THE HISTORICAL ARGUMENTS FOR THE DATE (5th CENTURY) OF WRITING "THE HISTORY OF ARMENIA" BY MOVSES KHORENATSI

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Movses Khorenatsi's "The History of Armenia" which extends from "The Root of Mankind" to c. 440 AD is a unique sample of world chronicle. The Armenian Father of History, stated: "History is not true without chronology"[1]. At present, a millennium and a half later this statement is adequately valid for the historiography and history of literature as well[2].

The chronological classification of the authors of ancient and mediaeval Armenian works is of the utmost importance to accurately envision the course of literary history, which is inseparably associated with the general history of the Armenian people and, particularly, the development of the Armenian spiritual culture.

The first attempt to classify Armenian literature, parallel to writing the history of Armenia, belongs to the greatest representative of our modern historiography, Mikayel Chamchean. In his tri-volume monumental work, he relied mainly on traditional data[3]. The authors of "The New Haykazean Dictionary" G. Avetikyan, Kh. Syurmelyan, and M. Avgeryan played a significant role in classifying ancient and medieval Armenian bibliography. They often unmistakably determined the time of writing or translation of works based on linguistic-stylistic characteristics[4]. Considerable also were the contributions of renowned Armenologists A. Aytnyan[5], T. Tornyan[6], N. Byuzandatsi[7] and, particularly, G. Zarphanalyan. Their valuable works relate to medieval Armenian literature and the translations of ancient works[8].

The credit of creating the systematic chronology and history of Armenian ancient and mediaeval literature belongs, however, to renowned literary critic and historian of literature M.Abeghyan, whose "History of Ancient Armenian Literature" in two volumes[9] remains a handbook. "It appears that it would be impossible to compose a work with

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[1] Մովսէս Խորենացի, Պատմութիւն Հայոց, աշխատասիրութեամբ Մ.Աբեղեան եւ Ս. Յարութիւնեան, Տփղիս, 1913, էջ 224:

[2] Մուշեղյան Ա. Վ., Մովսես Խորենացու դարը, Երևան, 2007:

[3] Չամչեանց Մ., Պատմութիւն Հայոց, հտ. Ա-Գ, Վենետիկ,1784-1786::

[4] Նոր բառգիրք Հայկազեան լեզուի, հտ. Ա, Վենետիկ, 1836, էջ 9-20:

[5] Այտընեան Ա., Քննական քերականութիւն աշխարհաբար կամ արդի հայերէն լեզուի, 1866:

[6] Թոռնեան Թ., Հատընտիր ընթերցուացք ի մատենագրութեանց նախնեաց, , հտ. 1, 1866, հտ. 2, 1910.

[7] Բիւզանդացի Ն., Կորիւն վարդապետ և նորին թարգմանութիւնք, Տփղիս, 1900:

[8] Զարպհանալեան Գ., Պատմութիւն հայերէն դպրութեանց, հտ. 1, 1865, հտ. 2, 1878, նոյնի՝ Հայկական մատենագիտութիւն, 1883, նոյնի՝ Մատենադարան հայկական թարգմանութեանց նախնեաց, 1889:

[9] Աբեղյան Մ., Հայոց հին գրականության պատմություն, Երևան, հտ. 1, 1944, հտ. 2, 1946:

chronological succession, without sufficiently clarifying the main moments of our ancient literature," he wrote[10]. Such chronological difficulties are tangible for modern researchers even half a century later, at present.

During the last three to four centuries the progress of European Armenology has contributed to the recognition of ancient and mediaeval Armenian literature as one of the most unique expressions of world literature. Meanwhile, Armenological studies have posed serious questions for Armenian philologists and historians, particularly with regard to the chronological succession in this field, which is waiting for its solution. Many of these issues continue to await solution.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, in the course of the rapid development of comparative philology and the historical-comparative method, centuries-old traditional perceptions pertaining to the chronological order of famous Armenian historians, writers, and their works underwent serious scientific revision. Along with achievements of historical and philological thought, excessively "impartial" examination of texts and sources often led to unsubstantiated verdicts and a variety of whimsical hypotheses. Age-old traditions were dismissed and moving the authors from one century to another became the preoccupation of ambitious critics, whereby they were called "hypercritics".

A greater temptation was reserved for Movses Khorenatsi, who became known to European philologists during the first half of the eighteenth century, in particular through two Latin translations of his "The History of Armenia". The first translator was the Swedish Armenologist Heinrich Brenner (1669-1732). In 1697, Brenner traveled to Persia. On his way back he was arrested and sent to Moscow by the Russians, because the 1700-1721 war had erupted between Russia and Sweden. During the years of his captivity, Brenner became interested in ancient Armenian literature and in Movses Khorenatsi's "The History of Armenia" in particular, and initiated its translation into Latin. After the Russo-Swedish peace treaty was signed in 1721, Brenner received permission to return to Stockholm and was appointed director of the Royal library. In 1723, he published in Stockholm the first annotated and abridged version of Movses Khorenatsi's "The History of Armenia" in Latin.

The second complete and comprehensively annotated Latin translation belongs to two young English philologist brothers, William (1667-1752) and George Whiston, who published the translation in London (in the printing house of their father) along with the translation of the short recension of Movses Khorenatsi's "Ashkharhatsoyts" (Geography) and the original Armenian text[11]. The Whiston brothers applied their entire

[10] Աբեղյան Մ., նշվ. աշխ., հտ. 1, Առաջաբան, էջ 1։

[11] Մովսիսի Խորենացւոյ Պատմութիւն եւ Աշխարհագրութիւն: Mosis Chorenensis Historiae Armeniacae. Libri III. Accedit ejusdem Scriptoris Epitome Geographiae: Praemittitur Praefatio, quae de Literatura, ac Versione Sacra Armeniaca agit;_et subjicitur appendix. Armeniace ediderunt Latine verterunt, Notisque illustrarunt Guilelmus et Deorgius, Gul. Whistoni Filii, Londini, MDCCXXXVI (1736).

knowledge of classical philology and ancient and early-mediaeval Greco-Roman literature to this publication. In their annotations, many parallels were drawn between Khorenatsi's History and the works of Greco-Roman classical authors, turning the Latin translation by the Whiston brothers into a valuable source. Along with the Latin translation, they placed the originals of Movses Khorenatsi's "The History of Armenia" and "Ashkharhatsoyts" published by Tovma Vanandetsi in Amsterdam (the first in 1695, the second 1698).

The hypercriticism against Movses Khorenatsi reached its peak in the late nineteenth century (A. Gutschmidt, Q. Carrier, G.Khalatyants), when toponymy and historical events belonging to the sixth-seventh centuries were "denoted" in Khorenatsi's History, thus these hypercritics claimed that he could not have lived in the fifth century. Simultaneously, they ascribed to the Armenian historian a whole series of borrowings from the historiographic works of the sixth-century Byzantine authors Malalas and Procopius, and from the late-seventh-century abridged Armenian translations of Silvestrus' "Biography" and Socrates Scholasticus' "Ecclesiastical History". Therefore, they concluded that Movses Khorenatsi could not belong to the fifth century, nor could be a pupil of Sahak Partev and Mesrop Mashtots, as he tried to "fake" in his "The History of Armenia". The facts were so impressive that they attracted the attention of other dedicated Armenologists, such as M. Ter-Movsisyan, J. Marquart, H.Hübschmann, N. Adontz, and N. Marr, who generally esteemed Khorenatsi highly.

In spite of this, a group of traditionalist philologists (B. Sargisean, N.Byuzandatsi, S. Malkhasyants, M. Abeghyan) ardently attempted to counter these attacks on Khorenatsi. Among them was the British Armenologist Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare (1857-1924) who in 1903, in a study refuted O. Carriere's false theory, showing that Khorenatsi did not borrow from Malalas' Chronology; rather, both of them used an older, the fourth-century Greek source[12].

In 1904 Adontz harshly criticized G. Khalatyants, accusing him of intentionally defaming Khorenatsi; and he voiced the hope that with Khalatyants' research on the Armenian Arsacid dynasty, the negative-biased study of Khorenatsi's History would come to end and transition to a positive and more realistic view.[13] In spite of this hope, new Armenian and non-Armenian names joined the ranks of Khorenatsi's critics.

Decades later N. Akinyan came to replace Khalat'yants. He proceeded to bring the critique of Khorenatsi's History to the level of grotesque. In his work, Ancient Literary Researches, published in 1930, Akinyan suggested that Khorenatsi's History was written in the beginning of the ninth century by the historian Ghewond Erets: "The forger

[12] Մ. Խորենացւոյ Պատմութեան ժամանակին մասին « թղթակցութիւն հայագէտ Փ Կոնիբերի, "Հանդէս ամսօրեայ", Վիեննա, 1903, էջ 30-36, 152-157, 215-218, 317-320, 325-330:

[13] Адонц Н., Г.Халатьянц, Армянские Аршакиды в Истории Армении Моисея Хоренского. - Записки Восточного отделения Русского Археологического Общества, СПб, 1904, с. 145-160.

under the name Movses had before his eyes the Prophet Moses, the author of Pentateuch." At the same time Akinyan with rather impermissible ridiculousness etymologized "Khoren atsi."

In 1934, H. Manandyan, despite rightfully criticizing Akinyan, still, treated the issue with a similar spirit and suggested that "Lament" and "The History of Armenia" were written after Bugha's invasion of Armenia in 852-855, during the reign of Catholicos Zakaria (855-875),[14] thus furthering Marquart's theory.

In 1940, in his introduction to the new Armenian translation of Khorenatsi's History, S. Malkhasyants' wrote: "In our opinion, the issue of the period the history was written in should be considered consumed after the numerous new and old evidences we have brought in the first addendum to our study "About Khorenatsi's Mystery" (page LXXI). Nevertheless, in 1961, Cyril Toumanoff published an article ("On the Date of Pseudo-Moses of Chorene")[15] in English which he included again in his "Studies in Christian Caucasian History". He considered the discussion over and revived the old arguments of the 1880s and 1890s, in particular, those belonging to Marquart. Thus Toumanoff moved "Pseudo-Moses" back from the late ninth century and placed him in the second half of the eighth century[16].

The climax of negative criticism against Khorenatsi must be considered Robert Thomson's introduction to the English translation of Khorenatsi's History, published in 1978. There, Khorenatsi is presented as a monk who lived as if during the second half of the eighth century and who, in order to establish reliability before the readers, camouflaged himself as the famous fifth-century philosopher and translator Movses[15] and pretended to be a pupil of Sahak and Mesrop. Relying mostly on the arguments of G. Khalatyants and C. Toumanoff, and referring to all historical and geographical anachronisms found in Khorentasi's History during the last century, R.Thomson concluded that Khorenatsi's History reflects the period following 750 when the Bagratids gained the upper hand over the Mamikonian's princely family in Armenia and this coincided with the first decades of the Abbasid Caliphate established in Iraq[17]. R.Thomson wrote that benefiting from the Armenian authors of the fifth to eighth centuries (from Agatangeghos to Sebeos and Stepanos Syunetsi), as well as the Armenian translations of foreign authors, Khorenatsi tried to restore the fifth-century texts to their original state and create a history that would give "Armenia an important role in Roman-Parthian history and forging a close link between the Bagratids and Palestine", with intention to reserve a special role for Armenians on the stage of world

[14] Մանանդյան Հ., Խորենացու առեղծվածի լուծումը, Երևան, 1934, էջ 130-131 և 176:

[15] See in: "Հանդէս ամսօրեայ", 1961, 10-12:

[16] Cyril Toumanoff. "Studies in Christian Caucasian History", Georgetown, 1963, pp. 333-334.

[17] Moses Khorenatsi, History of the Armenians. Translation, Introduction and Commentary of the Literary Sources by Robert Thomson, Cambridge, Massach., London, 1978., Introduction, pp. 59-60.

history[18]. In his introduction, Thomson subjectively "qualifies" Movses Khorenatsi as "a mystifier of the first order," "audacious, and mendacious, faker," who "when he is recasting written texts - be they originally foreign or native Armenian - he is completely unscrupulous in his distortions[19].

Jean-Pierre Mahe, a French Armenologist, also mentions the anachronisms in the introduction and annotations of his new French translation of Khorenatsi's History[20], but unlike Thomson, he retains a profound respect for Khorenatsi and his classical work.

The debate about the time of Khorenatsi has entered its second century, but the reviewers of his time have not yet reached a consensus. A.Gutschmidt, H.Hubschmann, A. Zaminyan, L. Melikset-Bek, and H. Orbeli considered Khorenatsi to be a seventh-century author. Others, such as O.Carrier, H.Tashyan, G. Ter-Mkrtchyan, S. Janashia, C. Toumanoff and R. Thomson, placed him in the eighth century. J.Marquart, K. Maclaire, N. Akinian, H. Manandyan moved him to the ninth century. Others mentioned a longer stretch: K. Krumbacher and F.Haage suggested the seventh to eighth centuries, whereas G. Khalatyants and Hans Levi offered the eighth to ninth centuries. N. Adontz suggested placing Khorenatsi's History among the literary monuments of the sixth-eighth centuries. Thus, Khorenatsi's time has been stretched over a period of more than 300 years, depending on which fact carries a greater weight in the eyes of researchers.

The current level of classical philology requires a more analytical approach toward the critical issues related to Khorenatsi and his work, and an optimal examination of ancient Armenian and non-Armenian sources. G.Sargsyan's work is very important from this point of view, where he noted that Movses Khorenatsi was the author of the 5th century and criticized R.Thomson's ani-scientific position in relation to Khorenatsi[21].

S. Malkhasyants suggested that Movses Khorenatsi was bom around 410 AD, based on the presumption that he should have been 22-23 years old when he set out for Alexandria, Egypt, to study[22]. But this date is unacceptable because Koryun, the youngest pupil of Mashtots, must have been at least 20-21 years old when in 431 he was in Constantinople during the Third Ecumenical council of Ephesus; therefore, he, too, would have been born in 410. Meanwhile, Khorenatsi belongs to the younger generation of the pupils of Mashtots and Sahak, like his brother Mambre the

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[18] Ibid., p. 57.

[19] Ibid., pp. 56-58.

[20] Moïse de Khorène, Histoire de l'Arménie, Nouvelle traduction de l'arménien classique par Annie et Jean-Pierre Mahé, avec une introduction et des notes , Paris, 1993, pp. 9-93.

[21] Мовсес Хоренаци, История Армении. Перевод с древнеармянского языка, введение и примечания Г.Саркисяна, Ереван, 1990.

[22] Մովսես Խորենացի, Պատմություն Հայոց, թարգմանությունը, ներածությունը և ծանոթագրություններն ակադեմիկոս Ստ. Մալխասյանցի, Երևան, 1868, էջ 6:

Decipherer, Eghishe - the historian of the Vardan rebellion, and others. According to H. Acharyan, Khorenatsi was born in 425.

According to a tradition, before heading overseas Movses was an acolyte under Catholicos Sahak Partev. Considering that Movses would have been at least 18-20 years old to serve as an acolyte and, moreover, make a distant trip at the time Sahak Partev died (at the end of the month Navasard in year 438 or 439), it is appropriate to suggest that he was bom around 420.

Moses Khorenatsi's initial education coincided with the years when, thanks to Mashtots' efforts and the order of Emperor Theodosius Junior (408-450), Armenian children were gathered in convenient places within the districts of Western Armenia (which was under the Byzantine rule) to receive stipends and learn the newly invented Armenian alphabet[23].

Khorenatsi, while telling of Mashtots' teaching in the western parts of Armenia, and perhaps also by recalling his study memories and impressions, noted: "Mesrop, dwelling in the uninhabited and woody places called Shaghgomk, completed the instruction of the first groups. He taught not as if it were an art, but as if he were giving spirit to the students in the apostolic manner"[24].

Besides, Khorenatsi studied Greek language and literature, because only a youngster at the age of 18-20 with such knowledge could have been dispatched to Alexandria by Catholicos Sahak and Mashtots, along with peers, to become an expert of the language in a real academy. Young Moses was most likely sent to Alexandria after 435, when, in his own words, Sahak and Mesrop translated again the Holy Bible that had been originally translated "hastily." They found that the Armenian translation was deficient in many parts, because "they were not versed in our technique"[25], that is, of the grammatical forms adopted by the Greek school and adjusted for the Armenian language.

Thomson and some others consider it questionable that Khorenatsi studied in Alexandria; they consider it a snobbish boasting on his part. But that Khorenatsi and his peers were indeed dispatched overseas by Sahak and Mesrop, in particular to Alexandria and other famous cities to complete their higher education is confirmed by a document produced in the second half of the sixth century, which here is being referred to for the first time.

According to the epistle "On Christ's Manifestation", the Armenian Catholicos Hovhannes[26] opposed to the novelty of the Roman Church (which established Christ's

[23] Կորյուն, Վարք Մաշտոցի, բնագիրը, ձեռագրական այլ ընթերցումներով, թարգմանությամբ, առաջաբանով և ծանոթություններով ի ձեռն Մ. Աբեղյանի, Երևան, 1941, էջ 68:

[24] Մովսէս Խորենացի, էջ339-340.

[25] Մովսէս Խորենացի, էջ 343:

[26] According to N. Pogharian, it is the letter (written c. 565 AD) of Hovhannes II Gabeghentsi (557-574) [Գիրք Թղթոց, Երկրորդ հրատարակութիւն (աշխատասիրութեամբ Նորայր արքեպս. Պողարեանի), Երուսաղէմ,

Birth and Manifestation to be two separate feasts, and designated December 25 as Christmas), and together with some arguments noted, “the holy fathers who convened in Nicaea, and the blessed St. Grigorios and St. Aristakes, did not establish two feasts - Christmas and Manifestation, but rather one. Likewise, the spirit-bearing vardapets [Sahak and Mesrop-A.M.] and translators who were taught in Alexandr[ia] and other famous cities, did not translate anything more and new, neither they perceived [such things] and nor consigned them to us”[27]. This letter of Hovhannes, in addition to providing reliable information that Khorenatsi had studied in Alexandria, provides the earliest reference to the existence of his History, because it was the main source that related to the studies carried out in Alexandria. This is so despite S. Malkhasyants' note that “There are no historical writings that have reached us from the sixth century which would contain a hint about Khorenatsi. Our literature of this century consists of translations, in general, and is Hellenistic in style”.[28]

On his way to Alexandria young Movses visited also Edessa, and “sailed gently over the depths of the archives” as he recalls figuratively, he examined slightly the rich local archive in Edessa. Thereafter, “we went on to worship the holy places and be engaged in the Palestinian studies for a brief period.”[29] Thus, Movses had also been in Jerusalem and was introduced to the Hebrew language. Afterward, he with his peers entered the famous country - Egypt, where they studied in the “real academy” of Alexandria for a few years, during which, apparently, Movses called his teacher the *New Plato*. After completing their studies Movses and his peers headed for Hellada (Greece), but because of a stormy sea their boat found itself in Italy. After a short stay in Rome, the peers moved to Greece and spent the winter in Attica, Athens. There, young Movses discovered *Ecclesiastes* by David of Rome, incidentally containing a description of the flight of the seventy virgins named after Hripsime from Rome to Egypt and thence their arrival in Armenia by the command of the Mother of God.

Movses and his peers traveled from Athens to Byzantium (Constantinople) and from there to the Homeland. This confirms, as reported in the epistle “On Christ’s Manifestation”, that the translators had been in Alexandria and other famous cities. This, in fact, is an echo of Khorenatsi’s account, reaching us through the epistle reflecting the ecclesiastical debates of the sixth century. It is noteworthy that in both the second chapter of Khorenatsi’s first book (unlike his third book, where the city is called

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տպարան Սրբոց Յակոբեանց, 1994, էջ 206, 671]. It should be mentioned that at the end of the 6th century, at the time of the Armenian Catholicos Movses Yeghivardetsi (574-604) there was anti-See Catholicos Hovhannes Bagarantsi (Պատմութիւն Սէբեոսի, աշխատասիրութեամբ Գ.Վ.Աբգարյանի, Երևան, 1979, ԺԹ, էջ 91, ԼԳ, էջ 112): .

[27] Գիրք թղթոց, Թիֆլիս, 1901, էջ 88-89:

[28] Մալխասյանց Ստ., Ժամանակագրական խնդիրներ հայոց հին մատենագրության մեջ. "Բանասիրական հետազոտություններ", Երևան, 1982, էջ 31:

[29] Մովսէս Խորենացի, էջ 344:

Alexandria[30]) and the aforementioned epistle, the city is named *Alexandr* instead of *Alexandria*.

Reliable information on Khorenatsi's birthdate and epoch can also be collected from his book, "The History of Armenia". Beginning with the first chapter - "The reply to the epistle of Sahak and the promise to fulfill his request" (where he gratefully promises his patron, Prince Sahak Bagratuni, to write the history of our nation and praises him for such a patriotic work) until the end of the work, Khorenatsi engages in direct conversation with his patron. While describing historical events, he intermittently stops to ask him questions or respond to his suggestions or opinions. This lively dialogue, which most likely was conducted in writing on Prince Sahak's part, also continues almost to the conclusion of "The History of Armenia".

Khorenatsi proceeds with this unique dialogue so masterfully that the preferences and interests of the other side with regard to the heroic acts of other *nakharar* dynasties (princely families), become comprehensible. This allows us to conclude that Khorenatsi sent his History piecemeal to Sahak Bagratuni, to familiarize him with the work, and sometimes received from him suggestions with advice to include various historical tales, ancestral traditions, and episodes relating to other nakharars

It appears that in order to make "The History of Armenia" comprehensive, Sahak Bagratuni also made considerable effort, prompting Khorenatsi not to omit the historical tales and events of big and small nakharar families, and he did this with utmost reverence toward Khorenatsi and his wisdom. Sahak did not want the History to become mere praise for the Bagratuni princely family. He wanted it to shed equal light on the significant deeds and valour of other princely families, at the same time not forgetting even the obscure and insignificant ones. The Father of History sometimes accommodated his patron's requests, such as when relating tales about the heroic acts of Aram Haykazn (I. 12-14). He sometimes accepted the suggestions unwillingly. There were also instances when he opposed the high-ranking nakharar with great exasperation, in attempts to spare their important venture from unreliable tales.

"For this reason, we shall write nothing about those families that were established by the last Tigran, despite your frequent pleas with us, but we shall write only of the subsequent ones that we know for certain. Because we have avoided, as far as has been possible, superfluous and embellished words and whatever words and opinions tended toward unreliability, following only what was fair and true, whether from other [sources] or from our own [knowledge] to the best of our ability. Here, behaving in the same way, I am stopping the course of my account as I note anything unsuitable or prone to casting doubt upon reliability. And I beg you now, as I have done often, not to impose writing superfluous things on us, lest our whole great and reliable labor turn into

[30] Նույն տեղում:

useless and unnecessary work because of such few or many accounts, for that brings equal danger to you as to me"[31].

This unique and interesting dialogue, which Movses Khorenatsi conducted with his influential patron with conscious genius and resolute dignity, beyond all doubt was received respectfully by the renowned Bagratuni. In addition to revealing the personality and moral characteristics of these two persons, the dialogue gives researchers valuable information about Khorenatsi and Sahak, helping to determine their ages and the epoch in which the History was written.

As a result of sending the eight chapters[32] of the epic of Tigran and Azhdahak to Sahak Bagratuni, Khorenatsi received from the patron an unexpected request to also tell the Persian myths that relate to Byurasp Azhdahak. These were neither included in Khorenatsi's plan nor in concordance with his literary taste. And although he reluctantly fulfilled the patron's plea, he excluded the chapter of Persian myths from his History's narration by placing it between the First and Second books. At the beginning of the chapter Khorenatsi reproached his patron with those pleas attributing them to his nonage and immaturity: "But what then is your passion? The fables of Byurasp Azhdahak are bombastic and ugly; and why are you troubling us for those awkward and unstylish and especially senseless Persian fables?".

Furthermore: "I repeat the same to you. What need have you of these and what wish is this to desire the undesirable and to trouble us more? We attribute this to your young age and consider it the desire of your nonage and immaturity. Therefore we shall here enact your will and fulfill your wish."

Thus the angry Father of History reproaches his patron, a man of high rank whose thoughtfulness had fascinated him and made him write at the beginning of his History, "By keeping the spark of your prudence alive and aflame with a beautiful intellect, you adorn the reason, whereby you remain a perpetual image."[33]

Thanks to the "incident" that angered Khorenatsi, we now know that Sahak Bagratuni, the client of "The History of the Armenia" was rather young when the book was in the process of narration. Therefore, those scholars are quite right who identify him as Sahak Bagratuni the knight whom the Armenians at the beginning of the rebellion in 481 AD installed as governor, and who organized together with Vahan Mamikonyan the Armenian rebellion against the Sassanid domination and perished in young age in the battle beside the Kura river.

Khorenatsis' last appeal to Sahak Bagratuni is made in one of the concluding chapters of "The History of Armenia". At the beginning of his work Khorenatsi speaks of his own age and uncertain future without anxiety, "especially because the task that lies

[31] Մովսէս Խորենացի, էջ 198:

[32] Նույն տեղում, Ա. ԻԴ - ԼԱ, էջ 71-86:

[33] Նույն տեղում, էջ 6:

before us is long, and time for mortals is short and uncertain."[34] At the end of the History, he speaks with trepidation of his own old age and unhealthy condition, paying little attention to the purity of his style. In haste to conclude the History, he addresses his patron with the following invaluable message:

"Because I am an old and sick man with no leisure from translating, and I have determined to hurry, without attention to the purity of style, so that your wishes may be accomplished and I may be free of your pressing demands and entreaties. I consider you to be a man with needs equal to ours and not, as the poets say, that princes are descendants of gods, relatives and kin to them."[35]

Khorenatsi uses the same words to describe his age and fragile health in the introduction to "Պատմութիւն սրբոց Հռիփսիմեանց" ("The History of Saint Hripsimyants").[36]

This means that Khorenatsi's patron, Sahak Bagratuni, was still alive when "The History of Armenia" was completed. The dialogue permits us to almost unmistakably determine that Khorenatsi composed his History during the seventh decade of the fifth century and completed it around 480, when he was 60 years old, and although aged and ailing, steadily engaged in translations, "with no leisure from translating."

In 1944, Malkhasyants offered a chronology of the famous works of Armenian literature of the second half of the fifth century in his study "Chronological Issues in the Ancient Armenian Literature", suggesting: "Eghishe's History is written in 461, Agatangeghos' History - in 461-465, the Armenian translation of Labubna and following it Biography of Apostle Thaddaeus - in 461-470, Pavstos' History - around 475, Khorenatsi's History - in 483-485, Ghazar Parpetsi's History - in the 490s".[37] H.Acharyan rightfully criticized this chronology.[38]

The assumption that Khorenatsi's History was written in 483-485 cannot be substantiated, because at that time, during the uprising of Vahan Mamikonean, Sahak Bagratuni had already been killed; whereas, as we saw, Khorenatsi communicated with his patron while writing the History. Therefore, "The History of Armenia" would have been completed a year or two before Vahan's uprising (481/2-484). According to Hovsep Gatrchyan, Khorenatsi's History was written in 480.

In his "Chronicle", Samuel Anetsi writes the Armenian year ՆՂԲ (corresponds to 492 AD) next to Khorenatsi's name, without specifying what the date denotes. Nevertheless, the date is acceptable as the year Khorenatsi died[39].

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[34] Նույն տեղում:

[35] Նույն տեղում, Գ.Կե:

[36] Սրբոց հօրն Մովսէսի Խորենացւոյ Մատենագրութիւնը, Վենետիկ, 1865, էջ 297:

[37] Մալխասյանց Ստ., Բանասիրական հետազոտություններ, էջ 32-33:

[38] Հր. Աճառյան, Հայկականք Գ (Armeniaca), ՀՍՍՀ ԳԱ Տեղեկագիր, 1945, 3-4, էջ 47-50:

[39] However, according to Saint-Martin, Khorenatsi must have died in 490 AD (see Գաթըրճեան Յ., Հինգերորդ դարու չորս հայ պատմագրութեանց ժամանակը, Հանդէս ամսօրեայ, 1887, 1, էջ 9-12):