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HOUSEHOLD/FAMILY IN SOCIAL THEORY OF MOSES KHORENATSI

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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 (οἶκος) to fruition and finding in it the first (and the basic) form of social partnership (κοινωνία) [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, Faustos 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

However, the intellectual situation in Early Medieval Armenia was more complicated. Besides Antique influence, traditional Armenian, Zoroastrian and Biblical intellectual paradigms were also important.³ To restore the adequate situation, it is

1 Aristotle states that civilization “[...] has advanced sequentially through three associations (κοινωνία) – 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 Armenian historiography is still awaiting its researcher.

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

necessary to consider this data as well. We will begin the discussion with the problem of the *human being* as a social animal.⁴

1. The Human Being

a. *The axiological aspect*

According to Aristotle, every form of natural being exists in threefold axiology based on the three essential poles of quality – deficiency (ή ὑπερβολή), excess (ή αὕξησις) and mean (τὸ 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 (ή ἐντελέχεια).⁵ The latter was thought 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 extreme poles with human passion (ή παθή) and linked the pole of mean with virtue (ή ἀρετή) [Aristot., Nic. Eth., II, 1106b, 25].⁶

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 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; 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, pleasure, joy, will, caution, hope, etc. Self-

4 Here, we are referring to the Aristotelian concept of *political animal* (ζῷων πολιτικόν) [Aristot., I, 1253a, 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. Aristotle 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 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 – 122.

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 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, 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 Platonism intent on combining Platonic and Stoic approaches. See in detail **Reydams-Schildts**, 2008, 175 – 182.

control and endurance 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 antique 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 been 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 especially 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 antiheroes. 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.

11 “[...] unmeasured impulses of man’s passions were calmed and allayed by self-mastery (σωφροσύνη)” [Philo, Op. mundi, 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 **Hittinger**, 2013, 4 – 15.

14 **Stepanyan**, 1991, 117 – 119.

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.

According to Platonic theory, social actions are expressions of mens’ 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 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 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

17 Stepanyan, 1991, 165 – 171.

18 In the days of Artavazd II (55 – 34 B.C.), 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.

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.

his spirit” [Khor., III, 8,3].²⁰ Khorenatsi articulates this condition as moderate affection (չափաւոր մոլութիւն).²¹ Among the Armenian historical actors, this is obvious in the portraits of Aram, Ara the Handsome, Tigran Eruvandean, 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, Eraknavu Andzevatsi, Otta Amatuni, Vasak Mamikonean - meet these criteria as well. Khorenatsi’s description of Smbat is the 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 Hripsime 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 case is the Roman triumvir, Marcus Antonius, who “[...] roared like a wild lion, especially envenomed by Cleopatra [...]. And not only for the Armenians (was 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 (ցանկալկանի մոլեգնութիւն).²⁵ 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 վարձալաց). He seemed more brave and noble than Achilles, but in truth was like the lame and pointed-head Thersites. His own nobles rebelled against him until he

20 «[...] որ միայն երից կանգնոց ունէր զչափ հասակի, եւ ոչ զհոգւոյն 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**, 1987, 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.

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.

25 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.

received the reward of his pride” [Khor., III, 19, 10].²⁶ 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, Paındzem, the consort of Arshak II. He states, “This Paındzem 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 antique 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].²⁷

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 statutes of civil life for this country” [Khor., II, 9, 3]. The main result of his activity was the good arrangement of Greater Armenia (բարեկարգութիւն).²⁸ 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].²⁹ 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

26 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 (յերգս արբեցութեան եւ ի կարգաս կտրութեան)” [Egh., III, 87].

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

28 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 (coercion), 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.

29 We believe 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.

authors of Armenian revival after periods of decline and disintegration. Their rational projects played a decisive role in that purpose.³⁰

With the conversion to Christianity (301 A.D.), clergymen took prominence in Armenian spirituality and culture. 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 scattered to the wilderness and precipices” [Khor., III, 68, 4].³¹ Blessed Mesrop Mashtots: “At that time Mesrop arrived, bringing the script for our language, and at the command of Vřamshapuh 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].³²

In this connection, the following fact must be highlighted. All these ideal clergymen lived and fulfilled their mission in the 4th century and in 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 A.D.) in the retreat of the kings from divine justice.³³

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

30 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.

31 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 Catholicos Sahak Partev in his renowned *Canons*. See **Thomson**, 1962, 379; **Garsoïan**, 1989, 566.

32 On the whole, the Armenian historical tradition has played down the role of King Vřamshapuh 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.

33 On these events, see in detail **Traina**, 2004, 353 – 366.

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 catholicos, 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].³⁴

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 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.³⁵

a. Philosophical aspect of family

According to Aristotle, the household/family 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].³⁶ 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].³⁷

Philo of Alexandria applied this approach in his numerous works to explain biblical subjects.³⁸ A principal similarity existed between Greek and biblical families -

34 On the position of the Catholicos during these crucial events, see **Ormanean**, 2001, 346 – 347. Cf. **Garsoïan**, 1997, 93; **Redgate**, 1998, 146 – 147.

35 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.

36 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.

37 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.

38 This approach is obvious in different aspects of Philo’s works starting from the cosmic creation to family and morality. Cf. **Bos**, 1998, 69 – 73.

both of them were monogamic.³⁹ For the philosopher, the patriarch 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].⁴⁰

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 generations. Early Christian thought developed this understanding of 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].⁴¹ The father of the household was considered 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].⁴²

However, in extreme cases, in the sight of God, the differences between family members may even be erased. A like situation is described by Egheshē. It happened in the days of the Great Rebellion of the Armenians against Sasanian dominance led by Vardan Mamikonian: “Thenceforth the lord seemed no greater than the servant or the pampered noble than the rough 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].⁴³

Throughout of Armenian history, Khorenatsi views various forms of family integration (տոնն, Էրդ, ծուխ) based on polygamy or monogamy.⁴⁴ Appian's record about the family of Tigran II seems rather critical. In 69 B.C., when the capital of Greater Armenia Tigranakert was sieged by L. Lucullus, the king “[...] sent about six thousand (of his solders), 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 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

39 Philo traces an essential feature in this, due to which the two societies are comparable in structure and ideology. Cf. **Sterling**, 2014, 133 – 147.

40 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.

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

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

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

44 See in detail **Hovhannisyán**, 1973, 195 – 208. On the problem of the patriarchal Armenian family, see **Karapetyan**, 1958, 25 – 60.

dominated.⁴⁵ It is notable that eunuchs occupied an eminent position among the high officials of the royal court.⁴⁶

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 - family integration - excess, 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 epoques* 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 one hand, as a courageous and strong person, and as an insidious and hypocritical 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].⁴⁷ The same was true about the family of Artavazd the Last. But the family of Arshak II occupied 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

45 The *Canons* of Nersēs the Great allow us to conclude that polygamy was prevalent even among the clergymen: “Although clerics (գրականացք) and officials (պաշտանեայք), the bigamists must be detained by soldiers for perfidy [...]” [Kanonagirk', 1964, 480].

46 The following fact is rather notable. As highlighted above, although they had converted to Christianity, the Armenian kings still had honored and 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 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 **Adonts**, 1908, 319 – 320; **Manandyan**, 1934, 64 – 68.

47 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 (ἀνὴρ βασιλικός) but not in private. **Goodenough**, 1928, 68; **De Callatay, Lorber**, 2011, 424 - 425.

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].⁴⁸ 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].⁴⁹

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 patriarch (consanguinity), *b.* cognates – the wives and domestic servants, and outsiders – the servants who joined later (heterosanguinity).⁵⁰ All of them were under the authority of the patriarch and had to obey and fulfill his commands.⁵¹ 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.⁵²

*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 scattered men before the arrival of our original ancestor Hayk [Khor., I, 12, 14]”.*⁵³

48 «[...] եւ նախանձ որդւոցն Արտաշէսի եւ զրգռութիւն ընդ միմեանս ի ձեռն կանանց»:

49 «գերփուրմն տանց եւ հափշտակութիւն ստացուածոց», «աշակերտք հեղձք առ ուսումն եւ փոյթ առ ի վարդապետել», «իշխանք [...] ծառայիցն համամիտք»:

50 On these two categories of servants/slaves, see **Eremyan**, 1951, 21.

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

52 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, 46 – 70.

53 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 nihilo*. On this ideological metamorphosis, see in detail **Bauman**, 2009, 88 – 104.

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 embarked on 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].⁵⁴

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 B.C., 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 one hand, the traditional (habitual) right, and Iranian (Zoroastrian) legal norms on the other. After the conversion to Christianity, biblical legal norms gradually replaced them.⁵⁵ 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.⁵⁶

The patriarchal family was based on land ownership. Clan property was under the control of the *paterfamilias* (սսսնսսէր). Essentially, it belonged to the past, present and future generations.⁵⁷ The present generation was thought of as a collective land holder obliged to save and transfer it to descendants.⁵⁸ 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 (սսսսս), Ayarat, with his family and

54 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.

55 On this process, see Ghltchean, 1913, 7 – 9; Samuelyan, 1939, 44 – 48.

56 Ghltchean, 1904, 6 – 11.

57 Cf. Karapetyan, 1958, 89 – 90.

58 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, 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. Adonts, 1908, 453 – 479; Manandyan, 1934, 256 - 266; Toumanoff, 1963, 108 – 129; Garsoïan, 1989, 49 – 50; Garsoïan, 1997, 75 – 77.

the crown-prince. The other members of the clan were allotted land portions in the provinces Hashtean, Aļiovit and Arberan.⁵⁹

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 Aļiovit and Arberan, leaving for them the 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 Hashtean, 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 us that the distribution of allotments was brought about per capita (ըստ մարդաթվի) 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 (ռամիկք).⁶⁰ It must be added that besides participation in collective property, members of the nobility could have their private estates (դաստակերսք, ա-գարակք) obtained for state service or bought.⁶¹

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 Hashtean on the grounds that he had a quarrel with his uncle Nerseh” [Khor., III, 31, 5].⁶²

This is in full accordance with the Iranian law practice compiled in the corpus entitled Matakdan i-Hazar Datastan (The Book of a Thousand Judges).⁶³ 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 son (bahr ī pus) and wife (bahr ī

59 On the royal domain of the Armenian Artaxiads and Arsacids and the legal settlement of relations of royal family members, see **Manadyan**, 1934, 191 – 195.

60 On the social status of village communities and their members - *ramiks and shinakans* - see **Manadyan**, 1934, 148 – 171; **Eremyan**, 1948, 38 – 40.

61 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 Iran, see **Perikhanian**, 1997 (Glossary), 349 – 351.

62 In other words, it was a matrilineal marriage. This fact is confirmed by unwritten (mores maiorum) and written legal norms of Medieval Armenia. See **Ghltchean**, 1904, 7 – 9; **Barkhudaryan**, 1966, 26 – 28. In his renowned *Datastanagir' (Corpus Legum)*, Mkhitar Gosh traces the Armenian woman's status from the Mosaic Laws [Gosh, *Datastanagir'*, II, 62 – 63]. In his time, the memory of the Iranian legal heritage was entirely erased.

63 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.

zan) [Matakdan, 44, 12; 51, 15; 52, 10 etc]. The only difference was that the son-heir received a double share (*bahr ī dō(v)īh*).⁶⁴

Probably, Eghishē had this exact right of inheritance in mind, highlighting that, after the Great Revolt against Sasanian domination (450 - 451 A.D.), Armenian noblewomen began to restore devastated family estates, replacing their deceased husbands and sons [Eghishē, 93-108]. In other word, they became the actual heads of their clans, obliged to preserve and pass on the collective property to the next generation.⁶⁵

These legal regulations primarily concerned *the well-arranged families* (cum menu mariti). In the *Matakdan*, it is defined as *pāticšāyīh* – 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 husband or his father. She became a legitimate member of the new agnatic group (*zan ī pāticšāyīhā*) and her potential sons and daughters would be recognized as rightful members of the latter – legitimate son (*pus ī pāticšāyīhā*) and daughter (*duxt ī pāticšāyīhā*) [Matakdan, 36, 2; 36, 16 – 17; 44, 4; 49, 3; 70, 6 etc].⁶⁶ It is comparable with the Roman marriage known as *confarreatio* with absolute *patria potestas* over a woman in the agnatic group of her husband.⁶⁷ 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 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. He kidnapped the princess of the Alans, Satenik, and paid a high bride price. He entered into a *pāticšāyīh* marriage with her. On these grounds: “She was the first of Artashēs' wives and bore him Artavazd and many others [...]” [Khor., II, 50, 18].⁶⁸ Let us highlight once again that only the children born in this marriage were the prime heirs of the paternal property.

64 See in detail *apamānd* in **Perikhanyan**, 1997 (Glossary), 337.

65 According to European travelers, this traditional right was valid even in the beginning of the 19th century. **Barkhudaryan**, 1966, 25.

66 *Pāticšāyīh/Pāticšāyīhā* – in general “full-right relations”. In the family, it denoted the limits of rights and responsibilities of the lawful members. **Perikhanyan**, 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 could a person of full legal capacity be born (twānīk). Cf. **Shaki**, 1971, 323 – 324; **Perikhanyan**, 1983, 639 - 644.

67 *Patria potestas*, **Nickolas**, 1992, 789.

68 Therefore, the suggestion that upper-class families were monogamic in Armenia cannot be accepted. Cf. **Barkhudaryan**, 1966, 29.

Besides the full-right marriage, another form of family was in practice as well. In that case, a woman being not enrolled in the agnatic group of her husband would not be under his (or his father's) 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* or *xvasrūyonīh* [Matakdan, 21, 9; 41, 10].⁶⁹

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].⁷⁰ 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 (սւլսւն) 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 arms and finery, so they loved him all the more” [Khor., III, 22, 5]. Arshak demanded that he leave for the provinces Hashteank, Aļiovit or Arberan, and Gnel obeyed him. But soon it became 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].⁷¹

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* marriage were considered lawful: *a.* natural (or levirate), when the widow or daughter married an agnate, *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

69 Perikhanian, 1997 (Glossary), 344.

70 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.

71 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 *duxdat son*. Cf. Shaki, 1975, 48 – 53; Perikhanian, 1997 (Glossary), 343.

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 belonged to Artavazd” [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.⁷²

This approach provides a key to a new interpretation 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 ostan. 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 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].⁷³

Faustos 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 Pařandzem, 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 refuses him. Moreover, he murders the crown-prince and marries the widow: “Pařandzem 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 undeniable. Since the prince had passed away childless, the king, as the head of the Arsacid clan,

72 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.

73 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 Faustos 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 practices of the Armenians.

was obliged to marry the widow of his nephew, to protect his property and pass it on to a legal son.⁷⁴ Pařanzem bore a boy, Pap, but Arshak was only his *stūr 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.*⁷⁵

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.⁷⁶

*Regarding the reign of Tigran IV (20 – 6 B.C.), 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].*⁷⁷

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.

According to our authors, the problem was settled by (now declared treacherous and merciless) Pařanzem 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 Pařanzem a chance to reshape her marriage with the king and be declared as a full-right royal consort. We can also suppose that she was “inscribed as an Arsacid”

74 In the *Mātakdān ī Hazār Dāstān*, 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. **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].

75 Cf. **Perikhanian**, 1983, 649- 650; **Perikhanian**, 1997 (Glossary), 347; **Shakī**, 1999, 187 – 189.

76 It was considered the most desirable form of patrilineal (or agnatic) matrimony. Cf. **Shakī**, 1999, 186; **Macuch**, 2017, 330.

77 “Daughters shall be [wives] for fathers and sisters for brothers. Mothers shall not withdraw from sons, and grandchildren shall ascend the couch of grandfathers”. Cf. **Christensen**, 1944, 323 – 324. Eghishē’s passage reflects the Christian axiology. Meanwhile, this form of marriage was characteristic of many Hellenistic ruling houses. It was designed to denote their particular social and religious status. See **Ager**, 2005, 1 – 34.

and crowned. Respectively, she took over all responsibilities arising from this status as part of the royal house as Greater Armenia. On these grounds, it was quite natural, Pap was legitimized and declared the crown-prince of Greater Armenia.⁷⁸ 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 Pařandzem, she abandoned the status of widow-stūr and, “divorcing” the late prince Gnel, was recognized as the rightful royal consort (zan ī pāticšāyihā).

These facts and considerations shed new light on the last days of Queen Pařandzem: it was during the four-year war (364 - 368), King Arshak was treacherously arrested by Shapuh II. The Persians captured, plundered and devastated the country in collaboration with Armenian rebels. The apostates, Meruzhan Artsruni and Vahan Mamikonian, were merciless [for details, 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 Pařandzem 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].

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 - after the Great Revolt, noblewomen began to restore their family estates to secure the transfer of them to the next generation.⁷⁹

To complete this aspect of our discussion, the following needs to be taken into consideration - in pre-Ashtishat families, concubines (հարճք) existed as well.⁸⁰ Young, beautiful and attractive, they belonged to eminent nobles marking their high social prestige. They were equated with 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.⁸¹

78 Iranian law provided a special procedure for this transition [Mat., 28, 7; 42, 14; 71, 6]. Cf. **Perikhanian**, 1983, 654 – 655; **Perikhanian**, 1997 (Glossary), 353.

79 “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., The Names of the Princes, 93, 97]. Cf. **Stepanyan**, 2018, 196 – 197.

80 This Armenian term most probably has an Iranian origin – *harčī*, though it is not attested. **Acharyan**, 1977, 60 – 61; cf. **Shahbazi**, 2003, 672.

81 The institute of concubines, besides the aforementioned aspects, played an important role in regulating of the situation in 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.

Antique authors inform us about the concubines of Tigran II. In Khorenatsi's text, two of them are eminent – 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].⁸² 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 of Household and Society

Some aspects of this isomorphism have already been the focus of our discussion. Now, the problem is to summarize and systematize them. For this purpose, the following needs to be highlighted - family and society integration, according to Khorenatsi, were composed in accordance with three basic principles: common blood, reason and belief (արեամբ, բանի, դէնի).⁸³ They corresponded to the three forms of Armenian identity: ethnical, political nation and religious covenant.⁸⁴

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 of blood relatives (agnates).⁸⁵

According to the official ideology, they gradually spread to the far borders of the land, therefore it is named House of the Armenians (*Snit' 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 Maecenas, 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].⁸⁶

⁸² Khorenatsi's story of Prince Trdat Bagratuni and the concubine Nazinik is the best illustration of that [Khor., II, 63, 6 - 12].

⁸³ This is the basic ideology of so-called patriarchal societies in different parts of world from China to Western Europe. Cf. **Weber**, 1968, 1071 – 1076; **Hamilton**, 1984, 393 – 425; **Hamilton**, 1990, 79 – 102.

⁸⁴ Cf. **Stepanyan**, 1991, 146 – 156.

⁸⁵ From the point of view modern theory, *terra nullius* 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.

⁸⁶ 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.

This period is known as the time of the hereditary domination of the Haykids, which had outstanding rulers – Aram, Ara the Handsome, Tigran the Elder. 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 father's full power over his subjects (δεσπότης).⁸⁷ It is governed by ancestral customs (*moria maiorum*) since society has no idea about written laws. Respectively, the rule of the leader is formulated as the care (խնամք) of his people.⁸⁸ This is apparent in the assessment of the reign of Tigran the Elder: “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].⁸⁹

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].⁹⁰

It must be added that 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, տանտուէրք) – Bznunis, Ordunis, Khorkhorunis, Manavazeans, Siunis, etc.⁹¹ The outstanding 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.

This well-balanced setting of social life, according to Khorenatsi, has an antiform in barbarity deprived of stable institutions, legal and moral rules (ազգք խուժդուժ, վայրենի). 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 com-

87 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*, e. *common beliefs*. Cf. **Armstrong**, 1982, 3 – 13; **Smith**, 1986, 22 – 31.

88 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.

89 Most probably, this is a passage from the “Apology of Tigran” compiled according to the canons of Hellenistic rhetoric. **Abeghyan**, 1968, 301 – 305.

90 Plato proceeded from the idea of good life under paternal rule (τῶ πατρίῳ νομῶ): “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.

91 Their rule was based on the ancestral customs (քարք եւ սովորութիւնք) which regulated all areas of social life of the Armenians. **Adontz**, 1908, 467.

mands and taxes, so that when he next saw them he might appoint leaders and princes with proper institutions” [Khor., II, 6, 5].⁹²

The second principle indicates the level where the identity of family and society is already lost, but a reasonable balance between them can possibly be established (on new grounds). Instead of ancestral customs, laws (արիւնք) were introduced as the regulators of social relations.⁹³ With laws, according to Khorenatsi, societies are capable to reach the harmony of their basic elements. From this point of view, the periods of the reign of the following eminent kings are 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 statutes of *civil life* for this country” [Khor., II, 3,2]. In a more detailed manner: “He appointed judges at court and jugdes in the cities and towns. He ordered that the townspeople be more highly esteemed and honored than the peasants and that the peasants should respect the townspeople like the princes. But the townspeople were not to vaunt themselves too much over the peasants but to live on brotherly terms for the sake of harmony and life without rancor – which are the causes of prosperity and peace and similar [blessings]” [Khor., II, 8, 40 - 41].

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*).⁹⁴ 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 (*հաւանդական կամ բռնաւորական բանիւ*) [Khor., II, 92, 3 9].⁹⁵ 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 (*արիւն քաղաքացիական*), and whatever is of relevance to the kingdom [...]” [Khor., II, 8, 2 - 3].⁹⁶

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 the next level of social integrity focused on the image of the Omnipotent God.

92 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. **Stepanyan**, 1991, 145.

93 In classical political theory, this is formulated as the transition from unwritten laws to written. **Humphreys**, 1988, 478 – 481.

94 Khorenatsi connects the transition from barbarity to political community with the activity of wise men and governors (*իմաստունք եւ վերականգնիչ*) who are well acquainted with the art of statesmanship [Khor., II, 6, 6]. See in detail **Stepanyan**, 1991, 171 – 181.

95 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.

96 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].

To a large extent, the harmony of social life depended on the balance between the persuasive and compulsory principles. An imbalance was fraught with either tyranny or ochlocracy. Forceful methods, according to Khorenatsi, dominated in the tyrannical regimes of the kings Eruand the Last, Artavazd the Last, Arshak II and Pap. The portrait of Pap Arsacid seems most typical. The author keeps silence about his efforts at the reinforcement of the sovereignty of Greater Armenia and focuses attention on his conflict with Archbishop Nersēs and the Roman Emperor. According to him, Fortune retaliated against the king - he was captured 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].⁹⁷

*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 aristocratic point of view. The opposition aristocracy was against the absolutization of royal authority for the entirety of Armenian history.*⁹⁸

The author demonstrates the ochlocratic anarchy with the example of the antihero of the Persian fables, Buraspi 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.⁹⁹ 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).¹⁰⁰ More precisely, the Armenians (alongside with some other

97 This curious fragment is in contradiction with the accounts of Ammianus Marcellinus and Faustos Buzand, relating that King Pap was treacherously murdered in a banquet arranged by the Roman general [Amm., XXX, 21; Buz., V, 32, 10 - 17].

98 “Crossing Mesopotamia, he (M. Antonius) slaughtered the innumerable 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].

99 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.

100 **Zikiyan**, 2005, 49 – 51.

nations) began to consider themselves as a people of covenant.¹⁰¹ On these grounds, Khorenatsi attributes a *feature of civilization* to the Armenian Christian community, an approach, that is in opposition to antique ideas. 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. The fact is that Khorenatsi, in line with the perceptions of the new religion, ranked the achievements of Christian theology much higher.

*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.*¹⁰²

For him, the term civilization is a marker of the high moral values of the given society. In this connection, as it has been highlighted above, 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].¹⁰³ In other words, instead of laws, the *canonical regulations* (*կանոնական սահմանադրությունը*) of the Church took predominance as guarantees of social peace and order in Armenia.¹⁰⁴

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 continuation under God's direct guidance.¹⁰⁵ In this vein, we can even speak about the equality of family members before the Lord. Of course, this was an idealistic perception still far from the everyday life of the Armenians.¹⁰⁶

101 On different aspects of this process and similar shifts in various social and religious communities, see in detail **Smith**, 2003, 66 – 73; **Zikiyan**, 2005, 57 – 59.

102 On this theme, see in detail **Shirinian**, 1998, 21 – 38.

103 «Եւ էր այնուհետեւ տեսանել զաշխարհս մեր ոչ որպէս զբարբարոսս այլանդակեալս, այլ իբրեւ զբարաքացիս համեստացեալս». Obviously, Khorenatsi proceeds from the ancient concept of 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. **Malkin**, 2014, 375 – 379; **Wirth**, 2017, 472 – 487.

104 The perception of civilization as a cultural and moral phenomenon has old roots. Particularly, it made up the foundation of the important dichotomy of the Greek mentality - *culture and barbarity*. See **Gillet**, 2004, 1 – 7; **Heit**, 2005, 725 – 739; **Bonfante**, 2011, 1 – 25.

105 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.

106 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.

In this regard, it must be emphasized that, despite the conversion to Christianity, the Armenians continued to follow their traditional family rules, customs and values. Khorenatsi traces one of 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 mitigate 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.¹⁰⁷ 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].¹⁰⁸ 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 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.¹⁰⁹ 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 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 Vramshapuh. He ruled the land in accordance with, on one hand, Christian piety, and on the other hand, the preceptions of the Sasanian court. In an essential sense, he built his policy on the Christian idea of *Dual Allegiance* – to earthly Caesar and the heavenly Lord.¹¹⁰

107 Cf. **Redgate**, 1998, 122 – 126. Scholars point out another reason for the “church–crown” opposition. Like the Byzantine emperors of that time, they were adherents of Arianism. **Garsoïan**, 1997, 85.

108 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.

109 For this, the revision of the role of Gregory the Illuminator 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, 26; **Stepanyan**, 2018, 43 – 46.

110 Thomson traces this understanding in the Great Revolt against Sasanian Iran under Sparapet Vardan Mamikonian in 450 – 451. He sees exactly this Christian perception of the Armenians in the settlement of the conflict. See, **Thomson**, 1982, 25; cf. **Zekiyani**, 2005, 51; **Stepanyan**, 2018, 61 - 65.

In other words, God's covenant implied a plan of social and moral innovation. It was designed to set up an ideal model of family under the authority of an ideal paterfamilias - 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 Church. This situation obtained more apparent features especially after the invention of the national script and the emergence of the literal Christian culture.¹¹¹ In other words, 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 lament over the death of the teachers: "Who will silence the insolence of those who rise up in opposition to the 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 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.¹¹²

In this vein, it seems important to remember 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.¹¹³ At the same time, it must be highlighted that they carried out their mission in a society where traditional blood relations still prevailed.

111 Thomson interpreted the Armenian concept *սուրբ ուխտ* as the Hebrew *berit qōdesh* – *holy covenant* (δίαθήκη ἁγία) Thomson, 1982, 11; Zekiyan, 2005, 57 – 59; cf. PGL, 1961, 348.

112 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 from 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 (*awhawunuly* - *martyr*) – "a defender of true faith against heretics", "a Christian struggling in this life". Cf. PGL, 1961, 26; cf. Redgate, 1998, 130 – 131.

113 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 martyrs. The parallel with the Maccabees is quite obvious. See Thomson, 1975, 34 – 36.

4. 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, whose numerous works were well-known in the 5th century Armenia, played the role of a intermediator in this case as well.

According to Aristotle, a household is comprised of the key elements of government – 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.¹¹⁴

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.¹¹⁵

The first paradigm depicted the transition from patriarchal leadership to patriarchal monarchy (δυναστεία) which happened in Armenia under Paroyr, son Skayordi [Khor., I, 21, 4].¹¹⁶ One of the definitions of this form of monarchs is very precise. Khorenatsi names them *պսակաւորք* – 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

114 This aspect demonstrates the close relationship between Philo’s philosophy and Greek-Hellenistic intellectual traditions. See Alesse, 2008, 1 – 6; Sterling, 2014², 153 – 154.

115 On this aspect of Khorenatsi’s social theory, see Stepanyan, 1993, 22 – 23.

116 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 (αἰσμηῆτοι). They rule without distinct constitutions [Arist., Pol., V, 1315b, 40 - 41]. Cf. Riesbeck, 2016, 121.

that he attempted to implement a *mixed state system* (πολιτεία μικτή).¹¹⁷ 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* (ուղղութամբ) and they would serve *sincerely* (միամտութամբ)” [Khor., III, 29, 11].

Over the centuries, the *concord* (միաբանութիւն հայոց) 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* (Չափանամակ) - had been compiled to legitimize the situation.¹¹⁸ 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.¹¹⁹ 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.¹²⁰ Moreover, as it is obvious from the history of the 4th century, it had the ambition to gain supremacy over 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 Sasan-

117 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.

118 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.

119 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; **Thon**, 2015, 54 – 56.

120 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 traditional 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**, 19942, 34.

ian 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, 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.¹²¹ This laid down the foundations of the Byzantine Empire.¹²²

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. The author interprets problems with a multi-dimensional perspective and combines 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 ethnics, 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 *Matakdan 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 the key problem of the present investigation. 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 – *տոնն հայրց*.

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

121 Scholars find that this image of the emperor was formed after the Hellenistic paradigm of royal authority based on the concepts of epiphany (ἐπιφάνια) and soteria (σωτηρία). See in detail **Dvornik**, 1966, 236 – 237; cf. **Goodenough**, 1928, 67 – 73.

122 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**, 20142, 157 – 166.

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.

Ալբերտ Ա. Ստեփանյան - գիտական հետաքրքրությունների շրջանակն ընդգրկում է անտիկ շրջանի և վաղ միջնադարի հայոց պատմության հիմնահարցերը:

Հակիրճանք

ՏՈՒՆ/ԸՆՏԱՆԻՔԸ ՄՈՎՍԵՍ ԽՈՐԵՆԱՑՈՒ ԸՆԿԵՐԱՅԻՆ ՏԵՍՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄԵՋ

Ալբերտ Ա. Ստեփանյան

պ. գ. դ.

Հանգուցաբառեր - տուն/ընտանիք, բազմամուսնություն, մենամուսնություն, լիարժեք և պայմանական ամուսնաձևեր, ընտանիք-հանրային-պետություն համակերպություն, Մովսես Խորենացի, Արիստոտել, Փիլոն Աղեքսանդրացի, **Մատակ-դան ի-հազար դատաստան:**

Հոդվածը խնդիր ունի հետազոտելու ընկերային կառույցի հիմնարար բաղադրիչի՝ տուն/ընտանիքի կերպավորությունները հընթացս հայոց պատմության երկար տևողության: Տևողություն, որը կազմում է Մովսես Խորենացու «Հայոց պատմության» իմաստային հենքը: Այս հոլովույթում ընտանիքը դիտարկվում է հայոց ազգային ինքնության երեք հարացույցների համաձիգում տոհմիկ կառույց, քաղաքական ազգ և ուխտ Աստծոյ: Հայոց սովորության իրավունքի, հելլենիստական իմաստասիրության, զրադաշտական և աստվածաշնչյան իրավական ըմբռնումների լույսի ներքո բացահայտվում է ընտանիքի ներքին կառույցի, ունեցվածքային և բարոյա-

կան հարաբերությունների համալիրը: Բազմամուսնություն և մենամուսնություն, լիարժեք և պայմանական ամուսնություններ՝ ահա այն չափույթները, որոնցով լուսաբանվում է հիմնախնդիրը: Հարոյունս բացահայտվում է ներընտանեկան հարաբերությունների այն բազմազանությունը, որը պարառում է ընկերային համակեցության այս հիմնարար միավորի սովորույթային, ծիսական, բարոյական և իրավական հիմքերը: Դրանց հարմոնիկ համադրությունը միտված է ապահովելու նրա կայունությունն ու շարունակականությունը հընթացս հարափոփոխ ժամանակի:

Առանձնակի սևեռումի առարկա է **ընտանիք-հանրույթ-պետություն** հարաբերությունների ուսումնասիրությունը: Դա հնարավորություն է ընձեռում նորովի լուսաբանելու հայոց պատմության բազում դրվագներ, որոնք ցայժմ դիտարկվել են սոսկ առօրեական-նկարագրական կերպավորմամբ: Ասվածի լույսով ուրվագծվում է պատմության մի կայուն ալգորիթմ, որը ներկայացնում է Տուն Հայոցի կերպափոխությունները՝ սկսյալ տան և հայրենիքի նույնությունից (Հայկ և հայկյաններ) մինչև տան և Աստծո կամքի համադրելիության հեռանկարը (քրիստոնեական ըմբռնում):

Ուրույն դիտանկյուն է ներկայացնում արքայական ընտանիքը: Հիշենք, մինչ 4-րդ դարի արյունահեղ ընդհարումները վերջինս ընկալվում էր իբրև ընտանիքի ընդհանրական հարացույց, որի կարգաբերվածությամբ և բարոյական պատկերով շատ առումներով պայմանավորված էին Մեծ Հայքի անդորրը և բարեկեցությունը: Այս դրույթը հողվածում ներկայացված է ականավոր գահակիրների օրինակով Արտաշես Ա, Տրդատ Մեծ: Դիտարկված է նաև հակավիճակը, երբ արքայական ընտանիքում տիրող քառսը հանգեցնում է Մեծ Հայքի թուլացմանն ու անկմանը: Այդ վիճակը դիտարկված է Արշակ Բ-ի ընտանիքի օրինակով:

Резюме

**ДОМ/СЕМЬЯ В СОЦИАЛЬНОЙ ТЕОРИИ
МОВСЕСА ХОРЕНАЦИ**

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Ключевые слова - дом/семья, полигамия, моногамия, полноценная и условная формы брака, изоморфизм семья-социум-государство, Мовсес Хоренаци, Аристотель, Филон Александрийский, Матакдан и-Хазар Датастан.

Статья посвящена исследованию метаморфоз важного компонента социума- дома/семьи на протяжении продолжительного хода истории, на которой

построена осевая структура «Истории Армении» Мовсеса Хоренаци. Древняя и раннесредневековая армянская семья рассматривается на фоне трех парадигм национальной идентичности – племенной общины, политической нации и божьего завета. На основе армянского обычного права, эллинистической политической теории, правовых норм зороастризма и Библии раскрываются разные аспекты структуры, имущественных отношений, морали семьи. Полигамия и моногамия, полноценная и условная формы брака – вот измерения, по которым освещается проблема исследования.

Предметом особого внимания является изоморфизм **семья-социум-государство**. Это дает возможность по новому осмыслить многие важные фрагменты армянской истории, которые по сей день интерпретируются лишь в повседневно-описательном плане. Сказанное, в первую очередь, касается царской семьи, благосостояние и моральный образ которой имели парадигмальное значение для всей Великой Армении.

Царская семья являлся средоточием всех названных ценностных ориентиров. Вспомним, до кровавых внутривнутриполитических столкновений 4-го века, ее благосостояние и моральный образ имели парадигмальное значение для всей Великой Армении. Эта идея в статье раскрыта на примере выдающихся армянских венценосцев Арташеса I и Трдата Великого. Рассмотрена и противоположная ситуация, когда хаос в царской семье приводит к ослаблению и упадку страны. Эта обстановка рассмотрена на примере семьи Аршака II.

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