

THE MANUSCRIPTS OF LEVOND VIII CENTURY ARMENIAN HISTORIAN

*Ezean, Karapet: History of Levond, the great Vardapet of the Armenians.
Second Edition, St. Petersburg, 1887.*

Ezean has published his edition of Levond's History from one MS that he owned (A) collated with the first edition of G. V. Chahnazarean (1857). Chahnazarean, as Ezean makes clear, published his edition based on one MS (B) in the Ejmiacin Library at the time, which he had copied¹.

Unfortunately Ezean does not give any information about the MS that he owned and which he used for his edition, except that the colophon at the end² speaks of Hamazasp Mamikonean, who ordered the writing of the MS, and of Sarkis, the scribe. The information may agree with the *Matenadaran* (Erevan) MS 1902, a 13th century MS ordered by Hamazasp Halpatec'i and written by Sarkis, the scribe³. We also learn, on the other hand, that the six MSS that Ezean had donated to the *Matenadaran* do not include this particular MS 1902⁴.

I learn from Prof. Leon Xac'ikyan's recent letter⁵, dated March 31, 1972, that Ezean has published his critical edition based on three different texts:

- (a) his own; (b) Chahnazarean's edition of 1857;
- (c) 13th century MS 1902 of the *Matenadaran* (C).

If this is so then the most ancient and therefore the most reliable MS has been incorporated in Ezean's edition. The colophon of this MS gives us important details as follows: No date, most probably written between 1279-1311. Ter Hamazasp Mamikonean was then the Abbot of Hovhanna Vank'. In 1664 the MS was received by Hovhannes Karcavanec'i, and later in 1670 Vardan Balisec'i owned it and then donated the same to Ejmiacin in 1690. It is obvious that the manuscript was written by Sarkis for Hovhanna Vank' during 1279-1311. The place of writing remains unknown⁶.

Ezean very vaguely identifies his own MS of Levond by saying: "(Of which MS) some complete information are given in the Introduction of the History of Asolik on pages 33-38"⁷. I have checked Asolik's History which does contain the said information.

Again, Ezean mentions the fact that because his own MS lacked the first thirteen (13) chapters of Levond's history (that is up to page 43 in his edition), he had to ask Yusik Vardapet Movsesian of the monastery of Ejmiacin to copy the missing portion from another MS (D) which was kept in Ejmiacin⁸.

¹ Ezean, p. 80 (Introduction).

² *Ibid.*, p. 170.

³ The *Catalog*, I, p. 671.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁵ I am grateful to Prof. Xac'ikyan who upon my request has copied all the colophons from each of the seven MSS of Levond and has sent them to me.

⁶ Cf. Akinean, N. *Matenagrakan Hetazotut'iwnner*, vol. III, 1930, pp. 34 ff.

⁷ Ezean, p. 80 (Introduction).

⁸ *Ibid.*

Finally, Ezean tells us that his edition was critically edited by Step'an Malxasean with the different readings of "these manuscripts", which I take as Ezean's own MS, and the one that Y. Movsesian copied from for the 13 missing chapters, and with the "first published edition". Here we should add the evidence of Prof. Xac'ikyan who has stated that the 13th c. MS (1902) was also consulted by Ezean.

Thus we understand that the *apparatus criticus* done by Malxasean and edited by Ezean was based on one published and three MSS texts, as follows:

1. Ezean's own MS (A)
2. The MS then in Ejmiacin used by Chahnazarean for the latter's edition of 1857 (B)
3. The 13th century MS, presently in the *Matenadaran* (C)
4. The MS then in Ejmiacin wherefrom the first 13 chapters were copied by Y. Movsesian (D).

Note:

- (a) It may well be that MSS (B) and (D) are the same MS.
- (b) In the *Matenadaran Catalog*, II, p. 74, the list of the manuscripts received during 1910-1915 includes No. 4584 MS entitled *The History of the Armenians of Levond the Priest*. In the introduction of the same chapter is mentioned the name of archbishop Yusik Movsesian as the librarian (1913-1916) of the 911 MSS then kept in Ejmiacin. One may think that Movsesian had copied, albeit 30 years earlier, from this very manuscript the first 13 chapters, upon the request of Ezean.

The MSS of Levond's History in the Matenadaran, Erevan

Altogether eight (8) manuscripts are listed in the two-volume catalog of the Mesrop Mastoc' *Matenadaran* in Erevan, of which one (No. 4442) should be discounted since it is a copied collection of an already printed material. No such MS is found in the catalog of the MSS in Vienna⁹. The so far published catalogs of the Jerusalem Patriarchate do not contain any text of Levond. I have not heard from Jerusalem and from Venice for any additional information.

Chronologically these are the seven MSS kept in the *Matenadaran*.

1. XIII century, No. 1902. A collection containing the complete text of Levond. Four colophons. Scribe Sarkis.
2. 1668, No. 4584. A collection which contains the incomplete Levond. The first 13 chapters are missing. Scribe Abraham Erec'. Place Tigranakert.
3. 1669-1674, No. 3070. A collection which contains the complete text of Levond. One colophon same as the first colophon of MS No. 1902. Scribe Davit' Cncluk. Place Van.
4. 1675, No. 1889. A collection which contains the complete text of Levond. Scribe Markos, Hayrapet. Place Nor Julay.
5. 1683-1684, No. 5501. A collection which contains a "most incomplete" text of Levond. (See the appropriate colophon). Scribe Grigor K'ahanay. Place Bales.
6. XVIII century, No. 3783. A complete text of Levond. No details.
7. 1856, No. 3741. An incomplete text of Levond. First 12 chapters are missing. Scribe Oskan Erevanc'i. Place Moskva.

⁹ Tasean, H. *C'uc'ak Hayren Jeragrac'*, Vienna, 1895.

From the foregoing details we now know that beside the XIII century MS we have three other complete texts written between the latter part of 17th and sometime in the 18th centuries.

Akinean believes that Chahnazarean used No. 3070 (1669-1674) manuscript for his 1857 edition. This is based on the assumption that the said MS belonged to Karapet archbishop Bagratuni. The *Matenadaran* Catalog identifies the previous belonging of this MS, giving the name of the same owner.

Akinean further believes that Ezean's own manuscript of Levond was none other than the No. 4584 (dated 1668) MS. This particular MS lacks the first 13 chapters as admitted by Ezean himself regarding his manuscript.

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