

ԳԵԻՈՐԳ ՄԱԴՈՅԵԱՆ
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ԱՐՇԱԿ ՄԱԴՈՅԵԱՆ

Ե. ՂԱՐԻ ՄԱՏԵՆԱԳԻՐ ՄՈՎՍԷՍ ԽՈՐԵՆԱՑԻՆ ԵՒ ԻՐ ՔՆՆԱԴԱՏՆԵՐԸ¹

Յօդուածում ներկայացուած են Ե. Ղարի պատմիչ Մովսէս Խորենացու քննադատների տեսակէտները: Յուզ է տրուած, որ Խորենացու 5-րդ դարում ապրած լինելու հանգամանքը մերժող կռուաններն անհիմն են, եւ դրանք հերքուած են համապատասխան փաստարկներով:

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5TH-CENTURY AUTHOR MOVSES KHORENATSI AND HIS CRITICS

Among the authors of ancient Armenian literature, Movses Khorenatsi has been the most extensively studied². According to the Armenian classical tradition, he is a 5th-century author. However, some later Armenian as well as foreign scholars identified what they considered to be inconsistencies between Khorenatsi's narrative and the 'accepted' chronology, leading them to reject his attribution to the 5th century.

² Sometimes he is called Movses the Grammarian or Movses the Father of grammarians. In some translations, this author's name is also rendered as *Moses Khorenatsi* or *Xorenaci* (E. Bonfiglio, "Movsēs Xorenac'i", *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, R.G. Dunphy ed. (Brill, Leiden, and Boston 2010). Robert W. Thomson *The English translator of Moses' History* uses transcription and writes the author's name this way: *Khorenats'i* (see *Moses Khorenats'i, History of the Armenians, Translation and Commentary on the Literary Sources* by Robert W. Thomson, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 1978, cf. Revised Edition, Caravan books, Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A., 2006). Thomson also uses transcription for all the proper names and the "strange" or "unusual" words of the book. But it's easy to notice that at least in the case of *Moses' History*, transcription hinders more than helps. It must be noted that practicing transcription is not always a helpful method. Maybe transferring of pronunciation of the words is a better way, especially in those cases when the sound could be expressed without any additional marks. In the translation, several times we can meet wrongly transcribed words. Many Armenian words have been transcribed incorrectly and one can only guess their real articulation only if he/she knows the correct pronunciation in Armenian. One of the main shortcomings of transcription is that different authors use different systems and the same "Movses Khorenatsi" becomes *Moses Khorenats'i* in Thomson's translation or *Movsēs of Xoren* in Dowsett's study, while it could be written *Movses Khorenatsi*: simple and precise. We can see that neither "ē" (*Movsēs*) is useful for reading, nor the contraction of "v" (*Moses*) is suitable.

In general, transcription makes the reading difficult for the ordinary reader (making him think more about the pronunciation of the different marks than of the meaning of the paragraph). But it's much worse that in some cases, transcription harms or radically changes the real meaning and context. For example, on page 118 Thomson translates an excerpt from the words of Khorenatsi this way:

"But, they say,

Queen Sat'nik had great desire for the vegetable artakhur and the shoot tits' (our bold.— M.) from the table of Argavan". It is unlikely that any reader would guess that «tits'» is merely an herb. For this reason, we do not use transcription.

The majority of these criticisms were formulated—and subsequently refuted—during the 19th and 20th centuries³. Over time, however, the refutations have largely been forgotten, whereas the thoroughly debunked criticisms continue to be repeated in persistent attempts to discredit Khorenatsi⁴. These criticisms have been periodically reiterated by various scholars, sometimes acknowledging and sometimes omitting the fact that their assertions had already been made by earlier figures, whose claims, in turn, had been thoroughly refuted in their own time. As a result, a situation has emerged in which the field has become saturated with numerous critics of Khorenatsi. But in reality, while there are many critics, there is no true criticism. They continue to reiterate the same arguments, adding nothing new; instead, they merely recycle previously refuted claims. A succinct characterization and summary of the criticisms against Khorenatsi is found in the words of A. Musheghyan: «The climax of negative criticism against Khorenatsi must be considered Robert Thomson’s Introduction to the English translation of Khorenatsi’s *History*, published in 1978»⁵. However, it can be stated that Thomson has not made any significant critical, investigative, or analytical contribution to determining the *date of Moses of Khoren*. Perhaps in support of this assertion are Thomson’s own words: «Many of the texts known in Armenian to Moses were either translated or composed after the time at which he claims to be writing. There are various historical clues scattered in his *History* that enable us to reject a fifth-century date. *These have been noted by various scholars,*

³ Notable 21st-century publications include Gabriel Soultanian’s *The History of the Armenians and Mosēs Khorenats’i* (Bennett & Bloom, 2011, 280 pages) and A. Musheghyan’s studies, particularly «Մովսես Խորենացու դարը»/ *The Century of Movses Khorenatsi* (in Armenian, Yerevan, 2007, 412 pages). See also Musheghyan’s “The Historical Arguments for the Date (5th Century) of Writing “The History of Armenia” by Movses Khorenatsi”, in “Fundamental Armenology”, No. 1, 2015.

⁴ See e.g. “More problematic is the History of Armenia by Movsēs Xorenac’i, which has a bad reputation amongst scholars, as a text full of suspected anachronisms. (Among the considerable literature, see at least Gignoux 1999 and Garsoian 2003–2004.)» Sasanian Iran in the Context of Late Antiquity, the Bahari Lecture Series at the University of Oxford, Edited by Touraj Daryaei, 2018; «Such a documentary chaos aroused harsh criticisms, leading many scholars, especially in the West, to reject his historical value; an authoritative voice, such as Robert Thomson, remarks that Xorenac’i’s *History* is not only controversial, but also basically untrustworthy» G. Traina, *Ancient Armenia: Evidence and Models*, ELECTRUM * Vol. 28 (2021): 13–20.

⁵ Musheghyan, “The Historical Arguments for the Date...”. Technical issues negatively affect the perception of this work—for instance, the pages of the publication are unnumbered, and Footnote 15 appears between Footnotes 16 and 17. However, the author cannot be held responsible for these and similar shortcomings, as he was born without sight and could not oversee the work of negligent typographers.

and conveniently rehearsed by Toumanoff, so a brief recapitulation is all that is necessary here (our italics.-M)»⁶. In other words, Thomson acknowledges the fact that it was *conveniently rehearsed by Toumanoff* and refers to his work as a *brief recapitulation*. After this, Thomson directly quotes Toumanoff. But before turning to the latter, let us recall that Toumanoff, too, did not delve deeply into Khorenatsi's work, nor did he overcome the complexities of Classical Armenian (Grabar) to identify the distinct linguistic and stylistic features of the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th centuries within Khorenatsi's text. Instead, he merely took and *conveniently rehearsed* everything that was *noted by various scholars*, which, as we have mentioned, had already been thoroughly refuted in their proper context and time. Thus, let us examine what Toumanoff's *rehearsing* consists of to understand what Thomson's *recapitulation*⁷ entails, and, based on both, to assess the true value of the numerous criticisms directed at Khorenatsi.

Toumanoff writes: «The best among the arguments against the traditional dating of Pseudo-Moses appear to me to be the following. (1) In 1. 14, Pseudo-Moses projects into a remote past the division of western Armenia and some neighboring lands into First, Second, Third, and Fourth Armenia, which division was instituted by the Emperor Justinian I in 536». For this statement, Toumanoff cites the following work: *Adontz, Armenija v epoxu Justiniana*, more precisely, the passage on page 203 of that book:

“Сохранившиеся у Хоренского предания о томъ, что армянскія владѣнія простирались путемъ завоеванія до Понтійскихъ земель и до Мажака-Кесаріи, и что на всемъ этомъ протяженіи говорили по - армянски, являются, въ сущности, *отголосками положенія вещей въ эпоху Юстиніана* (our italics.— М.), а не отдаленныхъ временъ Арама, какъ представляетъ историкъ. Это ясно изъ того, что въ связи съ завоеваніемъ названныхъ земель Хоренскій упоминаетъ о раздѣленіи армянскихъ земель на I, II, III и IV Армении, но

⁶ see *Moses Khorenats'i, History of the Armenians, Translation and Commentary on the Literary Sources* by Robert W. Thomson, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 1978, cf. Revised Edition, Caravan books, Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A., 2006, p. 57. The 1978 edition is also exactly the same word for word, p. 58: All subsequent references to Thomson will be made according to the 2006 edition.

⁷ To avoid unnecessary redundancy, we do not overload the footnotes with references, as the two aforementioned critics have diligently listed all negative opinions, whereas those in favor of Khorenatsi have not always provided references.

упорно приурочиваетъ его къ легендарнымъ временамъ Арама, не довѣряя тѣмъ слухамъ, которые ходили въ имперской части Арменіи о дѣйствительномъ происхожденіи указаннаго дѣленія”⁸.

And if, indeed, the “*best among the arguments against the traditional dating*” envisioned by Toumanoff and “discovered” by Adontz is correct, and if the division of *First, Second, Third, and Fourth Armenia* “*was instituted by the Emperor Justinian I in 536,*” then Movses of Khoren must have truly lived and written after the year 536. But we hasten to reassure the reader. The “*best argument*” known to Toumanoff is easily refuted when we examine, for instance, point 2 of the *Conclusions* in the work of the Romanian scholar Ionut Holubeanu, “*Armenia Prima and Armenia Secunda in the Original Epiphanius’ Notitia Episcopatum*.”: «Between the end of the 4th century (our italics.— M.) and the year 591, the ecclesiastical provinces of Sebasteia and Melitene were known as ‘*Armenia Prima*’ and ‘*Armenia Secunda*’, respectively»⁹. In other words, according to this record, the numerical division of Armenia existed even before Emperor Justinian I—so far in advance that any 5th-century author, including Khorenatsi, could have been aware of it and referred to it. But this is not all: Holubeanu’s *Conclusion* is not a discovery but merely a documentation of a fact that has been known for a significantly longer time, as we can see, for example, from the writings of Peter Edmund Laurent (1796–1837): «*In the times of Diocletian and Constantine* (our italics.— M.), at the division of the provinces into smaller parts, Armenia Minor, properly so called, became Armenia Prima, with a praeses: Armenia Secunda then comprised all the southern tracts which had been added to Armenia Minor, with the exception of Cataonia, which was incorporated with Cappadocia Secunda»¹⁰. This means that the numerical division of territories existed at least since the time of Diocletian and Constantine. Consequently, any writer living in the 5th century—including Movses Khorenatsi—could have used the designations *First, Second, Third, and Fourth Armenia*. Therefore, we can state with complete confidence that the “*best argument*” envisioned by Toumanoff, along with Adontz’s proposed date of 536, collapses not only as the “*best argument*” but

⁸ St. Petersburg, 1908- in original-«Арменія въ эпоху Юстиніана».

⁹ Ionut Holubeanu, Armenia Prima and Armenia Secunda in the Original Epiphanius’ *Notitia Episcopatum*, 5th International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on Social Sciences and Arts, SGEM2018, Conference Proceedings Vol. 5, p. 228.

¹⁰ Peter Edmund Laurent, An Introduction to the Study of Ancient Geography, London, 1830, p. 234.

as an argument altogether since it had already been preemptively refuted by Laurent's writings before the time of its so-called discovery. We are deeply convinced that, in reality, the *division* took place exactly as Khorenatsi describes it, in the very era he indicates. Justinian I did not need to invent new territorial divisions; rather, he merely reaffirmed or officially recognized the divisions that had already existed before his time.

Let us move forward. As his second point, Toumanoff writes: “(2) In 3.18, he [Khorenatsi] speaks of the Iranians’ penetrating as far as Bithynia in the course of a war on the Empire. This occurred, for the first time in history, in the war of 604–629”¹¹.

As a highly significant argument, Thomson repeats the same claim—first in the *Introduction* (p. 58). Later, while translating the relevant passage of *Book III, Chapter 18* of *The History of the Armenians*, Thomson once again recalls the *historical clue* related to Bithynia: “Khalatians notes that the spelling in Moses, Biwtania, is identical with that of the *Ashkharhatsujts*. But since this is the Armenian biblical spelling, nothing is proved. The Persian expedition to Bithynia is an important indication for the date of Moses because such deep penetration into Roman territory occurred only in the war at the beginning of the seventh century; see Sebeos, chap.

¹¹ As a reference, Toumanoff cites Conybeare's article in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. «F. C. Conybeare signed also by A. v. Gutschmid [+ 1887], Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed. (1911) At the end, Toumanoff writes the following regarding Conybeare's encyclopedic article: «This appears to be the author's [Conybeare's] definitive opinion» (p. 468). With the phrase ‘definitive opinion,’ Toumanoff wants to imply that all of the other writings of Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare, the English orientalist and professor of theology at Oxford University, on Khorenatsi are rendered null after this article, including the following lines: «But so far as they are intended to shew that the history of Moses of Khoren was only written about 750 or later, *they seem to me abortive*. A careful perusal of them leaves on my mind quite another conviction, namely that *Moses wrote at the date, 460, about which is traditionally assigned him*. For M. Halatians (Khalateants) *fails to indicate a single passage* in the History of Moses clearly copied or imitated from any Armenian text later than 450 A. D. It may be that Moses invented the narrative which he ascribes to Mar Aba Katina, as Prof. Carriere argued in his earliest brochure. I cannot agree with him on the point, but that a similar narrative equally attributed to Mar Aba is prefixt in the mss to the history of Sebeos, surely does not prove that Moses copied Sebeos. *It rather confirms Moses' veracity*» (our italics.— M.): see “The Date of Moses of Khoren» in “Byzantinische Zeitschrift”, 10, 1901, p. 875. Here, we should simply note that the so-called “definitive opinion” mentioned by Toumanoff is, in reality, an encyclopedia entry. In such a context, neither Conybeare nor any other contributor had the right to present a personal opinion; rather, they were required to provide a balanced overview of all possible perspectives—which is precisely what Conybeare did.

38, and Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 331. Musheghyan, ‘*Vortegh e gtnvel*’, notes the Persian claim to Bithynia in Ammianus Marcellinus, XXV 4.24, and interprets Bithynia here as Bitule on the coast of Syria near Seleucia on the Orontes.” As we can see, Thomson merely references Musheghyan’s article, presenting its main idea without expressing any positive or negative opinion regarding it. Therefore, Musheghyan’s article should be regarded as a refutation of the *historical clue* related to Bithynia, since Khorenatsi’s critics have not provided a substantive rebuttal against it. Interestingly, Thomson mentions Musheghyan’s article only in a footnote, in small print, whereas, in contrast, he enthusiastically repeats Toumanoff and his predecessors in large print in the *Introduction*: “Moses knows of an Iranian advance into Bithynia. Only in the 604–629 war did the Iranians advance so far west” (p. 58).

It must be mentioned specifically that Musheghyan directly responded to the accusation concerning Bithynia, thoroughly analyzing the issue (over 19 pages) and refuting the claim. Meanwhile, Thomson merely references Musheghyan’s article without further comment. What does it mean that Thomson neither refutes, rejects, nor criticizes Musheghyan’s study? For example, in the case of Khalatians—just two lines before mentioning Musheghyan—Thomson explicitly states: “Khalatians notes that the spelling in Moses, Biwtania, is identical with that of the *Ashkharhatsoyts*. But since this is the Armenian biblical spelling, nothing is proved.” This shows that whenever Thomson has an argument to make, he explicitly states it. Therefore, considering his complete silence regarding the idea of Musheghyan’s article, we must conclude that Thomson either lacks a counterargument or agrees with Musheghyan’s position. In either case, it follows that the accusation against Khorenatsi regarding the Persian advance into Bithynia is invalid—unless and until Musheghyan’s reasoning is properly refuted.

And if, in the future, there are once again those who seek to exploit the issue of Bithynia, in addition to Musheghyan’s article, we would also suggest considering the following:

Was the 604–629 war truly the only time in human history that the Persians could have reached Bithynia? Is it not possible that, amid the countless wars of the past, a similar military success had occurred at an earlier date? Were there no other wars besides the one in 604–629? Or do Khorenatsi’s *skilled* critics possess complete knowledge of all of history and remain absolutely certain that the event they point to is the only and unparalleled instance of such an occurrence? Let us recall an important point: Khorenatsi was not writing history arbitrarily, nor was he merely

reconstructing from memory what he had learned during his years of study, in an approximate or fragmentary manner. Rather, he carried out this work by synthesizing various sources, always striving to identify the most reliable among them rather than blindly repeating whatever he encountered.

If we examine the chapter on Bithynia, along with its surrounding passages, we will see that Khorenatsi not only possesses precise, name-by-name knowledge of the rulers of the time and the events that took place, but he is also aware of specific details that are rarely attested elsewhere—for instance, the mention of *castle Bergition*. In certain passages concerning the Byzantine-Persian war, Khorenatsi not only demonstrates knowledge of fortress sieges but also describes them in detail. He is aware that negotiations took place between the attackers and defenders, and he even presents these negotiations in the form of direct speech¹². In short, when describing the period under consideration, Khorenatsi undoubtedly relies on one or more sources and structures his account accordingly. This reliance enables him to present detailed and compelling knowledge about the era. The passage concerning Bithynia should likewise be considered part of this corpus of substantiated historical accounts: “Arriving in Bithynia, he [Shapuh] camped there for many months, unable to do anything. By the sea, he set up a column and placed a lion on top with a book under its feet. This signified that just as the lion is the most powerful of animals, so too is the Persian king among kings; and the book contains wisdom, as does the Roman empire.” (p. 269)

Here, we must remember that, unlike modern political figures, rulers of the past did not make meaningless gestures or statements. If a king symbolized himself as a lion, holding his rival under his paw, he must have secured a significant victory—otherwise, his declaration would have been regarded as mere empty rhetoric, something unworthy of an Easterner, let alone a king.

In our deep conviction, the scene described by Khorenatsi far more closely resembles the era of Shapur I than that of the Byzantine–Sasanian War of 602–628. Khorenatsi’s description bears a striking resemblance to a testimony found in the *Epitome De Caesaribus*, a 5th-century Latin historical work. «But, indeed, Valerianus, waging war in Mesopotamia, was defeated by Sapor, King of the Persians, immediately captured, too, and among the Persians grew old in ignoble servitude. 6. For he lived [Valerianus] a long while, and the king [Sapor] of the same province

¹² See e.g. pp. 279–280.

was accustomed, with him bent low, to place his foot on his shoulders and mount his horse»¹³. And despite this source being Western, it is beyond doubt that such a scene could only have been witnessed in the East—whether at the Persian court or in a location where one could encounter the Persian king performing this act. Therefore, the origin of this depiction must be linked to a Persian setting and sources. And thus, in M. Sprengling’s work, we read: «Now we have a photograph, fair, though hardly approaching perfection, accompanied by a very careful and detailed description by Sir Aurel Stein, Iraq, vol. III, 1936, Plate XVII opposite page 191, and pp. 194–196. Its chief contribution for our purpose is the identification of the figure in the background on whose head the left hand of Sapor rests. This is not, as the simperingly youthful, almost monastic features drawn by Flandin and Coste suggest, a person who could possibly be Mariades; it is most distinctly, as Sir Aurel says in so many words, Valerian himself, who with bare hands outstretched may even be kneeling, though all but his head and torso is hidden by Sapor’s horse and the figures in the foreground».¹⁴ It is not difficult to notice that the image of “a figure in the background on whose head the left hand of Sapor rests”, which represents “Valerian himself”, closely resembles the depiction of “a lion with a book under its feet”. This is how Shapur envisioned and symbolized his relationship with Emperor Valerian. The only difference is that in one scene, Shapur and Valerian appear in human form, while in Khorenatsi’s account, the depiction is symbolic—represented by the lion and the book. In our view, Khorenatsi’s account does not refer to the 602–628 war, which would require confusing the names of all the rulers—meaning that on the Persian side, Khosrow would have to become Shapur, while Valentinian and Valens would have to be mistaken for Phocas and Heraclius. Rather, it pertains to the events of 253–260, where the name of the Persian king remains unchanged—Shapur—and the only possible source of confusion would be the emperor’s name, Valentinian-Valerian. Summarizing the discussion, we can conclude that, according to Musheghyan, the *Bithynia* clue is not a chronological issue but rather a geographical-toponymic misplacement. Therefore, it cannot in any way influence the determination of Khorenatsi’s historical period. At worst, it could be attributed to

¹³ Ancient History Sourcebook: A Booklet About the Style of Life and The Manners of the Imperatores (Sometimes Attributed to Sextus Aurelius Victor), Translated by Thomas M. Banchich, Canisius College Translated Texts, Number 1 (Canisius College. Buffalo, New York, 2018) -3rd edition.

¹⁴ M. Sprengling, Third Century Iran: Sapor and Kartir, Prepared and Distributed at the Oriental Institute University of Chicago, Chicago, 1953, p. 92.

the carelessness of a scribe, but never to the historian himself. From our perspective, there is no compelling reason to assume that the mention of *Bithynia* must be exclusively tied to the 602–628 war. On the contrary, it is far more plausible that it reflects the events of 253–260.

Supporting this view is Khorenatsi's unique description of “*a column and a lion on top with a book under its feet*”, which has no parallel in the accounts of 602–628, whereas, in the context of 253–260, it finds a clear justification—one that fully exonerates Khorenatsi.

As his third point, Toumanoff states: «(3) In 3.46, allusion is made to the institution, following the death of Arsaces III (c. 390), of the office of presiding prince [arajnorder naxararac'n], along with that of comes Armeniae (komess ishkhangs) in the provinces fallen under Imperial control. This can only be a reminiscence of the situation which resulted from Heraclius I's victory over Iran in 629».

In contrast to Toumanoff's claim, we find an interesting testimony in the work titled *The Acts of Saint Cyprian of Antioch*: «The most plausible historical candidate for the author's Terentius is the homonymous *dux et comes Armeniae* (our italics.— M.) from 369–374 CE (see PLRE 1:881–82 s.v. Terentius 2). As both *dux and comes Terentius* governed the whole of Armenia (the *comes Armeniae* governed Armenia Maior, the *dux Armeniae* Armenia Minor). Both Eutolmius and Terentius governed simultaneously (Eutolmius from 370–374 and Terentius from 369–374), but certainly, they would not have had recourse to interact over such matters as these»¹⁵. Similarly, in the *Introduction* to Chapter 1 of *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus*, we read: “Terentius, *dux et comes Armeniae*”¹⁶. And finally, in *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, we read: “Terentius 2 comes et dux (Armeniae) c. 369–374 v.p. dux (of Valeria) in 3762 + 10677 tiles from Aquincum and Brigetio (undated) (both towns were now in Valeria)”¹⁷. As we can see, the accusation against Khorenatsi is entirely baseless. The titles *comes Armeniae* and *presiding prince* are attested as early as the 4th century, fully satisfying the so-called *requirements* for Khorenatsi to have lived in the 5th century.

¹⁵ R. Bailey, *The Acts of Saint Cyprian of Antioch: Critical Editions, Translations, and Commentary*, School of Religious Studies, McGill University, Montreal, January 2017, A thesis submitted to McGill University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Ph.D., 2017.

¹⁶ J. den Boeft, J.W. Drijvers, D. den Hengst, H.C. Teitler, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXX*, LEIDEN • BOSTON, 2015.

¹⁷ By A. H. M. Jones, Vol. I (A.D. 260–395), Cambridge, 1971, p. 881.

As his fourth point, Toumanoff states: «(4)In 2.65, he [Khorenatsi] refers to the Khazars (as at the time of the mythical King Valarsaces), which no Armenian source does prior to the Geography of Ananias of Siracene, of the end of the seventh century, once ascribed to the same Pseudo-Moses 9. At the beginning of that century, Sebeos does not mention the Khazars by name».

Before addressing this accusation, several key considerations must be taken into account.

1) It must be acknowledged that the tent-dwelling nomads known as the Khazars are largely enigmatic and obscure, with conflicting opinions regarding them. For instance, in one case, we read: “There has been considerable discussion as to the relation of the Khazars to the Huns on the one hand and to the West Turks on the other”¹⁸. Elsewhere, we learn that: «На основе сведений письменных источников и данных археологии автор реконструирует этническую карту Северо-Западного Прикаспия позднего сарматского периода и приходит к выводу, что под Хазирами и Басилами следует понимать ираноязычных кочевников региона — носителей традиций средней сарматской культуры и традиций ранней Аланской культуры»¹⁹. This means that even today, the term *Khazar* and the circumstances associated with it remain difficult to comprehend and even more complex to explain. Therefore, the accusation against Khorenatsi must be analyzed on multiple levels.

1) It is essential to consider what exactly is deemed questionable by the *discoverers* of the so-called *Khazar clue*—is it the very existence of the Khazars, or rather their presence in the period described by Khorenatsi?

A close examination of these aspects reveals that Armenology encounters no difficulty in defending Khorenatsi against this accusation. Many of those who seek to claim the Khazar legacy have already pushed their origins back to antiquity and to even more distant regions. As noted by a scholar: «Азербайджанский историк удревнял появление в Европе гуннов, барсиллов и хазар»²⁰. As the saying goes, commentary is unnecessary.

The next question is:

¹⁸ D. M. Dunlop, the History of the Jewish Khazars, New York, Princeton University Press, 1967, p. 4.

¹⁹ М. Гаджиев, Сообщение Хоренаци о Походе Хазир и Басил в 216 г. и Этнокарта Северо-Западного Прикаспия в Позднесарматский Период (in Russian), «Caucaso-Caspica-I», p. 7.

²⁰ Я. Пилипчук, Миграции Огурских Племен, “Тюркологические исследования”, 2019, vol. 2, № 4, p. 64.

2) Could nomadic tent-dwelling groups suddenly and unexpectedly appear in the Caucasus while searching for new pastures and opportunities for plunder?

Clearly, not only could they, but this was precisely their way of life.

And the final question is:

3) Is it possible that all of this would be reflected in the work of only one author?

Here, it should be noted that, according to Khorenatsi's critics, the answer to this question must necessarily be negative.

After considering these questions, let us turn to the core accusation: "At the beginning of that (7th) century, Sebeos does not mention the Khazars by name." And here, yet another question arises—Is this truly a fault? And if it is indeed a fault, does it lie with Khorenatsi or Sebeos? What exactly is the issue here? Was Sebeos obligated to mention by name every single nation previously recorded by other authors? If so, then Sebeos's fault becomes even greater when we consider that he not only "failed" to mention the Khazars that Khorenatsi refers to but also omitted the *Khailndurk* mentioned by Yeghishe—a term that Yeghishe seemingly applied to the same or a similar group of stateless, nomadic, tent-dwelling people.

By a remarkable coincidence, *Khailndurk* is also absent from the *Ashkharhat-soyts*. And what does this mean? Should we now argue that Yeghishe does not belong to the 5th century either? Is this the logic being followed here—or is this even *logic* at all? Should authors be moved from one century to another simply based on their use of a specific word? Where exactly is the *crime* here? Khorenatsi's work contains four other words (*artakhur*, *khavart*, *titz*, *khavartzi*) that have not only gone unmentioned in Sebeos's 7th century but have never appeared in any Armenian author's work to this day. So what should we conclude from this? Should we now attempt to *prove* that Khorenatsi belongs to the 22nd century? What does the use or omission of a single word prove or reveal?

Grigor Narekatsi employs words that appear neither before nor after him. Does this *prove* that such a writer never existed? Or does it simply demonstrate that this entire accusation is baseless?

From the discussion and questions raised above, we can unequivocally conclude that the use of the word Khazar is not a *crime*—it is simply its earliest recorded instance, one that warrants deeper study rather than condemnation.

As his fifth point, Toumanoff states: «(5)He [Khorenatsi] makes use, in 2.62, of "Vaspurakan", to designate the territory east of Lake Van; this territory,

however, came to be so designated only after the partition of Armenia in 591. Sebeos, in the early seventh century, does not yet know this term as a toponym, but uses vaspurakan adjectivally as an “elevated” equivalent of “Iranian”, and, thus, also to designate the territory in question, which in 591 remained in the Iranian spherela. It is only in the *Narratio de rebus Armeniae*, compiled c. 700 and reaching us in a Greek rendering, that Vaspurakan first appears as Pseudo-Moses uses it»:

If we follow Thomson’s translation (p. 202), we are indeed dealing with a toponym. «Since the king loved him he gave him the second rank, which Artavazd used to hold; he entrusted to him the care of the army of the east, and he left with him Druasp. [The latter was] a Persian friend of his who had become related by marriage to the princes of Vaspurakan»: However, when we examine Thomson’s footnote 423 on the same page, where he explains the etymology of the word Vaspurakan, we see that it derives from *Vaspuhr* and, in addition to being a toponym, it can also mean “the magnates of Sasanian Iran.” To this, we should add the following explanation: “According to Khorenatsi, the King of Armenia leaves ‘...Druasp, a certain Persian, his confidant, who was closely associated with the nakharars of Vaspurakan...’ in the care of Erakhnavu Andzevatsi. At this time, *Vaspurakan* referred to the *Land of the Princes*, specifically the domains of the Arsacid *sepuhs*, such as the provinces of Aghiovit and Arberan”²¹. Therefore, instead of Thomson’s rendering “*princes of Vaspurakan*,” the passage should be translated and understood as “*princes of the royal region*,” where *vaspurakan* is not a toponym or proper name but rather a general noun indicating a royal territory. In this case, in Armenian the word should be written in lowercase. Here, it is important to recall that the passage we cited was published in 1975—that is, before the criticism of Khorenatsi. By 1978, when Thomson *criticized* Khorenatsi, he not only could have but was obligated to review this article. And if he disagreed, he should have at least attempted to refute it.

A more detailed explanation of this issue is provided by Sultanyan. «The term Vaspurakan could not be an invention of AD 591 during the late Sassanian period, since Strabo knows it and gives us the Greek form of it as Vasoropeda (Basoropeda

²¹ Ս. Երեմյան, Հայաստանի Բաղաբական վիճակը Արտավազդ Ե. ժամանակ/ S. Yermeyan, The Political Situation of Armenia during the Reign of Artavazd V. (252/3–261), «Լրաբեր հասարակական գիտությունների»=Herald of the Social Sciences, 1975, p. 17.

= ‘Border Land of the King’, ba =diminutive of basileu, hence has = ‘king’s’ + oro = ‘boundary, limit, border’+ peda = ‘land’)²².

If we accept that the toponym used by Strabo is the same as the one used by Khorenatsi, then this historical clue immediately collapses. However, in an attempt to *neutralize* Strabo’s testimony, Khorenatsi’s critics cling to Hubschmann’s work—*Die altarmenischen Ortsnamen, mit Beiträgen zur historischen Topographie Armeniens und einer Karte* (1904, Strasbourg)—treating it as a refutation of the supposed identity between the toponyms used by Strabo and Khorenatsi.

Hubschmann’s key thoughts on Khorenatsi and Vaspurakan can be summarized as follows:

A) The name of the province of Vaspurakan was introduced into Armenia only during the Sasanian period and did not yet exist in the Parthian era.

B) Had this name already been established in the Parthian period, it should have been known to the writers of the 5th and 6th centuries.

Regarding the first assertion, it is sufficient to recall that the beginning of the Sasanian period is dated to 224 AD, which means that at least 200 years separate it from Khorenatsi’s time. This does not contradict the attribution of Khorenatsi to the 5th century. As for the second point concerning the writers of the 5th and 6th centuries, this issue has already been addressed and resolved in the relevant section, making repetition unnecessary.

As the sixth argument, Toumanoff writes: “(6) He [Khorenatsi] uses the term ‘Sisakan’ to designate the province of Siunia (Siwniq), in 1.12. Now this term makes its earliest appearance in the Syriac chronicle of Zacharias Rhetor (554), but the earliest Armenian use of it is found in the Geography of Ananias of Siracene (Shirakaci). What is important, however, is that in this source Sisakan is not yet treated as synonymous with Siunia, but as the name of a canton in the neighboring province of Arc’ax (Arcakh). It is only in the tenth-century History of the Katholikos John VI that this term has the same sense as in Pseudo-Moses.” And for this idea, Toumanoff cites the source: ‘Adontz, Armenija, p. 421, n. 3’, which is not limited to the page mentioned by Toumanoff, but rather includes the analysis of the toponyms ‘Siwni’ and ‘Sisakan’ found on pages 421–423, where the footnote in small print, which Toumanoff considered significant, reads as follows: «Персидская форма Сисакан,

²² G. Soutanian, *The History of the Armenians and Moses Khorenats’i*, Bennett & Bloom, 2012, p. 82.

упоминается впервые у Захарія Ритора подь 554 г.». This is also emphasized by Thomson, who, writing about the ‘equate’ of the names Siunik and Sisakan by Khorenatsi, first mentions it on page 52, then on page 57, and repeats the same on page 88, consistently referencing the same pages (Thomson, pp. 91, 141). However, in the general context of page 423 of his book, not in the footnote nor small print, but in large letters, Adontz wrote: «Происхождение двойного названія [Siwni] & [Sisakan] *еще темно и нельзя сказать ничего определеннаго*» (our italics - M.).”. This has simply gone unnoticed by researchers. However, for a Russian speaker, it is clear that Adontz is not at all confident regarding the two names, but merely accepts that, at least at the time of his writing, ‘нельзя сказать ничего определеннаго’. Most importantly, researchers failed not only to understand or appreciate what Adontz wrote in Russian but also the Armenian text of Khorenatsi. ‘*Persians more precisely call it Sisakan*’ (Thomson p. 88). From this, it should have been understood that Khorenatsi does not use ‘Sisakan’ as his own or the Armenian nation’s term, but merely states that *the Persians use the form ‘Sisakan’* instead of the Armenian ‘Siwniq.’ That is, Khorenatsi did not ‘use’ the term ‘Sisakan’ to designate the province of Siunia (Siwniq); he simply presented the Persian version of the name. Similarly, when it is stated, ‘Brief demonstration that the one *called* Bel by profane authors is in truth Nimrod [Nebrot] of the divine Scriptures’ (p. 78), it should be understood that Khorenatsi does not ‘use’ the names Bel and Nebrot to fabricate that he wrote before Christ, but simply indicates that one is from the profane authors and the other from the divine Scriptures. Or when it says, ‘Abgar *was called* ‘noble man’ (in the Armenian version it’s pronounced «Avag ajr») because of his great kindness and wisdom and, later, for his years. And since the Greeks and Syrians could not pronounce his name correctly, they called him Abgarus.”²³ In other words, it was not Khorenatsi who said ‘Abgarus,’ but the Greeks and Syrians. Therefore, when we read the accusation that ‘He uses the term “Sisakan” to designate the province of Siunia (Siwniq),’ we should realize that it is not Khorenatsi who is in the wrong, but rather those accusing him, who either failed to understand or distorted the author’s words. Consequently, this accusation should be considered as baseless.

In the next point, Toumanoff writes: «(7) For him [Khorenatsi], his dislike of the Mamikonids is a corollary of his devotion to the Bagratids. This can only have

²³ Thomson p. 161, cp. also p. 137: “And the country was *called* Aghuank’ [Albania] after the gentleness of his mode of life; for they *called* him [Sisak] *Aghu*.”

been an outcome of the dynastic policies of the two houses as they were shaped after the mid-eighth century».

Even grasping this accusation is challenging. What exactly are Khorenatsi's critics trying to suggest? That the Mamikonians and Bagratunis did not exist before the 8th century? Or that, until that time, human beings—even those of noble descent—were incapable of conflict or enmity? Or are they implying that the hypothetical Khorenatsi, before the 8th century, was somehow deprived of the right, possibility, or ability to have personal preferences—to favor or admire a certain dynasty or individual, or, conversely, to dislike or disapprove of them?

To refute this notion, it is sufficient to recall that in 370 (or 371), Mushegh Mamikonian was the *sparapet* (commander of the army), while the cavalry was under the command of Smbat Bagratuni. This provides clear evidence that as early as the 4th century, the noble clans that had distinguished themselves in military affairs were jointly fighting against threats to the nation. It is only natural that misunderstandings and conflicts would arise over years of cooperation. Therefore, the artificial limitation of the “mid-eighth century” is entirely unfounded. Even the closest allies could, at any given moment, find themselves in opposition or outright hostility.

In 371, the Armenian and Persian armies clashed on the plain of Dzirav²⁴. This battle stands as one of the most glorious chapters in the history of the Armenian military. The battle and victory brought glory and honor to King Pap as Commander-in-Chief and to Sparapet Mushegh Mamikonyan as the army's commander, overshadowing the role of the cavalry and its commander, Smbat Bagratuni. However, considering the military strategy of that era, it is reasonable to conclude that the cavalry played a significant role in securing the victory. Did Bagratuni have valid grounds for grievance or claims of neglect? Fundamental human instincts—competition, envy, malice—are not confined to any particular time or place. They could have escalated and influenced events not only in the “mid-eighth century” but also in its early years, at the end of the 7th century, or even as far back as the 370s.

At the end, Toumanoff writes: «(8) The work of Pseudo-Moses is, as has been noted, an antiquarian's production – one is tempted to suspect him of emulating the Antiquities of Josephus on which he often draws—and his attention is focussed on the creative minority of Great Armenia, especially of the Arsacid and post-Arsacid phase,— its class of dynastic princes. His treatment of the Armenian princely nobil-

²⁴ See e. g. *U. Սարգսյան*, Հայ ռազմական արուեստի պատմություն, Երևան, 1969, chapter 8.

ity, however, is strikingly anachronistic. It is marked by an obvious archaeologism as well as by an *étatiste* misapprehension of the dynasticist nature of that social group. This suggests that the Armenian Antiquities of Pseudo-Moses could hardly have been written before that group began losing its vigour and, what is more, its actuality, and so could attract antiquarian interest; before; that is, the ushering in, in the mid-eighth century, of the Abbasid-Bagratid phase». Here, Toumanoff references pages 237–238 and 489²⁵ of Adontz's work, the main and key idea of which we present in full, without omissions: «Дѣйствующие въ жизни явленія и институты, пока живы и жизнеспособны, не нуждаются въ регламентаціи и въ толкованіи; но они неминуемо становятся предметомъ изысканій, когда отживаютъ свой вѣкъ, когда начинаютъ увидать въ жизни и въ памяти и, постепенно уносясь въ даль, дѣлаются достояніемъ прошлаго. Съ этой точки зрѣнія Исторія Арменія, по критическому духу автора ея, знаменуетъ періодъ упадка, когда бывшые устои нахарарской жизни пошатнулись, историческія нормы, разлагаясь, уходили изъ живой реальности въ область преданій и воспоминаній. Состояніе это правдиво характеризовано самимъ Хоренскимъ; устами перваго Аршакида историкъ задается вопросомъ: откуда происходятъ эти пахарарства, которыя существуютъ здѣсь въ Арменія; не видно, чтобы здѣсь были какіе нибудь порядки, и неизвѣстно, кто первый среди главарей страны и кто послѣдній; нѣтъ ничего установленнаго, а все въ безпорядкѣ, все неустроено. Въ такомъ видѣ засталъ Арменію, по словамъ Хоренскаго, основатель династія Аршакидовъ, который, по прибытіи въ Арменію, хотѣлъ ознакомиться со ввѣренной ему страной и съ существовавшими въ ней нахарарскими порядками. Разумѣется, то было не желаніе царя-пришлеца, а предметъ любознательности самого историка, и положеніе, которое тутъ изображается, вовсе не относится ко временамъ появленія Аршакидовъ въ Арменіи, а есть точная картина современной историку дѣйствительности»²⁶. As we can see, Adontz freely presents his opinion without even considering that when asserting something, one should at least attempt to provide justification, let alone prove it. The only reference he provides is Khorenatsi's passage 1.9: 'The

²⁵ Toumanoff also references himself, but his main argument is merely a repetition: see «Formative Centuries...», p. 56: «This is Adontz's chief argument for so dating Moses Xorenatsi; Armenja 237–238».

²⁶ pp. 237–238.

letter of Valarshak, king of Armenia, to Arshak the Great, king of Persia' (Tomson p. 80). In this regard, Adontz states that *«устами первого Аршакида историкъ задается вопросомъ: откуда происходят эти нахарарства»*, (our italics.— M.) and concludes that he has uncovered Khorenatsi's forgery. First, it should be noted that before making any assertion, Adontz was obliged to prove that the 'The letter of Valarshak, king of Armenia, to Arshak the Great, king of Persia,' as quoted in full in Khorenatsi's work, is not based on any historical foundation, but rather is the result of the imagination of Moses Khorenatsi from beginning to end. Only after proving this could Adontz move on to criticism. Since he does not do this, his entire opinion does not concern a royal letter created by Khorenatsi's imagination, but rather words born from Adontz's own imagination, which lack both foundation and proof and therefore are devoid of any scientific value.

Now, for a moment (just for a moment, not more), let us accept that Adontz has flooded his words with serious and weighty arguments, and it is indeed proven that the 'Vagharshak, king of Armenia' letter is a fabrication of Khorenatsi. How do we know that the question "Откуда происходят эти нахарарства" could not have arisen in the 5th century? That way, it could not have been said by the 5th-century Movses Khorenatsi, but only by the 8th-century Movses Khorenatsi. How do we know that the 'былые устои нахарарской жизни' in the 5th century 'еще не пошатнулись' and that only in the 8th-9th-10th centuries could all of this become possible, and that the question 'откуда происходят эти нахарарства' would become relevant only then? Another question: Was there a written history of the noble houses during the time of Moses Khorenatsi, who, according to Armenian tradition, was writing in 460? Did the question 'откуда происходят эти нахарарства' have an answer in the 5th century, and was there no need to raise this question in the 5th century, while in the 8th-9th-10th centuries the need arose to answer it because, during those centuries, «былые устои нахарарской жизни пошатнулись»? As we noted, in his unproven statement, Adontz references the Vagharshak letter, in which the only remark about 'былые устои нахарарской жизни пошатнулись' is the following sentence: 'It is not clear *which is the first of the lords of this country and which the last* (our italics - M.), nor is anything else regulated, but all is confused and uncivilized' (p. 80). To the surprise of Khorenatsi's critics, who believe that in the 5th century «былые устои нахарарской жизни не пошатнулись», and therefore the writers of that era had no cause for concern, suddenly, the historian of the Battle of Avarayr, Eghishe, expresses a thought very much in line with Khorenatsi's concern

when describing how the Persian king caused confusion in his conquered lands, including Armenia: «...սկսաւ այնուհետեւ յառաջ կոչել զկրտերս յաւագաց եւ զանարգս ի պատուականաց եւ զոգէտս ի գիտնոց եւ զանարիս ի քաջ արանց. եւ զի՞ մի մի թուիցեմ. այլ զամենայն զանաթժանսն յառաջ մատուցանէր եւ զամենայն զարժանաւորսն յետս տանէր... (Eghishe 2): Could these lines not be in line with Khorenatsi's thought: 'which is the first of the lords of this country and which the last'? Could Eghishe's concern not be about 'былые устои нахарарской жизни не пошатнулись'? Is it not about the disruption of the traditional hierarchy of the nobility? In other words, as we see, the idea expressed by 'which is the first of the lords of this country and which the last,' or a very similar version of it, could certainly have been voiced in the 5th century, and Eghishe's lines fully justify Khorenatsi. And even if, for a moment (just for a moment, no more), we accept that Adontz has flooded his argument with serious and weighty evidence, and it is indeed proven that the 'Vagharshak, king of Armenia' letter is a creation of Khorenatsi, even in this case, accusing Khorenatsi is not justified, because it is clear that the same concern is expressed in both 5th-century texts.

A different analytical approach may shed new light on this issue, particularly when considering historical narratives. For instance, in Chapter 1:9, we find a passage where a new ruler-king arrives in Armenia and states: 'I have decided to discover who may have been those who ruled over this land of Armenia before me and whence arose the principalities that now exist here.' This raises the question: could such an idea have emerged only in the 8th-10th centuries and only in Armenia? Certainly not. What Vagharshak says imposes neither a temporal nor a geographical limitation. Both today and thousands of years ago, the fundamental principle of governance remains the same. Today, any newly appointed official, entering the institution entrusted to them, will try to understand who holds what office, and who is responsible for what areas. And what is the solution to this governance issue? Very simple: the official will contact the human resources department or the institution's Archive and receive a clear answer (provided it is not a den of incompetents) regarding the responsibilities and rights of the staff. What Vagharshak is writing is exactly that: 'I beg Your Majesty to order the royal archives to be opened for this man.' Vagharshak merely wants to have the information he is interested in clarified. Here, Vagharshak is not interested in the history of the Armenians, nor in the matter of whether 'былые устои нахарарской жизни пошатнулись'; rather, he is concerned with the duties of the nobles, or more simply, who needs to collect what trib-

ute, and who has what rights and obligations in relation to the pagan temples, otherwise, ‘cults for the temples are uncertain.’ In other words, the passage discovered by Adontz has nothing to do with the collapse of the old structures of the nobility, but simply with the solution to governance issues.

Now let us turn to the more complex issues in favor of the 5th century, which have been used by Khorenatsi’s critics, and the refutation of those presented by scholars in support of it. A problem to which Toumanoff has ‘found an easy solution. He writes: “Broadly speaking there are three groups of theories on this subject: some ascribe this History to the seventh century, others to the eighth, and still others to the ninth (please note that Toumanoff doesn’t even remember the fifth century—the most common opinion.— M.). These divergent views, and their mutual exclusion, were recently held up to irony by a *Soviet Armenian savant* (he means Stepanos Malkhasean.— M.), who reverted to the traditional date, and he has been seconded in this by *another authority* (Toumanoff hints at Manuk Abeghean.— M.).” Here, it should be noted that Toumanoff’s list is incomplete, as the same opinion was also held by Hrachya Acharian, a scholar of the same period and of the same caliber. One can observe that Toumanoff attempted to characterize the proponents of the traditional Armenian view as ‘Soviet Armenians. Perhaps in this way, Toumanoff was attempting to dismiss their opinion. As we have seen (footnote 11), Conybeare also placed Khorenatsi in the 5th century, but perhaps because he was not a ‘Soviet scientist,’ Toumanoff does not criticize him. In contrast, ‘Soviet scientists’ like Malkhasean, Abeghean, and Acharian can be criticized as much as one wants. But who were these three scholars in reality? Were they really ‘Soviet’? They were born, lived, worked, and created in their homeland—Armenia, which, unfortunately, was conquered by various empires at different times, from Assyria and Babylon to Persia, Rome, Turkey, and Russia. The empires have come and gone, but Armenia and the Armenians have remained the same—tightly bound to their land and traditions. Therefore, Armenian scholars should not be labeled as ‘Soviet’, ‘Turkish’, or ‘Russian’. If the scholars are dedicated to their national traditions and principles, they are simply Armenian scholars. No further description or qualifier is needed, as ‘Armenian’ is the most recognized and defining characteristic. Armenia was renowned long before the emergence of countries like Russia and Turkey²⁷, as well

²⁷ Let us present a few examples concerning prehistoric times: Sisithrus (Noah), when he had complied with commands, sailed immediately to Armenia, and was presently inspired by God—

as the empires that have come and gone. It will remain well after these states and empires have faded away. So these scholars were born in their motherland, Armenia, which at different times was under the rule of Russia, Turkey, and Persia. They received their primary education in their native language, in their birthplace, their homeland, where there were more Armenian schools than these empires had schools in their native languages in their central provinces. In terms of the ratio of educational institutions, scholars, and their proportion within the population, Armenians surpassed all other nations within the mentioned empires²⁸. It is worth noting that at a time when education across Europe was conducted in Latin, and major states lacked instruction in their own national languages, Armenians were exclusively taught in their native tongue, excelling in political, religious, and scientific realms without yielding in any way to their European counterparts.

The scholars whom Toumanoff labeled as ‘Soviet’ initially received their education at the Gevorgean and Nersisean seminaries—institutions that, without a doubt, could be considered the Armenian universities of their era. Subsequently, they furthered their studies at renowned institutions such as the University of Petersburg, Sorbonne, Strasbourg, Jena, Leipzig, and Berlin. In their scholarly endeavors, they adhered to the established principles of Oriental studies. Yet, one might ask: can they truly be regarded as ‘Soviet’ or ‘Russian’, ‘German’... scholars? If one feels the need to characterize them, it would be more appropriate to do so not by geography, but by their expertise—recognizing them as accomplished scholars and authorities in their field. Unlike scholars such as Toumanoff and Thomson, when it came to dis-

Syncel. Chron. 38.—*Euseb. Præp. Evan. Lib.* 9.—*Euseb. Chron.* 5. 8., Having asked the Deity, whither he (Xisuthrus=Sisithrus) was to sail? He was answered, “To the Gods, [to the land of Armenia]”—*Syncel. Chron.* 28.—*Euseb. Chron.* 5. 8., The Ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat—Gen. 8:4, Book of Jubilees V. 28..., The vessel, which yet remains in Armenia...—*Syncel. Chron.* 38.—*Euseb. Præp. Evan. Lib.* 9.—*Euseb. Chron.* 5. 8. The first altar devoted to God was built in Armenia—Gen. 8:20, Jub. VI. 1. The first vineyard was planted in Armenia—Gen. 9:20, Jub. VII. 1., Wine for the first time was produced in Armenia—Gen. 9:21, Jub. VII. 2...

²⁸ See Գ. Մադոյան, Հայկական ընտանիք (Դիուագներ աւանդոյթի եւ աւանդութեան), G. Madoyan, *The Armenian Family (Episodes of Tradition and Heritage)*, Yerevan, 2018, pp. 38–42, cf. «Վիճակացոյց գաւառական ազգային վարժարանաց Թուրքիոյ»/“Statistical Report on Provincial National Schools of Turkey”, Տեոր Ա./part 1, Կոստանդնուպոլիս/Constantinople, 1901, աղյուսակ/table 33, cf. Գ. Կիրակոսյան/G. Kirakosyan, Արեւելյան Հայաստանի դպրոցների եւ աշակերտների թուաքանակը XIX դ. 80–90-ական թթ., «Լրաբեր հասարակական գիտությունների»/“The Number of Schools and Students in Eastern Armenia in the 1880s–1890s», “Lraber Hasarakakan Gitutyunneri”, 2008, N 2, pp. 37–45:

cussing Khorenatsi, these scholars did not merely ‘second,’ ‘rehearse,’ or ‘recapitulate’ one another’s opinions. Instead, each articulated his own viewpoint, grounded in his independent analysis and research. Perhaps the most significant quality of these ‘Soviet Armenian savants’ was that, unlike many others, they had a thorough grounding in the history and literature of ancient Armenia. By examining the linguistic features of a text, they could pinpoint whether it was composed in the style of the 5th, 6th, or 8th century. In contrast, most of Khorenatsi’s critics could not even read the original work—something that remains a basic requirement for any sound scientific study in this field, where familiarity with the native language is essential. After all, even a single misplaced word can distort the entire narrative.²⁹

And when the desire arises to label someone as a ‘Soviet Armenian savant’ or ‘another authority,’ one must first earn the right to make such a statement. Moreover, if one chooses to make such a claim, it must be backed by solid reasoning and evidence. Thus, who were Malkhasean, Acharean, and Abeghean? First of all, we

²⁹ Although what we are stating is a plain truth, let us provide an example: In book II chapter 65 Thomson translates it like this: “*Vardges as a child (in original «մանկ») – M.) left the province of Tuhq by the River Qasakh and came to dwell by the hill of Shresh by the city of Artimed on the River Qasakh, to hammer and batter at the gate of Eruand the king.*” In the footnotes (see number 458) Thomson writes: “*Hammer at the gate: ‘to ask in marriage,’ see Malkhasyants’, note 137 and Abeghyan, Erker, I:128–129. For betrothal ceremonies in early Armenia see Hovhannisyan, BEH 1971, and Mahe, “Norme et droit coutumier,” esp. pp. 694–5.*” (T. p. 207).

Here it should be noted that for an ordinary reader instead of helping the footnote makes the passage hard to understand. After the Thomsons’ interpretation, the story appears something like this: Vardges was a child yet “or as a child” when he left the region of Tuhq (Murhq). He was a child but at the same time, he could leave the province alone and arrive at the other to “ask in marriage” the sister of Eruand the king. In the subsequent paragraph of the book, Moses of Khoren tells us that Vardges indeed married the sister of king Eruand and he built a city and named it after himself. By this, we can conclude that the story is not about a literary, imaginary, fabulous, or mythical marriage. And what is the solution? Thomson simply needed to consult Bedrosian’s work, where in *New Dictionary [Classical] Armenian–English, Venice, 1875–79, p. 432*, the word «մանկ» is given with another meaning—“soldier, warrior”—and the story gets logical context.

Vardges the Warrior left the region Tuhq and went to ‘to ask the sister of the king Eruand in marriage. This real and acceptable idea contradicts the absurd meaning of Thomson’s translation: “A lonely child went from one province to another for marriage.” Here, we should also note that in several passages, Thomson deduced from the context that «մանկ» should not be translated as “child.” For instance, in Book I, Chapter 15, he translates «մանկանցն Շամիրամայ» as “Semiramis’ troops” (p. 94), and in Book II, Chapter 5, he renders the phrase “soldiers (մանկունք) of Vagharshak” as “Vagharshak’s young men” (p. 132). However, in the case of Vardges, the mistake reduces the passage to an embarrassingly flawed version.

must state that Thomson often uses the works of the mentioned authors for annotations in his translation (6 times from Acharyan, 11 times from Abeghyan, and more than 30 times from Malkhasean). Especially in connection with Moses Khorenaci, it must be noticed that Malkhasean's translation of Moses's History from Old Armenian (Grabar) to Modern (Ashkharabar) is considered the best one to this day. Abeghyan was one of the compilers of the critical text of Moses's History. Acharian is the author of an encyclopedic Armenological, fundamental research where he enumerates by names and the sources where they have remembered all the personalities of the Armenian past³⁰. These three scientists were sure and were insisting that Moses Khorenatsi was a 5th-century author. Moreover, simply labeling the views of Malkhasean, Acharian, and Abeghyan as "Soviet" is by no means a sufficient basis for opposing their opinions. Solid and well-founded arguments are required, especially since, as we have seen, those who merely "*rehearsed*" or "*recapitulated*" others' ideas lacked original contributions of their own. Furthermore, it is scientifically unfounded to dismiss the writings of these three scholars by simply labeling them as "*Soviet*" and rushing to a conclusion without offering solid counterarguments. We do not intend to create the impression that the scholars under discussion are to be regarded as infallible or beyond critique. Nor do we wish to suggest that their work was solely dedicated to praising, glorifying, or unequivocally establishing Khorenatsi in the 5th century. To dispel both of these doubts, it is sufficient to refer to our article "Ghevond Alishan and Manuk Abeghian about the Mythical Period,"³¹ where we have demonstrated that Abeghian approaches Khorenatsi with even greater rigor than any foreign scholar. This, in turn, attests to the fact that his primary commitment lies in scientific integrity: Therefore, refuting the views of Abeghian, Acharian, and Malkhasian should also have been based solely on a rigorous scientific case, rather than simply disregarding them without discussion, references, evidence, or examples.

We have examined the grounds on which critics of Khorenatsi attempted to refute his status as a 5th-century author. We have demonstrated that, at times, these accusations are mere assertions, lacking both foundation and evidence—statements

³⁰ See «Հայոց անձնանունների բառարան»/Dictionary of Proper Names of Armenians (in Armenian), vol. 3, Yerevan, 1946.

³¹ Ղևոնդ Ալիշանն ու Մանուկ Աբեղեանը առասպելեալ շրջանի մասին ("Collection of scientific articles of Gavar State University", 2020, vol. 8, pp. 28–35).

presented in the form of declarations or revelations, which one is expected to accept unquestioningly, without verification. And what stands as their grand scholarly accomplishment? Two centuries of collective effort by two hundred scholars have culminated in an eight-point³² critique—one whose scientific merit crumbles under the slightest scrutiny. And it becomes evident that the problem lies not with Pseudo-Movses Khorenatsi, but with the pseudo-scholars. Before criticizing Khorenatsi, one must at least demonstrate a fundamental level of knowledge in Armenian studies—Classical Armenian (Grabar), Armenian literature, and history—just as, before venturing into the ocean, one must first be able to navigate a mere stream on land.

ՀԻՄՆԱԲԱՌԵՐ

Մովսէս Խորենացի, 5-րդ դար, Կիրիլ Թումանով, Ռօբերտ Թօմասոն, Ադոնց

РЕЗЮМЕ

В статье анализируются взгляды критиков историка V века Мовсе-са Хоренаци. Аргументированно показывается, что утверждения, ставящие под сомнение его принадлежность к V веку, необоснованны и убедительно опровергнуты.

³² We are confident that if there had been a serious argument to be made, Toumanoff would have unquestionably included it in his list.

