

**THE ISSUES IN THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT AND EARLY MEDIEVAL  
ARMENIA IN FRENCH ARMENOLOGY OF THE 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY  
(Summary)**

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The book is dedicated to the analysis of the coverage of issues in the history of ancient and early medieval Armenia in French Armenology of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Special attention is paid to the evaluation of the Armenian historiographical heritage in the French Armenological studies by J. Saint-Martin, J. Oppert, M. Brosset, V. Langlois, E. Dulaurier and others. Many of them followed the traditions of Armenian studies carried out since the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the Mekhitarist Congregation in Venice.

The studies of the history of Armenia were realized by the French Armenologists along with the translation of Armenian sources [Movses Khorenatsi<sup>1</sup>, Koryun, Pavstos Buzand, Agathangelos, Ghazar (Lazar) Parpetsi<sup>2</sup>, Sebeos<sup>3</sup>, Thovma Artsrouni<sup>4</sup>, Oukhtanes<sup>5</sup>, Hovhannes Catholicos Draskhanakertsi<sup>6</sup>, Kirakos Gandzaketsi, Stepannos Orbelian<sup>7</sup> et al.] and their corresponding comments.

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<sup>1</sup> P. E. Le Vaillant de Florival, Moïse de Khorène, Histoire de l'Arménie, Venise, 1841. Mémoire sur l'époque de la composition de la Géographie attribuée à Moïse de Khoren (i)°è J. Saint-Martin, Mémoire historique et géographique sur l'Arménie, t. II, Paris, 1819, pp. 301-394). Géographie de Moïse de Corène d'après Ptolémée, texte Arménien, traduit en français par le P. Arsène Soukry Mékhitariste, Venise, 1881. The bibliography of the French Armenologists' works devoted to Movses Khorenatsi's «History of Armenia» see Հովհաննիսյան Պ., Մովսես Խորենացի. Մատենագիտություն, Երևան, 2013:

<sup>2</sup> Collection des historiens anciens et modernes de l'Arménie par V. Langlois, Première période-historiens Grecs et Syriens traduits anciennement en arménien, Paris, t. I, 1867; Collection des historiens anciens et modernes de l'Arménie par V. Langlois, Paris, t. II, 1869. The translation and research of the Armenian medieval sources was continued also later in France. (see. G. Garitte, Documents pour l'étude du livre d'Agathange, Roma, 1946; Histoire de l'Arménie par Moïse de Khorène, Nouvelle traduction de l'arménien classique par Annie et J.-Pierre Mahé, (d'après V. Langlois) avec une introduction et des notes, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Brosset M., Rapports sur un voyage archéologique dans la Géorgie et dans l'Arménie, St.-Petersbourg, 1849, Troisième rapport, pp. 49-57. Dulaurier E., Recherches sur la chronologie arménienne technique et historique, Paris, t. I, 1859, pp. 230-232. Histoire d'Héraclius par l'évêque Sébéos, traduite de l'arménien et annotée par Frédéric Macler, Paris, 1904.

<sup>4</sup> Collection d'historiens arméniens, Th. Ardzrouni, X<sup>e</sup> s., Histoire des Ardzrouni; Arakel, de Tauriz, XVII<sup>e</sup> s., Livre d'histoires; Johannès de Dzar, XVII<sup>e</sup>s., Histoire de l'Aghovanie; traduits par M. Brosset, t. I, St.-Petersbourg, 1874.

<sup>5</sup> Deux historiens arméniens: Kiracos de Gantzac, Histoire d'Arménie, Oukhtanès d'Ourha, Histoire en trois parties, traduits par M. Brosset, 1<sup>re</sup> Livraison, St.-Petersbourg, 1870.

<sup>6</sup> Histoire d'Arménie par le patriarche Jean V dit Jean Catholocos, traduite de l'arménien en français par J. Saint-Martin, ouvrage posthume, Paris, 1841.

<sup>7</sup> De la vie et des écrits d'Etienne Orpélian, archevêque de Siounie (see J. Saint-Martin, op. cit., t. II, pp. 1-300), Histoire de la Siounie par Stépannos Orbelian, traduite de l'arménien par M. Brosset, St.-Petersbourg, 1864.

Special attention is paid to the high assessment of the source value of Movses Khorenatsi's "History of Armenia"<sup>8</sup> in the works of the French Armenologists. Based on the point of view accepted in Armenian historiography, they fairly considered Movses Khorenatsi as the historian of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Not accepting «hypercriticism»<sup>9</sup> (which started since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly, in relation to Movses Khorenatsi's "History of Armenia"), V. Langlois explained it as a result of unfair disregard of the true state of the ideas of Khorenatsi's epoch and the facts of the sources about the ancient history of Armenia<sup>10</sup>. It is necessary to note that, as it has been noted<sup>11</sup>, there were also political motives behind the "hypercriticism".

While assessing the Armenian sources, V. Langlois noted that they stand out among the literary heritage of the peoples of Christian East. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the religious and philosophical approaches to the study of history largely owed to the use of a syncretic method<sup>12</sup>. The study of the ethno-spiritual foundations of Armenian history has been important for historical and philosophical comprehension, which played a certain role in the theoretical elaborations of the French Armenologists<sup>13</sup>. The Haikian/Haikazun (the descendants of Patriarch Haik) genealogy presented in Movses Khorenatsi's "History of Armenia" was considered by Saint-Martin and V. Langlois from the standpoint of religious ontology in historical context by the method of correlation of the biblical and Armenian traditional notions<sup>14</sup>.

Saint-Martin and M. Brosset studied the historical geography of Armenia (Great Armenia, Armenia Minor, Armenian Mesopotamia and Cilician Armenia). In the research of 15 provinces (regions) of Great Armenia, they paid attention to the historical and political description of Taik, Gugark, Artsakh and other provinces<sup>15</sup>. Saint-Martin restored some original Armenian toponyms on the basis of the Armenian sources. At the same time he pointed to deformations of toponyms by foreigners. He noted that currently there is almost no trace of the former names which had been rediscovered only in old Armenian

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<sup>8</sup> Մովսես Խորենացի, Պատմութիւն Հայոց, Երևան, 1991:

<sup>9</sup> Carrière A., Nouvelles sources de Moïse de Khoren, Vienne, 1893, pp. VI-VII); Խալաթյանց Գր., Մովսես Խորենացու նորագոյն աղբիւրների մասին, Հանդէս ամսօրեայ, Վիեննա, 1897, 10,11,12, էջ 359; Халатьянц Г., Армянские Аршакиды в «Истории Армении» Моисея Хоренского, Москва, 1903, с. 359), cf. Moses Khorenats'i. History of the Armenians, transl. and comment. on the literary sources by R. W. Thomson, Ann Arbor, 2006, pp. 59-60.

<sup>10</sup> Langlois V., Etude sur les sources de l'Histoire d'Arménie de Moïse de Khoren, tiré du Bulletin, t. III, Paris, 1861, pp. 305-306.

<sup>11</sup> Մալխասյանց Ստ., Խորենացու անդժվածի շուրջը, Երևան, 1940, էջ 113; Мовсес Хоренаци, История Армении. Перев. с древнеармянского яз., введение и прим. Г. Саркисяна, Ереван, 1990, с. XXIII-XXXVI; Մուշեղյան Ա., Մովսես Խորենացու դարը, Երևան, 2007, էջ 28:

<sup>12</sup> Langlois V., Etude sur les sources..., p. 310.

<sup>13</sup> La Croze M., Abrégé de l'Histoire universelle, Breme, 1765, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Langlois V., op. cit., J. Saint-Martin, Mémoire historique et géographique sur l'Arménie, t. I, Paris, 1818, p. 258.

<sup>15</sup> Saint-Martin J., op. cit., t. I, p. 17-278.

books, consequently there were Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Georgian names everywhere which consigned to oblivion what was here used in the past<sup>16</sup>.

The ancient Armenian province Taik is mentioned in Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions under the name of *Daiaeni*<sup>17</sup> among the *Nairi lands*, i.e. the regions of *Nairi* (in Armenia). *Diau(e)he* of the Biainian cuneiform inscriptions corresponds to *Daiaeni*. It is denoted that an interpretation of the Biainian cuneiforms' masculin person determinative *m*, as the determinative indicating *ethnos*<sup>18</sup>, has not been substantiated, because it is not a determinative indicating ethnic names. <sup>m</sup>Diau(e)he is deciphered as "Diau(e)he"-ian [suffix -he(-hi-) is not the ethnonym-forming, but a suffix indicating appurtenance, forming adjectives]<sup>19</sup>. Similarly *Swjtgħp* (*Taikians*) mentioned in Armenian sources (cf. *Ταόχοι* of Greek sources) is a toponymical form of the name indicating the Armenian population of Taik.

Some unfounded interpretations in relation to *Daiaeni*, *Diau(e)he* and *Ταόχοι* distort the ethno-geographic and political history of Armenia's northern part; consequently Taik, as well as Kgharjk - a gavar of the Great Armenia's province Gugark, being wrongly presented as "south-western regions of historic Georgia" (Iberia), particularly, in contemporary Georgian historiography<sup>20</sup>. But, according to ancient Greek and early medieval Armenian sources, Iberia (*Virk*) was situated to the north of Armenia: the north-eastern portion of the border of Great Armenia ran along the Kur River<sup>21</sup>. According to M. Brosset, the origin of the name «Somekhi» given to Armenians by Georgians, is connected with the Georgian word «samkhreti» (სამხრეთი), which means «south»<sup>22</sup>. Thus, the forms of the name *Somkhitil Somkhet* relate to the territory (starting from the north-eastern *gavars* of the Great Armenia's province of Gugark situated to the south of Iberia)<sup>23</sup> of entire Armenia<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>17</sup> King L. W., *The Annals of the Kings of Assyria*, London, 1902, vol. I, col. IV, 82-83, 96-97, p. 67- 68; col. V, 9, 22, 29, p. 69-71. Luckenbill D. D., *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, Chicago, vol. I, 1926, p. 81, 82.

<sup>18</sup> Меликишвили Г.А., К вопросу о древнейшем очаге урартских племен, *Вестник древней истории*, 4 (22), Москва, 1947, с. 26, прим. 2. Меликишвили Г., *Урартские клинообразные надписи*, Москва, 1960, с. 51-52.

<sup>19</sup> Դումիկյան Ա., *Տայքը (Դայաննի/Դիաուլիսի) սեպագիր և հին հունական ու հայկական վաղ միջնադարյան սկզբնաղբյուրներում*, Հայոց պատմության հարցեր, 2011, 12, էջ 3-21:

<sup>20</sup> Меликишвили Г., К истории древней Грузии, с. 176. Атлас Грузинской ССР, Москва, 1964, с. 245-250; Лордкипанидзе О., Наследие древней Грузии, Тбилиси, 1989, с. 32; Бахтадзе М. А., Вачнадзе М., Гурули В., *История Грузии (с древнейших времен до наших дней)*, 2000 ([http://krotov.info/lib\\_sec/04\\_g/ruz/ia\\_kr2.htm](http://krotov.info/lib_sec/04_g/ruz/ia_kr2.htm)) etc.

<sup>21</sup> *The Geography of Strabo*, with an English translation by Horace Leonard Jones, vol. V, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 1954, XI 1.5-6, 2. 19-3.2, 14.2-4, *Claudii Ptolemaei Geographia*, E codicibus recognovit, prolegomenis, annotatione, indicibus, tabulis instruxit Carolus Mullerus, voluminis primi, pars secunda, Parisiis, 1901, V. 10.1; 11.3; 12.1.

<sup>22</sup> *Histoire de la Géorgie depuis l'antiquité jusqu'au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles traduite du géorgien par M. Brosset*, I<sup>re</sup> partie, St.-Petersbourg, 1849, p. 15, com. 5.

<sup>23</sup> Դումիկյան Ա., Հայաստանին վրացիների կողմից տրված «Սոմխիթ» անվանման հարցի շուրջ և XIX դ. ֆրանցիացի հայագետների մոտեցումները, Հայոց պատմության հարցեր, 2012, 13, էջ 18-32:

Certain comments on the cuneiform inscriptions of the Van Kingdom in the context of the ancient history of Armenia are of special interest in the works of French Armenologists and other European specialists. They called the language of the inscriptions Vanique (Vannic) or Armeniaque (Armenian)<sup>25</sup>. The most valuable is Brosset's contribution, who on the one hand used the researches on Egyptian hieroglyphic, Assyrian and Babylonian cuneiform texts, and on the other hand, studied Armenian medieval sources containing also ancient data<sup>26</sup>.

The significance of Movses Khorenatsi's work in discovery of the Van cuneiform inscriptions is determined by their place in the historical cultural heritage of Armenia. The comments on the country name *Armenia* and the ethnic name *Armenian*, on the basis of the decipherment of the Assyrian and Van cuneiforms are an important contribution by the European and particularly French Armenologists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the studies of the history of the Van (Araratian) Kingdom (Urartu) as an integral part of the Armenian statehood's history<sup>27</sup>.

The conceptual assessment of Armenian civilizational values in the works of French Armenologists is characterized by their ontological approaches to the history of ancient and early medieval Armenia: the biblical perception of Armenia as the Ararat land<sup>28</sup>, early Christian developments beginning with the Apostolic preaching and founding of the Armenian Apostolic Church (I century AD) and consequently declaration of Christianity as the state religion in 301 AD<sup>29</sup>, pre-Mashtotsian Armenian letters and invention of the Armenian alphabet by St. Mesrop Mashtots (405 AD) which resulted in creation of translated<sup>30</sup> (into Armenian) and original Armenian literature<sup>31</sup>.

In the 13<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries European and, among them, French explorers, travelers

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<sup>24</sup> Փալստոսի Բիւզանդացոյ Պատմութիւն Հայոց, էջ 216: Երեմյան Ս., Հայաստանը ըստ «Աշխարհացոյց»-ի, Երևան, 1963, էջ 104-105:

<sup>25</sup> Oppert J., Expédition scientifique en Mésopotamie, Paris, 1863, liv. I, ch. V, pp. 69-70; Lenormant Fr., Manuel de l'histoire ancienne de l'Orient, 1869, t. II, pp. 155-156.

<sup>26</sup> Brosset M., Sur l'histoire ancienne de l'Arménie, d'après les textes hiéroglyphiques et cunéiformes, Bulletin de l'Académie Impériale des sciences de St-Petersbourg, 1871, t. seizième, p. 332-340.

<sup>27</sup> Oppert J., Expédition scientifique en Mésopotamie, Paris, 1863, liv. I, ch. I, com. 2, p. 18 ; Layard A. H., Discoveries in the ruins of Ninveh and Babylon, London, 1853, p. 403. Tournebize Fr., Histoire politique et religieuse de l'Arménie, Paris, 1, p. 17. Cavaignac E., Histoire générale de l'antiquité, Paris, 1946, p. 155.

<sup>28</sup> Saint-Martin J., op. cit., t. I, p. 261.

<sup>29</sup> Histoire de la Siounie par Stépannos Orbelian, traduite de l'arménien par M. Brosset, St.-Petersbourg, 1864, pp. 89-94.

<sup>30</sup> Evaluation de la littérature de traduction arménienne de l'Age d'or par les arménistes français dans le contexte des relations interculturelles, Université Libre Internationale de Moldova, Institut de recherches philologiques et interculturelles - Francophonie: L'interculturalité à travers la linguistique et la littérature, Numéro 7, vol. 1, 2012, pp. 213-219.

<sup>31</sup> Langlois V., Mémoire sur les origines..., pp. 200-206.

and missionaries during their voyages to the eastern lands<sup>32</sup>, visited Armenia paying attention to ethnographic, economic and historical cultural - civilizational values, especially the sacred Mt. Ararat-Masis<sup>33</sup>. Their memoirs, including information about Armenia and Armenians' participation in international trade along the Silk Road and further in Europe (particularly in France), are of special interest in the study of the history of economic and cultural relations of Armenia<sup>34</sup>.

The elucidation of the issues in the ancient and medieval history and historical geography, as well as the spiritual and civilizational values of Armenia on the basis of historical sources was at the centre of the 19<sup>th</sup> century French Armenological studies. French Armenologists made an important contribution to the Armenian historiography.

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<sup>32</sup> Deux voyages en Asie au XIII<sup>e</sup> s., Guillaume de Rubruquis (envoyé de Saint Louis) et Marco Polo (marchand vénitien), Paris, 1888. See also The Etchmiadzin chronicles, recorded by missionaries and merchants diplomats and scholars, compiled by Archbishop Mesrop Ashjian, 2003.

<sup>33</sup> De Rubrouck G., Ambassadeur de Saint Louis en Orient, récit de son voyage, traduit de l'original latin et annoté par Louis de Backer, Paris, 1877, p. 281.

<sup>34</sup> Դումիկյան Ա., Մետաքսի ճանապարհի առևտրում հայերի գործունեության արժևորումը XIII-XIX դդ. ֆրանսիացի ճանապարհորդների հուշագրություններում, Հայաստանի քաղաքակրթական ավանդը մետաքսի ճանապարհի պատմության մեջ, 2012, էջ 167-174: