

THE EPOCH OF MOVSES KHORENATSI

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SUMMARY

The monograph is devoted to the life and the epoch of the founder of the Armenian historiography Movses Khorenatsi and his "History of Armenia". In the course of the last 120 years a number of European and Armenian scholars (from Gutschmid and Khalatyants to Toumanoff and their followers), having considered several facts as anachronisms in Movses Khorenatsi's "History of Armenia", have removed him and his classical work in their research from the 5th c. to the 7th c. and even to the 9th c., depending on giving preference to one or another friet. The author of the monograph "The Epoch of Movses Khorenatsi" analyses in detail and rejects a number of denoted by them anachronisms of historic-geographic and ethnic character on the basis of die old and medieval Armenian literature, using new data from the Greek, Latin and Syrian sources, the Sassanian inscriptions of the 3rd century and early Pablavi literary monuments.

The author of the monograph has also focused his attention on the Biainian and Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions (the 8th -9th cc.) as well as Aramaic ancient texts (the 5th c. BC), which contain terms used later in Sassanian inscriptions. Thus, new interpretations of the Biainian, Aramaic and Sassanian terminology (which has been up to now inadequately interpreted) are put into scientific circulation.

One of the main conclusions of the research is that the ancient Iranian and Armenian royal traditions and court tides, their etymology and exact meaning can be revealed merely under the light of the historical tradition preserved in the "History of Armenia" of Movses Khorenatsi.

To think that Movses Khorenatsi is an author of the 7th-9th centuries means to remove him to a period and an environment which are much more incoherent to his Weltanschauung, geographical notions, political and religious perceptions, and unique language and style, than a number of more or less serious anachronisms, which are completely rejected in this book. The discussed facts once more demonstrate complete groundlessness of the biased theses and conclusions of G. Khalatyants, C. Toumanoff and others. Movses Khorenatsi is undoubtedly an author of the 5th century and his classical "History of Armenia" is a product of that exceptionally fateful period of the historical biography of the Armenian people.

And finally, if one follows unconditionally A. Carrière and G. Khalatyants, it will really seem to him untenable that a historian of the Bagratid court of the end of the ninth century or a monk of the eighth century tries to present "the traditional image of himself as a pupil

of Mashtots and Sahak”¹. According to Prof. Thomson, “more telling is the fact that no Armenian source before the tenth century refers to Movses among the pupils of Sahak and Mashtots, many of whom are mentioned by name”². But for the prince of the 5th century Sahak Artsruni, a contemporary of Movses Khorenatsi, he is not only the pupil of Mashtots and Sahak but, moreover, the Second Sahak and Mashtots who came to replace his teachers after their decease. Thus Movses Khorenatsi became equal to them and worthy to be blessed as a saint.

“We wish to rejoice some time over your light because you were given to us as the Second Mashtots and Sahak after they had passed to God. Owing to it, You the Saint, must be blessed!”³.

1 R. Thomson, Introduction, p. 8.

2 Ibid, p. 3.

3 Խորենացի, Մատենագրութիւնք, էջ 281: