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SAPIENTIA ILLUSTRIS HISTORIAE

An Attempt of Revising the Texts by Eghishē
and Moses Khorenatsi*

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Introduction

With Hellenistic cultural influence, the western canon of historiography – tragic and pragmatic histories – were introduced in Greater Armenia. The eminent intellectuals Methrodor of Scepsis and Artavazd II were the pioneers of this innovation. However, we have no evidence that this theoretic comprehension was developed by the subsequent historians – Mar Aba Katina, Priest Olymp, Bardetsan. Most probably, they compiled chronographies on events of the past and present of Armenian history¹.

The new wave of Hellenism generated cultural revival spurred by Christianization of Greater Armenia (301) and invention of the Armenian script system by St. Mesrop Mashtots (405). It gave birth to various genres of intellectual activity – theology and philosophy, rhetoric and poetry, linguistics and hermeneutics, history and geography.²

Historiography occupied a central position in the new cultural paradigm. Its best representatives saw their task in shaping the perspective of history combining Hellenistic, Christian (and even Iranian) values with those of national epic tales and historical chronicles.³ In time, a steady concept was thought out on the early medieval

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1 Sargsyan, 1966, 239 -241; Sargsyan, 1969, 107 – 115.

2 About the new paradigm of Armenian mentality based on the inner (Christian) and outer (pagan) intellectual experience see Inglisian, 1963, 158 – 165; Thomson, 1999, 218 – 226; Shirinian, 2005, 189 - 194. However, it does not concern with the Iranian (Zoroastrian) influence. From this point of view, some works of N.G. Garsoïan are quite noticeable. Garsoïan, 1976, 177 – 234; Garsoïan, 1996, 7 – 43.

3 Stepanyan, 1991, 119 -120.

Armenian historiography. According to Stepanos Taronetsi, the author of 10th - 11th centuries, it looked as following: “First and foremost the valiant Agathangelos, the historian of the amazing wonders and torments of St. Gregory and of our coming to know God; then Moses, the equal of Eusebius, who is called the rhetor (քերթող); then Eghishē vardapet, who [wrote] about the Vardanank and tortures and martyrdom of the holy priests; then the history of the eloquent Ghazar Parpetsi [...]”.⁴

They worked out their research retrospection of the past in various genres of historiography – local, universal, dynastic, individual-biographic, institutional, ecclesiastic histories etc.⁵ Scholars also distinguish them by methods of analysis and compilation of historical material as well as by quality of reasoning of their results. More specifically, the genre of synthetic history sought to depict a multidimensional history designed for an advanced reader. Sometimes scholars formulate the best examples of this approach as historic synthesis.⁶

Although the genre is well attested in Armenian historiography of the Golden Age, scholars have yet not paid due attention to it. Undertaking such a task, we should like first of all to point out the following: two authors of the mentioned list seem most relevant for the purposes of the present investigation – Eghishē and Moses Khorenatsi.

In this regard, we would like to underline that we are not concerned with problems of the specific time and details of the biography of the authors. We think they overshadow the view of researchers and do not allow them to penetrate in the depths of the authors' narrative. We believe that, despite some obvious interpolations and discrepancies of their texts, the both authors, nonetheless, lived and created in early Medieval Age.⁷

At some extent, these two authors are even opposite to each other – one has made the object of his narrative a concrete fragment of Armenian history - the rebellion against Sassanids in 450 - 451 (point history). As to the other, he tried to cover all Armenian history from the formative period up to the fall of the Armenian Arsacids in 428 (total history).

Nevertheless, common features are also transparent in the texts of the both authors. First of all, it concerns their intention to compile the existing genres of narrative for revealing the essential meanings of the past and present.⁸ Second, they intend to consider the perspective of the past simultaneously in different dimensions of time – mythical, epical, rationalistic, sacral-eternal and philosophical. Third, they knit historical data through a complicated system of connections – direct (imaginative) sequence, rational causality,

4 **Ստեփանոս Տարբանեցի**, էջ, 6 – 7. “Իսկ ըստ հայունս՝ նախ և առաջին քաջն Ագաթանգեղոս, որ նորասքանչ հրաշից և չարչարանաց սրբոյն Գրիգորի և աստվածածանաթոյթեանս մերոյ է պատմիչ: Եւ գլխի մեծն Մովսէս, հանգոյն Եւսեբեայ, որ քերթողացն անուանի հայր: Եւ ապա Եղիշէ վարդապետ, որ վասն Վարդանանց և սուրբ քահանայիցն չարչարանաց և կատարման: Եւ Գազարու Փարպեցւոյ ճարտասանի պատմութիւն [...]”.

5 On the genres of Medieval historiography see in detail **Deliyannis**, 2003, 1 – 16.

6 See on this and similar aspects of synthetic history **Fling**, 1903, 3 – 5; **Bender**, 2002, 132 – 134; **Pizarro**, 2006, 91 – 104.

7 On these complicated problems see **Ter-Minasyan**, 1946, 113 – 198; **Sargsyan**, 1965, 22 - 23; **Traina**, 1995, 280 – 281; **Topchyan**, 2006, 8 – 10. In the case of Moses Khorenatsi, J.-P. Mahé occupies a middle position: “De même l’Histoire de l’Arménie de Moïse de Khorène ne peut pas, quoi qu’en dise l’auteur, être sous sa forme actuelle l’œuvre d’un des derniers disciples de Maštoc”. Toutefois elle s’appuie sur une Histoire primitive de l’Arménie remontant sans doute au Ve siècle”, **Mahé**, 2012, 93.

8 On the experience of Moses Khorenatsi see in detail **Stepanyan**, 1991, 171 – 178.

typological parallels, sympathetic frames of narrative unity etc. Fourth, they intend to reveal the metaphysics of the tragic plot of history distinguishing its structural and semantic elements – the beginning, develop and end. Fifth, they pattern the images of outstanding historical characters after renowned moral models of Bible, national and antique traditions.⁹

1. Eghishē

The main work of this learned cleric is “History of Vardan and the Armenian War” dedicated to the events of Armenian revolt against Sassanid domination (450 – 451) for the sake of political, national and religious identity of the country.¹⁰ Modern scholarship has illuminated the political, religious and military aspects of this clash with appropriate coverage.¹¹ We see our task in scrutinizing the author’s narrative from point of view of the basic methods, skills and ideas of historical writing of the Age. We proceed from the hypothesis that they have been crowned with a synthetic history which, in its turn, is patterned into a historical tragedy to demonstrate the emotional, semantic and semiotic depth and poetry of Great Revolt. These important aspects will make the subject of the present investigation. They indicate a metaphysical insight of history under consideration.

For carrying out this essential task, let us state once again, we decided not to concern with the complicated facts of Eghishē’s biography. We do not discuss the problems of his time or political orientation (the Mamikonid case). We follow the traditional assumption and find him to be one of Mashtots’ pupils of the second generation. We believe also that the bishop Eghishē of Amatunik, mentioned in the list of the prelates-participants of Artashat council (449), is to be identified with Eghishē.¹² Consequently, his History ought to be recognized belonging to the fifth century based on eyewitness of the author. His narrative, as it is obvious from the text, is compiled at behest of the Mamikonids and expresses their vision of Great Revolt.

a. Synthetic history of Great Revolt

Even a sketchy acquaintance with Eghishē’s text leads us to a conclusion that his History has been compiled in strict accordance with black-and-white symmetry of mythological and epical thinking being enriched with some important elements of natural philosophy. This strange combination covers the levels of narrative representing opposite poles of social life - order and disorder, piety and treachery, justice and anarchy, rightful rule and tyranny. In imaginative level of perception, they are frequently personified by oppositions of Christians and non-Christians (heroes and antiheroes).¹³

All these oppositions are linked together through causative (or quasi-causative) relationship making up a string of narrative clusters in their semantic and semiotic cer-

⁹ More actively, scholars discuss the biblical models. See in detail Thomson, 1982, 136 – 148; Shirinian, 2005, 166 – 187.
¹⁰ For these aspects see in detail Adontz, 1904, 122 - 130; Akinean, 1932, 40 – 48; Thomson, 1982, 22 – 38; Zekiyan, 1997, 231 – 256; Redgate, 2000, 283 – 284.

¹¹ Frye, 1983, 146 – 147; Khachatryan, 1992, 126 – 139; Garsoïan, 1997, 98 – 100; Daryee, 2011, 185 – 186.

¹² Abeghyan, 1968, 325 - 328; Ter-Minasiyan, 1971, 150 - 194; Nersessian, 1984, 309 – 315.

¹³ This cosmic symmetry Eghishē expands on the dwelt world tracing two poles of extreme opposition in Sasanid Iran and Byzantine Empire.

tainty. In author's view, they are aimed at the displaying of the divine providence which "[...] by visible means presages the invisible" [Hist., At the request, 9].¹⁴ It has been appreciated as the main purpose of Eghishē's History which is divided into local narrative unites and situations in accordance with the following aspects of perception of history: pragmatic narrative algorithm of the principal events; their individualization around key actors of the present and past; reshaping events into a cohesive (tragic) plot to comprehend the poetry of history; uncovering the metaphysics of spiritual movement (initiation) of the Armenians to God and turning their social community into His covenant.

The visible aspect of the narrative sets up *the first, matter-of-course layer* of Eghishē's text which is algorithmic. It represents nearly the following description of events before, during and after the Revolt:

Sassanid king of kings Jazkert II (Yazgird, Yazdagerd) (438 - 457) decided to end with the autonomy of Persarmenia (Marzpanate) set up since the fall of Armenian Arsacids (428). He began oppressive actions against the Armenian magnates and commoners. However, his main target was Church; sever persecutions were launched to extirpate Christianity in Armenia. The same policy was adopted towards Iberia and Caucasian Albania as well. The patriotic forces joined around the marzpan Vasak Siwni, sparapet (commander-in-chief) Vardan Mamikonid, acting catholicos St. Yovsēp and built a covenant (սխմբ). In 449, the Artaxata council denied the official proposal of the Persians. The leaders of the council were summoned to Jazkert's court and, under humiliations and tortures, outwardly accepted the king's condition and promised to reconvert Persarmenia to Mazdaism. Coming back to the country, they found the people highly excited and ready for rebellion. Most of magnates took the side of the people, and Vardan became their leader. An embassy was sent to the Byzantine court for support but the new emperor Marcianus (450 - 451) declined the proposal.¹⁵ The spontaneous movement of the people was rapidly gaining strength; at the instigation of the clergy, it swept away Mazdean fire-temples and their priests. A similar situation emerged in Albania, and Vardan hastened to their help. He routed the Persians up to the Caucasus Mountains and concluded a treaty with the Huns. During these events, the Persian court decided to change policy to Armenia. To appease the rebellion, it declared its readiness to end persecutions and recognize the rights of Christian Church. Marzpan Vasak believed these promises and abandoned the rebellion. As to Vardan, he, on the contrary, decided to fight to the end. The decisive battle took place on 26 May 451, in the plain of Avarayr. The Persian army, which outnumbered that of Armenian three times, gained victory. Sparapet and many illustrious magnates died a heroic death. But the resistance of the Armenians bemused the enemy. Jazkert continued persecutions putting to death many captive clergymen and grands. But at the same time, he made apparent advances to meet charismatic feelings

14 "[...] այլ այցելութիւն երկնաւոր տնտեսութեան, որ մատակարարէ յառաջադիմութեամբ զհասունցմունս երկրցունց կողմանցն, որ երևելեալն զաներևոյթն գուշակէ": Historical investigation was believed to change the usual configuration of events of the past and show them in a new configuration. This assumption was immanent to the Greek historiography from its formative period and reached its height in Hellenistic authors. **Pitcher**, 2009, 113 – 115. In philosophical approach, this case implied transition from the visible aspect of being to its substantive aspect (οὐσία). Cf. **Heidegger**, 2009, 17 – 25.

15 However, Ghazar Parpetsi represents other sequence of events. According to him, the embassy was sent to the Byzantine court after the Avarayr battle [Parp., II, 41, 3].

of the Armenians and appointed an Arsacid prince, Atrormizd, new marzpan (governor) of Armenia.¹⁶ His successor Peroz I was more decisive and found this policy unsuitable. In Armenia he restored order and peace recognizing traditional privileges of Church and mag-nates.¹⁷

Consisted of imaginative fragments, this layer is designed to give answer to the question “what happened”. In other words, it represents the past and present in descrip-tive sense which Aristotle considered intrinsic for every historical study.

The second layer is again compiled around the visible aspect of the past but in-stead of bare descriptive algorithm of events and facts, it proposes cohesive sequence of the narrative units. The author finds a row material for this operation in opposite characters and actions, ideas and moral choices, good intentions and evil passions of crucial actors of the given period of Armenian history. These oppositions are compiled in accordance with the epical principle of composition. In other words, in such ap-proach, history becomes individualized and embodied in a series of opposite couples of outstanding historical actors: Theodosius II – Jazkert II, Vardan Mamikonid – Vasak Siwni, St. Yovsep – Movpetan Movpet etc.¹⁸ In fact, they represent the characters and typological relations which are possible between oppositions.

At the same time, the following is very remarkable: the author combines the indi-vidualization with another aspect of natural philosophy which is based on the parallels of cosmos, social community and human being: “The soul is the life of the whole body, but the mind steers both body and soul. Just as it is for a man, so it is for the whole world” [Egh., II, 11].¹⁹ This concept proceeded from the Stoic philosophy, and follow-ing it, Philo of Alexandria named human being “a miniature heaven (βραχόν οὐρανῶν)” [Philo, Op. mundi, 27, 82]. On this base, he defined the devoted man as “citizen of cosmos (κοσμοπολιτής)”. Maintaining this tradition, Eghishē names the similar kind of men “sharers and inheritors of the supernal and spiritual city” [Egh., V, 104].²⁰

The isomorphism of cosmos and human being is thought to function through the balance of four primary elements – earth, water, air and fire - which composes the con-tent of the Universe.²¹ Probably, the immediate source of Eghishē was again Philo of Alexandria who, following Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics, contrasted the four sublu-

16 According to Ghazar Parpetsi, “Jazkert instructed Atrormizd not to raise discontent of the Armenians, but submit them with delicacy and leave everybody to worship Christianity freely” [Parp., II, 40, 4]. Cf. **Yuzbashyan**, 2001, 58- 89.

17 **Eremyan**, 1984b, 176 – 192; **Hewsen**, 1987, 32; **Garsoïan**, 1997, 98 – 99.

18 Eghishē was particularly inspired by the black-and-white symmetry of characters of the Maccabees. The similar approach was already traditional in the early Armenian historiography from Agathangelos, Faustos Buzand and Korian. See **Thomson**, 1975, 329 – 341.

19 The concept was effectively developed by the Stoics viewing in human beings an incarnation of the emanations flowing out from Logos (σπερματικός λόγος). It was believed to penetrate into men’s body through the rational soul and blood. Cf. **Zeller**, 1892; **Baltzy**, 2003, 12- 15.

20 “[...] բաժանորդք և ժառանգորդք վերին իմանալի քաղաքին”: On the concept of heavenly City in early Armenian mentality see in detail **Margaryan**, 2007, 21 – 38.

21 Put forth by Empedocles, this theory was developed by Aristotle [De gen., II, 1, 2 – 5; 3 10 – 13; 5, 18 20]. See **Wright**, 1997, 171 – 175. Later, the balance of the four elements was scrutinized by the Stoics as the basis of the harmonic state of the Universe. Cf. **Zeller**, 1886, 239 – 241; **Arnold**, 1911, 195 – 197. Some scholars trace the origin of the theory in Zoroastrianism. Cf. **Habashi**, 2000, 111 – 112.

nary elements to the heavenly ether [Philo., Plant., 3, 1].²² The concept was adopted by Christian theology which applied it particularly to describe and interpret God's creation of the universe: "He used the four material elements to set up the world – earth, water, air and fire" [Egh., De an., I, 1a, 3; cf., I, 1 9; I, 6a, 3 etc].

At the same time, it was believed that the order of the world on the whole and every human being in particular depended on the balance or misbalance of these elements. In the first case, it brought about harmony, peace and order in all forms of life, whereas in the second case, on the contrary, it engendered disorder, conflict and strife.²³ We are going to pursue this on the concrete persons and situations of the Armenian rebellion against the Persians in order to illuminate the general aspect of short-time history.

In this regard, we come back to the perception that harmony and chaos represent the two most important poles of the author's reasoning of history. More concretely, he embellishes this mixture of mythological, epical and nature-philosophical comprehensions making numerous (direct and indirect) quotations from biblical texts. Despite Khorenatsi (focused on old biblical patriarchs), Eghishē proceeds predominantly from the images of the Maccabees, the leaders of the great Jewish rebellion against the Seleucids (168 – 164 BC.). Though great losses, the rebels were victorious: they restored the independence of Judea and founded the Hasmonean dynasty which ruled a hundred year.²⁴ Eghishē's parallels with the Maccabees are designed to activate the reverse perspective of an intellectual reader with biblical subjects, persons and moral instructions.²⁵

The third layer of perception is also apparent in the text of Eghishē. It reveals the author's attempt to lift the veil of the visible and gain knowledge about the invisible in history. Therefore, it demands reasoning of the past as a string of complete actions with its causative and typological relations and connections. For this purpose, the author applies the renowned canon of tragedy plot: "[...] I have recorded and set down in complete detail the beginning and middle and end, so that you may read it without interruption and learn the valor of the virtuous and baseness of the cowards" [Egh., I, 1, 9].²⁶ As it was demonstrated in contemporary investigations, it was an accepted idea of the Armenian historiography starting from Artavazd II to Faustos Buzand²⁷ However, it had not been brought to completion until the second half of the fifth century. This was the mission of Eghishē.

Undoubtedly, the tripartite rhythm of the plot testifies about the tragic history, the genre which represents one of most effective ways of historization of the past and pres-

22 Cf. Sharples, 2008, 67- 68. Perhaps, it was quite possible Eghishē to use immediately the works of Plato and Aristotle who were popular among the Armenian intellectuals of the 5th - 6th centuries. Arevshatyan, 1971, 10 – 11; Areshatyan, 1973, 19.

23 For the tradition of the four primary elements in early Christian Armenian mentality see Eznik, II., 32, David, Isagoge, Greek Passages, 15.

24 Thomson, 1975, 330 – 331.

25 Thomson, 1982a, 25 – 26. Cf. Asmussen, 2008, 937 – 938.

26 "[...] և եղեալ ծայրալիր պատարմամբ գսկիզքն և գմիջոցն և զկատարումն, զի հանապազորդ ընթերնուցուս, լսելով զառաքինեացն զբաջութիւն, և զլեսսս կալեցոց զվատութիւն":

27 Stepanyan, 1991, 104 – 114; Stepanyan, 2015, 112 – 123.

ent.²⁸ This means that Eghishē has chosen the significant events of the Armenian revolt to bridge them in accordance with the canon of poetry with a view to turn the chaotic information into suitable facts and narrative units.²⁹ Narrative units, which promised to display the lesson of history through catharsis - purgation for the sake of uncovering the emotional and moral, religious and political aspects of the *recent past*.

For this purpose, the author has attributed the plot with seven semantic elements which comprise the crucial points of his narrative: the time; the course of events brought about by the Prince of the East; the unity of the covenant of the church; the secession of some who abandoned the covenant; the attack of the Easterners; the resistance of the Armenians in war; the continuation of the trouble state of affairs. Such division represents the essence of motion (δρῶμός) of the tragedy of Great revolt from its beginning to the outcome.

In other words, the text of Eghishē is to be discussed in parallel dimensions of axiology and social action, causality and individual exploit. Only their combination is able to reveal the real essence of his vision of history. But it is possible, if the mentioned elements are focused in a plot of tragic performance. Consequently, the task of the author is to pattern history of the revolt according to the structure of tragedy underlining its beginning, development and outcome.

b. Tragedy of the Great Revolt

The beginning of the narrative Eghishē's History is connected with the burst of evil into the world being personified by the Persian king of kings Jazkert II, whose violations and crimes brought to the mixture of good and evil: "But him Satan made his accomplice, and spewing out all his accumulated venom filled him like a quiver with poisonous arrows. He began to wax haughtily in his impiety; by his roaring he blew winds to the four corners of the earth; he made those who believed in Christ to appear as his enemies and opponents; and he tormented and oppressed them by his turbulent conduct" [Egh., I, 3 - 4]. According to the author, evil permeates all insides of such men and "[...] when no outer enemy is found they wage war against themselves" [Egh., I, 16].

According to the theory of tragedy, such situation makes up the content of the sudden change of fortune - peripeteia (ἡ περιπέτεια), an important part of every plot wherefrom begins its essential motion. Eghishē proceeds from this perception and formulates the beginning of his History as a lament on the break of natural order of things: "[...] let us begin where it is right to begin, although not eagerly do we bemoan the misfortune of our nation. Indeed, not willingly but with tearful lament we shall describe the many blows which we suffered and of which we ourselves were an eyewitness" [Egh., At the Request, 20].³⁰

28 On transition from the mythical cyclic temporal and semantic motion to the metaphysics of the plot see in detail **Lotman**, 1979, 161 – 184.

29 According to modern narrative theory, this process comprises the following crucial phases: description-representation, analysis-interpretation, and reasoning-evaluation. Cf. **White**, 1984, 2 – 4.

30 On the comprehension of the concept tragedy in early medieval Armenia see **Hovhannisyan**, 1971, 21 - 42.

The author demonstrates the Persian king's evil character as a result of the turbulence of the primary elements of which his nature is consisted – earth, water, air and fire.³¹ Their primary balance has been broken down and one of them - fire, air, water or earth – prevails over the others initiating confusion and destruction: “[...] by his roaring he blew winds to the four corners of the earth” “[...] he began to increase his plotting, as one throws more wood onto a blazing fire”; “He did not cease provoking and stirring up a winter snowstorm. He resembled the tumult of the winging wave-tossed sea” [Egh., I, 6, 10; II, 247]. He resembled a wild and dangerous beast: “Now he fleshed and writhed like a poisonous snake, now he stretched himself like a furious lion. He rolled, twisted, and sprawled in his ambiguous intention, striving to fulfill his desired plans” [Egh., II, 24].

In a profound sense, Jazkert II belonged to the type of men whose “[...] souls were captive in their bodies like a living man in a tomb” [Egh., I, 14].³² It is the renowned ancient concept of opposition of somatic and psychic principles of human being (σωμα στήμα), which Greek philosophy introduced from religious (particularly Orphic) theology and practice. Christianity adopted it to prove its basic values and truths.³³

Righteous men usually control the balance of their primary elements under the guidance of divine or rational-philosophical instruction because: “This world is material, and the elements are different and opposed to each other. The Creator of these opposites is one, and brings them into harmony by persuasion” [Egh., II, 167; cf. De an., I, 8, 1; 14, 3 – 9, etc.]. Accordingly, deviations are thought to be caused by the lack of knowledge and wisdom: “[...] evils enter man's mind from lack of knowledge” [Egh., II, 2].³⁴ In a more philosophical formulation: “All these evils enter man's mind from the lack of knowledge. A blind man is deprived of the rays of the sun, and ignorant man is deprived of a perfect life. It is better to be blind in the eyes than blind in the mind” [Egh., II, 4 - 5].³⁵ The king's mental blindness contains fatal dangers for the society because: “A king has to give account not only for himself, but also for all those whom he was the cause of destruction” [Egh., III, 37].

Probably, Eghishē proceeds from the moral theory of Philo of Alexandria, who defined this kind of men as worthless beings (φάυλοι, μοχθήροι) – deprived of mind and reason and swept down to the world of sense-perceptions and living in a whirl of prodigality [Philo, De fuga, V, 28; cf. De somn., VIII, 44].³⁶ However, among his probable sources, the Cappadocian fathers could also be mentioned who connected these men with sin and possibility of spiritual pilgrimage [Basil, Hex., 3, 18; 36; Greg. Nyss., Mos., II, 157; 196 etc.].

31 On the similar situations see **Van der Eijk**, 2005, 19.

32 However, his evil essence could temporarily lose its validity under defeats and crashes. But always restored “his wild heart to human nature” [Egh., III, 223].

33 Cf. **Plato**, Phaedo, 66b, 82e; Crat., 400c; Rep. 517b etc. Cf. **Gundry**, 1976, 110 - 117.

34 The concept had a long way from the Sophists to Plato and Neo-Platonists. See **Elilsson**, 2007, 22 – 24. Most probably, Eghishē departs from Philo of Alexandria [Philo, De op. 77 – 78; Plant., 159 – 165; QG, II, 9,3 etc.].

35 “Լաւ է կոյր աշարք բախ կոյր սնարք” A verbatim quotation from Wisdom of Aḥikar. See **Conybear, Hurris, Lewis**, 1913, 207.

36 **Dillon**, 1997, 190 – 197; Graver, 2008, 175 – 176.

The development of the tragic plot displays the separation of evil and good, a result of the malicious policy of Jazkert II towards the Christians. In contrary to the Mazdeans, the Christians make up the pole of social and political, religious and moral good.

Eghishē depicts Theodosius II (408 - 450), the blessed emperor of Eastern Roman Empire, as the complete antipode to Jazkert. This belief shares the Armenian nobility in its letter to the emperor: “[...] you who with your peaceful benevolence rule over land and sea; and there is no person on the earth who can oppose your irresistible empire” [Egh. III, 143]. However, his sudden death and ascension to the throne of the new emperor, the impious Marcian, invalidated the possibility of resolving the conflict in favor of Good. In other words, even the Christians of the highest social rank are not blameless. As a rule, it supports Evil to take the upper hand: “From being a little suspicious he (Jazkert) became thoroughly fearless; therefore, he caused many to fall away from the holy covenant of the Christianity – some by threats, some by imprisonment and tortures, and some he put to a terrible death” [Egh., I, 11].

This fact encumbered the position of the Armenians, as well and Jazkert openly began to demonstrate his intention to destruct the social and moral order of the country through sowing material desire, egoism and mutual enmity.

He therefore, he began to give precedence to the junior over the senior, to the unworthy over the honorable, to the ignorant over the knowledgeable, to the cowards over the braves [...] All the unworthy he promoted and all the worthy he demoted, until he had split father and son from each other [Egh., II, 24].

As a result of this negative metamorphosis, social, religious and individual relations in Armenia were ultimately polarized. Without entering into details of concrete events, the following seems appropriate to point out: the process gave birth to two opposite factions led by marzpan Vasak Siuni and sparapet Vardan Mamikonid.

According to the author, Vasak (and his close entourage) represented the apostates. As it was pointed out above, he first took the side of the patriotic nobility but later abandoned it: “He fought against the wise with cunning and against the knowledgeable with craft – openly against innocent and secretly against the prudent. He seized and drove many from the band of Christ, joining them to the troops of demons” [Egh., IV, 23]. With this purpose: “He deceived and tricked particularly through false priests pretending that they were honest men. He had the Gospel and cross brought and by these means hid all his own satanic falsehood” [Egh., IV, 46].³⁷ As to his private life, it was under bodily lust and passions: “He continually increased the allowances of the banqueting-hall, he extended the music of jollity, stretching out the nights in drunken singing and lascivious dancing. He amused some with music and pagan songs, and heaped great praise on the king’s religion” [Egh., III, 57]. In other words, the reason lost leading position in Vasak, body began to dominate with low desires. As a result, this “inflicted

37 Koriwn gives a very positive characteristic of Vasak: “At that time God ordained that Vasak Siuni, wise and ingenious, far-seeing man, endowed with the grace of divine knowledge, came to be ruler of Siunik. He greatly assisted in the work of the evangelization. He showed obedience as a son to his father, and duly serving to gospel, carried out all his respects” [Kor., XV,6].

mortal wounds on his soul” [Egh., III, 89].

The Persians fed Vasak with hopes promising him royal dignity but with a strict prescription: “[...] to find a way to destroy the unity of the Armenians’ covenant and ensure the fulfillment of the king’s wishes in that land” [Hist., IV, 12].³⁸ Among the apostates appeared even some Christian priests seduced by material lucre - high ranks and fortunes. In this fashion Vasak: “[...] brought disturbance and confusion to Armenia, with the result that he split many blood brothers from each other, did not leave father and son united, and wrought tumult in the midst of peace” [Egh., IV, 59].³⁹ Nonetheless, his policy essentially differed from that of Ctesiphon. Despite Eghishē’s assurances that the marzpan accepted the religion of magi (յանձն աննեալ զնոգութիւն) [III, 219], in point of fact, he was for the strengthening of the influence of Syrian (Nestorian) Church in Armenia, the Church which was traditionally in favor of the Sassanids.⁴⁰ Most probably, along with the other factors, this caused the change of the Sassanid religion policy in Armenia; Vasak began to promulgate it through his false priests who went to the people with the Bible in hand: “In this fashion through deceptive trickery the removed many from the holy union and brought them to join the bands of apostates” [Egh., IV, 37].

The other faction represented the patriotic forces of the society ready to lay down lives for their religion and homeland. It came into being after the split of the unanimity of the anti-Persian movement followed by a series confusion: “There one could see the great agony of doubt. Some let forth torrents of tears which flowed from their eyes like streams; others let forth loud shrieks as if they would shake the heavens; while others took courage and ran to arms, preferring death to life” [Egh., III, 46]. By efforts of clergymen and nobles, this exited mob was reshaped into the best form of social integration and soon gained a high influence among the Armenians being recognized as Christ’s covenant (նւխտ).⁴¹ Its members unanimously preferred all kinds of material and moral losses to apostasy: “Apostasy they accounted as death, and death for God’s sake as everlasting life” [Egh., V, 3].⁴²

Philo of Alexandria recognized four aspects of communal unity: ancestral (συγγένεια), social (πολιτεία), political (νόμος), and religious (εἶνε θεος) [Philo, Spec. leg., IV, 159].⁴³ In different periods and conditions of national life, one of them gained domination in response to the challenges of history.

38 N. Adonts undertook an attempt to vindicate Vasak motivating his behavior by an intention to restore peace and harmony in Armenia through the benevolent agreement of the Sassanids. **Adonts**, 1904, 125 – 126. Another attempt, on the contrary, connected Vasak’s expectations with the Roman Empire and the Huns under Attila. **Manaseryan**, 2011, 68 – 73

39 “Եւ այսպէս շարժեաց և շփոթեաց զաշխարհն Հայոց, մինչև գրագում եղբարս հարազատս քակեաց ի միմեանց, ոչ եթող միաբան զհայր և զորդի, և ի մէջ խաղաղութեան արար խաղութիւն”:

40 On the activity of Syrian Church in Armenia see **Ter-Minaseants**, 2009, 19 – 21.

41 In a word, the covenant of Christ was recognized as the focus of the survival of the Armenians in accordance with the paternal laws. See **Thomson**, 2005, 36 – 37. Modern theory defines the similar situations as *a subjective intention to homogenize the national identity*. **Panossian**, 2006, 2 – 3.

42 “Եվ գուրացութիւնն մեռելութիւն վարկանէին, և զմահ վասն Աստուծոյ՝ անանց կենդանութիւն”:
In Hellenistic and Christian spirituality, death for God’s sake was considered as a form of initiation to reach eternal values. See **Stepanyan**, 2016, 39 – 45.

43 **Zekiyan**, 1988, 385 – 386.

The Christ’s covenant of the Armenians was based on a concept of ideal partnership com-parable with the early Christian social utopia embodied in monastic experience: “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 those united by Christ. Thenceforth gold was cast away, no one took silver for himself and without avarice they despised and disparaged the honorable garments [worn] for adornment and distinction” [Hist., III, 116].⁴⁴

The social and psychological values of this kind of commonality were personified by the leaders of the covenant. Most probably, Eghishē has adopted this concept from Eusebius of Caesarea believing the people of God to be the guarantee of salvation of all mankind [Euseb., HE, I,4,2].⁴⁵ But the Armenian author does not share this concept entirely: he disagrees with Eusebius at the point where he asserts that a true covenant is not an ethnos and consequently has no fixed borders.⁴⁶ On the contrary, he (and representatives of his generation) links the Armenian ethnicity and Christianity.⁴⁷

Vardan Mamikonid is the personification of this perception and the words put by Eghishē on his mouth are the best proof of that: “Now if we accomplish deeds of valor for a mortal commander, how much more [will we do] for our immortal king, who is Lord of the living and dead and who will judge every man according to his works? So even if I were to attain a very advanced age, yet we would still have to leave the body and enter the presence of the living Gog, from whom we shall be separated no more” [Egh., V, 19 - 20].

The ultimate separation of Zoroastrian evil and Christian good led to the ferocious and merci-less clash at the battle of Avarayr which took place on 26, May, 451.⁴⁸ In time, it has made up one of most important narratives of the Armenian national identity:

[...] both sides were filled with passions and enflamed with wrath, they rushed on each other with the force of wild animals. The melee caused a roar like the thundering in turbulent clouds, and the echoing of their sounds made the caverns of the mountains shake. From the multitude of helmets and shining armor of the soldiers’ light flashed like rays of the sun [Egh., V, 133 -134].

Since it was spring time the flowering meadow became torrents of many men’s blood. Especially when one saw the vast mass of fallen corpses, one’s heart would break and one’s bowels shrivel up on hearing the groaning of the injured, the crying of the hurt, the rolling

44 In similar terms, Philo told about the kind of a man who represented god’s image: “[...] while he that was after the (divine) image was an idea or type or seal, an object of thought (only), incorporeal, neither male nor female, by nature incorruptible” [Philo, Op., XLVI, 134]. Later, the like texts were usually compiled after the pattern of early Christian communities. **Lowther Clarke**, 1913, 114 – 126; **Murphy**, 1930, 93 – 95; **Špidlik**, 1981, 365 – 373; **Starky**, 1996, 203 -209. Identical issues are particularly traceable at the break situations of Armenian history. See **Zekiyán**, 2002, 189 – 198; **Zekiyán**, 2005, 5 – 8.

45 Cf. **Dvornik**, 1966, 616 – 619.

46 Cf. **Winkelmann**, 2003, 24.

47 Eghishē’s approach was in full accordance with the spiritual shift of the time marked with balance of Christian universality and national identity. See in detail **Redgate**, 2000, 126 – 132; **Zekiyán**, 2006, 408 – 428.

48 **Rance**, 2003, 373 – 375.

and crawling of the wounded, the fleeing of the cowards, the hiding of the deserters, the dismay of the fainthearted, the wailing of the effeminate, the lamentations of dear one's, the bewailing of relatives, the woe and grief of friends [Egh., V, 151 - 152].⁴⁹

The Persians gained a formal victory, whereas the moral victory was for the Armenians because: “Death not understood is death, death understood is immortality” [Hist., II, 2]. This sophisticated formula, is marked with a spiritual experience tracing in death a way to God.⁵⁰ Besides this sublime formula, the author proposes a concrete and reasonable estimation as well: “For neither side was victorious, neither side was defeated; but heroes attacked heroes and both sides went down to defeat” [Hist., V, 153].⁵¹ This is thought as the latent essence of the separation which never secures an absolute benefit for any side of a conflict.

The end of the tragic plot demonstrates the way to individual and communal catharsis which is expected to be followed by a process of renovation of the Armenians.

Catharsis of the tragic plot of Great Revolt has two expressions, material and spiritual. Undoubtedly, this division is conditional since both parts have infused each other. The first of them represents the battle of Avarayr, the corporal clash of implacable enemies. The second represents their spiritual clash which starts at the beginning of the Armenian opposition (Artaxatan refutations) and reaches its apogee in the verbal battles of the Christian apologists against their Zoroastrian opponents. The scene of that is the trail of the holy priests and nobles exiled from Armenia to deserted places of Iran after Avarayr. Supposedly, the combination of both patterns of catharsis may be traced in primary rituals outlining the way of a spiritual adept “through bodily death to a new level of life”.⁵²

Philo of Alexandria formulates the situation as spiritual suicide as: “The wise man, when seeming to die to the corruptible life, is a life to the incorruptible; but the worthless man, while alive to life of wickedness, is dead to the life happy” [Philo, Det., 49; Mos., 2, 227, Post., 39 etc.]. The same perception was adopted by the early Christian theologians to advocate the concept of eternal movement of righteous men to divine perfection led by their free will: “We are in some manner our own parents, giving birth to ourselves by our own free choice in accordance with whatever we wish to be [...]” [Greg. Nyss., Mos., II, 3].⁵³

The leading figures of the apologists of the Armenian Church – locum tenens of catholicos Joseph, bishops Abraham and Samuel, priests Ghevond and Mushē, deacon

⁴⁹ The fragments have been set up of the direct and indirect quotations from the patriarchs and prophets of Old Testament. The parallels with the Maccabees are obvious as well. Cf. **Thomson**, 1982b, 161, 169, 171.

Some scholars suppose Eghishē to possess good knowledge in military art. See **Khachatryan**, 1992, 126 – 139.

⁵⁰ Christian theology adopted this concept combining the eastern mystic and antique philosophical traditions. The text of Gregory of Nyssa seems to be one of the best expressions of that. He defined such death as a “living death” committed by devotees through free will: “[...] for everyone who destroys some evil that the Adversary has contrived in him kills in himself that one who lives through sin” [Greg. Nyss., Moses, II, 211] Cf. **Daley**, 2003, 67 – 76.

⁵¹ “Քանզի ոչ եթե կողմ էր՝ որ յաղթեաց, և կողմ էր՝ որ պարտեցաւ, այլ քաջք ընդ քաջս ելեալ՝ երկրքին կողմանքս ի պարտութիւն մասնեցան”:

⁵² **Mentzer**, 1997, 6.

⁵³ Cf. **Zeller**, 1995, 27 – 34; **Stepanyan**, 2016, 42 – 45.

K'ajaj etc. – in the debates defend the dogmata of Christian theology by refuting those of Zoroastrianism. On this way, they first focus on the rejection of worship of material elements (fire and water) turning gradually to global theological and ideological issues.⁵⁴ Particularly, they emphasize the superiority of Christian moral and spiritual values.

Nonetheless, a softening of tone is traceable in their speeches after Avarayr: instead of former rigor, they try to demonstrate the lawfulness of their position toward every fair ruler and the omnipotent Lord: “Our religion [does not so] teach us but enjoins us very strictly to honor earthly kings and to respect them with all our strength, not as some insignificant man but to serve them as [we serve] the true God” [Egh., VII, 186].⁵⁵

At the same time, however, these words contain also an intention to justify the right of every spiritual community to rebel against an unjust ruler for the sake of divine justice. The apologists prove this with sophisticated arguments and as a rule they are victorious in all verbal battles. As to the Zoroastrian priests, they feel fear of their victims and become more and cruel during the trial process. At last, it grows into extreme bitterness, rancor and hatred. As a result, the victory of the apologists turned into the cause of their execution in tortures. They fell to meet Vardan Mamikonid and his associates and join the heavenly host of immortals [Egh., VII, 74 - 78]. Only a group of noblemen survives due to the tolerance of the man of Khuzhastan (Shnūm Shapur) who secretly sympathizes the Christianity.⁵⁶

Meanwhile, after the battle of Avarayr, many Armenians continued the resistance from the fortified and inaccessible places of Khaltik, Tmorik, Ardzakh and other provinces. In addition, the Huns, in accordance with their pact with the Armenians, invaded the borders of the Sassanid empire: “They ravaged many provinces, took very many prisoners back to their own country, and clearly showed to the king their unity with the Armenians” [Egh., VI, 52]. All this forced Jazkert II to calm his policy to Armenia. He appointed a new hazarapet to this country, Atromizd, who arrived “with goodwill and in peace”.⁵⁷ He returned the ancestral possessions to some nobles, restored the privileges to the Church. Moreover, he issued an edict permitting everyone converted by force to Mazdeism to embrace again Christianity [Egh., VI, 61 – 67; Parp., III, 40, 4 -5].

These positive changes continued under the new king of kings Peroz I (457 - 484) who, according to Eghishē, brought profound peace to the land of the Aryans. As to Armenia, he still more moderated the policy towards the nobles and in the fifth year of his reign: “[...] restored to many of them their properties and held out the hope to others

54 Scholars trace in it a locus communis of Christian – Zoroastrian controversy: “Called before the judges, they (the Christians) were forced to choose between large fines, conversion from Christianity or martyrdom. The Christians, according to texts, responded with theological arguments about the nature of God and Salvation and chose martyrdom”. **Bundy**, 2007, 131.

55 This concept, as it is indicated in the first chapter, was believed to be initiated in Byzantine political theory under the basic ideas Eusebius of Caesarea. See **Dvornik**, 1966, 616 – 622.

56 **Yuzbashyan**, 2001, 42.

57 Ghazar Parpetsi names him Atromizd Arshakan and states him to be from Armenia (յաշխարհէս Հայոց) [**Parb.**, II, 40. 4 - 5]. Most probably he was a descendant of the Arsacids, and Jazkert II tried to show his respect to the sentiments of the Armenians. Cf. **Yuzbashyan**, 2001, 39.

that in the sixth year they would all be finally released [in possession] of their property and rank” [Egh., *The Names of the Princes*, 71]. The positive changes sowed hope among the contemporaries that troubles were over and the days of global welfare would start.

Sharing this expectation, Eghishē depicts the restoration of Armenia in its universal coverage. Following the ancient tradition, he traces the most transparent expression of that in the renovation of the natural rhythm of seasons’ alternation beginning from spring: “The ice of many winters melted; spring arrived and the returning swallows came again” [Egh., *Hist.*, *The Names of the Princes*, 101].⁵⁸ This account responds with the author’s well-known formula: “The four seasons in their circle fulfill their material tasks; the four of them look to the will of their attentive Creator. They are unconsciously yoked to their obligatory work, not encroaching on each other’s established order” [Egh., II, 169].

In its turn, this order is considered as an expression of cosmic harmony of the four primary elements: “So are these elements mingled, and they exist as one body and do not destroy each other’s nature. They never cease in their opposition, looking to the one unmingled Lord who arranges and orders the mixture with a view to the nature of all living things and the prolongation of the stability of the whole world” [Egh., II, 174]. Philo seems to be the immediate source of such perception: commenting God’s creation of the visible universe, he relates: “This He did that they (heavenly bodies) might serve many purposes. One purpose was to give light; another to be sings; a third duty to fix seasons of the year; and lastly for the sake of days, months, years, which (as we all know) have served as measures of time and given birth to number” [Philo, *Op.*, XVIII, 55].

The healing of the broken cosmic harmony is believed (in accordance with the global isomorphism) to give start to a social healing. The focus of the process Eghishē pursues first of all in the delicate women of Armenian land (տիկնայք փսփկասունք Հայոց աշխարհին) who, forgetting social and personal barriers, are ready to give a new birth to Armenia. In profound sense, they personify the potencies of Holy Spirit:

*They forgot their weakness and became men heroic at spiritual warfare. Waging war with the greatest sins, they struck away and cut out their deadly roots. By sincerity they overcame deceit and by holy love they cleansed the livid strains of jealousy. [...] By humility they smote pride; and by the same humility they attained the heights of heaven” [Egh., *The Names of the Princes*, 93 - 94]. This catharsis was accompanied with memories about the late husbands and sons: “[...] to attain the promises to those who love God in Christ Jesus our Lord” [Egh., *Hist.*, *The Names of the Princes*, 109].*

This expurgation, let us remind again, was not so much a concrete historical event as more an intention to moral completion of social community in accordance with the principles of poetry of history.

⁵⁸ In this regard, the striking opposition of this fragment to that of the Lament of Moses Khorenatsi about the confusions of seasons comes afford. See **Stepanyan**, 2009, 184 – 185.

c. Zoroastrian perspective of the interpretation of Great Revolt

Eghishē's narrative also outlines another, Zoroastrian, perspective of interpretation of history of Great Revolt. It becomes obvious when we depart from his theoretical considerations about the isomorphism of the universe and its inhabitants – the high living beings: “The soul is the life of the whole body, but the mind steers both body and soul. Just as it is for a man so it is for the whole world” [Egh., II, 11]. To this, it must be added that in Hellenistic and early Christian spirituality, the soul was frequently identified with feminine principle. Philo of Alexandria, for example, named the cosmic Soul Cod's daughter (θυγάτηρ τοῦ θεοῦ) attributing to her the potency of keeping the universe in unity and harmony [Philo, De fuga, IX, 51].

This parallel provides evidence for identification of the image of the *delicate woman* with the *soul of Armenian land*. In the context of decline of the principle of reason (political and spiritual elite), it took over the function of social integration. In this regard, it seems quite relevant to remind that, in traditional assumption of the Armenians, the goddess Anahit, daughter of Ahura Mazda (Aramazd): “[...] is the glory of our race and life-giver (վստք ազգիս սերոյ և կենցուցիչ); her all kings honor [...]. She is mother of all virtues, benefactor of all human nature, and the offspring of the great and noble Aramazd” [Agath., V, 11].⁵⁹

It gives reason to believe that the two opposite intellectual traditions – Christian and Zoroastrian - have come together in Egheshe's narrative to signify the emotional and spiritual catharsis of the tragic plot of Great Revolt.⁶⁰The purification makes up the formal final of Eghishē's narrative – from social chaos and lamentation to peace and renovation.

However, the author's narrative has also a rational semantic conclusion which is valid in the extra-textual reverse perspective of an experienced reader well acquainted with history of Iranian Empire. In memory, he would have to restore the image of the king of kings Jazkert I (399 - 420) who, according to the historical tradition, was a wise and benevolent ruler. Particularly, he was known for his tolerance towards the Christians, Jews and other communities of his empire.⁶¹ In this regard, the legend inscribed on the king's coins was very noticeable: “Who maintains peace in his realm”. This perception of balance, most probably, was modeled after the old concept reaching back to the time Achaemenids. It traced parallels between the universe and Iranian Empire under an ideal king of kings imitating the creative potencies of Ahura Mazda.⁶²It must be reminded that, in numerous bas-reliefs of Sassanid period, kings of kings are depicted in company with Ahura Mazda.

59 I translate the term կենցուցիչ in its direct (and primary) meaning ζωοποιία. In this light, parallel with the formula of Zoroastrian perception becomes quite apparent. According to it, the earth, water and plants were the embodiments of the female seed. See Bundahishn, 16,6. It seems noticeable the eminent terracotta of I – II centuries A.D. from Armavir which depicts a woman suckling a naked child. The figures are under an arch which emphasizes their particular status. J. Russell identifies the woman with the goddess Anahit. See **Russell**, 1990, 2682; **Russell**, 2001, 192.

60The meeting of the two religions on the Armenian ground is still waiting for its researcher, though some aspects of it are successfully discussed by modern scholars.

61 The orthodox Zoroastrian tradition, on the contrary, named him sinner. See **Asmussen**, 2008, 939 – 940; **Daryee**, 2011, 184 – 185.

62 **Dvornik**, 1966, 127 - 129.

The balance of the Sassanid Empire, however, resulted from the visible material world existing in real time and space. In Neoplatinic interpretation, wherewith the eastern Christianity was closely acquainted, it could be defined under the title of one-and-many (έν - πολύ). It meant a universal unity through numerous diversities.⁶³ For achieving this aim, creative ideas, efforts and actions of eminent personalities were demanded.

In Eghishē's text, beyond this static picture, an experienced reader could observe a dynamic picture of history as well. The starting point of that observation would be the belief that the author was well acquainted with the Zoroastrian mysticism. Particularly, this concerns the concept of global phases of world history *from its harmonic state to evil destruction and rebirth – bundahishn* (creation), *gumezishn* (mixture of good and evil), *vizarishn* (separation of good and evil). At the end of *vizarishn* a hero-benefactor (saoshyant) of the seed of Zoroaster would come into being. *Frashacart* (restoration) was thought to be the last phase of earthly history when the hero-benefactor would judge the mankind and prepare its righteous part for eternal life.⁶⁴

Most probably, Eghishē has also patterned his narrative after this Zoroastrian basic idea in order to demonstrate Great Revolt from chaos of rebellion (and lament) to the reconciliation of the adversaries. It reflected the expectations of the Armenians to reach heavenly peace and integration. In this approach, parallels with the tragic plot of Great Revolt appear in new light: *bundahishn* represents the ideal condition of the things embodied in God's covenant the deeds of which make up the axis of Eghishē's narrative; *gumezishn* – the mixture of good and evil initiated by vicious ideas and actions of Jazkert II, whose image is identic with that of Angra Mainyu - personification of cosmic and social evil; *vizarishn* – separation and clash of good and evil culminated in Avarayr battle, tortures and executions of holy clergies and noblemen; *frashacart* – is designed to re-establish eternal justice, peace and harmony through judgement and purification of men which is apparent in the final fragments History.

However, the probability of the juxtaposition of the classic tragic plot and Zoroastrian mystic historicism is conjugated with an essential question: whether Eghishē was enough familiar with Zoroastrian theology? The answer seems quite positive: for that, it is sufficient to pay attention to the author's detailed and precise description of the Zoroastrian (sacred and secret) grades of initiation according to their five doctrine-codes [Egh., VII, 21 - 22].⁶⁵In other words, the parallels under consideration ought to be discussed as carefully planned components of Eghishē's historical narrative. If this proposition is right, we shall recognize that beyond the verbal battles, Eghishē is looking for ways to combine some key concepts of Christianity and Zoroastrianism. This conclusion is in line with modern scholarship which traces the combination of the two theological systems (through Judaism) as one of mainstreams of the development Christianity.⁶⁶

63 **Hadot**, 1999, 128 – 130. According to Plotinus' theory, one-and-many represented the overwhelming soul, the uniting principle of world. It was also named the reasoning soul (ψύχη νοητή) present in human beings as well. **Armstrong**, 1967, 250 – 257; **Stepanyan**, 1999, XXII - XXVI.

64 See **Dhala**, 1938, 108 – 112; **Zaehner**, 1961, 316 – 318; **Du Breuil**, 1978, 95; **Nigosian**, 1993, 94.

65 Cf. **Christensen**, 1944, 122.

66 **Mills**, 1906, 39 – 48; **Barr**, 1985, 202 – 211; **Rennie**, 2007, 3 – 6.

In this light, coming back to Eghishē's political and religious ideal, the following formula seems most appropriate: it implied restoration of the sacred covenant of double allegiance - both to Christian God and the Sassanid king of kings.⁶⁷ This perception is fixed at the beginning of the author's narrative: relating about the fall of the last Arsacid king, he states that the rule passed to the Armenian princes: "Although the tribute went to Persian court, yet the Armenian cavalry was completely under the control of the princes in time of war. As a result of that, God's worship was freely practiced with great honor in Armenia [...] [Egh., I, 2 - 3]".⁶⁸

The Christians, particularly, vindicated their obedience to pagan kings by the behavior model reaching back to Christ: "Quae sunt caesaris caesari et quae sunt Dei Deo" [Mt. 22:21].⁶⁹ Undoubtedly, Eghishē proceeds from this maxim stating: "Just as on earth we do not have the power to change him (the king) for another lord, so in heaven we have no power to change our true God for another, as there is no other God save him" [Egh., VII, 188].⁷⁰

This ideal balance was believed to be the political program of the Armenian nobility beginning from the 30-s of the fourth century. It regained validity during the next anti-Persian great revolt under Vahan Mamikonid in 482 – 484. Through ebb and flow of military clashes, it was crowned with the so called Nuarsak treaty written and sealed by the hand of the king of kings Vagharch. It legalized the autonomy of Armenia as an important region (marz) of Sassanid Empire. Relating these events, Ghazar Parpetsi outlines three crucial points of the agreement based on the same principle of double allegiance [Parp., III, 89, 8 - 15]. The Persian side assessed it as peaceful subjugation of the Armenian noble folk. As to the Armenians, they received it as God's blessing and celebrated it with great feast. The nobles went further in formulating the status of Armenia in accordance with old tradition – Armenian House (Հայոց տուն) under jurisdiction of its householder (տաճարատէր).⁷¹

2. Moses Khorenatsi

The text of Khorenatsi's *History of the Armenians* consists of three books: "Genealogy of Greater Armenia"; "The Intermediate Period in the History of Our Ancestors" and "The Conclusion [of the History] of Our Fatherland". As it shall be demonstrated below, they compose a plot of tragic understanding of Armenian history being purposed to uncover the poetry of the past.

67 This flexibility of the stance of the Armenian rebels, unfortunately, escaped the attention of some eminent scholars. See **Frye**, 1983, 147; **Daryee**, 2009, 78.

68 "Ջի թեպէտ և գանձն յարբունիս Պարսկաց երթայր, սակայն այրուծին Հայոց բովանդակ ի ձեռն նախարարացն առաջնորդէր ի պատերազմի: Վասն որոյ և աստուածապաշտութիւն բարձրագուլս կանակատարութեամբ երևելի լինէր աշխարհին Հայոց":

69 About the ebb and flow of the Sassanid policy towards the Christians see **Brock**, 1982, 1 – 19.

70 "For Eghishē, Vardan's patriotism is directed towards the way of life in which one's political allegiance may indeed be given to a foreigner and non-Christian, but in which one's personal moral (Christian) integrity cannot be compromised". **Thomson**, 1982a, 25.

71 **Eremyan**, 1984b, 198 – 206.

The important part of The Conclusion makes up its last chapter - the “Lament over the Removal of the Armenian Throne from the Arsacid Family and of the Archbishopric from the Family of Saint Gregory” - which composes the appropriate semantic final of the author’s text. The latter is to be considered as the *catharsis* of the tripartite plot of the tragedy of Armenian history.⁷²

In Khorenatsi’s case also, the present investigation is first of all focused on the history writing skills and methods of the author with a view to uncover more profound aspects of the past, present and visible future of Armenian history. However, despite Eghishē’s *point-history*, Khorenatsi saw his task in representing of Armenian identity within long duration of time - from the remote formative period up to the fifth century. It is pertinent to formulate it as *totum per toto*. Naturally, from this point of view, many traditional approaches to his biography and creative activity have been left aside. In this case also, it must be underlined that for us it is quite sufficient to state that Khorenatsi was a historian of early Middle Age who sought to explain Armenian history through intellectual experience of his time; an experience which is believed to combine traditional Armenian, Hellenistic, and Christian intellectual traditions.

The other difference, which strikes the eye, concerns the semantic and emotional content of history. As it was indicated above, Eghishē starts his narrative with destruction and lament and ends it with social harmony, whereas Khorenatsi, on the contrary, starts his narrative with social utopia of the Haykids and ends it with overall lament of his (real or imagined) time. However, it must be affirmed that the term of lament has quite different significance in the texts of the two authors. This insight is very important for adequate interpretation of their perception of history.⁷³

Features of history writing craft

In Khorenatsi’s text, the history writing experience is first of all connected with memory, the main feature of which the ancient philosophical tradition traced in order and sequence. According to Aristotle: “[...] things arranged in a fixed order, like the successive demonstrations in geometry, are easy to remember (or recollect) while badly arranged subjects are remembered with difficulty” [Arist., Mem., II, 451b23-452a 4]. Memory was also discussed as an embodiment of mental transformation from concrete (and fragmentary) perceptions (τὰ φαντάσματα) to abstract (and common) knowledge (ἡ ἐπιστήμη).⁷⁴ For such experience, it was important to define: “[...] a beginning of movement whose sequel shall be the moment which (a man) desires to reawaken. This explains why attempts at recollection succeed soonest and best when they start from a beginning (of some objective series)” [Ibid.]. In other words, a plot is traceable in an act of memory for every beginning implies its development and end as well.⁷⁵ Developing this idea, Aristotle pointed out: “All memory, therefore, implies a time elapsed; consequently, only those animals which perceived time remember” [Arist.,

72 Stepnyan, 1991, 134 – 135.

73 Besides personal-emotional elements, Khorenatsi’s Lament has been based on the experience of so called communal (ritual) laments. On this genre see Boda, 2008, 83 – 88.

74 Cf. Sorabji, 2004, XIX – XXI.

75 Cf. Sorabji, 2004, XXII – XXIV.

Hellenistic historiography (continuing herodotan tradition) linked memory with history writing craft. This experience derived from the assumption that both of them were aimed at overpassing *one-case facts and stories*. As to modern scholarship, it finds that this process usually happens through contextualization of narrative units which, in its turn, combines them with different types and forms of relations – temporal, causative, typological, sympathetic etc.⁷⁷

Temporal continuum is most important for historical narrative. It contains indexes to the mode of representation and interpretation of the past – mythological, rationalistic, philosophical, theological.⁷⁸ Allegedly, Khorenatsi proceeds from such understanding, defining the purpose of his History as to cover an extend field of memory: “[...] from the time of confusion of the building of the tower up to the present” [Khor., I, 3, 10]. According to the author, besides pure intellectual purpose, historical memory pursues quite practical purpose. It is thought to be helpful for kings to govern their realms in accordance with the outstanding images and ideas of the past – both traditional Armenian and biblical.⁷⁹

Although strictly conjugated, memory and history are not identical. In order to turn into a genuine history, memory has to undergo a professional elaboration. Khorenatsi sees the first condition of that in structuralization of the content of memory and fixing it in written accounts: “If in truth those kings are worthy of praise who *in written accounts* fixed and ordered their annals, wise and brave acts and inscribed each one’s valor in narratives and histories, then like them the compilers of books and archives who were occupied with the similar efforts are worthy of our eulogy” [Khor., I, 3, 3].⁸⁰ These three elements – written accounts, annals, wise and brave acts come to make up the essence of real historical narratives.⁸¹

Despite oral accounts and stories, written histories stand out by the order of their compilation (կարգ բանից, շարածք բանից).⁸² Sometimes, they are formulated as cohesive stories transparent from their beginning to end and, vice versa, from end to beginning. On this account, in dialogue with his patron prince Sahak Bagratid, Khore-

76 On modern interpretations of the problem of individual and collective-historical memory see in detail **Nora P.**, 1998, 7 – 13; **Halbwachs**, 1992, 46 – 51; **Kanstein**, 2002, 185 – 190; **Hovannisyan**, 2014, 62 – 76.

77 They are thought to reflect the transition from representational strategy to that of explanation. Cf. **White**, 1984, 5 – 7; **Aron**, 1962, 16 – 17.

78 **Koselleck**, 1985, 94; **Stepanyan**, 1991, 132.

79 As to the technical side of the problem, it must be stated that Khorenatsi departs from Hellenistic rhetoric which recognized memory as one of five parts of its subject – *inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, pronuntiatio*. Cf. **Yates**, 1966, 5.

80 “Ձի թէ արդարև արժանի գովութեան այնք ի թագաւորաց իցեն, որք գրով և պատմութեամբ զիրենանցն հաստատեալ կարգեցին ժամանակս, և զգործս իմաստութեան և զքաջութիւն իւրաքանչիւր արձանագրուցին ի վէպս և ի պատմութիւնս՝ ըստ նոցանէ և պարապեալքն այսպիսում ճգնութեան դիւանագիրք մատենից՝ ներբողականաց ի մէջ արժանի եղևն սաից”:

81 Two approaches to historical time and narrative is traceable in this fragment. Typological for Hebrew Scriptures, the first is oriented to hearing of information (ear), whereas the second is characteristic for ancient texts oriented to vision of facts (eye). In this regard, scholars usually call to witness the well-known formula of Herodotus: “[...] men trust their ears less than their eyes” [Herod., I, 8, 1]. Cf. **Marincola**, 1997, 63 – 85 **Bassi**, 2005, 17 – 26.

82 On the problems of the origin of the written history and its tools of description, explanation and reasoning of the past see in detail **Croce**, 1921, 181 – 199; **Hamilton**, 1996, 7 – 30; **Marwick**, 2001, 22 – 54; **Mauskopf - Deliyanis**, 2003, 1 – 16; **Cartledge**, 2006, 20– 37.

Լ. (Ժ-Գ) Կասրի, թիվ 4 (56), հոկտեմբեր-դեկտեմբեր, 2016 ՊԱՏՄՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՏԵՄՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

natsi points out: “[...] I can bring down [my account] without error from the beginning as far as you, or starting from you and others work backward to the beginning” [Khor., I, 3, 11].⁸³ The author sees the ideal of such experience in the Hebrew historians who easily brought back the events and actors of their time back to Abraham and Moses and other eminent patriarchs.

Developing this subject, it must be highlighted that Khorenatsi views in historical craft a way of converting the accidents of everyday life (both of the past and present) into a suitable order of events, meanings and causes. The ideal state of such order is thought to be: “[...] full of reliable story and worthy of the most polished and elaborated exposition” [Khor., II, 7, 1].⁸⁴ To achieve this purpose, the author applies the golden principle of historical writing: “Omitting what is least important from our account, we shall speak of what is significant” and “Choosing to the best of our ability what is reliable from many sources [...]” [Khor., I, 21, 1, cf. I, 6, 1].⁸⁵

Such texts are assessed as symmetric and harmonic (ողորմ). Qualities, that the antique tradition discussed in homogeneity with justice and truth. Khorenatsi traces the best pattern of such texts in Plato: “[...] our account should be elegant and lucid, like Platonic works” [Khor., I, 32, 2]. Undoubtedly, the author departs from this perception when concerns the problem of trustworthiness of historical records and promises: “[...] to be truthful in this history through our diligence and faithfulness. According to these principles our collection has been made, as is clear to God; but whether men will praise or criticize is of no import to us” [Khor., I, 19, 3].⁸⁶ It is an objective of great importance to compile a narrative “far from falsehood and full of what opposes falsehood” [Khor., I, 32, 2].⁸⁷

With this statement, we closely come up to the problem of the basic features of the historical texts. First it was formulated by Herodotus and became popular in Hellenistic time. In professional work of historians, Herodotus traced three intentions aimed to find out: how (πῶς), when (ποτῆ) and why (διὰ τί) occurred this or that significant event of past and present [Herod., I, 1; 23 - 24].⁸⁸ In these intentions, modern scholars trace the key peculiarity of historical investigation. It occupies a middle position between philosophy, exact sciences and poetry.⁸⁹

A careful observation of the History brings a reader to the conclusion that all the

83 “[...] ի վերուստ ի քեզ իջուցանիցեն անսխալ, կամ ի քէն և այլոց սկսեալ՝ անդր ի վեր հանիցեն ի սկիզբն”.

84 Apparently, the author departs from the same concept viewing correspondence between heaven and man - a miniature heaven (βραχίων οὐρανών) [Philo, Op., XL, 117]. It engendered a series of isomorphic values – goodness (ἀγαθός), order (τάξις), justice (δική), truth (ἀλήθεια) - embodied in incorporeal and corporeal beauty (καλός) [Plato, Rep., 435a 8-9, 439a 3-7; 475 e 517b-c; Tim., 33b – 36e etc.]. See Turley, 1995, 9 – 20. Some modern constructivists emphasize the esthetics of historiography. White, 1973, XII.

85 Idea of sketching narrative in accordance with the research strategy and aim of a historian reaches back to Herodotus and Thucydides. Woolf, 2005, XXXVII.

86 In some senses this formula reminds that of Herodotus: “I am under obligation to tell what is reported, though I am not bound altogether to believe it; and let this saying hold good for every narrative in this History” [Herod., VII, 152]. Botsford, 1922, 282.

87 “հեղի ի ստույթենէ, և լի ինչ ընդդէն ստույթեան”:

88 Jones, 1967, 3 – 5; Stepanyan, 2014, 171 – 172.

89 Gold, 1989, 71 – 78; Munslow, 2007, 38.

three intentions are apparent in the text of Khorenatsi. From this point of view, two formulas of the author are of particular importance. The first concerns with the time about which we spoke above: “[...] there is no true history without chronology” [Hist., II, 82].⁹⁰ The concern of the second are the other two intentions - how (որպէս) and whence or why (նուսոյի): “But I shall begin to show you our own history – whence and how it developed [...]” [Khor., I, 7, 8].⁹¹

According to Khorenatsi, besides pure epistemological interests, historians pursue practical interests as well: “[...] when we read their accounts we become informed about the course of the world, and we learn about the state of civilization when we peruse such wise discourses and narratives” [Khor., I, 3, 2].⁹² As it was established above, a special group of royal servant-scribes were responsible for preservation of memory of the past events – *guardians of memory*. Moreover, historiography was recognized responsible to influence the events of present day after the models of the past.⁹³

For this purpose, the knowledge and creative will of outstanding persons were demanded. Developing this idea, the author traces parallels between the works of eminent political actors and historians. Collaboration of these two kind of actors is very productive especially in crucial periods of history. Three pairs of such persons are prominent in Khorenatsi’s narrative – Vagharshak Arsacid and Mar Abas Cathina, Trdat the Great and Agathangelos, Sahak Bagratid and Moses Khorenatsi.⁹⁴ In other words, Khorenatsi believes that, besides divine providence, history results from free will of righteous men.⁹⁵

Khorenatsi also demonstrates the opposite situation on the example of the early Armenians who: “[...] were not enamored of scholarship or intellectual books. Therefore, it is superfluous for us to say anything more about those unlettered, lazy and barbarous men” [Khor., I,3,9]. As to the rulers: “[...] all our kings and other forefathers were negligent toward scholarship and unconcerned with the life of reason” [Khor., I, 3,3].

The next feature of Khorenatsi’s professional craft, which seems important to discuss in the present investigation, is the dialogic character of his narrative. In its turn, this is an index of the polyphony of the *History*. It means that the author discusses the same persons, events and epo-ques simultaneously in parallel narrative systems, therefore he is polyvocal and polysemantic.⁹⁶ Consequently, he puts on various masks, be-

90 “[...] ոչ է պատմութիւն ճշմարիտ առանց ժամանակագրութեան”:

91 “Այլ սկսեալ ցուցից քեզ գմերն, թէ ուստի և որպէս”.

92 “[...] ի ձեռն որոց և մեք յընթեռնուին զառ ի նոցանէ, շարածս բանից՝ ըստ աշխարհարէն կարգաց իմանանալ ապիմք, և քաղաքականս ուսանել կարգս, յորժամ զայսպիսի ըթերցասիրիցեմք իմաստութեան ճառս և զրուցատրութիւնս”:

93 History was believed to supply not only intellectual and moral pleasure, but also practical benefit. Such approach was typical for Greek historiography from Herodotus and Thucydides to Polybius and Posidonius. Summing up this insight, Polybius stated that history provided “[...] the reason why what was done or spoken led to failure or success” [Polyb., XII, 25b]. Cf. **Marincola**, 1997, 19 – 33; **Pitcher**, 2009, 116 – 118.

94 See in detail **Beledian**, 1992, 119 – 126.

95 This pivotal concept was worked out by Aristotle being adhered by Hellenistic philosophers – Panetius, Posidonius, Philo of Alexandria etc. It was adopted by early Christianity and found profound interpretation especially in the works of the great Cappadocian fathers – Basil the Great, Gregory Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa. See **Wolfson**, 1942, 138 – 140; **Otis**, 1958, 107; **Dilman**, 1999, 49 – 53;

96 **Bakhtin**, 1992, 279 – 280.

tween which, intensive dialogues occur which lead to balanced conclusions on important events and problems of Armenian history. The most renowned is Khorenatsi's dialogue with his eminent patron – prince Sahak Bagratid. In proper sense, the latter is the author's *alter ego*, who perceives history in mythological and epical terms.⁹⁷ As it will be demonstrated in the sequel, such masks and dialogues are present in almost all levels of author's narrative, being aimed to outline the poetry of the *History*. In this dialogic character, the peculiarities of the new form of historical synthesis must be traced.

The last approach to the craft of Khorenatsi concerns with the synthetism of his way of compiling of historical narrative. It is a complicated process which begins with analysis of every significant historical situation to its atomic units – *deeds of valour* (*գործք քաջություն*), *deeds of wisdom* (*գործք իմաստություն*), *virtuous and righteous acts* (*գործք առաքինությունը և նրդությունը*) etc. Being linked together, they outline the constructive perspective of Armenian history. However, Khorenatsi also distinguishes atomic elements of negative axiology – *acts of cowardice* (*գործք փոքրիկություն և երկչություն*), *acts of evil* (*գործք չարափառություն*), *barbarity* (*բարբարոսություն*) etc. Together they set up the destructive perspective of Armenian history. In other words, two parallel subtexts with opposite axiology are traceable in the narrative of *History* - constructive and destructive.

The purpose of a true historian is to distinguish paths to reconstruct a stable perspective of history. Khorenatsi finds that it is possible only through intertextual dialogue. It is about a particular narrative synthesis which modern scholars sometimes indicate as dialogism and heteroglossia of culture.⁹⁸ A process, which is typical for transitive societies since it forms a common intellectual space where the values of mythological, epical, rationalistic, and metaphysic perceptions interpenetrate. In some senses, *History* of Khorenatsi represents a similar situation. The result of this synthesis depends on the intellectual abilities of the (real or expected) reader as well. This is another reflection of the intertextual dialogue of the author with his *alter ego*.

To bring about this research program, Khorenatsi had to use primary sources of different origin and content: myths and epic tales, rituals and minstrel songs, inscriptions and archive materials, biblical and theological texts, chronicles and historical works. The last group, naturally, represented particular interest being subdivided into pagan and Christian authors. However, for Khorenatsi, this division had no principal meaning since he appreciated historical works on their trustworthiness and narrative skills.

However, the other mode of subdivision was also important for the author, it concerned the scope of history in both essential and formal senses – chronography, universal history, local national history, church history etc. The impressive list of historians mentioned and used in *History* attests this fact: Berossus, Alexander Polyhistor, Josephus Flavius, Abydenus, Cephalion, Julius Africanus, Firmilianus, Eusebius of Cae-

97 Stepanyan, 1991, 166.

98 See in detail Bakhtin, 1992, 119-126.

sarea, Evagrius and many others.⁹⁹ Along with them, the works compiled in Armenia were used as well. They were authorised by Mar Abas Katina, priest Olympus, Badetsan, Agathangelos, Pavstos Buzand.¹⁰⁰

Synthetic history of Armenia

Under this title the unity of the three complexes of Khorenatsi’s historical narrative - epical, rationalistic and metaphysic - are planned to be discussed. Each of them represents a unique system of historical perception. Some important aspects of this polyphony are traced by modern scholars but it is important to understand the principle by which they are interwoven.¹⁰¹

a. The epical perception of the narrative, as it is pointed out above, is based on the (first and second) epical historical cycles (*վիպասանք*). Khorenatsi conjugates their fragments with a common logic and axiology. As a result, this layer looks like an eon – long cosmic and social time duration - with nearly identical starting and final elements.¹⁰² Under the starting element, he means Flood and the escape of Noah and his family by God’s will. Under the second element, he means the social chaos of his time depicted in detail in his renowned *Lament*.¹⁰³ This layer represents the tripartite rhythm of social regression typical for the epical perception of history.

The *first phase* of the epical perception is connected with the natural impulse of the valiant archer Hayk and his descendants which makes up the golden age of Armenian history.¹⁰⁴ Patriarchal institutions dominate in social organization, and Armenia of the Haykid period is nothing than an expanded patriarchal family or clan (տուն, աղյւ) governed by ancestral customs.¹⁰⁵ Although Paroyr, son of Skayordi acquires the status of royalty (for participation in anti-Assyrian struggle) and his descendants name themselves kings, the situation does not change radically till Vahē, the last Haykid ruler of Armenia.

It is more precise to define their rule as patrimonial monarchy.¹⁰⁶ According to this perception, the mainstream of Armenian history make up the noble clans: “[...]to write the history of our nation in long and useful work, to deal accurately with the kings and the princely clans and families: who descended from whom, what each one of them did, which of the various tribes are indigenous and native and which one of foreign origin

99 Terian, 2001/2002, 118 – 129. On chronological techniques dating back to the biblical narrative of the Creation and Flood see Johnson, 1962, 126 – 132; Moyer, 2013, 218 – 220.

100 On the primary sources of Khorenatsi and the methods of applying their information in compiling the narrative texture of his History see in detail Sargsyan, 1956, 31 – 42; Sargsyan, 1969, 112 – 126; Topchyan, 2006, 1 – 16.

101 Spetanyan, 1991, 171 – 189.

102 On the the cyclic cosmic and social perception of time in early Christian theology see in detail Escribano-Alberca, 1972, 42 – 51. On the idea of eon in the narrative of Khorenatsi see Stepanyan, 2006, 248 – 254.

103 Sargsyan, 2006, 127 – 139.

104 Modern scholarship defines it as a genre with a core theme about origins gentium. Cf. Pizzaro, 2003, 43.

105 According to the definition of M. Weber, it is a form of patriarchalism incorporating “[...] the situation where, within a group (house hold) which is usually organized on both an economic and kinship basis, a particular individual governs who is designated by a definite rule of inheritance” Weber, 1963, 231. On the epistemological aspect of the problem see Bloch, 2004, 24 – 32.

106 It represents “[...] the formally most consistent authority structure that is sanctified by tradition”. Weber, 1963, 1009.

but naturalized” [Khor., I, 3, 10].¹⁰⁷ In other words, time is not abstracted from its material content: it is focused on the deeds of the representatives of the glorious princely clans. Whereas Eghishē was focused on the Mamikonids, Khorenatsi prefers the Bagratids and pursues the history of their service at the court of Greater Armenia (aspets, coronants) from the days of Vagharshak Arsacid up to the fifth century.¹⁰⁸ Other aspect of the problem must also be taken into consideration: the author believes the Bagratids to be of Jewish origin, from the house of David. It links them with the biblical tradition tracing close spiritual relationship between David and Christ.

The *second phase* is connected with the *impulse of social regulation*. It culminates particularly under the three eminent kings of Greater Armenia – Vagharshak Arsacid, Artashēs the Last and Trdat the Great. The time and circumstances of their reign are different but the basic features and results are quite comparable. From this point of view, Korenatsi’s account about Vagharshak reign is very typical: “Here there is much to say about the ordering and organization of houses, families, cities, villages, estates and in general the entire constitution of the kingdom and whatever is of relevance to kingdom– the army, generals, provincial governors and similar matters – the army, generals, provincial governors and similar matters” [Khor., II, 7, 2].

All these innovations are administrated for the sake of prosperity and peace of of the kingdom [Khor., II, 8, 41]. In Trdat’s days, a new kind of innovation comes into force being marked by the conversion of the country to Christianity.¹⁰⁹ A spiritual impact that came to change nearly all aspects of social life of the Armenians: “[...] but the king’s merit was greater in subjecting [people] by persuasive or forceful words, for he never interrupted his efforts on behalf of the faith. For this reason, I call him the leader on the road and the second father of our illumination” [Khor., II, 92, 3].¹¹⁰

However, apart from them, kings of ambiguous character are typical for this phase as well. They do not commit significant deeds (զգօրծս արութեան և իմաստութեան) but took care about their welfare – Artavazd the Elder, Sanatruk, Tiran the Elder, Tigran the Last. The summary of the reign of the king Tiran sounds more than typical for them: “No great actions are told about him, he faithfully served the Romans and rested in peace. It is told that he was spending his time in hunting and wandering” [Khor., II, 62, 2]. Inadequacy of these persons to their royal responsibilities opens a door to social apathy and egoism. As a result, the Armenian society ceases to live in unison rhythm.

The *third phase* displays the process of gradual decline and disintegration of social relations and institutions. It is accompanied, on one hand, with inner strives, on the

107 “[...] երկար և շահաւոր գործով զազգիս մերոյ կարգել զպատմութիւնն ճշդիւ՝ զթագաւորացն և զնախարարականաց ազգաց և տոհմից, թէ ով յումմէ, և զինչ իւրաքանչիւր որ ի նոցանէ գործեաց, և ով որ ի ցեղիցս որոշելոց ընտրանի և մերազնեայ, և ոյք ոմանք եկք ընտանեցեալք և մերազնացեալք”:
108 On the Bagratids in Armenia see in detail **Toumanoff**, 1963, 201 – 203. In her translation and commentary of the Aramaic inscription from Sissian (Zangezur), A. Perikhanian has traced a Bagratid priest in the close entourage of Artaxias I (189 – 160 B.C.). **Perikhanian**, 1971, 5 – 11.

109 **Beledian**, 1994, 29 – 40;

110 Plato built his concept of state authority on the balance of persuasion (ῥήθος) and coercion (κράτος). [Plato, Alc., 114b – 114d; Grg., 453a – 454a; Lg., IV, 719e – 722b etc.]. **Hall**, 2004, 100 – 102.

other hand, with wars against Sassanid Iran. Somatic principle reaches its height, and tyrants come to power instigating egoism and wickedness – Tiran the Last, Arshak II, Pap are depicted with these and other negative features. In this regard, the portrait of Arshak II is very typical: “[...] but in his vanity continuously gloried in wine drinking and in the songs of dancing girls. He seemed more brave and noble than Achilles, but in truth was like the lame Thersites. His own nobles rebelled against him until he received the reward of his pride” [Khor., III, 19, 10]¹¹¹. The destruction brought first to the partition of Greater Armenia between Rome and Iran (387)¹¹² and later to the fall of the Armenian Arsacids (428).¹¹³ The Lament of Khorenatsi completes the cyclic duration of a whole eon which has also cosmic coverage and comprises all the levels of being - from heaven, plants, animals to social orders, and individuals:

“What then does this demonstrate, save that God has abandoned [us] that the elements have changed their nature? Spring has become dry, summer very rainy, autumn like winter, and winter has become very icy, tempestuous and extend” [Khor., III, 68, 39 - 40].¹¹⁴ “There is exile abroad for the nobility and innumerable outrages for the common people. Cities are captured and fortresses destroyed; towns are ruined and buildings burned. There are famines without end and every kind of illness and death. Piety has been for-gotten and expectation is for hell” [Khor., III, 68, 43].¹¹⁵

This indicates the last point of the regressive movement of mythical time of universal history “from chaos to chaos”. In the narrative terms, it sounds more precisely: “from cosmic Flood, history has moved to the social chaos of the fifth century”.

b. The rationalistic layer is compiled on the linear axis of time: “to write the history of our nation in a long and useful work” [Khor., I, 3,]. In other words, time is abstracted from its material content and turned into an external dimension applied to the historical narrative.¹¹⁶ Consequently, the parallels with chronologies of other states and communities are demanded. They are purposed to attribute to Armenian history a sense of accuracy (real or imagined).

From this point of view, it seems relevant to underline that the chronology of the History accepts more or less precise features from the second book. The starting date is the first year of the Seleucid era - 312/311 BC.¹¹⁷ Thematically, it is divided into parallel narrative lines: Seleucids - Arsacids – Sassanids – Roman emperors - Armenian kings - patriarchs of Church. They are believed to represent fragments of the global chronology compiled by Julius Africanus and later worked out by Eusebius of Caesarea in his

111 Undoubtedly, in Armenian historiography, the image of Arshak II (350 - 368) is patterned on epical black-and-white axiology. This approach is far from reflecting the complicated internal and external situation of Greater Armenia under this king. 112 For political, military and diplomatic background of the partition of Greater Armenia see in detail Blockley, 1973, 222 – 234; Greatrex, 2000, 35 – 48.

113 On political, military and diplomatic background of the fall the Armenian Arsacid dynasty see Eremyan, 1984a, 23 - 25; Garsoïan, 19972, 84 – 93; Mahé, 2012, 83 – 84, 90 – 91.

114 It is a nearly exact quotation from Philo of Alexandria [Philo, Op., XIX, 59]. Stepanyan, 2006, 250 – 251; Stepanyan, 2009, 184 – 185.

115 About the semantic structure of the Lament and its hypertextual connection with biblical and philosophical traditions see Zekiyan, 2000, 199 – 203; Sargsyan, 2006, 127 – 139; Stepanyan, 2009, 183 – 188.

116 On the typology of this transformation see Breisach, 2002, 46 – 48.

117 Sargsyan, 1965, 37.

renowned Chronographia. It harmonized ancient chronological systems in the focus of biblical texts.¹¹⁸ This work was very popular in early medieval Armenia and Khorenatsi follows it, however, from time to time, he deviates from it for the sake of the integrity of his narrative system.¹¹⁹

In rationalistic perception, the author's narrative looks as a tripartite rhythm of social progression shaped on the anthropomorphic pattern – body, soul and intellect (youth, virility and senility).¹²⁰ Each of them prevails in one of the three phases of Armenian history. This anthropomorphism was quite popular in Hellenistic historiography and culminated in the works of Polybius, Posidonius and Strabo.¹²¹

The first phase of the rationalistic layer comprises the first book of the History and represents the principle of youth. Consequently, the heroes, the Haykids, are first of all remarkable for somatic qualities in the state of the mean. As it was pointed out above, they look handsome and attractive with strict symmetry of body parts. They are strong and swift, valiant and brave, skillful archers and lancers – Hayk, Ara the Handsome, Aram, Tigran Ervandean. The portrait of Tigran (nearly identical to that of Hayk) is most characteristic:

[He was] blond with grey-flocked hair, of ruddy complexion and gentle eyed, personable and broad shouldered, strong legged and noble feet, continent in eating and drinking and orderly at feasts, and – as those among our ancients who sang to the lyre used to say – moderate in the pleasures of the flesh [...] [Khor., I, 24,11].

Besides these somatic features, Khorenatsi also bestows intellectual features on his heroes, and frequently they are characterized as prudent and intelligent (ուշիւ և խոհեւ), wise and eloquent (մեծիմաստ և պերճարբան) [Khor., I, 11, 11; cf. 24, 11]. As it was underlined before, these epithets are rhetoric embellishments of the text and have no strict axiological significance. In common, the reign of the Haykids may be defined as authority rested on strength in its balanced mean, escaping excess and lack. It denotes the best way of youth when the somatic principle is led by nature or divine guidance.

At the same time, this phase reveals an important transformation in Armenian history which, according to Khorenatsi, happened under Paroyr, the son of Skayordi: “And now I shall rejoice with no little joy on reaching the period when the descendants of our original ancestor acquired the status of royalty” [Khor., I. 21, 3].¹²² Contemporary scholarship finds that the like transformation gives birth to political nationhood marked with intensive relationship of a ruler with different groups and estates of society.¹²³

118 Topchyan, 2006, 65 – 100.

119 Sarkisian, 1991, 86 – 87. On Eusebius' experience see Sreedharen, 2004, 45 – 46.

120 Stepanyan, 1998, 291 – 294.

121 In this regard, the formula of Polybius is very suitable: “history has formed an organic whole” [Polyb., I, 3, 3 - 4]. Cf. Walbank, 1981, 129; Bringmann, 1997, 147.

122 “Եւ այժմ ահա զուարճացայց, ոչ փոքր ինչ կրելով խնդութիւն, հասանելով ի տեղիս, յորում իսկ բնիկ նախնոյն սերունդք ի թագաւորութեան հասանեն աստիճան”:

123 Smith, 2003, 22 – 23.

In this light, the reign of Tigran Ervandean seems most typical: “He was just and equal in every judgment, and he weighed all the circumstances of each case impartially. He did not envy the noble nor did he despise the humble, but over all alike he spread the mantle of his care” [Khor., I, 24, 14].¹²⁴ On the whole, the absolute ethnic identity of Hayk’s time came to give way to an identity based on harmonic unity through diversities. Khorenatsi’s utopian account on Tigran’s deeds represents this idea as follows: “He multiplied the stores of gold and silver and precious stones, of garments and brocades of various colors, both for men and women, with the help of which the ugly appeared as wonderful as the handsome, and the handsome were altogether deified at that time” [Khor., I, 24, 3].¹²⁵

The second phase: comprises the second book of History and represents the principle of virility. Consequently, it indicates the affective principle in its two opposite poles: on one hand the balance, on the other hand, the vice (excess and lack).

For displaying the essence of the balance, the renowned dictum on the character of Alexander the Great is applied: “[...] Alexander of Macedon who was only three cubits high, though this did not impair the vigor of his spirit” [Khor., III, 8, 3].¹²⁶ Indeed, the corporal traits do not play an important role in the activities of the crucial heroes – Vagharshak Arsacid, Artashēs the Last and Gregory the Illuminator. Led by moderate passion (չափաւոր սնուութեամբ), they bring about innovative projects in favor of all social estates.¹²⁷ Their reign may be defined as true monarchy.

Vagharshak: he is a valiant and prudent able to fix effective statues of civil life (կարգս կենցաղականս) of Greater Armenia [Khor., II, 3, 3]. Artashēs the Last: his reign consists of virtuous and righteous acts (առաքինութիւնք և գործք ուղղութեանց) [Khor., II, 56, 2].¹²⁸ The example of Trdat the Great seems very symptomatic: although he is gifted with extraordinary corporal forces and abilities, he commits the most important mission of his life – the conversion of Greater Armenia to Christianity – exclusively due to his spiritual labor:

After his conversion to Christ he shone out with every virtue, increasing more and more his acts and words for the cause of Christ. He chided and urged the greatest princes, and at

124 It seems symptomatic that R. W. Thomson, despite G. Khalatians, denies parallels of the fragment with biblical texts. See, **Thomson**, 1978, 114, n.10.

125 It is well noticed that the fragment of Tigran Ervandean concerns chiefly Tigran II. **Abeghyan**, 1966, 104 – 115, **Manandyan**, 1943, 68 - 71. It was compiled in accordance with Hellenistic rhetoric art, probably in the king’s days or subsequently. **Sargsyan**, 1969, 121 – 123. If we accept the first probability, Metrodorus of Scepsis, Artavazd II and Amphicrates of Athens come afford as more predicable authors of this work. As it was noted above (Introduction), it and similar essays were included into a compendium – Book of Chreia – a handbook of rhetoric training widespread in Armenian intellectual circles.

126 “[...] որ միայն երից կանգնց ունէր գչափ հասակի, և ոչ զհոգւոյն խափանէր աշխոյժս”: A common place of Hellenistic literature and rhetoric. Cf. Ps.-Callistenes, 179.

127 The term reached back to the Stoic concept of *μετριοπάθεια* implying self-restriction of men under God’s guidance for the sake of living in accordance with Nature (τὸ κατὰ φύσιν ζῆν). In its turn, the latter initiated *εὐπάθεια* indicating comfort and ease [Diog. Laert., Vit. Phil, VII, 105 - 107]. Cf. **Brennan**, 2003, 271 – 275. The immediate source of Khorenatsi seems to be Philo of Alexandria [Philo, Plant, 45; Leg., 29 - 30].

128 Such men are defined by Philo as prudent and righteous and gracious: “The earthly element is, therefore naturally dissolved and washed away, when the whole mind in its entirety resolves to make itself well-pleasing unto God. This race is rare, however, and found with difficulty [...]” [Philo, De mut. nom., 4, 3].

the same time all the mass of the common people, to become true Christians so that the deeds of all might bear witness to the faith [Khor., II, 92, 6].

The bearers of affective vice are divided in two groups: those of excess – Artashēs the First, Tigran the Middle, Khosrov III Kotak – are portrayed *as proud and warlike men* [Khor., II,1,2]. Martial valor, deeds and victories are characteristic for them. But in its ultimate expression, the excess is able to bring also to cruelty and evil actions.¹²⁹This is the case of Artavazd the Last: “When Artavazd, son of Artashēs, reached maturity, he proved to be a valiant man, vainglorious and proud” [Khor., II, 51, 2].

As to the lack of affectivity, its bearers are entirely deprived of the will to act on the benefit of society. They are very selfish – Artavazd I, Tiran I, Tigran the Last – whose rationalistic characteristics are in fact identical to those of the previous (epical) layer. Artavazd the First: “But he gave no indication of any other act of nobility or valor and occupied his time with eating and drinking” [Khor., II, 22, 4].¹³⁰The reign of the kings of affective vice may be formulated as tyranny.

The phase of virility contains all the variants of the affective principle. The outcome mostly depends on the character and choice of the kings and their close entourage.

The third phase: comprises the third book of the History and represents the principle of senility (mentality). However, it does not appear immediately: in politics, for example, the negative manifestations of the affective principle continue long. In the crucial for Greater Armenia fourth century, this tendency is incorporated by the kings Khosrov Kotak, Tiran the Last, Arshak II and Pap who are depicted as proud, selfish, warlike, perfidious and vindictive individuals. These are the qualities which entail bloody conflicts with nobility and Church. The situation is also complicated by numerous military clashes between Rome and Sassanid Empire causing devastation of the towns and villages of Greater Armenia.

Khosrov Kotak: “Not only did he give no evidence of prowess of his father’s, but he did not even make any opposition to regions that had rebelled [...]. Leaving the Persian king to his wishes, he made peace with him, considering it sufficient to rule over the territories that he retained and absolutely no desire for noble projects” [Khor., III, 8, 2]. Tiran the Last: “Paying tribute to the Greeks and a special tribute to the Persians, he lived in tranquility like his father and evinced no deed of bravery or valor” [Khor., III, 11, 2]. Pap: “[...] he was debauched with a shameful passion for which he was reproached and blamed by Nersēs the Great” [Khor., III, 38, 5].¹³¹

129 Allegedly through Philo of Alexandria, Khorenatsi seems well acquainted with the Aristotelian theory of moral values consisting of three poles – two extremes, deficiency and excess (ἐλλείψει καὶ ὑπερβολῇ) and the mean (τὸ μέσον) [Arist, EN., 1180b, 10 – 35; cf. Philo, VC, 25].

130 “Բայց այլ ոչ ինչ գործ արութեան և բաշտութեան եցոյց, այլ ուտելաց և ընմելաց պարսպեալ”. Supposedly, this image of Artavazd II (55 – 34 BC.) reflects the sentiments of the opposition nobility. Meanwhile, the king corresponded with Gaius Caesar Octavianus (Augustus) who felt sympathy to him [Dio, LXIX, 41, 5]. C. Tacitus shared this sympathy [Tacit., Hist., II, 3]. Cf. **Stepanyan**, 2012, 201 – 205.

131 On the social, politic and religious background of the decline of Greater Armenian in the 4th century see in detail Garsoïan, 1967, 297 – 320.

The only exception makes up the king Vřamshapuh: although he commits no significant deeds of military valor, but lives in peace with the nobility and clergy. Khorenatsi formulates his reign as follows: “Vřamshapuh ruled out our country and was subject to both kings, paying them tribute – to Vřam for the Persian part and to Arcadius for the Greek part” [Khor., III, 51, 20]. At the first sight, this reminds the policy of Tigran the Last but in fact it entirely differs from that. Essentially, Vřamshapuh has taken a step to overcome the negative results of the partition of Greater Armenia with an aim to unite its two parts under his personal rule.

Most impressive is the king’s cultural policy: he supports St. Mesrop and Sahak the Great in inventing the Armenian alphabet and in laying the foundations of the new (Christian) cultural paradigm. This balance engenders a new model of Armenian civilization concentrated on cultural and religious achievements.¹³² It remains to add that the foreign policy of the king entirely corresponds to this purpose. As it is clear from the cited piece of information, the king coordinates his policy with the Persian court, keeping a friendly eye to the Romans.

The principle of intellectual senility is first of all characteristic for the eminent spiritual leaders of the Armenian Church – St. Grigoris, Vrtanes, Yusik, Nersēs the Great, Sahak the Great, Blessed Mesrop. They are the followers of the case of Gregory the Illuminator, the main actor of the con-version of the Armenians to Christianity:

From the eastern regions of our land he arose fur 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, truly a divine palm tree planted in the house of the Lord and flourishing in the courts of our God. He increased [the number of the faithful] among such and so many peoples and gathered us to an old age of spiritual wealth for the glory and praise of God [Khor., II, 91,]¹³³.

Nersēs the Great: “Summoning a council of bishops in concert with the laity, by canonical regulation he established mercy, extirpating the root of inhumanity, which was the natural custom in our land” [Khor., III, 20, 4].¹³⁴ Sahak the Great: “He resembled his fathers in all virtue, and even surpassed them with regard to prayer” [Khor., III, 49,]. St. Mesrop is a person of special reverence of Khorenatsi:

Or is it my father and high priest and his lofty mind who, wherever he went, brought perfect eloquence, whereby he guided and brought harmony, and taking the reins into his hands directed persons and bridled dissentient tongues? [Khor., III, 68, 27].

Summing up the rationalistic layer, we have to pay attention to the following fact:

132 This balance makes an exception in the black-and-white contrasts of the time. In modern terms, Vramshapuh (389 - 414) tried to bring together necessity and opportunity. However, his image is shadowed both in primary sources and modern scholarship. All achievements of the time are ascribed to his entourage. N. Garsoïan, however, believes that this king “brought a last moment of glory” to history of the Armenian Arsacids. **Garsoïan**, 1997, 92 – 93.

133 See in detail **Ormanean**, 2001, 84 – 122.

134 “Ժողով արարեալ եպիսկոպոսաց և համարեն աշխարհականաբ, կանոնական սահմանադրութեամբ հաստատեաց զողորմածութիւն, խլելով ու զանգթութեանն արմատ, որ բնաբար սովորութեամբ էր յերկրիս մերում”:

its progressive (and anthropomorphic) concept of history indicates a way of social metamorphosis - through phases of adolescence, virility and senility, to the high mentality and spirituality. During this process, the traditional social and state institutions degenerated, and the Armenians faced the problem of self-innovation. But it was possible only in the case of a new mode of self-reflection capable to uncover the profound senses of their history.

c. The metaphysic layer has its true beginning in the Lament of the History. To demonstrate this, we need to point out the following fact: this layer is authentic only in the presence of an experienced reader whose perception of history is based on the axiological approach.¹³⁵ In other words, this interpretation of history is real when the author's narrative is continued in the reverse perspective of his advanced contemporaries (and later generations).

Their collaboration is expected to uncover the hyper-textual perspectives of the concrete text. For this purpose, besides cause-and-effect connections of historical facts and events, it is necessary to restore their sympathetic relations as well. The other aspect of this collaboration implies a new perception of author's narrative time as sometimes slowing down, sometimes speeding up duration depending on the efficiency of the plot of history.¹³⁶ The features of the collaboration become traceable in the narrative *locus communis* brought about by the joint efforts of the author and his reader.¹³⁷

Scholars usually discuss the Lament in the light of the biblical parallels which are more than obvious in its text.¹³⁸ Indeed, those who see a series of direct and indirect quotations (especially, in the second part of the Lament) are not far from the truth. With an intention to depict the situation developed in Armenia after the fall of the Arsacids, Khorenatsi states:

For [we are] not like that of people in olden times, but our misery greater. Moses has been removed, but Joshua does not succeed him to lead [us] to the promised land. Roboam was abandoned by his own people, and the son of Nabat succeeded him. Not a lion but the completion of time consumed the man of God. Elijah was raised up and Elisha did not remain to anoint Jehu with the spirit again, but Azayel was invited to exterminate Izrael. Sedekia was led off to captivity, and no Zerubabel is anywhere to be found to restore the leadership. Antiochus forces us to abandon our ancestral laws, and Matathias does not oppose him. War has surrounded us and Maccabaeus does not save us. Now there are struggles within and terrors without: terrors from the pagans and struggles from the schismatic; and there is no counselor among us to advise and prepare for war [Khor., III, 68, 11 - 16].¹³⁹

135 Axiological approach is a concept of historiography and philosophy. Its correlate is to be traced in rhetoric history which began to be more actual from the days of Thucydides, Theopompus and Ephorus. See **Flower**, 1994, 183 – 187; **Hornblower**, 2006, 321 – 323; **Harrison**, 2010, 380.

136 They point out a peculiar balance of spatial and rhythmical modes of historical time representing respectively the Greek and Hebrew ideas of it. Momigliano, 1966, 5. As to the term of historical plot, it is usually discussed in connection with ethnic/national identity. Cf. **Ricoeur**, 1985, 214 – 215.

137 The reader “[...] is simply that someone who holds together in a single field all traces by which the written text constituted” **Barthes**, 1971, 167 – 172.

138 **Khalatyan**, 1903, 140 - 143; **Khachatryan**, 1969, 34 – 36; **Zekiyan**, 1993, 31; **Sargsyan**, 2006, 136 - 138.

139 On these parallels with Old Testament (Kings) and Maccabees see **Thomson**, 1978, 351.

This biblical parallelism is effectively continued in the sequel using ideas and phrases of old prophets, especially Jeremiah, Isaiah and Zechariah.¹⁴⁰ But a careful examination of the text gives reason to believe that another approach is quite possible as well. The latter, particularly, implies interpretation of the crucial fragments of the Lament from point of view of ancient philosophy.¹⁴¹

In this regard, the following ought to be underlined: Lament consists of numerous persons and situations, ideas and perceptions depicted in accordance with an axiology worked out by Aristotle and his Hellenistic successors. It was adopted by the Christian intellectuals and was also popular in early medieval Armenia.¹⁴² This is about the three poles of the same quality – excess, deficiency and mean – which have numerous been discussed above.

According to Khorenatsi, the destruction concerned all the layers of being – seasons change, countries fertility, social estates, legal and moral standards. In the Lament, their negative extremes are outlined in detail. Country:

Spring has become dry, summer very rainy, autumn like winter, and winter has become very icy, tempestuous and extended. The winds bring snowstorms, burning heat, and pestilence. The clouds bring thunder and hail; the rains are unseasonable and useless; the air is very cold and causes frost, rising of the waters is useless and their receding intolerable. The earth is barren of fruit and living creatures do not increase, but there are earthquakes and shakings [Khor., III, 68,40].

Through the principle of isomorphism, the social community of the Armenians undergoes the same kind of destructions. Khorenatsi represents them in sequence of the principal social estates: the teachers, monks, clergy, students, laity, soldiers, princes, judges. Above all, the figure of vicious kings stands: “The kings are cruel and evil rulers, imposing heavy and onerous burdens and giving intolerable commands. Governors do not correct disorders and are unmerciful. Friends are betrayed and enemies strengthened. Faith is sold for this vain life” [Khor., III, 68, 42].

Coming back to the image of the advanced reader, it seems quite reliable the following proposition: the latter may have retrospected the Lament in the wide perspective of the History with an aim to find the means of the extreme negative qualities of it. Indeed, a careful observation of Khorenatsi’s text uncovers a series of the mean situations in description of natural conditions of countries, social estates and outstanding persons.¹⁴³

In this regard, the description of Egypt must be recognized as very typical: “[...]”

140 It is quite indicative that Khorenatsi only once called by name a leader of the Maccabees [Hist., III, 68,13]. Eghishē, on the contrary, takes their deeds, images and names as models for the heroes of the Great Revolt Cf. Thomson, 1975, 36; Thomson, 1982, 47.

141 Stepanyan, 2009, 194.

142 The said is most definite in David the Invincible: the quality extremes are transmitted through the terms առավելաստացութիւն (excess) and պակասաստացութիւն (deficiency) and are characterized as lacking limits (անչափութիւն). As to the mean, it is strictly conjugated with limit (սահման) [David., Cat., II, 2].

143 Stepanyan, 2009, 195.

Egypt, that famous land free from the extremes of cold and heat, from floods and aridity, set in the most beautiful part of the world, filled with all kinds of fruit and furnished with natural wall by the Nile. This not only provides protection but enables [Egypt] to produce sufficient food by itself; and through its irrigation it masters both dryness and moisture for the cultivation of the land” [Khor., III, 62, 4].¹⁴⁴

From numerous descriptions of Armenia, one seems most appropriate to this comprehension. Khorenatsi cites it in connection with the campaign of Semiramis against Armenia: “Seeing the beauty of the land, the purity of the air, the limpidity of the flowing streams, and murmuring of the smooth rivers, she said: “In such a temperate climate and purity of waters and land, we must build a city and royal residence [...]” [Khor., I, 16, 4]. Khorenatsi also knows cases when the creative efforts of outstanding men overpass extremes and make the climate of land balanced. This ideal land has also its ethnic and cultural borders indicated by Armenian language (եզերք հայկական խաւսից) [Khor., II, 8, 5; cf. II, 3, 6].¹⁴⁵

Creation of an ideal society and state, after general decline, is a valuable experience which Korenatsi has compiled in the form of “full of reliable history and worth of the most polished and elaborate exposition” [Khor., II, 7, 2]. and installed it in the middle of his History where the main concern is the creative activity of Vagharshak Arsacid, Artashēs the Last and Trdat the Great. We have already depicted these kings from different points of view, so it will be sufficient to remind the semantic code of their activity in connection with restoration of natural rhythm of social community of the Armenians.

Vagharshak’s, example seems most appropriate. The core element of Khorenatsi’s narrative is about his reformation covering all the spheres of Greater Armenia from the court to remote peripheries. It distinguishes ranks and positions, responsibilities and honors of ideal officeholders (գործակալք), sovereign princes (տանուտէրք), priests (քուրք), judges (իրավարարք), soldiers (զարականք), citizens (քաղաքացիք) and peasants (գեղջուկք). In this regard, let us remind once more that the ultimate aim of the king’s policy was *peace, harmony, prosperity, life without rancor and similar blessings* [Khor., II, 8. 41].

The detailed analysis of values of this pole (both philological and philosophical) is beyond the limits of the present investigation. Its immediate interest is to pursue the counterpoint relations between this fragment of the *History* (as well as the like fragments) with those of the Lament. It is expected that, in the reverse perspective of an advanced reader, the negative extremes of the same quality will meet with their positive mean. In their relations, the poetry of Armenian history may have taken a real shape – beyond concrete situations, events and actors. It may have to state that the Lament is not an inconsolable threnody denoting the end of Armenian history. With the appropri-

144 More precisely, China also is depicted by Khorenatsi as a pole of absolute mean: “Their land is wonderful in its abundance of all [varieties of] fruits; it is adorned with beautiful plants, rich in saffron, peacocks and silk” [Khor., II, 81, 11].

145 In line with this reasoning, Buzand names Armenia a land of Armenian language – աշխարհի ամենայն Հայոց լեզուին [Buz., IV, 12, 5]. This aspect of was one of cornerstones Artashēs’ reformation aimed to establish Armenian homgloty. **Stepnyan**, 1991, 166.

ate reader, it can turn into a device of overpassing of crisis situations of social life. In this light, a new rhythm of Armenian history acquires importance – *from birth to re-birth*.¹⁴⁶

In other words, the Lament contains an instrument of catharsis and innovation. It is more appropriate to define it as tragedy (ողբերգություն) in Aristotelian sense. For this metamorphosis, let us underline again, the role of the advanced reader is very important.¹⁴⁷ It seems, Khorenatsi means just him in the last words of the Lament: “From this may Christ God protect us and *those who worship him in truth*” [Khor., III, 68, 44]. Most probably, under them, the adepts with profound theological knowledge are to be traced. The adepts who possessed *summa sapientia* of their time, both inner and outer origin. With a low probability of error, it may be defined as the formula of self-identity of the Mashtots generation who believed in Socrates’ maxim: “Give a man a correct education, and the instincts will lead him to virtue, but educate him badly and he will end up at the other extreme” [Plato, Lg., 682e].¹⁴⁸

For Khorenatsi, the most effective way of education is history written down in form of reliable and trustworthy records and texts: “For although we are a land of low cultivation and[so] very restricted in numbers, weak in power, often subject to other’s rule, yet many manly deeds have been performed in our land worthy of being recorded in writing” [Khor., I, 3, 4].¹⁴⁹ In other words, if sufficiently cultivated, Armenia has ability to escape catastrophes. In confirmation of this, the advanced reader may recall the well-known fragment of the History which sums up the results of the reformation of Artashēs the Last: “[...] in the time of Artashēs there was no land uncultivated in Armenia, neither of mountain nor plain, on account of the prosperity of the country [Khor., II, 56, 5]”.¹⁵⁰ It means that under this king, Armenia has entirely turned into a crafted soil (ածու); an achievement which is usually accompanied by the rapid development of sciences, technologies and arts.

The metaphysic perception states that there is no strict predestination in history: God’s benevolence is with the men who are His image and possess a free will of self-determination in the frame of universal justice. Fatalistic formula of history “it happened so” comes to be replaced by metaphysic perception “it might happen so”. Such a statement is aimed at future which the new generation of intellectuals is going to prepare setting new paradigms of education, scholarship and culture. They realized that, with the fall of the Armenian Arsacids, a great époque of Armenian history came to end and the foundation of a new one is to be laid down.

146 Stepanyan, 2016, 54.

147 P. Bourdieu formulates the relationship of such writer and reader as follows: “[...] he knows it and he knows that his reader knows it”. Bourdieu, 1988, 24.

148 Most probably, Khorenatsi proceeds directly from Philo of Alexandria’s assumption of ἐν κύκλῳ παιδεία [Philo, Congr., 11, 14 – 18, Cher., 105; Mut., 229; Mos., 1, 123; QG, 3, 21; QE 2, 103]. Cf. Colson, 1917, 158 – 159; Mendelson, 1982, 9 – 14.

149 “Զի թէպէտ և ենք ածու փոքր, և թուով յոյժ ընդ փոքու սահմանեալ, և զուրութեամբ տկար, և ընդ այլով յոյլով անգամ նուաճեալ թագավորութեամբ՝ սակայն բազում գործք արութեան գտանին գործեալ և ի մերում աշխարհիս, և արժանի գրոյ յիշատակի [...]”:

150 “[...] ի ժամանակս Արտաշիսի ոչ գտանել երկիր անգործ յաշխարհիս Հայոց, ոչ լեռնային և ոչ դաշտային, յարդագ շինութեան երկրիս”:

Epilogue

Synthetic history made up a genre aimed to bring together various achievements of historical perception to reach an essential comprehension of the perspective of the past, present and visible future. In an exact sense, it intended to combine the results of mythical and rationalistic concepts in the focus of metaphysical perceptions.

Two authors of the Armenian Golden age, Eghishē and Moses Khorenatsi, seem most prominent in systemizing Armenian history. They are very different in their research craft and grasp of history – one has written a point history, whereas the other - a total history. But both of them have come to metaphysic perception aimed to overpass the rigoristic-descriptive (regressive or progressive) pattern of history and discuss the creative ideas and plans, wills and actions of outstanding persons as important elements of history. A closer inspection reveals a more detailed assumption of Eghishē's and Khorenatsi's conceptions of Armenian history.

Eghishē: his *History* represents a synthesis in the frame of a tragic plot with the exact beginning, develop and end. The subject of the plot is the Great Revolt of the Armenians against the Sassanids (450 – 451). It begins from the great turmoil caused by the evil will of Sassanid king Jazkert II to put end to the autonomy of Persarmenia and reconvert the people to Zoroastrianism. Consequently, the characters of tragedy are divided into two opposite groups – the adherents and adversaries of evil. The partisans of the first group personify the base qualities – cowardice and falsehood, treachery and cruelty. As to the second group, it represents the mean – bravery and fidelity, piety and devotion. The clash of these oppositions culminated in the battle of Avarayr. It was a scene of catharsis: Vardan and his supporters fell as true martyrs. The martyrdom continued after the battle: many holy priests and noblemen found death under tortures. However, this did not break the Armenian resistance, it lasted and coincided with the devastating raids of the Huns forcing the Sassanids to change their policy toward Armenia. This opened a door to restoration of universal peace and order.

In Aristotelian theory, this process is defined as the establishment of *completeness* (ἐντέλεια). The situation is also explainable on the biblical (especially Maccabees) parallels about divine providence and human piety. But that is not all, the text can also be explained through parallels with Zoroastrian concept which traced three crucial phases in earthly history: mixture of evil and good (gumezishn), their separation and clash (vizarishn), and the restoration of order under God's judgement. For this compound (hyper-textual) perception an advanced reader was demanded able to represent the intellectual eye of his époque.

Moses Khorenatsi: his *History* demonstrates another way of narrative synthesis. Instead of Eghishē's point history, he has compiled a long-term history of the Armenians from the days of the ethnarch Hayk up to the fifth century. It represents three variants of interpretation of the past – epical, rationalistic and metaphysic.

The epical interpretation depicts an eon with regressive cycle of history “from chaos to chaos” – from Flood to the situation of Lament of the fifth century. As to the ra-

tionalistic interpretation, it depicts history as progressive movement from primary barbarity and disfavor of wisdom to high moral values and useful counsels of Christianity.

The metaphysic perception denotes the highest achievement of historical perception designed to overpass the fatalism of the epical and rationalistic assumptions of history. For this approach again the presence of an advanced reader is necessary. In his extra-textual perception, the extremes of situations and characters of the *Lament* are expected to be balanced with the means of the ideal periods of history under Vagharshak Arsacid, Artashēs the Last, Trdat the Great. These *dialogues* make up the essence of the poetry of history designed to uncover the polyphony of the *History* to give answer to the essential question of every historical investigation – “what might happen”.

Its addressee is a righteous man, who believes in his mission to collaborate with God as his image (ἰνδαλμα τοῦ θεοῦ) for the sake of supporting the universal order and justice. But ignorance is able to separate him from God: without knowledge, everything is confused and wild (խսռն ի խուռն և վայրենի) [Khor., I, 9, 6]. God’s knowledge helped the biblical patriarch Moses to lead his people to the Promised Land. His ideal image always inspired Khorenatsi to repeat his deed in writing space – to wear his mask (and become a right Moses) and chart a path out of chaos of the Lament.

All the discussed models of historical perception differ by their content, research methods and results. At the same time, they demonstrate some profound common features concerning the metaphysical layer of history writing. The main of them claimed history to be able to influence the social life through creative ideas and experiences. The work of a trustworthy historian was graded as *glorious deed* (զործ արժանաւիտւոյ). Khorenatsi’s account about the ultimate respect of Vagharshak Arsacid to the work of the historian Mar Aba Catina seems more relevant: “[...] estimating it as the foremost of his treasures, [the king] placed it in the palace, in safekeeping, with great care; and a part of it he ordered to be inscribed on a stele” [Khor., I, 9, 5].

The synthetic perception demanded to uncover the poetry of history to give answer not only to the question “what happened” but also “what might happen”. Such reflection promised to give an opportunity to influence the course of history. This was an important step in the way of overpassing social catastrophes and establishing order and prosperity.¹⁵¹ Such approach indicated possibilities of social and national rebirth of the Armenians.¹⁵²

In this regard, we again come up to the image of the advanced (conditional) reader. His reverse perspective focused and summarized the *summa sapientia* (philosophy and theology, axiology and morality) of the époque paving a path to synthetic history. This reader represented the collective image of the intellectuals of the Golden Age, and it is quite available to trace in him one of crucial figures of Armenian history.

151 Khorenatsi’s Lament belongs to the genre of so called surviving laments which is thought to be “[...] a work of art by survivors, metaphoric and symbolic, rather than a precise account of events” O’Connor, 2008, 27.
152 Stepanyan, 2016, 51.

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Ամփոփում

ՊԱՏՄՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԼՈՒՍԱՎՈՐ ԻՄԱՍՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ.

Եղիշեի և Մովսես Խորենացու գրույթների վերիմաստավորման փորձ

Բանալի բառեր – Եղիշե, Մովսես Խորենացի, Ոսկեդար, հելլենիստական քրիստոնեություն, գրադաշտականություն, Մեծ ապստամբություն, պատմության էպիքական ընկալում, ողբերգական պատմություն, համադրական պատմություն, հակառակ հեռանկար, պատմագիր, ուսյալ ընթերցող:

Հոդվածը խնդիր ունի լուսաբանելու Եղիշեի և Մովսես Խորենացու պատմահամակարգերը համադրական պատմության ժանրի շրջանակներում: Ժանր, որ միտված էր ի մի բերելու պատմության էպիկական և բանական (ռացիոնալիստական) ընկալումները մի նոր՝ բնագանցական (մետաֆիզիկական) համակարգի մեջ: Վերջինս կոչված էր խնդրարկելու անցյալը ոչ այն լույսով, թե «ինչ եղել է», այլ՝ «ինչ կարող էր լինել ըստ անհրաժեշտության և պատահականության»:

Արիստոտելյան «Պոետիկայից» բխող այս մոտեցումը լայն տարածում ուներ հելլենիստական մտավոր միջավայրում: Ներմուծվել էր Մեծ Հայք տակավին Արտավազդ Բ-ի ժամանակ, իսկ հունաբան մտավորականների ջանքերով դարձել պատմության ընկալման հույժ ներունակ հարացույց:

Այս լույսի ներքո Եղիշեի պատմությունը ներկայանում է իբրև մի ծավալուն պատմական ողբերգություն՝ իր հստակ ուրվագծված խաղընթացով՝ սկիզբ, զարգացում և ավարտ-մաքրագերծում (կատարսիս): Այդ ծիրում պատմությունը զարգանում է համակեցական քառսի սկզբնավորումից (Հազկերտ II-ի բռնությունները և Հայոց պատերազմի սկիզբը) դեպի ծայրահեղ ծավալում-բևեռացում (Ավարայրի ճակատամարտ, հայոց ավագանու և հոգևոր դասի կտտանքներ) և ապա դեպի խաղաղության ու բարեկարգության վերականգնման քայլեր: Հոդվածում ցույց է տրվում, որ պատմության ընկալման նման հարացույցն իր զուգահեռներն ունի նաև գրադաշտական կրոնամիստիկական պատմատեսության մեջ՝ *գումեզիշն* (չարի և բարու միախառնում), *վիզարիշն* (չարի և բարու ծայրահեղ բևեռացում և բախում), *ֆրաշակարյր* (աստվածային դատ և հավերժական խաղաղության վերականգնում):

Այլ է Խորենացու պարագան. նա խնդիր ունի իմաստավորելու հայոց պատմության ողջ ընթացքը՝ սկսյալ Զրիեղեղից և Հայքի հիմնումից մինչև իր օրերի ընկերային քառսը: Ժամանակի այս երկար տևողությունը Խորենացին նույնպես դիտարկում է պատմահայեցողության երեք զուգահեռ հարացույցների լույսով՝ էպիկական, բանական և բնագանցական: Էպիկական հարացույցը հանդիսանում է պատմական էոնի տեսքով՝ ներփակ բոլորակ, որ ծավալվում է «քառսից քառս» հետընթաց ծավալումով: Բանա-

կան հարացույցը հատկանշում է պատմության առաջընթաց շարժումը՝ տոհմական կենցաղից դեպի պետականություն և քրիստոնեական *ուխարհ* *Ասարծ*: Վերջինիս ներհատուկ է մարդակերպություն ըստ կայացման երեք շրջափուլերի՝ մանկություն (մարմնականություն), առնացիություն (հոգեկանություն) և ծերություն (ոգեկանություն): Դրանք համապատասխանում են *Պատմության* երեք գրքերին: Բնագանցական հարացույցը խնդիր ունի հարադրելու պատմության այս տարամետ ընկալումները: Համաձայն դրա՝ պատմության ծիրում հույժ կարևոր են խոշոր անհատականություններն իրենց ստեղծագործ եռանդով, գաղափարներով և կամքով: Բազմաչափ անցյալին նրանք հաղորդում են կառուցիկ այգորիթմ՝ նախանշելով քառտիկ վիճակների հաղթահարման հարացույցներ: Հայսմ բացահայտվում է պատմագրության կիրառական դիտանկյունը, քանզի անցյալի ուսումնասիրությունը համարվում է նման գիտելիքի իրական աղբյուր: Բնագանցական դիտանկյունից հայոց պատմությունը ներկայանում է իբրև ծնունդի (Հայկ) և վերածնունդների շարք (Վաղարշակ Արշակունի, Արտաշես Վերջին, Տրդատ Մեծ): Այս տրամաբանությունը հուշում է, որ «Ողբում» նկարագրված քառսը նույնպես հաղթահարելի է մտահոգևոր և կամային համակարգված ձիգերի պարագայում: Որպես նման ըմբռնման արգասիք պետք է նկատել պատմահոր *Պատմությունը*, որը, բացի գուտ տեսական-հետազոտական նպատակից, ունի կիրառական նպատակ՝ տալ ուսյալ ընթերցողին ունակություն կառուցակազմելու պատմության հեռանկարը՝ զերծ քառտիկ ընդհատումներից և ճգնաժամներից:

Նման մոտեցմամբ՝ Եղիշեի, և Խորենացու պատումները ներկայանում են իբրև *գործք արժանափառք*՝ հանգույն խոշորագույն այրերի հասարակաշինական նորագործությունների: Առաջինի պարագայում պատմությունն սկսվում է քառսից և ավարտվում կարգի վերահաստատմամբ: Երկրորդի պարագայում թե՛ քառսը, թե՛ կարգը հավասարապես ներհատուկ են պատմությանը: Նրա ընթացքը շատ առումներով կախված է իր ընտրյալ կրողների ընտրությունից և ստեղծագործ կամքից: Զի մարդն Աստծո պատկերն է (ἰνδαλμα τοῦ θεου):

Резюме

СВЕТЛАЯ МУДРОСТЬ ИСТОРИИ:

Опыт переосмысления текстов Егишэ и Мовсеса Хоренаци

Ключевые слова – Егишэ, Мовсес Хоренаци, Золотой век, эллинистическое христианство, зороастризм, Великое восстание, эпическое восприятие истории, трагическая история, синтетическая история, обратная перспектива, историограф, интеллектуальный читатель.

Статья нацелена на интерпретацию исторических концепций Егишэ и Мовсеса Хоренаци в рамках синтетической истории, жанра, гармонизирующего эпическое и

рационалистическое восприятия истории в новую метафизическую систему. По общему признанию, она была призвана дать ответ не только на традиционный вопрос “что случилось в прошлом”, а на вопрос “что могло бы случиться по необходимости или случайности”.

Следуя данному подходу, Егишэ изображает историю армянского анти-персидского восстания 450 – 451 гг. как всеохватывающую историческую трагедию с весьма четким сценическим развитием – начало, развитие и конец-катарсис. Сценарий развивается с началом социального хаоса (гонения Язкерта II против армян и начало анти-персидской войны), далее переходит к крайнему обострению вражды и насилия (Аварайрское сражение, пытки и смерть видных армянских нахараров и духовных предводителей), а к концу - к восстановлению мира, справедливости и благоденствия. Подобное восприятие имеет параллели с зороастрийской концепцией, где земная история человечества проходит через этапы гумезишна (смешение добра и зла), визаришна (крайняя поляризация и столкновение добра и зла) и фрашакарта (божественный суд и восстановление вечного мира).

Иная картина у Хоренаци. Его цель – охватить историю от Потопа и основания страны Армения вплоть до социального хаоса V в. Это длительное протяжение истории Хоренаци также рассматривает в свете трех парадигм – эпической, рационалистической и метафизической. Парадигма эпическая представлена в виде исторического эона, протекающего в регрессивном алгоритме “от хаоса к хаосу”. Парадигма рационалистическая изображена как прогрессивное движение от родовой формы общежития к государству, далее - к Божему завету. Это движение имеет антропоморфную форму: детство (соматизм), возмужание (аффективность), старость (духовность). Метафизическая парадигма имеет целью сопоставить две предыдущие. Согласно ей, в процессе истории весьма важна роль идей, программ и волевых действий выдающихся личностей. Они структурируют многомерное прошлое и в его алгоритмах выявляют пути преодоления социальных кризисов. В этом и проявляется практический аспект истории: вопреки теоретическим знаниям о прошлом, она имеет потенциал повлиять на ход современности. С метафизической точки зрения, армянская история вырисовывается как линейное движение от рождения (этнарх Хайк) к серии возрождений (Вагаршак Аршакид, Арташес Последний, Трдат Великий).

Сказанное подсказывает, что описанная в Плаче Хоренаци всеохватывающий хаос не является неотвратимым: нужны духовные, интеллектуальные и соци-волевые действия. Для этой цели и написаны труды Егишэ и Мовсеса Хоренаци. Они относятся к разряду “славных деяний” и вполне сопоставимы с социотворческими делами выдающихся исторических мужей.