of social decay from mountain summits to valleys. Indeed, the Armenian *Epic* also represents three forms of social integrity.[72]

The first form is embodied by Sassoun, a highland region of Armenia inhabited by hunters and flock herders. Their society is depicted as utopian. Communal interests absolutely prevail over private interests. The inhabitants of Sassoun make up agnatic groups (families, clans) and believe that they are brothers and sisters. They do not appreciate property and fortune but highly value social values such as liberty, justice, and equity. They live a primitive life and possess what makes the ultimate necessity. Their intersocial relations are regulated by ancestral legal habits and moral norms (*mos maiorum*). The hero–rulers practice the authority of family father (despot) for whom the biggest duty and honor is to care about their subjects. They are true shepherd–benefactors and people trust them entirely – Sanasar, Meher the Elder, David, and Meher the Junior. In decision–making activity, they proceed from the advice of the council of elders and consider the will of the people (Assembly).[73]

The only exception in this primary unanimity is Paṙav (Old Woman), who lives farming her millet field. She is depicted as a marginal person. In her youth, she was the mistress of Meher the Elder and infringed upon the sacred order of the Sassounian exogamy. Her lame daughter is an illegitimate child.

The second form is characteristic of agricultural societies. They inhabit hill slopes and plains, tilling the soil with plows yoked with oxen. As a rule, they cultivate

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[72] About the civilization background of this division, see **Demirdjian** 2010, 13–17.

[73] **Stepanyan**, 1991, 44–45.

grains – wheat, barley, and millet. They are skilled in agronomy. According to the epic axiology, they are smart, industrious, and moderate. At the same time, however, they are bestowed with some negative characters – duplicity, intricacy, and egoism. The farmers are acquainted with silver, gold, and market principles of exchange. Their intersocial relations are based on rational principles and strict laws. They live under monarchs who have already instituted government offices – court, administration, and military guard. The epic narrative demonstrates this using the examples of Khlat, Kaputkogh, Bitlis, and other kingdoms.[74]

The *Epic* also traces the antagonism between the hunters and shepherds and the farmers. From this point of view, one of its passages is very distinctive. It is preserved only in some versions of the narrative and represents the following scene. The hero David, making his way from Sassoun to the village Dashtu Padrial, watches some farmers making furrows with plows. He does not understand the meaning of the work and asks them to tell him about it. Hearing their explanation and yoking his horse and (even) himself to the plow, he tills the field in a short time. However, he does not believe that such *unserious work* is able to feed men. Upon his departure, he takes his miraculous sword and breaks the plow.

The third form displays a society which is ultimately opposite to that of Sassoun. It is represented by the Arabs and their king Msra Melik, the irreconcilable adversaries of the Armenians. The *Epic* depicts them predominantly as the citizens of the capital of Mser (Baghdad), who spend their time in idleness and luxury. They do not like hard work and producing material goods, but often wage wars against the neighboring countries, looting their fields and herds, villages and towns. Msra Melik subjugates the other nations and forces them to pay heavy tributes. The soci-

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[74] **Stepanyan**, 1991, 45–46.

ety of the Arabs is corrupted by silver and gold. Gluttony, low affections, and selfishness are their main qualities. As a result, their intersocial relations are based on injustice, transgression, and cruelty. The focus of all these (and similar) negative qualities is the person of Msra Melik, who reigns as a tyrant. His will is law for his court and empire. His goal is to become the most powerful and wealthy ruler of the world.[75]

According to the Epic, the corruption of Arab society is able to expand and seize the other countries and societies. The overall decline will come to influence Armenia as well. This prediction, as it has been demonstrated above, comes true in the days of the last epic hero Meher the Junior, when the cosmos and society lose their constructive forces. It is believed to be the end of the given cosmic *aiōn*, paving the way for a new one based on entirely different principles: "A grain of wheat will be as big as the berry of sweet–briar, and a grain of barley will grow to the size of a hazel–nut." This transmission will take place in accordance with the will of the Lord or Fate. Secluded in the Raven's Rock, the last hero is merely a passive observer. In other words, the cycle of catastrophe has come to its fatal end.[76]

4. The aiōn *concept of Moses Khorenatsi*

The author sees one of the cardinal problems of his *History of the Armenians* in linking local (Armenian) his-

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[75] In other words, the *pure sociological insight* has been colored with national self–estimation. The Armenians depict themselves with high social and moral qualities while lowering their adversaries extremely. Undoubtedly, this is an element of that layer of the *Epic* which has been compiled in the age of the anti–Arab struggle in the 7th – 9th centuries. See **Orbeli**, 1956, 9–10; **Harut'yunyan**, 1981, XXVI – XXVIII.

[76] **Stepanyan**, 1988, 164.

tory with global history.[77] For this purpose, he uses first the biblical narrative of the world creation as it is depicted in *The Book of Genesi*s. The focus is on the story of human generations starting from Adam and the original sin causing the expulsion from the Garden and from God [Khor., I, 4,]. The list of the patriarchs begins from Adam and ends at Lamech when evil gradually began to dominate over mankind.

a. The cataclysmic algorithm of history

The Lord decided "[…] to stop the impiety and evil by annihilation of the infamous men of the second age" [Gen., 5: 29]. Evil was washed away by the Flood. The pious Noah and his family were the mere men to be spared to give a new start to mankind.

This biblical story is utilized by Khorenatsi to introduce Armenian history into the universal biblical historical tradition. For this purpose, the author produces his version of the list of Noah's descendants – Sem, Ham, and Japheth. He believes that the Armenians come from Japheth and, in support of this idea, he analyzes the genealogy: "Yapheth begat Gomer, Gomer begat T'iras, T'iras begat Torgom, Torgom begat Hayk, Hayk begat Aramaneak, Aramaneak begat Aramayis, Aramayis begat Amasya, Amasya begat Gegham, Gegham begat Harmay, Harmay begat Aram, Aram begat Ara the Handsome" [Khor., I, 5, 27–37].[78] We

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[77] Scholars believe that, in this way, Khorenatsi was drawing from the experience of Eusebius of Caesarea who had already composed the diachronic and synchronic perspectives of biblical history in his renowned *Chronicle* and *Ecclesiastical History*. Cf. **Sargsyan**, 1991, 72–73.

[78] The crucial figure in this list is Hayk, the founder of Armenia, in real historical space and time. Cf. **Petrosyan**, 2009, 155–163. It must be also noted that in Early Medieval Armenia, a steady concept circulated that considered Torgom the ethnarch of the Armenians and calling the country the *House of Torgom* (տուն Թորգոմայ). On the ancient roots of this concept, see **Eremyan**, **Djakonov**, 1971, 195–196.

are not going to discuss the semantic code of this algorithm in detail: for now, it is important to emphasize the following fact – the formation of the Armenian nation, according to Khorenatsi, took place after the great cosmic catastrophe and it can be attributed to the third generation of mankind.[79] Another global catastrophe is mirrored at the end of Khorenatsi's historical narrative. Specifically, it makes up the essence of the '*Lament over the Removal of the Armenian Throne from the Arsacid family and of the Archbishopric from the Family of St. Gregory*' in the form of the following statement: "The winds bring snowstorms, burning heat, and pestilence, the clouds bring thunder and hail; the rains are unseasonable and useless; the air is very cold and causes frost, the rising of the waters is useless and their receding intolerable. The earth is barren of fruit and living creatures do not increase, but there are earthquakes and shakings" [Khor., III, 68,].[80] Namely, the end of Khorenatsi's narrative shows features of transition from the local (Armenian) catastrophe to the cosmic level. Taking after Philo, the author links these negative changes first with the break of the sequence of the seasons of the year: "Spring has become dry, summer very rainy, autumn like winter, and winter has become very icy, tempestuous and extended" [Ibid.].[81] The profound cause all of them,

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[79] Indeed, it is most probable that this genealogical list and the corresponding interpretation of the formative period of the Armenians had been drafted by the predecessors of Khorenatsi – unknown Christian intellectuals – with intention to justify the conversion of Armenia to Christianity in the context of Divine Providence.

[80] The cataclysmic perception made up a whole layer in the Armenian worldview. Moreover, it contained "une poétique de la catastrophe" which was observable for many centuries. See in detail, **Khachatryan**, 1969, 17–42; **Beledian**, 1995, 127–197.

[81] On the literal and semantic parallels of this passage with Philo's catastrophe description [Philo, Op., XIX, 58], see **Stepanyan**, 2006, 250–251.

like in the first case, is the social corruption that was caused by the Lord's decision to abandon the Armenians: "There is exile abroad for the nobility and innumerable outrages for the common people. Cities are captured and fortresses destroyed; towns are ruined and buildings burned. There are famines without end and every kind of illness and death. Piety has been forgotten and expectation is for hell" [Khor., III, 68, 40].[82]

Between the two poles of catastrophe, Khorenatsi compiles the history of the Armenians from the earliest times to the 5th century. His narrative is a plot with a beginning, development, and end. Together they encompass the entire duration of Armenian history as a *living thing* with its somatic, affective, and rational elements.[83] Their harmonic combination is believed to engender the *deeds of valor and wisdom* (գործք արութեան եւ իմաստից) of outstanding historical actors. Taken together, a linear perspective of the past, present, and (observable) future becomes apparent.[84]

Essentially, *deeds of valor* make up a particular pole of Khorenatsi's narrative. It is considered opposite to that of catastrophic deficiencies. It suggests that every significant event or personality is to be assessed in light of three opposite poles to maintain their profound historical and epistemological content and essence.[85] In other words, the *History of the Armenians* requires reader's intellectual sight to uncover its layers, which are usually sub–textual invisible for a *profane reader*.

In order to demonstrate this, it is necessary to take into consideration the following: in his *Lament*, Khorenatsi

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[82] The concept is generalized by K. Beledian. See **Beledian**, 1995, 138–140.

[83] Cf. **Ankersmit**, 1983, 82–89.

[84] **Stepanyan**, 2013, 5–7.

[85] At the same time, they make up the syntax of *historical happening* open for moral and historical interpretations. Cf. **White**, 1978, 170–173.

catalogs the main traits of the corruption of the Armenian society. For composing this catalog, Khorenatsi proceeds from the ideas (and phrases) of the great prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.[86] He compiles them in a strict logical consequence comprising all the classes of society, from kings to peasants.

At the same time, the author also uses Classical and Hellenistic philosophy to bring biblical ideas into *intellectual motion*. Here, we are referring to the Aristotelian theory and its adherents regarding the tripartite structure of every moral quality: two extremes (vices) – deficiency and excess (ἔλλειψις καὶ ὑπερβολή), and the mean or virtue (τὸ μέσον) [cf. Aristot., EN, 1180b, 10–35].[87] Correspondingly, in Khorenatsi, the extremes are concentrated in the passages that describe Primary Chaos and (especially) Final Destruction (the *Lament*). As for the means, they are to found in narrative blocks of the *History* regarding the vital conditions of human beings, families, state constitutions, and outstanding kings and heroes.

Concerning the chaotic natural conditions of the *Lament*, the text of *History* contraposes the temperance of climate of Great Armenia (բարեխառնութիւն = εὐκρασία). Regarding the description of Ayrarat, Khorenatsi states: "At the foot of the mountains gushed forth many limpid streams, which came together to form gentle rivers. At the borders by the base of the mountains and edges of the plain in their youthful course they flow like strolling maidens" [Khor., I, 12, 11]. The Assyrian queen Semiramis was charmed: "Seeing the beauty of the land, the purity of the air, the limpidity of the flowing streams, and murmuring of the smooth rivers" [Khor., I, 16, 3].

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[86] Khorenatsi names Jeremiah the main source of his tragic feelings. Cf. **Sargsyan**, 2006[2], 138.

[87] Aristotle considers the establishment of the mean as a complicated process based on the free will and choice of men. Cf. **Salkver**, 1990, 78–79, 116–117.

The temperance can also be resulted from creative actions of men.[88] King Vagharshak provides an example of that: "He returned northward to the foot of Parkhar in Tayk to the wet and foggy regions of forests and moss. To this land he gave a prettier form, reducing the mountainous and tropical terrain to a temperate and delightful climate for his royal resort" [Khor., II, 6, 5]. However, the experience of Artashēs the Middle seems most impressive. We have already cited this passage: "But it is said that in the time of Artashēs there was no land unworked in Armenia, neither of mountain nor plain, on account of the prosperity of the country" [Khor., II, 56, 5]. This was the result of the sciences, and arts of the time that had been introduced in Armenia by this king.[89]

As for the social components of the catastrophe, they are grouped in three anti–classes – the clergy (priesthood), the administrative and military elite, and the laity (producers). In this regard, let us note that their representatives are depicted by Khorenatsi as the bearers of deficiency and excess of the same moral qualities.

The first anti–class manifests itself in *the anti–intellect* embodied in teachers (վարդապետր), monks (կրաւնաւորք), bishops (վիճակաւորք), and students (աշակերտք). They are: "lovers of honor than lovers of God", "lovers of commerce and buffoonery", "lazy to study and eager to teach". But the lowest degree of the corruption is obvious in teachers who "[…] have become wolves (զայլբ եղեալ), tearing their own flocks" [Khor., III, 68, 30–33].[90]

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[88] This is quite in the line with the Aristotelian ethic theory which states that ethical virtues prepare the foundation for practical wisdom and appropriate action. See in detail, **Coope**, 2012, 145–156.

[89] Let us remind again that Khorenatsi's Artashēs the Middle shows numerous features of Artashēs I (189–160 BC.), well attested in antique authors. Cf. **Sargsyan**, 1966, 34–48; **Adontz**, 2009, 445–455; **Stepanyan**, 2018, 18–30.

[90] **Stepanyan A.**, 2009, 185–186.

In contrast to these images, in the text of his *History*, Khorenatsi paints numerous portraits of Armenian clericals who personify the intellectual mean: Gregory the Illuminator, Nersēs the Great, Sahak Partev. The description of Gregory the Illuminator seems more typical: "From the eastern regions of our land he arose as a true dawn, a spiritual ray of the divine sun, an escape from the profound evil of idolatry, the source of spiritual prosperity […]" [Khor., II, 91, 19].

The second anti–class is represented by the *anti–spirit* present in solders (զաւրականք), princes (իշխանք), and judges (դատաւորք). They are: "wicked, false boasters, hating weapons, cowards, and lovers of ease", "rebellious companions of thieves", "inhuman, false, and deceitful." The kings (թագաւորք) are on the top of this hierarchy and represent the worst form of corruption: "who are cruel and evil–doers, imposing heavy and onerous burdens and giving intolerable commands" [Khor., III, 68, 42].[91]

On the contrary, in the text of the *History*, there are numerous portraits of kings that personify the spiritual mean: Tigran Eurvandean, Vagharshak Arsacid, Artashēs the Middle, Trdat the Great, and others. Tigran Eurvandean: "He was just and equal in every judgment, and he weighed all the circumstances of each case impartially. He did not envy the noble nor did he despise the humble, but over all alike he spread the mantle of his care" [Khor., I, 24, 13–14]. Trdat the Great: "He chided and urged the greatest princes, and at the same time all the mass of the common people, to become true Christians so that the deeds of all might bear witness to the faith" [Khor., II, 92, 6].[92]

The third anti–class is manifested in the absolute somatic principle comprised of the laity (ժողովրդականք).

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[91] **Stepanyan A.**, 2009, 186–187.

[92] Their activity gives rise to the new concept of the *Armenian Homeland* based on the new rational and spiritual understandings of the time. See **Zekiyan**, 2000, 202.

Its description is short but very exact: "The laity are arrogant, insubordinate, blusters, loafers, topers, pernicious, and they flee their patrimonies" [Khor., III, 68, 34]. Like the other anti–classes, its members have entirely lost the noble feelings of love and shame.[93]

As for the harmony of the laity, Khorenatsi portrays it in the context of the innovations of Vagharshak Arsacid: "He ordered that the townspeople be more highly esteemed and honored than the peasants and the peasants should respect the townspeople like princes. But the townspeople were not to vaunt themselves too much over the peasants but to live on brotherly terms […]" [Khor., II, 8, 41].

In this regard, the following observation seems important. Unlike the *Epic*, tracing strict (vertical) antagonism between the sub–classes, Khorenatsi describes a new social concept when emphasizing the possibility of (though hierarchical but) symmetrical relationship among them: "[…] for the sake of harmony and life without rancor – which are the causes of prosperity and peace and similar [blessings]" [Ibid.].[94] This marks the ideal end of the social partnership of individuals, families, and social classes in accordance with God's will and prescripts. Certainly, such an understanding was engendered by the combination of the antique and biblical traditions in the context of Christian doctrine.

Undoubtedly, Khorenatsi followed this approach when harmonizing the two intellectual experiences in the context of his *Lament*. The technical interpretation of it demands *outer wisdom* (Aristotle's theory), while the essential interpretation is possible with the backdrop of *inner wisdom* (Jeremiah's lament). As we have noted, this combination made up the viewpoint of Neoplato-

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[93] **Stepanyan**, 2009, 187–188.

[94] The early Christian social ideal became more effective beginning in the 4th century with the wide expansion of the almsgiving practice and (particularly) the monastic lifestyle. Cf. **Grant**, 1977, 165–167.

nic Christianity adopted in Armenia under Cappadocian influence.[95]

b. Recovery

All this gives reason for formulating the *History of the Armenians* as a narrative based on internal dialogue with opposite poles (negative or positive events, actors and values) that are designed to be balanced in the *reverse perspective* of the intellectual reader. This balance was as much real as his (direct or indirect) acquaintance with the Aristotelian theory of moral excesses and the harmonic mean. We noted above that Aristotle was a very important *outer* author for the generation of Khorenatsi. As true Christian intellectuals, its members also paid attention to the biblical prophets and looked for a recipe to the problems of their time. Khorenatsi's call to Jeremiah was the best witness of that. In both cases, it was considered quite possible to avoid social corruption through intellectual experience.[96]

In this light, it seems worthy to recall the following fact: historical epistemology recognizes four levels of processing *rough historical material*: documentation, explanation, understanding and application (representation in writing and reading texts).[97] The highest level is thought achievable when the application gives way to the reworking of history as "its only instrument for seeking truth."[98] The self–reflection, self–estimation, and self–correction

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[95] See Chapter 1.

[96] Cf. **Jonker**, 2009, 197–218.

[97] Scholars sometimes consider this process the "domestication of the past." According to S. Wineburg, "By tying our own stories to those who have come before us, the past becomes a useful resource in our everyday life, an endless storehouse of raw materials to be shaped or bent to meet our present needs." **Wineburg**, 2006, 5.

[98] In other words, the truth in history is a long process with intermediate phases on the way to the final result. On this approach, see **Ricoeur**, 2004, 376–381.

of society find their ideals in the persons of outstanding ancestors and contemporaries. Together, they make up the historical perspective to be written down in facts, terms, and concepts.[99]

> *Scholars are unanimous that the text of Herodotus is addressed to the body of all citizens, whereas the addressees of Thucydides are the statesmen and intellectuals. The second approach was dominant in the Hellenistic age, when historical writings were usually composed at the royal courts while being designed to meet the interests of the elite groups. They were interested in both theoretical and (especially) practical aspects of history because their target was the improving of deficiencies of the given society.*[100]

From this point of discussion, another side of Khorenatsi's theory comes to the fore. It concerns the place of history (and the historian) in social axiology. The author keeps this problem in the spotlight of his discussion while dealing with the problem of molding the past into history.[101] Following the tradition going back to Plato and Philo, he attributes a great importance to historiography and believes it to indicate the level of civilization of every social and ethnic unit: "[…] when we read their account we become informed about the course of the world, and we learn about the state of civilization when we peruse such

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[99] They give rise to a narrative plot with important elements – the beginning, development, and end. It shows apparent common features with Aristotelian theory. Cf. **Ricoeur**, 1980, 174–175.

[100] Cf. **Hamiltom**, 1996, 9–10.

[101] From this point of view, H. White's definition of a historian's work seems more pertinent, which is to set up "[…] a verbal structure in the form of a prose discourse that classifies past structures and processes in order to explain what they were representing them as models". **White**, 1978, 3.

wise discourses and narratives – those of the Chaldeans, Assyrians, and Hellenes" [Khor., I, 3].[102]

Khorenatsi's ideas on the purposes and skills of historical narrative make up the theme of a special investigation. As for now, it seems quite sufficient to highlight some of the basic approaches of the author. The first concerns the parallelism of *historical memory* and *historical time*.[103] According to Khorenatsi, they are closely interrelated, and the absence of one entails the absence of the other. As it was noted, in the text of the *History*, the period from King Vahē to Vagharshak Arsacid was such a time: "From this point until the reign of Vagharshak in Armenia I have nothing very accurate to tell you, for there was confusion caused by factions and men rivaled each other for the control of our country" [Khor., I, 31, 15].

In terms of modern scholarship, Khorenatsi follows narrative realism when interpreting the past as a narrative that needs to be translated into *the language of historiography*.[104] The essence of this transformation is to replace the tangible images of memory with logical terms, structures, and concepts.[105] The author deals with these two levels proceeding from the case when the deeds of valor, wisdom, and good administration of the eminent historical actors (գործք արութեան, իմաստութեան եւ բարեկարգութեան) give rise to harmonic texts: "[…] in truth those kings are worthy of praise who in written accounts fixed and ordered the annals and wise acts and inscribed each one's valor in narratives and histories […]" [Khor., I, 3, 2].[106]

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[102] Typologically, this approach could be juxtaposed with the *within–time–ness* which represents the past interpreted and addressed in the *now*. See **Ricoeur**, 1980, 174.

[103] In spite of modernity, the ancient experience came from the equation of memory and history. See in detail **Nora**, 1989, 8–9.

[104] **Ankersmit**, 1983, 76; **Pitcher**, 2009, 97.

[105] **Le Goff**, 1981, 61–63.

[106] Similarly, the past was perceived as the sum of perfect or completed

However, narrative idealism is also present in the text of Khorenatsi. According to this approach, written texts are effective when they are regarding the perspective of history. In other words, the deductive influence of the text on the image of the past is one of the main features of historiography. To bring about this function, historical texts are to be based on exact facts and strict logical arguments and proofs. Only in this case is it possible to harmonize the memory of the past deeds (զիշատակս բանից = μνήμην τῶν πραγματῶν), paving the way to the legitimation of historical reconstructions.[107]

Among the important features of this legitimation is the faithfulness of the memory and strict duration of the narrative (շարախաւսութիւն, շարագրութիւն): "[…] to write the history of our nation in long and useful work, to deal accurately with the kings and the princely clans and families; who descended from whom, what each of one of them did, which of the various tribes are indigenous and native and which are of foreign origin but naturalized, to set down in writing each one's deeds and times from the time of confusion at the building of the tower up to the present […]" [Khor., I, 3, 10].[108] In this conjunction, the promise of the author sounds relevant: "But I shall begin to demonstrate you our [history] – *whence* and *how* [it developed]" [Khor., I, 7, 6]. In other words, the uninterrupted duration of the memory and narrative secures the stability of historical time.[109]

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actions deserving emulation. See **Le Goff**, 1981, 7–10.

[107] This is about collective memory: "No memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections". **Halbwachs**, 1992, 43. On the connection of historical memory and the process of the legitimation of history, see **Cassinari**, 2010, 37–46.

[108] In fact, in this account, Khorenatsi outlines the frame of his memory and historical narrative. Cf. **Assmann**, 2008, 112–113.

[109] Proposed by B. L. Zekiyan, this definition of the Early Medieval

The third important feature of legitimation is order. According to Khorenatsi, a true historian is occupied with ordering (զկարգն կանոնելով) the past [Khor., I, 22, 9]. This requires that the historical narrative to be set down in strict accordance with the aestheticism of the content and form: "This is an important chapter, full of reliable history and worthy of the most polished and detailed exposal (եւ արժանի ողորկագունից եւ յոյովից)" [Khor., II, 7, 1].[110]

To understand this assumption of Khorenatsi, one must bear in mind that Classical Greek axiology traced isomorphism between *justice*, *order*, *beauty*, *and truth* (δικαῖον, τάξις, καλόν καὶ ἀλήθεια).[111] Truth was the most important marker of this isomorphism, both in narrative and life: "[…] our account must be elegant and lucid, like Platonic works, far from falsehood and full of what opposes falsehood" [Khor., I, 32, 2].

A true historian must work with *beautiful and moderate desire* (գեղեցիկ եւ չափաւոր մղումբեամբ) [Khor., I, 1, 5]. This makes it quite possible to juxtapose his person with those of the eminent historical actors – kings and reformers, princes and priests. Following this assumption, let us note again, Khorenatsi traces the collaboration of the following pairs of outstanding figures who came to prominence in crucial periods of the Armenian history – Vagharshak Arsacid and Mar Abas Catina, Trdat the Great and Agathangelos, Prince Sahak Bagratuni and Moses Khorenatsi. They represent the political power and historical narrative united in complementarity.

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historian's work seems quite apparent: "L'historiographie est donc essentiellement une mnémographie". **Zekiyan**, 1987, 477.

[110] It must be kept in mind that *kalos* (beauty) and *agathos* (good) were knitted to each other (*kalokagathia*) in Greek ideology. The other virtues – wisdom, self–control, bravery etc. – were considered their derivations. Cf. **Halliwell**, 2002, 44–50; **Reid**, 2019, 80–84.

[111] **Price**, 1997, 381–384; **Cooper**, 1999, 82–83, 110–111.

Vagharshak Arsacid and the historian Mar Abas Catina are the best examples of this.[112] As has been pointed out, according to Khorenatsi, this Parthian prince ascended the throne of Armenia after a long period of confusion and saw his task in restoring peace and order. For this purpose, he made his mind to discover: "[…] who may have been those who ruled over the land of Armenia before me and whence the principalities that now exist here arose. For the orders of rank here are quite uncertain, as are the cults for the temples. It is not clear which is the first of the lords of this country and which is the last, nor is anything else regulated, but all is confused and uncivilized"[Khor., I, 9, 5].

For this purpose, the king found "a certain Syrian, Mar Abas Catina, a diligent man versed in Chaldean and Greek" who examined the royal archives and compiled the *History* of the Armenian race: "The personable and valiant Vagharshak, skilled archer, eloquent, and intelligent, received it and estimating it as the foremost of his treasures placed it in the palace, in safekeeping, with great care; and part of it he ordered to be inscribed on a stele" [Khor., I, 9, 13].[113]

This partnership has its symmetric correlate at the end of the *History*, represented by the *hazarapet* (the head of administration) of Persarmenia Sahak Bagratuni and the historian Moses Khorenatsi. They lived in the time of the final corruption of Armenian society described in the *Lament* and were anxious to restore its former glory, leaning upon the glorious images and ideas of the past.[114] The prince sponsored Khorenatsi to compose his work,

[112] **Beledian**, 1992, 116–119.

[113] In other words, the king hoped to promulgate important facts and ideas of Armenian history, making them the elements of social memory in both the sacral and rational senses. On these aspects in modern scholarship, see **Bolter**, 1991, 43–46.

[114] **Beledian**, 1992, 121.

and their *dialogue* passes through all the *History* is some-times marked by full consensus and peaceful conversa-tion, sometimes with disagreement and (even) irritation. However, they both understood the significance of his-tory for establishing social peace, order, and stability. Moreover, they intended to link this end with the idea of continuity of *the Armenian historical memory and time* from the earliest ages up to the present.

In Khorenatsi's estimation, this task was unprecedented and its initiator deserved to be praised very highly: "For if on account of our reason, as it is said, we are the image of God, and furthermore if the virtue of a rational being lies in intellection and you have an assiduous desire for these matters, then by keeping alive and aflame the spark of your intellect by such noble discernment, you ornament reason, whereby you remain the image. Thus, you may be said to make reason's archetype rejoice, being moved and stirred to this goal by a noble yet moderated passion" [Khor., I, 1, 2].[115]

These words, certainly, also contain some features of the author's self–estimation when intending to set forth the panorama of the Armenian past with his artistic skills and methods. For him, historical reflection is an effec-tive way for regaining life in accordance with Nature and God's will. It is worth recalling that the author saw the cause of global social corruption of his time in the fact that: "Reverence for God has been forgotten (մոռացեալ) and expectation is for hell" [Khor., III, 68, 44].

In the scope of epistemology, the problem concerns (social and individual) memory and knowledge, on the one hand, and oblivion and ignorance, on the other. The concept clearly goes back to Socrates' theory tracing the

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[115] In fact, Khorenatsi endows his hero with the features of an ascetic who has reached God's vision. Philo and Plotinus called him the man of perfection (αὐτοάνθροπος) or God's image (ἴνδαλμα τοῦ θεοῦ). See **Gurmin**, 2010, 71–74.

main resource of public order and welfare in knowledge.[116]
Khorenatsi comes to this assumption through Plato and
(more probably) Philo of Alexandria.

Conclusion

One of the basic concepts of ancient history views
its beginning and final point in the two poles of cosmic
catastrophe. This concept had already existed in the myth-
ological traditions while being elaborated further in vari-
ous religious and philosophical systems. The platonic sys-
tem, which is thought to be its best manifestation, connects
cosmic and social catastrophes in a single historical event.
Their mutual influence is depicted in a series of rational
(causative) transactions – natural, social, political, moral,
religious, individual, etc. Unlike the mythological tradi-
tion, Plato does not find corruption to be the unavoidable
end of history. In some cases, he manifests the *conditional
understanding of history* when the set of memory, know-
ledge, and volition of outstanding personalities is (really
or hypothetically) capable of changing its course.

In parallel, the great biblical prophets came to the
same understanding of the importance of positive human
senses, ideas, and volition for society and (even) the cos-
mos. However, they viewed these values in the unity with
the holy divine prescripts of justice and moral duty. They
outlined the possibility of overcoming catastrophes as a
return to the mercy of the omnipotent Lord. The idea was
very attractive for the early Christian intellectuals since
they believed the advanced human being to be *God's
image*. As for Philo, he saw his purpose in completing this
redemption with the data of Greek philosophical anthro-
pology. He proposed a system of education aimed at the

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[116] Regarding this concept, see **Hadot**, 1995, 266–269; **McLelland**,
1996, 23–27.

formation of an elite able to pave the way from everyday affections and pleasures to divine moral values.

Moses Khorenatsi has adopted these assumptions, keeping also the Armenian mythological tradition in the focus of his consideration. This tradition combined many common features of Old Indo–European and Middle Eastern, Zoroastrian and Classical intellectual experiences when depicting great cosmic circles with their developments and declinations. The changes of the forms of communal life – from the ideal societies of mountain tops to the tyrannical regimes of valleys – make up the social aspect of cosmic circles. This primary epic comprehension undoubtedly influenced the formation of historical thinking in Armenia. With some essential corrections, it is present in the perception of history of Moses Khorenatsi.

As a matter of fact, Khorenatsi denies the passive stance of the last epic hero, Meher the Junior, who is waiting for the world to change during his seclusion in Agravu K'ar. The author, on the contrary, considers the Armenian past in light of active social volition based on the knowledge of the essence and significance of history. He also believes that catastrophes can be overcome by using the experience of the former generations generalized in historical narratives. He considers his *History of the Armenians* a self–sufficient narrative system focused on positive social values, ideas, and structures. This purpose demands an intellectual eye (reader) ready to collaborate with the author in working out the golden mean of mind and behavior from the extremes of the text. This approach illustrates the adherence of Khorenatsi to the intellectual movement engendered by St. Mashtots (Յունաբան դպրոց) whose credo was encoded in the first sentence of the Bible translated into Armenian: "For attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight" [Prov., I, 2].

Chapter Four

The King:
Less than God, More than Men
(Khorenatsi, II, 53, 11)

Introduction

The passage under consideration is a part of the large section of the *History of the Armenians* dedicated to the reign of Artashēs the Middle, who is believed to share some important biographical details with Artashēs I (189–160 BC.), the founder of the Artaxiad dynasty. Scholars consider the passage under consideration to contain elements of various primary sources including myths, epic tales and historical records.[117] The purpose of this chapter is to offer a new interpretation of the latter that has been overlooked hitherto. We are going to reveal this aspect in light of Hellenistic social theory, which combined the intellectual traditions of Classical Greece and the Near

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[117] There are numerous studies on the sources of Khorenatsi's narrative about Artashēs. Some of them are focused on its epic roots. **Abeghyan**, 1966, 114–121. The others ignore the epic substrate while tracing in Khorenatsi bare combinations of the antique authors' accounts. **Khalatiants**, 1903[1], 208–213; **Khalatiants**, 1903[2], 52–72. Some outline correspondences between the antique authors and Moses Khorenatsi. **Manandyan**, 1946, 9–17; **Adontz**, 2009, 445–455. The fourth group of scholars interprets the problem on the basis of the epigraphic material (the Aramaic inscriptions of King Artashes) and the theory of Hellenism. **Sargsian**, 1966, 144–153; **Perikhanyan**, 1971[1], 5–11. An attempt has been made to illuminate the problem by incorporating Iranian (Zoroastrian) material. **Perikhanyan**, 1971[2], 169–174; **Stepanyan**, 2013, 1–9.

East. Numerous works of Philo of Alexandria were thought of as exemplary outcomes of this trend. Later, they were instrumental in the forming of Christian theology. On this ground, as highlighted above, they were very popular in Early Medieval Armenia.[118]

For the present investigation, the ideas of Philo on the parallelism of the universe and "the true state forms" are of particular interest. They consider the figure of a righteous king as an important chain connecting these two opposite poles. Through him, divine law and justice are believed to penetrate the different spheres of society while engendering order and harmony.[119] Scholars think that this concept of Philo exerted an exceptional influence on Eusebius of Caesarea when composing the image of the *true Christian king* as God's image in the material world.[120] In this regard, Constantine the Great (307–337) was declared the best personification of the concept – "Less than God, more than men".[121] This retro–Hellenistic project, as it has been singled out, revalidated the power vertical of Rome, paving the way to the Byzantine Empire.

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[118] Their influence on the efforts for determining the foundations of the Christian Armenian identity is indisputable. In a profound sense, this demanded the combination of local ethnic identity with Christian universalism. Cf., **Redgate**, 2006, 168–176.

[119] Philo composes the portrait of the patriarch Moses in full accordance with these values. It serves as a model for the images of all righteous rulers and kings of the Jews and other nations. Cf. **Pearce**, 2004, 52–59.

[120] On the problem of Philo's influence on Eusebius, see **Dvornik**, 1966, 622; **Niehoff**, 2015, 185–194. Regarding royal authority, see **Barnes**, 1981, 245–260.

[121] We will only focus attention on two aspects of the problem. *First*, the factual, the best source of which is thought to be the numismatic data. See **de Callatay**, **Lorber**, 2011, 421–427. *Second*, the theological, philosophical, and legal. See **Goodenough**, 1928, 65–71; **Dvornik**, 1966, 227–248; **Iossif**, 2014, 1132–139.

Nearly the same intention is apparent in the internal policy of the first Sasanians. They tried to reform the loose ethnic, political, social, and religious structures of the empire inherited from the Parthians. Despite some initial successes, they could not secure radical changes, and the empire continued its existence as a confederation of ethnic and religious groups, local kingdoms, and provinces (*marz*es) of different statuses.[122] They tried to settle the problem of consolidation with strict administration and religious unification.[123] On the whole, this policy did not succeed either. Some scholars (certainly idealizing the situation) define the Sasanian Empire as an *Iranian Commonwealth*.[124]

These two paths to the future made up the basis for the clashes in Armenia during the 4th and 5th centuries.[125] The first under eminent kings (especially, Trdat the Great, Arshak II, and Pap), who chose the Roman way of strict centralization,[126] while the second under noble clans (nakharars) preferred the Sasanian experience of decen-

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[122] See on these fundamental developments, **Börm**, 2008, 26–39. Khorenatsi was well acquainted with the administrative system of Sasanian Empire. See **Traina**, 2007, 164–168.

[123] Due to this endeavor, the quadripartition was introduced, and the empire was divided into four administrative, military, religious and economic units. See **Daraee**, 2009, 124–125.

[124] **Rapp Jr.**, 2016, 28–30; Cf. **Daryaee**, 2017, 86. The term was probably coined on the Parthian Commonwealth. Cf. **de Jong**, 2013, 159–161; **de Jong**, 2015, 126–127.

[125] **Scott**, 2017, 342.

[126] In realty, the situation in Armenia was not so simple. It must be taken into consideration that centralized and absolute royal authority had old roots starting (at least) from King Artashēs I and Tigran II. The Arsacid model replaced this with state decentralization and nakharar freedom (beginning from 66 AD.). Of course, Trdat the Great was influenced by the Roman experience, but he was also most probably aware of the traditions of his country. More correctly, his ideal was to combine the local, Roman and Christian traditions. **Stepanyan**, 2014, 145–148.

tralization. This contradiction continued even after the fall of the Armenian Arsacids. Accordingly, this problem (in so far as it touched on the issue of national identity) remained of great importance in the days of Khorenatsi. The author refers to this problem in various parts of his work, but we decided to focus on one of them while planning to expand its semantic area on the background of the concepts of Philo and Zoroastrian axiology [Khor., II, 53, 11]. It must be kept in mind that some features of this religious system were still valid in Armenia of the 4th – 5th centuries.

1. The cosmic perspective of Philo's political theory

We decided to illuminate this issue by linking together the two aspects of discussion, *a*. the isomorphism of the cosmos and society, *b*. the figure of the ideal ruler. In Philo's works, they make up a coherent philosophical and theological narrative.

a. Cosmos–society isomorphism

It is an accepted fact that Philo sees his task in combining the biblical wisdom with ancient philosophy on the problems of the cosmos and human being.[127] He proceeds from the concept determined by the Stoics, which traced isomorphism of all beings in the universe: "This is explained by consideration of the different conditions, which God has made inseparable from the various bodies. These are in some cases cohesion, in others life, in others a reasoning soul" [Philo, Quod Deus, VII, 35].[128] He also

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[127] About this aspect of Philo's worldview system, see **Chadwick**, 1967, 153–155.

[128] Philo discusses the image and attributes of the omnipotent Lord, combining the Hellenistic philosophical theology with the biblical theological philosophy. One of the renowned metaphors of this perception is considered "Platonizing Moses". See **Sterling**, 1993, 97–105. Cf. **Friedlander**, 1912, 32–42; **Furley**, 2008, 413–414.

indicates the tripartite structure as the uniting principle
of all of them and believes that it represents the somatic,
affective and rational components of every form of life,
starting from human souls and ending with heavenly bo-
dies. Reason occupies the dominant position over the
other two components: "For as the sight holds the leading
place in the body, and quality of light holds the leading
place in the universe, so too in us the dominant element is
the mind" [Philo, Quod Deus, X, 45].[129]

The Stoics believed that the supreme power of the
universe was Logos. They assumed that the cosmic Fire
or Intellect had created all beings through its emana-
tions.[130] In Philo's system, this role is attributed to omni-
potent God. But the essence of the creation is the same:
"Accordingly this world of ours was formed out of all
that there is of earth, and all that there is of water, and
air and fire, not even the smallest particle being left out-
side" [Philo, De plant., II, 6].[131] However, Philo's God
did not immediately participate in the act of creation. He
is detached from the universe. Logos, God's most inti-
mate aid (λόγος ὁ θεῖος), is considered the connecting
link between them: "He receives nothing from anyone,
for, besides that He has no needs, all things are His pos-
session, and when He gives, He employs as minister of

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[129] **R. K. McIver**, 1998, 268–273. Presumably, Philo also proceeds
from the Hermetic literature of his time in which this concept was
developed in a more sophisticated form. Hermetic ideas were present in
Armenia during the 5th – 6th centuries as well. See **Mahé**, 1990/1991,
115–134.

[130] **Sandbach**, 1989, 72–74.

[131] In other words, Philo (despite the biblical approach) prefers the
Classical theory of cosmic creation *ex re*. It was a fundamental concept
in various Greek philosophical schools, from the Ionians to the Stoics,
Plato, and Aristotle. See **Furley**, 2008, 423–427, 434–435, cf. **Vlastos**,
1975, 23–27.

His gifts, the Reason wherewith also He made the world" [Philo, Quod Deus, XII, 57].[132]

In his other texts, Philo analyzes the creative role of the Logos. In this regard, the following account seems quite explanatory: "He it is, who extending Himself from the midst to all its length Nature's unvanquished course, combining and compacting all its parts. For the Father, who begat Him constituted His Word such a Bond of the Universe as nothing can break" [Philo, De plant., II, 9].[133] It was this bond that gave birth to the overwhelming harmony, which, according to the author, had an apparent textual character: "The Divine Word stations Himself to keep the [primary] elements apart like a Vocal from voiceless elements of speech, that the universe may sound in accordance with a masterpiece of literature" [Philo, De plant., II, 10].

b. The image of the ideal of state and statesman

From its cosmic eternity, the creative activity of the Divine Word enters into the realm of time, space, and concrete events: "For circlewise moves the revolution of that Divine Logos which most call fortune. Later it ceaselessly flows to cities, nations and countries" [Philo, Quod Deus, XXXVI, 176]. In this way, Logos covers all the layers of the universe making the isomorphism of all its elements quite natural. Following the Stoics, Philo believes that this flow is able to bring "[…] to the end that the whole of our world should be as a single state (μία πόλις), enjoying

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[132] See **Chadwick**, 1967, 142–143; **M**. **Hiller**, 1998, 23–25. However, despite its rationalist essence, Logos, in early Greek philosophy, especially in Heraclitus, had an esoteric significance as well. Philo developed this side of the problem. **Habli**, 2014, 250–251.

[133] Following the tradition of Hellenistic mentality, Philo has patterned the concept of Logos after linguistic and logical understandings as well – φωνή, λέξις and λόγος. This gave him the opportunity to increase the theological perception of the concept while denoting it with the epithet *holy*. **Habli**, 2014, 260–262. Cf. **Schenkeveld**, 1999, 179, 184–186.

that best of constitutions, democracy" [Ibid., cf. Op., L, 143–144].[134]

To understand this concept, the following must be taken into account. By democracy, Philo most likely means the mode of ruling based on law, justice and humanity, and not a concrete form of government. In this regard, he follows Plato, for whom the quality of every form of government mainly depends on the qualities of its rulers.[135] The best of them is the *royal man* (ἀνήρ βασιλικός) who can rule with a monarchy, aristocracy, and even democracy.[136]

According to Philo, the rulers of various levels have some common features. Among them, he emphasizes their ability to lead the *flocks of men* to the haven of justice and prosperity: "Indeed, so good a thing is shepherding that it is justly ascribed not to kings only and wise men and perfectly cleaned souls but also to God the All–Sovereign"

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[134] The concept of cosmopolitism expresses the social ideal of the Stoics who envisioned a society set up in accordance with the Law of Nature (νόμος τῆς φύσεως). See **Horsley**, 1978, 38–40. On the Stoic theory of the universal city of law and justice, see **Schofield**, 1999, 760–769.

[135] Speaking about the ideal ruler, Plato emphasizes: "[…] he'll look to the constitution within him and guard against disturbing anything in it" [Plato, Rep., 591e]. In this regard, the following fact is very important. With Classical and Hellenistic influences, Philo compiled the paradigm of the Mosaic polis, an ideal polity, where the body of citizens lives in full accordance with divine (Mosaic) laws. They enjoy God's justice. This philosophical metaphor compares the Mosaic polis with the harmonically settled universe. Parallels with the Stoic theory of cosmopolis are quite obvious. See **Tsolis**, 2000, 339–343; **Carlier**, 2008, 87–96.

[136] **Hall**, 2005, 71–72. By the words of Plato, the royal man "[…] is the one that controls all of these, and laws, and cares for every aspect of things in the city, weaving [them] together in the most correct way" [Plato, Polit., 305e]. Sometimes Plato attributed him with εὐτραπελία – *liveliness*, *ready wit*. This denotes a man who does everything in moderation and avoid vices. He was a playmate in God's hands [Plato, Laws, 644d]. Cf. **Ardley**, 1967, 234–237.

[Philo, De agr., XII, 50].[137] The author considers the contact of righteous kings with God as an expression of the principle of the global cosmic sympathy.

Righteous kings have to escape the extremes of power, that is, either ultimate force (rigorous laws), or ultimate liberty (lawlessness). According to Philo, their duty is to balance the extremes and establish the mean of benevolence: "It is a strong bulwark of cheerfulness of spirit and freedom from danger to have reposed our confidence in a king who is not urged by the greatness of his dominion to inflict injuries on his subjects but whose love for man makes it his delight to supply what is lacking to each one" [Philo, De plant., XXI, 92].[138]

To perform this mission, the kings had to become God's *earthly image* (εἰκώνα τοῦ θεοῦ). For that purpose, they had to pass through several stages of spiritual initiation. In the mind of Philo, during their initiation, the adepts gradually abandon bodily passions (vices). At the stage of *spiritual trainee* (ἀσκητής), they begin to attain high moral virtues and enter into immediate contact with heavenly beings. As a result, they become sages (σόφοι).[139] The

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[137] **Wedderburn**, 1973, 315–317. The identification of a righteous king with a shepherd reaches back to ancient Mesopotamia. See **Zaccagnini**, 1994, 268–271. This was also true in the Jewish political mentality. **Davis**, 1979, 51–55. In the Hellenistic age, this concept was revived with new colors. **Goodenough**, 71–73. In Christianity, it was reshaped in the steadiest symbol of Christ's heavenly and earthly missions. **Freeman**, 2015, 159–162.

[138] Self–mastery and high responsibility before God were held to be his main features. Only in this case was he considered capable of carrying out his mission of the mediator. Cf. **Carson**, 1981, 160–163.

[139] This is about the old sacred initiations practiced in the various religions of the Ancient Near East. Philo proceeds from the Jewish practice, which (being enriched with Hellenistic experience) helped to pave the path for the Christian mysteries of consecration. Cf. **Snyder**, 2000, 126–127; **Ryu**, 2015, 51–55. **Schult**, 1908, 276–279.

last stage of initiation was available only for a few adepts when they reached God's vision and became ideal men [Philo, De plant., XIV, 60; De gen., I, 26–28; Op., 134].[140] Philo believes that all righteous leaders of nations, countries and states represent the latter type of men. He defines their status by a term modeled on Hellenistic theology and legislation, the *animate law* (νόμος ἔμψυχος). It underlines the idea of their mediatory activity between Divine Law and earthly justice [Philo, De Mos., II, 12–14; De Abr., 274–276].[141]

2. The semantic context of Khorenatsi's narrative of King Artashēs

The narrative of Khorenatsi about the reign of the king Artashēs occupies a rather large section in his work [Khor., II, 37–60].[142] One of its important constructs is the opposition of the two eminent kings of Great Armenia Eruand and Artashēs. While the first is depicted as a typical tyrant, the second is a righteous and just sovereign. It seems more probable that Khorenatsi proceeds from the ideas of Philo when describing them.

According to the philosopher, tyranny frequently arises from social disorder and confusion: "Anarchy, however,

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[140] **Wedderburn**, 1973, 312.

[141] **Goodenough**, 1928, 96–98; Philo applies the Hellenistic theory of royal authority to the biblical material. Cf. **Najman**, 1999, 67–68; **Martens**, 2003, 53–57. Some scholars believe that the concept of *animated law* is quite applicable to the kings of Sumer, Babylonia and Israel as well. **Goodenough**, 1929, 172–177; **Geljon**, **Runia**, 2013, 120–136.

[142] Khorenatsi patterned his *History* on the tripartite model. As it was highlighted, each of his work's three books correspond to the one principle – somatic, affective and rational. The second book gives preference to the affective activity of historical actors. See **Stepanyan**, 1998, 293–294.

the mother of mob–rule (ὀχλοκρατία), is not our only danger. We have to dread also the uprising to sovereign power, forcibly setting law at naught. For tyrant is a natural enemy (ἐχθρός). In cities this enemy is man; to body and soul and all interests of each of these, it is an utterly savage mind, that has turned our inner citadel into a fortress from which to assail us" [Philo, De agr., XI, 46].[143] In other words, tyranny is an external and internal evil, both for society and human beings.

Khorenatsi begins his narrative by describing a scene of a turmoil in Great Armenia: "After King Sanatruk's death the kingdom fell into confusion (շփոթի ինն թագաւորութիւնն), for a certain Eruand, son of an Arsacid woman, gained the throne […]" [Khor, II, 37, 2–3]. The author believes the confusion was also a result of this king's ancestry, for he was born "after an illicit intercourse". This explains the essence of his psychology, which is defined by ambiguous feelings and passions [Khor., II, 38, 2–3].[144] Later in his account, Khorenatsi combines the features of two types of tyrants in the image of Eruand. While one of them is too severe, the other is too mild.

To this point, Khorenatsi's adherence to the ideas of Philo seems very probable: "Nor is it only from these [sever] tyrannies that we drive no benefit. We gain nothing

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[143] Philo considers tyranny to be the result of the imbalance in a person in favor of somatic and affective elements. In this regard, he traces parallels between social instability and natural catastrophes [Philo, Op., XIX, 58]. See **A**. **Stepanyan**, 2009, 184–185.

[144] In other words, Khorenatsi speaks about *blood heritage* in psychological typologies. In this regard, we must take into consideration the following: Philo sometimes uses a simpler approach to the problems of the soul, while dividing it into two parts – rational (divine) and irrational (corporeal). He even connects the latter with human blood. See **Dillon**, 2009, 19–21. An analogical understanding is apparent in early Christian texts. For example, St. Paul opposed the *inner man* to the ignoramus. Cf. **van Kooten**, 2009, 81–87.

from the rule and governance of men who are too good
and gentle. For kindness is a quality open to contempt and
injurious to both sides, both rulers and subject" [Philo, De
agr., XI, 47]. While the first type causes fear, the second
causes subjects' scorn.[145] In the words of Khorenatsi,
Eruand is frightening to his proxies, but he is also afraid of
them. Therefore, he either threatens or flatters them. At
the beginning of his career, he acts as a flatterer: "By
his modesty and generosity (խոնարհութեամբ եւ
առատաձեռնութեամբ) he drew everyone to him. And
at the death of Sanatruk, they in unison made him king
[…]" [Khor, II, 37, 8–9]. Later, he intensifies the element
of violence in his actions: "But when Eruand became king,
having suspicions of the sons of Sanatruk, he slaughtered
them all" [Khor., II, 37, 10]. The contradictions of the
king's character reach their peak at the end of his reign:
"But Eruand gave even more generous gifts and bestowed
treasures on each of them (proxies). However, the more
generous he was, the more hateful he became" [Khor., II,
45, 5].[146] The proxies began to act with hatred, fear, and
shame. Soon, all abandoned the king, and the solders of
Artashēs killed him in his fortress.

As for Artashēs, Khorenatsi depicts him as an ideal
ruler. Having obtained his ancestral throne, he embarked on
resolute reforms and established peace, order, and prospe-
rity in Greater Armenia. Summing up his *virtuous and righ-
teous deeds* (գործ առաքինութեանց եւ ուղղութեան),
the author underlines that "[…] he increased the popula-
tion of Armenia by introducing many foreigners into the
populace and settling them in the mountains and valleys

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[145] **Goodenough**, 1938, 27; **Geljon**, **Runia**, 2013, 140–142.

[146] In other words, Khorenatsi combines the polar extremes of moral
values and behavior in this malefactor. It is in the spirit of Philo's psy-
chological concepts reaching back to Plato. The renowned formula
"rich in possessions but poor in wisdom" is quite applicable to King
Eruand. Cf. **Wilson**, 2011, 213.

and plains" [Khor., II, 56, 2]. In addition to that, *the noble arts and sciences* of the Hellenistic age were introduced into the country [Khor., II, 59, 3].[147]

In this point, Philo's influence is apparent once again. By his words, this type of ruler was like a genuine husbandman [Philo, De agr., I, 5].[148] This activity was believed to imitate the function of God, the Husbandman of the whole universe. It must be remembered that for Philo, husbandry is like the other forms of the *kingly art* and "[…] stands in need of two tending powers, governance and benefaction (ἡγεμονία καὶ εὐεργεσία)" [Philo, De somn., XXVI, 162]. Governance is aimed at harmonizing the varieties of the realms under the sway of both God and kings. As for benefaction, it has a distributive character aimed at supplying the subject people *what they lacked*. Both functions are based on the love for humanity (φιλανθρωπία) [Philo, De plant., XXI, 92].[149]

> *The Hellenistic political theory worked out a system of legal and moral concepts to describe royal authority. It was thought to emanate from the supreme divine substance, while furnishing kings with the abilities necessary to perform their fundamental functions. Besides beneficence, it encompassed the efforts to save the country from (real or potential) destruction. For this reason, they were declared liberators (σωτήρ). It was also believed that*

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[147] See in detail **Stepanyan**, 2018, 18–31.

[148] **Kamesar**, 2009, 91. In other words, the best qualities demanded for herding and husbandry were recognized as the virtues required for a righteous ruler. On these perceptions in the Armenian epos *Sasna Tsŕer* see **Stepanyan**, 1991, 40–46; **Hambardzumyan**, 2018, 112, 120.

[149] The idea comes from Plato's concept of the two fundamental aspects of kingly authority: power and (moral) habit (κράτος καὶ ἦθος) [Plato, Polit., 300c]. **Goodenough**, 1928, 62–63. The relationship between these poles is rather complex, and it is intermediated by knowledge, justice and *epithumia* (desire) aimed at the overcoming of *akrasia* (weak will). Its success promises to introduce benevolence and benefaction. Cf. **Rorty**, 1970, 52–55.

they personified earthly law and righteousness (ὁ νόμος ἔμψχος).
Kings were sometimes even presented as revealed deities (ὁ
ἐπιφανής), linking their countries and communities with cosmic
destiny. The last point of justification concerned the tool of the
kings' creative activity. It was identified with their spear whereby
they were thought to have conquered, subjugated and brought
to order their lands as divine endowments (χώρα δορίκτετος). In
addition, Hellenistic legislation considered the whole country to
be the possession of the king (κλῆρος βασιλέως). In this role, he
undoubtedly imitated God who was thought to possess the whole
universe [Philo, De plant., XIII, 56].[150]

Studies show that most of these ideas were used to
justify royal authority in Hellenistic Greater Armenia as
well.[151] From this point of view, the rule of King Artashēs
can be formulated as the benefaction for all social classes
of Armenia.[152] Khorenatsi demonstrates this idea in his
account of the funeral of the king. The representatives
of the tripartite Armenian society, the rulers, the solders,
and the mass of common people gathered around the
royal bier.[153] Willing sacrifices were performed around the

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[150] The legal, philosophical, moral and psychological justification of
Hellenistic king's authority was first of all based on religious beliefs,
senses and practices. **Runia**, 1988, 53–61; **Chaniotis**, 2003, 431–445.
They indicated the king's sacred relationship with their land and sub-
jects. **C. Edson**, 1953, 153–159. The sum of these relations gave rise to
different aspects of royal power. Cf. **Dvornik**, 1966, 232–238; **Gruen**,
1996, 116–125.

[151] **Stepanyan**, 2012, 57–62. The Parthians also utilized the Hellenistic
concept of the propaganda of royal power. **Dąbrova**, 2008, 25–31.

[152] In Stoic tradition, this benefaction was considered the result
of knowing, willing, and especially deliberating courses of action
(προαίρεσις). **Rist**, 1969, 223–232. In Philo, it is a form of connecting
the wise with God. **A. Mendelson**, 1977, 107–110.

[153] This funeral procession is reminiscent of the Popular Assembly
of Npat Mountain which played a critical role in the social unity of

tomb. In the last sentence, the author sums up the life of Artashēs as the following: "This sovereign, so beloved to our country, reigned forty–one years" [Khor., II, 60, 16].

Summing up this discussion, we have to emphasize the following fact: despite his obvious adherence to the cause of the Bagratuni clan, Khorenatsi demonstrates his full sympathy to the concept of strong royal power under omnipotent God's guidance. He displays this idea in numerous passages of the *History*.

3. The semantic context of the passage concerning the prince Vroyr

For a suitable interpretation of this issue, it is necessary to return to the reforms of King Artashēs while singling out his military and administrative innovations. He administrated a military reform by dividing the army of the kingdom into four units – eastern, western, northern and southern, entrusting them to his tutor, Prince Smbat Bagratuni, and three sons – Artavazd, Tiran and Zareh. In parallel, the king divided Greater Armenia into a hundred and twenty provinces,[154] uniting them in large territorial districts (աշխարհ).[155] In this vein, he entrusted to his

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the Armenians. See Chapter 6.

[154] Plinius the Elder records approximately one hundred and twenty provinces in Greater Armenia [Hist Nat., VI, 9, 27]. Hypothetically, scholars connect them to the reforms of Artashēs *reckoning on the common logic* of his activity. See **Sargsyan**, 1971, 678–679; **Stepanyan**, 2018, 25–27.

[155] This division is comparable to the military and administrative reforms of the Sasanians. However, the idea that Khorenatsi could apply it to the époque of King Artashēs seems unacceptable. We have more relevant analogues in the days of King Tigran II, who divided his administration into four units [Plut., Luc., 21]. The traces of that is usually seen in the system of the four *bdeškhs* reaching back to the Achemenids. **Marquart**, 1901, 172–175; **Adontz**, 1908, 110–111;

other son, Vroyr, the highest administrative office of *hazarapet*: […] and entrusted to him all the affairs of the royal household" [Khor., II, 53, 11].

The institution of hazarapet went through serious metamorphoses over several centuries. In the court of the Achemenids, the hazarapatiš was the head of the regiment of the Immortals watching over the security of the great king. Later, in the age of Alexander and the Seleucids, it was translated into Greek literally – χιλλιάρχος (captain over a thousand) – and gained some administrative functions as well.[156] The Armenian institution seems to have developed this approach while adding some unique features to the hazarapet's functions. However, it seems the status of this office was not strictly defined. Everything depended on the concrete situation and historical actors. Before Vroyr, King Artashēs, for his extraordinary merits, entrusted Smbat Bagratuni with "[…] control over the entire Armenian army, the king limited the scope of this office, conceding to the demands of his sons. In particular, he separated its two components: the military to his elder son Artavazd, and the administrative to Vroyr [Khor., II, 53, 10–11].[157]

Toumanoff, 1963, 155–159.

[156] For this office in the Achaemenid court and its metamorphoses in the Hellenistic age, see **Briant**, 1996, 269–271; **Collins**, 2001, 260–268; **Collins**, 2012, 159–167. On Khorenatsi's acquaintance with this office in the Sasanian court, see **Traina**, 2007, 172–179.

[157] **Manandyan**, 1934, 71. Later on, this division became traditional for Greater Armenia. In this vein, the following passage of Buzand about Arshak II seems quite precise: "First [he entrusted] the office hazarapet, of the overseeing care for the land, the supervision [dehkanut'ium] over the enrichment and welfare of the realm, to the clan of Gnuni, who cared for the peasants as hazarapets of the entire land" [Buz., IV, 2, 8]. H. Manandyan finds that, despite the prince Vroyr, Smbat Bagratuni was a *great hazarapet*. **Manandyan**, 1934, 69–73.

In this light, it is quite obvious that Khorenatsi's passage about Vroyr is to be discussed in worldview perspectives, particularly concerning the parallels between the universe and the ideal state structure. The main point of that, as highlighted above, was the detachment of the Sovereign from the cosmos. Divine Logos, His intimate aid, provided contacts with all the forms of beings. In this regard, it is quite apt to remember that the Christian intellectuals identified Philo's Sovereign with omnipotent God and Logos with Christ. At the same time, they lowered the role of Hellenistic kings to the level of Christ's *earthly correlate* who took care of the everyday life of his realm (microcosm).[158] As it is noted above, Constantine the Great acquired this role when constructing the new power hierarchy in the Late Roman Empire.

The concept of the cosmic perspective of earthly government was popular in Great Armenia as well. The king's participation in various spheres of administration was mediated by the royal minister of highest dignity – the hazarapet. To emphasize that Logos, the king and hazarapet were the mediators in transferring the potency from the divine creative center to the peripheries, Philo calls all of them ministers (ὑπάρχοι). As a result of their activity, the universe and society functioned in unison. According to Philo, this overall rhythm also had an intellectual context: "[…] the universe may sound in accordance with *a masterpiece of literature* (ἐπὶ τῆς ἐγγραμμάτου μουσικῆς συνηχήσῃ)" [Philo, De plant., II, 10].[159]

Undoubtedly, the formula of Greater Armenia (popular in the time under consideration) reflects this perception. Faustus Buzand, we have highlighted, defines Armenian

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[158]   See in detail **Dvornik**, 1966, 614–623.

[159] Hence, a conclusion that the etymology is required in order to understand the universe and participate in it. It is "[…] to all appearance a Stoic coining, by which they indicate that search for the reason why a particular name has been given to a particular thing is related to the search for truth". **Schenkeveld**, 1999, 182.

land as "the entire world of the Armenian tongue" [Buz., IV, 12, 5]. Khorenatsi thinks the same way when tracing the borders of Armenia "to the borders of the Armenian tongue (ի ծայրս հայերէն խաւսից)" [Khor., II, 2, 6].[160] In modern terminology, it would probably be expressed as follows: Greater Armenia was a unique system of communicative activity.[161]

> *In two passages of Artashēs' section, Khorenatsi provides new information about the hazarapet while referring to it as the second rank of the administrative hierarchy of Greater Armenia (զաhն երկրորդական) [Khor., II, 47, 4; 51, 3]. He also describes the insignae potestatis relevant for it: "[…] a crown decorated with sapphire, rings for both ears, a red slipper for one foot, [the right] to have a golden spoon and fork and to drink from golden goblets" [Ibid.]. To a certain extent, it remains a notable relict of the Achaemenid legacy.*[162]

All of this provides the key to solve the *riddle* of Khorenatsi's account of Vroyr. It concerns the reason why the king appointed him to this office. The author states it to be justified by the fact that he was "a wise and erudite man" [Khor., II, 53, 10]. However, it seems that English translation does not express the hidden (and sophisticated) essence of the text – "զայր իմաստուն եւ բանաստեղծ". It concerns the second epithet of Vroyr. Certainly, it can be translated as *erudite* (զրագէտ). It is a possible but is

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[160] See **Stepanyan**, 1991, 146–148; **Stepanyan**, 2018, 230.

[161] This communicative unity usually makes up the legal system of social relations. Cf. **Deggau**, 1988, 132. In a more general sense, this problem is interpreted in the context of the rationalization of societies. Cf. **Habermas**, 1989, 154–174.

[162] In ancient philosophy, the concept of the statesman's detachment was already analyzed by Plato: "For what is really kingship must not itself perform practical tasks, but control those with the capacity to perform them" [Plato, Polit., 305d].

not the primary significance of the word. It would be more correct to translate it as "poet" and pay attention to its ety-mology, which consists of two roots – *բան* (mind/word – λόγος) and *ստեղծ* (creator – ποιητής).

We can explain the situation by taking into conside-ration the antique assumption that poetry (and poets) deals with the mimesis of eternal ideas and values.[163] Building upon this logic, we can conclude that Khorenatsi's text is about the hazarapet's imitation of Logos in the earthly space and time of Greater Armenia. Following Philo, we can formulate his intellectual endeavor to shape the Ar-menian microcosm as *a textual unit*.

However, Philo provides us with another important comparison as well. Describing universal cosmic har-mony, he states: "Others there are of perfect purity and excellence, gifted with a higher and diviner temper, that have never felt any craving after the things of earth but are viceroys of the Ruler of the universe, *ears and eyes*, so to speak, of the great king (ὥσπερ μεγάλου βασιλέως ἀκοαὶ καὶ ὄψεις) beholding and hearing all things" [Philo, De somn., XXII, 140; cf. De gig., 16].[164]

It would not be an exaggeration to emphasize that Philo modeled the cosmic harmony after the empire of Achaemenids. It is well attested that the great Achaemenid kings had their "eyes and ears" who provided them with

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[163] In Homer, the poet is defined as a *shepherd of people* [Homer., Iliad., 1, 10, 79a; 2, 579–580a]. Cf. **Haubold**, 2000, 23.

[164] This passage must be considered in light of Xenophon's account: discussing the king of kings Cyrus, it states: "[…] we have discovered that he acquired the so–called "king's eyes" and "king's ears" in no other way than by bestowing presents and honors; for by rewarding liberally those who reported to him whatever it was to his interest to hear, he prompted many men to make it their business to use their eyes and ears to spy out what they could report to the king to his advantage. As a natural result of this, many "eyes" and many "ears" were ascribed to the king" [Xen., Cyr., 8, 2. 10–11]. Cf. **Dandamaev**, 1989, 17.

information about the state of affairs in all satrapies, from the Indus to the Nile.[165] This concept was most probably elaborated in the Achaemenid court. This was one of basic elements of the religious and political propaganda of the Achaemenids. This understanding was adopted by the Seleucids.

It was also inherited in Great Armenia, where the traditions of Zoroastrianism were valid. The fact is that the imperial structure of the Achaemenids had obvious parallels with the Zoroastrian universe, with Ahura Mazda in the center and His Immortals (aməša s spəntas), who supported him in running the cosmos. Among them, Vohu Mana (Sacred Mind) is to be singled out as a mediator between Him and the immortal and mortal worlds. It is well attested that in pre–Christian Armenia, the worship of the Immortals was popular. The same was true particularly of Vohu Mana.[166]

In other words, the Armenian tradition combined the two great intellectual traditions, and one of the passages of Khorenatsi seems to depict this most explicitly: "[…] the stars receive their light from the moon, and the moon shines from the sun's [light], and the orb of the sun [shines] from the ethereal heaven. Thus, the ether pours its rays into both zones, and each zone shines through the sun according to its order, revolution and time." [Khor., III, 62].

Hellenistic Greater Armenia was the crossroads of the Classical and Zoroastrian intellectual experiences. Poetry was considered in the context of advanced technological

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[165] Plato conceptualized the tradition of idealization of the Achaemenid Empire which came from the logographs and Herodotus. In his words: "While the Persians steered a middle course between subjection and liberation, in the time of Cyrus, they began by winning their own freedom and went on to make themselves masters of numerous peoples. As a government they gave these subjects their share of liberty and placed them on equal terms with themselves" [Plato, Leg., 694a].

[166] See Chapter 8.

devices and sciences with the function of mimesis. The obvious parallels of this passage of Khorenatsi with Philo gives us reason to think that the expected conclusion would also be in the same logic: "[…] in accordance with a certain natural sympathy, the things of the earth depend on the things of heaven". [Philo., Op., XL, 117].

This sympathy contains impulses of the mimesis of heavenly and eternal values on the earth. The advanced technology, arts, and sciences were considered the best means to accomplish it. In this regard, it is worthy to remind again, Khorenatsi's renowned summary of the deeds of King Artashēs: "But it is said that in the time of Artashēs there was no land unworked in Armenia, neither of mountain, nor plain on account of the prosperity of country" [Khor., II, 56, 5]. Indeed, this was the result of king's creative efforts, but next to him was the hazarapet Vroyr. While the king personified the divine mimesis, he represented the *mimesis of mimesis*.

In all this, the state ideal of Khorenatsi is apparent. Living in the conditions of *overall destruction*, he envisioned a centralized and powerful state based on the best traditions of the East and West.

Conclusion

The narrative of the *History of the Armenians* by Moses Khorenatsi regarding the deeds of Artashēs the Middle contains information sufficient for restoring some of his theoretical and religious ideas on royal authority in the Hellenistic age. They are based on the intellectual traditions of the West and East while being harmonized with the texts of some sophisticated Hellenistic authors, especially Philo of Alexandria. In them, the person and power of the king were discussed in both cosmic and earthly dimensions. He was thought of as a mediator between powerful gods and their subjects. While demonstrating this antique theory, Philo interpreted it in light of biblical monothe-

ism. This approach was accepted in Greater Armenia with enthusiasm due to its Zoroastrian traditions.

In Philo, in running the cosmos, God used the support of Logos, while in Zoroastrianism, Ahura Mazda was assisted by Six Immortals of which Vohu Mana (Sacred Mind) was responsible for His contacts with all subjects. With his governing skills, a king carried out this mimetic function while conducting divine potencies to the far borders his realm. In this, he was supported by his administration under the hazarapet. In an essential sense, the latter was considered a *mimesis of mimesis*. However, the situation radically changed with the conversion of the Armenians to Christianity (301). The Father, Christ and the Holy Spirit occupied Heaven, and the church (and her head) was now considered the mediator of heavenly potencies. Correspondingly, the role of the king and his entourage was lowered.

However, in the Roman Empire, under Constantine the Great, the Hellenistic power paradigm was preserved, while being modified to correspond to the theology and hierarchy of Christianity. The emperor retained the role of mediator between heaven and earth. The church was to play the role of *a mediator of the mediator*.

In Armenia, however, the Roman experience failed (428). Khorenatsi lived in the days of "overall decline" and idealized the image of King Artashēs who, having a heavenly mandate, had brought his country to "overall prosperity".

Is this the real indication of the political and social preferences of Khorenatsi? Can we trace in it a program for the observable future? We are going to approach this problem from other points of view in the following chapters.

Section 3.

Aspects of Social Partnership

> "What chiefly attracts and chiefly benefits students of history is just this – the study of causes and consequent power of choosing what is the best in each case."
>
> *Polybius, VI, 1, 2. 8.*

Chapter Five

Household/Family

Introduction

Antique and Early Medieval (Christian) social theory is considered to be based on the concept of the isomorphism of the two principal components of social life – individual and social bodies. This approach reached back to the Sophists, Socrates, and Plato. In his treatise, *Politics*, Aristotle brought the concept of focusing attention on the household/family (οἴκος) to fruition and finding in it the first (and the basic) form of social partnership (κοινονία) [Aristot., Polit., II, 1259a, 3–7]. He believed that the socialization of two opposite individuals – men and women – was only effectively formed within a family.[1]

The concept was introduced in Armenia either directly or via Hellenistic authors (initially through Philo of Alexandria) and played an important role in the interpretation and understanding of the historical past and present. This was the case for the texts of Agathangelos, Faustus Buzand, Eghishē, Ghazar Parpetsi. Particularly, it was an important topic for Moses Khorenatsi in his *History of the Armenians*, which is the main concern of the present investigation.[2]

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[1] Aristotle states that civilization "[…] has advanced sequentially through three associations (κοινωνίαι) – household, village and state" [Aristot., Pol., II, 1104a, 15]. Cf. **Saunders**, 1999, 126–127.

[2] Unfortunately, this aspect has not yet met due attention in modern scholarship. A comprehensive study of the influence of Philo on the Armenian historiography is still awaiting its researcher.

However, the intellectual situation in Early Medieval Armenia was more complicated. Besides Classical and Hellenistic influence, traditional Armenian, Zoroastrian, and biblical intellectual paradigms were also important.[3] To restore the adequate situation, it is necessary to consider this data as well. We are going to embark on the discussion with the problem of the *human being* as a social animal.[4]

1. The Human Being

a. The axiological aspect.

As highlighted above, according to Aristotle, every form of *natural being* exists in threefold axiology based on the three essential poles of quality – deficiency (ἡ ὑπερβολή), excess (ἡ αὔξησοις) and mean (τό μέτρον) [Aristot., NE., II, 1106a, 25–30]. The objective of the last pole was to bring the two formers into balance and support a being to obtain its completion (ἡ ἐντελέχεια).[5] The latter was considered capable of realizing its purpose only in this case. It must be added that this concept had an appropriate development in Aristotelian psychology. In particular, the philosopher identified the aforementioned extreme poles with human passion (ἡ παή) and linked the pole of moderation with virtue (ἡ ἀρετή) [Aristot., Nic. Eth., II, 1106b, 25].[6]

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[3] In modern scholarship, the Zoroastrian component is usually neglected, although it is very important when reconstructing the spiritual situation of the 4th – 5th centuries Armenia. See **Garsoïan**, 1996, 7–43; **Russell**, 1987, 4–17.

[4] Here, we are referring to the Aristotelian concept of *political animal* (ζωῶν πολιτικόν) [Aristot., I, 1253,a, 1–3]. Cf. **Knoll**, 2017, 31–32.

[5] Aristotle discusses this problem in the context of the universal relations of things and beings [Aristot., Phys., II, 193b, 5–20] comprising all forms of life. Cf. **Salkever**, 1990, 19. The philosopher connects the state of completion with happiness (εὐδαιμονία). **Crips**, 1999, 113–118; **Richardson Lear**, 2009, 387–403.

[6] In an essential sense, this virtue is linked with the harmonic state

Philo of Alexandria had applied this concept in his numerous works with the intention of reinterpreting the renowned biblical subjects in light of antique philosophy.[7] It is well known, his works were popular in Early Medieval Armenia, translated into Armenian, and commented on and interpreted by generations of intellectuals. Moreover, some of his writings have only been preserved in Armenian.[8]

According to Philo, the extremes engender *inordinate and excessive, irrational and unnatural* impulses. As for the mean, it is linked with *measure* [Philo, Spec., 4, 79; cf. Leg., 3, 185]. Following Plato, the philosopher traces a correspondence between these impulses and the human soul consisting of three main parts.[9] The extremes are thought to be generated by the base parts of it (somatic, passionate), while the measure – by the higher part (rational).[10] Correspondingly, the extremes are combined with (positive or negative) passions – desire, fear, sadness,

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of a being. Men attain it through their rational choice between two excesses. See **Annas**, 1996, 748–752; **Crips**, 1999, 118–122. We will not go into detail regarding intellectual and moral virtues in Aristotelian theory. On this aspect see **Deslauriers**, 2002, 107–120.

[7] In this endeavor, Philo kept in mind the Socratic, Stoic, Platonic, Aristotelian, and Pythagorean philosophical systems. His point of departure was to combine their essential ideas and concepts with the *imaginative wisdom* of the Bible. The explicit reflection of that was the comparison between Plato and Moses. Cf. **Dillon**, 2008, 226–232.

[8] **Zarbanalean**, 1889, 734–747. **Arevshatyan**, 1973[2], 32. This fact is to be discussed in the context of the great *argumentative network* of the Mediterranean world. Cf. **Collins**, 1998, 103–108.

[9] On Plato's theory of the tripartite soul, see **Ferrari**, 2007, 166–176.

[10] Scholars agree that the psychology of Philo is mostly influenced by *Timaeus*, *Protagoras* and the *Republic* of Plato. However, the author's ideal ought to be linked with Middle Platonic intention on combining Platonic and Stoic approaches. See in detail **Reydams–Schilds**, 2008, 175–182.

pleasure, joy, will, caution, hope, etc. Self–control and temperance are designed to overcome passions and lead men to virtues – prudence, temperance, courage, piety, repentance, and nobility [Philo, Spec., 4, 135].[11]

Philo shares the Classical and Hellenistic view connecting the base parts of the soul with femininity and the upper one with masculinity and ascribes axiological coloring to them: "[…] for the better to rule always and everywhere, and for the worse to be ruled" [Philo, Leg. All., 1, 72]. This rigorism certainly comes from Aristotle, but it does not encompass the entirety of Philo's moral theory.[12] Most likely, the latter is of a complementary character intended to define the roles of the sexes and to integrate them in the context of the harmonic family. According to the philosopher, this complementarity "[…] should lead both husbands and wives to cherish temperance and domesticity and unanimity, and by mutual sympathy shewn in word and deed to make the name of partnership a reality securely founded on truth" [Philo, Spec., 1, 138]. Scholars believe that on this point, Philo gives preference to the biblical tradition traceable in the families of eminent patriarchs. However, it is also true that the theoretical justification of it he has borrowed from Plato and Aristotle.[13]

The same dualism is traceable in the narratives of the authors of Early Medieval Armenia. In describing the social status of the sexes, they follow the Aristotelian (and the Stoic) tradition, but complementarity is preferred when systematically covering the problem.[14] This is espe-

[11] "[…] unmeasured impulses of man's passions were calmed and allayed by self–mastery (σωφροσύνη)" [Philo, Op., 26, 81; Virt., 13; cf. Plato, Rep., 442a–c].

[12] This concept encompasses all layers of Philo's cosmology and sociology, tracing their oppositions and (possible) combinations from just this point of view. See **Prudence Sister**, 1985, 91–112.

[13] See **Hittinger**, 2013, 4–15.

[14] **Stepanyan**, 1991, 117–119.

cially true in the case of Moses Khorenatsi. We believe that the author's concept of the nature of the human being and the household/family must be discussed while taking into account the data of traditional Armenian (ancestral), Zoroastrian, biblical moral systems interpreted in the light of Platonic moral theory.[15]

b. The human dimension

It has been pointed out that the *History* of Khorenatsi represents a gallery of images of eminent heroes and anti-heroes. They make up the background of the Armenian past and present. Moreover, they personify historical situations and are *sui generis* semantic keys to them.[16]In other words, every historical situation can be decoded using imaginative features. However, it demands an adequate interpretation of every image.

According to Platonic theory, social actions are expressions of men's characters, which, in turn, depend on the correlation of the basic elements in their souls – somatic, affective, and rational. Consequently, there are three main types of characters with a predominance of appetitive, passionate, or rational elements. Khorenatsi proceeds from this understanding when depicting the key actors of Armenian history.[17]

Predominance of the somatic element. In this case, the affective and rational elements are subordinate. Usually, this gives rise to base passions. The typical form of this

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[15] This suggestion is in the context of Khorenatsi's historical synthesis, which was an approach that was quite acceptable for many historians of the 5th century. This is particularly true of Eghishē. On this subject, see in detail **Stepanyan**, 2018, 184–203.

[16] This aspect of Khorenatsi's narrative has been interwoven with the multidimensional concept of history. Due to that, the *bare concept* obtained features of the vivid past and present. See in detail **Stepanyan**, 1991, 136–143.

[17] **Stepanyan**, 1991, 165–171.

inversion is traceable in the tyrannical adversaries of the Armenians. The Babylonian, Bēl, is the most relevant example of this. He was of the "[…] race of giants, monstrous and enormous in force and size, who in their arrogance conceived and gave birth to the impious plan of building the tower" [Khor., I, 9, 17]. The giant and his entourage are proud and ambitious, cruel and treacherous, arrogant, and cowardly. Among the Armenians, Khorenatsi traces similar features in King Artavazd the Elder, stating, "But he gave no indication of any other act of nobility or valor and occupied his time with eating and drinking. He wandered about in the marshes, fens and rocky places, tending wild asses and swine. Unconcerned with wisdom, valor or good repute, truly a servant and slave to his stomach, he fattened his guts" [Khor., II, 22, 4].[18] The author even describes a woman of this type: "A certain woman of the Arsacid family, fat of body, horribly ugly, and libidinous, whom no one could bear, gave birth to two children after an illicit intercourse […]" [Khor., II, 37, 5].

Predominance of the affective element. In this case, the somatic and rational elements are subordinate. The situation has two outlets. On the one hand, it is able to generate positive emotions (and actions) – bravery and generosity, magnanimity and piety, moderation, and altruism. On the other, it is able to give rise to negative emotions (and actions) – cruelty and cowardice, treachery and

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[18] Artavazd the Elder of Khorenatsi's text is usually identified with Artavazd II (55–34 BC.). In his time, the situation in Greater Armenia was extremely polarized. The elite was divided into two opposite parties. One of them comprised the clan nobility, which was intent on preserving its traditional liberties. Its members were adherents of the old national culture based on myths and epic tales. The second party united the new (bureaucratic) nobility consolidated around absolute royal authority. It was Hellenized. Most probably, the passage under consideration expresses the point of view of the old nobility. See **Stepanyan**, 2012, 142–157.

impiety, immoderation, and egoism.[19] Consequently, two affective actors are possible with opposite impulses and motivations. Their influence on history may be measured by the structure and character of their personality.

According to Khorenatsi, the best exemplar of the first case is Alexander the Great: "[…] who was only three cubits high, though this did not impair the vigor of his spirit" [Khor., III, 8, 3].[20] Khorenatsi articulates this condition as *moderate affection* (չափաւոր մնլութիւն).[21] Among the Armenian historical actors, this is obvious in the portraits of Aram, Ara the Handsome, Tigran Eruandean, Artashēs the Elder. Their style of governing, according to Khorenatsi, proceeds from Hayk's experience: "Among the giants he was the bravest and was famous, the opponent of all who raised their hand to become absolute ruler over all the giants and heroes. He intrepidly raised his hand against the tyranny of Bēl […]" [Khor., I, 10, 2].[22] The portraits of some princes – Smbat Bagratuni, Erakhnavu Andzevatsi, Otta Amatuni, Vasak Mamikonean – meet these criteria as well. Khorenatsi's well–known description of Smbat is the

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[19] These ideas of Platonic psychology were adopted by Christian intellectuals. Particularly, they are apparent in Gregory of Nyssa (Greg. Nyssa, De virg. XV, 2, 18–20; XVI, 1, 6–12, 27–31 etc). See **Cadenhead**, 2018, 55–57.

[20] «[…] որ միայն երից կանգնող ունէր զչափ հասակի, եւ ոչ զհոգ-լոյն խափանէր աշխոյժս»: It was an old rhetorical trope to emphasise the greatness of Alexander due to his good affective features. It contains an obvious parallel with Ps.–Callisthenes, 179. Cf. **Thomson**, 1978, 261, n. 4.

[21] In Plato's *Phaedrus*, Lysias names *moderate affection* the best expression of friendship (φιλία) [Phaidr., 231a – 234c]. Later, in Skepticism, it was linked with the search of an adequate opinion. Cf. **Baird**, 2011, 257.

[22] In modern scholarship, this class of tales are defined as *formative myths* in so far as they contribute to the formation of ethnic/national identities (*origines gentium*). See **Pizarro**, 2003, 43–44.

most typical: "The stature of his limbs was in proportion to his valor; he pursued virtue of the spirit; was notable for the beauty of his hair […] In addition to being agile of person and body, he was moderate in all things and had a gift for success in battle more than anyone else" [Khor., II, 52, 2]. There are also heroines of this type: Princess Tigranuhi, Queen Ashkhen, Virgin Hripsimē and her companions. They are depicted as moderate and gentle, pious and devoted women. The author's formula of the character of Tigranuhi seems very pertinent: "[…] the most beautiful and intelligent among women" [Khor., I, 27, 5].[23]

The best exemplar of the second (negative) case is the Roman triumvir, M. Antony, who "[…] roared like a wild lion, especially envenomed by Cleopatra […]. And not only for the Armenians (was he severe) but for many other kings in his efforts to rule over their dominions" [Khor., II, 23, 2]. The same is true about the Sasanian king, Shapuh II – fierce, vicious, merciless and treacherous [Khor., III, 35, 2–12]. Khorenatsi formulates this condition as *obsession with affections* (ցանկական մոլեգնություն).[24] It is obvious in some of the Armenian kings – Eruand the Last, Artavazd the Younger, Arshak II, and Pap. Eruand the Last: "[…] a valiant man, vainglorious and proud" who had base affections from his birth [Khor., II, 52, 2; 61, 11]. Arshak II: "[…] but in his vanity continuously gloried in wine drinking and in songs of dancing girls (ի գինարբուս եւ յերգս վարձակաց). He seemed more brave and noble than Achilles, but in truth was like the lame and pointed–

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[23] Despite their common features, these Christian women were devoted to the Lord ready to be martyred for their beliefs. Armenian Church cultivated the image of the Hripsimean virgins to set up a new behavioral ideal for women. **Ormanean**, 2001, 79–81; cf. **Phyllis**, 1998, 50–53.

[24] However, Eghishē is more eloquent in his description of this kind of person: "[…] when no outer enemy is found they wage war against themselves" [Egh., I, 16]. Cf. **Stepanyan**, 2018, 184–188.

head Thersites. His own nobles rebelled against him until he received the reward of his pride" [Khor., III, 19, 10].[25] There are also eminent women who personify this vice. The Assyrian queen, Semiramis, who, "in the folly of her great passion […] had become madly enflamed" [Khor., I, 15, 6]. The same is true about the famous Egyptian queen Cleopatra. Among Armenian women, the author singles out the *impious queen*, Paṙandzem, the consort of Arshak II. He states, "This Paṙandzem worked an unheard and unimaginable crime worthy of inspiring horror in those who heard of it. Through an unworthy priest, falsely so named, she mixed mortal poison in the remedy of life and gave it to Olympias, Arshak's first wife" [Khor., III, 24, 5].

Predominance of the rational element. The somatic and affective elements are subordinate in this case. According to the Classical moral theory, this made up the basis of the harmonic stance of men in different areas of their private and social activity.

> *Following the classical tradition (and first of all Plato), Philo of Alexandria formulates the like situations as follows: "And the health of the soul is to have its faculties, reason, high spirit and desire happily tempered with the reason in command and reining in both the other two, like restive horses. The special name of this health is temperance, that is σωφροσύνη or "thought–preserving", for it creates a preservation of our powers, namely, that of wise–thinking" [Philo, Virt., III, 13].*[26]

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[25] The first sentence contains a standard portrait of an apostate. Eghishē uses it to describe the treacherous Vasak Siuni: "He continuously increased the allowances of the banqueting–hall, he extended the music of jollity, stretching out the nights in drunken singing and lascivious dancing (յերզս արբեցութեան եւ ի կաբաւս լկտութեան)" [Egh., III, 87].

[26] See in detail **Bechtle**, 1998, 377–392. On the possible collapse of this harmony into a chaotic situation, see **Dillon**, 1997, 190–197.

Khorenatsi finds Constantine the Great, the pious, merciful, and moderate emperor of Rome, to be the best personification of this harmony [Khor., II, 88, 10]. In Armenian history, it is obvious in the characters of great reformers. Vagharshak Arsacid: "[…] was a valiant and prudent man. He expanded his authority over his territories; and as far as he was able, he fixed the statues of civil life for this country" [Khor., II, 9, 3]. The main result of his activity was the good arrangement of Greater Armenia (բարեկարգութիւն).[27] Artashēs the Middle: "[…] in the time of Artashēs, there was no land unworked in Armenia, neither of mountain nor plain, on account of the prosperity of the country" [Khor., II, 56. 5].[28] Trdat the Great: "He chided and urged the greatest princes, and at the same time all the mass of common people, to become true Christians so that the deeds of all might bear witness to the faith" [Khor., III, 92, 6]. As it has been demonstrated before, these three kings were the authors of Armenian revival after periods of decline and disintegration. Their rational projects played a decisive role in that purpose.[29]

With the conversion to Christianity (301), clergymen took prominence in Armenian spirituality and culture.

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[27]   This is a correct translation of the Greek term εὐταξία denoting a situation when different components of a society were brought into balance. According to Plato, the balance would be comprised of *power* and *liberty* above all. The first represented royal authority (cohesion), while the second – the freedom of people (persuasion) [Plato, Leg., 719e – 722b]. Any deviation from this balance was fraught with either tyranny or anarchy. Cf. **Hall**, 2004, 100–102.

[28] Let us highlight again, this passage is to be discussed in contrast to the author's *Lament*, where Armenia is depicted as a land of total chaos [Khor., III, 68, 39–40]. **Stepanyan**, 2018, 30.

[29] This triad of kings, in the narrative of Khorenatsi, has been counterpoised by the church triad – Gregory the Illuminator, Nersēs the Great and Sahak Partev. The common feature of both triads is creativity resulting in new paradigms of Armenian identity.

In this vein, a group of intellectuals began to work out a new paradigm of Armenian identity in accordance with Christian axiology. This process was directed by the eminent leaders of the Church. Gregory the Illuminator: "From the eastern regions of our land, he arose for us as a true dawn, a spiritual sun and divine ray, an escape from the profound evil of idolatry, the source of blessing and spiritual prosperity […]" [Khor., III, 91, 19]. Nersēs the Great: "Summing a council of bishops in concert with laity, by canonical regulation he established mercy, extirpating the root of inhumanity, which was the natural custom of our land" [Khor., III, 20, 4]. Sahak Partev (whose death is assessed as an irreparable loss for the country): "No longer I see your rational flock pastured in a verdant place and by peaceful waters, nor gathered in a fold and protected from wolves, but scuttered to the wilderness and precipes" [Khor., III, 68, 4].[30] Blessed Mesrop Mashtots: "At that time Mesrop arrived, bringing the script for our language, and at the command of Vṙamshapuh and Sahak the Great he brought together selected children – intelligent, well spoken, with pleasing voices and long breath – and established schools in every province" [Khor., III, 54, 3].[31]

In this connection, the following fact must be highlighted. All these ideal clergymen lived and fulfilled their

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[30] The church triad was most probably canonized in the 5th century. During that period, the Armenian Church drew up its history as an irreversible movement to God. It was believed that the Church began to personify a new national identity. In this way, it also coined the concept of its priority over royal authority. Scholars think that the latter was brought to completion by the catholicos Sahak Partev in his renowned *Canons*. See **Thomson**, 1962, 379; **Garsoïan**, 1989, 56.

[31] On the whole, the Armenian historical tradition has played down the role of King Vṙamshapuh in the history of the invention of the Armenian script system. Most probably, the king of Persarmenia had enlisted the support of the Sasanian court. See **Stepanyan**, 2018, 61–64.

mission in the 4th century and at the beginning of the 5th, when (after Trdat the Great) the royal authority degraded. The kings Khosrov Kotak, Tiran the Last, Arshak II, and Pap personified moral and psychological vices. Certainly, this interpretation proceeds from the clerical circles tracing the root cause of the fall of Armenian Arsacids (428) in the retreat of the kings from divine justice.[32]

This contrast is apparent in the case of the last Arsacid king of Armenia, Artashir/Artashēs. Two figures are opposed – the king and the catholicos, Sahak Partev. In opposition to the ideal archbishop, the king is depicted as a person full of somatic and affective vices: "But Artashir, the king of Armenia, began to plunge without restraint into licentious pleasures to the extent that all the princes became disgusted with him. Coming to Sahak the Great they raised a complaint and invited him to help them in denouncing to the Persian king, in deposing their own king" [Khor., III, 63, 2; cf. Parp., I, 14, 7–17]. Condemning the king for his negative traits, the archbishop, nevertheless, tries to save *his lost lamb* and bring him back to the righteous path. But this endeavor is in vain – the fall of the Armenian Arsacids proves to be inevitable: "Though they (nakharars) disowned Artashēs/Artashir, things were not as they said, and those listening did not believe them. But they had resolved to abolish the Arsacid line's rule in the kingdom". [Parp., I, 14, 17].[33]

2. Status of the household/family

This aspect of Khorenatsi's narrative outlines two possible approaches for interpreting the problem – philosophical (moral) and legal. They make up the main focus of

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[32] On these events, see in detail **Traina**, 2004, 353–366.

[33] On the position of the catholicos during these crucial events, see **Ormanean**, 2001, 346–347. Cf. **Garsoïan**, 1997[1], 93; **Redgate**, 1998, 146–147.

this part of our investigation. We propose that only the combination of these aspects will give an opportunity to perceive the role of family (and its varieties) in Armenian History.[34]

a. The philosophical aspect of family

According to Aristotle, the family/household comes before the state and contains the essential features of it. The philosopher traces the most important of them in the *natural intention* of sexes to complement each other for the continuation of life and happiness. It makes up the foundation of the household, the first essential form of social partnership. The latter, in its turn, is based on a pair of opposite relations – *ruling* and *being ruled* [Aristot., Polit., I, 12, 1259b, 5–10].[35] The members of a household – wife, children, and servants – participate in it in accordance with the peculiarity of their souls: "The deliberative (rational) part of the soul is entirely missing from a slave; a woman has it but it lacks authority; a child has it but it is incompletely developed" [Aristot., Polit., I, 13, 1260a, 10].[36]

Philo of Alexandria applied this approach in his numerous works to explain biblical subjects.[37] A principal si-

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[34] Due to the scarcity of the information from primary sources, we decided to omit the problem of the differences between rural and urban families apparent in Graeco–Roman world. We depart from their (imagined) identity.

[35] According to Aristotle, the household/family is a focus of different relations – from biological sexuality to ownership and high morality. See in detail **Saunders**, 1999, 125–129; **Nagle**, 2006, 19–30.

[36] Through friendship bonds, it gives rise to polis, the best form of social partnership. The latter is viewed as the focus of individual and common happiness [Aristot., Pol., VII, 8, 1328a, 35]. See **Adkins**, 1984, 29–30.

[37] This approach is obvious in different aspects of Philo's works starting from the cosmic creation to family and morality. Cf. **Bos**,

milarity existed between Greek and biblical families – both
of them were monogamic.[38] For the philosopher, the patri-
arch Noah personified the ideal of paterfamilias. Applying
appropriate crafts and skills, he was *the best cultivator of
the earth and human souls*. [Philo, Plant., 17 19].[39]

At the same time, an obvious difference existed between
them as well. Like to the Aristotelian family, the biblical
family was patriarchal and united two or three genera-
tions. Early Christian thought developed this understand-
ing while defining a virtuous family as an embodiment of
God's covenant with the purpose of securing a peaceful
domestic life, where all members performed their (even
ritualized) duties and responsibilities [I Pet., 2:13–37;
I Tim., 2:8–19].[40] The father of the household was con-
sidered to be the guarantor of family harmony before the
Lord: "Whoever loves father or mother or son or daughter
more than me is not worthy to me" [Matt., 10:37].[41]

> However, in extreme cases, in the sight of God, the differences
> between family members may even be erased. A similar situation
> is described by Egheshē. It happened in the days of the Great
> Rebellion of the Armenians against Sasanian dominance led by
> Vardan Mamikonean (450–451): "Thenceforth the lord seemed
> no greater than the servant or the pampered noble than the rough

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1998, 69–73.

[38] Philo traces an essential feature in this, due to which the two soci-
eties are comparable in structure and ideology. Cf. **Sterling**, 2014,
133–147.

[39] Cain is considered as his opposite who is only *a worker of earth*
without skills and moral values, causing the gravest crime – fratricide.
Cf. **Geljon**, **Runia**, 2013, 101–119.

[40] On the interpretation of this theme in the context of Greco–Roman
and biblical social and cultural traditions, see **Barton**, 1997, 81–89.

[41] This ideal mode of relations, according to common perception,
could be achieved only through an appropriate education. **Barton**,
1994, 23–56.

villager, and no one was behind another in valor. One willing heart was shown by all – men and women, old and young, all united by Christ" [Eghishē, III, 116–117].[42]

Throughout all Armenian history, Khorenatsi views various forms of family integration (սուն, երդ, ծուխ) based on polygamy or monogamy.[43] Appian's record about the family of Tigran II seems rather critical. In 69 BC., when the capital of Greater Armenia Tigranakert was sieged by L. Lucullus, the king "[…] sent about six thousand (of his soldiers), who broke through the Roman line to the tower, and seized and brought away the king's concubines" [App., Mitr., 85].

In Greater Armenia, monogamy became the dominant form of marriage after the Ashtishat Council "of bishops in concert with the laity". It was held in 356 on the initiative of the archbishop Nersēs the Great. It aimed to establish "[…] mercy, extirpating the root of inhumanity, which was the natural custom in our land" [Khor., III, 20, 4]. Before that, though the country had converted to Christianity, polygamy dominated.[44] It is quite notable that eunuchs continued to occupy an eminent position among the high officials of the Armenian court.[45]

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[42] In other words, the Armenian covenant consisted of *images of the Lord* (*ἰνδάλμαι τοῦ Θεοῦ*). They indicated the highest rank of human being who had reached the communion with Him. It was believed they reached this level through ascetic devotion and experience. Cf. **Selminen**, 2017, 63–68.

[43] See in detail **Hovhannisyan**, 1973, 195–208. On the problem of the patriarchal Armenian family, see **Karapetyan**, 1958, 25–60.

[44] The Canons of Nersēs the Great allow us to conclude that polygamy was prevalent even among the clergymen: "Besides clerics (գրակար-դացք) and officials (պաշտաւնեայք), the bigamists must be detained by soldiers for perfidy […]" **Kanonagirk'**, 1964, 480.

[45] The following fact is rather notable. As highlighted above, although they had converted to Christianity, the Armenian kings still had hono-

Nevertheless, in both cases (polygamy or monogamy), one feature of the household was stable – it represented a combination of the abovementioned pair of role behaviors – *ruling* and *being ruled*. Additionally, every household was set up according to the same principle of triple symmetry and demonstrated three variants – either family integration excess, or deficiency, or balance. While the first two variants concerned the somatic and affective (female) elements, the third pole was identified with the rational (male) element.

Predominance of somatic and affective elements in the household. The first type of these classes of deviation was connected to excess while the second with the deficiency of the mentioned elements. Usually, they gave rise to negative human passions and acts. Khorenatsi traces similar situations in the households of the fierce rivals of Armenia. As for excess, it initiated the tyranny of the paterfamilias: Babylonian Bēl and Median Astiag were the best examples of that [Khor., I, 10, 4; 26, 2–5]. As for the deficiency, it generated a reverse condition of the dominance of the female element. Semiramis and Cleopatra were distinctive representatives of this [Khor., I, 15, 6; II, 21, 2–4].

Vicious forms of the household were characteristic for *lower époques* of Armenian history. The limitless authority of the father generated family tyranny. In this vein, Eruand the Last was the first among the Armenian kings. He is depicted by Khorenatsi, on the one hand, as a courageous and strong person, and as an insidious and hypocritical,

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red powerful eunuchs. Among them, the authors point out the princely house of Mardpetuni and the valiant Drastamat: "As for the eunuch Drastamat, in the days of Tiran king of Armenia and of his son Arshak of Armenia, he had been the prince of the royal district [tan gawaṙin] and had been entrusted with the treasures of the fortress of Angegh and with all the royal fortresses in those regions" [Buz., V, 7, 7]. On this *curiosity*, see **Adontz**, 1908, 319–320; **Manandyan**, 1934, 64–68.

one on the other: "However, the more liberal he was the more hateful he became. Everyone knew that he was not giving generously but spending out of fear. And he did not so much make friends of those to whom he gave much as make enemies of those to whom he gave less generously" [Khor., III, 45, 5–7].[46] The same was true about the family of Artavazd the Last. But the family of Arshak II occupied the first place with numerous acts of impiety and murder [Khor., II, 61, 11, III, 21–27].

As for the deficiency of family integration, it generated a reverse situation with the domination of the female element. According to Khorenatsi, this is most traceable in the households of the sons of Artashēs the Middle: "[…] the envy of the sons of Artashēs and their mutual provocation brought about by their wives" [Khor., II, 49, 2; cf. 53, 10].[47] The same is true about Arshak III, who frequently acts with the instigation of his wife [Khor., III, 43, 4–5]. Regarding these kings, the following formula is quite appropriate, for they all "[…] ruled without exhibiting any brave deed worthy of record" [Khor., II, 62, 3].

Family corruption under excesses and deficiencies is rather precisely formulated in the renowned *Lament*, which concludes the narrative of Khorenatsi's *History*. Houses "are sacked and possessions ravaged"; children are "lazy to study and eager to teach"; masters and servants are likeminded [Khor., III, 68, 33, 36, 43].[48]

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[46] This image has been composed in accordance with the principle of antinomy. In Hellenistic political theory, benevolence (εὐεργεσία) was thought to be the main characteristic of every good ruler. He practiced that due to his kingly character (ἀνήρ βασιλικός) but not in private. **Goodenough**, 1928, 68; **De Callatay**, **Lorber**, 2011, 424–425.

[47] «[…] եւ նախանձ որդւոցն Արտաշիսի եւ գրգռութիւն ընդ միմեանս ի ձեռն կանանց»:

[48] «Գերփումն տանց եւ հափշտակութիւն ստացուածոց», «աշակերտք հեղգք առ ուսումն եւ փոյթ առ ի վարդապետել», «իշխանք […] ծառայիցն համամիտք»:

Predominance of the rational element in the household. In Khorenatsi's narrative, Armenian history begins with an ideal patriarchal household which belongs to the hero–eponym, Hayk. He left Babylon and moved north "[…] to the land of Ararat, which is in the northern regions, with his sons and daughters and sons' sons, martial men about three hundred in number, and other domestic servants and the outsiders who had joined his service and all his effects" [Khor., I, 10, 6; cf. Anonym, I, 1–2]. In other words, the household–clan consisted of two categories of members: ***a. agnates*** – the direct descendants of the patriach (consanguinity), ***b***. ***cognates*** – the wives and domestic servants, and outsiders – the servants who joined later (heterosanguinity).[49] All of them were under the authority of the patriarch and had to obey and fulfill his commands.[50] In this, Khorenatsi sees the guarantee of the successes of the Haykids – to defeat the horde of Bēl, to obtain and populate the *northern land* – the future Armenia.[51]

> The ancient epic tale of Hayk and Haykids has been revised according to Hellenistic political theory and rhetoric. This ideological trend is apparent in the concept of terra nullius (nobody's land). The fact is that Alexander and his generals considered the subjugation of new countries in this light. For them, the moral, religious, cultural, and ethnic aspects of the problem were of special importance. In accordance with this, Khorenatsi states: "[…] in many places of our land there were dwelling a few

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[49] On these two categories of servants/slaves, see **Eremyan**, 1950, 21.

[50] About key theories regarding this problem see **Waters**, 1989, 195–207. On the Armenian household/clan (ազդ) and its parallels in Georgian society, see **Eremyan**, 1948, 35–37. Cf. **Karapetyan**, 1958, 54–56.

[51] On the problem of historicity of the epic tale of the dissemination of the Haykids in the *Northern Lands* and the formation of Armenia, see in detail **Sargsyan**, 2006[1], 46–70.

scattered men before the arrival of our original ancestor Hayk [Khor., I, 12, 14]".[52]

Khorenatsi believes that this kind of family integration was characteristic for the *top epoques* of Armenian history – under Vagharshak Arsacid, Artashēs the Middle, and Trdat the Great. As a rule, they began reform activity from their household. Vagharshak provides the best example: "In the royal palace, he established fixed rules, distinguishing the times for audience, councils, feasts, and amusements" [Khor., II, 8, 36].[53]

However, these descriptions refer only to the *noble households*; the author has no relevant information about the polygamy among commoners. Probably, it was a marker of high social rank. In this vein, the following fact also seems worthy to be taken into consideration. At the end of the 5th BC., traveling in Armenia and visiting numerous villages, and describing their everyday life, Xenophon, in his *Anabasis*, provides no evidence of polygamy in Armenian families.

b. Legal aspect of family integration.

It has been noted above that family relations in ancient Armenia were regulated in accordance with, on the one hand, the traditional (habitual) right, and Iranian (Zoroastrian) legal norms, on the other. After the con-

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[52] This concept gained a new interpretation in the Industrial Age as an ideological justification of colonial expansion. It was even combined with the basic Christian idea of *creatio ex nihile*. On this ideological metamorphosis, see in detail **Bauman**, 2009, 88–104.

[53] In an essential sense, the person of the king, his house and court were considered as the center of the country. Hence the political, administrative, religious and charismatic impulses emanated to the far peripheries, securing the unity of the country. This tradition reached back to Assyria and came to complete fruition in Hellenistic states. **Strootman**, 2007, 111–124. On the Armenian experience, see **Stepanyan**, 2012, 280–291.

version to Christianity, biblical legal norms gradually replaced them.[54] This basically changed the social and moral context of society. Inherently, this transition made up the essence of the evolution of the Armenian family over time.[55]

The patriarchal family was based on land ownership. Clan property was under the control of the paterfamilias (տանուտէր). Essentially, it belonged to the past, present, and future generations.[56] The present generation was thought of as a collective landholder obliged to save and transfer it to descendants.[57] In the *History* of Khorenatsi, this is best of all traceable in the example of the royal clan. The king was the paterfamilias responsible for the welfare of his relatives (Arsacids). He dwelt in the royal domain (ոստան), Ayrarat, with his family and the crown–prince. The other members of the clan were allotted land portions in the provinces Hashteank, Aḷiovit, and Aṙberan.[58]

From this point of view, the following account of Khorenatsi regarding Artavazd the Elder seems very relevant: "He established his brothers and sisters as heir in the provinces of Aḷiovit and Aṙberan, leaving for them the

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[54] On this process, see **Ghltchean**, 1913, 7–9; **Samuelyan**, 1939, 44–48.

[55] **Ghltchean**, 1904, 6–11.

[56] Cf. **Karapetyan**, 1958, 89–90.

[57] This structure shows typological parallels with other patriarchal (clan) societies, and the fundamental ideas of M. Weber seem quite relevant to describe it. See **Weber**, 1963/1968, 1018–1034. M. Weber defined this relationship in terms of *traditional patrimony*. However, in Armenian studies, there is a steady tradition of tracing features of *eternal feudalism* in ancient Armenia. **Adontz**, 1908, 453–479; **Manandyan**, 1934, 256–266; **Toumanoff**, 1963, 108–129; **Garsoïan**, 1989, 49–50; **Garsoïan**, 1997[1], 75–77.

[58] On the royal domain of the Armenian Artaxiads and Arsacids and the legal settlement of relations of royal family members see **Manandyan**, 1934, 191–195.

royal portion in the villages of those provinces with their special incomes and rents, according to the example of his kinsmen in the regions of Hashteank, so that they would have a more honorable and royal position than these latter Arsacids. He only prescribed that they could not live in Ayrarat, the royal residence" [Khor., II, 22, 2–3].

In another passage, the author informs that the distribution of allotments was brought about per capita (ըստ մարդաթուի) and it was repeated from time to time [Khor., II, 62, 8]. It is quite notable that the same system worked in communities of peasants (ռամիկը).[59] It must be added that, besides participation in collective property, members of the nobility could have their private estates (դաստակերտք, ազարակք) obtained for state service or bought.[60]

The experience of the royal clan demonstrates that women also had their portion in clan property. In the cited record, Artavazd the Elder recognized the right of inheritance for both his brothers and sisters. Other passages from Khorenatsi confirm this information. In this regard, the most relevant is the story of Spandarat Kamsarakan, whose clan was massacred by Arshak II: "Not one of them escaped except Spandarat, the son of Arshavir, for he had an Arsacid wife and had settled in her hereditary lands (բնակեցաւ ի նորին ժառանգութիւն) in the regions of Tarawn and Hashteank on the grounds that he had a quarel with his uncle Nerseh" [Khor., III, 31, 5].[61]

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[59] On the social status of village communities and their members – *ṙamiks* and *shinakans*, see **Manadyan**, 1934, 148–171; **Eremyan**, 1948, 38–40.

[60] On the private estates of nobility in the Hellenistic world and Greater Armenia, see **Eremyan**, 1948, 40–43; **Sargsyan**, 1962, 39–53, **Sargsyan**, 1967, 97–101. On the etymology and social significance of the term *dastakart* in Sasanian Persia, see **MHD** (**Perikhanian**), 1997 (Glossary), 349–351.

[61] In other words, it was a matrilocal marriage. This fact is confirmed

This is in full accordance with the Iranian law practice compiled in the corpus entitled Mātiyān i–Hazar Datastan (The Book of a Thousand Judges).[62] *The case under consideration can be defined as apamānd – "succession, inheritance" that supplied a daughter a share (bahr ī duxt) of father's property along with the shares of the son (bahr ī pus) and wife (bahr ī zan)* [**MHD (Perikhanian***), 44, 12; 51, 15; 52, 10 etc*]. *The only difference was that the son–heir received a double share (bahr ī dō(v)īh).*[63]

Probably, Eghishē had this exact right of inheritance in mind, highlighting that, after the Great Revolt against Sasanian domination (450–451), Armenian noblewomen began to restore devastated family estates, replacing their deceased husbands and sons [Eghishē, VII, 93–108]. In other words, they became the actual heads of their clans, obliged to preserve and pass on the collective property to the next generation.[64]

These legal regulations primarily concerned the *well–arranged* families (cum manu maritimi). In the *Mātiyān*, it is defined as *pātixšāyīh – a full–right marriage*. In this case, through a sacred marriage ritual, a woman abandoned her native agnatic group (and the authority of her father or elder brother) to enter the authority of her hus-

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by unwritten (mores maiorum) and written legal norms of medieval Armenia. See **Ghltchean**, 1904, 7–9; **Barkhudaryan**, 1966, 26–28. In his renowned Datastanagirk' (Corpus Legum), Mkhitar Gosh traces the Armenian woman's status from the Mosaic Laws [Gosh, Datastanagirk', II, 62–63]. In his time, the memory of the Iranian legal heritage was entirely erased.

[62] The *Sasanian Law–Book* contained legal norms reaching back to the earliest times of Iranian history. It was enriched by Zoroastrian religious dogmas and practices. See **Macuch**, 2015, 290–291.

[63] See in detail *apamānd* in **MHD** (**Perikhanyan**), 1997 (Glossary), 337.

[64] According to European travelers, this traditional right was valid even at the beginning of the 19th century. **Barkhudaryan**, 1966, 25.

band or his father. She became a legitimate member of the new agnatic group (*zan ī pātixšāyīhā*) and her potential sons and daughters would be recognized as rightful members of the latter – legitimate son (*pus ī pātixšāyīhā*) and daughter (*duxt ī pātixšāyīhā*) [**MHD** (**Perikhanian**), 36, 2; 36, 16–17; 44, 4; 49, 3; 70, 6 etc].[65] It is comparable with the Roman marriage known as *confarreatio* with absolute *patria potestas* over a woman in the agnatic group of her husband.[66] She gained this status by going through a ritual of adoption.

Khorenatsi describes an excellent example of this case on the occasion of Trdat the Great: "When Trdat arrived in our land, he sent General Smbat, the father of Bagarat, to bring the maiden Ashkhen, the daughter of Ashkhadar, to be his wife. This maiden was no less tall than the king. He ordered her to be inscribed as an Arsacid, to be vested with purple, and to be crowned in order to become the king's bride" [Khor., II, 83, 2–4]. Undoubtedly, Khorenatsi is talking about the same ritual of adoption.

In some cases, the Armenian kings kidnapped their brides and paid a ransom for them. Khorenatsi concerns this practice retelling the story of the marriage of Artashēs the Middle. As it was mentioned above, he kidnapped the princess of the Alans, Satinik, and paid a high bride price. He entered into a *pātixšāyīh* marriage with her. On these grounds: "She was the first of Artashēs' wives and bore

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[65] *Pātixšāyīh/Pātixšāyīhā* – in general "full–right relations". In the family, it denoted the limits of rights and responsibilities of the lawful members. **MHD** (**Perikhanian**), 1997 (Glossary), 380. In a more particular sense, the term denoted the patriarchal authority of the head of a household (*katak xvātāy*) – paterfamilias. Consequently, full–right marriages were under his authority. Only in this form of marriage, a person of full legal capacity could be born (*twānīk*). Cf. **Shaki**, 1971, 323–324; **Perikhanian**, 1983, 639–644.

[66] Patria potestas, **Nickolas**, 1992, 789.

him Artavazd and many others […]" [Khor., II, 50, 18].[67] Let us highlight once again that only the children born in this marriage were the prime heirs of the paternal property. Besides the full–right marriage, another form of family was in practice as well. In that case, a woman who was not enrolled in the agnatic group of her husband, would not be under his (or his father's) full authority. With her nearest kinsmen, she continued to share the authority of her father (or eldest brother) as a legitimate member of her native agnatic group. In other words, her marriage was *sine manu maritimi*. The Iranian legal practice defined that as *bagaspān orʿxvasrūyonīh* [**MHD (Perikhanian)**, 21, 9; 41, 10].[68]

Most probably, Khorenatsi has this form of marriage in mind when describing the family of the prince Trdat Bagratuni, who had married Eraneak, the daughter of King Tiran: "She hated her husband Trdat and was continuously grumbling and complaining, lamenting that she, a beautiful woman, lived with an ugly man, and that being of noble family she lived with a man of ignorable origin" [Khor., II, 63, 3].[69] It seems true about the prince Gnel Arsacid as well. The nephew of King Arshak II neglected the ancestral rule and dwelt in Ayrarat, in the township (ավան) Kuash with his (blinded and retired) grandfather, King Tiran [Khor., III, 22, 3].

He gained the respect of the nakharars: "They were pleased and friendly toward him and gave him their children. These he accepted and grandly equipped them with

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[67] Therefore, the suggestion that upper–class families were monogamic in Armenia cannot be accepted. Cf. **Barkhudaryan**, 1966, 29.

[68] **MHD** (**Perikhanian**), 1997 (Glossary), 344.

[69] The carefree behavior of Eraneak testifies that, despite her marriage, she considered herself an Arsacid princess and had a share in royal household property. However, she was forced to live in the Bagratuni court in a full–right marriage. Most probably, this status was regulated by a special agreement.

arms and finery, so they loved him all the more" [Khor., III, 22, 5]. Arshak demanded that he leave for the provinces Hashteank, Aḷiovit or Aṙberan, and Gnel obeyed him. But soon it become clear that he had inherited Shahapivan – the estate of his maternal grandfather Gnel Gnuni – situated in the district Tsaghkotn in a neighborhood close to the royal domain [Khor., III, 22, 12 13].[70]

There was also a third form of marriage defined in Iranian legal practice as *sturīh* – a modification of *sine manu maritimi*. It was aimed at securing the continuity of the given household. More often, this form was in use when a paterfamilias died without leaving a male heir; his widow or mature daughter were obliged to marry to provide him with an offspring. Two forms of *sturīh* (conditional) marriage were considered lawful: *a.* natural (or levirate), when the widow or daughter married an agnate of the deceased, *b.* legal, when the new husband was chosen *from outside*. Both forms are apparent in Khotenatsi's text.

The most obvious reference to this form of marriage is contained in a passage of Khorenatsi regarding King Tiran the Elder: "In his days, there was a youth of the clan of Andzevatsis named Erakhnavu, who was noble in everything. He married the last wives of (the late) Artavazd brought from Greece. In view of the fact that Artavazd had left no children, the king bestowed on him Artavazd's all house, since he was known as a kind and frugal and modest in bodily passions. The king liked him and gave him also the *second rank* that earlier belonged to Artavazd"

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[70] This implies that Gnel preferred his maternal lineage and accepted the inheritance of his maternal grandfather, Gnel Gnuni. In the terms of the Iranian legal experience, it meant that his mother had been a *stūr–duxt* (daughter) obliged to give a legal heir to her native (paternal) household. If this suggestion is right, Gnel was now considered a *duxtdat son*. Cf. **Shaki**, 1975, 48–53; **MHD (Perikhanian)**, 1997 (Glossary), 343.

[Khor., II, 62, 9–11]. The abovementioned Prince Trdat Bagratuni also was born in the marriage under consideration. According to the author: "King Tiran married his daughter Eraneak to a certain Trdat Bagratuni, the son of Smbatuhi, daughter of the valiant Smbat […]" [Khor., II, 63, 2]. Probably, the prince Smbat had no male heir, and Smbatuhi entered in *sturīh* marriage to secure the continuity of her paternal clan.[71]

This approach provides a key to a new interpretion of the life–drama of Arshak II. His marriage to the Roman Emperor's *relative*, Olympias, was childless. He kept his elder nephew, Tirit, close as crown–prince in Ayrarat province. However, the latter saw in Gnel a serious concurrent and began to spin an intrigue against him. He convinced the king that Gnel was involved in a regicidal conspiracy. Gnel's fate was sealed. Soon, the prince was killed on a royal hunt. According to tradition, it happened with full consent of the insidious and cunning king.

The next fragment of this tale continues to "prove" a negative characteristic of King Arshak. He seduced the widow of Gnel, the lady Pařandzem: "However, Arshak showed no repentance or contrition but shamelessly rifled the treasuries and inheritance of the dead man and even married his wife Pařandzem. From her was born a son who was called Pap" [Khor., III, 24, 4].[72]

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[71] In the terms of the Iranian legal experience, the princess Smbatuhi was the *stūr–duxt* of her father and her son became the full–right heir of the Bagratuni noble house.

[72] Usually scholars discuss this passage as a typical epic tale, focusing their attention on its literary merits. This approach obscures the historical and (particularly) legal context of the narrative. In this, they proceed from the interpretations of Faustus Buzand. Cf. **Harutyanyan**, 1987, 112–115. Meanwhile, careful observation is able to uncover numerous new aspects. In our concrete case, it is the *stūr marriage* proposed to Pařandzem by Tirit and Arshak. Cf. **Macuch**, 2006, 591–594. Both proposals were in full accordance with pre–Christian (pre–Ashtishat) legal

Faustus Buzand describes a version of the events which differs only in details. It presents a love triangle drama between Gnel, Tirit, and Arshak who are charmed by Paṙandzem, the beautiful and modest princess of the Siuni clan. She has been married to Gnel, who falls victim to the intrigue planned by Tirit with the silent support of Arshak. Tirit asks permission to marry the widow, but the king rejects his demand. Moreover, he murders the crown–prince and marries the widow: "Paṙandzem bore a boy to the king and he was called Pap, and he was nursed and raised to manhood" [Buz., IV, 11, 70 75].

The discussion of the passage in light of the *sturīh* marriage takes away the main charge against the king. Indeed, besides rumors, we do not have any real evidence regarding the participation of the king in the murder of Gnel. One thing is indisputable: since the prince had passed away childless, the king, as the head of the Arsacid clan, was obliged to marry the widow of his nephew, to protect his property and pass it on to a legal son.[73] Paṙandzem bore a boy, Pap, but Arshak was only his *stur father*. The long–expected child legally belonged to the dead Gnel.

According to Iranian legal practice, King Arshak was the pit ī čakar – natural but not legal father of Pap. Respectively, by his social status, the boy was the čakardat pus – natural but not legal son of the king.[74]

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practices of the Armenians.

[73] In the *Mātiyān ī Hazār Dātastān*, this form of matrimony is defined as a *stūr ī būtak* – a natural stūr marriage when the deceased man's widow entered into nuptials with one of his agnates. **MHD (Perikhanian)**, 1997 (Glossary), 387. Sometimes, it was called a *čakarīh* – levirate marriage. **Carlson**, 1984, 103–108. However, this form of marriage was present in many traditions as well. The biblical story of Tamar and Judah is the best illustration of that [Gen., 38: 6–26].

[74] Cf. **Perikhanian**, 1983, 649–650; **MHD (Perikhanian)**, 1997 (Glossary), 347; **Shaki**, 1999, 187–189.

As it has been highlighted above, polygamy (and its relics) was outlawed at the Council of Ashtishat: "These two things he (Nersēs the Great) abolished from the princely families: first, the marriage of close relatives, which they practiced for the sake of their own property; and second, the crimes they committed over the dead according to the heathen custom" [Khor., III, 20, 12; cf. Buz., IV, 4, 42]. It is about the incestuous marriages that were common in Zoroastrian family law – *xvēdodah*. Moreover, Zoroastrian axiology indicated that as a sacred form of matrimony.[75]

> *Regarding the reign of Tigran IV (20–6 BC.), Tacitus highlights: "Neither Tigranes, nor his children reigned long, although they, following the foreign custom, married and shared the throne between them" [Tacit., Ann, II, 3]. This form of marriage became an object of ardent criticism of the Armenian authors of the 5th century – especially Eghishē [Egh., II, 307].*[76]

The Ashtishat regulation, naturally, had yet not rooted out the old custom entirely. Nevertheless, Arshak had a serious problem naturalizing of Pap as his legal son. It must be taken into consideration that after Ashtishat, the king lost the right of having two (and more) wives since monogamy was declared as the norm of family integration. The royal family was expected to be an example of true Christian morality.

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[75] It was considered the most desirable form of patrilineal (or agnatic) matrimony. Cf. **Shaki**, 1999, 186; **Macuch**, 2017, 330.

[76] "Daughters shall be [wives] for fathers and sisters for brothers. Mothers shall not withdraw from sons, and grandchildren shall ascend the couch of grandfathers". Eghishē's passage reflects the Christian axiology [Egh., II, 307], cf. **Christensen**, 1944, 323–324. Meanwhile, this form of marriage was characteristic of many Hellenistic ruling houses. It was designed to denote their exclusive social and religious status. See **Ager**, 2005, 29–34.

According to our authors, the problem was settled
by (now declared treacherous and merciless) Paṙandzem
who poisoned her rival, Queen Olympias [Khor., III, 24,
6; Buz., IV, 15, 79]. We do not know if this information
is accurate. One thing is apparent – it gave Paṙandzem a
chance to reshape her marriage to the king and be declared
as a full–right royal consort. We can also suppose that she
was "inscribed as an Arsacid" and crowned. Respectively,
she took over all responsibilities arising from this status
as for the royal house as for Greater Armenia. On these
grounds, it was quite natural that Pap was legitimized and
declared the crown–prince of Greater Armenia.[77] Thence,
the continuity of royal lineage was secured.

> *According to Iranian law, the child (natural son) now gained a*
> *new status and became the legal son of the king (pus ī dātastān).*
> *As for Paṙandzem, she abandoned the status of widow–stūr and,*
> *"divorcing" the late prince Gnel, was recognized as the rightful*
> *royal consort (zan ī pātixšāyīhā).*

These facts and considerations shed new light on the
last days of Queen Paṙandzem: it was during the four–year
war (364–368), King Arshak was treacherously arrested
by Shapuh II. The Persians captured, plundered and de-
vastated the country in collaboration with Armenian
rebels. The apostates, Meruzhan Artsruni and Vahan
Mamikonean, were merciless [for details see Buz., IV,
58–59]. It caused horror. Many nakharars – even those
who previously took the side of the Persians – "fled to the
land of the Greeks" with their families. However, Queen
Paṙandzem did not join them, she "[…] did not obey her
husband's summons, but with the treasures took refuge in
the castle Artagetk'" [Khor., III, 35, 5].

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[77] Iranian law provided a special procedure for this transition. Cf.
Perikhanian, 1983, 654–655; **MHD** (**Perikhanian**), 1997 (Glos-
sary), 353.

Our principal authors do not reveal the real cause of this *strange* behavior. Indeed, why did the queen not leave the country? Was she unaware of the danger? Hardly. The only reasonable answer is as follows – as emphasized above, the full–right royal consort felt herself responsible for the royal house and the whole country. It must also be added that this behavior was in full accordance with important evidence from Eghishē – as it was emphasized above, after the Great Revolt, noblewomen began to restore their family estates to secure the transfer of them to the next generation.[78]

To complete this aspect of our discussion, the following needs to be taken into consideration – in pre–Ashtishat families, concubines (հարճք) existed as well.[79] Young, beautiful and attractive, they belonged to eminent nobles marking their high social prestige. They were equated to servants but with a notable difference – they were called to satisfy the *subtle demands* of their masters. Sometimes, they were even in close relationships with them and this guaranteed them power and influence.[80]

Antique authors inform us about the concubines of Tigran II. In Khorenatsi's text, two of them are eminent

[78] "They forgot their feminine weakness and became men heroic at spiritual warfare. […] The widows among them became second brides of virtue, removing from themselves the opprobrium of widowhood" [Egh., VII, 93, 97]. Cf. **Stepanyan**, 2018, 196–197.

[79] This Armenian term most probably has an Iranian origin – harčī, though it is not attested. **Achaṙyan**, 1977, 60–61; cf. **Shahbazi**, 2003, 672.

[80] The institute of concubines, besides the aforementioned aspects, played an important role in regulating the situation in Hellenistic courts through unofficial instructions, gossip and extravagant behavior. With "close royal servants", – eunuchs, perfumers, doctors, tailors, hairdressers – they took care of the body of a king. It is believed that the Hellenistic court hierarchy was mostly influenced by the Achaemenid experience. Cf. **Brosius**, 1996, 94–95; **Strootman**, 2017, 121–142.

– Mandu and Nazinik. The first belonged to Argam, the
head of the clan Muratsean, the second to Bakur Siuni –
"very remarkable for beauty and carriage". Usually, they
played, sang, and danced (*sang by hands*) to entertain
the master and his guests. They were rated highly and at
times became the object of lust of others [Khor., II, 51, 5;
63, 6].[81] It seems, the Iranian term *tan* (*body*) indicated
just this group of slaves. We have no information about
their children. They, most probably, occupied the status of
bastard–servants.

3. Isomorphism "household – society"

Some aspects of this isomorphism have already been
the focus of our discussion. Now, the problem is to sum-
marize and systematize them. For this purpose, the follow-
ing needs to be highlighted – family and society integra-
tion, according to Khorenatsi, were composed in accor-
dance with three basic principles: common blood, reason,
and belief (արեամբ, բանիւ, դենիւ).[82] They corresponded
to the three forms of Armenian identity: ethnie, political
nation, and religious covenant.[83]

a. Household and forms of national integrity

The first principle – common blood – indicates the
level where the two poles of integration (household and
society) are identical. A similar situation is the example
of Hayk and his descendants. Armenia (Հայք) is depicted
as an expanded household, the nucleus of which consists

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[81] Khorenatsi's story of Prince Trdat Bagratuni and the concubine
Nazinik is the best illustration of that [Khor., II, 63, 6–12].

[82] This is the basic ideology of so–called patriarchal societies in
different parts of world from China to Western Europe. Cf. **Weber**,
1963/1968, 1071–1076; **Hamilton**, 1984, 393–425; **Hamilton**, 1990,
79–102.

[83] Cf. **Stepanyan**, 1991, 146–156.

of blood relatives (agnates).[84] According to the official ideology, they gradually spread to the far borders of the land, therefore it is named *House of the Armenians* (*Snιŭ huyng*): "This Hayk, son of Torgom, son of Tiras, son of Gomer, son of Japheth was the ancestor of the Armenians" [Khor., I, 12, 36].

> *In this respect, the following fact deserves to be highlighted – Khorenatsi's patron, the hazarapet of Persarmenia Sahak Bagratuni, proposed him to depict the past of Armenia as a family history: "[...] to write the history of our nation in a long and useful work, to deal with the kings and the princely clans and families: who descended from whom, what each one of them did, which of various tribes are indigenous and native and which are of foreign origin but naturalized" [Khor., I, 3, 10].*[85]

This period is known as the time of the hereditary domination of the Haykids, which saw outstanding rulers – Aram, Ara the Handsome, Tigran Eruandean. According to the author, this period continued to the days of Alexander of Macedon, when the last Haykid ruler, Vahe, was killed. In ancient understandings, this form of integration was defined as *ethnie* (ἔθνος), with a father's full power over his subjects (δεσπότης).[86] Let us highlight again that it

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[84] From the point of view modern theory, *terra nulius* was semiotized (and recreated) through the names of Hayk's descendants – Kadmos, Aramaneak, Amasya, Gegham, Parogh, Tsolak, Harmay, etc. Their names became sui generis *signs of topology*. On the theoretical aspects of the problem, see **Stewart**, 1966, 4–9; **Frutiger**, 1989, 40–42.

[85] Sahak Bagratuni has been recognized as the *alter ego* of Khorenatsi. During all his narrative, the author is in (sometimes emotional) dialogues with the prince who, as it becomes clear, knows Armenian history in epic vein. See **Stepanyan**, 1991, 172–176.

[86] Scholars define some basic features of ethnie: *a.* historic territory or homeland, *b.* common mythical ancestor(s) *c.* common language (internal communication), *d.* common myths and historical memories,

is governed by ancestral customs (*moria maiorum*) since society has no idea about written laws. Respectively, the rule of such a leader is formulated as *care* (խնամք) of people.[87] This is apparent in the assessment of the reign of Tigran Eruandean: "He was just and equal in every judgement, and he weighed all the circumstances of each case impartially. He did not envy the noble nor did he despise the humble, but over all alike he spread the mantle of his care" [Khor. I, 24, 13–14].[88]

> *This statement is reminiscent of Plato's renowned idea: "[...] in the use of the word "father", would the care of a father be implied and the filial reverence and duty and obedience to him which the law commands" [Plato, Rep., V, 469d].*[89]

As it was noted, in modern sociology, this form of integration is sometimes formulated as *traditional patrimony*. This concerned not only centralized state power but also the local principalities and clans under their fathers (նահապետք, տանունտէրք) – the Bznunis, Ordunis, Khorkhorunis, Manavazeans, Siunis, etc.[90] The outstan-

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e. common beliefs. Cf. **Armstrong**, 1982, 3–13; **Smith**, 1986, 22–31.

[87] In modern theory, ancestral customs are discussed as necessary knowledge for structuring of early social life: "Structure has no existence independent of knowledge that agents have about what they do in their day–today activity". **Goody**, 1984, 26. Cf. **Collins**, 1986, 267–279.

[88] Most probably, this is a passage from the "Apology of Tigran" compiled according to the canons of Hellenistic rhetoric. **Abeghyan**, 1968, 301–305.

[89] Plato proceeded from the idea of good life under paternal rule (τῷ πατρίῳ νομῷ): "But wherever law is despot over the rulers, and rulers are slaves to the laws, there I foresee salvation and all blessings which the gods bestow on cities" [Plato, Leg., IV, 715d]. Cf. **Dusenbury**, 2017, 42.

[90] Their rule was based on the ancestral customs (բարք եւ սովորութիւնք) which regulated all areas of social life of the Armenians.

ding kings – Vagharshak Arsacid, Artashēs the Middle, Trdat the Great – assuming the reins of Greater Armenia, legitimized their hereditary rights. Sometimes, the kings created new principalities too.

This well–balanced setting of social life, according to Khorenatsi, has an antiform in barbarity deprived of stable institutions, legal and moral rules (ազգք խուռդղուծ, վայրենի). We have already touched on this problem above. Regarding King Vagarshak's campaign to the Caucasus Mountains, he records: "He summoned there the barbarious foreign race that inhabited the northern plain and the foothills of the great Caucasus Mountain and vales or long and deep valleys that descend from the mountain on the south to the great plain. He ordered them to cast off their banditary and assassinations and become subject to royal commands and taxes, so that when he next saw them he might appoint leaders and princes with proper institutions" [Khor., II, 6, 5].[91]

The second principle indicates the level where the identity of family and society is already lost, but a reasonable balance between them can be established on newgrounds. Instead of ancestral customs, laws (աւրէնք) were introduced as the regulators of social relations.[92] With laws, according to Khorenatsi, societies are capable to reachthe harmony of their basic elements. From this point of view, the periods of the reign of the following eminent kingsare most typical – Vagharshak Arsacid, Artashēs the Middle, Trdat the Great. Vagharshak Arsacid: "He extended his authority over his territories; as far as he was able, he fixed

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Adontz, 1908, 467.

[91] In Khorenatsi's narrative, barbarity is an asocial condition of life. It is a *sui generis* departing point for demonstrating the vast diversity of forms of social and political integrity. Cf. **Stepanyan**, 1991, 145. In the present monograph, we have scrutinized this theme in Chapters 2 and 9.

[92] In classical political theory, this is formulated as the transition from unwritten laws to written. **Humphreys**, 1988, 478–481.

statutes of *civil life* for this country" [Khor., II, 3, 2]. In a more detailed manner: "He appointed judges at court and judges in the cities and towns." [Khor., II, 8, 40]. One of the significant results of this transformation was the formation of a new mode of social integrity that antique political theory formulated as *political community* (κοινωνία πολιτική = կարգ կենցաղական, կարգ քաղաքական).[93]

In the mind of the author, it gave rise to monarchy. The central figures of that were kings and their close entourage (court), designed to establish peace and order through *persuasive and compulsory methods* of rule (հաւանողական կամ բռնաւորական բանիւ) [Khor., II, 92, 3 9].[94] The algorithm of their creative activity is formulated as the following: "[…] the ordering and organization of houses, families, cities, villages, estates, and in general the entire constitution of the kingdom (աւրէն թագաւորութեան), and whatever is of relevance to the kingdom […]" [Khor., II, 8, 2–3].[95]

From this point of view, the experience of Trdat the Great is notable as well: "He chided and urged the greatest princes, and at the same time all the mass of the common people, to become true Christians so that the deeds of all might bear witness to his faith" [Khor., II, 92, 6]. To be more correct, it contained characteristics of a transition to

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[93] Khorenatsi connects the transition from barbarity to political community with the activity of *wise men and governors* (իմաստունք եւ վերակացունք) who are well acquainted with the art of statesmanship [Khor., II, 6, 6]. See in detail **Stepanyan**, 1991, 171–181.

[94] This concept reaches back to the Stoics and Plato, tracing in power a balance of these two opposite poles – persuasion and compulsion (ἦθος καὶ κράτος) [Plato, Rep., I, 350d – 352d; Leg., IV, 718a–c]. See in detail **Bobonich**, 1991, 365–376.

[95] This reveals an obvious parallel with the rhetorical formulae of ideal royal authority which "[…] makes up the most relevant cause of prosperity of rural places, cities and every household" [**GP**, I, 2, 20–25].

the next level of social integrity focused on the image of
the Omnipotent God.

To a large extent, the harmony of social life depended
on the balance between the persuasive and compulsory
principles. Their imbalance was fraught with either tyranny
or ochlocracy. Forceful methods, according to Khorenatsi,
dominated in the tyrannical regimes of the kings Eruand
the Last, Atravazd the Last, Arshak II, and Pap. The por-
trait of Pap Arsacid seems most typical. The author is silent
about his efforts at the reinforcement of the sovereignty of
Greater Armenia and focuses attention on his conflict with
the archbishop Nersēs and the Roman Emperor. According
to him, Fortune retaliated against the king – he was cap-
tured by *the valiant general Terentius*: "In iron bonds he
went before Theodosius the Great, but for his insolence
was put to death with axe" [Khor., III, 39, 8].[96]

> *Despite more than four hundred years between them, Artavazd
> the Elder and Pap have a common feature. In Khorenatsi's
> History, their images have been compiled in accordance with
> the point of view of oppositional nobility. As it was noticed, it
> was against the absolutization of royal authority in all phases of
> Armenian history.*[97]

The author demonstrates the ochlocratic anarchy with
the example of the antihero of the Persian fables, Buraspi

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[96] This curious fragment contradicts the accounts of Ammianus Mar-
cellinus and Faustus Buzand, relating that King Pap was treacherously
murdered in a banquet arranged by the Roman general [Amm., XXX,
21; Buz., V, 32, 10–17].

[97] "Crossing Mesopotamia, he (M. Antonius) slaughtered the innu-
merable army of the Armenians, and captured their king. On returning
to Egypt, he gave Artavazd, Tigran's son, as a gift to Cleopatra with
many values from the booty of war" [Khor., II, 23, 5]. According to
antique authors, the Armenian king was in silver bonds [Plut., Ant., L,
4; Dio Cass., XLIX, 40 14].

Azhdahak: "He wished to show everyone a way of life in common, and said that people should not possess anything privately but in common. Everything of his was open, both word and deed; he had no hidden thoughts, but all the secrets of his heart he brought out into the open by his tongue. He allowed his friends to come and go freely at night as in the day. And this is his so–called first maleficent kindness" [Khor., From the Fables of the Persians, 8]. It is well known that similar ideas were generated in numerous Zoroastrian heresies and were summed up in Mazdakism at the end of the 5th century.[98] Khorenatsi was most probably familiar with their fundamental ideas.

The third principle was a marker of Christianity that came to replace paganism. The conversion of Greater Armenia was considered a victory of the highest spirituality, which, in its turn, gave rise to a new form of Armenian identity – *God's covenant* (ուխտ Աստուծոյ).[99] More precisely, the Armenians (alongside with some other nations) began to consider themselves as a people of covenant.[100] On these grounds, Khorenatsi attributes a *feature of civilization* to the Armenian Christian community, an approach, that seems contradicts the antique assumptions.

Indeed, a steady intellectual tradition reached back to Plato and Aristotle, the Stoics and Cicero that linked this feature with *civil society* built on rational principles.

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[98] Scholars are unanimous that the Sasanian king, Kavad, was dethroned and exiled in 496 due to his adherence to Mazdakite beliefs. The opponents of Mazdakism accused it of breaking up the social order and mixing "people who should remain separated" [Dēnkart, V, 31, 30]. Cf. **Luttinger**, 1921, 676–677; **Christensen**, 1943, 338–362; **Rezakhani**, 2015, 58–60. On the connection of this passage of Khorenatsi with Mazdakite tradition, see **Akinean**, 1936, 15–20.

[99] **Zekiyan**, 2005, 49–51.

[100] On different aspects of this process and similar shifts in various social and religious communities, see in detail **Smith**, 2003, 66–73; **Zekiyan**, 2005, 57–59.

Khorenatsi, in line with the new perceptions of his time, ranked Christian theology much higher. However, as an adept of Neoplatonic Christianity, he saw no obstacle in using the achievements of philosophy in theology. In other words, the contradiction is imaginary. In the context under consideration, the term *civilization* has mostly moral and religious significance typical for societies based on God's covenant.

> *In this vein, the following must be highlighted; a dichotomy existed in Christian axiology. The so–called inner knowledge was opposed to that of the external. While the first represented the Christian value system, the second denoted antique philosophy, arts, and sciences. The latter were considered a lower layer of knowledge though their results were widely used by Christian apologists against pagan beliefs.*[101]

In this connection, as it has been highlighted above, the archbishop Nersēs "[…] by canonical regulation established mercy, extirpating the root of inhumanity" [Khor., III, 20, 4]. As a result of that, "[…] one could see that our country was not like uncivilized barbarians but like a well–mannered civilized nation" [Khor., III, 20, 13].[102] In other words, instead of laws, the c*anonical regulations* (կանոնական սահմանադրութիւնք) of the Church took predominance as guarantees of social peace and order in Armenia.[103]

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[101] On this theme, see in detail **Shirinian**, 1998, 21–38.

[102] "Եւ էր այնուհետեւ տեսանել զաշխարհս մեր ոչ որպէս զբարբարոս այլանդակեալս, այլ իբրեւ զբաղաքացիս համեստացեալս". Obviously, Khorenatsi proceeds from the ancient concept while tracing the roots of civilization in urban societies [Aristot., Pol., 1, 1252b, 27–30; Strabo, IV, 5, 1; Cicero, Rhet., 2, 1; Tacit., Ger., 16]. **Finley**, 1977, 305–306; cf. **Makolin**, 2014, 375–379; **Wirth**, 2017, 472–487.

[103] The perception of civilization as a cultural and moral phenomenon has old roots. Particularly, it made up the foundation of the important

As highlighted above, Christianity introduced important novelties concerning not only all of society but also private family life. In addition to monogamy, it established a new moral code. The family was thought of as a balance of different role behaviors (biological, legal, moral) designed to secure its continuity under God's direct guidance.[104] In this vein, we can even speak about the equality of family members before the Lord. Certainly, this was an idealistic perception still far from the everyday life of the Armenians.[105]

In this regard, we would like to emphasize again that, despite the conversion to Christianity, the Armenians continued to follow their traditional family rules, customs, and values. Khorenatsi traces one of the fundamental problems of the 4th century Armenian history in this. According to him, it managed to endanger the relationship of the royal authority and commoners. This danger was obvious even in the days of Trdat the Great: "But I wish to mention the hardheartedness, or rather vainglory, of our nation from the beginning to now: enemies to the good, strangers to the truth by nature presumptuous and perverse, they opposed the king's will concerning the Christian religion, following the will of their wives and concubines" [Khor., II, 92, 7]. However, the new kings of Greater Armenia – Khosrov Kotak, Tiran the Last, Arshak II, and Pap – came to miti-

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dichotomy of the Greek mentality – *culture and barbarity*. See **Gillet**, 2004, 1–7; **Heit**, 2005, 725–739; **Bonfante**, 2011, 1–25.

[104] See in detail **Osiek**, 1996, 6–22. The point of departure was the full equality of the two sexes in early Christian communities. Later, however, the situation changed radically and the status of women was lowered. **Loades**, 1998, 83; **Guy**, 2004, 176. The concept of "family role behavior" was a compromise between these opposite approaches actualized in the 4th century.

[105] Vestiges of Zoroastrian practices were rather valid in (especially) low social classes, and Christianity had to overcome many obstacles along the way. **de Jong**, 2015, 21.

gate Christian orthodoxy and meet some key demands of common people: animal sacrifices, serpent worship, funeral crowns and banquets, identification of Zoroastrian and Christian feasts of Lady Anahit and Vergine Mary, Vanatur and John the Baptist, and (supposedly) Mihr and Christ.[106] As a result of that: "[…] at that time, they took the king as their example of evil, began to model themselves on that example, and to do the same" [Buz., III, 13, 7].[107] The Church and its leaders, on the contrary, insisted on *the purity of the faith*. Moreover, its apologists composed a concept on the exclusive role of the clergy in Armenian history.

> *Actually, this process began with the efforts of the archbishop Nersēs the Great and achieved tangible results under Sahak Partev. But in reality, purity continued to be a desirable ideal for the clergy and (especially) its elite.*[108] *The common people, according to Buzand: "From antiquity when they had taken on the name of Christians, it was merely as [though it were] some*

[106] Cf. **Redgate**, 1998, 122–126. Scholars point out another reason for the "church–crown" opposition. They even suppose that, like the Byzantine emperors of that time, the kings of Greater Armenia were adherents of Arianism. Cf. **Garsoïan**, 1997[1], 85.

[107] It demanded a long process of modifying and mitigating Christian universalism in the Armenian context. **Redgate**, 1998, 126–132. Scholars suggest that Zoroastrianism went through a similar process of mitigation in Armenia some centuries before. It concerned some perceptible aspects of ideology and practice of that religion. See **Russell**, 1982, 3–5; **Russell**, 1987, 165–175; **Stepanyan**, 2012, 161–164; **de Jong**, 2015, 123–125.

[108] For this, the revision of the role of Gregory the Illuminatior in the Armenian conversion to Christianity was crucial. He began to gain primacy over Trdat the Great. This process was completed by the patriarchs Nersēs the Great and (especially) Sahak Partev and took more than a century. See **Thomson**, 1994[1], 26; **Stepanyan**, 2018, 43–46.

> *human religion, and they did not receive it with ardent faith, but*
> *as some human folly [and] under duress" [Buz., III, 13, 8].*

Among the last Armenian Arsacids, the only exception was King Vṙamshapuh. He ruled the land in accordance with, on one the hand, Christian piety, and the perceptions of the Sasanian court, on the other. In an essential sense, he built his policy on the Christian idea of *dual allegiance* to an earthly Caesar and the heavenly Lord.[109]

In other words, *God's covenant* implied a plan of social and moral innovation. It was designed to set up an ideal model of the family under the authority of an ideal pater-familias – the heavenly Lord. And all members of the covenant were considered the children of the Father. The nucleus of that were the hierarchs and intellectuals of the Church. This situation obtained more apparent features especially after the invention of the national script and the emergence of the literal Christian culture.[110] Namely, universal Christianity was bestowed with local characteristics.

Khorenatsi proceeds precisely from this perception, depicting the images of the blessed Mashtots and St. Sahak Partev in his *Lament*. They are depicted as fathers responsible for the spiritual rebirth of their son–pupils: "For they gave me birth through their teaching, and they raised me by sending me to grow up among others" [Khor., III, 68, 20]. This kind of relationship is confirmed in the author's mourning over the death of the teachers: "Who will silence the insolence of those who rise up in opposition to the

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[109] Thomson traces this understanding in the Great Revolt against Sasanian Persia under Sparapet Vardan Mamikonian. He sees exactly this Christian perception of the Armenians in the settlement of the conflict. See **Thomson**, 1982, 25; cf. **Zekiyan**, 2005, 51; **Stepanyan**, 2018, 61–65.

[110] Thomson interpreted the Armenian concept *սուրբ ուխտ* as the Hebrew *berit qōdesh – holy covenant* (*διαθήκη ἀγία*) **Thomson**, 1982, 11; **Zekiyan**, 2005, 57–59; cf. **PGL**, 1961, 348.

wholesome teaching – those who are shaken and rent by every word, alternating many teachers and many books […]. Who will silence and reprimand them, console us with praise, and put a limit to talking and silence?" [Khor., III, 68, 20].

Contrary to clan (blood) relations based on the similarity and recurrence of generations, the spiritual family implied ongoing development and gave the pupils a chance to outrank their teachers: "Who will express the delight of a father, in part exceeded by this son?" [Ibid.]. Moreover, the guarantor of the pupil's greater success was the teacher–father himself. In short, his "defeat" was planned in advance and brought him great satisfaction. If this consideration is right, we can speak about the introduction of the *culture of excellence* in Armenia discovered in Classical Greece.[111]

In this vein, it seems important to remind the following fact – in Eghishē's narrative, God's covenant was the *collective hero* of the Great Revolt of the Armenians against Sasanian domination. It was thought of as a new form of national identity. Its spiritual leaders were martyrs, feeding forthcoming generations with Christian piety and fidelity, veneration and devotion.[112] At the same time, it must be

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[111] The culture of excellence was linked to a basic concept of the ancient Greeks. It is about agon (ἀγωνία) – a contest or struggle for victory that made up the axis of human behavior in various areas beginning form philosophy and theater ending with politics and the Olympic Games. **Wright**, 1992, 28. This concept was adopted by Christian intellectuals and one of the key concepts of their teaching was coined on the idea of agon – ὁ ἀγωνιστής (նահատակ – martyr) – "a defender of true faith against heretics", "a Christian struggling in this life". Cf. **PGL**, 1961, 26; cf. **Redgate**, 1998, 130–131.

[112] From this point of view, the following passage from Eghishē is of undoubted interest: "Let not a father spare his son, nor a son respect his father's dignity. Let a wife strive her husband, and a servant turn against his master. May the divine Law rule over all […]" [Egh., III, 35–37]. In other words, family members had to become Christian mar-

highlighted that they carried out their mission in a society where traditional blood (agnatic) relations still prevailed.

b. Household – state

To complete this part of our study, it seems necessary to pay attention to the problems of state typology. In this vein, it must be emphasized that without clear definitions, Khorenatsi, nevertheless, discusses the political aspect of the social integration of Armenia from the formative period to his days. On the whole, he follows the antique tradition reaching back to the Stoics, Plato, and (especially) Aristotle. Most probably, Philo of Alexandria, in this case also, played the role of a intermediator.

We have singled out, according to Aristotle, a household is comprised of the key forms of government in embryonic form – monarchy (βασιλικῶς), republic (πολιτικῶς), and despotism (δεσποτικῶς) [Aristot., Pol., 1259b, 15]. The supremacy of one or another element determines the character of the given political regime. Philo shares this approach in interpreting and reasoning of biblical social relations in the terms of antique political philosophy.[113]

Khorenatsi follows this experience. His narrative demonstrates the metamorphoses of the Armenian state over the long duration of historical time. As it has been stated above, the point of departure of his considerations is the household based on the opposite elements of integrity – *power and freedom*. Their different combinations give rise to different paradigms of state integration. In this regard, it must be kept in mind that Khorenatsi proceeds from the typological parallels of the household and state.[114]

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tyrs. The parallel with the Maccabees is quite obvious. See **Thomson**, 1975, 334–336.

[113] This aspect also demonstrates the close relationship between Philo's philosophy and Greek–Hellenistic intellectual traditions. See **Alesse**, 2008, 1–6; **Sterling**, 2014, 153–154.

[114] On this aspect of Khorenatsi's social theory, see **Stepanyan**,

The first paradigm depicted the transition from *patri-archal leadership to patriarchal monarchy* (δυναστεία) which happened in Armenia under Paroyr, son Skayordi [Khor., I, 21, 4].[115] One of the definitions of this form of monarchs is very precise. Khorenatsi names them *պսակա-ւորք* – literary, *wreath bearers* [Khor., I, 22, 6]. According to the author, patriarchal monarchy is the ideal form of state government. This statement even excited his emotional desire to have lived in those days: "How dear it would have been for me if the Savior had come at that time and redeemed me and if my entrance into the world had occurred in their time […]" [Khor., I, 22, 4].

The second paradigm defined the development of the household into a political form of integration. This happened under Vagharshak Arsacid. A detailed consideration of the extensive passage of Khorenatsi on this king gives us reason to state that he attempted to implement a *mixed state system* (πολιτεία μικτή).[116] It balanced two (at first sight opposite) forms of government – royal authority, on the one hand, and aristocratic hierarchic republic, on the other. This balance, with numerous cases of infringement, lasted for centuries. Regarding Arshak II, Khorenatsi formulates this situation as the possibility of consent and alliance between the king and nobility. After bloody conflicts, through the efforts of Nersēs the Great "[…] was established a covenant that thenceforth the king would rule *justly* (ուղղութեամբ) and they would serve *sincerely* (մհամնութեամբ)" [Khor., III, 29, 11].

1993, 22–23.

[115] Aristotle calls this form of monarchy, *barbaric*. Sometimes, he recognizes its existence in Greece as well and defines these kings with a special term, *regulators* (αἰσυμνήτοι). They rule without distinct constitutions [Arist., Pol., V, 1315b, 40–41]. Cf. **Riesbeck**, 2016, 121.

[116] This theory was formulated by Aristotle and was further developed by Polybius on the basis of Roman history. See in detail **Walbank**, 1990, 143–151; **Riesbeck**, 2016, 108–114.

Over the centuries, the *concord* (միաբանութիւն հա-յոց) was institutionalized by the Popular Assembly and State Council. It must be added that the two important documents of Early Medieval Armenia – *The Rank List* (Գահնամակ) and *Military List* (Զաւրանամակ) – had been compiled to legitimize the situation.[117] However, the break of the balance was fraught with the danger of the absolutization of one of the poles. It would pave the way to either tyranny or anarchy. Such an outcome, according to Khorenatsi, was especially possible in the days of Arshak II and Pap, when the internal situation of Greater Armenia was extremely polarized.

The third paradigm represented an ideal community under God's guidance. It was thought of as an earthly image of the heavenly republic, a concept that had been adopted by Christian intellectuals from Stoic theory.[118] God communicated with the community through church hierarchs who: "[…] turned the entire population of the land of Armenia into the likeness of a universal order of solitary–communities" [Buz., IV, 4, 35]. This threefold unity – God, clergy, community – existed in parallel with the state system.[119] Moreover, as it is obvious from the his-

[117] However, by the 4th century, the importance of the Popular Assembly diminished. It was replaced by the aristocratic State Council. Kings referred to the population of the land and held Assemblies only in exceptional cases. See in detail **Manandyan**, 1934, 79–82; **Stepanyan**, 2014¹, 33–38. For a detailed analysis of these two important documents, see **Adontz**, 1908, 249–272. We touch on the details of this problem in Chapter 6.

[118] The problem of the parallels between cosmic and earthly commonwealths had strong roots in Hellenistic and early Christian mentality. See **Stob**, 1934/1935, 217–224; **Lesilva**, 1995, 553–559; **Thom (Stellenboch)**, 2015, 54–56.

[119] Scholars discuss this process on the background of the new model of royal power introduced in Armenia by Trdat the Great. It was based on Roman ideology (and experience) and opposed to the tradi-

tory of the 4th century, it had the ambition to gain supremacy over the absolute royal authority. In some cases, this objective united the Church with the opposition nobility, with the intention of reshaping the situation into an "ideal republic" where the king would have been either *unus inter pares* or *absent* on the whole. The clash of these ideologies of power made the decline of Greater Armenia inevitable. The process was aggravated due to the continuous clashes of the two neighboring super states – Rome and Sasanian Persia. As a result, in 387, Arsacid Armenia was partitioned between the rivals and finally left the stage of history in 428.

The following comparison, we believe, can shed further light on the Armenian path of development. The Roman Empire faced similar problems. However, the absolute royal authority proved its ability to settle essential contradictions and build a new social and political order. According to the new ideology, the person of the emperor was declared God's earthly image in order to transmit His will to the Church and all of society.[120] This laid down the foundations of the Byzantine Empire.[121]

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tional Parthian model of weak royal authority. For this purpose, the king hoped to use Church ideology and hierarchy. See **Scott**, 2016, 317–319. However, in Armenia, the Church increased its power in close connection with the nakharar system. Despite the influence of the Greco–Roman world, it had not spread from "city to city" but from "principality to principality". **Thomson**, 1994[2], 34.

[120] Scholars find that this image of the emperor was formed after the Hellenistic paradigm of royal authority based on the concepts of epiphany (ἐπιφανία) and sotery (σωτηρία). See in detail **Goodenough**, 1928, 67–73; cf. **Dvornik**, 1966, 236–237.

[121] On this aspect of the formative period of the Byzantine Empire, see **Scott**, 2016, 306–315. For the diversity of the Byzantine and Armenian historical paths, see **Stepanyan**, 2014[2], 157–166.

Conclusion

The household/family occupies a central position in the sociology of Moses Khorenatsi. It provides a key for reasoning and understanding numerous events from the past and present of Armenian history. We interpret problems with a multi–dimensional perspective and combine the data of the Armenian, Zoroastrian, antique and biblical intellectual traditions. This approach demonstrates the metamorphoses of the Armenian identity over the long duration of history – traditional ethnie, political nation, God's covenant. These paradigms functioned not only in diachronic but also in a synchronic layer of historical time.

Despite the global aspect, the household/family would have to respond to the concrete challenges of history. The effectiveness of these responses depended mostly on the cooperation of its members – father, mother, children and servants. Their relationship was regulated by a law code parallel to the Iranian *Mātiyān i–Hazar Datastan*. It concerned the different forms of marriage and family – polygamic and monogamic, full–right and conditional (half–right), patrilocal and matrilocal. Besides divergences, they looked at the same objective – to ensure stability in the lives of their members, as well as all of society.

The typological interdependence of the household/family and society is a key problem. It proceeds from the antique philosophical tradition in combination with the Armenian traditional perception. It made up the basic concept that depicted Armenia as an expanded household – *տունՀայng*.

In Khorenatsi's *History*, a concept that reaches back to Aristotle's theory is traceable. It sees the principal elements of state government in every household – monarchy, republic, and despotism. The prevalence of one or the other depended on the structure and essence of family relations. In the first instance, it was about the royal household, which personified a high pattern of structure and morality for the whole country. Every just king was

considered responsible for peace and order not only in his household but also in the whole kingdom. Respectively, discord and quarrel within the royal family could initiate chaos in the country. In this case, tyranny or anarchy would gain the upper hand.

Historically, the last form of family and social partnership was God's covenant. It was aimed at the absolute correspondence of household and society in order to secure welfare and security under God's direct leadership. From the political point of view, this form was considered a mixed government with elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. On the whole, the different forms of household/family integration and social and national solidarity of the Armenians operated synchronically as well. They interacted, instilling new features of validity in the perspective of the past and present.

Chapter Six

Metaphysics of Popular Assembly
(Khorenatsi, III, 34, 2–24)

Introduction

This is an attempt at a hypertextual interpretation of the text by Moses Khorenatsi concerning the events of the prince Pap's ascendance to his ancestral throne. His reign and reforms (370–374) are not appropriately described in primary sources. The analyses cause him to be a polarizing historical figure. On the one hand, he is depicted as the personification of evil since he oppressed the Church. On the other, he is also an active and brave ruler whose reforms were the last effective attempts to prevent the decline and fall of the Armenian Arsacids. The first approach goes back to the Armenian historical tradition – Faustus Buzand and Moses Khorenatsi [Buz., IV, 44, 162–163, V, 22, 219; Khor., III, 38, 5].[122] As for the second approach, it proceeds from the records of Ammianus Marcellinus, the eminent historian of the 4th century [Amm. Marc., XXX, 7, 12].[123]

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[122] On the criticism of the primary sources and their coverage of the reign of Pap, see **Garagashian**, 1905, 122–124. Despite their exceptional role in Armenian history, neither Arshak II, nor Pap have become the subject of special historical investigation. Scholars have referred to them only in the common context of the 4th century. See **Eremyan**, 1984, 87–95, 102–106; **Garsoïan**, 1997[1], 86–91; **Redgate**, 1998, 131–136; **Scott**, 2017, 321–322.

[123] According to the historian, the young prince was "et doli iam prudens". His treacherous assassination by the Romans, he compares to that of Pyrrhus and Sertorius, the heroes of classic *justice*. [Amm.

Essentially, the negative approach places the legitimacy of Pap's reign under suspicion from the point of view of divine and human justice: "His mother gave birth to him. And since she was a lawless creation and did not know God's fear, devoted him to devas. Many of them dwelt in the child and led him according to their [evil] will" [Buz., IV, 44, 3]. Correspondingly, an official concept was worked out, the main features of which are traceable in the text of Moses Khorenatsi.

However, there is another approach to this king found in the works of these authors. Particularly, this concerns their description of the battle of the joint Armenian and Roman forces against the Persians, which took place in 371, in the Valley of Dzirav, near the sacred Mt. Npat. Here, they have apparently mitigated their assessment of the king. This arises a quite natural question – what caused the change? In this regard, we decided to scrutinize the events of the battle while interpreting and comprehending their semiotic and semantic codes in light of history and mythology, religion and social philosophy. Such an approach promises to uncover the profound relationship between the royal power and the Panarmenian Popular Assembly (Աշխարհաժողով). An institution, which reached back to the times of the clan community (traditional patrimony) and played an important role in the state practice of Greater Armenia under the Artaxiads and Arsacids. For this reason, we have also applied the data of the ancient authors – particularly, Cornelius Tacitus and Ammianus Marcellinus.

1. *Historical Background*

Pap was the only offspring of King Arshak II and Queen Paṙandzem. The reign of this king was notable for both its glorious and tragic events.

Marc., XXX, 20–23]. Cf. **Asdourian**, 1911, 161.

The social model of Greater Armenia, based on the predominance of royal authority and central state administration, was *en route* of losing its resources. It was introduced centuries ago by the reforms of Artashēs I (189–160 BC.) and corresponded to Hellenistic state theory and experience.[124] King Trdat III (298–330) tried to revitalize this model while using the authority of the Christian Church.[125] However, neither the king nor his successors succeeded in reaching this end. The separatism of the Armenian dynasts (nakharars) gradually gained the upper hand. Their power was based on their hereditary domains and state offices, subject peasantry, and military contingents.[126] They competed for privileges, high ranks, and wealth and looked frequently to Rome or Sasanian Persia for support. As for the superpowers, they took advantage of these opportunities to interfere in the domestic affairs of Greater Armenia.[127]

This process reached its peak in the days of Arshak II (350–368). Scholars agree that the first years of his reign were marked with social order and peace. The king intended to maintain the balance of opposing forces in both domestic and foreign policy. He acted in cooperation with St. Nersēs, the archbishop of the Armenian Church. By their efforts, in 356, a council of bishops in concert with the laity was held in Ashtishat, a village in Taron province, to

[124] On the Hellenistic system of government and administration in Greater Armenia, see **Eremyan**, 1948, 35–51; **Sargsyan**, 1971[2], 678–689; **Stepanyan**, 2012, 41–48.

[125] On the problem of Christian Hellenism in Armenia under Trdat III, see **Garsoïan**, 1997[1], 80–86; **Kettenhofen**, 2002, 78–81; **Mahé**, 2012, 79–81; **Scott**, 2017, 270–276; **Stepanyan**, 2018, 31–46.

[126] Dynastism in Greater Armenia involved a whole system of social partnership – traditional patrimony – immanent for its history for long centuries. Scholars of the older generation identified it as feudalism. See **Adontz**, 1908, 389–407; **Manandyan**, 1934, 68–75, 311–315; **Toumanoff**, 1963, 114–119.

[127] Regarding this policy see in detail, **Dignas**, **Winter**, 2007, 179–18.

establish new modes of communal relations. By canonical regulation, it "[…] established mercy extirpating the root of inhumanity, which was the natural custom for our land" [Khor., III, 20, 4]. The council institutionalized healthcare for sick and aged poor people, strangers, and orphans. For this purpose, numerous hospitals, inns, and hospices were built with stable sources of income. Additionally, it also abolished some *heathen customs* of the princely families. Nevertheless, more typical was the ordinance containing exhortations to lords and servants. To the lords: "[…] to show mercy to their servants, and their inferiors, and their followers, to love them like the members of their own families, and not to oppress them unjustly with exorbitant taxes, remembering that they too had a Lord in heaven" [Buz., IV, 4, 45]. As for the servants, the council ordered them: "[…] to be obediently faithful to their masters so that they might receive a reward from the Lord" [Buz., IV, 4, 46].[128] Khorenatsi was inclined to believe that: "Thenceforth one could see that our country was not like uncivilized barbarians but like a well–mannered civilized nation" [Khor., III, 20, 13].[129]

It seemed also that King Arshak found that combining the interests of different social groups, estates, and classes would lead to prosperity and turn his realm "[…] into the likeness of a universal order of solitary–communities" [Buz, IV, 4, 84]. For this purpose, he acted through not only persuasion, but used compulsory methods, too. Under the sparapet (commander–in–chief) Vasak Mamikonean, the army took control of all Greater Armenia and prevented or suppressed the rebellions of separatists. In this regard, in the court, a group of nobles who believed that good

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[128] On the Council of Ashtishat and its ordinances, see in detail **Ormanean**, 2001, 186–192.

[129] In this and other analyses of Khorenatsi, scholars trace one of the basic ideas of the national *ideology* of the Armenians. See **Zekiyan**, 1987, 472–474.

administration would solve all the problems of the country became influential. The leading figure of this faction was Głak (Gghak) Hayr Mardpet, the supreme eunuch and supervisor of the royal treasury and estates.[130]

Proceeding from this idea, Arshak II worked out his *retro–Hellenistic* political program while desiring to restore the Hellenistic state model that endowed the king with absolute authority.[131] Particularly, it meant the recognition of the king as the supreme landholder of Greater Armenia by the *right of weapon* (χῶρα δορίκτετος). It also promised to restore the perception of him as the source of right, order, and justice (νόμος ἔμψυχος).[132]

> *In this regard, we would like to remind the following formula which Khorenatsi puts in the mouth of the Parthian king Arshak the Brave. It expresses precisely this right of the Hellenistic kings: "For the frontiers of the brave […] are their weapons: as much they cut, that much they hold (զի սահմանք քաջաց […] զէնն իրեանց, որքան հատանէ` այնքան ունի)" [Khor., I, 8, 4].*[133]

With the intent to realize this program, King Arshak took his first (and the most resolute) step by establishing

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[130] See in detail **Marquart**, 1930, 58–70. While expressing the feelings of the separatists, Buzand depicts Głak extremely negatively [Buz., V, 3, 196].

[131] This term has been coined to demonstrate the mingling of the two powerful tendencies of world history – Hellenism and Christianity. See **Stepanyan**, 2009², 25–31; **Stepanyan**, 2018, 67–87.

[132] This perception had deep roots in Greek mythological thinking where the weapon (especially the spear) was considered an instrument of creation. In the days of Alexander the Great, the ancient paradigm obtained a new meaning of creating of the new world order. Later, Diadochi legalized the concept as a means of justification of their authority over the subject lands. Cf. **Chaniotis**, 2005, 57–62.

[133] R. W. Thomson finds this to be an accurate quotation from the *Theonis Progymnasmata*. See **Thomson**, 1978, 82, n. 5.

a new royal residence. It was situated in the province Kogovit, on the southern slopes of Mt. Ararat and bore the king's name – Arshakavan. Both Faustus Buzand and Moses Khorenatsi record this event from the point of view of the opposition nobility when representing the new–dwellers of the city as trustees, debtors, slaves, delinquents, thieves, murders, divorced men, shedders of blood, liars, etc. [Buz., IV, 12, 116; Khor., III, 27, 4].

Additional information is also traceable in the texts of both the aforementioned authors. It concerns the Classical and (especially) Hellenistic experience of city founding applied by Arshak II. Here we are first referring to *synoikism* – the settling of inhabitants from various places in a new city and forming a new community (πολίτευμα).[134] Endowed with absolute power, the king directed the process using his material and human resources. From this point of view, the account of Buzand seems more precise: "It was around that time that the king built himself a dastakert in the designed valley of Kog. And he ordered a royal edict proclaimed in every district of his dominion and announced on every public square in his realm, and filled all the regions and districts with the royal proclamation: "Should anyone be indebted to anyone, or should anyone anywhere have wronged anyone else, or should anyone have been summoned to judgment, let every one of them come and settle in this dastakert" [Buz., IV, 12, 116].

In other words, King Arshak proclaimed his absolute right over Greater Armenia. He also stated that everyone had the freedom to follow the royal prescriptions. Obviously, this retro–Hellenistic program was notrealistic

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[134] The relations of Hellenistic kings with cities differed depending on their status and real role in the economic, political, religious, and cultural life of the given country. Overall, they lived in autonomy with their own elected councils and officials. See **Ehrenberg**, 1964, 191–205; **Strootman**, 2011, 148–150.

(if not utopic), since times had irreversibly changed. It had become the time of hereditary magnates (nakharars), who saw a great threat to their power and prestige in the king's actions. Therefore, they united and made their best efforts to stop the king. As for the Church, it shared the position of the magnates and refused to recognize the king's absolute power. From the point of view of Christian canon and axiology, the king was one of many subjects of Omnipotent God. Particularly, the Hellenistic monarch had lost the ability to be worshiped as a *revealed god* (ἐπιφανής).[135] Common for the king's and their royal ancestors, this title was now assessed to be inherent only to Christ.[136] On these grounds, the early Armenian authors bore witness to the competition (sometimes even rivalry) between the royal and church authorities.

> *It started already in the days of Trdat the Great and Gregory the Illuminator. Their well–known dispute on supreme authority is considered the best example of this. According to Agathangelos, it took place before the Armenian conversion to Christianity. The scene was the temple of the goddess Anahit, in the village Yerez of the province Acilisene. In response to the pagan king's claim to absolute power, Gregory stressed: "I [served you] looking for no reward from you, but for the reward of God, to whom belong all the visible and invisible creations" [Agath., V, 12].*[137]

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[135] This title was usually associated with the other titles – *benefactor* (εὐεργετής) and *savior* (σωτήρ). About these and other homogeneous titles, see **Goodenough**, 1928, 57–75; **Gruen**, 1993, 7–24. Cf. Chapter 4. On the warship of the Artaxiad kings and their ancestors, see in detail **Sargsyan**, 1966, 23–78.

[136] Despite this *Armenian austerity*, the process of the deification of royal authority was en route in both Christian Rome and Sasanian Persia. See **Mango**, 2002, 106–109; **Canepa**, 2009, 100–103; **Daryaee**, 2008, 63–67.

[137] Cf. **Calzolari**, 2011, 53–57.

In the conflict with Arshak II, the Church decisively took the side of the magnates who sought support from either Persia or Rome.[138] The king's efforts to balance these opposing forces were fruitless. The policy of Trdat III to meet the interests of all sides (both…and) was now unrealistic.[139] The contradictions were implacable. This became more apparent with the new breakdown of relations between the two superpowers.

It began at the end of the 350s. In 359, Shapuh II invaded North Mesopotamia and captured Amida, an important military and economic center.[140] He devastated the southern and southwestern regions of Greater Armenia as well. After that, he took Tigranakert and Ani of Daranalia.[141] As a result, Greater Armenia was drawn into a long war on the side of Rome. The war reached its peak under Julian the Apostate (361–363) who even reached the vicinity of Ctesiphon, but was routed and killed.[142] The new Roman emperor Jovian signed a peace treaty with Shapuh, which Ammianus calls *ignominious*.[143] He surrendered to the enemy all the lands obtained by Diocletian, including Nisibis and Sangara. The contract clause, which stated that the Roman side would refrain from supporting them, was especially disastrous for the Armenians: "To these conditions there was added another, which was destructive and

[138] **Asdourian**, 1911, 160–161; **Daryaee**, 2009, 19.

[139]   Cf. **Stepanyan**, 2014², 155–163.

[140] On the details of the wars on the eastern frontier of Rome in 350–360s, see in detail **Lenssen**, 1999, 37–45, **Dodgeon**, **Lieu**, 2002, 211–230; **Maksymiuk**, 2018, 87–94.

[141] On these events, see **Eremyan**, 1984, 92; **Redgate**, 1998, 133–134.

[142] **Jones**, 1992, 567–568. On his Persian expedition and its tragic end, see in detail **Ridley**, 1973, 317–330; **Fornara**, 1991, 1–15.

[143] "Quo ignobili decreto firmanto, nequid committeretur per indutias contrarium pacis […]" [Amm. Marc., XXV, 7, 13]. This is the echo of the disgrace of Rome in the eyes of her (especially eastern) subjects. Cf. **Asdourian**, 1911, 153–154; **Farrokh**, 2007, 205–206.

impious, namely, that after the completion of these agreements, Arsaces, our steadfast and faithful friend (*amico nobis semper et fido*) should never, if asked it, be given help against the Persians" [Amm. Marc., XXV, 7, 12].[144]

While these events were taking place, the tension between King Arshak and his opponents reached its apogee. Taking advantage of the difficult situation, the forces of the magnates attacked Arshakavan, and they looted and killed its citizens. It was the tragic end of the retro–Hellenistic paradigm of social reformation. The magnates took the upper hand, attempting to achieve their own political agenda, which demanded the limitation *of the king's rights in favor of the hereditary dynasts*.[145]

Soon, Shapuh II waged war on Greater Armenia (364–368), and that provided new opportunities for the magnates. The Shah recognized Mehruzhan Artsruni as the king of Armenia, furnished him with an army to take the throne and restore Zoroastrianism as the state religion of Greater Armenia. Many magnates joined him. As for King Arshak, he defended his case successfully with the full support of the sparapet Vasak. But the conflicting forces were unequal, and the king's adherents began to abandon him: "[…] for every one of them longed for his own house, his own place, in accordance with the inborn ways of Armenian men" [Buz., IV, 20, 141].

At last, the king remained alone with a circle of faithful friends and servants. Through his ambassadors, Shapuh invited Arshak to come and negotiate the terms of peace and friendship. Though he attested the proposal with sacred

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[144] **Mommsen**, 1999, 409.

[145] The political factions of Greater Armenia in the second half of the 4th century are usually depicted in black–and–white axiology while connecting them with either the agendas of Rome or Persia. Meanwhile, the picture is more complicated. Every faction had its own vision of the future of the country, and the task of modern scholar is to interpret them on their own merits. See **Stepanyan**, 2018, 46–56.

symbols, he broke his promise. When Arshak II arrived at
the camp of the Shah, he was detained and imprisoned in
the Andməš (Անђn։ <) fortress, where he died.[146] The queen
Paṙandzem tried to organize a resistance comprised of
patriotic forces but failed. She was besieged in the fortress
Artagerk' for a year and surrendered. However, she man-
aged to send the young prince Pap to the Romans.

The new Roman emperor Valens, at first reluctantly,
but later actively and officially, supported the prince in
his efforts to regain his ancestral throne. The central event
was the battle, which took place in 370, in the valley of
Dzirav, near Mt. Npat. The Armenian and Roman joint
forces defeated the enemy. For the young prince, this vic-
tory paved the way to royal dignity.

2. The historical and esoteric semantics of the site
of Npat and the Popular Assembly

According to Buzand, the battlefield was chosen by
Pap: "And so, the Persian army came and raided into the
Armenian Midlands. Then Pap, king of Armenia, like-
wise ordered the army assembled at Bagavan. And the
Greek forces that were in Eṙand and Bakhishn came to
King Pap and assembled together. And they dug a ditch
around the camp near Mt. Npat by the Euphrates River,
arrayed themselves and made ready for battle" [Buz., V,
4, 197].[147]

This choice was apparently not only determined by
military considerations. It had profound spiritual motiva-
tion as well. There was a religious and esoteric perception

[146] On this jail in Armenian and Iranian primary sources, see **Traina**,
2002, 399–422.

[147] The district of Daranalia and the eminent pre–Christian religious
center Ani–Kamakh were situated on the opposite bank of the Euphrates
(Aratsani), with the temple of the highest deity Aramazd and the tombs
of deceased kings.

of the geographic space of Greater Armenia. It ascribed an exceptional role to the site of Npat in the *spiritual unity of the country*. Indeed, the mountain was situated in the district Bagrevand of the Ayrarat region. The religious center of that was Bagavan situated in its vicinity. The toponym "[…] translated from Pahlavi means *the village of gods* (Ditsavan)" [Agath., 916, 2]. As for Bagrevand, scholars trace its etymology in Av. *raēva* (rich), *raēvant* (possessing wealth).[148] It expressed one of the basic concepts of Zoroastrian axiology, denoting spiritual and material opulence. Ahura Mazdā usually granted it to his true creatures, endowing them with $x^w arrah$.[149] With the conversion to Christianity, the site had not lost its significance, since it (and correspondingly the fest of Navasard) was devoted to the commemoration of the great prophet John [Buz., IV, 15, 126]. Later, a sanctuary of Gregory the Illuminator was erected there [Parp., III, 76, 17].

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[148] Despite Christianity, Zoroastrianism highly estimated opulence and cultivated a reverence to material prosperity. It was connected with the fundamental axiological concept of this religion while comprising good thought, good speech, and good deed. The last component was considered the peak of the morality and social behavior of a true adherent. See **Zaehner**, 1961, 76–77. This concept seems to be the root of the Armenian personal name Eruand/Arvant/Orontes. See **Acharyan**, 1944, 145; **Perikhanyan**, 1965, 121. In this light, the bearer of this name seems like a true adept of Zoroastrianism who (by his everyday creative work) supports Ahura Mazda against Angra Mainyu.

[149] It was the personification of the sacred Glory through which Ahura Mazda attributed grace and favor to faithful Mazdeans. For kings, it was also the source of their bravery and victory over their enemies. In this regard, the observation of N. G. Garsoïan is appropriate: "[…] the Armenian kings, even after their conversation to Christianity, as well as the Iranian rulers were endowed with valor (k'aĵutiwn), good fortune (baxt), and especially the "transcendental glory" (Mid. Pers. $x^w arrah$, Arm. p'ark')". **Garsoïan**, 2004, 436; Cf. **Garsoïan**, 1976, 215–217; **Russell**, 1985, 447; **Russell**, 1987, 309–311.

The etymology of the toponym Npat/Νιφάτης also sheds some light on this issue. Among its numerous interpretations, the Av. nāfya appears to be the most plausible. It is held to be a parallel of the Ved. *sapinda*, Gr. ἀγχιστεῖς, Lat. *agnatio* denoting an *agnatic group*. As a rule, it was comprised of the descendants of the same patriarch (mid. Pers. *nāfapat* and Arm. *nahapet*) bound with strict ties of collective responsibility. With this (real or imagined) kinship with the common ethnarch, the term could obtain nationwide coverage.[150]

The case is more than obvious in Greater Armenia. The ancient Armenians believed themselves to be the descendants of the mighty hero Hayk.[151] On these grounds, they also considered themselves the members of the same patriarchal house – սուն Հայոց. This concept existed for centuries and initiated some important institutions of social organization.[152] Among these, a special role belonged to the Panarmenian Assembly (Աշխարհաժողով) held usually on the slopes of St. Npat Mount at the beginning of every year, in the month Navasard. It represented a ritualized action aimed at the reproduction of macro–and–microcosms worn out during the previous year. It implied the comeback of its participants to the *beginning of time and space*.[153]

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[150] Regarding this and other Iranian loanwords concerning tribal organization – particularly, nāfa, nafapati, see **Acharean**, 1926, 420; **Perikhanian**, 1983, 641–646.

[151] Regarding the oldest Indo–European layer of the image of the Armenian forefather and its parallels with other mythological traditions, see **Petrosyan**, 2009, 155–161.

[152] In Hellenistic political theory, this understanding was formulated as "Idealtypisch verwaltete der König sein Reich wie ein Hausvater sein Haus (oikos)". **Heinen**, 2003, 89–90. Another concept also circulated that saw in the ruler a shepherd taking care of his flock. The concept was adopted by the Christian theology. See **Freeman**, 2015, 159–173.

[153] On the carnival, social inversion, and ideology of the Navasard

According to comparative mythology, this text is archetypical with numerous variations. However, its core narrative is rather stable. Scholars define it as the Creative Myth of Twins that is well–attested in various mythological traditions.[154] They restore (certainly, only in general features) the syntax of the primary myth as follows: before everything, there existed the twins who were destined to initiate the tripartite cosmos and human commonality.[155] Frequently, they were bestowed with opposite qualities. The bearer of positive qualities (strong, brave, wise, and active) sacrificed his brother and, using the body, created the sun, stars, planets, waters, plants, animals, etc.[156]Thereafter, his creative activity concerned the social classes comprising the priests, warriors, and commoners: "The action of sacrifice is thus seen to be one of expansions or amplifications, taking matter from the microcosm of victim's body, and expanding it to macrocosmic form and dimensions".[157] This concept was best of all manifested in the deeds of Ved. Manu/Yama (Puruša), Old Pers. Manuš/Yima (Gayōmart), Rom. Romulus/Remus.[158] It is also worth noting that the killing of the second partner was replaced with the lowering of his social status in some (probably, later) traditions.

The primordial twins play an important role in Armenian mythology as well – Hayk/Bēl, Sanasar/Baghdasar, David/Msra Melik, etc. While Bēl and Msra Melik were killed, Baghdasar stayed barren and abandoned his homeland Sassoun.[159] This gave Hayk, Sanasar, and David the opportunity to create (or rebuild) the Armenian mi-

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Popular Assembly, see **Stepanyan**, 1991, 48–49.

[154] **Petrosyan**, 2002, 14–22. In this regard, we are pleased to express gratitude to Prof. Armen Petrosyan, whose advice on the twins' mythology was very useful for our interpretation of the Panarmenian Assembly.

[155] Cf. **Dumézil**, 1994, 119–125.

[156] **Beit–Hallahmi**, **Paluszny**, 1974, 345–353.

[157] **Lincoln**, 1986, 163–164.

[158] **Lincoln**, 1975, 129–136.

[159] **Petrosyan**, 2009, 157–161; cf. **Ghřejyan**, 2011, 83–88.

crocosm. In the frame of historical time and space, these heroes provided paradigms of behavior for future kings: "Insofar as the king and the social hierarchy are alloforms of one another, when the one is created, it can only be from the other: the unity within the king is divided into the social classes, and the diversity of the classes merges into the king".[160]

In other words, the person of the king was considered as the fulcrum for opposite qualities and intentions – unity and diversity of isomorphic macro–and–microcosm. To perform this role, he had to go through initiations. For Armenian kings, the Navasard Assembly was of great importance. Records about it are scarce, but combined they demonstrate a rather distinct syntax of ritual actions and world–view system. This is in full accordance with modern Critical Social Theory while recognizing "[…] the centrality of rules, practices, meaning, knowledge, action and agency in the constitution and reproduction of social life".[161] Proceeding from this idea, we prefer to trace the following aspects of the Navasard ritual actions: *a*. social context, *b*. inversion and return of the community to the primordial social utopia, *c*. restoration of social barriers and hierarchy.

a. The social context of the Popular Assembly.

We have numerous records from the Early Medieval Armenian historians where the social context of the Assembly is formulated explicitly. Agathangelos: "[…] Ditsavan which was full of the *magnates and army and a great crowd* assembled from all the sides" [Agath., 916, 4]. Buzand: "Then the men of the realm of the land Armenia – the nakharars, magnates, nobles, kusakals, ašχarhakals and azats, the army leaders, judges, chieftains and princes, not to mention the army commanders and even [some] of the

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[160] **Lincoln**, 1986, 158.

[161] **Pleasants**, 1999, 32.

ramik and shinakan – gathered together in a council of still
greater accord" [Buz., III, 21, 64].[162]

> *Such a structure of the Assembly is also traceable in the text of*
> *C. Tacitus. While telling about the ascendance of Zeno–Artashēs*
> *to the Armenian throne (18 AD.), he emphasizes: "[...] but the*
> *nation's liking inclined towards Zeno, son of Polemon, king of*
> *Pontus, who from his earliest infancy had imitated Armenian man-*
> *ners and customs, loving the chase, the banquet, and all the pop-*
> *ular pastimes of barbarians, and who had thus bound to himself*
> *chiefs and people (proceres plebumque)" [Tac., Ann., II, 56, 2].*[163]

In accordance with the Hellenistic theory and practice,
the primary sources sometimes use a brief definition of the
Assembly – *the king and his army*.[164] They unite all the
participants into a common body featuring them as real or
potential warriors. In this regard, Khorenatsi seems very
exact. While portraying the reign of Artavazd II (55–34
BC.) in a negative light, he speaks about his conflict with
the army on domestic and foreign policy: "Being blamed
by his troops for his excessive sloth and great gluttony,
and especially because Antony had deprived him of Me-
sopotamia, he became furious and commanded an army to
be raised [...]" [Khor., II, 22, 4].[165] This is certainly about

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[162] The medieval authors are certainly writing about this institu-
tion when it was already considered a relic of "old and good times".
However, their information is sufficient to restore the full picture. See
Manandyan, 1934, 79–82.

[163] Prior to gaining the people's favor and their coronation, the can-
didate (as it was usual) had to pass through secret initiations to which
only Tacitus alludes. See **Stepanyan**, 2012, 311–318; **Stepanyan**, 2018,
108–110.

[164] **Tarn**, 1927, 43–44; **Ehrenberg**, 1964, 158–172. H. Bengston dis-
cusses the army of Hellenistic Greater Armenia with this understand-
ing. See **Bengston**, 1964, 255–257.

[165] This tradition was still alive in 4th–5th century Armenia. See

the institutionalized relationship between the king and his people–army.

All this gives reason to consider the Assembly to be a paradigm of Armenian society. It originated from the social conditions that preceded state organization and represented *the collective will of the Armenians*. In various ages of history, it preserved its functions, though they later became ritualized and mostly modified.[166]

b. Social inversion at the Assembly.

In the mythological worldview of the ancient Armenians, there was a social concept based on the hierarchy of human productive activity: hunting/herding, agriculture, and crafts. As it was demonstrated above, it is most clearly apparent in the heroic epos *Sasna Tsřer*, many passages of which are held to go back to the times of the Proto Indo–European age. Its heroes – and especially David – scorned and denied all forms of productive activity, with the notable exception of hunting. According to them, only this form was able to secure equality and justice in communal life.[167] Hunters were thought to possess only what was necessary for a natural life of moderation following the moral imperatives established by God.[168]

Garsoïan, 1999, 259–267.

[166] Namely, the Assembly could be perceived as a visual manifestation of the historical past. It gradually lost its influence on Armenian social practice. See **Stepanyan**, 2014², 126.

[167] This epic tale has worked out a social theory which shows obvious parallels with the Indo–European, Near Eastern, and Greek mythological traditions. **Petrosyan**, 1997, 41–44; **Petrosyan**, 2002, 43–45, 127–128 etc. See Chapter 3. They gave rise to various theological and esoteric systems. **Stepanyan**, 1991, 40–42.

[168] In this conjuncture, the parallel with the Platonian social utopia is obvious. The herdsmen of the mountains were "[…] unskilled in the arts generally, and especially in such contrivances as men use against one another in cities for purposes of greed and rivalry and all the other vil-

The society of hunters represented the utopia to which the community ritually returned to at the beginning of every year. As we have noted above, this was true about the Navasard festival as well.[169] The best confirmation of this idea is the renowned account of Grigor Magistros (a polymath author of the 11th century) regarding the last words of the dying King Artashēs. The author's source was a song of the ancient bards:

> *"Who will give me the smoke of the censer*
> *and the morning of Navasard,*
> *The running of the stags and the coursing of the deers?*
> *We sounded the horns and beat the drum,*
> *As is the manner of kings" [Gr. Magistros, T'ght'er, 33].*

In other words, the first stage of the Navasard ritual was aimed at carnival inversion – the effacement of social barriers and reconstruction of the primordial unity and equality of the Armenians. The royal hunt was believed to be an effective way to achieve this goal. Sacred animals (stags and deers) played the role of sacrificial object, instead of the king's twin.[170] Their bodies were taken as *the material* for composing the new macro–and–microcosm of the forthcoming year. The spirit of gaiety and exaltation dominated everywhere.

c. The restoration of social barriers and hierarchy.
The second stage of the Navasard ritual marked the reversion from sacred time and space to the material (pro-

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lainies which they devise one against another" [Plato, Leg., III, 677b]. Cf. **Verlinsky**, 2009, 227–230. Most probably, the philosopher was also drawing from ancient (Indo–European) mythological tradition.

[169] **Stepanyan**, 1991, 48.

[170] **Ward**, 1968, 8–17; **West**, 2007, 187–191. On this problem in light of Armenian mythological and epic material see **Stepanyan**, 1991, 48–49.

fane) world. The essence of this movement was the dis-
solution of the primordial social partnership. Diversity
again began to play important role in intersocial relations.
Moreover, the three principal social classes were believed
to come from the king's person – the priests, the warriors,
and the commoners.[171]

The king's identification with each one of these clas-
ses was taken for granted. We have sketchy but trust-
worthy evidence regarding this. Particularly, according
to Khorenatsi, King Eruand "[…] having built temples
appointed his own [twin] brother Eruaz as high priest"
[Khor., II, 40, 3].[172] Namely, he separated the functions
of the priest from those of the warrior–ruler. The king
remained the head of the estate of warriors under the hea-
venly protection of the valiant god Vahagn. It was believed
that he received the divine mandate of royal authority
from this deity.[173]

As for Artashēs the Middle, in his tragic childhood and
youth, he was first identified with herdsmen and later on
with warriors while passing through the appropriate stages
of initiation. In this regard, the record of Khorenatsi is
quite exact. The tutor (dayeak) of Artashēs, Prince Smbat
Bagratuni, saving him from the massacre of the royal fam-
ily: "Wandered for a long time on foot over the mountains
and plains in disguise with the child and brought him up
in the cottages of shepherds and herdsmen (սնուցանէ ի
հովուանս եւ յանդէորդս) […] [Khor., II, 37, 14]". After
that, his education continued at the Parthian military camp,
where, the tutor "was greatly honored", and "the child was

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[171] **Ahyan**, 1982, 251–271; **Petrosyan**, 1997, 22–27. On the problem
of the tripartite ideology in concrete historical context, see **Petrosyan**,
2000, 168–170.

[172] **Petrosyan**, 2000, 170–172.

[173] See **Garsoïan**, 1976, 185–186. More precisely, the king received
this mandate through his second level of initiation. It was believed to
grant him the title "brave" (քաջ). Cf. **Stepanyan**, 2012, 313–318.

among the king's sons (մանուկն ընդ որդիս թագաւորին) [Ibid.]".[174]

> *In this light, a new interpretation of the renowned border–stones of King Artashēs seems possible. They were erected to mark the borders of the allotments of rural communities with inscriptions in Aramaic. In the translation and interpretation of A. Perikhanian, one of them reads: "Divided the land between villages Artashēs the king, Eruandakan, the good, the son of Zareh, the victor over everything which supports evil".[175] By attributing his name (and authority) to communal lands, the king certainly emphasized his relationship to communities in the worldview aspect as well. His Aramaic epithet the good (ṬB) is parallel to the Greek εὐεργέτης (benefactor) and εὐσεβής (pious) signifying royal creative potency and activity toward his country.[176]*

From this point of view, returning to the syntax of the Npat Assembly, the following must be highlighted. The yearly feast–ritual came to its desired end with the restoration of the king's absolute power over Greater Armenia. Through that, he regained his legal dignity. It was believed that the macro–and–microcosm received a new stimulus of peace, order, and integrity. In this regard, one can even

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[174] There was an apparent parallel between the three levels of royal initiation and the triad of the main deities of the pre–Christian pantheon of the Armenians – Anahit, Vahagn, and Aramazd. They obtained "[…] abundant fertility from noble Aramazd, protection (and benevolence) from Lady Anahit, valor from valiant Vahagn" [Agath., V, 127]. Cf. **Stepanyan**, 2018, 36.

[175] **Perikhanian**, 1966, 26–29.

[176] These two titles and relevant potencies were perceived as exceptional since they secured the king's contact with the divine sphere. **Goodenough**, 1928, 63–66; **Chaniotis**, 2003, 436–444. In Christian theology, they were already attributed to Christ, and the images of kings (not without tragic tensions) were obscured. See **Dvornik**, 1966, 647–658.

trace parallels between the Panarmenian Popular Assembly and the well–known carnival tradition of the West.[177]

3. The syntax and semantics of the Battle of Dzirav Valley

The observed aspects of the site of Npat made up the extratextual context of the battle under discussion.[178] Now, our task is to discuss the important features of the narratives regarding this event compiled by Buzand and Khorenatsi. At first glance, both texts show obvious similarities in the rhetorical and artistic style of the narrative, which is a *locus communis* for early Armenian historiography, and Khorenatsi formulates it as "worthy of the most polished and elaborate exposition" [Khor., II, 7, 2]. Namely, this approach was aimed at illustrating God's providence on the victory of the Armenian and Roman forces over the Persians. Biblical parallels emphasize precisely this idea.

However, there are numerous differences in the texts of Buzand and Khorenatsi (and even contradictions) concerning the details of the clash. In this vein, scholars pay special attention to the following basic facts in the text of Khorenatsi: *a*. the Roman emperor is named Theodosius instead of Valens, *b*. the role of the archbishop Nersēs the Great is exaggerated at the expense of Pap, *c*. the role of the sparapet Mushegh Mamikonean is overshadowed by Smbat Bagratuni, *d*. Mehruzhan Artsruni is killed with a solemn ritual even though (as it is well attested) he escaped following his defeat at Dzirav.

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[177] **Stepanyan**, 1991, 49.

[178] Unfortunately, this aspect of Early Medieval Armenian authors is generally overlooked. Meanwhile, it could outline new horizons for the interpretation and comprehension of their fundamental texts in light of modern philology and philosophy, historiography, political theory, narratology, and mythology.

Despite these discrepancies, another narrative layer is traceable in the text of Khorenatsi. It connects the events of the battle with the tradition of the Assembly. Combined with the records of Buzand, it shows a precise narrative course with its beginning, development, and end that correspond spatially to the three stages of drama.[179]

The first stage represents the summit of Mt. Npat: "Now when Nersēs the Great saw all this, he went up to the summit of the mountain Npat. Lifting his hands to heaven, he kept them up in supplication like the first prophet Moses until the second Amalek was defeated" [Khor., III, 37, 14].[180] Buzand, on the contrary, emphasizes the activity of Pap: "[…] he took the great high–priest Nersēs with him, went up, and took his stance on Mount Npat, while all the forces of the Greeks and the Armenians went down to the site of the combat" [Buz, V, 4, 199]. The summit was thought of as the pole of *sanctity and eternity*. Sparapet Mushegh climbed up with his standards and weapons to receive the blessing of the archbishop and his mandate from the young king.

The second stage is the field of Dzirav where the Roman and the Armenian joint forces met the Persian troops and their allies led by Mehruzhan Artsruni. The Roman forces under the generals Adde and Terentius built a fortified camp and performed defensive maneuvers. As for the Armenian forces, they, under the command of Sparapet Mushegh, led the offensive operation. The youths of the

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[179] **Stepanyan**, 2018, 177–178. This Aristotelian concept of dramatic action was applied to history in the Hellenistic era. The tradition has been expanded to the phenomenon of narrative in our days. It transformed the old concept of *the plot of history*, see **White**, 1984, 4–5.

[180] In other words, the Battle of Dzirav has been applied to the biblical eternal and sacred history. It was the general intention of the medieval authors to justify Armenian history in the context of the Old Testament. In this regard, the *History* by Moses Khorenatsi is very typical. **Thomson**, 1978, 11.

valiant noble families (մանկունք քաջ նախարարացն
Հայոց) also fought under the *aspet* Smbat Bagratuni. For
them, the combat was obviously an important step in their
initiation to the warrior class.

> *The Armenian youths (ἐφέβοι) differed from the males in their*
> *appearance as well. Buzand provides the following colorful*
> *description of one of them – Artavazd, the son of the prince*
> *Vache: "He was [still] a boy in years and in accordance with the*
> *pattern set for boys by Armenian custom, the head of the young*
> *Artavazd had been shaven at that time in boyish fashion accor-*
> *ding to regulation, leaving only the forelock and a hanging*
> *braid" [Buz., V, 43, 255].*[181]

The battle was bloody, and many heroes on both sides
fell. At last, *the Persian host lost heart*: "Thus, strength-
ened by help from above, the Greek and Armenian armies
in concert filled the entire plain with corpses of the enemy
and pursued all the fleeing survivors" [Khor., III, 37, 19].
It must be added that this stage was in the scope of the
historical present.

The third stage takes place *at the edge of the fen of
Kogovit*. It describes the last moments of Mehruzhan
Artsruni. Khorenatsi was certainly aware that the death
of this antihero occurred some years later, by the hand of
the companion–in–arm of Sparapet Manuel Mamikonian
[Buz., V, 43, 256]. However, he deviates from historical
truth for the sake of completing his narrative in full accor-
dance with the ancient ritual: "But because the impious
Mehruzhan's horse was wounded, he was unable to make
a quick escape with the fugitives. The Armenian general
Smbat quickly caught up with him, slew his companions,
and took the villain prisoner […]" [Khor., III, 37, 20].

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[181] The *youths* (տղայք/մանկունք), *men* (արք), and *old men* (ծերք)
made up the degrees of social status of noblemen in ancient and medie-
val Armenia. **Bais**, 2003, 388–391.

Let us again focus attention on the fact that this occurred at the edge of the fen. This provides us with the key to uncover the hidden meaning of the passage, since fens (ջուռբ), marshes, and swamps were associated with the Underworld in various mythological traditions.[182] This means that the place of the execution was chosen with apparent intention. Narrative *time and space came to their desired end*.

This also indicated the end of the whole narrative cycle, which was based on the combinations of dual oppositions, *a*. *spatial*: mountain summit – valley, valley – fen, *b*. *axiological*: "we" (the Christians) – "they" (the Mazdean pagans). The same kind of opposition is traceable in the historical actors as well: the legitimate king Pap Arsacid – illegitimate Mehruzhan Artsruni; the Christian high–priest Nersēs the Great and his supposed Mazdean opponent, the Sparapet Mushegh Mamikonean and his pagan opponent (again) Mehruzhan Artsruni.[183]

However, there is also another actor whose image is beyond black–and–white opposition. Nonetheless, he participates in all the aforementioned oppositions. We refer here to the prince Smbat Bagratuni, whose noble family held the high office of coronant (թագադիր, թագակապ) in the court of the Artaxiads and Arsacids. As noted above, his homonymous ancestor brought the young Artashēs through all the layers of sacred initiations and crowned him the legitimate king of Greater Armenia (cf. Chapter 4).

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[182] This is an echo of the old Indo–European perception. Regarding the underworld and its inhabitants in Indo–European ideology, see **Gamkrelidze Th**. **V**., **Ivanov V**. **V**., 1984, 525–536.

[183] Binary oppositions make up the structure and nucleus of mythological narratives. Scholars in various aspects have interpreted this problem. See in detail **Lévi–Strauss**, 1981, 537–560; **Abramyan**, 1983, 80–88. About the same problem in the Armenian epic material, see **Ghṙejyan**, 2011, 46–59.

Noting this privilege of the prince, Khorenatsi composed the last act of his narrative on the Battle of Dzirav: "And thinking that perhaps Nersēs the Great might free him (Mehruzhan), he therefore did not take him to the camp but found at the spot, opportunely for destruction of the impious one, some people living in tents who had lit a fire and an iron spit for roasting meat. This he heated bent into a circle like a crown, and making it red–hot said: "I crown you, Mehruzhan, because you sought to be king of Armenia: and it is my privilege as *aspet* to crown you according to the customary right of my ancestors". And while it was still red hot, he placed it on Mehruzhan's head, and thus the wicked one was killed" [Khor., III, 37, 23].

Another semantic string is also important for the widening of the scope of the narrative. It again concerns the mythological concept of the fen. In our sources, we find numerous accounts depicting the royal hunt as taking place at similar sites. Khorenatsi, for example, speaks of the love of Artavazd II for hunt: "He wandered about in the marshes, fens and rocky places, tending wild asses and boars" [Khor., II, 22, 4]. About the Armenian king Shapuh (415–421), he records: "Again another time they were hunting wild boars among reeds with fire […]" [Khor., III, 55, 12].[184]

These and other such references give reason to think that Khorenatsi is depicting the execution of Mehruzhan as a hunt scene. Indeed, the Battle of Dzirav is patterned on the Navasard festival as a ritual of twin sacrifice for the sake of the restoration of cosmic and social harmony and order. This conclusion demonstrates the real motive of the author's deviation from the text of Buzand. In the last

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[184] However, the mythological boar could also be interpreted in accordance with Zoroastrian perceptions, where it figures as the sacred animal of Veretragna/Vahagn, the patron of the social class of warriors. Cf. **Alishan**, 1910, 314–320; **Russell**, 1987, 191–192. This role of this god was held as the marker of his particular importance in Armenian version of Zoroastrianism.

sentence of his account of the battle, he emphasizes this idea: "Thenceforth the land was peaceful and subject to Pap's rule" [Khor., III, 37, 24]. This means that the cycle had come to its expected end. Armenian society had again gained its hierarchic integrity.

> The Navasard sacrifice is also traceable in the complicated relationship between Arshak II with his nephew Gnel. The king's messenger Vardan Mamikonean assured the young prince that the king did not want to run the feast of Navasard without him and invites him to Shahapivan, the royal camp "with the walled hunting preserve" [Buz., IV, 15, 126]. In the mythological sense, the prince was the king's binary opponent while being a pretender to the throne. Moreover, the organizer of the Feast planned to sacrifice him. Indeed, on his arrival Gnel was arrested and murdered without trial. According to the king's propaganda, it was done for the benefit of Greater Armenia.

Summing up the principal results of Khorenatsi's narrative of the Battle of Dzirav, we can single out three scenes – the heaven, earth, and underworld. They mark the three dimensions of time – eternity, historical present, and end of time. It was believed that they make up a cycle with potency to come back to its sacred staring point.[185] Mehruzhan's sacrifice was considered a very important transition.

Conclusion

The results of this investigation allow us to view Pap's accession to the throne in a new light. We have three versions of it described by Faustus Buzand, Moses Khorenatsi, and Ammianus Marcellinus. According to the Armenian authors, the Roman emperor immediately recognized Pap as king of Greater Armenia at the request of the Armenian nobility. Led by their political preference, they portray the

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[185] Cf. **Leeming**, 1998, 238–239.

archbishop Nersēs the Great and the sparapet Mushegh Mamikonean as the initiators of this event.

Ammianus does not share this view, and his text seems more exact. Therefore, we decided to follow his version while describing the early period of Pap's activity. According to Ammianus, the return of the young crown–prince was initiated by two Armenian noblemen, Cylaces and Arrabannes. One of them was *the prefect of the nation and the other commander–in–chief*. "However, for that moment assistance was refused them; but Para (Pap) was conducted by the general Terentius back to Armenia, where he was to rule that nation without any of the insignia of royalty; which was a very wise regulation, in order that we might be accused of breaking our treaty of peace" [Amm. Marc., XXVII, 12, 10].[186] However, the forces of Pap were limited, and he was forced to seek refuge in the remote mountains of Lazica. Meanwhile, Shapuh started a new military campaign against Greater Armenia: "[…] he burnt all the fruit trees, all the fortified castles, of which he had become master by force or treachery" [Amm. Marc., XXVII, 12, 12]. At this critical moment, the Emperor decided to send forces to support Pap.

Unfortunately, Ammianus does not relate the events that followed. They are mainly restored based on the records of the Armenian authors. According to them, many of the Armenian magnates began to join Pap hoping to secure the independence of Greater Armenia. By the words of Khorenatsi, the Armenians adopted a new policy at the instigation of Nersēs the Great: "[…] all the princes, both those who willingly accepted the rule of Pap and who did not (զամենայն նախարարսն, որք կամակից էին ընդ տերութիւնն Պապայ եւ որք ոչ)" led him to the Armenian land [Khor., III, 36, 10]. Pap accepted all of them, appa-

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[186] J. Marquart identified these persons as follows: in Cylaces, he saw Cłak Hayr Mardpet, in Arrabanes – the hazarapet of Greater Armenia, Aṙavan (Առաւան). See **Marquart**, 1930, 154–156.

rently following his great ancestor, Trdat III, who also had regained his throne with the support of Rome. It is well attested that Trdat appealed to all of Armenia: "[…] to provinces and districts, nakharars and troops and shinakans and everybody" [Agath., XII, 1]. For him, the solidarity of the society in support of the monarch was the circumstance that could secure internal peace and order.

> *The young crown–prince followed this path. He and the magnates came to terms. The Battle of Dzirav and the Assembly ritual demonstrated this idea best of all. Namely, the Armenian elite had learned the lesson of the reign of Arshak II and showed a willingness to stand above group and individual interests.*

Both sides recognized the necessity of compromise, two types of which were essential in those days. *The first* exposed the collective–psychological aspect of Armenian unity based on the ritual (and direct) participation of the Popular Assembly members. More precisely, it must be emphasized that in the 4th century the State Council of the nobles began to gain momentum. Popular Panarmenian Assemblies were held from time to time, in extreme situations, in various locations – Artashat, Vagharshapat, Shahapivan, etc. Pap demonstrated his adherence to ancestral tradition while hoping to also gain the support of the common people (shinakans and ramiks). He even returned its location to Bagavan, on the slopes of Mt. Npat.

As for the *second* way, it was still in development and sought to formulate the Armenian entity as a Christian *covenant* (ուխտ Աստուծոյ) based on rational (moral and legal) values and perceptions. This aspect is apparent in the text of Khorenatsi. According to him, on the summit of Mt. Npat, Nersēs the Great prayed for his people *like the first prophet Moses* (հանգոյն նախասմարգարէին Մովսիսի). The conversion to Christianity implied a new mode of social partnership based on collective responsibility to the Omnipotent Lord.

Buzand provides one of the most exact definitions of the Christian covenant in the mouth of the dying sparapet, Manuel Mamikonean: "Would that it had been my lot to die for the true–lords of this realm, the Arshakuni, for our wives, for our children, for the people serving God, for brothers, companions and faithful friends" [Buz., V, 44, 260]. According to Eghishē, this collective hero was the main inspiration for the Vardanants rebellion against Sasanian Persia for the Christian identity of the Armenians (450–451).

If our interpretation of the Battle of Dzirav is accurate then young Pap deviated from the strict retro–Hellenistic (in some senses utopic) program of his father, Arshak II. He planned to rebuild Armenian unity under powerful royal authority in order to meet the interests of all social classes. However, the experience of Dzirav allows for another interpretation as well. By choosing the site of the battle and Assembly in a renowned site (Bagrevand, Bagavan, St. Npat Mountain), where the memory of pre–Christian gods was still alive, the king most probably desired to differentiate Armenian Christianity.[187] Namely, he followed the way of the kings Khosrov Kotak (330–338) and Tiran (338–350), who tried to mitigate the orthodoxy of the Armenian Church at the expense of the revival of some Zoroastrian practices. This interpretation is in full accordance with the king's religious policy. It is well attested that Pap dissolved the hierarchical dependence of the Armenian Church on the Cappadocian prelacy. The Armenian Church gained autocephaly and, in 371, the king himself consecrated the new archbishop, Sahak.[188]

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[187] Pap probably also proceeded from the fact that Armenian Zoroastrianism differed considerably from orthodox Iranian Zoroasrianism in some aspects. Cf. **Russell**, 1987, 14.

[188] **Ormanean**, 2001, 251–253. Some scholars find that Pap (like his father Arshak II) was an Arian. See **Garsoïan**, 1997, 83; **Redgate**, 1998, 133–134; **Terian**, 2011, 18.

Undoubtedly, these positive developments during Pap's reign would have had to prevail over the destructive separatist tendencies in order to secure the homeostasis of Greater Armenia both in domestic and in foreign policy. The early results of the king's activity were promising. Nevertheless, as is apparent from what eventually happened, these hopes did not come true. This time, the problems came from the Roman side, which was troubled by Pap's independent stance. As a result, the head of the Roman military mission in Armenia managed to assassinate him. Thus, the young king shared the tragic destiny of his father. The causes of his failure were of a different character – political, social, religious, psychological, individual, etc. They demand a complex (and interdisciplinary) investigation, which is beyond the limits of the current study.

Section 4.

Ways of Self–Conception

> "Here there is much to say about the ordering and organization of the houses, families, cities, villages, estates, and in general the entire constitution of the kingdom and whatever is of relevance to the kingdom – the army, generals, provincial governors, and similar matters."
>
> ***Moses Khorenatsi, II, 7, 2.***

Chapter Seven

The Semantic Index of
Greater Armenia

Introduction

Two passages of the *History of the Armenians* by Moses Khorenatsi make up the focus of the present investigation. One of them concerns the author's narrative about the foundation of Armenia by the ethnarch Hayk and his descendants [Khor., I, 10–12]. The other concerns the rebirth of the country under Gregory the Illuminator, the most prominent figure in the conversion of the Armenians to Christianity [Khor., II, 91, 19]. The current research focuses on these two passages that illustrate the most important movement in the symphony of Armenian history. It shows traits of anthropomorphism, whereby historical events and situations are interpreted through the lens of moral values as well.[1] In other words, our approach to the crucial époques of Armenian history is based on the method of prosopography – history via the canonized biographies of the main (mythical or real) heroes.

Despite numerous differences, both of these passages from Khorenatsi demonstrate semantic and semiotic parallels, which become more obvious in light of Philo's ontology and moral theory. From this point of view, his *Questiones et solutiones in Genesin* (QG) is of particular interest.[2] It represents a brief and clear summary of

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[1] On the anthropomorphism of the historical narrative of Khorenatsi, see **Stepanyan**, 1998, 289–291.

[2] **Vardazaryan**, 2006, 9–11; **Vardazaryan**, 2011, 191–193; On Philo's influence on sociology and moral theory of Moses Khorenatsi,

the author's ideas and concepts and is preserved in an Armenian translation.[3] Later, it was translated into Latin, and modern languages.[4]

Scholars usually analyze the data of the *Quaestiones* in the light of Philo's other treatises, particularly *De opificio mundi*, *De fuga et inventione*, *De somniis*, *De agricultura*, *De virtutibus*, *Vita Mosesis*.[5] We hope to make use of their results for a hypertextual interpretation of the passages under consideration and to find new opportunities to interpret the concept of history worked out by Moses Khorenatsi.

1. The Axiology of the Birth of Armenia: Ethnarch Hayk

In the first passage, the main motive of Khorenatsi is to trace the genealogy of the Armenians in the context of the book of *Genesis* of the Old Testament. Apparently, a whole generation of intellectuals had worked on this problem, and the author uses their results to link the local Armenian history with the universal biblical history.[6] He mentions numerous chronographers and historians who contribu-

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see **Zekiyan**, 1987, 471–477; **Zekiyan**, 1988, 381–390; **Stepanyan**, 2005, 248–254; **Stepanyan**, 2009[1], 181–185. This influence must not be categorically linked with the time of the translation of Philo's works. Apparently, Armenian intellectuals were well–acquainted with the Greek originals and (following the *heteroepic* method of translation) worked out Armenian equivalents of Philo's key terms and concepts. On this method in Armenia, see **Sargsyan**, 2006[3], 224–229.

[3] **Philoni Judaei** Paralipomena, MDCCCXXXVI.

[4] For a reference on this problem, see **Hilger**, 1991, 1–15.

[5] About this problem see in detail, **van Winden**, 1979, 313–318; **Hay**, 1991, 81–97; **Arevshatyan**, **1973**, 34–43; **Terian**, 1991, 29–46.

[6] The aim to harmonize the local Armenian history with global history makes one of important features of historical concept of Moses Khorenatsi. **Stepanyan**, 1991, 156–158.

ted to this task: the ballads, the songs and dances of *the old descendants of Aram*, the Sibylline Oracles, Berosus, Mar Abas Catina, Abydenus, Cephalion, and Eusebius of Caesarea [Khor., I, 5; 6; 8].[7] They represented the pagan and Christian approaches to this issue, and Khorenatsi seeks to combine them into a single convincing narrative system.[8]

Accordingly, he begins his narrative with God's creation of the world and proceeds to the Flood: "Which was not rest but the destruction of whatever was upon the earth. It seems to me that to give rest means to stop, namely, to stop the impiety and evil by the annihilation of the infamous men of the second age" [Khor., I, 4, 25]. In this regard, he relates the rescue of Noah, the righteous patriarch, who (with his household) fathers *the third generation of humankind* [Ibid.]. The next step was to establish "[…] the harmony of the order of the three races up to Abraham, Ninos, and Aram" [Khor., I, 5, 5]. They represent the eleventh generation of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.[9]

To create a list of Noah's descendants, Khorenatsi is forced to deal with numerous discrepancies in his primary sources [Khor., I, 5, 43]. Nevertheless, there is a significant amount of fictitious data in them, and modern scholars do not find them entirely acceptable. However, the *ideology* of the composition is more important. It is aimed at the

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[7] Regarding Berosus, Abydenus and Cephalion, see the versatile discussion of A. Topchyan. **Topchyan**, 2006, 17–64.

[8] This work was quite possibly already done by the previous generation of intellectuals. Khorenatsi may have had a compendium of early Armenian history already in hand. Cf. **Sargsyan**, 1986, 7–16.

[9] The genetic line from Shem to Abraham is well attested in Holy Scripture. As for the lines from Ham to Ninos and from Japheth to Aram, their authorship may be attributed to the composers of the Compendium.

synchronization of crucial events of early world history, paving the way for the origins of Armenia.[10]

In the days of Khorenatsi, two versions of the origins of Armenia were in circulation. One of them recognized Torgom as the ancestor of the Armenians, while the other attributed this role to his son Hayk.[11] The author is aware of both versions but prefers the second. Accordingly, he analyzes the text concerning Hayk's deeds while combining the data of the Holy Scripture and Mar Abas Catina.[12]

Hayk, the descendant of Japheth: "[…] was handsome and personable, with curly hair, sparkling eyes, and strong arms. Among the giants, he was the bravest and most famous, the opponent of all who raised their hands to become absolute ruler over all the giants and heroes" [Khor., I, 10, 3]. He lived in Babylon with ferocious and strong giants who lived under the sway of the worst of them – Bēl, but decided to live free. Let us recall again the renowned story:

> *"These circumstances enabled Bēl to impose his tyranny on the whole land. But Hayk refused to submit to him […] and jour-*

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[10] It is well attested that the chronological background of Khorenatsi's grasp of world history is adopted from Eusebius of Caesarea. As for the passages under consideration, they are derived from Chaldean, Assyrian, and Hebrew chronicles. [Euseb., Chron., 7–11; 15–19; 24–29].

[11] The narrative of Hayk and his descendants was popular in the Armenian historiography of the 5th–7th centuries, particularly in Anonym's *Primary History*. Cf. Sebeos I, 1–4. It was adopted by the Georgian historians and is well attested in *K'art'lis Tskhovreba*, I, 1–3. Cf. **Toumanoff**, 1963, 108–109.

[12] On the mythological aspect of this narrative, see **Abeghyan**, 1966, 38–42; **Petrosyan**, 2009, 155–163. Despite this, some scholars see a historical kernel in it as well. They combine the information of the myth with the data of the inscriptions of the Assyrian king Tiglath Pileser I (1114–1076 BC). **Hmayakyan**, 1992, 125–132.

*neyed to the land of Ararat, which is in the northern regions,
with his sons and daughters and sons' sons, martial men about
three hundred in number, and other domestic servants and the
outsiders who had joined his service and all his effects" [Khor.,
I, 10, 8]. "He came and dwelt in an elevated plain and called the
name of the plateau Hark' – that is, here dwelt the fathers of the
family of the house of T'orgom. He also built a village and called
it after his own name Haykashen. It is also recorded […] that on
the southern side of this plain at the foot of a long mountain there
already dwelt a few men who willingly submitted to the hero"
[Ibid.].*[13]

Through envoys, Bēl demanded Hayk's obedience but
received a firm refusal. He gathered his *giants of enor-
mous height*, forming a disorderly multitude, and invaded
Hayk's domain. The battle took place on a plain to the
southeast of Lake Van, which was later named Hayots
Dzor. Many giants were slain but the outcome of the battle
remained uncertain:

*"Realizing this, the skillful archer Hayk advanced, and approach-
ing the king (Bēl) pulled taut his wide–arced bow and shot the
triple–fletched arrow at his breast armor; the arrow pierced right
through his back and struck in the ground. So perished the
domineering Titan; he was struck to the ground and breathed
out his spirit" [Khor., I, 11, 22].*[14]

After this great victory, Hayk's descendants gradually
spread to all corners of the Northern Country, creating

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[13] It must be noted that Khorenatsi relates also that some of these
early men, who dwelt in the province of Tarōn, near Mt. Sim, were the
descendants of Shem [Khor., I, 6, 22–23]. Cf. **Sargsyan**, 2006[1], 58–59.
[14] In the *Primary History*, this version of the narrative is supple-
mented by details that make it more vivid and colourful. The same traits
are visible in *K'art'lis Tskhovreba*. This shows that the elaboration of
the narrative remained current for long time.

Armenia: "Now our country is called Hayk' after the name of our ancestor Hayk" [Khor., I, 11, 23].[15] In other words, Khorenatsi recognizes the anti–tyrannical stance as an intrinsic characteristic of the Haykids and early Armenia in general.

A similar moralistic approach is apparent in Philo of Alexandria as well. His narrative about Noah and his sons is of exceptional interest: "Who are the three sons of Noah – Shem, Ham and Japheth? These names are symbols of three things in nature – of the good, the evil and the indifferent. Shem is distinguished for good, Ham for evil, and Japheth for the indifferent" [Philo, Q G., I, 88].[16]

In this light, the clash of Hayk with Bēl gains important value. Hayk represents the household of Japheth, whereas Bēl (Nimrod) represents that of Ham [Khor., I, 5–6]. Correspondingly, Hayk personifies *indifferent qualities* (τὰ ἀδιαφόρα), whereas Bēl personifies evil (τὰ κακία).[17]

These qualities are clearly defined in the moral theory of Philo. According to the philosopher, evil results from the domination of the bodily principle over the mind. In the cosmos, this inversion leads to destruction and chaos. In human beings, it initiates a life full of base passions:

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[15] Cf. Eghishē, De anim., XI, 42–43;

[16] The Armenian original reads as follows: "Նշանակք անուանս այսր են` երից բնութենէս իրաց. բարւոյ, եւ չարի, եւ անորոշի. զանազանէ սեմն բարւոյ, եւ քամն չարի, եւ յաբեթն անորոշի" [Փիլոնի Երրայացւոյ Մեկնութիւն Ծննդոց, Ա, ձբ].

[17] According to the moral theory of the Middle Stoa, human actions represent three poles of axiology: the perfect actions (τὰ κατορθώματα), the evil actions (τὰ ἀμαρτήματα), and the appropriate actions (τὰ καθήκοντα). The actor of the first is the sage (πρεσβύτερος), the second is a result of the actions of the vicious man (φαῦλος). The third is marked by the advanced man (προκόπτων), whose main achievement is the moderation of passions (μετριοπαθεία) [Cf. Cicero, De leg., I, 2, 8]. Cf. **Sandbach**, 1989, 63–68, 126–128; **Martens**, 2003, 151–154; **Annas**, 2008, 11–24.

"[…] and in the universe it is the matter devoid of quality and in men the ignorant and untutored soul that is without mark" [Philo, De fuga, II, 9]. The worthless man (φαῦλος, μόχθηρος) is deprived of mind and reason and is swept down to the world of sense–perception [Philo, De somn., VIII, 44].[18] His life is guided by the vices that flow out of the mortal portion of the soul – pleasure and lust, gluttony and vainglory, luxury and treachery: "He, miserable creature, will be seen in his true colors, either with the instincts of a slave rather than a gentleman, a skinflint and a split penny; or on the other hand, as living in a whirl of prodigality, even ready to fling away money and to guzzle – an ever–active patron of courtesans, pimps, and every licentious crew" [Philo, De fuga, V, 28]. In a word, the material world is comparable to a turbulent torrent ready to swallow the weak soul [Philo, De fuga, IX, 48]. The latter is blind to heavenly intelligible values – *he neither seeks nor finds*.

Moses Khorenatsi patterns the figure of Bēl utilizing similar ideas. This antagonist is depicted as a symbol of the corporeal principle; he is selfish, cruel and tyrannical. His entourage is "like an impetuous torrent pouring down" [Khor., I, 11, 10].[19]

According to Philo, the indifferent axiology flows out of the ambiguity of human nature, which is believed to be comprised of two opposite elements – the heavenly and the earthly: "For the earth–formed man is a mixture, and consists of soul and body, and is in need of teaching and instruction, desiring, in accordance with the laws of philosophy, that he may be happy" [Philo, QG, I, 8].[20] For

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[18] **Dillon**, 1997, 190–197.

[19] Literally – որպէս յորձան ինչ սաստիկ. Like the case of Philo, in this passage, the turbulent torrent is viewed as a symbol of uncontrollable passions. Cf. **Graver**, 2008, 175–176.

[20] Happiness was considered by the Stoics to be the main motivation of human life: "[…] the core claim of Stoic ethics, that human happi-

him, genuine traits are health, courage, fidelity, wealth, correspondence of words with acts, etc [Philo, De fuga, XXVII, 152].[21] From this neutral position, he is capable of starting the heavenly journey to divine values: "[…] for in very deed God drops from above the eternal wisdom (σοφία) upon minds which are by nature apt and take delight in contemplation" [Philo, De fuga, XXV, 138].[22] In other words, *he seeks and finds*. Khorenatsi proceeds from such an understanding, depicting Hayk with high mental and corporeal descriptions. He is a "prudent and intelligent (ուշիմ եւ խոհեմ) giant with curly hair and sparkling eyes" [Khor., I, 11, 11].

But from a neutral (or indifferent) position, the opposite is also quite possible – a regression to the predominance of the corporeal principle under the irrational impulse (τῆς ἀλόγου φορᾶς) [Philo, De fuga, XXVI I, 152]. It promotes evil in both private and public life.[23]

This reconstruction makes it possible to formulate the axiology of Armenia as well. Indeed, Philo provides a key for assessing the place of this country in the essential layer of Khorenatsi's narrative. According to him, Armenia occupies a position between absolute good and evil. It means that both *haykism* and *bēlism* are to be viewed as archetypal components of Armenian history.

Khorenatsi demonstrates these opposite poles through the long *historical journey* of the Armenians, highlighting

ness depends on the recognition that what really matters is not securing 'indifferents' such as health and material goods but achieving what is really 'good', that is (roughly) acting virtuously". **Gill**, 2007, 194.

[21] Philo seemingly follows the Stoic ethics, while holding that *appropriate actions* belong to men by nature. **Devettere**, 2002, 19–20.

[22] In this way, cosmic Wisdom turns into earthly wisdom, giving human beings a free choice between good and evil. In its epistemological aspect, it denotes a movement from contemplative life to practical life. **Calabi**, 2007, 161–163.

[23] **Bos**, 2002, 281–284.

the causes of the supremacy of one or the other. According to him, *haykism* was absolutely valid up to the time of Vahē, the last of Hayk's descendants to rule Armenia: "[…] who rebelled and was killed by Alexander of Macedon" [Khor., I, 31, 14]. During this entire period, the principle of direct inheritance was unbreakable since "the descendants of heroes are heroes" [Khor., I, 31, 3]. With Vahē's death, the initial book of the *History* – T*he Genealogy of Greater Armenia* – comes to an end.[24]

The next book – *The Intermediate Period in the History of Our Ancestors* – is marked by a mixture of *haykism* and *bēlism*. The movement of history in one or the other direction depends on the ideas and projects, volition and actions of the leading personalities. Consequently, righteous kings or tyrants make up the main figures of the narrative. The most illustrious representatives of the first group are Vagharshak Arsacid, Artashēs the Middle, Trdat the Great, and (we would add also) King Vřamshapuh. Their reign combines "[…] the deeds of valor and bravery, the wise actions and ordinances (գործ քաջութեան եւ արութեան, իմաստից եւ կարգաց)" [Khor., I, 2, 2].[25]

The tyrants who make up the second group are personified by Artavazd the Elder, Eruand the Last, and Artavazd the Last. Khorenatsi's characterization of Artavazd the Elder is very precise: "Unconcerned with wisdom, valor, or good repute, truly a servant and slave to his stomach, he fattened his guts" [Khor., II, 22, 4].[26] The entropy of *bēlism* gradually takes the upper hand, causing great turmoil in the Armenian kingdom. The first act in this vein

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[24] On Vahē as a historical figure, see **Shahinyan**, 1973, 172–177.

[25] In accordance with the historical concept of Khorenatsi, this book is designed in accordance with the priority of the affective principle. Cf. **Stepanyan**, 1998, 292.

[26] As highlighted above, Philo assesses such situations as results of the soul's decline from natural balance. See **Dillon**, 1997, 193.

is perhaps the murder of King Khosrov II, which occurred in 252.[27]

2. Spiritual rebirth: the education of Gregory the Illuminator

The son of the late king, who regained his ancestral throne with the support of Diocletian, reigned for more than thirty years and was known as Trdat the Great (298–330).[28] Under the spiritual leadership of Gregory the Illuminator, Greater Armenia was converted to Christianity, presumably in 301,[29] an event that is scrutinized by Agathangelos in his *History*. Two more authors are of indubitable value for the problem under consideration – Sebeos and Zenob Glak.[30] Their records supplement each other and make it easier to certain the essence of Khorenatsi's narrative.

However, our main task is to analyze the biography of St. Gregory attested in the narrative of Moses Khorenatsi. It is believed to contain the essential semantic and semiotic

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[27] See **Gaorsoïan**, 1997[1], 72; **Dayraee**, 2011, 180.

[28] The problem of the succession to the throne after Khosrov II still remains uncertain. The data of Sasanian royal inscriptions allows us to speak about only two crown–princes with any precision, Hormizd–Ardashir and Narses, who were appointed as *great Arminian kings* (wuzurg Arminan šah). Presumably, they reigned in Greater Armenia until 293. See **Gaorsoïan**, 1997[1], 73–75. Sassanians bestowed the same title on the Kushan kings, and it was "[…] a way to forge deep ties, so to control the two flanks of empire, one in the Caucasus and the other in Greater Khurāsān". **Daryaee**, 2017, 86.

[29] This is the traditional date. In scholar literature, it varies from 284 to 314, and every approach is supplied with suitable arguments. For a brief (but essential) reference on the literature of this problem, see **Nersessian**, 2010, 23–25.

[30] For a detailed comparison of the data of these sources, see **Khalateants**, 1893, 3–37.

structures based on the ideology of the rebirth of Greater Armenia through Christianity.

It is well attested that the worship of St. Gregory already existed in the second half of the 5th century, serving as an impetus for spiritual unification of the Caucasian Christian area.[31] His life and spiritual exploits were canonized in accordance with the hagiographic tradition. We are going to discuss Gregory's way of life as a paradigm for the rebirth of Armenia. This approach, certainly, is the manifestation of the anthropomorphism of history, a concept that is obvious throughout Khorenatsi's text.

The passage of Moses Khorenatsi about the mission of St. Gregory is a result of canonical design and contains the following essential components: *a.* corporeal birth, *b.* education in Christian values, *c.* enlightening activity in pagan Armenia, *d.* death and apotheosis.[32] This narrative standard was set up in a historical space with exact axiological parameters – Sasanian Persia, Cappadocia, and Greater Armenia. The first two represent the opposite poles of spiritual evil and good, whereas the third is connected with indifference. Correspondingly, the biography of St. Gregory is to be considered as a series of transitions from one axiological condition to the other.[33]

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[31] On the Christian Caucasus region and the role of Gregory the Illuminator in religious unity of that, see in detail **Marr**, 1905, 149–155; cf. **Muradyan**, 1982, 5–20.

[32] Apparently, it represented the hagiographic genre *paterikon* – a common biography of saints compiled in accordance with the real data regarding their lives. Cf. **Aigrain**, 1953, 53–54; **Efthymides**, **Déroche**, 2011, 35–94. Regarding this genre in Armenia, see **Ter–Davtyan**, 1973, 6–11; **Cowe**, 2011, 299–322.

[33] Quite possibly, there is another way of establishing the similar axiological condition through the comparison with the ideal images of the Maccabees which makes up a practice usual in early Armenian historiography. Cf. **Thomson**, 1975, 329–341. However, this approach seems inappropriate since our aim is to consider the problem in its dynamics.

a. *The corporeal birth* of St. Gregory is connected with the treacherous mission of his father Anak, who arrived in Greater Armenia to murder king Khosrov II, an irreconcilable enemy of the Sassanian Empire [Khor., II, 67, 12]. For Khorenatsi, the Sassanians are evildoers because they overthrew the Parthians, the descendants of the biblical patriarch Abraham through his wife K'etura [Khor., II, 68, 2–6]. Anak is an Arsacid from the clan of the Sureneans, but becomes loyal to the Sassanians when he is seduced by the promises of Shapuh I (241–271):

> "[…] to return to them their original home called Pahlav, the royal city Bahl, and all the country of the Kushans.[34] Similarly, he promised the form and splendor of royalty, half of [the empire of] Arians, and second place under his authority" [Khor., II, 74, 3]. Anak succeeded in his plan: "After two years had passed since Anak's arrival in Armenia, in the third he killed Khosrov, who had reigned forty–eight years" [Khor. II, 74, 12].

In response, the murderer himself and all his family were put to death. But "God's care saved the only one", the future Gregory the Illuminator [Ibid.].[35] The main motive for Anak's treachery was his vainglory, a vice connected with the irrational affections of human nature.[36] In Philo's

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And it is quite consistence with the experience of Khorenatsi.

[34] F. Justi links the etymology of the name Anak to New Persian nāk – *verderbt*, *böse* (corrupt, perverse, and evil). **Justi**, 1895, 16.

[35] There was another tradition about the second son of Anāk: "Only two infant sons of the Parthian did someone save and rescue through their nurses, who took them and fled, the one to Persian territory and the other to Greek territory" [Agath., 34; cf. Zenob., 8].

[36] An *advanced reader* could see in this vainglory or self–esteem (ὑπερηφανία = superbia) one of the *seven homogeneous deadly sins*. This concept goes back to Euagrius Ponticus, a Christian monk of the 4th century. As for the other sins, they were as follows: gluttony, lust, avarice, sadness, anger, sloth, and pride. See in detail **Tilby**, 2009, 9–35.

moral theory, such men are ultimately separated from true and omnipotent God while living a life without reason and soul:

> "[...] they convey an unlimited supply of eatables one after another, and steep it in quantities of strong drink, until the reasoning faculty is drowned, and the sensual passions born of excess are aroused and raging with a fury that brooks no check, after falling upon and entangling themselves with all whom they meet, have disgorged their great frenzy and have abated" [Philo, De agr., 122]. This mode of life is defined by the author as lifelessness (βίον ἀβίωντον)" [Philo, De fuga, XXII, 123].[37]

b. *Education in Christian values* took place in Cappadocia. In fact, the narrative of Khorenatsi is about the initiation of a spiritual adept which begins as follows:[38]

> "A certain Persian, not one of the lesser and insignificant people, whose name was Burdar, went from Persia to the province of Cappadocia and settled in Caesarea. Having married a Christian wife called Sophy, the sister of a certain magnate named Euthalius, he set out to return to Persia with his wife. But Euthalius caught him and dissuaded him from going farther. At this point the birth of our Illuminator took place, and by chance [Sophy] became the child's nurse. When the catastrophe occurred, Euthalius took his sister and her husband with the child and returned to Cappadocia" [Khor., II, 80, 2–4].

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[37] Philo's definition *living being already dead* marks the lowest level of human existence, dominated by bodily passions. It marks an extreme condition of separation between the *soul and body*. **Royse**, 1988/1989, 224–225. Plotinus is more illustrative in his description of corporeal men: "[…] they are like the heavier birds which have incorporated much from the earth and are so weighted down that they cannot fly high […]" [Plot., V, 9, 1]. Cf. **Boeri**, 2005, 384–386; **Stamatellos**, 2013, 58.

[38] **Stepanyan**, 1998, 294–295.

Scholars have pointed out that the etymology of the names of the actors in this passage are reflections of the phases of the spiritual journey of an adept from somatic pleasures and passions to divine virtues and truths.[39]

Burdar is a name derived from the Avestan *beretar* – *patient*, *bearer*, *wearer*, *porter*.[40] This Persian has apparently chosen the destiny of men ready to start on the path to heavenly virtues. Burdar's journey to Cappadocia and his marriage are to be estimated as a spiritual migration. In the words of Philo, such men:

> *"When they have thoroughly learned in all its details the whole study of the sense–perceptions, calm it as their prerogative to advance to some other greater object of contemplation, leaving behind them those lurking–places of sense–perception, to which the name of Heaven is given" [Philo, De somn., VIII, 59].*[41]

Philo traces the best demonstration of this in the life of Abraham: "[…] who has thoroughly comprehended himself, thoroughly of himself, having as a step to this ascertained the nothingness in all respects of created beings" [Philo, De somn., VIII, 60].[42] This way is full of struggle; even regression is quite possible. Aware of this, Khorenatsi describes Burdar's intention "to return to Persia with his wife".[43] However, the ascendance to perfection is more

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[39] N. Adontz was the first to highlight this *hidden* side of Khorenatsi's record. However, he did not connect this to the initiation of an adept. See **Adontz**, 1928, 237.

[40] **Justi**, 1895, 73.

[41] Christian theology worked out a special term to express the readiness of an adept to follow the divine call to perfection. See **PGL**, 1961, 176 (ἡ εὐπερεκολουθησία).

[42] The beginning of Abraham's migration from Harran is quite comparable with this level of spiritual initiation. See **Lawrence**, 1935, 55–60.

[43] The absolute pole of such *deviation* (ἀπόκλισις) is observable in the biblical story of Lot who, with his two daughters, escaped the destruc-

influential in shaping Burdar's life.[44] He is brought back
to Caesarea, and, in Philo's terminology, must be consi-
dered a *practitioner* (ὁ ἀσκητής), a man who: "[…] does
not brook to spend a lifetime in the territory of the senses,
but a few days and short time in compliance with the
necessities of the body to which he is tied, but in the city
discerned by the intellect (ἔν τῇ νοητῇ πόλει) that a life–
long enduring is in store for him" [Philo, De somn., VIII,
46].[45]

    Sophy: is a name denoting *wisdom* (ἡ σοφία) in Classical
Greek, Hellenistic and biblical theology and philosophy.[46]
Philo is thought to be among the most prominent intellec-
tuals who worked to harmonize these traditions. In his the-
ory, wisdom figures in heavenly and earthly hypostases.[47]
The first of them indicates the most important potency of
God in keeping the intelligible universe in unity and har-
mony. This universal Wisdom is named *God's daughter*
(θυγάτηρ τοῦ θεοῦ):

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tion of Gomorrah. During the family's escape, Lot's wife turned into a
salt pillar since, despite the warning, she looked back [Gen., 19, 23–26;
cf. Philo, Migr., 148–149]. Cf. **Graffigna**, 2003, 137.

[44] According to Stoic moral theory, the *appropriate actions*, τὰ
καθήκοντα (officia), were prescribed to such men [Cicero, De leg., 2,
8]. **Martens**, 2003, 151–154.

[45] *Self–mastery* (ἐγκράτεια) or *self–control* (σωφροσύνη) is recog-
nized as the pivotal moral value of this type of man. See **Calabi**, 2008,
146–147. Concerning righteous men, Plotinus states: "Others do indeed
lift themselves a little above the earth; the better in their soul urge them
from the pleasant to the nobler, but they are not of power to see the
highest and so, in despair of any surer ground, they fall back in virtue's
name, upon those actions and options of the lower from which they
sought to escape" [Plot., V, 9, 1]. Cf. **Armstrong**, 1967, 258–263.

[46] **Horsley**, 1979, 30–54; **Sterling**, 1995, 357–373; **Latura**, 2012,
880–886.

[47] **Cox**, 2005, 71–95.

"For that which comes after God, even though it were the chiefest of all things, occupies a second place, and therefore was termed to express its contrast with the Maker of the Universe who is Masculine, and its affinity to everything else. For preeminence always pertains to the masculine, always comes short of and is lesser than it" [Philo, De fuga, IX, 51].[48]

At the same time, Wisdom is sometimes identified with the *Divine Word* (ὁ λόγος), which is masculine. Philo explains this with the argument that "[…] all virtues have a woman's title, but powers and activities of consummate men" [Ibid.]. As for earthly wisdom, it finds a home in human souls: "[…] the daughter of God, even Wisdom, is not only masculine but father sowing and begetting in souls aptness to learn discipline, knowledge, sound sense, good and laudable actions" [Philo, De fuga, IX, 52].[49]

In Christianity, this complicated assumption generated a system for the education of young adepts from *the outer* (*pagan*) *sciences* to *the inner or sublime* (*Christian*) *sciences*.[50] While the first stage demanded the study of grammar, rhetoric and philosophy, the second was focused on the works of the Fathers of the Church. On the whole, the purpose of education was to shape a harmonious human

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[48] Cf. **Mattila**, 1996, 108–112.

[49] In more exact terms, this divine hypostasis, though frequently called God's daughter, is of an ambivalent nature. **Borgen**, 1972, 117–121. On the parallel of the cosmic Word and human reason see **Robertson**, 2008, 10–14.

[50] See **PGL**, 1961, 995–996 (παιδεία, παίδευσις). The ideal mode of combination of these two branches of instruction is found in Khorenatsi's description of the Egyptian Christians: "They no longer seek oracles from Proteus, god of the underworld, but they study the power of various sciences from the new Plato, I mean from the teacher of whom I was not found an unworthy pupil […]". [Khor., III, 62, 8]. Apparently, this statement is about the Catechetical School of Alexandria (Didascalium) founded by Mark the Apostle. See **Ferguson**, 1974, 15.

soul consisting of the rational, the appetitive and the affective (spirited) parts:

> *"Of these parts we are told that the spirit and the appetite placed below, supporting on each side the intellectual part of the soul, while the rational aspect is joined to both so as to keep them together and to be held up by them, being trained for courage by the spirit and elevated to the participation in the Good by the appetite" [Gr. Nyss., Mos., II, 96].*

For this type of man, the following idea from the same author is quite applicable: "It was not some constraining power from above that caused the one to be found in darkness and the other in light, but we men have in ourselves, in our own nature and by our choice, the cause of light or darkness, since we place ourselves in whichever sphere we wish to be" [Gr. Nyss., Mos., II, 80].[51]

Euthalius: is a name derived from the Greek Εὐθαλής – *blooming*, *flourishing*, *thriving*, *well–fed*. He is firm in his Christian faith, and the name denotes his high spiritual status. According to Philo, these men have already set their gaze upon heaven, comprehending *all that follows on after God*: "[…] among created things which is holy is, in the universe, the heaven, in which natures imperishable and enduring through long ages have their orbits; in man it is mind, a fragment of Deity" [Philo, De somn., I, 34]. In most cases, *the fragment* reaches the Deity through training and knowledge, and its bearer becomes a seer (ὁρῶντα).

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[51] The free will of men paves the way to the divine virtues that prepare them to become *God's image* (ἴνδαλμα τοῦ Θεοῦ). However, it is also able to cause their downfall when influenced by passions and vices. See **Wolfson**, 1942, 135–137. Presumably, the concept of free will was adopted from Zoroastrianism, where it was considered the way people participated in the universal combat between good and evil. **Masani**, 1954, 97–103; **Zaehner**, 1961, 41–42.

The assumption of Gregory of Nyssa concerning such men is very characteristic: "We are in some manner our own parents, giving birth to ourselves by our own free choice in accordance with whatever we wish to be […]" [Gr. Nyss., Mos., II, 3]. For them, the assumption of Philo is quite applicable – *they seek and find*. Among them, however, there are some gifted personalities *who do not seek but find*: "Under this head is regarded every wise man who learns directly from no teacher but himself (αὐτομαθής καὶ αὐτοδίδακτος σόφος); for he does not by searching and practicing and toiling gain improvement, but as soon as he comes into existence he finds wisdom placed ready to his hand, shed from heaven above" [Philo, De fuga, XXX, 166].[52] The intellectual tradition saw the most appropriate manifestation of this type of man in the biblical patriarch Moses.[53]

Gregory: The account of Khorenatsi (and his main source Agathangelos) about the education of Anak's son in Caesarea is brief and without significant details: "I am happy to say, for the sake of [preparing] the way of our salvation. Otherwise, with what hope or expectation did they raise the child of Parthian descent in the Roman Empire and dedicated to the Christian faith?" [Khor., II, 80, 5].

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[52] This way represented the adept's attainment of the knowledge of God through revelation. **Wolfson**, 1960, 103.

[53] Moses was considered a personification of *the unwritten law* (ἄγρα-φος νόμος), which was greater than the written law. See **Wedderburn**, 1973, 310–311; **Najman**, 1999, 67–68. This situation was entailed by the activity of *the highest part of the soul*, defined by Plotinus as *godly*. Relatively, he calls these men *godlike*: "[…] in their mightier power, in the keenness of their sight, have clear vision of the splendour above and rise to it from the cloud and fog of earth and hold firmly to that other world, looking beyond all here; delighted in the place of reality, their native land, like a man returning after long wanderings to the pleasant ways of his own country" [Plot., V, 9, 1]. Cf. **Rist**, 1967, 418; **Song**, 2009, 29.

Apparently, *the outer sciences* were not applied for the training of the young. More probably, the narrative was patterned on the training of Gregory of Nyssa by his elder sister Macrina and his brother Basil the Great. Upon receiving training and reaching spiritual maturity, the adept usually became a *practitioner* (ὁ   ἀσκητής): "He who would approach to the knowledge of the things sublime must first purify his manner of life from all sensual and irrational emotion" [Gr. Nyss., Mos., II, 157].[54] Supposedly, the new (spiritual) name of the young adept, Gregory (Γρηγόριος), was a manifestation of this transformation, deriving from the Greek verbal form γρηγορεῖν – *to watch*, *to be watchful*, *alert*, *vigilant*.

However, the life of a *practitioner* is not yet stable, "[…] for practicing is by nature an uneven business, at one moment going onward to a height, at another returning in opposite direction, and at one time like a ship making life's voyage with fair winds, at another with ill winds" [Philo, De somn., I, 150]. Gregory's maturity was a step towards this stability.[55] A somatic element still persisted in his life, as he married the virgin Mariam, a daughter of a certain Christian called David. However, after the birth of his two sons, *they willingly separated from each other*. He consistently believed in his spiritual mission and "[…] did not linger in Caesarea, but quickly turned back and in the city of Sebaste *occupied himself with collecting material for his teaching*" [Khor., II, 80, 12]. He chose Greater Armenia not only to redeem the fault of his father but also: "For the holy martyrs who were martyred here made a road for these Northern

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[54] Gregory of Nyssa considered intellectual purification an important way for apophatic theology. **Ojell**, 2007, 179–182.

[55] In Christianity, the coming of age was celebrated with a baptism aimed at *the wearing of Christ like a toga virilis* vesting youths with the dignity of manhood. **Harrill**, 2002, 276.

regions, since they have gone up and made paths for others"
[Agath., 741].[56]

3. Spiritual rebirth: the mission and death
   of Gregory the Illuminator

The narrative of Gregory's illuminative activities in
Greater Armenia is compiled on a vertical axis – from the
Pit to the Caves of Manē situated on the summit of Mt.
Sepuh in the province of Daranałik.[57] During this entire
spiritual journey, King Trdat III initially sees the Saint as
his opponent, later on as a keen associate. Both of them
were victims of state turmoil, lost their parents and found
refuge in the Roman Empire. Reaching maturity, both of
them returned to Greater Armenia, one to inherit his ances-
tral royal title and authority, the other to illuminate the
country with the light of Christianity. This activity was
associated with moral, legislative and executive faculties,
demanding: "[…] love of humanity, of justice, of good-
ness and hatred of evil" [Gr. Nyss., Mos., II, 3, 9].[58]

A more detailed version of the narrative is preserved
in the text of Agathangelos, which has been the focus of
numerous studies.[59] The narrative begins with the irrecon-
cilable conflict between the Zoroastrian king and the

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[56] This primarily refers to the apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew.
According to the tradition of the Armenian Church, in the 1st century
AD., they arrived in Greater Armenia in order to convert the people but
were put to torture and death. See in detail, **Esbroeck**, 1972, 241–249.

[57] Daranałik was in Upper Armenia, one of the fifteen counties
of Greater Armenia. For a detailed descripttion of the province see
Hakobyan, **Melik–Bakhshyan**, **Barseghyan**, 1986, 52.

[58] The phrase is modeled in accordance with Philo's concept of divine
reward and punishment in response to men's virtuous or vicious actions.
See **Mendelson**, 1996, 105–116; **Runia**, 1997, 3–11.

[59] For a survey of the recent investigations on the problem see
Yevedian, 2006, 527–542.

Christian devotee. It results in the torture and imprison-
ment of the Saint in the jail of Artaxata, Khor Virap (Խոր
Վիրապ). However, due to God's punishment and inspi-
ration, the king changes his attitude towards his erstwhile
enemy, going from enmity to friendship and cooperation
[Agath, 225].

> *According to the tradition, the king was turned into a boar:*
> *"[...] he lost his human nature for the likeness of wild pigs and*
> *went about like them and dwelt among them. Then entering a*
> *reedy place, in senseless abandon he pastured on grass, and*
> *wallowed naked in the plain" [Agath., 212]. Most probably,*
> *this "punishment" was nothing but a reference to the ritual*
> *of the king's dedication to the cult of Vahagn/Verethragna, the*
> *god of warriors [Zend Avesta, Yašt, 14, 27]. It is well attested*
> *that the boar was the sacred heraldic animal of this god [Zend*
> *Avesta, Yašt, 14, 15].*[60]

In this cooperation, a parallel is apparent with the
renowned concept of Plato on the two essential potencies
of the Creator.[61] It was continued by Philo in the context
of biblical theology, considering the divine *kindness* and
governance (εὐεργεσίαν καὶ ἡγεμονίαν) as the embodi-
ments of these potencies: "Now the name denoting the
kind and gracious powers is *God*, and that denoting the
kingly ruling is *Lord*" [Philo, De Somn., XXVI, 163].[62] In
other words, the ideology of the Armenian Church saw the
embodiment of divine kindness in St. Gregory and that of

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[60] On this parallel, see **Russell**, 1987, 198–199. We must keep in mind
the fact that the king of Greater Armenia was the head of the warrior
class. **Stepanyan**, 2012, 312–317.

[61] Plato recognized *justice* (ἡ δική) as the culmination of these two
functions which in their turn made up the essential condition of social
cooperation of citizens. **Hall**, 2004, 42–51.

[62] Philo follows this platonic concept both in his cosmology and poli-
tical theory. Cf. **Carson**, 1981, 150–151; **Sterling**, 1993, 97–98.

divine governance in Trdat III. As highlighted above, the cooperation of the two eminent leaders led to the conversion of the country.

Curiously, Moses Khorenatsi does not recount the details and vicissitudes of this crucial event. He only sums up its results, which had a profound effect on the ecclesiastical organization of the country. In this regard, the author overlooks the consecration of the Saint in Caesarea, his return to Armenia and his baptism of the king and his court and the entire nation in the waters of the Euphrates, the destruction of pagan temples and the building of Christian shrines in their places [Agath., 778–791].[63] Instead, Khorenatsi recounts the events of the last phase of the earthly life of the Saint:

> *"After illuminating the whole Armenia with the light of divine knowledge, banishing the darkness of idolatry and filling all regions with bishops and teachers, in his love for the mountains and solitude and a secluded life with tranquility of mind to speak to God without distraction, he left his own son Aristakēs as his successor and remained himself in the province Daranałik in the mountain Caves of Manē" [Khor., II, 91, 3].*[64]

The Saint lived in the caves called *Caves of Manē* (Մանեայ այրք) for many years, but from time to time "[…] traveled about the country, visiting disciples and confirming them in the faith" [Khor., II, 91,]. Later, his seclusion became absolute and he no longer socialized with anyone. In this regard, the account of Gregory of Nyssa about Moses is quite relevant: "Moses lived alone in the mountains away from all the turmoil of the mar-

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[63] **Ormanean**, 2001, 98–99; **Redgate**, 1998, 116–119; **Stopka K.**, 2016, 26–33.

[64] For a complete survey of the last period of St. Gregory's life, see **Esbroeck**, 1971, 378–418; **Terian**, 2002, 45–65.

ketplace; there in the wilderness he cared for his sheep"
[Greg. Nyss., Mos., I, 19].

   With this rather imaginative description, an experienced
observer is able to trace the highest level of spiritual initi-
ation, when adepts, pursuing the example of the patriarchs
Abraham, Israel, Jacob and (particularly) Moses, enter
into an intimate relationship with God: "[…] for those has-
ten to make themselves like His blessed and happy nature"
[Philo, De Abr., XVIII, 87]. Thus they become *the friend
of God* (ὁ θεοφίλος).[65]

   The anabasis and communion with God was usually
interpreted as the corporeal death of the Saint: "[…] bad
people, prolonging their days, are dead, deprived of the
life in association with virtue, while good people even
if cut off from their partnership with the body, live ever,
and are granted immortality". In a more definite formula,
the same sounds as follows: "[…] some people are dead
while living, and some alive while dead" [Philo, De fuga,
X, 55].[66] In this light, the renowned formula of Eghishē
finds a quite acceptable explanation: "Death not under-

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[65] Essentially, they represent *the godlike men* whom Plotinus some-
times indicates as the *genuine beings* (αὐτοάνθροποι – *self–men*),
while highlighting: "But even there we are not to remain always, in
that beauty of the multiple; we must make haste yet higher, above this
heaven of ours and even that; leaving all else aside, we ask in awe:
"Who produced that realm and how?". Everything There is a single idea
in an individual impression and, informed by Good, possesses the uni-
versal good transcendent over all" [Plot., VI, 7, 16]. Cf. **Song**, 2009, 38.
[66] In other words, the life of the soul has two possible outcomes –
on the one hand, the union with God through a series of intermediate
deaths, with ultimate death and annihilation, on the other. In the eastern
intellectual tradition, this concept reaches back to Zoroastrianism. On
the Zoroastrian heritage of early Armenian Christianity, see **Redgate**,
1998, 120–122. Meanwhile, the western tradition connects it with
Orphism and Pythagoras. See **Zeller**, 1995, 21–23; **Bremmer**, 2002,
11–26; 41–55.

stood is death, death understood is immortality" [Eghishē, II, 2]. The author considered the Great Revolt against the Sasanian domination a collective initiation. Its heroes, while willingly choosing bodily death, prepared themselves for communion with the heavenly Lord. Indeed, after death, they joined the host of divine creatures becoming heavenly protectors of Armenia.[67]

Coming back to Khorenatsi, it becomes obvious that he views the end of Gregory's seclusion in this form of death. He depicts this event in accordance with Christian axiology, portraying him as a martyr inspired by *the view above*, *dying for God in an imitation of Christ*:

> *"There was a certain woman, Manē by name, among the companions of Saint Rhipsimē, like Nunē, the teacher of the Georgians, who made no haste to follow them when they came among us; but knowing that all places are God's, she dwelt in these mountains in some caves in the rock. For this reason, the mountain was named "Caves of Manē", and in that cave later dwelt Saint Gregory" [Khor., II, 91, 5].*[68]

To the experienced reader, the virgins Rhipsimē, Nunē, and Manē seem like manifestations of God's heavenly daughter, Wisdom, through whose guidance the souls of righteous men traveled to the visible and invisible heavens.[69] In Christian theology, *Wisdom* was identified as the Holy Spirit who strove for the world's salvation in partnership with Christ–Word.[70]

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[67] "Որպէս եւ ասաց ոմն ի հնումն, մահ ոչ իմացեալ՝ մահ է, մահ իմացեալ՝ անմահութիւն է": Cf. **Stepanyan**, 2018, 184–198.

[68] Cf. **Kelly**, 2006, 736–737.

[69] See **Sterling**, 1995, 363–367. This is quite comparable with the concept of Basil the Great about the journey of a soul "through three heavens". **Sheldon–Williams**, 1967, 438.

[70] This concept occupied a central position in Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Russian philosophy at the turn of the 19th and 20th

Gregory's death propelled him *to the ranks of the angels*: "Shepherds found him dead and buried him in the same place without knowing who he was. It was indeed fitting that they who were the ministers of our Savior's birth should also be the servants of his disciple's burial" [Khor., II, 91, 15].[71] Summing up his narrative about Gregory the Illuminator, Khorenatsi reminds the reader of his genealogy: "[…] he was a Parthian by origin, from the province of Pahlav, a descendant of the Arsacid family, from the Surēn branch through his father called Anak" [Khor., II, 91, 19]. Despite the wickedness of his father, he continued the line of spiritual purity reaching back to Abraham, and through him to Moses and Christ. The renowned biblical maxim was quite appropriate for him: "The man who has sinned is the man who must die and the son is not to suffer for the sin of his father" [Greg. Nyss., Mos., II, 91].[72] In this vein, the narrative of the hagiographic sketch turns back to its starting point, when regarding the predestined life of the young orphan.

4. The Zoroastrian perspective of spiritual rebirth

However, the narrative can also be interpreted in another way. The fact is that the province of Daranałik occupied a particular place in the *spiritual geography*

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centuries. See in detail **Tanev**, 2011, 31–44.

[71] In other words, the Savior's birth and the death of His (direct or indirect) disciples are considered comparable events. It gave the disciples the opportunity to get prepared for an encounter of the highest level. Apparently, it was about the Eucharist, "the summit of the Christian life", succinctly summarized in the words of Christ: "I am the living bread which came from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever" [John, 6:51]. Cf. **PGL**, 1961, 579 (Εὐχαριστία).

[72] This maxim reaches back to the concept of the old prophets on the individual responsibility of a man to God from the perspective of personal communion with Him. **Daley**, 1996, 85–89.

of Greater Armenia. The shrine of the head–deity of the Zoroastrian pantheon, Aramazd, and the reliquary of the Arsacid kings were both located in this province, in the fortress Ani Kamakh [Agath., 785]. Apparently, departing from their earthly body, the kings joined higher creatures. In this spiritual journey, they seem to emulate the experience of Zoroaster.

A popular tradition circulated among the Zoroastrians regarding the first encounter of the prophet with Ahura Mazda. In this story, Vohu Manah (Good Mind), one of Aməša Spentas (Immortal Spirits) who supported the Omnipotent Lord in running the visible and invisible universes is the intercessor.[73] This tradition highlighted the exceptional activity of Vohu Manah: "[…] and it is by Good Mind, the exteriorization of the divine thought, that the world is brought into existence" [Zend Avesta, Yasna, 31, 11].[74]

The tradition under consideration is most apparent in the *Denkart*, the Pahlavi *Act of Religion* of the 9th century AD., which preserved a long version of the prophet's life drawn from the Avestan Nasks:

> "And Vahman (Vohu Mana) bade Zardusht: 'Go forward to the assembly of divine beings'. Zardusht took ninety steps to the nine steps of Vahman. And when he had taken ninety steps, he saw the assembly of the seven Amahraspands (Aməša Spentias). […] Zardusht paid homage. And he said: 'Homage to Ohrmazd (Ahura Mazda), homage to the Amahraspands'. And he went forward, and sat in the place of seekers after enlightenment" [Denkart, 5, 2–4]. Ahura Mazda taught him the essential points of his creed: "[…] he showed the duality of the original prin-

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[73] On the role of the Aməša Spentias in Zoroastrian theology, see **Dhalla**, 1938, 39–67; **Boyce**, 1979, 21–24; **Hinze**, 2008, 11–22. Their worship was popular in pre–Christian Armenia as well. The article of G. Dumézil on this matter was pioneering. See **Dumézil**, 1926, 43–70.

[74] **Narten**, **Gignoux**, 1988, 478–488; **Iyer**, 2009, 92–98.

ciples and declared the difference between all their operations, saying: 'Of those two spirits he who was wicked, that is Ahriman, chose the worse actions; the Holy Spirit (I who am) Ohrmazd, chose righteousness' [...]" [Denkart, 5, 2, 5; cf. Zadspram, XX – XXI].[75]

The consultations with the members of the spiritual Heptad lasted for ten years. Upon his return, Zoroaster visited King Vishtasp to gain his support in promulgating the new religion. However, the king did not recognize him as a divine messenger: "[…] Vishtasp was turned against Zardusht, through slander and sorcery, by the persuasions of the kayags and karbs. Then he consigned Zardusht to imprisonment and torture" [Denkart, 7, 4, 69]. However, the prophet did not give up, and soon the king and his servants found him: "[…] alive and full of glory, despite hardship and fetters and other afflictions and prolonged starvation" [Ibid.]. To improve the situation, Ahura Mazda sent Immortals to Zoroaster's aid. Vohu Mana, Asha Vahishta and holy Fire made the king and people accept the new religion and its prophet through miracles: "And it is revealed that when Vishtasp accepted the Religion and praised righteousness, the dēvas in hell were troubled" [Denkart, 7, 4, 87].[76]

In this light, the parallels between King Vishtasp and Trdat III are quite obvious: *a*. king's rejection of the new religion, *b*. imprisonment and tortures of the prophet, *c.* his miraculous salvation, *d*. king's repentance due to divine signs and warnings, *e*. his (and his kingdom's) conversion to the new religion. All this gives grounds to emphasize that St. Gregory's hagiographic text had been modeled on the Zoroastrian pattern, which was later lost.

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[75] Cf. Yasna 28, 1. Cf. **Boyce**, 1979, 19; **Luhrmann**, 2002, 863–864.

[76] Cf. **Du Breuil**, 1978, 95–96. This problem must be discussed on the background of the close relationship between Zoroastrian and biblical religious ideas. Cf. **Isbell**, 2006, 143–154.

Namely, the original Zoroastrian texts played the role of the narrative sample for the hagiography of St. Gregory. In this regard, we must keep in mind the fact that some Zoroastrian priests (and their sons) converted and became servants of the Christian Church: "He (St. Gregory) took some of the pagan priests' children and brought them up in his own sight and under his care, giving them instruction and raising them with spiritual care and order" [Agath., 845, cf. 785].[77]

However, in spite of the obvious common features, the two narratives have essential differences as well. For example, Zoroaster's communion with Ahura Mazda and the Immortals occurred not at the end of his earthly life, but when he was only thirty and his spiritual mission was about to start. This may have been motivated by the world–view system of the Zoroastrians in assessing good deeds (and righteous earthly life) as higher than good thoughts and good speech.[78]

In short, an original text about the adoption of a new religion circulated in Armenia long before its conversion to Christianity. The descendants of the old priesthood, who had been converted to Christianity, used the archetypes and practices of Zoroastrianism in setting up the worship of Gregory the Illuminator. This gives us reason to believe that the last abode of the Saint, the Caves of Manē, were initially a shrine dedicated to Vohu Mana.[79] This proposition suggests that the spiritual rebirth of Greater

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[77] **Ormanean**, 2001, 102–103.

[78] **Dhalla**, 1938, 32; **Zaehner**, 1961, 74.

[79] It is possible that this custom dates back to pre–Zoroastrian times: "The customs which I know the Persians to observe are the following: they have no images of the gods, no temples, nor altars, and consider the use of them a sign of folly. […] Their wont, however, is to ascend to the summits of the loftiest mountains, and there to offer sacrifice to Zeus, which is the name they give to the whole circuit of the firmament" [Herod., I, 131, 5–10]. Cf. **de Jong**, 1997, 90–91.

Armenia was a rather complicated process, requiring new approaches and studies.

The process has been interpreted from the perspective of descriptive history. Meanwhile, it demands an interdisciplinary approach while comprising not only the Western (Christian), but also the Eastern (Zoroastrian) intellectual experience. This balance is obvious through the position of Armenia between the two religious and ideological poles.

Conclusion

Moses Khorenatsi adopted an anthropomorphic concept in order to define the axiological significance of Armenia from the historical perspective. This concept becomes more obvious in light of the moral theory of Philo of Alexandria, which reaches back to the Sophists and Plato. It views human beings and societies in parallel with the soul and its three basic moral qualities – goodness, evil, and neutrality. According to Khorenatsi, the semantic index of Armenia is neutrality, while implying the possibility of two opposite movements – either back to evil or forward to goodness. The outcome depends mostly on the choices of the country, its elite groups and leading persons. Regression is linked with bodily pleasure, leisure, and passivity.[80] Progression demands emotional and intellectual efforts apparent in *deeds of wisdom*. The author depicts the history of Armenia as a continuous conflict between these opposite principles. He highlights two turning points in it – *birth and rebirth*. In the present study, we decided to discuss this process while keeping an eye to the two outstanding actors of Armenian history – the ethnarch Hayk and the archbishop Gregory the Illuminator.

In the actions of Hayk, martial heroism (linked with emotional–corporeal symmetry, beauty, and strength) pre-

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[80] Khorenatsi's *Lament* must be considered the most poignant example of the regression of the soul. Cf. **Stepanyan**, 2009, 184–187.

dominates. The beauty and strength of Gregory the
Illuminator is motivated by his spiritual and intellectual
efforts to reach God. While the purpose of the first hero is
to separate Armenia from evil and establish its identity, the
purpose of the second hero is to bring the country into
close communion with the Lord.

Khorenatsi scrutinizes the experience of Gregory the
Illuminator, viewing in his initiation a model of the rebirth
of the Armenians into God's covenant (ուխտ Աստուծոյ).[81]
The initiation of the adept represents a movement from
corporeal desires to high spirituality. Every phase of it is
connected with the death and rebirth of the adept in order
to reach a new level of dedication.[82] His ultimate death
occurs in the Caves of Manē, indicating his innate con-
nection with Abraham, Moses, and Christ. However, this
spiritual journey contains clear allusions to the Zoroastrian
spiritual experience as well, particularly the prophet's face
to face encounter with Ahura Mazda through the media-
tion of Vohu Mana. Pre–Christian archetypes, beliefs, and
experiences had apparently not been forgotten in early
Christian Greater Armenia.[83]

Hellenistic spirituality viewed the king as the central
figure of the state and society, due to his exclusive cre-
ative potency. However, the situation radically changed
with the Christianization of Greater Armenia, when the
Church, which monopolized the heavenly mandate in the
name of the Omnipotent Lord, challenged the supremacy
of royal authority. This contradiction gradually grew into

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[81] The concept of *God's congregation* is more explicit in the *History*
by Eghishē [Egh., III, 33–35]. Though very important for the recon-
struction of the medieval Armenian mentality, this aspect has not yet
been studied in detail.

[82] Ceremonial death and resurrection were important elements of
Orphism and later were adopted by Pythagoras and his disciples. See
Bremmer, 2002, 11–26.

[83] **Garsoïan**, 1976, 186–187.

an overt conflict. Scholars usually trace its origins back to the relations between Gregory the Illuminator and Trdat III.[84] They usually recall the well–known account of Agathangelos, describing the quarrel between the Zoroastrian king and the Christian priest in the shrine of the great lady Anahit at the village Erēz in the province of Acilisene [Agath., 48].

The Armenians called the goddess "the glory of our race and savior (փառք ազգիս մերոյ եւ կեցուցիչ)" [Agath., 53]. The kings used to honor her with rich gifts and offerings. So, Trdat III "[…] ordered Gregory to present to the altar of Anahit's statue offerings of crown and thick branches of trees. But he did not agree to serve the worship to the gods" [Agath., 48]. He declared that he would receive no compensation from the king but only from omnipotent God. In an essential sense, the conflict was about the supremacy of royal or clerical authority.[85]

However, Moses Khorenatsi does not concern himself with this aspect of the rebirth of Greater Armenia. He wrote his *History* to depart from the social chaos of the 5th century described in his *Lament*. The spiritual index of his country made him believe that the Armenians would be able to overcome the chaos only by denying low corporeal passions. Under the guidance of Moses, the Hebrews had undertaken their Exodus from Egypt in search of God and the Promised Land. It is a very attractive argument that the Armenian author searched for this same end, but within the writing space of his *History*. Figuratively, Moses Khorenatsi tried to wear the

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[84] See in detail **Calzolari**, 2011, 56–61.

[85] This was a local expression of the innate problem of early Christianity. In the historical perspective, it would design the two ways of development of the West and the East based on the two types of union of the Church and the state. The first was under the Pope's prelacy, whereas the second was under the supremacy of the Byzantine emperor. Cf. **Schaff**, 1997, 115–121.

mask of the biblical Moses and performed his role on the Armenian ground since: "The multitude was not capable of hearing the voice from above but relied on Moses to learn by himself the secretes and to teach the whatever doctrine he might learn through instruction from above" [Greg., Nyss., Mos., II, 160].

In some of our former works, from different points of consideration, we have come to the same conclusion.[86] If this idea is true, we can suppose that Khorenatsi viewed himself (and his work) as an important datum of Armenian history. In this regard, we can suppose that his eulogy to his patron, hazarapet Sahak Bagratuni, contains elements of self–estimation as well. However, this assumption demands a detailed research, a task that is beyond the limits of the present investigation.

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[86] See **Stepanyan**, 2016, 53; cf. **Stepanyan**, 2018, 233.

Chapter Eight

Metaphysics of the Capital
(Khorenatsi, II, 49, 2–5)

Introduction

The passage under consideration concerns the reign of Artaxias/Artashēs I (189–160 BC.), the founder of the Artaxiad dynasty of Greater Armenia. According to historical tradition, he was able to reassert the independence of the country that had faltered under the last Eruandids.[87] First, the king regained "the frontier provinces" that had been lost to Armenia's neighbors – the Seleucids, Atropatene, Iberia, Pontus, and Cappadocia. Through his efforts, all the principal provinces of Greater Armenia (*աշխարհս*), except Sophene, were brought under the rule of the king.[88]

The unification process culminated in the construction of a new capital, Artaxata/Artashat, designed to serve as the new center of the country. This was part and parcel of

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[87] In effect, the Eruandid époque *was discovered by* H. Manandyan. They reigned in Armenia for a significant amount of time, from the 580s BC. to the end of the 3rd century BC. During this time, they ruled either as independent kings or as (Achaemenid) satraps, before regaining their royal dignity in 331 BC. See **Manandyan**, 1945, 35–73; **Tiratsyan**, 1958, 53–71; **Toumanoff**, 1963, 283–285.

[88] On the efforts of King Artashēs to reunite and reform various aspects of the social life of Greater Armenia, see **Adontz**, 2009, 443–449; **Sargsyan**, 1971[1], 521–545. As for Sophene, it remained under the authority of Zareh/Zariadris, a companion and ally of Artashēs, who established his own dynasty there. Like Artashēs, he claimed Eruandid heritage. **Redgate**, 1998, 66–67.

the new paradigm of the new identity of Greater Armenia while being set up in accordance with the advanced technological innovations of the time – political and social, economic and legal, religious and cultural. This ideal paradigm was designed to ensure the welfare of the whole country.

The new capital was founded in accordance with Classical and Hellenistic urbanization practices, embodying their essential traits, *synoikismos* and *autonomy*, as well as the *liberty* and *homonymy* of citizens. Modern scholars have addressed these aspects of Artashat with adequate diligence, mainly utilizing the observations of ancient historians, particularly those of Strabo and Plutarch.[89] Studies done in recent decades have demonstrated the importance of the accounts of Moses Khorenatsi as well.[90] As we have stated elsewhere, he compiled his *History of the Armenians* in the Early Middle Ages, but relied upon trustworthy sources that contained a significant amount of authentic historical information, including details regarding the founding of Artashat.[91]

In this research sketch, our task is to scrutinize the primary sources on this problem and, more importantly, to outline the metaphysical implications of their content from the perspective of ancient philosophical systems.

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[89] However, some scholars – especially G. Sargsyan, A. Perikhanyan, and G. Tiratsyan – have also utilized the Aramaic inscriptions discovered in Armenia over the last 70–80 years. On this problem, see in detail **Movsisyan**, 2003, 93–110.

[90] More correctly, this approach allows us to discuss Artashat in the context of the data of archeology and urban planning, along with the data provided by Moses Khorenatsi. See **Khachatrian**, 1998, 95–151.

[91] On this problem, see **Sargsyan**, 1966, 5–22; **Stepanyan**, 2012, 35–41; **Stepanyan**, 2018, 16–31

1. Artaxata/Artashat: the new capital of Greater Armenia

There is a consensus that the capital was founded in the mid–180s BC., based upon three historical accounts regarding this event. Two of these accounts – those of Strabo and Plutarch – link its foundation to Hannibal, the eminent Carthaginian general.[92] The account of Plutarch is more detailed and states:

> *"It is said that Hannibal the Carthaginian, after Antiochus had been conquered by the Romans, left him and went to Artaxias the Armenian, to whom he gave many excellent suggestions and instructions. For instance, observing that a section of the country, which had the greatest natural advantages and attractions, was lying idle and neglected, he drew up a plan for a city, and then brought Artaxias to the place and showed him its possibilities, and urged him to undertake the building. The King was delighted and begged Hannibal to superintend the work himself, whereupon a very great and beautiful city arose there, which was named after the king, proclaimed the capital of Armenia" [Plut., Luc., 31, 3–4].*

Plutarch is precise in his description of the foundation of the city. It was founded in accordance with the experience of the Phoenicians and subsequently the Greeks over the course of centuries. Usually, the founder (οἰκιστής or κτιστής) and his commander drafted a plan of the city ἐν τοπῷ and, after discussion and approval, started the construction of its most important sections: walls and squares, temples and courts, streets and gardens, etc.[93] Obviously,

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[92] The accounts of these authors and the fact of their correspondence with those of Khorenatsi have long been ignored by scholars. This approach has only changed recently. Cf. **Schifman**, 1980, 257–261; **Görlitz**, 2005, 295; **Bournoutian**, 2006, 29.

[93] On city planning and building theory and practice in the Classical and Hellenistic ages, see **Ehrenberg**, 1964, 28–43; **Hansen**, 2006, 39–67, **Strootman**, 2011, 141–153. Some authors touch on this issue

in the case of Artaxata, Hannibal was the founder, acting on behalf of King Artashēs. According to Plutarch, this historical tradition was present in Roman memory for a long time. In 68 BC., while in Armenia, L. Lucullus pleaded with his rebellious soldiers, "[…] to possess their souls in patience until they had taken and destroyed the *Armenian Carthage*, the work of their most hated foe, meaning Hannibal" [Plut., Luc., 32, 3].[94] Apparently, he hoped that the victory would allow him to be compared with P. C. Scipio Africanus.

Strabo's account, although less detailed than Plutarch's, is more topographically precise:

> "The cities of Armenia are Artaxata, also called Artaxiasata, which was founded by Hannibal for Artaxias the king, and Arxata, both on the Araxes River, Arxata being near the borders of Atropatia, whereas Artaxata is near the Araxene plain, being a beautiful settlement and royal residence of the country. It is situated on a peninsula–like elbow of land and its walls have the river as protection all round them, except the isthmus, which is enclosed by a trench and a palisade" [Strabo, XI, 14, 6].[95]

As for the other primary sources, they provide no evidence regarding "Hannibal in Armenia." However, the accounts of Strabo and Plutarch are not ambiguous.[96] Therefore, it is quite logical to outline Hannibal's last years as follows. After the defeat of Antiochus III at Magnesia and the conclusion of the Peace of Apamea (188

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based on the concrete evidences of ancient geographers, particularly Strabo. See **Trotta**, 2005, 118–128.

[94] More than a hundred years later, another Roman general, G. D. Corbulo, was guided by the same idea during his capture and destruction of Artashat (AD. 58). See **Ash**, 2006, 357.

[95] On the geography of the site of Artaxata, see **Tiratsyan**, 1988, 92–98.

[96] **Schifman**, 1980, 257–261; **Khachadourian**, 2007, 45–46.

BC.), the general fled to Crete. Later he sought protection in the court of Artashēs I, only staying for a short time as the king entered into an alliance (*amicitia*) with Rome and broke ties with him. His final refuge was the court of Prusias of Bithynia, where he passed away in 183 or 182 BC.[97]

Khorenatsi provides no evidence of being aware of Hannibal's sojourn in Greater Armenia and his participation in the founding of Artashat. Nevertheless, his description of the topography of the capital is in some senses reminiscent of Strabo:

> *"Artashēs came to the place where the Araxes and Metsamawr join; pleased with the hill he built there a city, which he called after his own name Artashat. The Araxes provided him with pine-wood, so it was built quickly and without labor. He erected in it a temple and transferred to it from Bagaran the statue of Artemis and all the ancestral idols. [...] And he embellished the city even further himself as the royal capital"* [Khor., II, 49, 4–7].[98]

Taking the third side of the promontory (the land–walls and gates) into account, we obtain the same triangular closed figure for the capital as present in the text of Strabo. It is important to note that Polybius' description of Carthage also reveals very precise parallels with Artaxata:

> *"Carthage, I should explain, lies in a gulf, on a promontory or peninsula surrounded mostly by the sea and in part by a lake. The isthmus which connects it with Lybia is about twenty–five stades*

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[97] Cf. **Scullard**, 1992, 487; **Cottrell**, 1992, 246; **Mills**, 2008, 106–107.

[98] "Երթեալ Արտաշիսի ի տեղին, ուր խառնին Երասխ եւ Մեծամաւր, եւ հանճեալ ընդ բլուրն՝ շինէ քաղաք իւր անուն անուանեալ Արտաշատ: Զերասխ ինի ննա եւ Երասխ փայտիւք մայրեաց, վասն որոյ անաշխատ եւ երագ շինեալ՝ կանգնէ ի ննա մեհեան, եւ փոխէ ի նա ի Բագարանէ զպատկերն Արտեմիդրայ եւ զամենայն կուռս հայրենիս [...], եւ առաւել եւս յինքենէ յաւրինէ իբրեւ զքաղաք արքայանիստ:"

in width and on the side of this isthmus which faces the sea, at no
great distance off from the capital, lies Utica, while Tunis is on
the other side by the lake" [Polyb., I, 73, 4–6].[99]

Artashat consisted of nine hills. The royal court with
its numerous administrations was situated on a special hill,
as is clear from the description of Tigran II's (95–55 BC.)
reception of the garrison sent by Pompey [Plut., Pomp.,
33, 2].[100]

2. *From Geography to History*

Ancient Greek science developed theories on the con-
nection between geography (landscape) and human
conditions of social commonality. Initiated by the logo-
graphs and Herodotus, this approach reached its apex in
Hellenistic times. In terms of modern scholarship, it con-
tained essential ideas about the relationship between geo-
graphic space and historical time.[101]

This problem was traditionally resolved within the
framework of such archetypical concepts as φύσις, ἔθνος,
and νόμος.[102] The first of these was represented by *geo-
graphic space* – the soil, mountains, lakes, rivers, woods,
animals, material resources, cities, and roads. The second

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[99] On the geographical location of Carthage, see **Church**, 1886,
17–20; **Hoyos**, 2003, 17–20.

[100] About the details of this event, see **Manandian**, 1944, 134–135.

[101] **Mitchell**, 1975, 51–54. According to modern assumptions, the *tam-
ing* of a space and reshaping it into a landscape – a scene of significant
happenings and events – is one of the essential features of the histori-
cizing of the past and present. In other words, through his intellectual
efforts, a historian can influence both historical space and time. See
Gaddis, 2002, 17–28.

[102] This concept occupied an important position in the Classical men-
tality. Regarding its development, see in detail **Adkins**, 1972, 103–112;
Byron, 1984, 21–36; **Hall**, 2004, 12–29; **Kerferd G. B.**, 2005, 246–248.

was represented by the *ethnic condition* – tribes, peoples, and nations, together with their common features and beliefs, rituals and customs (*mores maiorum*), tales and memories. The third concept was represented by markers of *civilization*, which were conceived as government types (πολίτευμα) – monarchy, oligarchy or democracy – with their steady borders and institutions, citizens and laws, sciences and arts.[103]

These three conditions – geographic space, ethnic situation, and civilization – influenced the process of history together. They also provided a reason for the tracing of parallels between humanity and history. Thus, for example, geographic space was thought to be comparable with the somatic, the ethnic makeup – the affective, and the civilizational – the rational principles of the human soul. It seems that Polybius proceeded from this equivalency in his description of a historian's work.[104] According to him, a historian was to commence his investigation from the second principle (the soul):

> *"In the same fashion, systematic history too consists of three parts (τριμερής), the first the industrious study of memoirs and documents and a comparison of their contents, the second the survey of cities, places, rivers, lakes, and in general all the peculiar features of land sea and the distances of one from another, and the third being the review of political events" [Polyb., XII. 25e].*[105]

For Polybius, the essence of history reveals itself through the consequences of the actions (πράγματα) of

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[103] Strabo represents it as the opposition of *culture* and *barbarity*. See **Dueck**, 2010, 243–244. On the various aspects of the problem of *identity and alterity* in the Greek mentality, see **Hall**, 2002, 30–36, 117–121.

[104] On this view of history, see **Clarke**, 2002, 79–81.

[105] On the anthropomorphic structure of world history in historical development – through local states to global empire, see **Quinn**, 2013, 337–352.

eminent personalities. They were able to change the given historical environment through their will and projects. This implied the next important concept of Polybius, *pragmatic history* (πραγματική ἱστορία), which particularly signified human creativity in the past and present. In certain aspects, it represented history as a chain of *local entelechies*: military victories, successful reforms, the foundation of states, the introduction of new religious and moral principles, etc.[106] Despite numerous failures, they, nonetheless, prevailed in the end and aimed at the highest level of entelechy – a united world history. In the mind of the author, the turning point of this process occurred in 218 BC., the third year of the 140th Olympiad: "It was at this time that the affairs of Greece, Italy, and Africa were first brought in contact" [Polyb., V, 105]. The leading force of unification was Rome, on account of her possessing a *mixed constitution* (πολιτεία μικτή) based on the balance of *correct state forms* (πολιτεῖαι ὄρθαι) – democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy – in addition to the efforts of outstanding statesmen. As for their adversaries, most of them (Macedonia, the Seleucids, Egypt, and Rhodes) represented only a particular correct (or simple) state forms destined to degrade to corrupted *antiforms* – ochlocracy, oligarchy, or tyranny.[107] Carthage constituted the main exception, as she also had a mixed constitution [cf. Aristot., Polit., II, 1276b, 5–10]. However, at the time of her conflict with Rome,

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[106] Scholars usually consider the *pragmatic history* as political history, endowing it with various nuances. It is comprised of practical affairs that are believed to have common scenarios in the past, present, and future. The task of a historian is to describe and explain them exactly. For a more detailed discussion of this problem, see **Herchenroeder**, 2010, 69–125.

[107] The theory of the simple and mixed political forms explained the meaning and direction of history. It was scrutinized by Aristotle and adapted by the Stoics. See **Crisp**, 1999, 130–135; **Brink**, **Walbank**, 1954, 109–115.

the element of democracy/ochlocracy dominated politically, and, as a result, Carthage could not mobilize all her resources to triumph over Rome. Defeated in three wars, Carthage left the stage of history in 146 BC. [Polyb., VI, 51, 1–8].[108]

The intellectuals of the Augustan age (27 BC. – AD. 14) felt themselves to be witnesses to the completion of this global movement. They saw the crucial impulse to that achievement in the personality of the Princeps, and accordingly attributed divine authority to him. This approach culminated in the *Res gestae divi Augusti*, written in the name of the Princeps about his deeds that brought the *inhabited world* (οἰκουμένη) into the *Pax Romana* – i.e. the harmony of different forms of ethnic and social commonalities under the Empire, from Hercules' Pillars to the Euphrates, from Britannia to Egypt.[109] The *Aenead* by Virgil represented the same concept through eloquent poetic images. It emphasized the role of divine guidance, Fortune, in the rise of Rome from the "seven hills" to world domination, and that the divine Hero "totum sub leges mitteret orbem." [Verg., *Aen*., IV, 231].[110]

Scholars believe that Strabo, a Greek writer from Amaseia, also compiled his works, the *Geography* and *Historical Sketches* (preserved only in fragments) in accordance with this logic. The latter continued the work of Polybius and traced the history of the world up to the days of Augustus. By that time, the degradation of simple state forms had reached its culmination all over the inhabited

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[108] On the legal–philosophical background of Polybius' theory of the fall of the Carthaginian state and society, see **Walbank**, 1990, 133–137; **McGing**, 2010, 187–189.

[109] Regarding the different aspects of the term *Pax Romana*, see **Petit**, 1967, 125–145; **Brouwer**, 2011, 112–114.

[110] The official propaganda of Rome represented Pax Romana as a universal world order that was constructed by the Romans in accordance with divine mandate. Cf. **Adler**, 2003, 198–199.

world, and Rome performed her great historical mission by "taking under her protection" various states and nations, thereby "saving" them from inevitable chaos.[111]

3. The Metaphysics of Rome

A metaphysical interpretation of geography implies two perspectives of study. One of them is connected with the *geometrization* of geographic spaces, the other – with the metaphysics of geometric figures. The first perspective arose from the abstract perception of concrete places, locations, and landscapes, a development already present in the accounts of the logographs. It reached its apogee in the Hellenistic age, particularly in the works of Dicaearachus, Eratosthenes, and Hipparchus.[112] Polybius considered such abstraction very useful for the training of statesmen and generals, since it furnished them with the ability *to operate with space*. Identifying concrete landscapes with the primary geometric figures – square, circle, triangle, or rhombus – "[…] they calculated their sides, angles, proportions, surfaces and applied their results towards the selection of proper sites for new cities and settlements, roads and aqueducts, harbors and battlefields" [Polyb., II, 14; cf. II, 4–12; V, 22, 1; VI, 30, 10].[113] In our opinion, this kind of knowledge was also necessary for historians who desired to compile accurate accounts of the events of the past and present.

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[111] Cf. **Petit**, 1967, 103; On this policy regarding Greater Armenia, see **Stepanyan**, 2014[5], 252–258.

[112] Their ideas and concepts contained features of the mathematization of geographic spaces and concrete landscapes. **Aujac**, 1966, 195–197; Cf. **Alonso–Nunez**, 1997, 53–67; **Rawlins**, 2008, 2–12.

[113] **Clarke**, 2002, 104–107; **Warmington**, 1992, 463. Usually, Polybius links geographical data with those of ethnography and history. It gives him the opportunity to discuss every historical event from different points of view. **Walbank**, 2002, 34–36.

The second perspective arose from the esoteric perception of primary geometric figures. It started in the early philosophical schools – Pythagoras, Empedocles – and reached its heights with Plato.[114] Instead of plane geometric figures, Plato used volumetric figures, associating them with the four primary elements: hexahedron – earth; icosahedron (sphere) – water; octahedron – air; tetrahedron – fire. He also explained the principle of transformation of one into another [Plato, Tim., 55d – 57d].[115] The obvious parallels with the concept of the tripartite soul made the esoteric explanation of the text readily identifiable.

Although Aristotle's approach (which scrutinizes the mechanism of the transformations and bears some semblance to modern chemistry) shuns the esoteric interpretation.[116] It is believed that Hellenistic geographers continued the tradition of an esoteric understanding of space and used it to demonstrate more profound relationship between landscapes, human behavior, societies, and history. Numerous descriptions of countries in accordance with the shape of geometric figures are therefore intended to be interpreted in an esoteric sense as well: India – rhombus; Armenia – quadrangle; Egypt (Delta) – triangle; Sparta – circle, etc. [Cf. Strabo, II, 1, 22, XI, 14, 11, XVII, 1, 27; Polyb., V, 22, 5].[117] It seems Strabo intends just such an approach in his renowned definition: "A country is well defined when it is possible to define it by rivers and mountains or sea, and also by tribes, by a size of such and such

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[114] On the philosophical esoterism of early Greek philosophy, see in detail **Zeller**, 1886, 45–75; cf. **Burnet**, 1920, 70–73, 164–165.

[115] Regarding the philosophical and mathematical aspects of the universal harmony, see **Lawlor**, 1982, 16–22; **Stefanides**, 1989, 5–7.

[116] Aristot., Gen. Anim., II, 312a, 5; cf. II, 3, 330a, 30. Cf. **Horne**, 1966, 21–27.

[117] For a detailed survey of this theory, see **Kingsley**, 1996, 317–334.

proportions, and by shape where this is possible" [Strabo, II, 1, 30].[118]

But even more obvious is perhaps the case of Rome establishing her domination over the Mediterranean basin in a relatively short span of historical time. In the view of Polybius, it was due to the work of Fortune (ἡ τύχη), which "[…] has guided almost all the affairs of the world in one direction and has forced them to incline towards one and the same end" [Polyb., I, 1, 4].

In other words, Rome was considered the embodiment of Fortune. Moreover, Rome's uniting function is comparable with that of the Spirit in the human being.[119] This approach seems to give the key to correctly interpret the well–known passage of Polybius, in which he describes the triangular shape of Italy: "Italy as a whole has the shape of a triangle of which the one or eastern side is bound by the Tyrrhenian Strait and then continuously by the Adriatic Gulf, the next side, that turned to the south and west, by the Sicilian and Tyrrhenian Seas. […] Its northern side is, as I have said, formed by the Alps themselves." [Polyb., II, 14, 3–9].

At the beginning of the Second Punic War in 218 BC., when Carthage and Rome fought for domination over the western part of the Mediterranean, both of them spoke about their historic mission of benefiting the nations through justice and order.[120] Rome had already unified all of Italy, and the triangle signified her ability to overcome the geographic, ethnic, and political diversity of the Italic populations. She was going to exercise the same function overseas by establishing the *Pax Romana* everywhere. In

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[118] Cf. **Dueck**, 2010, 248–249.

[119] More exactly, the united oikumene became σωματοειδής (like a corporal whole) and Rome was thought to be its uniting spirit (ἡ ψύχη) [Polyb., I, 3, 4]; cf. **Walbank**, 2002, 6–8.

[120] Cf. **Adler**, 2003, 209–211; **Eck**, 2007, 123–124.

time, these victories resulted in the religious worship of Rome even in distant parts of the Empire.[121]

4. Greater Armenia in Strabo

The three aforementioned layers (geography, ethnology, and history) are similarly distinct in the text of Strabo concerning Greater Armenia.[122] We are going to discuss them all in order.

a. His description of the borders of the country is considered to be more exact:

> *"As for Armenia, the southern parts of it have the Taurus situated in front of them, which separates it from the whole of the country between the Euphrates and Tigris, the country called Mesopotamia; and the eastern parts border on Greater Armenia and Atropatene; on the north the mountains of Parachoathras that lie above the Caspian Sea, and Albania, and Iberia, and the Caucasus [...] and on the west are these nations and the mountains Paryadres and Scydises in their extent to Lesser Armenia and river–land of the Euphrates, which latter separates Armenia from Cappadocia and Commagene"* [Strabo, XI, 14, 1].

The landscape is marked with great diversity – mountains and highlands, rivers and lakes, forests and fertile valleys, cities, and forts. By the words of the author, they

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[121] This concept contained profound religious and philosophical content. In accordance with this, a system of triad worship – *Roma aeterna*, *Divi et genius Augusti* – was introduced in the provinces. It was also thought to be an effective ideological device for integrating the different parts of the Empire from Britannia to Egypt, from Iberia to Syria. See **Petit**, 1967, 104–106; **von Wilamowitz**–**Moellendorff**, 1932, 306.

[122] See in detail **Stepanyan**, 2014⁴, 213–217.

made up *the nature of the country Armenia and its power* (φύσις τῆς Ἀρμενίας καὶ δύναμις) [Strabo, XI, 14, 11].[123]

b. Despite the geography, its ethnic composition is more homogeneous. According to Strabo, the essential element of the Armenian ethnie comprised of emigrants from Thessaly who settled in the country under the leadership of Armenius of Armenium, one of the companions of Jason: "Some of the followers of Armenius settled in Acilisene, which was formerly subject to the Sopheni, others in Syspiritis, and spread as far as Calachene and Adiabene beyond the borders of Armenia" [Strabo, XI, 14, 12].[124] The geographer mentions other ethnicities as well, but emphasizes that *all of them spoke the same language* in his days (πάντας ὁμογλώττους εἶναι) [Strabo, XI, 14, 5].[125] His account of the religious beliefs and rites of the Armenians is also assessed to be exact: "Both the Medes and Armenians have adopted all the sacred rites of the Persians, but the Armenians pay particular reverence to Anaitis, and have built temples to her honour […]" [Strabo, XI, 14, 16]. Nonetheless, some scholars find it

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[123] In light of Aristotelian theory, they correspond to the matter (ὕλη) and potentiality (δύναμις) under the active form (μορφή) [Aristot., Met., 12, 1070a1–3]. Their harmony secures the accomplishment of every true form of being. **Bechler**, 1995, 77–78. We have described this concept in Chapter 2.

[124] In other words, the nuclear element of the Armenians was of Greek stock. Consequently, Strabo does not think of them as barbarians. See **Stepanyan**, 2014[5], 237.

[125] The problem of language homogeneity is related to the global philosophical concept on the isomorphism of Cosmos and society. Both of them were considered as spaces of linguistic organization (grammar) [Plato, Tim., 48b–c]. Cf. **Pleshkov**, 2017, 144. On the social perspective of language homogeneity in Greater Armenia, see **Stepanyan**, 1991, 93–95.

strange that Strabo does not provide a distinct definition of the ethnic identity of the Armenians.

For this purpose, the following record may be useful: "The passion for horse training and riding (τὸν τῆς ἱππικῆς ζῆλόν) characterizes the Thessalians, and is common to the Armenians and Medes" [Strabo, XI, 14, 12]. For the *common reader* of the text, the mythological perception of the image of the horse was genuine. Both in the Greek, Iranian, and Armenian traditions, it was marked with ambivalence – earth and heaven, creation and destruction, virtue and vice.[126] This gives us the basis to state that affectivity was considered the main feature of the Armenians.

However, the *advanced reader* can interpret the text from the point of view of philosophical reflection. We first refer to the allegories of Plato, who used the image of the horse to explain the structure and functions of the human soul. It is well–known that the philosopher compared the two lower parts of the soul – the affective and the somatic – with two horses. One of them was white and had a good nature: "It is likewise a lover of honor, together with temperance and modesty; is the companion of true opinion, is not whipped, and is only to be governed by exhortation and reason" [Plato, Phaed., 253d]. The other was black and had a bad nature: "It is the companion of injury and arrogance, has its ears hairy and deaf, and is scarcely obedient to the whip and spur" [Plato, Phaed., 253e]. The third part of the soul represented its reasoning faculty and was compared to the wise charioteer (ὁ ἡνίοχος). His task was to bring the extremes into harmony using "arguments of reason and shame" [Plato, Phaed., 256a].[127]

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[126] On the image of sacred horses in Iranian, Armenian, and Greek mythologies, see **Shahbazi**, 1987, 724–729; **Petrosyan**, 1997, 5–7; **Larson**, 2007, 54–55, 64–67.

[127] Without this harmonizing principle, the other two parts become corrupted, causing the cessation of all functions of the soul. See **Robinson**, 1995, 34–37.

In this regard, returning to the Armanians, it seems quite obvious that we deal with the neutrality of their national character discussed in detail above.[128] An innate character consisting of black–and–white opposition, which could be settled by sound social projects of outstanding historical actors and their creative entourage.

c. According to Strabo, the history of Greater Armenia realized its true potential under the Artaxiads. The kings of this royal house determined the essence and rhythm of *national time* through their plans and deeds (τὰ σχῆματα καὶ πράγματα). Strabo depicts their history summarily as a circular regressive movement (ἀνακύκλοσις) peculiar to simple state forms.[129]

King Artashēs personified the phase of the beginning and growth (γένσις καὶ αὔξησις). In collaboration with Zareh/Zariadres, he unified the country and declared its independence [Strabo, XI, 14, 15]. His descendant, Tigran II, personified the climax (ἀκμή) connected with the unprecedented expansion of the power and influence of Greater Armenia over adjacent and distant countries, including Atropatene, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Phoenicia. However, this rise was stopped by L. Lucullus, who "[…] drove Tigranes both out of Syria and Phoenicia" [ibid.].[130] The decline (φθίσις) began during the reign of Artavazd II: "[…] he prospered as long as he continued a friend of the Romans. But having betrayed Antonius to the Parthians in the war with that people, he suffered punishment for

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[128] See Chapter 7.

[129] Strabo was also probably aware of a comprehensive version of Armenian history. See **Stepanyan**, 2014[1], 258. In other places, we have come to the conclusion that it could be the work of the king Artavazd II. **Stepanyan**, 2015, 122.

[130] On Tigran's empire, see in detail **Asdourian**, 1911, 22–49; **Sargsyan**, 1971[3], 585–589; **Manaseryan**, 1992, 122–139; **Stepanyan**, 2012, 73–94.

treachery." [ibid.].[131] According to the author, this process stopped the (inevitable) degradation of the Armenian state and the establishment of its vicious anti–form (tyranny). This result was achieved after the country entered into an alliance with Rome: "Many kings reigned after Artavasdes, who were dependent upon Caesar and the Romans. The country is still governed in the same manner" [Strabo, XI, 14, 16].[132] In the mind of Strabo, this made up the essence of *the Armenian entelechy*, uniting its geography, ethnology, and history with Fortune personified in Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus Augustus. In other words, Armenia shared the destiny of the other "advanced countries."

5. *Metaphysics of the Artaxatan Triangle*

In Hellenistic geography, there was a rather steady tradition that considered the territory of Armenia to be a quadrangle. The authors usually emphasized its two dimensions – length and breadth. This approach is perhaps formulated most clearly in the text of Pompeus Trogus: "Indeed, Armenia extends eleven thousand miles from Cappadocia all the way to the Caspian Sea, and in breadth it stretches seven hundred miles" [Just., Epit., XLII, 42, 6]. Nearly the same is true in the text of Strabo:

> *"Theophanes represents this as the size of the country: the breadth to be one hundred schoeni, and its length double this number, putting the schoenus at forty stadia; but his estimate is too high; it is nearer the truth to put down as length what he gives*

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[131] This assessment of Artavasdes' reign was conceived by Q. Dellius in order to acquit the strategic and tactical errors of M. Antony. While Tacitus defined the triumvir's policy towards Greater Armenia as a crime (scelus) [Tac., Hist., II, 3]. See **Asdourian**, 1911, 60–61. **Stepanyan**, 2012, 197.

[132] On Augustus's policy towards Greater Armenia, see **Chaumont**, 1976, 73–84.

as breadth, and as breadth, half, or a little more, of what he gives
as breadth" [Strabo, XI, 14, 11].[133]

The esoteric essence of the quadrangle or cube (tet-
rad) is well formulated by Plato: "To earth, then, let us
assign the cubic form; for earth is the most immobile
(ἀνακινητοτάτη) of the four and the *most plastic* of all
bodies, and that which has the most stable bases must
of necessity be of such nature" [Plato, Tim., 55e].[134] The
combination of these records gives reason to conclude that
Armenia was identified with the earth element in ancient
esoteric theory. Presumably, this estimation was influ-
enced by the text of Xenophon when he depicted Armenia
as a rural country with a dynastic (nakharar) mode of
social organization. In particular, the author described the
underground houses of the Armenians in detail:

> *"The houses were underground structures with an aperture like*
> *the mound of a well by which to enter, but they were broad and*
> *spacious below. The entrance for the beast of burden was dug*
> *out, but the human occupants descended by a ladder. In the*
> *dwellings were to be found goats and sheep and cattle, and cocks*
> *and hens with their progeny. The flocks and herds were all reared*
> *under cover upon green food. There were stores within of wheat*
> *and barley and vegetables, and wine made from barley in great*
> *big bowls" [Xen., Anab., IV, 24–26].*[135]

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[133] On the use of the coordinates of *breadth* and *length* in Hellenistic
geography, see **Aujac**, 1968, 184–189.

[134] Developing Plato's idea in the pure mathematical sense, Iamblichus
formulated that the tetrad "provides the limit of corporeality" [Iambl.,
De theologia arithmet., IV, 20].

[135] It is believed that these patriarchal households gave way to the
dynastic social hierarchy typical of early Armenia, see **Toumanoff**,
1963, 69–70.

As noted above, modern sociology defines such societies as *traditional patrimonies*. Its main characteristic was its large patriarchal family (clan) structures. Their authority was based on *mores maiorum*: "Under patriarchal domination the norms derive from tradition; the belief in the inviolability of that which has existed from time out of mind".[136] Consequently, old models of behavior and mentality were encouraged.

Challenging this *traditional immobility*, King Artashēs put forth his reforms aimed at the unification of Greater Armenia and the rationalization of its administration system. They indicated the process of transition to *bureaucratic patrimony*.[137] In the words of Khorenatsi, the king introduced *the noble arts and sciences* precisely for this purpose [Khor., II, 52, 2]. The author is certainly referring to the achievements of the Hellenistic époque in various areas – philosophy and state government, law and strategy, ideology and religion.[138]

At the esoteric level, the reform process may be understood as follows: by the efforts of Artashēs, steps were undertaken to modify the esoteric code of the country to move it away from the dominance of the somatic principle towards the rationality, and from the quadrangle (or cube) to the triangle and its combinations.[139] The visible result of this metamorphosis was believed to be the cultivation of idle spaces into fruitful fields, gardens, and cities. For this purpose, an *experienced eye* was necessary to appreciate the opportunities of the given location.

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[136] **Weber**, 1963/1968, 1007. Cf. Chapter 2.

[137] **Weber**, 1963/1968, 1008.

[138] Regarding the metamorphoses of Armenian society under the influence of Hellenism, see **Eremyan**, 1948, 39–56. See **Trever**, 1953, 11–14; **Sargsyan**, 1966, 17–22; **Stepanyan**, 2012, 28–31, 48–50.

[139] According to Iamblichus, the triad represented "a relation of equality to the extremes." [Iambl., De theologia arithmet., III, 15]. Cf. **Dillon**, 2010, 359; **Lloyd**, 2007, 299.

Before Artashēs, some kings of Greater Armenia had addressed this problem. Khorenatsi identifies the most notable example of that in the estate (*ătnulĕṛun*, *ηuuunu-lĕṛun*) planted by King Eruand:

> *"He filled the center of the valley with inhabitants and splendid buildings, shining like the pupil of an eye. Around the inhabited area were arranged gardens of sweet–smelling flowers, as the circle of the eye surrounds the pupil. A multitude of vineyards resembled the beautiful crescent of thick lashes; on the northern side its curved form truly imitated the arching brows of charming maidens. To the south the level plain [recalled] the beauty of smooth cheeks" [Khor., II, 42, 3–5].*

It must be added that this description is composed in accordance with anthropomorphic aesthetics. Classical and Hellenistic philosophy viewed in this the important trait of cosmos as opposed to chaos (wildness).[140]

Artashēs began his creative activity with the foundation of the new capital. A section of the country with the greatest natural *advantages and attractions* was chosen as its location. However, it was still lying *idle and neglected*. This esoteric quadrangle/cube was noticed by Hannibal – *the experienced and creative eye*, who applied his plan of reconstruction to it (σχῆμα πόλεως). The work resulted in *a great and beautiful city–massive* (μέγα καὶ πάγκαλον χρῆμα πόλεως) [Plut., Luc., 31, 3–4].

In the account of Khorenatsi, the visual aesthetics and spiritual essence of Artashat is also emphasized. King Artashēs embellished it with numerous *splendors* (*ιlujĕṛsnιǝhιĕ*) and *ancestral idols* (*quιĕĕuujĕ ḷnιɾu hujṛ ĕĕihu*) [Khor., II, 49, 7]. However, the new capital was

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[140] *Justice*, *order*, *truth*, *and beauty* were the main principles in Plato's realm of ideal forms. This approach was borrowed by the various philosophical systems of the Classical and Hellenistic ages. See **Halliwell**, 2002, 131–138.

only the starting point (and paradigm) for the king's creative activity. Subsequently, he went further, and his rule was marked with *noble deeds and acts of wise government*. As a result, Greater Armenia became entirely cultivated: "[…] there was no land unworked (*երկիր անգործ*) in Armenia, neither of mountain nor plain, on account of the prosperity of the country" [Khor., 56, 5]. Certainly, this is a utopian picture composed per rhetorical canon, but it demonstrates the author's ideal of the full entelechy of the country in accordance with ancient philosophical tradition. Achieving that end, he paved the way required for the transition from the pole of φύσις to that of νόμος – from the passive potentiality to accomplishment.[141]

Moreover, the king became the main figure of this performance since he acted in the name of *Fortune* or the cosmic *Soul*. This entirely conformed to the Hellenistic concept of royal authority. We have already discussed this aspect while representing the king as the connection between heaven and earth.[142] As a rule, an independent king was assessed as the *savior* (σωτήρ) of his country and subjects from (real or possible) chaos. Therefore, he was also recognized as *benefactor* (εὐεργέτης). The highest point of appreciation was the king's (and his family's) divinization. It provided him with the right to be called *a revealed god* (ἐπιφανής).[143] Studies have shown that King Artashēs bore all these titles.[144] The triangle of his capital

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[141] Aristotle defines this transformation as *performing the end* [Eth. Nic., VI, 1144b30–32]. Cf. **Kenny A.**, 1979, 104–105; **Lockwood**, 2005, 2, 27–31.

[142] See Chapter 4.

[143] For a consistent survey on the problem of the power of Hellenistic kings, see **Goodenough**, 1928, 62–67; **Dvornik**, 1966, 210–239; **Chaniotis**, 2007, 431–445.

[144] Regarding the sacred aspect of the royal authority of the Artaxiads, see **Sargsyan**, 1966, 23–78.

was the first and important marker of the creative relation-
ship between the king and his country – Greater Armenia.

6. The Zoroastrian Perspective of Artashat

We come nearly to the same conclusion if we approach
the problem from the point of view of Zoroastrian axi-
ology. We proceed from the fact that this religion sys-
tem was adopted in Armenian in the Eruandid époque –
more correctly, when the country was under the rule of
the Achaemenids. However, in time, a new version of
Zoroastrianism was formed to meet the local religious
experiences in Armenia.[145]

Let us again touch on the renowned passage of Strabo:
"Both the Medes and Armenians have adopted all the
sacred rites of the Persians." Such a similarity, particu-
larly, is traceable in Armenian onomastics where some
names may be etymologized only in accordance with
Zoroastrian concepts. One of them is the name Artaxias/
Artashēs (Artaxerxes) itself, which scholars usually derive
from Xšaθra Vairya (Desireable Dominion or Power).[146]
It was one of the six Aməša Spəntas (Immortal Spirits)
who supported Ahura Mazdā in creating and running the
Cosmos. It was believed that Xšaθra Vairya was responsi-

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[145] See **Russell**, 1987, 153–165; **Redgate**, 1998, 61; de **Jong**, 2015,
123–125; **Scott**, 2016, 261. Unfortunately, most Armenian scholars are
skeptical regarding this understanding, identifying the pre–Christian
religion simply as paganism. The best example of this approach is per-
haps the work of G. Alishan. Cf. **Alishan**, 1910, 267–274.

[146] H. Achaṙyan translated this name as "who rules righteously".
Achaṙyan, 1942, 305. This interpretation is in full accordance with
modern understanding of the function of this immortal spirite and his
relationship with Ahura Mazda and other aməša spentas. **Zaehner**,
1961, 45–48.

ble for cosmic, social, and moral order while being associated with the sacred and material metals.[147]

In this light, the sacral connection of the king to his name–concept becomes more obvious. Particularly, it seems clear that he believed in the cosmic perspective of his creative activity and realized the identity of his person with Xšaθra Vairya. By uniting, reforming, and bringing prosperity to Greater Armenia, he constructed an earthly cosmos. This conclusion finds confirmation in the *Vendidad*,[148] one of the fundamental books of the Zend Avesta, which contains a story with apparent parallels to that of biblical Noah.[149]

According to the *Vendidad*, Ahura Mazdā summoned the most renowned men – Yima (the progenitor of the human race), along with other excellent mortals, predicted catastrophe for the world, and taught them how to avoid it: "Therefore, make thee a Vara, long riding–ground on every side of the square, to be an abode for men; a Vara, long riding–ground on every side of the square, to be a fold for flocks" [Zend Avesta, Vendidad, (Fargard), II, 25].

Continuing his instructions, he described the future Vara: "In the largest of the place, thou shalt make nine streets, six in the middle part, three the smallest" [Zend Avesta, Vendidad (Fargard) II, 30]. This symmetric space would be filled with the best seeds of men and animals. The principal social parameters of that were also predicted by the Lord – poverty, lying, meanness and jealousy

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[147] See **Duchesne–Guillemin**, 1962, 193–207; **Boyce**, 1979 22–23; **Boyce**, 1989, 933–936. To the same semantic frame belonged the personal names Artaχšaθra/Artaxerxes/Artašašt/ Ardešir. See **Justi**, 1895, 34–37.

[148] Vendidad – literally "Law against Devas" contains religious observations, prayers, and myths composed by the magi in the early period of the formation of Zoroastrian doctrine. See **Zaehner**, 1961, 160–164.

[149] On the role of Yima in the reform of the human race, see **Kellens**, 1984, 267–274; **Cantera**, 2012, 47–51.

would find no abode in the Vara [Zend Avesta, Vendidad, (Fargard) II, 29]. They were declared the manifestations of the will of Angra Mainyu – the god of evil.

Due to the plan of the Lord and the creative activity of Yima and his entourage, the world gained a new chance at life. The ideal settlement was composed of nine sections, probably, in accordance with the tripartite paradigm of society: "In the largest part of the place he (Yima) made nine streets, six in the middle part, three in the smallest. To the streets of the largest part he brought a thousand seeds of men and women; to the streets of the middle part, six hundred; to the streets of the smallest part, three hundred. That Vara he sealed up with the golden ring, and made a door, and a window self–shining within" [Zend Avesta, Vendidad, (Fargard) II, 38].

Life in this settlement was the happiest. To appreciate its essence, this artificial space would be considered in opposition to the barren land: "Unhappy is the land that has long lain unsown with the seed of the sower and wants a good husbandman, like a well–shaped maiden who has long gone childless and wants a good husband" [Vendidad, (Fargard), III, 24].

If King Artashēs indeed followed these ideas, he would have to consider himself the *husbandman* or *husband* of the land chosen for his new capital.[150] It is quite noticeable that we came to the same conclusion when discussing the reformation activity of this king in light of the ideas of Philo of Alexandria (Chapter 4, Chapter 9).

> *Archeologists confirm that (beside the castle, where the royal court was situated) Artashat covered a location of nine hills.*[151]

[150] J. Russell translates Artashat as the "Joy of Artashēs". See **Russell**, 1987, 78.

[151] There were also two other hills, but they were not included into the frame of city walls. Cf. **Khachatrian**, 1998, 97; **Khachadourian**, 2007, 48.

We do not know, belonged this layout to the age of King Artashēs or not? The positive answer might have led us to a new layer of esoterism. The fact is that nine (after seven) was considered as the key number in Zoroastrian doctrine and practice while being in close association with Havrdād – an aməša spənta responsible for the heil, health, happiness, wisdom, and waters. In other words, the new capital of Greater Armenia represented a complicated esoteric situation when combining the fire and water (triangle and sphere). Certainly, we must add to this also the innate Armenian element – the earth (quadrangle or cube) which in Zoroastrian axiology is associated with Spənta Armaiti (Spandarmād).[152]

In short, the Greek, Armenian, and Zoroastrian traditions complement each other when applied to the story about the foundation of the new capital of the Greater Armenia. Artashat was planned and built as a link between the earthly and heavenly cosmoses, the main dimensions of which were *truth*, *order*, *and justice*, corresponding to the basic social values of the Greeks – ἀλήθεια, τάξις and δική.[153] The capital was thought of as the ideal paradigm for Greater Armenia to be cultivated in all districts and provinces in accordance with the highest sciences and arts of the time.

7. On the primary sources

The correspondence of different traditions on the foundation of Artashat raises an important question about the probability of a certain common primary source that preceded Strabo, Plutarch, and Moses

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[152] In Armenia, this *Aməša Spənta* gave birth to Sandaramet/Spandaramet, the deity of the underworld, who was also bestowed with fertility. This probably gave grounds to identify him with Dionysus. See **Russell**, 1986, 439–440; **Russell**, 1987, 326.

[153] **Williams Jackson**, 2003, 43.

Khorenatsi. In particular, the following record of Strabo comes to confirm this suggestion: while relating about the recent period of Armenian history, he states:"[…] and that which begins with Persian times and extends continuously to our own, might appropriately be stated *in brief* (ἐν κεφαλαίῳ) as follows" [Strabo, XI, 14, 15]. It is quite logical to conclude that the author had a more detailed version of Armenian history in hand. Who could have complied that compendium? It is impossible to give an exact answer.

However, in the case of the Greek tradition, we may assume that among the probable candidates, Metrodorus of Scepsis and King Artavazd II must be considered.[154] It is attested that Metrodorus, while residing in the court of Tigran II, had compiled *Res gestae Tigranis*.[155] As for Artavazd, he "[…] actually composed tragedies, and wrote orations and histories [Plut., Crass., 33, 2].[156] It is important to remember that the works of these authors were preserved after their death.

King Artavazd seems to be the more probable candidate as the author of the primary source of the passage related to the foundation of Artashat. Regarding this king, the account of Plutarch is of particular importance: in his days (50–120), some of Artavazd's works were preserved and known in Greece [Ibid.] Certainly, it is one of the rare cases when the works of a *barbarian* writer were preserved in civilized Greece.

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[154] **Sargsyan**, 1969, 119–120.

[155] See **FHGr**, 1848, 203. Metrodorus of Scepsis (106–69 BC.) was an eminent rhetorician, historian, and stoic philosopher, who sought refuge in the court of Tigran II. See **Scullard**, 1992, 685; On the speculative reconstruction of the historical concept of Metrodorus, see **Stepanyan**, 1991, 121–132; **Stepanyan**, 2018, 135–149.

[156] On the reconstruction of Artavazd's concept of Armenian history, see **Stepanyan**, 2015, 112–123; **Stepanyan**, 2018, 150–169.

We face a similar uncertainty in the Armenian tradition as well. Khorenatsi states that: "The deeds of the last Artashēs are mostly revealed […] from the storytellers who relate them in Goḷtn." And formulates his task *in uncovering the true meaning of the allegory* [Khor., II, 49, 2–3]. For this purpose, he most probably turned to the *Chronicle* of Julius Africanus. Khorenatsi highlights that he has used this work, because it describes "[…] the acts of our first kings down to Abgar and from Abgar to Eruand". The work utilized the data of the Edessene archive [Khor., II, 10, 6].[157] In other words, Khorenatsi (if we trust his records) had two versions of the history of King Artashēs: on the one hand, epic, on the other, pragmatic–historical. His task was to combine them into a single narrative. However, Africanus could not have been the author of this primary source, since Strabo and Plutarch lived before him.

In any event, the parallelism of the two traditions remains undeniable and it again raises the possibility of them sharing a common source. In this vein, we return to the figure of Artavazd II. In his favor, in addition to the above–specified arguments, we would like to add that only he could be well acquainted with the epic tales about King Artashēs that circulated in ancient Armenia. At the same time, only he could have been so familiar with the complexities of Zoroastrian doctrine. All these considerations, of course, increase Artavazd's chances but do not settle the problem. The authorship

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[157] «Քանզի նա բովանդակ փոխադրեաց որ ինչ ի քարտէզս դիւանին Եդեսիայ, որ է Ուռհայ, որ յաղագս թագաւորացն մերոց պատմէր. որ մատեանքն ի Մծբնայ էին փոխեալ անդր եւ ի Սինոպայ Պոնտոսէ ի մեհենական պատմութեանցն» [Khor., II, 10, 3]. Julius Africanus' (180–250) *Chronicle* is considered the first world history compiled by a Christian author. For a more detailed discussion of this proposal, see **Topchyan**, 2006, 79–83.

of Artavazd remains speculative and is as hard to prove
as it is attractive.

Conclusion

Three historical traditions are present regarding the
reign and creative activity of the Armenian king Artashēs I
– Greek, Armenian, and (in the deepest sense) Zoroastrian.
On the whole, they complement each other and open new
perspectives for the interpretation of history. They com-
bine historical, geographical, philosophical, and esoteric
ideas that outline a unique scenario of events of the 2nd
century BC. They were crowned by the building of the
new capital of Greater Armenia, Artaxata/Artashat. The
practice of συνοικισμός was applied, and the residents of
other cities (particularly, Eruandashat) were resettled in
the new capital. An ideal space of social commonality was
chosen, with the aim of reforming the life of the country
according to the sciences and arts of the Hellenistic age.
This successful experience engendered the unprecedented
development of Greater Armenia during the forthcoming
two centuries. These events were fixed in (oral and writ-
ten) texts while influencing the new Hellenistic identity of
the Armenians.

Greater Armenia faced a similar situation in the 4th
century AD. under King Arshak II (350–368). It was the
age of Christian (or retro–) Hellenism. Acting with simi-
lar logic, this king made an attempt to establish absolute
royal authority. He also started his reform activity with
the founding of the *new royal residence* – Arshakavan.
By a special decree, he exhorted his subjects (regard-
less of their social status) to come and inhabit his city.
However, conditions had changed in Greater Armenia.
The nakharars felt themselves too independent to bear
the king's absolutism. The Church and its hierarchy
supported them. Support came from the superstates –
Persia and Rome – who desired to see Greater Armenia

weakened and dependent. As a result of a bloody clash, Arshakavan was destroyed. King Arshak's plans failed, the country degraded and soon was divided between Persia and Rome (387).

Meanwhile, on the ideal pattern of Constantinople, Rome – under Constantine the Great – foresaw and prepared its transition to the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire.

Chapter Nine

Armenian Self–Conception in Moses Khorenatsi
(Individual, Society, and Narrative)

Introduction

The endeavor for self–definition is quite explicit in the first three chapters of the *History of the Armenians* by Moses Khorenatsi. They make up a textual unit which could be interpreted as an *Introduction* to the work. A close reading of it reveals the following semantic divisions:
a. the images of ideal and corrupted historical actors,
b. the text compilation as an efficient form of social activity,
c. the formula of the Armenian identity. At the first sight, these divisions look rather dispersed meanwhile their interpretation with the background of Classical/Hellenistic and Christian theology and philosophy can help us outline a new perspective of comprehending Khorenatsi's narrative and its fundamental values. In other words, it is about the hypertextual expansion of the semantic borders of the text of the *History*. This requires the gathering of all the results of the previous sections and chapters without fear of inevitable repetition.

1. *The image of the righteous historical actor and his opponent*

The departing point of Khorenatsi's narrative is the *Dedication* to his patron, Prince Sahak Bagratuni. Here, he creates a portrait of an ideal historical actor full of noble intention and energy. As we have emphasized many times, Khorenatsi proceeds from Platonic theory and its Hellenistic interpretations on the structure and function of

the soul in cosmic, social and human contexts.[158] It was thought to consist of somatic, affective, and rational components. Without reason, they would degrade and oppose each other. However, with the guidance of that, complementary relations began to dominate.[159] The Christian theologians adopted this theory as well.[160]

Khorenatsi sees the second case (domination of reason) in his patron and declares that he is a harmonic human being when highlighting "[…] before your body, I have come to know your soul (յառաջ քան զմարմնոյդ՝ զհոգւոյդ ընկալեալ զծանրութիւն)" [Khor., I, 1, 3]. Certainly, in this case, by the "soul", the author means its two higher elements and functions. After this, he outlines the details of this concept while explaining the role of human reason, which, in addition to its purely intellectual aspect, has an important practical aspect as well.[161] This con-

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[158] In this regard, we would again like to note the fact that the works of Plato and Aristotle were well known in Early Medieval Armenia. Scholars think that interest in translating them into Armenian appeared as soon as the 70s – 90s of the 5th century. **Zarbhanalean**, 1889, 321–322; **Arevshatyan**, 1971, 16–18; **Arevshatyan**, 1973, 33–34; **Ter–Petrosyan**, 1984, 9–14.

[159] Following Socrates, Plato considers reason's domination as the guarantor of a *good life* (εὐ ζήν), aspiring to virtuous thoughts and actions [Plato, Rep., 353d–e]. **Robinson**, 1970, 26; cf. **Woods**, 1987, 25–30; **Lorenz**, 2008, 259–266.

[160] Discussing this problem, Gregory of Nyssa emphasizes: "Of these parts we are told that the spirit and the appetite placed below, supporting on each side the intellectual part of the soul, while the rational aspect is joined to both so as to keep them together and be held by them, being trained for courage by the spirit and elevated to the participation in the Good by the appetite" [Greg. Nyss., Mos., II, 96].

[161] The practical aspect implies two functions – praxis and poiēsis. Performed for its own sake, the praxis (doing) is expressed in the syllogism *rule/case*, and the poiēsis (making) in *means/end*. See **Thornton**, 1982, 63–64. Cf. **Mordak**, 1976, 82–383.

cept most probably refers to the theory of Aristotle who clearly defines the differences between these two forms of intellectual activity. In Khorenatsi's text, they are represented consequently as բան (ὁ νοῦς) and բանական (ἡ φρόνησις).[162] The bearer of practical intellect "[…] is able to deliberate well about the things which are beneficial to him" [Aristot., E.N., IV, 1140a, 25].

> *In Gregory of Nyssa, Christian interpretation of this conception is quite apparent: "Wisdom holds to the mean between shrewdness and simplicity. Neither the wisdom of the serpent, neither the simplicity of the dove is to be praised if one should choose either of these with respect to itself alone. Rather it is the disposition which closely unites these two by the mean that is virtue" [Greg. Nyss., Mos., II, 289].*

The function of practical intellect is held as σωφροσύνη – temperance or prudence, which Khorenatsi identifies with the term խոհականութիւն.[163] In this regard, his well–known phrase acquires its real meaning: "the virtue of the practical intellect lies in prudence" [Khor., I, 1, 5].

Regarding the man of practical intellect (ὁ φρόνιμος), Aristotle states that he acts in full accordance with positive passions (emotions) – goodwill, moderation, temperance, responsibility, etc. – which are subject to reason [Aristot., NE., 1106b, 15–24; Anim., 412a, 18–9].[164] It

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[162] Actually, the semantic status of these two Armenian terms is not absolutely stable. Therefore, the context of their usage must be taken into consideration in every concrete case. In the text that we are discussing, they are strictly opposed: "Չի եթէ վասն *բանին* մեր, որպէս ասի, պատկեր Աստուծոյ, եւ դարձեալ՝ *բանականին* է խոհականութիւն […]" [Khor., I, 1, 5].

[163] By this term, Aristotle means a continuous mental process – a deliberation – which is the precondition for the practical reason and activity. **Wiggins**, 1975/1976, 30–36.

[164] This situation engenders two kinds of men. One is self–controlled

seems Khorenatsi proceeds from this assumption while reporting that the prince Bagratuni was consumed by a *noble and moderate passion* (զեղեցիկ եւ չափաւոր մոլութեամբ) [Ibid.].

Only in this cases a man was able to reach the Lord and become His true image (պատկեր). Khorenatsi was also probably acquainted with the renowned passage of Philo of Alexandria, where this concept was discussed in the context of the biblical Creation. It is about the transformation of the practical intellect into the theoretical. This process, in Creation, went in the opposite direction – from the theoretical level to the practical: "God, being minded to unite in intimate and long fellowship the beginning and end of created things, made heaven the beginning and man the end, the one the most perfect of imperishable objects of sense, the other the noblest of things earthborn and perishable, being, in very truth, a *miniature heaven*" [Philo, Op., XL, 117].

Khorenatsi's ideal is this *heavenly man*, who is "[…] bold and fertile not only in words and practical considerations but also in great and numerous deeds of glory (գործս արութեան)" [Khor., I, I, 7]. More precisely, the author combines the positive forms of human activity and recognizes them as being aimed at the divine realm (heaven) and human glory (earth). As a rule, heavenly and earthly men fulfill their mission when applying the achievements of, on the one hand, spiritual practices and skills, and various sciences and arts, on the other. Khorenatsi also probably follows Philo in this regard, who hoped for complementary relations between the two types of human being. By his definition, the heavenly man is the "true man" within all men while making up *the soul of their mind* [Philo, Op. XXVIII, 69; Agr., 9; Leg. All., I, 33, 42, etc.].

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and performs good actions, the other – the virtuous man – is assessed more highly, since he does *proper actions* that stem from his good character [Aristot., N.E., 1104b, 23]. Cf. **Iskra–Paczkowska**, 2016, 23.

Christian doctrine identifies the heavenly man prima-
rily with Christ, defining Him as "man from heaven"
[Paul, 1 Cor., 15:35–36]. As for common men, they had
the goal of becoming *spiritual bodies* while ascending
to heaven through a spiritual experience. The end of
this spiritual journey was a meeting with Christ.[165] It
comprised the essence of Christian justification, con-
secration, and dedication, since "We do not want to be
forever learning, but never coming into the truth" [Paul,
II Tim., 3:7]. In this regard, let us again emphasize that
this journey was frequently compared with death since
through that men lost their earthly body and received the
chance to become His image (εἰκών).[166]

Most probably influenced by Neo–Platonic Christian
(Cappadocian) perceptions, Khorenatsi reproduces this
concept while formulating his patron's purpose *to rejoice
the Archetype* (զակզրնատիպն ասիս ուրախացուցանել)
[Khor., I, I, 5]. We have demonstrated the images of the
most prominent representatives of such men throughout

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[165] "For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this,
that One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all that those
who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for
them and has been raised" [Paul. 2 Cor., 5:14–15]. Cf. **Brian E**., 2002,
480–483.

[166] Christian concept of *God's image* has been compiled from the
sources of Judaism, Classical and Hellenistic philosophy (especially,
Platonism and Neo–Platonism). Philo outlined this problem and later
Christian intellectuals developed it. See **Cahill**, 2006, 71–75; **Fishbane**,
2006, 84–89. Plotinus defined this man as αὐτοάνθροπος emphasizing
the fact that he had realized his good nature. **Blumenthal**, 1971, 22–23,
Armstrong, 2007, 222–223. Meanwhile, the Cappadocian fathers pre-
ferred the descriptive term ἴνδαλμα τοῦ Θεοῦ (God's image), the human
who came to Him through purification and illumination [Greg. Naz.,
Orat., XXVIII, 31 (70, 3–7, 70, 14), Greg. Nyssa, De Verg. (PG., 46,
373c – 376c)]. See **Sheldon–Williams**, 2007, 435–437, 443–447.

the text of the *History*, especially the ethnarch Hayk, Arta-shēs the Middle, and Trdat the Great.[167]

As for wicked or corrupted men, Khorenatsi charac-terizes them first by the *habits of hating wisdom* (ան-իմաստասէր բարս) [Khor., I, 3, 2].[168] We have discussed this as the main trait of barbarity (Chapter 2). It means that they are deprived of God's grace and entry to the heavenly realm. It seems that Khorenatsi proceeds from this idea while highlighting that for the corrupted men the *incom-pletion of the soul of intellect* (անկատարութիւն զլոյն բանականի) is the most characteristic trait of character [Khor., I, 3, 3].[169]

As a result, these men live with base somatic passions and desires – gluttony and lust, avarice and vainglory, cowardice, and deception. Khorenatsi finds it meaningless to talk about them in detail, considering them as *mindless* (անբան), *imbecile* (թուլամիտ), and *barbarous* (վայրենի) human beings [Khor., I, 3, 9]. This negative description finds its continuation in the renowned *Lament*: "the laity

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[167] The problem is to be discussed more broadly while bringing toge-ther the ruler and intellectual elite. In this vein, the figures of King Vṙamshapuh and Mashtots and Sahak Partev get a new light. Their col-laboration looked at the purpose of giving rise to the new paradigm of Armenian civilization centered on the written text (book) and culture. See **Stepanyan**, 2018, 56–67.

[168] Khorenatsi speaks about *habit* which is one of fundamental terms of Aristotelian moral theory – ἕξις. It implies regular actions emerging from (and corresponding to) human nature. Therefore, it can be con-sidered the cause of both virtue and vice [Aristot., N.E., II, 1, 1103a; 4, 1105a]. **Guthrie**, 1981, 218, 352.

[169] Worked out still by Plato this term obtained new color in the system of Plotinus. In the cosmic aspect, it is "a first–hand Cause, bodiless and therefore over itself" [Plot., IV, 7, 8, 4]. In a human being, it is the part of the soul connecting it with "this lively principle" [Plot., IV, 3, 13, 1]. Cf. **Rich**, 1963, 3–4. Christian doctrine identified the cosmic Soul with Holy Spirit. **Levison**, 2013, 42–45.

arrogant insubordinate", "the judges […] ignorant of law", "the princes rebellious, companions of thieves", "the kings cruel and evil rulers, imposing heavy and onerous burdens and giving intolerable commands" [Kor., III, 68, 30–37].[170] In contrast to heavenly men, wicked men are not able to influence the course of history positively and direct it toward social order and peace.

All of the history of Armenia is perceived by Khorenatsi as a scene of conflict between these two kinds of actors.

2. The text compilation as social action

Khorenatsi binds the social creation, as we have noted above, with sciences, arts, and technology. It distinguishes the wise man from the profane (barbarian). Two forms of positive social activity are distinguished throughout the *History – deeds of valor* (գործք արութեան) and *deeds of wisdom* (գործք իմաստութեան). Their various combinations are at the heart of the affairs of all outstanding actors of Armenian history, beginning from the ethnarch Hayk and ending with St. Mesrop Mashtots. These figures personify the two opposite poles of Armenian history. The first is identified with deeds of valor, the second with deeds of wisdom.

Khorenatsi reveals himself to be an adherent of the second idea. He is among the disciples of St. Mashtots, who received primary education, progymnasmata, under his supervision after being sent to the Alexandrian Catechetical School – Didascalium [Khor., III, 62, 2–4].[171]

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[170] See in detail **Zekiyan**, 1993, 27–42; **Sargsyan**, 2006, 127–139; **Stepanyan**, 2006, 248–254.

[171] Cf. Chapter 1. The hypertextual discussion of the passage about the journey of the young Khorenatsi and his friends from Armenia to Alexandria with stops in Edessa and Palestine. It shows the traits of the spiritual journey of an adept from the material world to the intelligible heaven. See in detail **Stepanyan**, 2006, 181–196.

Khorenatsi's preference for cultural texts – ritual, oral, and (especially) written – originates from this experience. He traces it in the image of Ptolemeus Philadelphus, the king of Hellenistic Egypt (283–246 BC.) who: "[…] took care to have the books and stories of all nations translated into Greek" [Khor., I, 2, 6].[172] At the same time: "[…] many famous scholars from the land of Greece were concerned not merely to translate into Greek the archives of other nation's kings and temples […] but also to seek out diligently, wherever they might be, the most important and most admirable artistic works and collect them and translate them into Greek" [Khor., I, 2, 7]. This motivates him to call Greece *the mother or nurse of the sciences*.

This strongly contrasts with the early Armenians led by ignorant kings: "But it seems to me that nowadays, just as in the past, the Armenians were not enamored of scholarship and books" [Khor., I, 3, 8]. In this regard, it must also be added that the passage generalizes the role of barbarity in Armenian history as a negative rhythm with its own definite beginning and end – *from barbarity … to barbarity*.

As for the first positive rhythm, – *from deeds … to deeds* – it is to be considered in the frame of this second one. By this logic, historical events occur as follows: just as Hayk and his clan overcame the initial barbarity, so are St. Mashtots and his generation able to cope with the final barbarity.[173] This reconstruction is capable of altering our

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[172] Namely, Ptolemeus Philadelphus is portrayed by Khorenatsi as an embodiment of the two fundamental forms of deeds – bravery and wisdom. Expanding upon the experience of Alexander the Great, he and his descendants even changed the natural conditions of the country [Khor., III, 62, 4–5].

[173] It is quite noticeable that the first part of the *Lament* is an eulogy to the righteous teacher and his pupil: "[…] who will express the delight of a father, in part exceeded by his son" [Khor., III, 68, 23], while the second part speaks about the dissolution of social connections. The set-

understanding of Khorenatsi's vision of Armenian history. From time to time, barbarity gains the upper hand, but men (the outstanding actors and their entourage) have the energy to overcome that by means of intellectual and practical actions.[174]

The following passage of the *Introduction* confirms this logic. While relating about the most eminent kings of the past, Khorenatsi pays attention to the fact that: "[…] those kings are worthy of praise who in written accounts fixed and ordered their annals and wise acts and inscribed each one's valor in narratives and histories" [Khor., I, 3, 3]. However, they are not alone in this noble enterprise: "[…] like them the compilers of books of archives who were occupied with similar efforts are worthy of our eulogies" [Ibid.]. In this vein, concerning the true craft of the historian, the author emphasizes that he must: "[…] not inject anything imaginary or unsuitable but only what is taken from books (ի գրոց) and similarly from wisemen learned in these matters" [Khor., I, 19, 3]. Moreover, his text should be composed in strict accordance with the principle of *symmetry* (չափի, կարգ, կշիռ) [Khor., I, 1, 19, 20; II, 1, 3, 2, 8, 59 15, etc.].[175]

tlement of the contradiction is implied in the reverse perspective of the advanced reader. The death of the spiritual fathers was parallel to overall destruction, which can be overcome by the efforts of their pupils. See **Stepanyan**, 1991, 171–188.

[174] **Stepanyan**, 2018, 36–86.

[175] **Stepanyan**, 1991, 137. It is a *locus communis* of the Classical and Hellenistic rhetoric expressed best in the renowned formula of Socrates: "But I do think you will agree to this, that every discourse must be organized, like a living being, with a body of its own, as it were, so as not to headless or footless, but to have a middle and members, composed in fitting relation to each other and to the whole" [Plato, Phaedr., 264c]. Presumably, this is about the *loose style* of putting words together most naturally. Cf. **Row**, 2001, 151. On the influence of verbal (rhetorical) harmony on various fields of text composition, and especially his-

Of course, the parallelism of these two figures (kings and intellectuals) personifies the two abovementioned noble deeds of valor and wisdom. It is apparent throughout the text of the *History* in the form of outstanding kings or rulers and their historians – Vagharshak Arsacid and Mar Abas Catina, Trdat the Great and Agathangelos, Sahak Bagratuni and Moses Khorenatsi. To this, numerous known and unknown authors of various ages should be added.

Besides pure cognitive and contemplative aspects, the aim of this collaboration was to apply the experience of the past to solve the problems of the present – social policy, economy, legislation, etc. In the *Introduction*, two approaches to historical writing are traceable. The author formulates the first as follows: "Indeed I shall describe briefly but faithfully the origin and formation (զուսն եւ զխարդն) of all the Armenian noble families as these are found in certain Greek histories" [Khor., I, I, 7]. Here he is referring to the genealogical genre which considered the history of the given country as the sum of the noble clans' histories with the intention to connect their origin with eminent heroes or (even) gods.[176] This ideology was typical for patriarchal societies, and the idea of the prince Sahak was to initiate the composition of such a history

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tory, see **Hornblower**, 2006, 321–323. Scholars define this approach as *rhetoric history* tracing its origin in Thucydides. See **Colson**, 1917, 164–173.

[176] The genealogical perception of history was characteristic of Greek logography. Building upon the old mythological tradition, the logographers (especially Hecataeus of Miletus and Damastes of Sigeion) described the past by utilizing genealogical lists proceeding from ancient heroes and gods. Cf. **Pearson**, 1992, 617. This genre was revived in the Hellenistic age. See **Dihl**, 1994, 266–271, 289–294. Khorenatsi seems have had contact with the Hellenistic tradition, perhaps through Berosus, Alexander Polyhistor, or (most probably) Eusebius of Caesarea. Cf. **Topchyan**, 2006, 26–35.

of the Armenian House (ппи‹ ‹шуng) consisting of the histories of local (nakharar) houses. Certainly, his special interest was concerned with his own *valiant and noble* Bagratuni house.[177]

It seems that the passage discussed above regarding the true kings and their historians refers to this genre of historical writing. However, its continuation causes doubt in this proposition. Moreover, it marks another genre connected with the theoretical assumption of history apparent in the text of Khorenatsi.[178] In this regard, we would like to pay attention to the following fact. According to the author, through the narratives composed by the collaboration of kings and historians: "[…] we become wise to common orders and able to study political conditions [of human life]" [Khor., I, 3, 3]. We have already shown (Chapter 2) that this refers to the two most essential forms of social integration based, on the one hand, on natural law, and positive (conditional) law, on the other. The last case demonstrates the active stance of societies and elite groups toward history.[179]

As a rule, this gives rise to the narratives aimed at a more profound grasp of the past and present. Khorenatsi

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[177] This approach gave rise to historical works reflecting the interests and viewpoints of the princely houses – the Bagratuni, Mamikonean, Artsruni, Siuni, etc. Cf. **Thomson**, 1997, 208–218; **Margaryan**, 2013, 35–36. Certainly, it posed a risk for *posterity's biased relationship with the past*. This phenomenon is well studied in Greek, Hellenistic and Roman historiography. See **Luce**, 1989, 21–31.

[178] See in detail **Stepanyan**, 1991, 176–182.

[179] Concerning this problem, modern theory considers exclusively political or power elite groups. Cf. **Putnam**, 1976, 20–44. Meanwhile, the ancient theory endeavored to combine the power and intellectual elites. This became more explicit in the days of the Sophists and was revived in the Hellenistic age. **Vatai**, 2001, 116–129. This tradition was developed in Christianity when being connected with Constantine the Great. See **Barnes**, 2011, 120–125; **Scott**, 2017, 343–344.

refers to this assumption of history when formulating its fundamental questions – how, when, whence (or for what reason) do this or that crucial event occurs: "But I shall begin to show you our own history – whence (ուստի) and how (որպէս) it developed" [Khor., I, 7, 8]. In other places of his text, he appreciates the particular significance of time in history (when): "[…] there is no true history without chronology" [Khor., II, 82, 2]. If this proposition is true, we can trace in Khorenatsi's assumption the renowned formula of Greek historiography searching for answers to the same questions in historical investigations – πῶς, πότε, διά τί (or πόθεν).[180]

We could also suppose that Khorenatsi is in favor of the second genre of history writing while explaining his numerous dissents with the prince Sahak Bagratuni, who represents the first genre. Nevertheless, the diversities of these approaches are not absolute: in a profound sense, they complement each other and make up the two poles of the dialogue between the patron and historian, which makes up the basis of the *History*'s narrative. Moreover, they could be considered as two *alter egos* of Khorenatsi, which help him maintain the lesson of Armenian history.[181]

3. The formula of Armenian identity

The formula of the Armenian identity, which we are going to analyze, is rather short and seems unsophisticated. However, it shows features of hypertextuality when we discuss it in parallel with other formulas of Khorenatsi. Therefore, we can define it as one of the key passages of the *History*, through which its fundamental essence is perceptible. It reads: "For although we are a small country and

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[180] See **Scalon**, 2015, 87–92.

[181] This dialogue could be compared with the renowned rhetorical style of imaginary questions and answers. Cf. **Porter**, 2001, 140.

very restricted in numbers, weak in power, and often subject to other's rule, yet many deeds of bravery have been performed in our land worthy of being recorded in writing […]" [Khor., I, 3, 4].[182] Prima facie, it is obvious that the passage consists of two opposing semantic units. While the first is based on the negative, the second leans on the positive axiology of self–conception. Therefore, they must be considered and comprehended in strict balance.[183] Correspondingly, the whole passage has two key words marking its beginning and end. The beginning is coded in the phrase "small country", the end in "recorded in writing".

The English translation of the first unit is obviously not correct. The term ածու (atsu) is translated as coun- try. To express this meaning, Khorenatsi could easily have used the noun *երկիր*. Meanwhile, it is well attested that in Classical Armenian, ածու denotes a *cultivated land* – field or garden yielding corns, fruits and vegetables.[184] In this light, it is appropriate to translate the first key phrase as "although we are a land of poor cultivation". It was quite appropriate for the times of Khorenatsi described in his *Lament*: "The earth is barren of fruit and living crea- tures do not increase; there are also quakes and shakings. In addition to all this, there are tumults on every side, according to the saying: There is no peace for the impious" [Khor., III, 68, 40–41].[185]

A similar situation is apparent at the very beginning of Armenian history, prior to the Haykids: "[…] in many

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[182] "Չի թէպէտ եւ եմք աձու փոքր, եւ թուով յոյժ ընդ փոքու սահմա- նեալ, եւ զաւրութեամբ տկար, եւ ընդ այլով յոյով անգամ նուաճեալ թագաւորութեամբ՝ սակայն բազում գործք արութեան գտանին գոր- ծեալ եւ ի մերում աշխարհիս, եւ արժանի գրոյ հիշատակի […]".

[183] In other words, the Aristotelian concept of extreme qualities and the mean ought to be applied to this formula. Only in this case, can its fundamental essence be achieved. Cf. **Stepanyan**, 2012, 66–67.

[184] See **NBHL (ՆԲՀԼ)**, v. 1, 1979, 21.

[185] **Stepanyan**, 2009[1], 191–196.

places in our land there were dwelling a few scattered men before the arrival of our original ancestor Hayk" [Khor., I, 12, 14]. This means that the land in its entirety was not cultivated. Moreover, it (and its districts) did not have a name. Hayk and his descendants began building villages, towns, fortresses, and cities, which were called after their names [Khor., I, 11, 25, 12, 2–38].[186] It must be added that these two poles of poverty (or barrenness) of the land correspond to the abovementioned two poles of primary and final barbarity.

However, this discussion also has a third pole, without which it cannot be considered complete. We are referring here to the renowned account of Khorenatsi summarizing the reign of King Artashēs the Middle. It has been discussed in some previous chapters, but now the context of its interpretation is quite different. Let us quote it once again: "But it is said that in the time of Artashēs there was no land unworked in Armenia, neither of mountain nor plain, on account of the prosperity of the country" [Khor., II, 56, 5]. Namely, all of Great Armenia was turned into an *atsu* by the efforts of this outstanding ruler. Khorenatsi sees the main cause of this metamorphosis in the fact that "noble arts and sciences" had been introduced.

> *Considering Philo of Alexandria, the image of King Artashēs receives new light. The author distinguishes two kinds of pea-*

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[186] In a profound sense, this narrative is about the semiotization of *nature by means of culture*. According to this approach, all the results of human creative activity are considered as traits of an overall semiosis of the given land. Due to that, it becomes observable and recognizable. Cf. **Gaddis**, 2002, 26–31. Early Medieval Armenian historians believe that the effective way of this semiotization is the Armenian language. They identify the borders of Greater Armenia with the area of the spread of Armenian. In this regard, the formula of Buzand is quite notable – "a country of entirely Armenian tongue" [Buz., IV, 12, 5; cf. Khor., II, 3, 6, 8, 5 etc.]. See **Stepanyan**, 1991, 93–94; **Stepanyan**, 2018, 22–23.

sants – the tiller of the earth and the husbandman. The first works without skills, looking only to his wages. While the second: "[…] would be glad to contribute something of his own, and to spend in addition some of his private resources for the sake of improving the soil […] for his desire is to derive his revenues every year not from another source, but from his agricultural labors, when they have been brought into a productive state" [Philo, De agr., I, 5].[187] *In other words, King Artashēs was a husbandman while looking out for the welfare of all his country.*

In this light, returning to the formula of Armenian identity, we can propose the following interpretation of the first semantic unit: "we are now a land of poor cultivation, but in due time, it was entirely cultivated and prosperous by virtue of new technological devices, arts and sciences." In the mind of Khorenatsi, the overall destruction of his days engendered a situation when the Armenians were "restricted in number", "weak in power", and "often subject to other's rule". This is the basic idea of the first (neqative) unit of the formula.

The second (positive) unit refers to the idea that in Armenian history there were periods of (even full) prosperity. The eminent kings executed great deeds and the historians wrote them down in their accounts. It seems that Khorenatsi speaks about this form of collaboration when stating: "[…] yet many deeds of bravery have been performed in our land worthy of being recorded in writing". Certainly, this is about the cohesion of the two forms of the abovementioned noble deeds. However, the author adds a new wrinkle to this idea as well. Although he accepts, assesses and applies the data of oral myths, epic tales, le-

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[187] See Chapters 4, 8. The tilling of the earth (ἡ γεωργία) and the husbandry (γῆς ἐργεσία) imply different forms of governments and rulers. While the first is comparable with either weak rulers or tyrants, the second implies righteous kings. See **Runia**, 1988, 69–71; cf. **Stepanyan**, 2012, 63–64.

gends, and songs of minstrels, he nevertheless gives pre-
ference to written texts. In this, he follows the experience
of Classical and Hellenistic historiography.

> In this regard, it must be emphasized that the Classical menta-
> lity has two polar approaches to the problem. The former is best
> expressed in the Phaedrus of Plato. It gives unconditional prefe-
> rence to oral tradition, which is based on memory – the divine gift
> of a human being [Plato, Phaed., 275a–e]. The second approach
> is usually connected with Herodotus, who declares at the very
> beginning of his Histories: "Herodotus of Halicarnassus here
> displays his inquiry so that things done by men may not be for-
> gotten in time" [Herod., I, 1, 2]. Nevertheless, Herodotus and his
> followers feel the necessity to combine the information of both
> sources while linking them consequently with hearing (ἀκονή)
> and vision (ὄψις). They demonstrate numerous examples of this
> combination for the sake of historical truth.[188]

Despite the oral memory, the written memory was con-
sidered to be a rational skill of mental activity looking at
the end of writing and enquiring of the past and present.
This comprehension was later adopted by Christianity,
where Scripture was recognized as the highest authority.
At the same time, various genres of written texts made
up the basis of Christian faith and doctrine. Nevertheless,
Christian intellectuals, continuing the ancient Jewish tradi-
tion, intended to combine the oral and written information
while perhaps also utilizing Philo's method of interpreting
the biblical subjects: "I always interwove what I was told

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[188] Cf. **Momigliano**, 1978, 5–6. We could even speak about the Apol-
lonian/Dionysian dichotomy of characters focused on rational spatial
rhythm and subconscious time fluidity. This Nietzschean concept widely
influenced modern psychology and cultural studies. Cf. **Barrack**, 1974,
115–119; **Daniels**, 2014, 47–58.

with what I read […]" [Philo, Mos., 1, 4; cf. Luke., 1, 2; Polycarp., Phil., 2, 3, 4, 1, 7, 1–2, etc.].[189]

All this gives ground for defining the role of the history writing craft and professional historian. We touched on the theoretical aspect of this problem, and now the practical aspect must be emphasized as well. It is best exposed in the fragment of the *History* concerning King Vagharshak Arsacid. To cope with the *chaos and confusion* in Armenia, he needed a compendium of its history. He found a Chaldean, Mar Abas Catina, well–versed in various arts, and ordered him to bring about his idea. In this regard, he formulated his vision of history: "[…] I have decided to discover who may have been those who ruled over this land of Armenia before me and whence arose the principalities that now exist here. For the orders of rank here are quite uncertain, as are the cults for the temples. It is not clear which is the first of the lords of this country and which is the last, nor is anything regulated, but all is confused and wild" [Khor., I, 9, 4–5]. Namely, the task of the historical work was to link together the records about *deeds of bravery and wisdom* into a single narrative compiled in accordance with truth, justice, and beauty.[190]

It was believed that only in this case would a historical narrative be able to influence history (real–life) enough to help establish peace and order. According to Khorenatsi, this is exclusively about *true historical texts*. He hopes

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[189] In this vein, we would like to recall the case of Ghazar Parpetsi, the eminent historian of the 5th century, who was attacked by his opponents: "He does not read the Holy Scripture, and the text pronounces so smoothly as if from letters" [Parp., Let., 159].

[190] Usually, in Classical and Hellenistic historiography, the complexity of these values is considered on occasion of the truth or authenticity of the given fact and event. In the Greek axiological system, both *justice* and *beauty* are linked together inseparably with the *truth*. Under the influence of rhetoric, this understanding was applied to this style of history writing. On this perception, see in detail **Schepens**, 2007, 27–41.

that his *History of the Armenians* will correspond to this demand while covering the positive experience of all generations of the Armenians about the overcoming of situations of decline, confusion, and chaos: "[…] to set down in writing each one's deeds and times from the time of confusion at the building of the tower up to the present" [Khor., I, 3, 10]. This approach gave him the confidence to describe his task as "[…] to write the history of our nation in a long and useful work (երկար եւ շահաւոր գործով)" [Ibid.].

In this regard, we would like to single out a new nuance of Khorenatsi's history writing skill, which is still explicit in Herodotus. In his introduction to the *Histories*, the father of history emphasizes: "This is the display of the inquiry (ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις) of Herodotus Halicarnassus […]" [Herod., I, I, 0]. In other words, the experience of *exhibiting* or *making public* is believed to be one of the pivotal characteristics of historical texts. In this vein, the following passage of Khorenatsi comes to mind. The personable and valiant King Vagharshak, while highly estimating the historical work of Mar Abas Catina: "[…] a part of it he ordered to be inscribed on a stele" for wider observation [Khor., I, 9, 13]. Here also, the exhibition of history is considered to be an important trait of public memory. Certainly, this approach was inherited from the illiterate creative experience and was aimed at the uniting of men around the patterns of collective memory.[191]

Summing up the results of this hypertextual interpretation of the passage under consideration, we have to emphasize that it is comprised of two scenarios of Armenian history – pessimistic and optimistic. Their relations are reversible. Namely, the pessimistic scenario is possible to improve through the creative projects and actions of outstanding rulers and intellectuals. It is nearly the same result

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[191] See in detail **Nagy**, 2001, 532–538; **Nagy**, 2009, 428–429.

to which we came while discussing the semantic index of
Armenia in light of Philo's moral theory.[192] In both cases,
the individual and nationwide paradigms of identity are
strictly interwoven. The last actors of this historical play
were King Vṙamshapuh and St. Mashtots.

Conclusion

The first three chapters of the *History* by Moses Kho-
renatsi make up a kind of *Introduction* to his work. It
demonstrates the author's ideas concerning creative his-
torical actors and their opponents, oral memory and writ-
ten texts, social confusions and ways of overcoming them.
They are brought together and balanced under the more
general concepts of national and individual identities.

Two fundamental narratives are apparent in Armenian
history – constructive and destructive. They are repre-
sented correspondingly by *perfect* and *corrupted* historical
actors – kings, princes, and religious leaders. Their actions
depend on their natural data (soul structure) and education.
Education is able to correct deficiencies and change the
lives of both individuals and societies. This is very impor-
tant, especially if we take into consideration the fact that
the majority of every society is made up of *common men*
who consist simultaneously of good and evil.

The core element of education is memory while being
expanded to the scope of national history, from the for-
mative period to modernity. Following the Classical/
Hellenistic intellectual tradition and Christian doctrine,
Khorenatsi has a special assessment of the memory
recorded in historical narratives. He believes that only in
this form does it obtain the potency to uncover the lesson
of the past and influence the course of the present. For this
purpose, the cooperation of rulers and historians is highly
appreciated. However, for reaching this end, the historian

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[192] Chapter 7.

must be versed in the craft of history writing and be particularly ready to answer the fundamental questions – how, when, and why happen events in the context of the historical past and present. Appropriately compiled historical texts contain ideas of social healing (ἰατρεία).[193]

All these approaches are apparent in the renowned *Formula of Armenian Identity*, which is the focus of the *Introduction*. It demonstrates pessimistic and optimistic scenarios of Armenian history and reveals their causes and results. The further text of the *History* shows the play of these opposite scenarios during the entire history of Armenia. Moreover, it outlines how to prevent (or overcome) ruinous ones.

In the optimistic scenario, the formula singles out the importance of *deeds of bravery and wisdom* while being fixed in written texts. It most probably proceeds from the well–known maxim of Thucydides, which was adopted into Classical and Hellenistic rhetoric: "History is philosophy teaching by examples" [Cf. Dionys. Halicarn., Rhet. Art, XI, 2]. Namely, historical works composed in full accordance with the craft of the genre are considered able to reveal the lesson of the past and present. It provides instructions for overcoming crises, and the collaboration of rulers with intellectuals is the most effective way to succeed in this regard. It is designed to influence history by interpreting, understanding, and formulating the Armenian identity as a sociological problem. It was for this exact purpose that Moses Khorenatsi embarked on the compilation of his *History of the Armenians*.

With regard to this hypertextual enlargement of the *Formula*, we would like to emphasize the conclusion we

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[193] This idea was most effectively worked out in Plato's *Sicilian project* [Plato, Leg., 638a – b; Ep., VIII, 334c–d]. In the Hellenistic age and in the period of the fall of the Roman Republic, it was revived with new colors [Cicero, Rep., 5, 8, 6, 17–18]. **Gallagher**, 2001, 513–515; **Godin**, **Lucier**, 2012, 11–13, 19–21; **Evangeliou**, 2019, 187–200.

reached in the Chapter 7. The last passage of the *History*, the *Lament*, does not denote the absolute end of Armenian history. The new intellectual technology introduced by the efforts of King Vṙamshapuh, Catholicos Sahak Partev and St. Mesrop Mashtots – the national writing system and school, translation of *inner* and *outer* authors, theology and philosophy, linguistics and rhetoric, history and geography – were called upon to lay the foundations of a new glorious époque. This is the main result of the self–reflection of the intellectual elite cultivated on the Armenian soil by St. Mashtots and Sahak Partev.

Epilogue

This monograph discusses four fundamental aspects of the *History of the Armenians* by Moses Khorenatsi – the renowned work that occupies a critical position in the medieval Armenian historiography. With its fundamental features, variety and (even) contradictions, a reverse perspective is traceable in the *History* which is only visible to the advanced reader. The latter sees his task in collaborating with Khorenatsi (with his intellectual and emotional perceptions) in order to expand the semantic and semiotic borders of the author's narrative. Namely, this is about the hypertextual unraveling of Khorenatsi's *History*.

The author of this monograph considers himself to be in the role of an advanced reader who is also going to interpret the text of Khorenatsi through the intellectual experience of former generations of scholars – from the Armenian, Classical, biblical, Hellenistic and Christian perspectives. Embarking on this investigation, he hoped to escape the traditional *bare philological approach* by complementing it with philosophy, theology, narratology, hermeneutics and many other spheres of intellectual activity. He also hoped to put afore those aspects of interpretation of the *History* that have traditionally been ignored or overlooked. They concern such aspects as the author's historical concept, which can reveal his social theory, perception of cosmic and social recurrence, forms of social partnership in the frame of the household/family, and the semantic index of Armenia in biblical and Hellenistic intellectual traditions. Together, they outline the path of intellectual development from natural–philosophical assumptions to the paradigms of the self–conception of the Armenians.

This approach defines the structure of the monograph, which is divided into four sections, each consisting of two

or three chapters. They represent the steps of the semantic development of the main subject of the investigation.

Section 1. The Author and his Social Theory*. The first chapter* is focused on the synopsis of the person, writing craft and experience of Moses Khorenatsi. They are aimed at the overall coverage of the Armenian past and present while proceeding from the data of various disciplines – chorography and history, ethnology and social philosophy, theology and rhetoric. They are interpreted in causative, typological and sympathetic aspects when depicting the perspective of Armenian history from the biblical Flood to the general destruction of Khorenatsi's time described in the *Lament*.

The focus of this chapter is the problem of the time of the author. There is a philological approach which traces *alien fragments* in the text of the *History* and concludes that it was compiled not in the 5th, but in the 7th, 8th or 9th centuries. Proceeding from modern theories of compilation, the "open source" nature of medieval texts and authorship, we propose a balanced attitude to Khorenatsi in order to appreciate his work in accordance with the ideas of his époque. In this regard, we must also keep in mind that interpolations were habitual for medieval culture, and the problem of scholars is to measure their influence on the given text. However, no such work has been done on the text of Khorenatsi. On the other hand, departing from the textual integrity of the *History*, we are quite sure that there are no sufficient arguments for shaking Khorenatsi's reputation as the historian of the 5th century. In a word, despite interpolations, the basic sketch of the *History* is a production of that époque.

The second chapter examines Khorenatsi's social theory. Directly or through Philo of Alexandria, Khorenatsi proceeds from Aristotle's theory of the passive *matter* (potentiality) and the active *form* (actuality), which usually results in *artefacts*. Through these phases, everything reaches its *end*. Apparently, this theory has commonali-

ties with the theory of the tripartite soul, which consists of somatic, affective and reasoning elements.

At the same time, these understandings have sociological content reflecting the main phases of social integration. Following that, Khorenatsi traces these aspects of the Armenian past: *a*. the asocial *barbarity* which corresponds to the passive matter, *b*. the traditional *nakharar system* based on natural or habitual laws (the rule of the Haykids), *c*. the civilization based on positive laws while engendering a state with stable written laws, social institutions and government (the rule of the Arsacids). With Christianity, a new form of social integration came into effect – the *God's covenant*. It was held to be founded on the canonical regulations of the Church, which led the covenant under the guidance of the Lord.

A parallel division is obvious in the narrative style of the *History*. According to Khorenatsi, it sees: *a*. pointless and raw myths (of the Persian typology) which are comparable to the passive matter, *b*. myths and historical epic tales worked out according to the canons of Classical/Hellenistic rhetoric (actuality of the form) aimed at the truth of the past in symbolic and allegoric forms, *c*. historical narratives (records, chronicles, compendiums) composed in accordance with rational and theoretical methods of research. The last case paves the way to the lesson of history which looks for the answer to the question (not only what happened but) what *could happen by necessity and occasion*. In the reverse perspective of the advanced reader, all these algorithms are expected to complement each other while outlining the essential features of the social theory of Khorenatsi.

Section 2. Cosmic Rhythm and Royal Authority. It is composed of two chapters. *The third* continues the theoretical approach but focuses on another aspect of discussion: the concept of the so–called great temporal circles comprising both cosmos and societies moving "*from chaos to chaos*". The roots of this reach back to Indo–European,

Ancient Near Eastern and Archaic Greek mythical tradi-
tions. In the Classical and Hellenistic ages, the concept
was filled out and gained philosophical and sociological
weight. In this regard, the efforts of the Stoics and Plato
were most effective. According to them, the universe goes
through *aiōns* – great temporal circles – the beginning
and final phases of which are synonymous with overall
destruction. Plato describes the intermediate period in
social terms as the transition from mountainous primi-
tive communities (utopia) to coastal states, where wealth
and moral corruption are dominant. In the philosopher's
view, this was the indication of the end of the given *aiōn*.
It must be added that Christian doctrine adopted this con-
cept, while combining the Zoroastrian, biblical, and Greek
conceptions.

A similar perception of long cosmic duration is apparent
in the oldest layers of *Sasna Tsṙer* – the Armenian Epos.
It is also based on the intersection of different intellectual
traditions and depicts the cosmic long duration through the
algorithm "*from chaos to chaos*." As for the social aspect,
it is comprised of the opposition of the highland utopian
community and the thoroughly corrupted valley cities and
states.

The influence of the oldest layers of the Epos on Kho-
renatsi's *History* is quite apparent. However, the influ-
ence network is much wider, including the Zoroastrian,
Classical/Hellenistic and biblical intellectual traditions.
Indeed, Khorenatsi's narrative represents a global circle
of world events beginning from the biblical Flood to the
overall destruction of his time. Between these ultimate
poles, the history of the Armenians flows through the suc-
cessive phases of the dominance of somatic, affective and
rational elements.

In the perspective of Armenian history, the final domi-
nance of rational elements (the experience of St. Mashtots)
indicates, on the one hand, the decline of the given global
temporal circle and underlines the possibility to engen-

dering paradigms for coping with the destruction, on the other. In the view of Khorenatsi, historiography is one of the effective ways of fulfilling this important task. Most probably, he keeps eyes on this stimulus when composing his *History*.

The fourth chapter of this section is dedicated to the image of the Armenian kings of the Hellenistic age – Artashēs I (at least partly identifiable with Artashēs the Middle in Khorenatsi), Vagharshak Arsacid – as a link between heaven and earth. According to royal ideology, they were the earthly personifications of the cosmic Logos while applying its creative potencies within the borders of their kingdom. Hence, they were considered *revealed gods*, whose main function was to save the country from destruction and chaos. A special emphasis is made on the sacred initiation rituals of future kings. Khorenatsi's narrative gives evidence that they went through three phases that could be identified with the three main social classes – commoners, warriors and rulers – and their divine patrons (Anahit, Vahagn and Aramazd). All this depicted the king's spiritual journey from the earth to heaven. His authority could be assessed as legitimate only at the end of this trial.

Section 3. Aspects of Social Partnership consists of two chapters. *The fifth* discusses the problem of social partnership of the ancient Armenians beginning from its primary element – household/family. The interdisciplinary approach examines the aim of bringing together traditional Armenian, Zoroastrian, Classical/Hellenistic and biblical viewpoints. They are traceable in the data of religious beliefs, philosophical concepts and legal norms. The departing point of the discussion is the assumption of the two genders of human beings having different legal statuses. They are united in households/families for the sake of the biological, social and moral continuity of society. In this regard, Aristotle's social theory is taken as the guideline. One of its fundamental ideas is regarding the isomor-

phism of the human being (body, soul, mind) and the family (father, mother, children and servants).

The ancient and Early Medieval Armenian household/ family had some curious peculiarities. It was simultaneously monogamous and polygamous, nuclear and patriarchal (clan), habitual and conditional. Its goal was to secure the stability of society in terms of property, as well as its legal and social aspects. With the conversion to Christianity, the Church (through its councils and ordinances) put forth effort to unify and standardize family relations under God's will and guidance. In time, the nuclear family gained prominence.

The household/family was interpreted as being in an isomorphic relationship with society and state. The first approach is compared to the tripartite structure of the family with the tripartite society. For centuries, Armenian society had undergone metamorphoses, the most significant poles of which were: ethnie, political nation, and God's covenant. The ethnie was based on (real or imagined) consanguinity of its members, the – nation on positive law and political partnership, the covenant – on religious belief and charismatic integrity. They function not only diachronically but also in synchronic time. The last statement suggests that the society of the Armenians represented a shifting balance of these three forms of social integrity. As for the second approach, it indicates the isomorphism of the family with the state. In this case, we also proceed from Aristotle who traced the embryonic forms of political power in family – monarchy (father), republic– deliberative (mother) and despotic (children and servants). Khorenatsi sees the balance of these forms in the eminent Armenian rulers and their elites. The renowned formula defining Armenia as a *Household* (տուն Հայոց) seems to be the best manifestation of that.

The sixth chapter discusses the problem of social partnership on the level of the Panarmenian Popular Assembly, an institution that reached back to the formative époque of

Armenia. Representatives of all social classes met on the slopes of the holy Mt. Npat at the beginning of every year, in the month Navasard. They believed they would gain a new beginning to their communal relations focused on the person of the king. Two poles are traceable in the function of the Assembly. While one referred to the equality and unity of primordial times, the other returned to the real times of social division and hierarchy. The Assembly also met during emergencies to make decisions on important issues of the state. In time, it was replaced by the council of nobility but in difficult days the kings again appealed to the people and gathered the Assembly. This is apparent in the reign of Trdat the Great, Arshak II and (especially), Pap. The perception of Armenia as the common Home of the Armenians was alive for many centuries.

Section 4. Ways of Self–Conception and Identity is comprised of three chapters. *The seventh chapter* again looks at the fundamental aspects of the social theory of Khorenatsi. However, the angle of interpretation is different while being linked to the problem of the identity of the Armenians that was formulated by intellectual circles as a program of self–organization in the perspective of historical time – the past, present and (observable) future. Khorenatsi departs from Classical/Hellenistic theory while singling out three poles within moral values – good, evil and neutrality. Neutrality was interpreted in light of the twofold axiology and movement: either in upward development to completion, or downward regression to corruption.

In his interpretation of the Old Testament, Philo of Alexandria traces the same values in the three sons of Noah – Shem (good), Ham (evil), and Japheth (neutrality). In Medieval Armenia, a stable tradition existed that considered the ethnarch Hayk a descendant of Japheth. Namely, it indicated that neutrality was the basic character of the Armenians. Particularly, it meant that the success and prosperity of this land would be achieved only

through relevant social projects and actors being able to fulfill them.

Proceeding from this understanding, two eminent historical heroes are singled out in this chapter – the ethnarch Hayk and the initiator of the conversion to Christianity, Gregory the Illuminator. They personified the two crucial époques of Armenian history – the *birth and rebirth*. Despite obvious differences, they show common traits as well. Specifically, they begin their activity with the predominance of the somatic element and move to more fundamental values. For Hayk (and his clan), martial somatism is the way to gain freedom, independence and self–determination. For Gregory, on the contrary, somatism is an impediment on the way to God. Through his noble feelings and mind, he reaches the divine realm and becomes *God's image*.

In the view of Khorenatsi, this is also the way of the Armenian people. As has been elaborated upon above, his *History* depicts the historical course of the Armenians in three main époques each corresponding to one of the elements of a human being – the body, affections and reason. The predominance of the first element is able to stir up destructive tendencies. To escape it, wise leaders are necessary. In the Old Testament, Moses fulfilled this mission while leading his nation out of chaotic Egypt to the Promised Land. It seems probable that Khorenatsi utilized the persona of this patriarch while composing his *History of the Armenians*. He saw his mission in finding a way to escape the general destruction of his time.

The eighth chapter discusses the problem of Armenian identity while proceeding from the phenomenon of the capital of Greater Armenia. It is considered to be an ideal paradigm for the country's new identity that needed to be created in accordance with advanced technology – architectural, social and intellectual. Two royal residences are compared, Artashat and Arshakavan. The first was built by Artashēs I (189–160 BC.), the second by Arshak II (350–

368). Respectively, one represented the Hellenistic and the second the retro–Hellenistic (or Christian Hellenistic) époque.

King Artashēs was quite successful. Artashat was founded by the method of *synoikismos*: the residents from various places received liberty and high autonomy under the supreme authority of the king. By his efforts, some essential features of Artashat commonality (royal supreme authority and stable laws, liberty and autonomy of commoners) were expanded over all Greater Armenia. It comprised the basis of the Hellenistic Armenian social identity. As for King Arshak, he met the resistance of the opposition nobility (nakharars) backed by the Church. Sasanian Persia and Rome took advantage of this situation as well. As a result, the second project failed. Soon, Greater Armenia was divided between the two superstates (387), later it finally fell (428). However, the intellectual elite took over the task of shaping of the new national identity. As expected, it was mostly a cultural and contemplative–religious paradigm. Now, the Armenians considered themselves *God's covenant* and their true capital was the heavenly Jerusalem.

The ninth chapter examines the so–called *Introduction* of Khorenatsi's *History*. Three aspects of that are scrutinized concerning his understandings of historical actors, historical texts and the self–conception of the Armenians.

Khorenatsi contrasts two kinds of historical actors – the righteous and corrupted. These characters are determined by their nature and free choice. For the righteous actors, *deeds of valor and wisdom* are typical. They are anxious to leave a good memory of themselves. In this endeavor, some of them collaborate with intellectuals – King Vagharshak – Mar Abas Catina, Trdat the Great – Agathangelos, Vŕamshapuh – St. Mashtots, Sahak Bagratuni – Moses Khorenatsi. Historical texts are recognized as effective means for the reformation of the historical present and outlining the essential features of the future. In this regard, one of

most impressive self–conceptions of the Armenians comes to the fore, which is marked by a balance of pessimistic and optimistic scenarios of Armenian history: "For although we are a land of poor cultivation […] many deeds of bravery have been performed in our land worthy of being recorded in writing". It states that social declines and destructions can be overcome by the creative efforts of outstanding rulers and intellectuals. The apogee of this activity is the ideal to turn Greater Armenia into an *entirely cultivated land*.

In this conclusion, Khorenatsi sees the solution to the problem of overall chaos described in his *Lament*. Moreover, his *History of the Armenians* is an intellectual endeavor for working out paradigms for this purpose. Namely, despite the somber ending, Khorenatsi's work has an optimistic vision of the past, present and (observable) future. Rephrasing the Stoic formula, we can outline the general background of the *History* as its author's *desire*, *action and judgement* for the sake of truth, justice and order.[194]

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[194] Cf. **Hadot**, 2009, 62.

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ANRW, 1976, – H. Temporini (ed.), Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, II, 9. 1, (Berlin, New York, de Gruyter).

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BH – Banber hayagitut'yan NAS RA.

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OHPI, 2006, – R. A. W. Rhodes, S. A. Binder (eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions (Oxford, UP) 111–130.

OSAP, 2009, – B. Inwood (ed.) Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy, v. 37 (Oxford, UP).

PAPP, 2008, – F. Alesse (ed.), Philo of Alexandria and Post–Aristotelian Philosophy (Leiden, Boston, Brill).

PBH – Patma–banasirakan handes NAS RA.

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          Greek City after Classical Age (Leuven, Paris, Walpole (Ma),
          Peeters).

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          dyan (in Armenian) (Yerevan, HH GAA hrat.).

REA – Revue des Études Arméniennes.

RHAC – Revue d'histoire arménienne contemporaine.

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Index

Personal names*

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* In this list, we do not mention Moses Khorenatsi otherwise we would have to indicate nearly every page of the monograph.

* Of modern scholars, we mention only those who have been quoted in the monograph.

Toponyms

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KHORENICA

Studies in Moses Khorenatsi

by

Albert A. Stepanyan

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Պատմության լուսավոր իմաստնությունը

ԽՈՐԵՆԻԿԱ

Ուսումնասիրությունք ի վերայ Մովսիսի Խորենացւոյ

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