

LITERARY REVIEW



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ԱՐՄԷՆ ՅՈՎԱԿԻՄԵԱՆ

Բանասիրական գիտ. թեկնածու, ԵՊՀ

ՔՐԻՍՏԻՆԷ ԲՈՅԱՋԵԱՆ

ՄԱՍԷ

ԳՐԻԳՈՐ ՄԱՐԱՇԵՏԻ. 900-ԱՄԵԱՅ ԹԱՏԵՐԳՈՒԹԵԱՆ ՆՈՐ ԿԵԱՆՔԸ

Հեղինակներն ընթերցողին են ներկայացնում Մայր Աթոռ Սուրբ Էջմիածնի հերթական հրատարակությունը՝ Գրիգոր Մարաշեցու «Բան գովեստից Մարիամու Աստուածածնին» երկը, որ հայ իրականության մէջ մեզ հասած առաջին ամբողջական, ինքնուրույն «թատերային» ստեղծագործությունն է:

GRIGOR MARASHETSI THE NEW LIFE OF NINE HUNDRED-YEAR-OLD DRAMA¹

Unlike many nations that had no literature at all in the Ancient or Middle centuries or have been satisfied with the proportionality of one author-one small creation, the Armenian past is rich with noticeable figures and literary heritage. In consideration of the contents of our article let's remember some prominent medieval poets such as Grigor Narekatsi (951–1003), Nerses Shnorhali (1102–1173), Grigor Anavartzetsi (about 1240–1293), Arakel Syunetsi (1350–1425), authors who left immortal creations after them surpassing their time.

¹* Ստացուել է՝ 13.11.2023, գրախօսուել է՝ 20.11.2023:

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But if Nerses Shnorhali or Grigor Narekatsi are known to Armenian readers, there are many Armenian poets whose works are not known not only to the foreign reader but also to the Armenian reader, as they rest closed in manuscripts remaining inaccessible to those who don't know Grabar (old Armenian) or Cilician (middle Armenian).

The name of Grigor Marashetsi can be added to the above-stated names who have not found his present reader not because he has created in classic Armenian but because his works have not had any new edition.

We have little information from his biography. It is certain that this author occupying his unique place in the 12th century Armenian literature, founded the Hesvants Monastery in Cilician Armenia in the vicinity of Marash² province of Adana state and died after 1149.

Grigor Marashetsi was popular in Cilicia and the neighboring areas as a scientist and philosopher and it is not in vain that in various manuscripts he is often referred to as “Grigor the Philosopher”. One of the scribes of his works has written the title of the book as follows: “The Book of Alas of Laments that was confessed to God by the invincible scientist (Vardabed) and Monk Grigor Hesuatsi³.

The first person to talk about the writings of Grigor Marashetsi was the Priest of the Mekhitarist Congregation, Father Ghevond Alishan. Concerning the poem called “Lamentation” Ghevond Alishan has written that the poem “contains passages and repetitions resembling simple or ordinary speech but there are also many selected descriptions and moral reflections, for which Grigor deserved to be called Grigor the Philosopher. However, it is more likely that Grigor wrote a separate philosophical work”⁴. After Ghevond Alishan many scientists have studied the works of Marashetsi. In the beginning, they confused him with Grigor Mashkevor, and only in 1960 did H. Melyan find the answer to the dispute, showing the difference between Mashkevor and Marashetsi⁵. The next important reference to Marashetsi's work was in 1980, when Arshak Madoyan brought together all the important in-

² In 1065 this city for a short time became the residence of the Armenian Patriarch, see Թ. Յասկոբեան, (T. Hakobyan, et alias), Հայաստանի եւ յարակից շրջանների տեղանունների բառարան (Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and Adjacent regions), vol. 3, Yerevan, 1991, p.721.

³ See Mesrop Mashtots Research Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, manuscript N 8323, p. 164, cp. manuscript N 38, p. 61b.

⁴ Գ. Ալիշան (Gh. Alishan), Ծնոթալի եւ պարագայ իւր (Shnorhali and His Circumstances), Venece, 1873, p. 219.

⁵ See «Էջմիածին» («Etchmiadzin»), 1960, N 6. p. 37.

formation about Marashetsi in an article, highlighting Marashetsi's most important literary writings summarizing them in the following way: "Grigor Marashetsi is a writer who left his unusual mark in the bibliography of the 12th century, whose legacy is rather interesting and original. If his poem "Lamentation" belongs to the school of Grigor Narekatsi, then with his other poem "Word of Praise" he stands on the individual ground, bringing his contribution to the development of Armenian literature"⁶. As we know Arshak Madoyan is a devoted literary critic of medieval Armenian literature. He is the grandson of Seylan (Arshak Madoyan)⁷, the chronologer of the Sassoon liberation struggle, and the son of literary scholar Gevorg Madoyan⁸, who has educated many generations of pedagogues in Javakhq. Many of his 600 works and monographs are about medieval poetry and poets in particular so Arshak Madoyan's opinion about Marashetsi deserved special attention. However, the literary heritage of Marashetsi has remained inaccessible to the reader for many years, only a small part of the writer's works were published. Not long ago, the Mother See of Etchmiadzin through the hard work of Arshak Madoyan, published Grigor Marashetsi's poem "Praise be to the Most Holy Virgin Mary"⁹ and the lines from the pages of the ancient manuscript returned to the hands of the Armenian faithful reader with a new breath and life, glorifying again and again the Holy virgin who gave birth to the Savior. Perhaps it can be said that this book was the reason for the emergence of new publications on Marashetsi¹⁰, which is perhaps one of the goals of every scientific publication.

⁶ «Բանբեր Երեւանի համալսարանի» ("Herald of Yerevan University", 1980, N. 3, pp.190–196.

⁷ About Seylan, see «Սասուն» («Sasun») (Historical Overview), Yerevan, 1990, pp. 3–24; cp. «Ով Ով է. (Հայեր)» («Who is Who? (Armenians)» Encyclopedia, vol. 2, Yerevan, 2007, page 447, cp. «Հայ գրատպություն եւ գրքարուեստ» («Armenian Printing and Book Arts») Encyclopedia, Yerevan, 2015, p. 955.

⁸ About Gevorg Madoyan see Գ. Ստեփանյան (G. Stepamyan), Կենսագրական բառարան (Biographical Dictionary), vol. 2, Yerevan, 1981, p. 262, cp. «Գեւորգ Մադոյան. Անդրադարձ» («Gevorg Madoyan: Return»), Compilation and Preface by A. Khudaverdyan, Yerevan, 2012, p. 3 and ff.

⁹ Etchmiadzin, 2017, 92 pages.

¹⁰ See Յ. Զեռնիկ, Ներածություն հայ եկեղեցական մատենագրության (H. Qyoseyan, Introduction to Armenian Ecclesiastical Literature, Yerevan, 2018, pp. 358–362, also G. Terzyan's article: «Գրիգոր Մարաշեցու մատենագրական վաստակը» (Literary Heritage of Marashetsi) in («Բանբեր Մատենադարանի») («Banber Matenadarani», N32, 2021, p. 78 and ff.), and poems of Marashetsi published in one book in 2020: Գրիգոր Մարաշեցի, Վայեր, Ողբեր, Մեղաներ (Grigor Marashetsi, Laments, Mourning, Regrets)

In addition to publicizing the medieval poet's originals, the book of the Mother See is also valuable with a rather voluminous (37 pages) preface ("Grigor Marashetsi and his work") where Madoyan comprehensively presents the author and his work. We'd like to end our speech regarding this poem by Grigor Marashetsi with the following assessment given by Madoyan, who makes its value and significance more explicit: "However, we would like to note that Marashetsi's poem is the first complete, self-contained "dramatic" work that has reached us in Armenian reality, which perhaps has the character of a mystery and is interesting in many ways¹¹.

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ՀԻՄՆԱԲԱՌԵՐ

Գրիգոր Մարաշեցի, քերթուած, թատերգութիւն, բանք, Մարիամ Աստուածածին

РЕЗЮМЕ

Авторы представляют читателю очередное издание Первопрестольного Святого Эчмиадзина: творение автора XII века Григора Марашеци «Хвалебное слово Пресвятой Богородице», что в армянской действительности является первым самостоятельным и полным духовно-поэтическим произведением, текст которого дошел до наших дней в целостности и сохранности.



¹¹ See the «Word of Praise», p. 42.