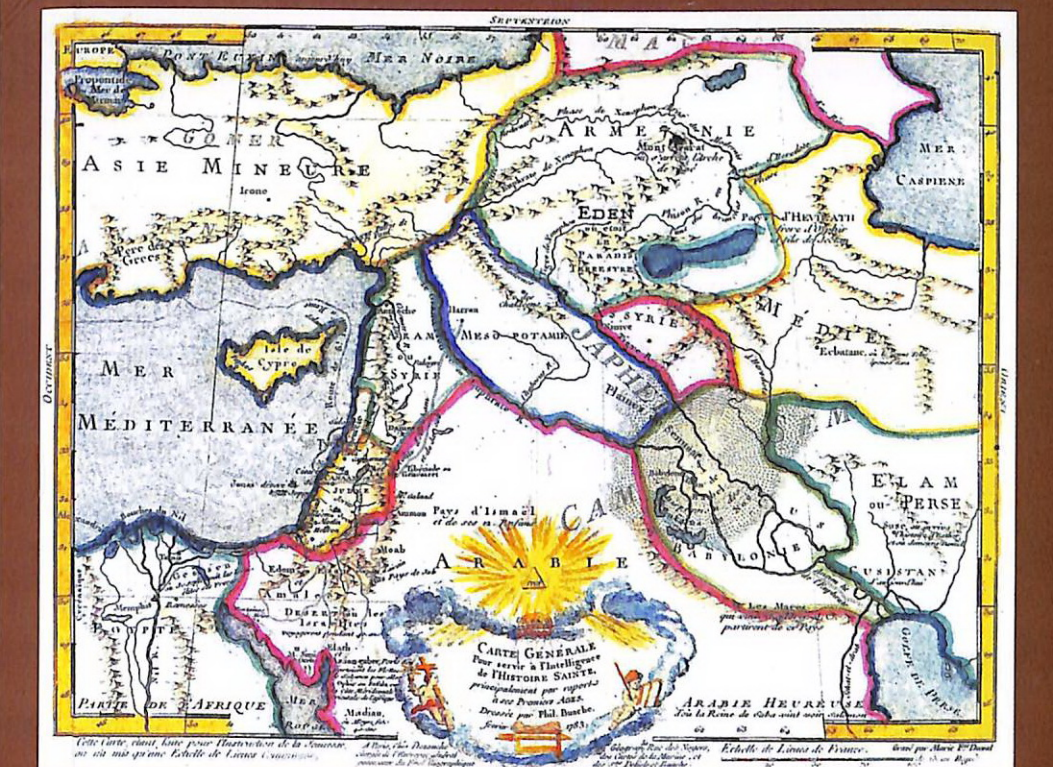


of the Ancient Near East



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THE SACRED HIGHLANDS

*Armenia in the Spiritual Geography
of the Ancient Near East*

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Cover design – Sumerian seal impression (3rd mill. BC)
and a Biblical Map published by Philip Buache in 1783, covering
the first era of human history (Eden, the earthy Paradise is marked
on the map in Armenia, to the southwest of Mount Ararat).

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INTRODUCTION

The disciples asked Jesus:

"Tell us, what will be our end"?

*Jesus said, "Have you discovered the beginning
that you seek the end?"*

For where the beginning is, there too will the end be".

Gospel of Thomas (apocryphal)

Just as in the life of an individual, a nation, after overcoming crisis, pauses to take stock, to consolidate, to reconsider its past and to chart its future. The millennia-old questions become paramount: *"who am I, where am I from, where am I going"?*

During the past century, the Armenian people have overcome the most long-lasting and gravest crisis of its history, the loss of its statehood. After centuries of continuous struggle and being subjected to genocide, the Armenian nation has regained its independence. The Republic of Armenia (1918-1920) had a very short life. Battles of self-defense and the struggle to overcome famine and epidemics left little time for reflecting on searching questions. These questions remained unanswered throughout the Soviet period as well, for any efforts in the direction of national awakening were forbidden or at the very least discouraged. In the Diaspora, efforts were made in a different direction, but in the end, the fundamental issue for the dispersed Armenians around the world was preserving national identity. So perhaps it is the destiny of the present generation to seek answers to these questions and raise the level of national consciousness, especially as mankind's entry into a new cosmic epoch, the Age of Aquarius, raises new issues regarding the future of our nation.

The present study does not have any ambitious pretensions; rather it is an attempt to partially answer two questions relating to our identity: who were we to begin with and where do we come from? How is our country portrayed in sacred and mythological world view of nations of the ancient world, some of whom

have disappeared from the world scene, what was their perspective, who were our ancestors, and what role did they play in the ancient world, did they have a mission, and if so, what was it? These are questions whose answers our people have lost through the vicissitudes of our history, but fortunately for us, relevant information has been preserved in the written sources of many ancient peoples, uncovered in the past two centuries.

This book is the first attempt to compile these ancient passages describing Armenia, as preserved in one of the cradles of world civilization, the Near East. The citations are presented here with meticulous care, strictly without any additions or omissions. The other key principle has been to reconstitute the ancient image of Armenia, guided first and foremost by foreign sources and then only by looking at Armenian sources (in order to avoid any national bias). At the same time, this being the first attempt at such an undertaking, we have no pretensions of being the last word on this topic and expect that in the future these findings will be augmented with new information.

* * *

Before turning to this monograph itself, I would like to thank Dr. Thomas Samuelian for his assistance with editing the English translation of this work.

I would also like to express special gratitude to Arthur Armin, President of the "Spurk-Diaspora" organization, for covering the entire cost of this publication.

BOUND TOWARD ARMENIA – LAND OF THE GODS

With the conquests of Alexander the Great, the Hellenistic era in world civilization began. Hellenic culture penetrated the countries of the ancient East, and the West became acquainted with the achievements of Eastern culture. During such a period of cultural interaction certain important figures stand out, in this instance, the Berossus – chief priest of the temple to Babylon's supreme god, Bel¹.

Born in 350 BC and having received a classical education for that era, he departed for Greece at the end of the 4th century and established a school of astrology. Returning to Babylon in 290 BC, he was commissioned by the Seleucid king, Antiochus-I Soter to write a history of Babylon in Greek. The priest, being well-versed in the cuneiform inscriptions of Mesopotamia, wrote a three-volume work, entitled "Babylonica". However, this very valuable work has not survived. Fragments of this work that have reached us via citations in later works have great significance for the history of the ancient world². There are interesting passages regarding Armenia in these fragments, which present the Babylonian version of the Universal Flood.

According to the tradition presented by Berossus³, after the creation, God appears to mankind six times to give various messages (a number which coincides with the number of divine sacred books). However man's sinfulness exhausted God's patience and God decided to punish man with the flood. God's just eye did not overlook the few pious people, lead by King Xisuthros, who was commanded to write the history of the world and bury it and to

¹ For biographical information about Berossus, his life's achievements and legacy, see Schnabel, 1923.

² Various fragments of Berossus' work have reached us in the works of later authors (Josephus Flavius, Eusebius Pamphilus of Caesarea, and others) and have been compiled in the appendix to Schnabel, 1923, pp. 250-272. Various works on which Berossus based his work (Alexander Polyhistor (in Armenian sources - Alexander Bazmavep), Abyudenos and others) have not reached us.

³ For the account of the flood according to Berossus, see Schnabel, 1923, pp. 264-266; Josephus Flavius, "Against Apion", I, 128-130; "Jewish Antiquities", I, 89-93; Eusebius Pamphilus of Caesarea, 1818, pp. 15-18, 24-25; q.v., see the section below on "When the flood cleansed everything..."

build a boat to save himself from the flood. When everything was ready, the king wanted to know where his boat was to go. From heaven came the answer: "*Near the Gods*"...

The flood destroyed sinful mankind. Reaching dry land, the king and his wife, together with their daughter and ship captain, disembarked from the boat and offered sacrifice on the mountain of their salvation. The satisfied gods granted them immortality and accepted them into their ranks. The rest of the people on the boat came out and searched for the king and his three companions, but to no avail. A voice from heaven proclaimed the fate of the four chosen individuals, ordering the people to return, find the buried holy book and preach it to everyone and reestablish Babylon. From this divine voice it became clear that the land of their salvation had been Armenia.

The people who had been saved returned to Mesopotamia and carried out the divine commandments. Berossus adds that fragments of the boat had been preserved until his times in the mountains of Armenia, from which people took pieces of tar to make talismans.

Let us once again recall chief priest Berossus' history as recorded in Mesopotamian cuneiform records. When the pious king wanted to know where his boat would go to save them, he heard the voice from the heavens, "*Near the gods*". And when the people who had been saved descended from the boat, the heavenly voice announced, that they were in Armenia...

THE CENTER OF CREATION

It is difficult to imagine a nation in the world which does not have a traditional story about the creation of the universe and the world. In these ancient accounts the place where the creation took place is particularly important. It is in that place where the navel of the earth is located, through which the axis of earth (or the universe) passes, and from which rises the Universal Mountain, the Universal Tree, or its variants, the Tree of life and wisdom. The Mountain or Tree that rises from the center of the earth becomes the symbol of universal harmony, whose destruction will lead to the primordial chaos and the end of the universe. Therefore it is not an accident that in mythology and legend the place where creation happened is considered extremely sacred⁴.



Pic. 1

A large part of the earliest, recorded creation myths which have reached us, are from the Near East, the best known of which is the Biblical account of Genesis. According to the Biblical tradition, God created the world in six days, completing his work with the creation of man, with the Tree of life (the Tree of knowledge of

⁴ On the widespread nature of this belief about the place of creation, see the articles by V. B. Toporov, "Mountain" ("Gora"), "World Tree" ("Drevo mirovov"), "Tree of Wisdom" ("Drevo poznaniya"), MWP, vol. 1 1992, pp. 311-315, 396-407, "Navel of the World" ("Pup zemli"), MWP, vol. 2, 1992, p. 350).

good and evil) in the middle of Paradise (Gen. 1:1-2, 15). Later we will have the opportunity to look more closely at Biblical Paradise and the Trees of life and wisdom. For now, it is enough to note that the most important fact regarding the location of Paradise is that it is the headwater of four rivers (Euphrates, Tigris, Gihon and Pishon), which unequivocally shows that the Biblical Paradise and the Trees of life and wisdom were centered in the Armenian Highlands. In other words, the place of creation was Armenia, according to the Bible.

Perhaps it would have been expected that the Jews who wrote the Old Testament would have located this center of creation in their own homeland, but that is not the case. This fact becomes yet more intriguing and significant, when the Armenian Highlands are considered the place of creation in a number of ancient Near Eastern nations' creation accounts, which were written centuries before the Old Testament.

The earliest inhabitants of southern Mesopotamia who are known to us through their writings are the Sumerians (a people whose origin to this day has not been discovered), who created a unique civilization (including the invention of cuneiform writing) and disappeared from the world scene some 2000 years BC.

In the first half of the third millennium BC Semitic tribes from the Arabian Peninsula migrated into Mesopotamia, where they founded first the Akkadian and then Babylonian kingdoms, and in the north, Assyria. They absorbed the Sumerian civilization, making it their own. Religious values were a significant part of the borrowings, including traditional creation accounts, which were adopted by the Semitic people. The Sumerian invention, cuneiform, spread among these peoples. For this reason, there are similarities among the written accounts left by ancient peoples of the Near East, to which we shall return later.

The complete, original Sumerian creation account has not reached us. Various episodes are found in various original writings; from this it is not possible to reconstitute the complete Sumerian creation story.

The most complete account of the ancient Mesopotamian tradition is the Babylonian epic "Enuma Eliš ..." ("When skies

above...")⁵. It tells of a primordial period (*"when skies above were not yet named, nor earth below pronounced by name"*) when there were two primordial oceans, Apzu (Sumerian Abzu) and the proto-mother Tiamat, *"whose waters mixed"* and from which was born the first generation of gods. Their restless behavior irritated the two pre-existing gods, who decided to destroy the young gods. The later were saved by the wisest of their number, Haya⁶, who killed Apzu and erected his dwelling upon that spot, calling it Apzu⁷.

⁵ The Creation Epic, ANET, pp. 60-72 (trans. E. A. Speiser); "When skies above..." - "Enuma Eliš ..." (poem about the creation of the world), MM, pp. 228-277 (trans. St. Dalley), IOYCW, pp. 32-51 (trans. V. K. Afanseva). The poem is known by its opening words.

⁶ Haya (Ea, Enki, in Sumerian - "Lord of the Earth"), is also encountered with the epithet Nudimmud, which means "Creator". Many accounts of Haya-Enki's creation of the world are told in various Mesopotamian sources (see about it below).

⁷ "Abzu" ("Apsu") was well known in Mesopotamia as the name of an underground ocean, whose ruler was Haya-Enki, as well as his temples. In Hittite (Ap-suva) and Hurrian traditions, Abzu was also a geographic name (in Hurrian - "city", see MFH, p. 309), which perhaps was the tie between the underground ocean and the heavens. In ancient Mesopotamia, the Tigris and Euphrates were usually viewed as originating from the shoulders of the Abzu ruler Haya-Enki or from a goblet in his hands (see pic. 1-2). This same god was also known as "Bel Nagbi" - "Lord of the Springs", which is understood to be a reference to the headwaters of the Euphrates and Tigris. The *"šurpu"* water was believed to flow from Abzu (A Collection of Sumerian and Akkadian Incantations, Graz, 1958, IX, pp. 119-124, cited by Beriashvili, 1987, pp. 262-263). The divine holy law ("me") which ruled the universe was kept in Abzu, and in the Sumerian epic Aratta is referred to as the "land of the divine holy law", the earliest reference to date to a state in the Armenian Highlands (see fn. 112 and Appendix A). This evidence shows that the underground ocean and the tie between earth and Abzu above, was the place where Haya killed the primordial creator Abzu-ocean and built his dwelling, called Abzu and was located in the Armenian Highlands. A Mesopotamian seal (pic. 1) from the 3rd millennium BC supports this conclusion. It depicts Haya-Enki with water flows representing the Euphrates and Tigris and one foot on the Mašu (Masius Masion, see fn. 26) on the south of the Armenian Highlands (which the sun rises). On the same seal there is a bull under Haya-Enki's foot, which A. Piliposyan and H. Kamalyan consider to be a "symbolic, geographic code" for the Taurus Mountains, the later, along with the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates, being the territory of Abzu. A. Piliposyan and H. Kamalyan link a number of toponyms from the Armenian Highlands to Abzu, including Abzerik, Apsadzor, Apazvank, Apizode, Apshtidzor, Bazu, Bznunik, Bznunyatz Mountains, lake and islands (Piliposyan & Kamalian, 1997, pp. 67-69). Their observation about the connection between the bull image and the Taurus Mountains,



Pic. 2. Mesopotamian seal impressions with images of Haya-Enki (3rd millennium BC)

however, is undermined by the fact that the animal in the seal appears not to be a bull, but a goat (which is connected with the cult of Haya-Enki), who was often represented in animal form as a fish with a goat head, and his boat was called "Abzu's goat". Nevertheless, the presence of the Mašu Mountains, as well as the Sumerian legend "Enki and Ninnah", according to which man was made in the Harali from Abzu clay (see, the section below on "In the image and likeness of God"), taken together with the facts and explanations above are sufficient to support linking Abzu with the the Armenian Highlands.

Taking refuge from the chaos in his new dwelling, Haya and his wife beget a child Marduk. Trying to establish law and order in the chaos and avenging her spouse do not give Tiamat much rest, as she shortly thereafter goes to battle the younger gods. Not one of them dares confront Tiamat, and young Marduk saves the day. Marduk agrees to fight Tiamat, if all the other gods recognize his supremacy, to which they consent. In the decisive battle, Marduk defeats Tiamat and begins to create the world. Cutting Tiamat's body in half, he makes one half into heaven, building a mountain on her head and from within her two eyes spout forth the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Out of the other half, he creates the earth, establishing the tie between heaven and earth. Thereafter, the god Haya creates humankind, who in the image of Abzu the gods create Babylon, "Gates of the God", where forever rules Marduk, supreme god of the Babylonians.⁸

In this creation account, the place of creation is the premordial mountain which rises from Tiamat's head and provides a unique tie between heaven and earth. From the mountain flow the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, that is, the place of creation is the Armenian Highlands.

The victory over the forces of chaos, building a mountain on top of the defeated foe, and creating a new world order are also the theme of the Sumerian legend of Ninurta (the son of the supreme god Enlil)⁹. It is notable that here as well the geographic location is established as the Armenian Highlands in the headwaters of the Tigris.

According to ancient Mesopotamian geography, the Mašu (Masu) Mountains held up the universe, "*their upper parts [touch (?)] the sky's foundation, below, their breasts reach Arallu*".¹⁰ These mountains, which Gilgameš reaches on his journey to immortality (which goes along the banks of the Euphrates) coincide by geographic location and by name with the Kašari (today known

⁸ In the Assyrian version, Marduk is replaced with the head god of the Assyrians (IOYCW, p. 284), which understandably aims to stress his supreme authority.

⁹ van Dijk, 1983; Kramer, 1961, pp. 79-2; Kramer, 1965, pp. 206-208; ETCSL 1.6.2 (and sources cited therein).

¹⁰ ANET, p. 88; MM, p. 96; PPAO, pp. 200-201; PAO, p. 143.

as the Tur Abdin) Mountains on the southern approach to the Armenian Highlands, which in Greek as well as medieval Armenian sources are referred to by the names Masius and Masion.¹¹



Pic. 3. Fragment of a Biblical Map published by Phil. Buache in 1783, covering the first era of human history. Eden, the earthy Paradise is marked on the territory of Armenia, to the southwest of Ararat. For the complete map, see the front cover of this book

The western branch of the Semitic tribes inhabiting northern Syria in the 14-13 centuries BC established a Ugaritic city-state and left us many written records. According to Ugaritic sources, their head god was Ilu (El) who lived in the headwaters of the Great River, from which two oceans had their source¹². In the context of the ancient Near Eastern world view, the Ugaritic sources indicate that Ilu (El) dwelt in the Armenian Highlands and that the Great River is the Mesopotamian land of immortality and the main

¹¹ See the section below, "In search of immortality: the way of the Armenian's country".

¹² Shifman, 1987, pp. 56, 85 (as well as the sources he cites).

river of the Biblical garden of Eden (see the explanation below under "In the image and likeness of God"), and the two oceans (heavenly and earthly, or perhaps underground) are interpreted as the place of creation¹³.

A late Hittite version of a Canaanite legend also demonstrates that the place of creation and dwelling of Ilu (El-kunirši) was in the Armenian Highlands, according to which he dwelt near the headwaters of Western Euphrates (in the original – "Mala")¹⁴.

Pre-Christian Armenian creation accounts have not reached us. Armenian letters and folklore, however, not only show a similar tradition that exists in pre-Christian Armenia, but also its similarity with the Near Eastern versions presented above. In particular, in pre-Christian Armenian mythology, the pre-Christian Armenian spiritual center of Bardzr Hayk' ("Upper Armenia") Province has been considered the Universal Mountain, where the father god Aramazd, mother goddess Anahit, the goddess Nane, the god Sun-Mihr, and other cult centers were located. Bardzr Hayk' Province in the well-known "Ashkharhatzuytz" ("Geography") of Anania Shirakatzi is described as follows: *"This territory, truly, as its name shows, is higher than not only the rest of Greater Armenia ("Mets Hayk'"), but also the rest of the world; for that reason, it was called the top of the world. From it flow forth the rivers to the four corners of the world. Four large rivers originate in Bardzr Hayk'"*¹⁵. And Pavstos Buzand's "History of Armenia" preserves the name of one of the mountains of Bardzr Hayk' and its description: *"On the Great Mountain, in place of the gods, which is called the seat of Nahata"*¹⁶. We shall return to the four

¹³ Lipinski, 1971, pp. 41-57.

¹⁴ El. Ašertu and Storm-god (tr. A. Goetze), ANET, p. 519; MFH, pp. 167-169; Lipinski, 1971, p. 56. On the Hittite's reverence for this river as sacred, see MFH, pp. 186-191.

¹⁵ Yeremyan, 1963, p. 106; Anania Shirakatzi, 1979, p. 291.

¹⁶ Pavstos Buzand, 1912, p. 327; in the Classical Armenian original text: *"...on the Great Mountain in the place of the gods, which is called the throne of Nahata"* (*"... ի Մեծի լեռինս ի տեղի դիցն՝ զոր կոչեն արքոն Նահատայ"*). In the Modern Armenian translation (Pavstos Buzand, 1968, p. 259), without explanation, another word (altars) has been added in parentheses: *"On the Great Mountain in the place of the gods (altars), which is called the throne of Anahit"* (*"...Մեծ լեռան վրա, աստվածների (մեհյանների) տեղում, որ կոչվում է*

large rivers in connection with the discussion of Paradise below. For now, let us note that in the ancient Armenian world-view, Bardzr Hayk' was considered the "top of the world", and the Great Mountain - the "place of the gods". It is noteworthy that in the Geography under the name "top of the world" is mentioned Mountain Srmantz, the highest peak of the Byurakn Mountains to the south of Bardzr Hayk' (which is the location of Paradise on earth, according to Armenian traditions extant to this day)¹⁷. This may correspond with Indo-Iranian legend of the seed-spouting, life-creating mountain¹⁸.

The Universal Mountain is usually presented in three parts: on its summit dwell the gods, beneath it dwell the forces of evil, and in the middle of it (that is on earth) lives mankind¹⁹. Greater Ararat (Masis) in ancient Armenian literature is known as "the mountain on which the sun strolls"²⁰, and "the highest mountain in the universe"²¹, under which dwell evil forces²². This shows that in the earliest beliefs of the Armenians Greater Ararat (Masis) was presented as the holy mountain that preserved the system of the universe after creation.

It is apparent from a riddle dating to the 12th -14th centuries preserved and recorded by Hovhannes Tsortsoretzi that Masis (Greater Ararat) was understood in the Armenian world-view as the Universal Mountain.

Միահիւսիսի սրբոյն). K. Patkanyan following St. Malkhasyantz concluded that instead of "սրբոյն Միահիւսիսի" ("throne of Nahata") it should read "սրբոյն Միահիւսիսի" ("throne of (goddess) Anahir") (Pavstos Buzand, 1968, pp. 259, 334, n. 170).

¹⁷ Yeremyan, 1963, pp. 107-108; Anania Shirakatzi, 1979, p. 293.

¹⁸ Martirosyan, 2004 (in press): argues that there are vestiges of the creation account in the first part of the "Davit of Sassoon" (or "The Daredevils of Sassoon") epic, where the "Kapot sea" ("Blue sea", of which "there is no end") symbolizes the ocean of the universe, the great rock - the Universal Mountain, and the "four taken together" form a "white fountain" - the "immortal water" that flow out in the river of Paradise to the four corners of the world.

¹⁹ Toporov V. N., "Mountain" ("Gora"), MWP, vol. 1, 1992, pp. 311-315.

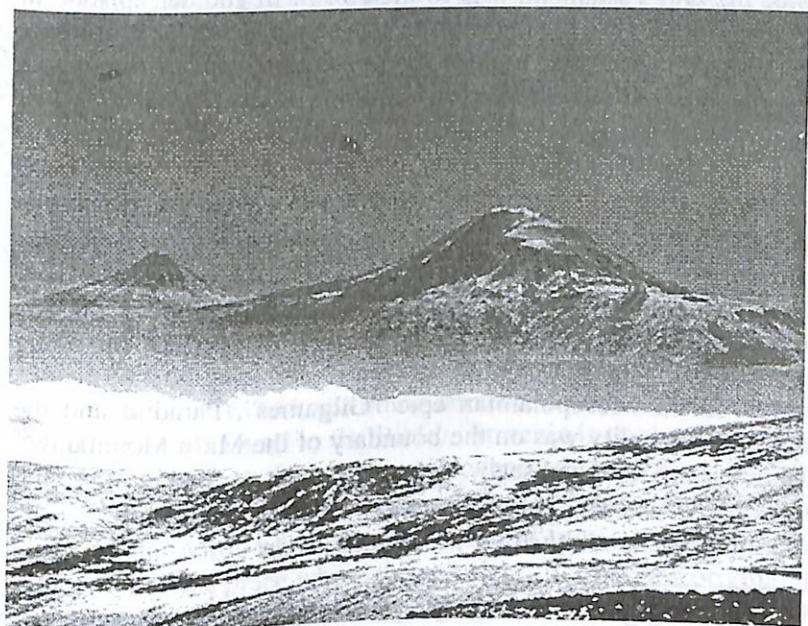
²⁰ Movses Khorenatzi, 1913, p. 39.

²¹ Hetum Patmich (Historian), 1842, p. 14.

²² Movses Khorenatzi, 1913, p. 192; Vardan Bardzraberdtzi the Great, 1861, p. 51; Ghanalanyan, 1969, pp. 362-364, 481.

*“As defined by the great Creator
it is a pyramid and the foundation of the world,
the place of the house built by God
on which human feet may not tread
(answer – Masis)”²³*

In this sense, the report by the European traveler William Rubruk (13th cent.) is quite valuable. According to this report, among the Armenians it was forbidden to climb Mt. Ararat– Masis. When he asked why, it was forbidden, the Armenians answered: *“Masis is the mother of the world”²⁴ ...*



*Pic. 4. Masis - “the mountain on which the sun strolls”,
“the highest mountain in the universe”*

²³ Mnatzakanyan, 1980, p. 365.

²⁴ Hakobyan, 1932, p. 18.

THE LAND OF THE SUN

In the Bible, the Garden of Eden is located "*in the Eastern parts*" (Gen. 2:8). In another place in Genesis, Noah's ark found refuge in the Mountains of Ararat (that is, in Armenia), after which a people "*from the East*" who still spoke the same language went and in a field in the land of Sēnaar built the tower of Babylon to heaven. For this reason, God mixed all the languages of mankind and scattered them around the world (Gen. 9:1-9). In both instances, Armenia (the Garden of Eden and Mountains of Ararat) are presented as the land of the East, whereas for the Hebrew writers of the Old Testament, it is to the North. In another episode in the same book, for the third time the same image is presented, "*And Jacob set out and went to the land of the sons of the East... And Jacob asked them: 'Brothers, where are you from'? And they answered: 'We are from Harran' "*"(Gen. 29:1-5). Jacob was traveling from the town of Beersheba in southern Palestine to the town of Harran located in northern Mesopotamia on the south-western border of the Armenian Highlands, which although located directly north of Beersheba, was known as the land of the sons of the East. These passages show that at least in the book of Genesis the Armenian Highlands were known as the land of the East (or rising sun)²⁵. What is the source of these views?

In the Mesopotamian epic "*Gilgameš*", Paradise and the land of immortality was on the boundary of the Mašū Mountains,²⁶ where the sun rises and sets:

"The name (?) of the mountains [is (?)] Mašū.

When he reached the Mountains Mašū

²⁵ It should be noted that in the Old Testament "East" does not always designate the Armenian Highlands and neighboring regions, and in the Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel the Armenian state is accurately referred to as northerly. Ghevond Alishan citing earlier references to Armenia as the East or the Eastern home and analyzing the Old Testament passages concludes that in the Bible the lands east of the Euphrates were called East (Alishan, 1904, p. 252, n. 8).

²⁶ There have been various proposals by scholars to identify Mašū with Masis (Greater Ararat) and the Masius / Masion Mountains (presently Tur-Abdin) on the southern border of the Armenian Highlands, of which the later is better supported (see Lehmann-Haupt, 1927, pp. 797-798; Inglizyan, 1947, pp. 119-132; Lipinski, 1971, pp. 49-50).

Which daily guards the coming out [of Sun (Šamaš)]-
 Their upper parts [touch (?)] the sky's foundation,
 Below, their breasts reach Arallu.
 They guard its gate, Scorpion-men
 Whose aura is frightful, and whose glance is death.
 Their terrifying mantles of radiance drape the mountains.
 They guard the sun at dawn and dusk-
 Gilgameš looked at them, and fear and terror clouded his
 face"²⁷.



Pic. 5. Utu (Sun) god dawning above the Mashu mountains
 (3rd millennium BC, fragment of a seal impression)

In other words, according ancient Mesopotamian views (of which some are found in the Bible), Armenia is the land of the rising sun as well as the setting sun, where the sun rests at night. Thus, for the peoples of Mesopotamia and Palestine, the Highlands lying to the north were considered "East" not in the geographic sense, but as the place where the sun rises. In time, the original literal meaning was lost, and the geographic meaning preserved. The view that the Armenian Highlands was known as the resting place of the sun is further supported by Hittite sources. According to the latter, the sun rises in from the "Eastern Sea", which based on Hittite sources, was the Hittite name for Lake Van²⁸. That is also consistent with the Armenian folk traditions recorded by Garegin

²⁷ ANET, p. 88, MM, p. 96; PPAO, pp. 200-201; PAO, p. 143.

²⁸ Ivanov, 1980, p. 136.

Srvandztyantz in the 19th century, according to which the rest place of the sun was at the bottom of Lake Van, from where the light-giver of the day rises in the morning and returns in the evening²⁹.

Very interesting evidence regarding Armenia as the land of the rising sun (not in the geographic sense of the word) is preserved in the "Davit of Sassoon" ("The Daredevils of Sassoon") epic, which has been overlooked. In the first part ("The Struggle against the Caliph of Baghdad") of the first cycle ("Sanasar and Baghdasar") Tsovinar advises her sons to flee Baghdad for Armenia, saying the following:

*"Flee, go to the city of the Armenian kings,
Follow the bright star in the night,
In the day ask
for the land of the king of the East"*³⁰.

In the epic, Armenia is called the "*Land of the King of the East*", which could only have arisen and been preserved from the most ancient times³¹.

Bringing together the Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, Hebrew (Biblical) and Armenian sources, we see that Armenia was considered from ancient times to be the land where the sun dwelt, its resting place, the land of the rising and setting sun.

Finally, let us suggest a hypothesis. As we see in the key events in the Old Testament (Eden, Flood, etc.), Armenia is considered the "East". Is it not possible that New Testament Magi from the East, who were the first to welcome Jesus Christ's birth, were priests from Armenia, and that being the first to worship Jesus is somehow mystically linked with Armenia's being the first country to adopt Christianity as its state religion?

²⁹ Srvandztyantz, 1978, p. 76.

³⁰ "Davit of Sassoon", 1939, p. 27; 1981, p. 21. The passage is cited from the new critical edition (1993, p. 35), in which there are no significant changes.

³¹ It is noteworthy that in the work of the Secretary Scribe of Edessa Labubna the Apostle Thaddeus's journey from Edessa north to Armenia to preach is presented as follows: "And he came and went to the East, preaching the Gospel of Christ" (Labubna, 1868, p. 46, cf. Petrosyan, 1990, p. 7). In the old Syrian version, Thaddeus went from Edessa to Tsopk' (Sophene) (Petrosyan, 1990, p. 7), which was north of Edessa. That Armenia is referred to as the "East" in this early source is perhaps a reflection of a memory from ancient times.

COUNCIL OF THE GODS

In the first section it was noted that in the three-volume work of Berossus (III-IV cent. BC), a unique and encyclopedic source on ancient Mesopotamia in cuneiform, Armenia is characterized as the dwelling place of the gods. And in this characterization, Berossus is not alone.

In the Gilgameš epic, after the Flood, a great council of the gods was convened on the mountain of salvation and the surviving hero was granted immortality by the "council of the gods"³². In the Mesopotamian legends the salvation from the flood and the recreation of mankind is tied to the Armenian Highlands (see the section below, "When the Flood Cleansed Everything..."); therefore, the "council of the gods" must have taken place there as well. Here, the great gods gathered, to decide the most important questions, among which the most important was the granting of the right of survival to the human race.

Memory of the meeting mountain of the gods is reflected in the Biblical prophecy of Isaiah, in the passage relating to the King of Babylon: *"You said in your heart, 'I shall ascend to heaven and my throne shall be above the stars of God, and I shall dwell on the meeting mountain, in the northern parts; I shall ascend upon the clouds and I shall be like the Most High...'"* (Is. 14:13-14). There is reference to the throne of God in the north in one of the apocryphal books of the Old Testament (I Enoch 25:3-5)³³. The belief that God's dwelling place was located in the north is so widespread in ancient Hebrew reality, that Mt. Zion in the book of Psalms is considered in the north, even though it rises above Jerusalem. *"The Lord is Great and is to be highly praised in the city of our God, on his sacred hill. Zion, the mountain of God is high and beautiful; the city of the great king brings joy to all the world"* (Ps. 48:1-2; in Arm. Bible – 47:1-2).

In ancient Mesopotamia and in the ancient Hebrew milieu information about the meeting place of the gods is consistent with the mythological information from the northern-Syrian Ugaritic

³² ANET, p. 93; MM, p. 109; PPAO, p. 212; PAO, p. 155.

³³ Lipinski, 1971, p. 56.

sources (14-13th cent. BC). According these, the supreme God Ilu's dwelling place was located in the Armenian Highlands³⁴ (in the late Hittite version of the Canaanite legend - on the Western Euphrates, the Mala River head waters)³⁵ the meeting and banquet place of the Ugaritic pantheon.

The "Gilgameš" epic indirectly testifies to the location of the gathering place of the gods regarding banquets, according to which Gilgameš after crossing the Mašu Mountains (i.e. entering into the Armenian Highlands) met goddess Siduri - the ale-wife of gods, who offered them beer³⁶. The Mesopotamian gods celebrated the creation of mankind with a banquet, which took place in the Armenian Highlands (see "In the image and likeness of God").

Aside from being the gathering place of the gods, according the ancient Near Eastern beliefs, the Armenian Highlands were considered the dwelling place of specific gods and was tied to their cults. The Armenian Highlands were tied to the cult of the Mesopotamian great god Haya-Enki and his son Dumuzi, which we shall treat separately below. In Hurrian mythology, in the south of the Armenian Highlands were located, successively, the cult centers two of their supreme gods: the god Kumarbi in Urkiš (in the vicinity of the Mašu / Masion Mountains) and the god Tešup in Kumenu (Province Korduk' of Greater Armenia)³⁷. In the legends of various peoples, the Armenian Highlands was also considered the dwelling place of the sun god, as noted in the previous section.

These beliefs that the Armenian Highlands are the dwelling place of the gods would not exist among various Near Eastern peoples, unless they were widespread among the indigenous peoples of the region. And as much as the emergence of Christianity in Armenia was accompanied by the obliteration of pre-Christian culture, nevertheless, there are many direct and indirect references in Armenian literature in the early Middle Ages. As we have already noted, according to Pavstos Buzand, the Great Mountain of Bardzr

³⁴ Lipinski, 1971, pp. 41-57.

³⁵ El, Ašertu and Storm-God (tr. A. Goetze), ANET p. 519; MFH, pp. 167-169; Lipinski, 1971, p. 56.

³⁶ ANET, p. 89; MM, p. 99; PPAO, p. 204; PAO, p. 146.

³⁷ MFH, p. 125-140; M. L. Khachikian, "Kumarbi", MWP, vol. 2, p. 28; V. V. Ivanov, "Tešub", MWP, vol. 2, p. 505.

Hayk' is known as the "*place of the Gods*"³⁸. And Bardzr Hayk' in the "Ashkharhatzuytz" of Anania Shirakatzi is characterized as the "*top of the world*"³⁹. The "Ashkharhatzuytz" also calls the "*top of the world*" the Srmantz Mountain (one of the peaks of the Byurakn Mountains) in the vicinity of Bardzr Hayk'⁴⁰, and according to Armenian traditions that have reached us, earthly Paradise is located in the Byurakn Mountains (see the section entitled "In the Image and Likeness of God").

Based on the foregoing, we can see that the Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian, Ugaritic, Canaanite, Hurrian, Hittite, ancient Hebrew (Biblical) and ancient Armenian world-views from the earliest times presented Armenia as the center of creation, the dwelling place of the gods, meeting place of the gods – the council – where they gathered and made the most important decisions and held their banquets.

³⁸ Pavstos Buzand, 1912, p. 327.

³⁹ Yeremyan, 1963, p. 106; Anania Shirakatzi, 1979, p. 291.

⁴⁰ Yeremyan, 1936, pp. 107-108; Anania Shirakatzi, 1979, p. 293.

THE GOLD-LADEN LAND OF HARALI

Interesting information about the land of Harali has been preserved in ancient Mesopotamian records (variants: Arali, Arallu, Harali, Harallum). According to these sources, the land is described as

- a) the dwelling place of the gods before man's creation, the cradle of civilization;
- b) the underworld;
- c) a real country that was rich in gold mines.⁴¹

Upon examination of all the testimony regarding the land of Harali as a real-historical country up to the 7th century BC, its earliest depictions have evolved into a legendary place, first as the dwelling place of the gods and then as the underworld. Fortunately, examination of written sources makes it possible to identify the location of that sacred and enigmatic, but real country.

The Sumerian passage, dating to 20-18th centuries BC from the "Enki and Ninhursag" legend has important significance, which is alternatively called, "Panegyric to Tilmun's trade"⁴².

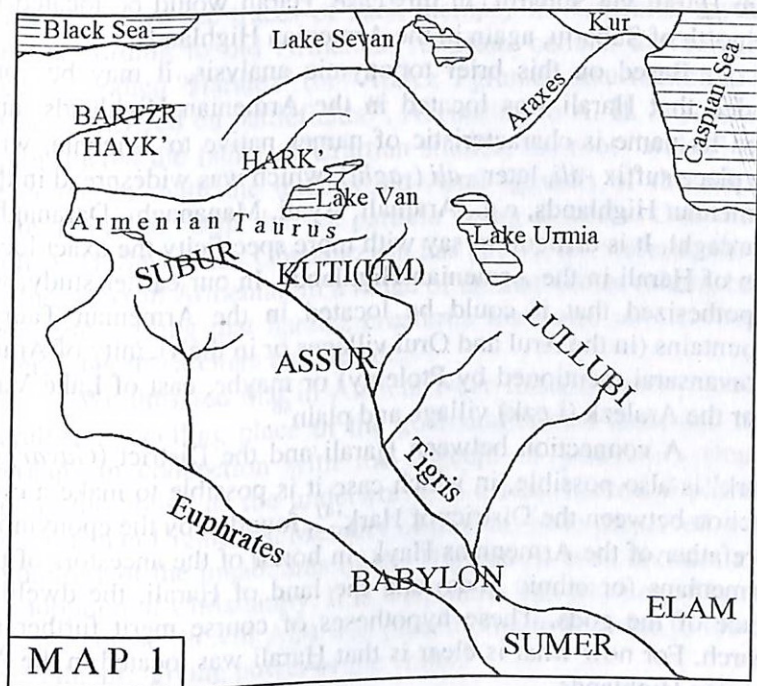
According to the relevant passage of the legend, gold was sent from Harali to Tilmun via the land of Tugriš. Historic Tilmun was located in the Bahrain Islands of the Persian Gulf (see the section "The Enigma of the Sumerian Paradise"). There is a great deal of information about Tugriš⁴³. The Assyrian King Sargon (19th cent. BC) locates Tugriš between Lullubi (south of Lake Urmia) and Subir-Subartu (later Arme-Šubria, in the south-west Armenian Highlands, north of Mesopotamia). Tugriš is mentioned as being in the vicinity of Lullubi in several Hurrian inscriptions from the capital of the Hittite Empire, in the following sequence: Elam-Lullubi-Tugriš (Elam is a country in the southwest of the Iranian plateau). In one of the inscriptions of the famous Babylonian king Hammurabi's (18th cent. BC), Tugriš is mentioned following Elam,

⁴¹ For information about references to the Land of Harali, see Komoroczy, 1972, pp. 113-123; AD, 1968, v. 1, pt. II, pp. 226-227.

⁴² Enki and Ninhursag: A Paradise Myth (tr. S. N. Kramer), ANET, pp. 37-41; ETCSL, 1.1.1 (and sources cited therein); for an interpretation of the passage, see Komorotzi, 1976, pp. 5-36.

⁴³ Komorotzi, 1976, pp. 12-13, n. 26-36 (and works cited therein).

Gutium (Kutium, in the Province Korduk' of the Greater Armenia), and Subir. In addition, the ancient Assyrian ruler Šamši-Adad I (19-18th cent. BC) mentions Tugriš neighboring the Upper Land in the headwaters of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers in Armenian Highlands (according to certain authors, the same as Bardzr Hayk').



Based on this information, at a minimum it is evident that Tugriš was located south of the Armenian Highlands, and bordered Lullubi, Guti(um) and Subir (see Map 1)⁴⁴. Therefore, Harali must be located along the southern border of the Armenian Highlands en route to the Bahrain Islands, i.e., in the central or northern regions of the Armenian Highlands. This conclusion is confirmed by one additional fact. In the ancient world, very often, unique goods were named after the country where they were produced. A type of door

⁴⁴ For the location of Tugriš, see Bobokhyan, 1993, pp. 80-83.

exported from Subartu to Mesopotamia was called "Harali"⁴⁵, which if taken in the context of facts indicating that Subartu and Tugriš are neighboring countries and on the other hand the fact that Harali and Tugriš are probable neighbors, Subartu and Harali are likely to be neighbors as well; however, this does not preclude the possibility that this refers to goods transported to Mesopotamia from Harali via Subartu. In this case, Harali would be located to the north of Subartu, again in the Armenian Highlands.

Based on this brief toponymic analysis, it may be concluded that Harali was located in the Armenian Highlands, and even its name is characteristic of names native to Armenia, with the place suffix *-ali*, later *-ati* (*-aghi*), which was widespread in the Armenian Highlands, e.g., Aramali, Ayali, Mananaghi, Daranaghi, Mardaghi. It is difficult to say with more specificity the exact location of Harali in the Armenian Highlands. In our earlier study, we hypothesized that it could be located in the Armenian Taurus Mountains (in the Arul and Orul villages or in the vicinity of Arane caravansarai mentioned by Ptolemy) or maybe, east of Lake Van, near the Aralezk (Lezk) village and plain⁴⁶.

A connection between Harali and the District (*Gavar*) of Hark' is also possible, in which case it is possible to make a connection between the District of Hark'⁴⁷, founded by the eponymous forefather of the Armenians Hayk, in honor of the ancestors of the Armenians (or ethnic gods) and the land of Harali, the dwelling place of the gods. These hypotheses of course merit further research. For now what is clear is that Harali was located in the Armenian Highlands.

G. Komoroczy, the author of a special study dedicated to Harali, explains the transformation of that real country into a legendary land through two key factors: the vast distance from Sumer and Akkad, and its rich gold mines. According to G. Komoroczy, Nubia also became legendary among the Egyptians due to its riches, as the place called Evilia in the Old Testament, known for

⁴⁵ Komoroczy, 1972, p. 118; AD, 1956, v. 6, p. 89.

⁴⁶ Movsisyan, 1992, pp. 43-44.

⁴⁷ Movses Khorenatzi, 1913, p. 33.

its pure gold⁴⁸. Let us, for our part, add a third major reason. The Armenian Highlands are depicted in ancient Mesopotamian as the dwelling place of the gods, a sacred place, evidence of which has been presented above and will be expanded upon later.

And has any recollection of this country been preserved among the Armenians?

Leaving aside our hypothesis that Harali and Hark are the same place, we see traces of such memory in Armenian mythology. According to old Armenian religious beliefs, mythological creatures called "Haralez" (or "Aralez") granted resurrection to the heroes sacrificed on battlefields⁴⁹. According to A. H. Sayce, who is considered the father of Urartian studies, the root "aralez" may be connected with the underworld Arali (Harali) of the ancient eastern sources, with the -ez particle being a suffix. Concurring with A. H. Sayce, Gr. Ghapantzyan has shown the widespread use of this suffix in Armenian in a range of animal names (khlez, bzez, lorez, etc.; noting that haralez creatures were also animal-like)⁵⁰. Later, other researchers concurred.

We thus see that in Ancient Near Eastern descriptions of Harali, the dwelling place of the gods and sacred land, and later (perhaps in connection with the concept of generation change among the gods), as the underworld, is a real, historical place in the Armenian Highlands. Memory of this has been preserved in the mythology of the inhabitants of the Highlands, even decades after the adoption of Christianity. It is well known that Mushegh Mamikonyan's corpse (in 374 AD) was placed on a tower, due to the belief in the life-giving power of the aralez⁵¹.

⁴⁸ Komoroczy, 1972, pp. 121-122. It is interesting that among the Armenians the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates were known as a golden place. According to G. Srvandztyantz, in the headwaters of the Tigris, "everything is golden. The morning sunbeams are golden. The wings of the birds are golden. The sound of the birds is like the sound of a gold-stringed harp, and the rustling of the grass and trees golden. All the flowers, blossoms and leaves are golden. Everything in view was golden." (Srvandztyantz, 1978, p. 392). And the Western Euphrates starts in the Voskeantz Mountains (in Armenian - "Golden Mountains").

⁴⁹ For a detailed explanation of the aralez in Armenian mythology, see Matikyan, 1930, pp. 109-170; Ghapantzyan, 1944, pp. 28-34.

⁵⁰ Ghapantzyan, 1944, pp. 10-12, 30-31.

⁵¹ Pavstos Buzand, 1968, p. 276.

"IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD..."

According to the Biblical story, on the sixth day of Creation, God created man from earth (clay) in his image and likeness (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7). Creation was thus complete. God planted Paradise, Eden, "in the East", where he also placed mankind's ancestors to live. A great river flowed out of Eden that branched into four rivers: Pishon, Gihon, Tigris and Euphrates. To this day, there is still debate on the identity of the first two rivers. At the same time, the fact that the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates are located in Armenia has led many scholars to conclude that Eden is located in the Armenian Highlands⁵². This is also supported by the fact that Eden is located "in the East", as already discussed in the section on "The Land of the Sun". Let us add that in the Bible, Paradise is presented as "*God's holy Mountain*" (Ez. 28:13-14), from which we can conclude that Eden was a mountainous place.

One of the key distinctive features of Eden is being the headwater of the main river which branches out and irrigates Paradise and its neighboring lands. There are references to this main river in sources predating the Old Testament. According to Ugaritic (northern Syria) sources dating to 14th-13th centuries the dwelling place of supreme god Ilu was, according to Ugaritic beliefs, not only the dwelling place of the supreme god and meeting place of the gods, but also the center of the world's creation⁵³, which is described as the headwaters of the main river, consistent with Biblical depictions.

In the Akkadian version of the epic of "Gilgameš", the heroes saved from the flood, have been granted immortality by the gods and placed to live "near the mouth of the rivers"⁵⁴. In this respect, "near the mouth of the rivers" has the same meaning as "the headwaters of the rivers," because according to the oldest Mesopotamian records, rivers (at that time the Euphrates, the Tigris and their headwaters) flowed from subterranean ocean, and the place of

⁵² For the pre-20th century view that Eden was located in Armenia, see Injijyan, 1935, pp. 244-271; Alishan, 1904, pp. 1-16, 249-254.

⁵³ Lipinski, 1971, pp. 41-57; Shifman, 1987, pp. 56, 85.

⁵⁴ ANET, p. 95; MM, p. 116; PPAO, p. 217; PAO, p. 161.

the outflow was the mouth of the subterranean ocean and the source or headwater of the river⁵⁵. The same source presents the dwelling place of the saved hero as the land of immortality located in the upper waters of the Euphrates in the north of the Mašu (Masius, Masion) Mountains⁵⁶, that is, in the Armenian Highlands.

It is noteworthy that in the Sumerian flood accounts, the gods settle the saved hero in Tilmun (Dilmun) country, "*where the sun rises*"⁵⁷. We have already examined the various views concerning the dwelling place of the sun, its rising and setting, and will treat the Sumerian Tilmun Paradise in the next section. Here, let us point out that in the Sumerian and Akkadian versions of the flood legend, the dwelling place of the saved hero is called Paradise, at the headwaters or source of the river, which was the land of immortality (for the details, see the discussion in the section on "In search of immortality: the way of the Armenian's country").

The theme of man's creation and his earthly calling are found in several Mesopotamian sources (written centuries before the Old Testament), of which the Sumerian legend "Enki and Ninmah"⁵⁸ and the Akkadian epic "Atrahasis"⁵⁹ are particularly significant. According to Mesopotamian tradition, prior to man's creation, the gods performed all earthly activities. According to the Sumerian "Enki and Ninmah" legend these took place in the land of Harali. To liberate themselves from toil and hardships of work, the gods convened and asked the mother goddess to create the human race to work and save the gods from their woes. Goddess Ninmah agrees, and with the wisest of the gods, Haya-Enki undertakes the creation of man. The two gods create man from clay and administer the "*breath of life*," a motive that is later reflected in the story of the first created man Adam and spread through Jewish, Christian and Muslim religious accounts. Significantly, Sumerian

⁵⁵ Cf. Lipinski, 1971, p. 51.

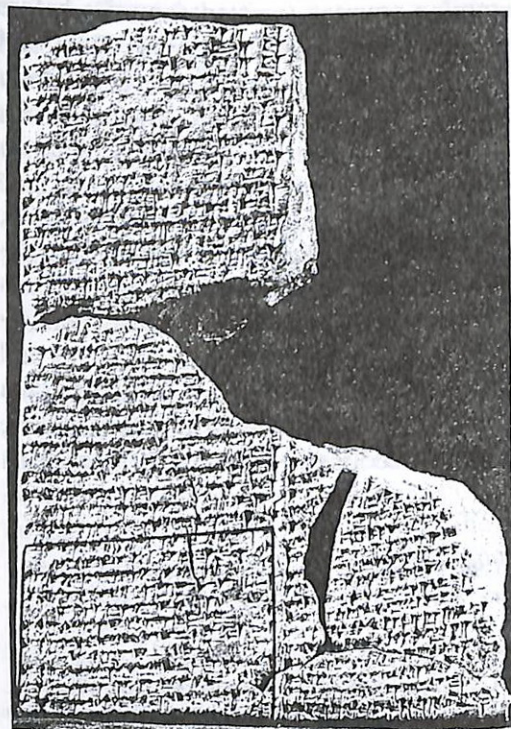
⁵⁶ ANET, pp. 88-89; MM, pp. 97-98; PPAO, pp. 200-202; PAO, pp. 140-144.

⁵⁷ The Deluge (tr. S. N. Kramer); ANET, p. 41; Kramer, 1965, p. 180; ETCSL, 1.7.4 (and sources cited therein).

⁵⁸ ETCSL, 1.1.2 (and sources cited therein).

⁵⁹ Atrahasis, ANET (trans. E. A. Speiser & A. K. Grayson), pp. 104-106, 512-514; Atrahasis, MM (trans. St. Dalley), pp. 1-38; "When the gods instead of man ..." (Legend of Atrahasis), IOYCW (trans. V. K. Afanaseva), pp. 51-75.

various degenerate types. According to the legend, following man's creation, the gods get together to celebrate the birth of their new creation. During the celebration, the drunken creator gods try to create man again. Because they are drunk, they fail and create imperfect beings, infertile women, genderless, and all manner of defective men. That is, in the ancient Mesopotamian world view birth defects are considered the result of the gods' mistake at creation. Moreover, by creating human beings in pairs, the gods have sealed their fate, so that as man and wife "*from here until eternity*" they must live together, continue the human race, which required tilling the earth, farming and other work, offering the harvest to the gods in thanksgiving, erecting temples for their adoration, and faithfully worshipping them. Man is mortal and his work is ephemeral (these ideas have also been expressed in the books of the Old Testament).



Pic. 6. The
Sumerian tablet about
the creation of man

Locating the Mesopotamian land of creation does not pose a problem, because it is already evident to us that the country of Harali (the Armenian Highlands) is where the gods lived before the creation of man (see section on "Gold-Laden Land of Harali"). It is clear that the meeting place of the gods, according to Mesopotamian (as well as Ugaritic and Biblical) beliefs is similarly found in the Armenian mountains.

It is noteworthy that description of Paradise in connection with the headwaters of the two major rivers in the mountains (Euphrates and Tigris), is found in Mesopotamia as well as the Armenian Highlands and the archeological monuments of the northern Caucasus⁶⁰, which further confirms that Paradise was considered to be in the Armenian Highlands from the most ancient accounts.

Of course, the earliest accounts describing Armenia as the center of creation, Paradise and the cradle of civilization must have been widespread in the Armenian world-view. Evidence of this view has been preserved in old medieval Armenian manuscripts as well as in popular folklore. We have already discussed the fact that "Ashkharhatzuytz" refers to Bardzr Hayk' as *"being not only higher than the rest of the Greater Armenia but also above the rest of the world, and for that reason, it has been called the top of the world. It sends forth rivers to the four corners of the world. Four great rivers start from there (Bardzr Hayk')"*⁶¹. As for the Great Mountain of Bardzr Hayk', according to Pavstos Buzand, it has been considered *"the place of the gods"*⁶². In addition to being the dwelling place of the gods and the top of the world, it is significant that Bardzr Hayk' sets forth the four rivers to the four corners of the world, which corresponds with the Near Eastern and especially Biblical descriptions (the four rivers originate from Eden).

In the vicinity of Bardzr Hayk' according to Armenian traditions preserved to this day, the Byurakn (modern Bingyol) Mountains are considered to have been a Paradise created by God⁶³. Like Bardzr Hayk in the "Ashkharhatzuytz", Mount

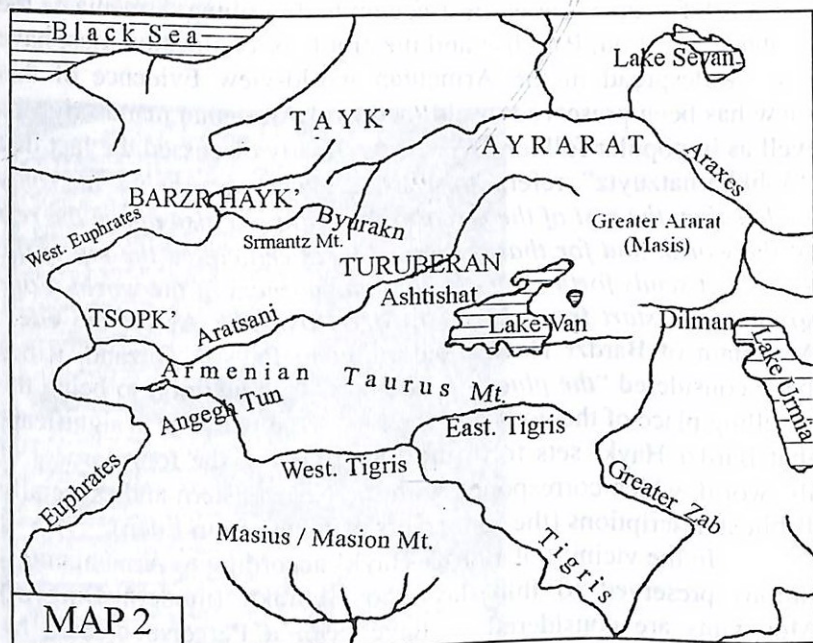
⁶⁰ Avetisyan, Bobokhyan, 1999, p. 34.

⁶¹ Yeremyan, 1963, p. 106; Anania Shirakatz, 1979, p. 291.

⁶² Pavstos Buzand, 1912, p. 272.

⁶³ Ghanalanyan, 1969, pp. 21-22, 422.

Srmantz, the highest peak of Byurakn is given the epithet "*the world's summit*"⁶⁴. Pavstos Buzand and Movses Khorenatzi mention a place named "Hatzyatz Drakht (Paradise)" in the vicinity of Vahagn's temple in Ashtishat, where St. Gregory the Illuminator baptized the Armenian army⁶⁵. It is clear that the emergence of Christianity in Armenia, as elsewhere, was accompanied by the obliteration of the former religion, building a comparable Christian edifice on that foundation. The name, "Hatzyatz Drakht (Paradise)", may contain in itself the memory of having once been part of Paradise, and hence, the baptism of the Armenian forces took place there, symbolizing the beginning of a new life.



⁶⁴ Yeremyan, 1963, pp. 107-108; Anania Shirakatzi, 1979, p. 293.

⁶⁵ Movses Khorenatzi, 1913, p. 272; Pavstos Buzand, 1968, pp. 96, 100.

The fact that Paradise was located in Armenia is also found in Yeghishe's "Commentary on the Creation", based on Biblical exegesis⁶⁶.

Already in the 19th century, bringing together Biblical, literary information and popular accounts, Ghevont Alishan attempted to place Paradise, based on the following description. According to him, Paradise is located in the Bardzr Hayk' Province and the neighboring regions, bordering the Armenian Taurus Mountains in the south, the Euphrates in the west, Partizatpor district in the Province of Tayk in the north (Alishan considers the name of this district Partizatspor to be derived from the name of the garden of Eden) and the Ayrarat and Turuberan provinces to the east (see Map 2)⁶⁷. If the current data were projected on a map, the same borders would be outlined as set forth in the Near Eastern descriptions of the location of Paradise, where man was made in the image and likeness of God...



*Pic. 7. Mesopotamian seal impression with images of "wrong-doing".
In the center is the tree (of wisdom), with its fruits; on the right, a man;
on the left, a woman, above whom is the snake that tempts her
(3rd millennium BC - British Museum in London)*

⁶⁶ Khachikyan, 1992, p. 245.

⁶⁷ Alishan, 1904, p. 10.

THE ENIGMA OF THE SUMERIAN PARADISE

We established in the previous pages that according to the oldest Near Eastern beliefs the Armenian Highlands were described as a land, inhabited by the gods since the beginning, where they created the first humans. In the material to be presented, we will see that according to the same descriptions Armenia was not only the cradle of humanity, but also the land of rebirth (after the flood) where the mysteries of immortality and wisdom are kept. In the context of this world-view, it seems that in Sumerian sources the land of Tilmun (Dilmun) emerges as Paradise, which should undoubtedly be placed in the Armenian Highlands. But the analysis of a series of Mesopotamian sources, which are not of a mythological nature, (25th - 6th centuries BC)⁶⁸, do not provide evidence for locating Tilmun north of Mesopotamia. This is an odd situation. On the one hand, Tilmun is Paradise, the undefiled and holy land inhabited by the gods, and on the other hand (in non-mythological sources), it is the center of sea trade, and kings, defeating it, extract tribute from it. What is this puzzle and what is its solution?

Based on non-mythological sources, the most probable and accepted location for Tilmun is in the Bahrain Islands of the Persian Gulf⁶⁹. In order to solve the contradictions surrounding Tilmun, P. Cornwall proposed a hypothesis based on which the proto-inhabitants of the Sumerian civilization once lived on the Bahrain Islands⁷⁰; therefore they were considered Paradise by the Sumerians, in connection with their ancestor worship. But carbon-14 analysis of items belonging to the Mesopotamian and Bahrain cultures shows that the Bahrain artifacts are from a later era and originated in Mesopotamia⁷¹. Consequently, even in this version it is impossible to determine the location of mythological Tilmun. Let us also observe that in non-mythological sources, Tilmun usually

⁶⁸ For references to Tilmun, see Cornwall, 1946, p. 3f; Kramer, 1963b, pp. 112, 114, n. 10 (and the sources cited therein); Bibby, 1984, pp. 45-47; 170-175 etc.

⁶⁹ This view has been elaborated in historical detail since 1879, see Bibby, op. cit.

⁷⁰ Cornwall, 1946, p. 4.

⁷¹ Lloyd, 1978, pp. 62-64.

appears alongside the countries of Magan and Meluhha, which does not occur in mythological sources.

According to the oldest Sumerian Flood accounts discovered in 1914, Ziusudra (Sumerian Noah), the hero rescued from the disaster by the will of the gods, lived in Tilmun ("land of the rising sun")⁷². This expression has led some researchers to locate Tilmun to the east of Sumer all the way to India⁷³. That is not supported by the evidence, because as noted in the section on "The land of the Sun", according to Sumerian and Akkadian descriptions, the sun rises and sets on the Mašu (Masius, Masion) Mountains. In the Akkadian (Babylonian) epic of Gilgameš, moreover, the rescued hero lives north of the Mašu Mountains. Thus, according to the oldest Mesopotamian beliefs, Tilmun-Paradise is the same land of immortality that is reached after traveling "*the way to Aratta*", which is the first state mentioned in the territory of Armenia. If we add that Aratta is known in the Sumerian epics by the title of "*the land of the divine holy laws*", which also corresponds with the description of Biblical Ararat (which like Eden, is found "*in the East*"), it becomes clear that the Sumerian land of immortality (Paradise) is the same as Aratta, or that both are found in the Armenian Highlands.

Thus, there appear to be two places called Tilmun in the ancient Near East: the mythological Tilmun of the Armenian Highlands and historic (non-mythological) Tilmun of the Bahrain Islands (25th - 6th cent. B.C). Information about the two similarly named places is intermingled in Mesopotamian records, making it one of the most enigmatic problems in Near Eastern Studies. And is there any connection between these homonymous countries? If the similarity in their names is not accidental (which is less likely), one hypothesis is that part of the Armenian Highlands population migrated to the Bahrain Islands taking the name with them. When could such a migration have taken place? At the latest in 2500 B.C., because that is the date when the name Tilmun is attested in the Bahrain Islands. Another possible date could be the 6th - 5th mil-

⁷² The Deluge (tr. S. N. Kramer), in ANET, p. 44; Kramer, 1965, p. 180; ETCSL 1.7.4 (and sources cited therein).

⁷³ See, e.g., Kramer, 1963(b), pp. 111-115.

lennia BC, when the proto-inhabitants of the Sumerian civilization lived in the south of the Armenian Highlands and in the northern regions of Mesopotamia (in antiquity this was the land of the well-known Hassunian culture)⁷⁴. Moreover, the sacredness attributed by the Sumerians to the Armenian Highlands could be linked to ancestor worship. Within this broad time frame, archaeological findings permit a more specific and probable dating for the migration. J. Bibby, who for years conducted excavations in the Bahrain Islands, has concluded that the oldest known strata may be traced to the 28th century BC⁷⁵. During this period one of the largest migrations from the Armenian Highlands began, taking the bearers of the Early Bronze Age (also referred to as the Kur-Arax, Shengavit Age) culture of Armenia as far as the Northern Caucasus and as far south as Palestine where it was known as the Kirbet-Kerak culture in archeological literature⁷⁶. In all likelihood, the founding of the Tilmun in Bahrain is part of the same migratory phenomenon. It is not irrelevant that circa the 28th century BC emigration from the Armenian Highlands to the south of Mesopotamia is confirmed by Sumerian records (to which we shall return later).

There is a hypothesis that Dilmun (Tilmun) should be equated with the Dilman Plains located south-west of Lake Urmia⁷⁷. Such conclusions are based on coincidence of the names and cannot be explained with reference to the historical information of the 25th - 6th century BC. Moreover, the name Dilmun is not mentioned in the ancient sources, and it is assumed that it has originated from the Delmik tribe that invaded Armenia in the Middle Ages⁷⁸. Based on the foregoing, it is unlikely that Tilmun is equivalent to Dilman (especially, since it assumes that these place names remained unchanged for over five thousand years)⁷⁹.

⁷⁴ Afanaseva, 1983, pp. 66-75.

⁷⁵ Bibby, 1984, p. 346 (chronological table).

⁷⁶ Mellaart, 1957; Burney, 1958; Khanzadyan, 1967; Sagona, 1984 (cf. sources cited therein).

⁷⁷ This view was expressed to me in a conversation with Gevorg Janoyan.

⁷⁸ DTANR, 1988, vol. 2, p. 113.

⁷⁹ We hypothesize that in Armenia the memory of the name Tilmun may have been preserved in the name Tman (also Tmnis) in Korduk' and in the Tmnis place name in Tsopk. Tmnis in Tsopk is found on the bank of the Euphrates and is

THE UNDERWORLD

In Sumerian the word "*kur*" meaning "mountain, land, mountainous land, enemy land, underworld"⁸⁰. The weight given to the words "mountain" and "land" led specialists to conclude that the original land of the Sumerians rather than being south of Mesopotamia was a mountainous region. As for reinterpretation of the term as "enemy land" and "underworld," this was probably the result of subsequent historic events. It is significant that *kur* is not only a common noun, but also the proper name of a country. Research based on information about the latter from the Armenian viewpoint is interesting, especially in the comprehensive context of the depictions of Armenia.

Kur, according to Sumerian and Akkadian sources, is a distant land. Two Sumerian legends, called "The Exploits of Ninurta"⁸¹ and "Inanna and Ebiḫ", are very helpful for determining the location of that land. According to the first legend, Ninurta, the Mesopotamian god of war and agriculture, battles against the giant god of the land of Kur, Asak (Akkadian Asaggu), but is defeated and flees "*like a bird*". Eventually, he succeeds in defeating Asak, whose dwelling (the underworld Kur) is close to the Tigris region (the Armenian (Eastern) Taurus Mountain Range). The location of the Mesopotamian underworld corresponds to the oldest Armenian beliefs. In the Armenian translation of the Bible, the name of the Mesopotamian ruler of the underworld, Nergal has been replaced with Angegh (Kings 2:17, 30) which shows that the latter held the same position in ancient Armenian mythology. As for Angegh's cult center, Angegh Tun ("Angegh's House") District, is found on the headwaters of the Western Tigris (in the Province of Agh-dznik).

The battle of the Mesopotamian god against Kur, which in this instance is the Mountain Ebiḫ, is depicted in the legend of

within the boundaries of Paradise sketched by Alishan, and Tman in Korduk' is on the slope of Ararat, which is connected to several ancient legends of the Universal Flood.

⁸⁰ Kramer, 1961, p. 76; V.K. Afanaseva, "Kur", MWP, 1992, v. 2, p. 29.

⁸¹ van Dijk, 1983; Kramer, 1961, pp. 79-82; Kramer, 1965, pp. 206-208; ETCSL 1.6.2 (and sources cited therein).

"Inanna and Ebiḥ". The latter is found in the country of Lullubi, south of Lake Urmia⁸², which shows that according to Mesopotamian beliefs, that region enters the realm of the upper strata of the underworld. In the section above on "The Golden Country of Harali", it is already mentioned that the land of Harali while being a real geographic place in the Armenian Highlands, was understood first to be the dwelling place of the gods and then the underworld. In that sense, the positive-negative duality of the ancient Mesopotamian traditional views of the divine nature of the Armenian Highlands, is striking. Moreover, the positive (the dwelling place of the gods and immortality, Paradise) is located in the north, and the negative is to its south. That is why the hero in search of immortality had to cross Mašu Mountains, which were the border between the gods and the human world. He had to overcome the dark world and the waters of death in order to reach the land of eternal bliss. Paradise and the underworld had similar positions in Armenian beliefs. Bardzr Hayk' in the North, the Angegh Tun in the south (discussed more fully below).

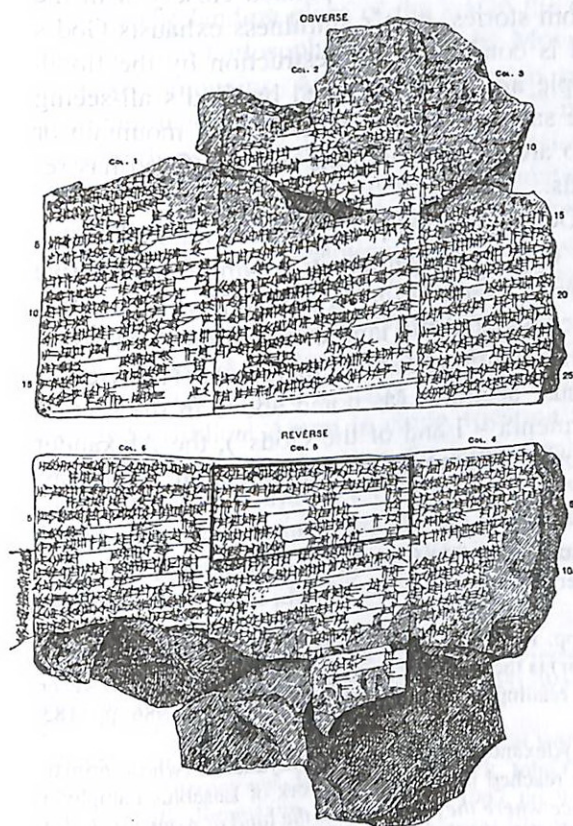
Digressing a bit from the main subject, we would like to emphasize once again the importance of the Sumerian and Akkadian sources (including those relating to the Underworld – Kur) for Armenian studies, while noting several issues to be further examined below. Asag (in Akkadian – Asakku), whose dwelling place (i.e., the main cult center) was in the Armenian Taurus Mountains, may have left his name in the Armenian calendar, like many other gods, as the Armenian name of the 17th day of the month, Asak⁸³. In various places in Armenia there are place names derived from the root "asak". We can probably also assume some connection between the mythological and the Biblical name "Askanaz" given to Armenia. According to Gen. 10:3, Torgom and Askanaz were brothers. Moreover, it is interesting to note that according to testimony by Ghevont Alishan, ancient Armenians were called "sak" (skayordi = "son of skay", "son of Hayk' ")⁸⁴. The story of Asag's birth, in many of its details bears resemblance to

⁸² For information about Lullubi, see Klengel, 1966, pp. 349-371.

⁸³ Anania Shirakatzi, 1979, p. 257.

⁸⁴ Alishan, 1904, pp. 55-57.

the Hymn of Vahagn's Birth⁸⁵. It is possible to connect Kur to the widespread worship of Indo-European god Kuera during the Kingdom of Van (Urartu-Ararat) and the much earlier (although there is no published work on this connection, most Armenian experts share this opinion). Kuera is cited by Zenob Glak and Hovhan Mamikonyan as Kuar, the eldest son of Vahagn-Gisane and Astghik-Anahit-Demetr. Although it would be possible to continue to pursue various considerations relating to this theme, let this suffice for now, so we can move on to the legend of the Universal Flood.



Pic. 8. The Sumerian Flood Story. Arno Poebel's hand copy of the tablet (in Pennsylvania University Museum)

⁸⁵ Petrosyan, 2002, pp. 38-40.

WHEN THE FLOOD CLEANSED EVERYTHING...

Stories about the flood that destroyed the world are widespread among all the peoples of the world on different continents⁸⁶. Several of those stories, with distinctive thematic content, were recorded in the ancient Near East.

The oldest written flood account is Sumerian which was discovered in 1914⁸⁷. Before then, J. Smith had published in 1872 the Babylonian (Akkadian) flood story contained in the 11th tablet of the epic of Gilgamesh⁸⁸, which corresponded closely with the Biblical account. In both stories, man's sinfulness exhausts God's patience and mankind is condemned to destruction by the flood. But certain pious people are not overlooked by God's all-seeing and just eye. They are saved in an ark, landing on a mountain or mountains. Those who are saved determine that the flood has receded by releasing birds.

In the Bible (Gen. 8:1-4) the place of salvation is the Ararat Mountains. In the epic of Gilgamesh, it is Nimuš (alternative reading, Nisir) Mountain⁸⁹, south of the Armenian Highlands. It is clear that Armenia is considered the land of salvation in Mesopotamian tradition and the traditions derived therefrom. This view is also evident in Berossus' accounts (as noted above in the section on "Bound toward Armenia – Land of the Gods"), the Alexander Polyhistor, Abyudenos⁹⁰, Hieronymus the Egyptian, Mnaseas,

⁸⁶ For most of them, see Fräzer, 1923 (1985), the section "Great Flood".

⁸⁷ ANET, pp. 42-44; Kramer, 1965, pp. 175-180; ETCSL, 1.7.4 (and sources cited therein).

⁸⁸ ANET, pp. 88-89; MM, pp. 109-120; PPAO, pp. 211-220; PAO, pp. 155-165.

⁸⁹ Traditionally, Nisir (Nitsir) is the accepted reading of this place name; however, based on various facts, the reading Nimuš is preferable (Lambert, 1986, pp. 185-186).

⁹⁰ The fragments from the Alexander Polyhistor and Abyudenos (whose primary source was Berossus) have reached us through the work of Eusebius Pamphylus of Caesarea: "...and the place where they landed was the land of Armenia" (Alexander Polyhistor); "...and the ark traveled and landed in the land of Armenia, and gave the inhabitants of the world a useful cure from its wood" (Abyudenos, see, Eusebius Pamphylus of Caesarea, 1818, pp. 18 & 25). Hieronymus the Egyptian, who wrote the "Antiquities of Phoenicia", Mnaseas's account is related by Josephus Flavius, who cites a passage from the work of Nicholas of Damascus

Nicholas of Damascus, Josephus Flavius, Eusebius Pamphylus of Caesarea and other accounts⁹¹. It is noteworthy that in the Qur'an flood story, as well, (also originating the Near East) Judi Mountain, in southern Armenia, is considered the place of salvation:

*"...And the water abated,
And the matter was ended.
The Ark rested on Mount
Judi, and the word
Went forth: "Away
With those who do wrong"! (Qur'an 11: 44).*

The landing place of the ark in the oral account of Olympiodoros, the Philosopher⁹², quoted by Movses Khorenatzi, is also in these mountains. As for the Assyrian cuneiform sources, the mountain mentioned is Arartu Mountain⁹³ in the Korduatz Mountains. Perhaps due to damage to the Sumerian flood text, the name of the land of salvation is missing. Fortunately, it is possible to fill that gap with information from other Sumerian accounts, which give the following description of the people of the land of Aratta:

*"They, who stood in the midst of the flood
After the flood swept thereover",⁹⁴*

Aratta is the first known state of the Armenian Highlands to this day (evidenced as early as the 28th cent. BC), which corresponds to Biblical Ararat in name, location and traditions relating to the flood. Aratta-Ararat is the land of salvation in Sumerian as well as Biblical world view. Moreover, according to the Bible, in the Mountains of Ararat, the eternal covenant was sealed between God and humankind, as symbolized by the rainbow (Gen. 9:12-13).

(Josephus Flavius, "Jewish Antiquities", I, 94-95). We shall revert to the work of Nicholas of Damascus in Appendix 2.

⁹¹ Based on relevant passages from the exegetical works of Eusebius Pamphylus of Caesarea, Hieronymus, Eustatius of Antioch, John Chrysostom, Theodoros, Isidore of Seville, Epiphanius, see Ingilizyan, 1947, pp. 9-21.

⁹² Movses Khorenatzi, 1913, pp. 25-26; Movses Khorenatzi, 1981, pp. 105-106.

⁹³ Mentioned by Aššurnasirpal II (also Araradi, Arredi variants), see Luckenbill, 1926, # 441, pp. 142-143; Diakonov, 1951, N 2, pp. 285-289, n. 12; Grayson, 1976, # 546, p. 123.

⁹⁴ Kramer, 1952, pp. 42-43; Kaneva, 1964, p. 218; Cohen, 1973, p. 140.

As for the landing place of Ark of salvation, we note that ancient authors as well as folk tales transmitted from generation to generation point to two locations: Southern Armenia (Korduat Mountains) and Masis – Greater Ararat located in the center of the Highlands. Certain ancient sources simply state that the Ark of salvation landed on the mountains of Armenia, without specifying a location. In all three accounts, Armenia is considered the land of rebirth and new homeland of mankind from the perspective of Near Eastern religious beliefs. After the flood, humanity's survival was a unique new act of creation, which not coincidentally took place in the very location of man's creation, in the Armenian Highlands.

It is also not by chance that in antiquity from a mythological perspective the place of creation and the place of salvation from the flood was considered the earth's navel, the axis and center of the world⁹⁵. The flood account is preserved in exactly that formulation by Tovma Artsruni: *"After God's will was done, the stormy waves brought the ark to the east at the center of the earth, and it landed on the Korduat Mountains. And the patriarch offered God sacrifices in thanksgiving, who in turn promised never to punish the world this way again, confirming his eternal covenant with this word, "I shall place my bow in the sky" which is the rainbow, which some viewed as fire from the clouds, and by pagans as Aramazd's belt"*⁹⁶.

Tales about the flood which destroyed the world existed in pre-Christian Armenia. According to one such tale, the Armenian god Aramazd and the Chaldean god Trujan were enemies, and Aramazd was victorious, drowned Trujan⁹⁷. This might be a mythological reflection of the ancient relations between Armenia and Mesopotamia. According to another account, Tsir Katin (the constellation Milky Way) the heavens tore open and poured forth the flood over the earth leaving its mark in heaven for all mankind

⁹⁵ Toporov V. N., "Navel of the World" ("Pup zemli"), MWP, 1992, v. 2 p. 350.

⁹⁶ Tovma Artsruni and Ananun (Anonymous), 1985, pp. 32-33; Thomas Artsruni, 1991, pp. 18-19.

⁹⁷ Alishan, 1904, p. 44.

to see⁹⁸. Another Armenian tradition about the Flood is a unique glorification-hymn to Greater Ararat (Masis): the Armenian mountains advise the ark of salvation to go to the Mother Mountain, greater and higher than the rest.⁹⁹

After the acceptance of Christianity, Armenian folk tales (some of which have been forgotten) intermingled with the Biblical story and a new tradition took shape that requires further research (see also, Appendix B).



Pic. 9. This picture is from a Gospel published in London in 1634, in which Armenia is presented as the birthplace of all mankind

⁹⁸ Ghanalanyan, 1969, pp. 7, 420.

⁹⁹ Ghanalanyan, 1969, pp. 12, 24, 26, 54. It is notable that this theme about the flood became the basis of the "Caucasus variant" of the flood legend, according to which the ark was driven toward the Kazbek Mountain, cutting its peak in two, then reaching Mt. Ararat, landing there (Ghanalanyan, 1969, p. 164).

IN SEARCH OF IMMORTALITY: THE WAY OF THE ARMENIAN'S COUNTRY

According to the well-known Biblical story, God planted the Trees of life, knowledge of good and evil, and other fruit-bearing trees in the center of Eden, and commanded that only fruits from the fruit-bearing trees be eaten. Due to the serpent's intermeddling, the first created humans tasted the forbidden fruit, their eyes opened, and like the gods, they knew good and evil. Warning that humans, by eating the fruit from the Tree of life, would become immortalized and divine, God expelled man from Paradise and placed the seraphim and cherubim with flaming swords as guards on the roads leading to the Tree of life (Gen. 2:8-3:24).

From the Biblical perspective, between the divine and the mere living beings, there are two huge chasms: wisdom and immortality. The sacred Trees symbolizing two divine attributes grew in Paradise (which was the center of creation and the world) whose location in the Armenian Highlands was well-known long ago. Therefore, among the Biblical descriptions of Armenia (Paradise, the land of mankind's rebirth, the land of the eternal covenant between God and mankind), we should underscore its being the bearer of the mysteries of wisdom and immortality as well.

It has already been noted that in the Old Testament, the sources of various themes and concepts are connected to ancient Mesopotamia. The themes relating to the mysteries of wisdom and immortality are no exception. In the Bible as well as in the oldest Mesopotamian sources, man attains wisdom only (endowed with reason), but remains mortal, occupying a middle ground between the divine and the animal orders.

Nevertheless, man did not cease to seek immortality, and the quest for eternal life has become man's constant companion. In the oldest Mesopotamian traditions, Gilgameš is the hero in search of immortality, about whom many tales have been written in many languages around the world. In the Sumerian epic "Gilgameš and the Land of Living", Gilgameš decides to journey to the land of immortality. In order to go there, Utu (Sun) god gives him seven

talismans to find "*the way to the land of Aratta*"¹⁰⁰. In the Hittite version of the epic, the hero seeks immortality with his friend upstream of the Euphrates¹⁰¹. And in the Babylonian version, Gilgamesh traverses the Mašu Mountains and the twelve leagues long thick darkness and reaches the garden reminiscent of Paradise. He crosses the waters of death, meets the immortalized hero saved from the flood and thanks to him obtains "*the Flower of immortality*", which the serpent steals from him on his return journey¹⁰². It is noteworthy that in the Bible as well mankind is condemned to death as a result of the serpent's intermeddling.

The concept of immortality associated with Gilgamesh has persisted in the Near East for a long time. In the motif of seeking immortality, Gilgamesh is later replaced by Alexander the Macedonian. According to the Alexander Romance (written in 240 BC), in order to find immortality, he sets out on the "*the way of the Armenian's country, where is the source of the Euphrates and of the Tigris*" (Book II, 23)¹⁰³. He reaches wonderland, crosses the world of darkness, meets a blessed person, and reaches the fountain of life.

And in connection with Alexander's journey, the Syrian version of the Alexander Romance refers to the Masis Mountain Range¹⁰⁴. In short, in ancient Near Eastern and Hellenistic literary traditions "*the way to the land of Aratta*" is replaced by "*the way of the Armenian's country*", and Mašu Mountains are replaced with the Masis Mountain Range. In both cases, the hero goes towards the headwaters of the Euphrates (and Tigris), crosses darkness, through a place reminiscent of Paradise, and then after the dark world or the waters of death, he meets God's chosen person and receives immortality. Alexander the Macedonian, who in reality never set foot in Armenia, is depicted in the epic tradition as taking

¹⁰⁰ PPAO, p. 131; ETCSL, 1.8.1.5.1 (and sources cited therein).

¹⁰¹ MM, p. 127, n. 32.

¹⁰² ANET, pp. 88-89; MM, p. 119; PPAO, pp. 218-220; PAO, pp. 163-165.

¹⁰³ Lipinski, 1971, p. 46.

¹⁰⁴ Lehmann-Haupt, 1927, pp. 797-798; Lipinski, 1971, p. 47; Turaev, 1924, pp. 262-263; Ingilizyan, 1947, p. 120.

the way to Armenia¹⁰⁵, because in ancient Near Eastern religious beliefs, the concepts of Paradise and immortality were tied to Armenia¹⁰⁶.

In the previous pages Near Eastern sources were examined that posit that Paradise is located in the Armenian Highlands. It was also noted that according to Armenian sources, Paradise was located in the Byurakn Mountains, Bardzr Hayk' and neighboring regions. In connection with this land there are a great many Armenian legends, according to which the "*Flower (grass) of immortality*" grew and source of immortality flowed forth in Byurakn. These had the power to bring the dead back to life, heal the hopelessly sick, and restore sight to the blind¹⁰⁷. It is noteworthy that as conceived by the Armenians in ancient times, location of Paradise was equated with that of the underworld, which parallels the Near Eastern tradition. The land of immortality/Paradise is found north of the underworld, and the hero seeking immortality coming from the south would have to cross the underworld first. The underworld, according to ancient Armenian beliefs, was found in the Armenian Taurus Mountain Range, in the territory of the District of Angegh Tun. In Mesopotamian sources, Kur, which is depicted as the underworld is also considered to be located in the Armenian Taurus Mountains – in the headwaters of the Tigris. Gilgameš first crosses the Mašu (Masi(u)s-Masion) Mountains, along the southern border of the Armenian Taurus, traverses the land of darkness, and emerges from the legendary garden of stone, passing through the waters of death to reach his destination¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁵ Note that Armenian legends preserve the motifs of Alexander's journey to Armenia, passing through the "*world of darkness*" to reach the "*land of light*", and obtaining the "*water of immortality*" (Ghanalanyan, 1969, pp. 279-282, 472).

¹⁰⁶ In Greek sources, the land of Aya, where the son of the Sun ruled and where Golden Fleece was kept, is in all likelihood the same as Hayasa-Hayk'-Armenia (Jahukyan, 1987, p. 285; Petrosyan, 1997, pp. 86-89; Martirosyan, 1997, p. 24). The Golden Fleece of Aya is tied to the Eternal Tree, Ea, of Hittite legend, from which the Golden Fleece hung as a symbol of all good things (MFH, p. 61).

¹⁰⁷ Ghanalanyan, 1969, pp. 21-22, 422. In pre-Christian Armenia, the cult of Tree of life and the Flower of immortality are evidenced by the "Sons of the Sun" communities, preserved into the 19th century, which worship the sun, poplar tree, and lilies (Bartikyan, 1967, pp. 102-112; Nersisian, 1987, pp. 66-67, 94).

¹⁰⁸ ANET, pp. 88-97; MM, pp. 96-120; PPAO, pp. 20-220; PAO, pp. 143-165.

After the Mašu Mountains, the darkness stretching 12 leagues, as C. F. Lehmann-Haupt pointed out several decades ago, was the natural tunnel of the Tigris, the exit of which the Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions designate as the Tigris headwaters and the "*mighty mountains of the rising and the setting sun*"¹⁰⁹. The image of the orchard on the stone is reminiscent of the description of Paradise in Ezekiel's Biblical prophecy (Ezekiel 28:13-14). And the waters of death and the world of darkness correspond to the Angegh Tun (the Armenian underworld). It is only by successfully traversing this expanse that a traveler from the south can reach the land of Paradise in Armenia, Bardzr Hayk' and Byurakn. Thus, based on examination of the details of the motifs as well as the geographical indicators, it can be concluded that there prevailed in the ancient Near East a systematic concept of immortality which continued into the Hellenistic era, according to which the mystery of eternal life is kept in the Armenian Highlands, and therefore, it is incumbent on the hero seeking immortality to travel the way leading to Aratta, the Armenian's country.



Pic. 10. The statue of Gilgamesh (8th cen. BC – Louvre Museum in Paris)

¹⁰⁹ Lehmann-Haupt, 1910, pp. 430-462.

THE LAND OF WISDOM

The thematic connection between the oldest Mesopotamian sources and the Bible is apparent even in primordial theme of knowledge. As mentioned earlier, the Tree of knowledge of good and evil, according to the Old Testament, was in Eden in the Armenian Highlands, where the first humans became aware of that wisdom (Gen. 3:1-7). In that sense, the following account from a Sumerian text that connects the origin of wisdom and art to the Armenian Highlands merits special attention: "*Wisdom and art was brought down from Aratta*"¹¹⁰.

In ancient Mesopotamian mythology, the cult of the wisest god, Haya-Enki creator of everything, including the global ocean and subterranean waters, is connected to the Armenian Highlands. His primary dwelling place is in Abzu, whose terrestrial realm is the Armenian Highlands, as described in the section above on "The Center of Creation". According to Mesopotamian beliefs, seven wise men lived in Abzu. They were dispatched by Haya-Enki to spread civilization to mankind. Among those, the story of Oannes is particularly well-known (thanks to the writings of Berossus). He taught writing, the sciences, building, agriculture, etc. to the people of Babylon, who until then had lived like animals¹¹¹. The land of Harali appears as the cradle of civilization in Sumerian sources as well (see the section on "The Gold-Laden Land of Harali").

In summary, we see that the Armenian Highlands have been the center of creation, the location of the birth and salvation of mankind, Paradise and the underworld, and granting of immortality, according to Mesopotamian beliefs, as well as the cradle of civilization.

¹¹⁰ B. Alster, *Studies in Sumerian Proverbs*, 1975, p. 128, n. 32 (as cited in Berlin, 1983, p. 22).

¹¹¹ MM, pp. 182-183; Schnabel, 1923, pp. 253-256; V. K. Afanaseva, "Oannes", MWP, v. 2, p. 234.

DEVOUT, CHOSEN PEOPLE IN THE LAND OF HOLY LAW: THE CHILDREN OF THE GOD HAYA

In Sumerian epic Aratta has the honor of being called the "land of the divine holy law"¹¹². *"The divine sacred laws"* (in Sumerian - *me*) is understood not only as rules, but also as the mighty, sacred forces which governed the universe and all spheres of the divine and human reality. For that reason it is suggested that the Sumerian "*me*" be translated as "essence, being"¹¹³. The lord of *"the divine sacred laws"*, according to Sumer-Akkadian mythology, was Haya (Enki), the wisest of the gods, whose cult center, as mentioned earlier, is connected with the Armenian Highlands.

In Mesopotamian literary accounts, major creation events took place in the Armenian sacred Highlands, where the sacred laws governing the universe, as well as the mysteries of immortality and wisdom were kept, and where not just ordinary mortals, but a chosen people lived. Sumerian epics have attested to that:

*"Aratta, on its right and left,
Inanna, the Lady of all the lands,
Surrounded for her like an onrushing torrent.
They are people (whom She) separated from other people,
They are people whom Dumuzi elects from other people"*¹¹⁴

This application of concept of a "chosen people" is unique not only because of its very early use, but especially because other nations apply the word "chosen", rather than being self-proclaimed (as in the case of the Jews and the Japanese). This also means that the view of the Armenians being chosen by god was held outside the boundaries of the Armenian Highlands.

The same primary source has preserved information about the Armenians' ancestors being god's chosen, with a unique sense

¹¹² The Sumerian expression *kur-me-sikil-la* may be translated in different ways (see, e.g., Kramer, 1952, p. 21; Kaneva, 1964, pp. 208-210; Cohen, 1973, p. 123; Berlin, 1979, p. 57, etc.). Since the divine laws were called *me*, we prefer the translation "land of the divine holy laws".

¹¹³ V.K. Avanesova, "Me", MWP, v. 2, 1992, p. 127.

¹¹⁴ Kramer, 1952, p. 43; Kaneva, 1964, p. 218; Cohen, 1973, p. 140 (there is no significant variation in the translations; we have followed the latter two here).

of destiny and mission, as evidenced in the words of the ruler of Aratta:

*"Should (Inanna) who is "mush-crown" of Aratta,
As the benevolent, protective Spirit of the land of the holy
law,
Keep Aratta, like "shining disk" of heaven, in proper or-
der for herself,
Then will I make known my preeminence"*¹¹⁵.

Ancient Near Eastern inscriptions have preserved numerous references to names of tribes or places based on the root "haya" in connection with the Armenian Highlands. The "Haya" tribe and place name is in particular recorded several times in the Ebla sources (northern Syria, 24th -23rd centuries BC), which make a connection with the cities of Armi and Azi in Armenia¹¹⁶. In the Mesopotamian sources, the city name Subur (Subari) corresponds to the name "land (city) of Haya"¹¹⁷. The name of the "Haya" tribe is mentioned in a Assyrian text dating to the turn of 3rd - 2nd millennia BC¹¹⁸. Hittite inscriptions from the 15th - 13th cent. BC mention the name of the country of "Hayasa". The suffix -(a)sa is a Hittite place-name particle¹¹⁹. Systematic analysis shows that Haya, the name of the god tied to the Highlands has much in common with the etymology of the Armenians' name for themselves and the Haya tribal and place names found in Sumerian, Akkadian, Ebla, and Old Assyrian and Hittite sources.

The connection between the god Haya and the Armenian Highlands is further underscored by the fact that his son Dumuzi is the patron god of the land of Aratta. It is noteworthy that the Mesopotamian Dumuzi corresponds to Orion, who in the Armenian translation of the Bible (Job 9:9) is referred to as Hayk¹²⁰. In other words, Hayk may well have been the god of Aratta. Dumuzi, the name of Haya's son, means "true son", while the name "Hayk" is composed of the root for the tribe name "Hay" and the suffix "-

¹¹⁵ Kramer, 1952, p. 23; Kaneva, 1964, pp. 211-212; Cohen, 1973, p. 125.

¹¹⁶ Ivanov, 1983, pp. 31-33; Movsisyan, 1993, pp. 119-121.

¹¹⁷ Gelb, 1944, pp. 31, 94-96.

¹¹⁸ Ivanov, 1983, pp. 30-31.

¹¹⁹ HAP, pp. 190-194 and citations therein (section author, S. T. Yeremyan).

¹²⁰ Matteosyan, 1993, p. 304.

ik" (e.g. h(i)nd-ik (Indian), pars-ik (Persian), etc.) meaning "representative (or son) of the tribe (or god) Haya". The god Haya-Enki is a major figure in the Sumerian and Akkadian creation myth.

Based on the works of Mar Abbas Katina, Movses Khorenatzi relates the following about Hayk, eponymous father of the nation: *"the first gods were awesome and prominent, the source of good in the world, the beginning of the world and the multitude of humankind. Preceding them was the generation of giants, Hayk Hapetostian being one of them"*¹²¹.

Everything seems to fall in place, and a forgotten page about the genesis of Armenians opens in front of us. The Armenians are descendants of the wisest god, the creator god, "Haya", whose son was the valiant Hayk. His name meant "son, representative of Haya", that is, "Hay"; therefore, as Movses Khorenatzi, the Father of Armenian History attests, Armenians were all named after him (Hayk = Hay (Armenian), Haykk' = Hayk' = Hayastan / Armenia). The naming of the people or land after a god was widespread phenomenon in the ancient world (e.g. the country of Aššur (Assyria), its capital and people, were named after their god Aššur)...

¹²¹ Movses Khorenatzi, 1981, p. 109.

IN LIEU OF A POSTSCRIPT

As we complete this work, which is a first attempt to gather the unique stories about Armenia current in the ancient Near East, let us stress, once again, that it has no pretensions to being a final or exhaustive treatment of subject. Nevertheless, the material presented is sufficient to give the outline of image of the Armenian land and people from the perspective of ancient Near Eastern religious beliefs.

According to these beliefs, the Armenian Highlands have been the dwelling place of the gods since before the creation of mankind, the location of Paradise, the place of mankind's creation, the dwelling place of the life-giving sun. Upon the destruction of sinful mankind, Armenia became once again the land of humanity's rebirth, where the eternal covenant between God and humanity was sealed. The sacred laws governing the universe, the mysteries of immortality and wisdom are kept in this land. The Armenians' devout forefathers have had the privilege of inhabiting that divine land. They were the chosen ones of the god Hayk-Dumuzi, the children of the wisest god, the god of creation, Haya, from whom in all likelihood the Armenians got their name...

Accounts that this land is sacred and its people were chosen by God persisted through Christian era as well, even though the Jews were acknowledged to be the chosen people of the Bible.

Taking into account the location of Paradise as evidenced by the two rivers (the Euphrates and the Tigris) and the Ark, symbolizing the rebirth of mankind, the Armenian historian Yeghishe attributes special significance to the Armenians: *"With two rivers and an ark, we surpass other nations. But what good is this? It is a source of wisdom, a reminder always to remember the God of creation, and expect transformation into the same, and then to have three intercessors with God"*¹²².

In St. Grigor Narekatzi's "Ode to Resurrection", the journey of a chariot to Jerusalem, symbolizing Christian theology, be-

¹²² Khachikyan, 1992, p. 245.

gins in Masis (Greater Ararat): *"the chariot descended from the Masis Mountain . . . and creaking entered Jerusalem"*¹²³...

Hovhannes Imastaser (Philosopher), noting that the Armenians and Jews were both god-chosen, emphasizes the Armenians' preeminence: *"Thus, the movement of the months of the Jewish calendar and the stability of the months of the Armenian calendar was established by the One on High, for the faith, writing and calendars of these two nations was given by God, whereas for other nations, it was created by man. The Armenian letters were written on a stone by a fiery hand from on high, and for them on a stone table; the calendar for them created by Moses, and for the Armenians by Hayk, before him; faith for them handed down from a mountain through an emissary, and for the Armenians delivered upon a stone, with a golden hammer wielded by God himself"*¹²⁴...

In one of the riddles recorded by St. Nerses Shnorhali the Armenians are characterized as follows:

*"Superior to all other nations
I know a nation whose people are brave giants
(answer: Armenians)"*¹²⁵

The fall of the Armenian State in the Middle Ages was followed by centuries of suffering and subjugation, when foreigners ruled the Armenians' land with the intent first psychologically and then physically to annihilate them, infecting the Armenian people with inferiority complexes, the consequences of which are palpable today. (We realize that against the background of centuries of propagandizing a slave-mentality, which still persists, this booklet may be labeled as sowing the seeds of national vanity. Let us once again underscore that our conclusions have been made first and foremost on the basis of the written accounts of countries neighboring Armenia).

The greatest crisis in Armenian history has been overcome. According to the rules governing the universe, everything "ever returning on its course". Therefore, we believe that in the

¹²³ Grigor Narekatzi, 1981, pp. 59-65.

¹²⁴ Abrahamyan, 1956, p. 223.

¹²⁵ Mnatzakanyan, 1980, p. 365.

new millennium, the Armenian people will strive along a path to be worthy of its original majesty...

APPENDIXES

A. THE OLDEST NAMES OF ARMENIA AND THE PROBLEM OF THE GENESIS OF ARMENIAN PEOPLE

Modern comparative linguistic evidence shows that Armenian, as a member of the Armenian-Hellenic-Aryan subgroup of Indo-European language family, emerged as a separate language at the beginning of the 3rd millennium BC¹²⁶, and that the earliest speakers of Armenian lived in the Armenian Highlands in the 3rd-2nd millennia BC¹²⁷. Are these linguistic facts supported by ancient written testimony? This section aims to answer this question only to a certain degree, i.e., are the names given to Armenia and Armenians in the 3rd millennium BC evidenced in ancient written sources?

Before examining the original sources it is necessary to observe that single country, like a people, may be known by different names and known in different centers of writing by a variety of names. In early Armenian historiography, Armenia was known, for example, as Hayk', Ararat/d, Armenia, House of Torgom (as well as the Land of the Askanaz nation), which come from different sources. Therefore, one issue that must be explored is whether the toponyms evidenced within the Armenian Highlands related to different political entities, or are different names for the same place.

Aratta and Subur (Šubur, Subartu). The earliest historical information relating to the Armenian Highlands evidence the existence of a state named Aratta, which is mentioned in Sumerian sources from the 28-27th centuries BC as well as in connection with events in the 22nd century BC. Let us begin with data relating to the location of Aratta.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Jahukyan, 1967, pp. 330-332; Shirokov, 1980, pp. 80-93; Jahukyan, 1987, pp. 24-25.

¹²⁷ Shirokov, 1980, pp. 80-93; Gamkrelidze & Ivanov, 1984, v. 1, pp. 393-428.

¹²⁸ Aratta is mentioned in the first five epic tales of the Sumerian epic, in the legend "Inanna and Ebih", in Eblaic texts and the inscriptions of Gudea, and elsewhere. On the location of Aratta, see our review of the earlier views in "The Old-

In the epic tale “Enmerkar and Ensuhkešdanna”, Sumer mounted a military campaign along the “river of Uruk” from Aratta¹²⁹, which logically is a reference to the Euphrates. From the primary sources, it is apparent that Aratta was a high, mountainous region, and that highest point from the “river of Uruk” to the Masius/Masion Mountains along the southern border of the Armenian Highlands does not exceed 1000 m. Therefore, Aratta must be found in these mountains and be south of this mountainous area, in the headwaters of the Euphrates.

In the Sumerian epic tales “Lubalbanda in the Mountain Cave” and “Lugalbanda”¹³⁰ the land of Zamua is mentioned on the route from Sumer to Aratta, which presupposes that Aratta is located on continuation of the Sumer-Zamua route. The land of Zamua is located to the north of Zagros¹³¹, south of Lake Urmia. Thus, Aratta must be in the Lake Urmia basin and/or neighboring territory.

On the route from Sumer to Aratta there is also mention of a place called *hur-ru-um-kur-ra*, which was originally understood to be land of Hurrum (i.e., Hurrians)¹³², however, C. Wilcke proposed reading this as a common noun, meaning “mountain cave”¹³³. Under the first interpretation, based on the fact that the Hurrians lived in Northern Mesopotamia and to the east of there in the first half of the 3rd millennium BC, the likely location of Aratta was in the mountainous area to the north to Mesopotamia. But

est State in Armenia: Aratta” (Yerevan, 1992), pp. 10-23. Since then, V. Mattoosyan (Matteosyan, 1995, pp. 284-303) and David Rohl (Rohl, 2003, pp. 89-136) have also concluded that Aratta is located in Armenia. But the information relating to this issue is no limited to the data examined therein, and we review additional facts in this study.

¹²⁹ Kramer, 1956, pp. 232-234; Berlin, 1970, pp. 46-49; ETCSL 1.8.2.4 (and sources cited therein); In these sources, have different forms of the personal names in the second name in the title of legend: Ensukušširanna, Ensuhkešdanna, En-suhgir-ana. In the last two sources, the section cited here is translated differently, but the invasion via a journey by water is the same.

¹³⁰ Kramer, 1956, pp. 235-38; Wilcke, 1969; ETCSL 1.8.2.2 (and sources cited therein).

¹³¹ Arutyunyan, 1985, p. 78.

¹³² See for example Kramer, 1963a, p. 275.

¹³³ Wilcke, 1969, pp. 36-38.

since *hur-ru-um-kur-ra* may be interpreted differently, this fact is not relied upon in this analysis.

In the Sumerian epic tale "Gilgameš and the Land of Living" (which is the original source for the Babylonian "Gilgameš" epic theme), in order to find the secret of immortality the Sun god (in Sumerian – Utu) grants Gilgameš seven magical beings who know "*the way to the land of Aratta*"¹³⁴. In the Hittite version of the "Gilgameš" epic in order to achieve immortality, Gilgameš goes with his friend Enkidu up stream on the Euphrates¹³⁵, and in the Akkadian (Babylonian) version he crosses the Mašū Mountains, which were very early indentified with the Masius / Masion Mountains on the southern border of the Armenian Highlands. It is noteworthy that as the "*Flower of immortality*" parallels the "*Tree of life*" in the book of Genesis, so too these sources consider their location to be in the Armenian Highlands.

That Aratta is located in the Armenian Highlands is further supported by the episode in the flood legend relating to the epic tale "Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta" ("Enmerkar and the Chief Priest of Aratta"), in which the people of Aratta are described as follows:

*"They, who stood in the midst of the flood
After the flood swept thereover"*¹³⁶...

To summarize, there are at least two locations for Aratta, the north of the Euphrates basin, and the Lake Urmia basin. Significantly, research on the location of the toponym S/Šubur-S/Šubartu produces a similar result¹³⁷.

In cuneiform and hieroglyphic inscriptions, proper names may be read not only in syllabary, but also as ideograms. In this light, the coinciding of Aratta with Subur takes on new significance, when in ideograms Aratta and Subur are written the same way as SU.KUR.RU¹³⁸. Thus, the coincidence of the syllabary and ideogram versions of the same place name demonstrates that

¹³⁴ PPAO, pp. 130-135.

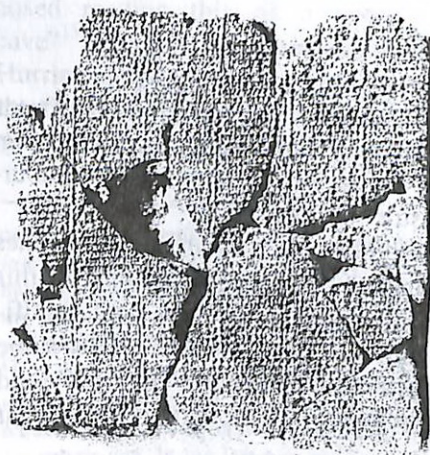
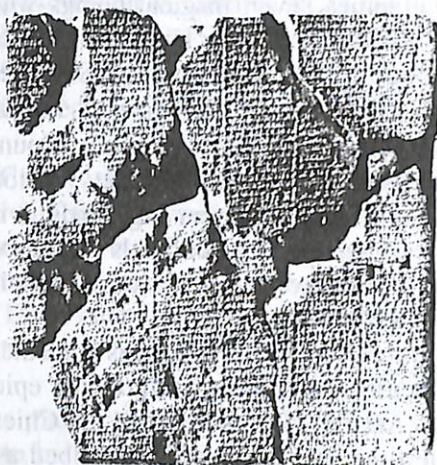
¹³⁵ MM, p. 127, n. 32.

¹³⁶ Kramer, 1952, p. 43; Kaneva, 1964, p. 219; Cohen, 1973, p. 140.

¹³⁷ Gelb, 1944 (see the Map at the end).

¹³⁸ Deilmel, 1932, p. 839; Labat, 1988, p. 250.

Aratta and Subur are names for the same place, which is an additional fact that supports locating of Aratta in Armenia. The identity of Aratta and Subur can also be demonstrated with other facts, to which we hope to treat in future studies.



Pic. 11. The tablet of the epic tale "Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta" (in Museum of Ancient Orient, Istanbul)

The likely etymologies of these two toponyms is also very interesting, especially in light of the epithet "*land of the holy laws*" given to Aratta in the Sumerian sources. The name Aratta may be

traced to the Indo-European root *-*arto*, from which in the Armenian-Hellenic-Aryan subgroup, develop such words as “holy law”, “order”, “holy right”, “just”, “pious”, “true” and related words¹³⁹. “Subur” (and its variants) in all likelihood comes from the Indo-European root *-*kubhro*, from which are derived the Sanskrit *ṣubhra* “shining, bright, beautiful, clean”, and the Armenian word *surb* (*subr* > *surb* through metathesis of the *-r* consonant blend, cf. *nubr* > *nurb*, *libr* > *lirb*, etc.), meaning “pure, clean, sacrifice, holy”¹⁴⁰. In the Indo-European protolanguage, the roots for “holiness, sacrifice, and lawfulness” give rise to the two names for this country - Aratta and Subur. It is also significant that in Mesopotamian sources, two place names are otherwise not mentioned side-by-side, which further supports the conclusion that these are two names for the same place, rather than neighboring countries.

Subur (Šubartu-Šubria) and Arman(i/um), Armi/e. It has long been observed that the land of Arme in the Urartian inscriptions is referred to in the Assyro-Babylonian inscriptions as Šubria. Thus, during the epoch of the Kingdom of Van (Urartu), this land had two names, from which, in scholarly as well as educational materials, the combined name Arme-Šubria came into use¹⁴¹. On the other hand, Šubria was connected with S/Šubur-S/Šubar-S/Šubartu from the 3rd-2nd millennia BC, and the hypothesis was made connecting Arme with the 3rd-2nd millennia BC toponyms Arman(i/um), Armi, Ur(u)me, Aram, Armana, Arime, Arme. This later connection has been long debated, and until today no consensus has been reached, especially about its dating to the 3rd-2nd millennia BC¹⁴². The identity of Šubur-Šubari-Šubartu-Šubria well established. Thus, if the primary sources show that Arman(i/um), Armi, Urume, Aram, Armana, Arime, Arme are names for the same place, then it is possible to conclude that as in the 1st millennium BC Arme and Šubria are the same, so too in the 3rd-2nd millennia BC, their predecessors were different names for

¹³⁹ Movsisyan, 1992, pp. 30-31 (the etymology was discovered by Hr. Martirosyan).

¹⁴⁰ Acharyan, 1979, v. 4, pp. 255-256; Jahukyan, 1987, pp. 57-58, 132-222.

¹⁴¹ See, e.g., HAP, pp. 423-435 (section author, S. T. Yeremyan).

¹⁴² For the latest research on this issue, see Movsisyan, 1993, pp. 113-127; Matteosyan, 1994, pp. 255-268.

the same place. To clarify this important issue, it is necessary to investigate further the location of the places referred to as Arman(i/um), Armi and Aram.

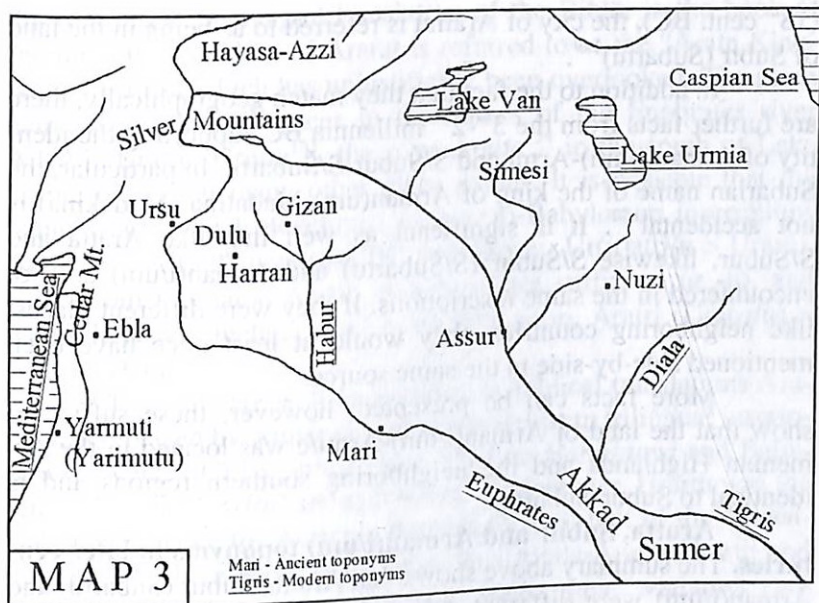
In the inscriptions of the Akkadian king Naram-Suen (23rd cent. BC) the conquest of the land of Arman(um)¹⁴³ is presented as an unprecedented event which no king had achieved "*since the creation of man*". Naram-Suen is referred to in various sources by the title as the "conqueror of the Armanum and Ebla", which became Armanum and has been used as evidence for locating Armanum near Aleppo (Ebla is located about 70 km. to the south-west of Aleppo). There is, however, more convincing evidence that such a location is not accurate. For example, in one of the inscriptions of Naram-Suen's grandfather and the founder of the Akkadian dynasty Sargon (24-23rd cent. BC), it is reported that he conquered the lands to the west of Euphrates "*Mari, Yarmuti and Ebla to the Cedar and Silver Mountains*" (see Map 3), without mentioning Armanum¹⁴⁴.

In the sources from Ebla, Armi is often mentioned, which researchers have often connected with Arman(i/um). In one of these sources, Armi is mentioned after the cities of Ebla and Dulu (in the region of Uršu and Harran), and the route from Ebla-Dulu leads to the Armenian Highlands. In another inscription from Ebla the cities of Armi and Azi are mentioned together (cf. the parallel name of Hayasa - Azzi) in connection with representatives of the Haya tribe. In another source there is a reference to persons from Armi, who live in Gizan¹⁴⁵.

¹⁴³ The *-um* suffix is the nominative case suffix in Akkadian; whereas, in the Hittite inscription of the same king the place name is written *Armani*.

¹⁴⁴ For the Akkadian royal inscriptions, see Barton, 1929, pp. 108-151; Hirsch, 1963, pp. 1-82; Sollberger & Kupper, 1971, pp. 97-114, Frayne, 1993, pp. 5-208.

¹⁴⁵ For the location of Armi, according to the Ebla sources, see Movsisyan, 1993, pp. 119-127.



For the proper location of Arman(i/um) of particular significance is the report in one of the Mesopotamian sources that *"From Ebla to Bit-Nanip is the land of the Armani"*.¹⁴⁶ Judging from available sources, Bit-Nanip is located in the Nuzi region. A large territory is thus drawn for the land of Arman(i/um), which corresponds to the territory of Šubartu (Šubria) in the 2nd millennium BC. A similar expanse is evidenced by references to the Simesian Armani (19th cent. BC).¹⁴⁷ In accounts of the Mesopotamian kings Naram-Suen and Šulgi's (21st cent. BC) invasions to the north in the Tigris basin there is reference to the land of Aram(e), which may be identified with Armi-Arman(i/um).¹⁴⁸ It is noteworthy that in an ancient Babylonian commercial contract

¹⁴⁶ Weidner, 1952-1953, S. 4-5; Astour, 1992, p. 30.

¹⁴⁷ This is located to the south-east of Lake Van (Movsisyan, 1993, pp. 121-122).

¹⁴⁸ Kifishin, 1965, pp. 64-66; Movsisyan, 1997, p. 10, and the sources cited therein.

(18th cent. BC), the city of Aramu is referred to as being in the land of Subir (Subartu)¹⁴⁹.

In addition to the fact that they match geographically, there are further facts from the 3rd-2nd millennia BC supporting the identity of Arman(i/um)-Armi and S/Šubur-S/Šubartu. In particular, the Subarian name of the king of Arman(um) Madatina (Madakina) is not accidental¹⁵⁰. It is significant as well that like Aratta and S/Šubur, likewise S/Šubur (S/Šubartu) and Arman(i/um) are not encountered in the same inscriptions. If they were different places, like neighboring countries, they would at least once have been mentioned side-by-side in the same source.

More facts can be presented; however, these suffice to show that the land of Arman(i/um)-Armi/e was located in the Armenian Highlands and the neighboring southern regions and is identical to Subur-Subartu.

Aratta, Subur and Arman(i/um) toponyms in later centuries. The summary above shows that Aratta, Subur (Subartu) and Arman(i/um) were different names for the same place in the 3rd millennium BC. It is noteworthy that separate studies of the three place names point to the same territory of the Armenian Highlands - from the watershed of the Euphrates to the Lake Van basin to south of Lake Urmia. Because it is such an expansive territory, Arman(i/um) was well-known among the neighboring peoples and became for other peoples (except the Georgians and the Kurds) the names applied to the Armenians and Armenia. The better founded etymology of this name, in our opinion, is that of G. B. Jahukyan, which shows that it is a native Armenian root *armn*, *z-arm* meaning "tribe, generation, root, foundation"¹⁵¹. In summary, *Aratta* signified "justice, piety, holy order and law", *Subur* - "holiness and sacrifice", *Arman(i/um)* - "noble lineage", all of which are elevated concepts that ancestors of the Armenians applied to the land of Armenia.

The name Aratta in later centuries continued to be used in the forms "Ararat" and "Urartu" to refer to Armenia. It is notewor-

¹⁴⁹ Finkelstein, 1955, p. 2.

¹⁵⁰ Gelb, 1944, pp. 103, 107.

¹⁵¹ Jahukyan, 1987, pp. 287-288.

thy that in the Septuagint translation of the Bible, in the book of Jeremiah the kingdom of Ararat is referred to as the "Arate Kingdom"¹⁵², a fact which has unjustifiably been overlooked. The place name Aratta left its traces in the names of the Euphrates river A.RAT. Urattu, Uruttu¹⁵³, the river Aratta¹⁵⁴ in the south of Lake Urmia basin and many other place names. It is possible that the name Urartu which developed in Assyro-Babylonian inscriptions from the 13th to 9th centuries BC as follows: Ur(u)atri/u > Urartu, came from the name Aratta plus the place suffix -ri or -ro, and which later was metathesized to its final form, Aratri (Uratri/u) > Ararti/u (Urartu).

The facts are well known that in Biblical translations Ararat was replaced by Armenia, and in the Behistun trilingual inscription (6th cent. BC) Persian *Armina*, Elamite *Harminuya* and Babylonian *Urartu* (*Uraštu*) are equivalent¹⁵⁵. Moreover, Urartu was the Babylonian name for Armenia through the first half of the 4th century BC¹⁵⁶. These show once again that Aratta-Ararat-Urartu and Arman(i/u)-Armi/e-Armina-Armenia (and their variants) are equivalent, as explained in the Subur/Šubartu analysis. From the 9th to 7th cent. BC the toponyms Subur/Šubartu were applied to a smaller territory than in the 3rd-2nd millennia BC in the form Šubria (Šubre). After that the S/Šubur, S/Šubartu and Šubria apparently fell into disuse, giving way to the equivalent name, Armenia.

Subur-Haya-Hayasa-Hayk'. According to the oldest Mesopotamian sources, the "Subur/Subari" toponym is also equivalent to the "Haya" ("HA.A"). In a series of Sumerian-Akkadian bilingual sources, the Sumerian "HA.A" corresponds to the Akkadian "Subur" toponym¹⁵⁷, which in itself shows that they refer to the same place. A place and ethnic name based on Haya is found in many 3rd-2nd millennium BC sources from Ebla, Aššur and the Hittite kingdom, which make plain the Haya-Hayasa (and the Subur-Subartu) connection with Hayk' and Hayastan.

¹⁵² Inglizyan, 1947, pp. 7-8.

¹⁵³ Gelb, 1944, pp. 21-22, 86, 98.

¹⁵⁴ Diakonov, 1952, v. 2, p. 322.

¹⁵⁵ Kent, 1953, p. 121-124, 171; Nalbandyan, 1964, pp. 8, 14-15.

¹⁵⁶ Dandamaev, 1990, pp. 102-106.

¹⁵⁷ Gelb, 1944, pp. 31, 94-97.

Aratta-Subur, Subur-Arman(i/um), Subur-Haya, Aratta-Ararat-Urartu-Armenia-Hayastan correspondences help complete our understanding of a range of issues relating to Armenian ethnogenesis. In summary, Armenia had a number of ancient names: Aratta-Ararat-Urartu; S/Šubur-S/Šubartu-Šubria; Arman(i/um)-Armi/e-Armina-Armenia; Haya-Hayasa-Hayk'-Hayastan, evidenced as equivalents from the first half of the 3rd millennium BC, when according to linguistic evidence, the Armenian language had emerged as a separate language. This view is further supported by many more facts than set forth in this section. In addition to the evidence already presented, in ancient Near Eastern primary sources Armenia is known by other general names, such as, Kuti(um), Nairi, House of Torgom, Kardu. These facts merit separate treatment.

Here, once again, we should stress that comparative linguistic evidence bears out the ancient sources and together confirm that in the first half of the 3rd millennium the Armenian Highlands were inhabited by speakers of the Armenian language who were known by an Armenian ethnic name and played an important role in the region.

2. THE ARMENIAN TRADITION CONCERNING THE UNIVERSAL FLOOD AND THE EARLIEST REFERENCES TO THE MOUNTAIN NAMED MASIS

Many peoples have preserved the legend of a devastating Universal Flood and the rebirth of mankind. Unique among them are the peoples of the Near East which connect the salvation and rebirth of mankind to the Armenian Highlands. Moreover, in some they locate the place of salvation generally in Armenia and in others more specifically in the Korduat Mountains or on Greater Ararat (Masis)¹⁵⁸.

In some scholarly circles the opinion is widespread that the legend of the flood spread among the Armenians during the middle ages through Biblical preaching and that Masis came to be known as the place where the ark landed, through epic traditions of Christian Armenia. However, in the pre-Christian period, there was also the view that Masis (Greater Ararat) was considered the place where the ark landed. The chief argument for this is the Greek writer of the first century BC, Nicholas of Damascus, which is preserved in the "Jewish Antiquities" of Josephus Flavius, as set forth more fully below: "*Nicolas of Damascus in his ninety-sixth book relates the story as follows: "There is above the country of Minias in Armenia a great mountain called Baris, where, as the history goes, many refugees found safety at the time of the flood, and one man, transported upon an ark, grounded upon the summit, and relics of the timber were for long preserved; this might well be the same man of whom Moses, the Jewish legislator, wrote"*¹⁵⁹.

This passage has been interpreted in different ways. M. Chamchyantz contended that "Masis" should be substituted for "Baris"¹⁶⁰. F. Murad contends that Minias is the same as the Biblical land of Minni (cuneiform Manna), and that Baris is the epithet of Masis (cf. Zend. *barez* "heights"), which could have spread widely outside of Armenia by the Persians.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Veber, 1901, pp. 1-77; Inglizyan, 1947,, pp. 5-106.

¹⁵⁹ Josephus Flavius, "Jewish Antiquities", I, 94-95.

¹⁶⁰ Chamchyantz, 1785 (1985), p. 150.

¹⁶¹ As cited by Inglizyan, 1947, pp. 27-29.

V. Inglizyan criticizes F. Murad's theory on the ground that the name of a country that had disappeared in the 6th century BC could not be remembered by authors in the first century BC and points out that the epithet "high" is not evidenced even once in reference to Masis in Armenian sources¹⁶². While accepting V. Inglizyan's position regarding the use of the epithet "high", his first opinion is questionable. It is clear that Nicholas of Damascus was a confidante of the Roman Emperor Augustus and King Herod, which would secure him comprehensive access to records of the time, as a result of which, his "General History" draws on 144 books¹⁶³. Among these sources there were undoubtedly passages translated into Greek from cuneiform and hieroglyphic records (such as the pivotal works of the Berossus and Manethon), which could have mentioned the land of Minni/Manna.

J. Markwart considered it possible that the name of the Mountain Baris could be tied to the Greek-Egyptian *baris* "boat, skiff", and identifying the mountain as Sipan or Nekh-Masik¹⁶⁴.

H. Sandaljian also interprets Baris to mean "boat" based on "Uartian-Greek dialects" and on Greek evidence, and connects it with Masis, identifying it with Uauš Mountain which is mentioned in the account of the invasion by Sargon II in 714 BC (the Assyrian army entered the Land of Bari after traversing this mountain, based on which H. Sandaljian connects it with the name of the mountain)¹⁶⁵. However, H. Sandaljian's view does not hold up under examination for the simple reason that Uauš Mountain and the land of Bari are located to the east of Lake Urmia and geographically do not correspond to Masis or the neighboring regions¹⁶⁶.

As for connecting the name of the mountain to the word for "boat" in other languages, this too is improbable (as well as F. Murad's proposal to connect it with the epithet "high"). It is significant that no mountain in the Armenian Highlands has been

¹⁶² Inglizyan, 1947, pp. 28-29.

¹⁶³ Krkyasharyan, 1976, p. 18.


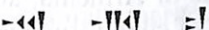
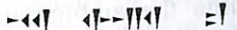

¹⁶⁴ As cited by Inglizyan, 1947, pp. 29-32; Arutyunyan, 1985, pp. 54, 195, 213-214.

¹⁶⁵ As cited by Inglizyan, 1947, pp. 32-34.


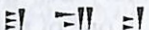

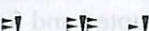
¹⁶⁶ Cf. Inglizyan, 1947, pp. 34-35.

known by the name of Baris. Such a significant mountain name would not have been forgotten completely, therefore it is logical to assume that it was corrupted before the time of Nicholas of Damascus. When and how could such a corruption take place (if in fact it did)?

The fact that location of the mountain of salvation is described with reference to Minias means that the source on which Nicholas of Damascus draws was written no later than the beginning of the sixth century BC. The Minias (Minni / Manna) kingdom ceased to exist and were off the historical scene and referred to at the latest in the beginning of the 6th century BC (Jer. 51:27). That means that the original source was probably cuneiform from the Near East. (This also supports the hypothesis that the original Near Eastern Flood accounts were also recorded in cuneiform).

- a)  Bar - is
- b)  Ba - ri - is
- c)  Ba - ar - is
- d)  Ba - a'r - is

Pic. 12

- a)  Mas - is
- b)  Ma - si - is
- c)  Ma - aš - is
- d)  Ma - aš - is

Pic. 13

How could it have been written in accordance with the rules of cuneiform writing? Possible alternatives are *Bar-is*, *Ba-ri-is*, *Ba-ar-is* and other variants (pic. 12), of which the most appropriate, efficient (shortest), non-duplicative and simplest to write is *Bar-is* in a two syllable form (see pic. 12a). Based on this it becomes evident how a corruption could have taken place. In cuneiform syllabary there was a good deal of ambiguity and the symbol

for the syllable *bar* could also be read *mas*, *maš*, *par*¹⁶⁷. Indeed, for this reason to this day is it not clear whether name the wife of Haldi, chief god of the Kingdom of Van, whose name in Assyrian sources should be pronounced *Bag-bar-tu*, *Bag-mas/š-tu*, or *Bag-par-tu*, or whether the name of one of the constituent units of Uruatri is *Bar-gun*, *Par-gun*, *Maš-gun*, or *Mas-gun*. In translating the cuneiform into Greek, if the scribe did not know the exact name of the mountain, it could have been misread, as a result of which the Greek translation of the mountain's name appeared in different variants. On the one hand, Nicholas of Damascus refers to a great mountain where the ark came to rest above the land of Minias, that is, north of the Lake Urmia basin (which corresponds to Masis), and on the other the same cuneiform symbols could be read *Bar-is* or *Mas-is* (see pic. 12a & 13a). From another perspective, the Armenian tradition that the mountain where the ark came to rest was Masis supports the hypothesis that in the primary source the original cuneiform name of the mountain was *Mas-is*¹⁶⁸. This means that the Armenian tradition about the Flood pre-dates the 6th century BC, was known outside of Armenia, and was written down in one of the ancient centers of cuneiform writing¹⁶⁹.

Later, probably in the Hellenistic period, this tradition was translated into Greek, at which time the ambiguous cuneiform symbols *Masis* were interpreted to be *Baris*. In the sources used by Nicholas of Damascus the name of the mountain must already have been corrupted and found its way into the "General History" in that form.

There is further proof that the Armenian tradition regarding the flood did not originate with the Bible. According to Josephus Flavius: "*Then the ark settled on a mountain-top in Armenia... Nok'os (i.e., Noah), thus learning that the earth was delivered from the flood, waited yet seven days, and then let the ani-*

¹⁶⁷ Labat, 1988, pp. 68-71; Borger, 1978, pp. 75-76; Lipin, 1957, p. 14.

¹⁶⁸ Of all the possible ways the name could be written, *Mas-is* is the most suitable of the options (see pic. 13).

¹⁶⁹ We consider this the earlier reference to the mountain by the name *Mas-is*, since the references to Masis in the Alexander Romance (written in 240 BC) and to the Mašu Mountains in Gilgameš point not to Masis (Greater Ararat), but to the Masius / Masion Mountains on the southern border of Armenia (see fn. 26).

mals out of the ark, went forth himself with his family, sacrificed to God and feasted with his household. The Armenians call that spot the Landing-place, for it was there that the ark came safe to land, and they show the relics of it to this day"¹⁷⁰. In the first century this account by a Jewish writer coincides with the Armenian tradition regarding Nakhichevan as the place of Noah's landing¹⁷¹.

In summary, the name that Nicholas of Damascus used in his "General History" to refer the mountain where the ark landed is corrupted and a closer look at the cuneiform text permits a recovery of the correct original form Masis. Based on this, it is clear that the Armenian tradition that Masis is the place where the ark rested did not emerge in Armenia as a result of the spread of Christianity, but was known for centuries before this and spread beyond Armenia's borders and was written down in a center of cuneiform writing sometime before the 6th century BC. Later there was a mistake in the transliteration of the cuneiform into Greek which found its way into the "General History" of Nicholas of Damascus and reached us through the "Jewish Antiquities" of Josephus Flavius. In Christian Armenia the pre-Christian native Armenian tradition and Biblical accounts merged and was embellished with episodes from local folklore, giving rise to a colorful new tradition¹⁷². The comprehensive study of this tradition (especially its chronological layers) is a topic for future research.

¹⁷⁰ Josephus Flavius, "Jewish Antiquities", I, 90, 92.

¹⁷¹ Ghanalanyan, 1969, pp. 11, 157, 169, 333, 417.

¹⁷² For Armenian tales relating to Noah and the Flood, see Ghanalanyan, 1969, pp. 11-12, 20, 24, 26, 29, 54, 123, 157, 164, 169, 332-336, 414.

THE LIST OF THE ABBREVIATIONS

- AD - The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Chicago
- AfO - "Archiv für Orientforschung", Graz
- ANET - Ancient Near Eastern Texts Related to the Old Testament (ed. by J.B.Pritchard), New Jersey, 1969
- DTANR - Hakobyan T., Melik-Bakhshyan S., Barseghyan H., The Dictionary of the Toponyms of Armenia and the Neighboring Regions, v. I-IV, Yerevan, 1986-1998 (in Armenian)
- ETCSL - The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature: Composite Text, Translation, Bibliography (Home page in INTERNET. Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford. www-etcs1.orient.ox.ac.uk)
- HA - "Handes Amsorya: Zeitschrift für armenische Philologie", Vienna (in Armenian)
- HAP - The History of Armenian People (publ. by the Academy of Sciences of Armenia), v. I, Yerevan, 1971 (in Armenian)
- HAO - The History of Ancient Orient, part I, Mesopotamia, Moscow, 1983 (in Russian)
- JOYCW - I'll Reveal for You the Secret Word. The Literature of Babylonia and Assyria, Moscow, 1981 (in Russian)
- JAH - "Journal of Ancient History", Moscow (in Russian)
- MFH - The Moon, Fallen from Heaven. The Ancient Literature of Asia Minor (trans. and comment. of V. V. Ivanov), Moscow, 1977 (in Russian)
- MWP - The Myths of the World's Peoples, Encyclopedia, vv. I-II. Moscow, 1991-92 (in Russian)
- PAO - The Poetry of the Ancient Orient, Yerevan, 1982 (in Armenian)
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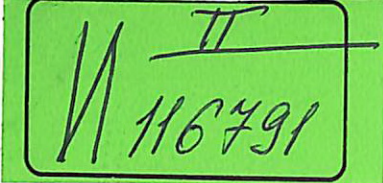
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