

THOMAS ARTSRUNI

History of the
House of the Artsrunik'

Translation and Commentary by

Robert W. Thomson

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TO *Jasper* AND *Crispin*

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Preface

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HISTORICAL WRITING forms one of the most original genres of early and medieval Armenian literature. Although many histories have perished through the ravages of war and rapine, earthquake and fire, few of those that do survive have been entirely neglected by modern scholars. But these works are often perused more for their information about other peoples with whom the Armenians came in contact than for an understanding of the histories in their own Armenian context. Thus the *History of the House of the Artsrunik'* by Thomas (T'ovmay) Artsruni has probably been studied most frequently in recent times by historians of the Muslim world. For it provides important evidence for the penetration of Arabs into southern Armenia in the ninth century. Art historians have also been drawn to this work, which contains many descriptions of the building of churches and castles in the area south and east of Lake Van, the homeland of the Artsrunik'.

However, Thomas does not seem to have attracted much attention as a writer. The amount of secondary literature devoted to his style or to his sources and his use of them is quite remarkably meagre. Yet he was thoroughly conversant with the great works of Moses Khorenats'i and Elishē, from whom he learned his attitude to historical writing; he used a wide range of historical and literary sources, both Armenian and foreign; he integrated many of the popular "apocryphal" tales into Armenian history; and he is the first to bear witness to local legends and traditions dealing with Vaspurakan. The most interesting aspect of his *History* is the way he conveys the spirit of the Armenian nobility of his time. More than any other writer (except perhaps the much earlier P'awstos Buzand, who described the clash of

PREFACE

Christian and traditional values in the fourth century), he depicts the basic outlook of the Artsrunik' and other families. Not their attitudes to grand issues such as interested Moses Khorenats'i and Elishē, but their more immediate concerns of a mundane sort: power, and the ways (fair or foul) to attain it.

This study of Thomas Artsruni's *History* is not a contribution to the political history of ninth-century Armenia. For that the interested reader will turn to the revised edition of Laurent's *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam* by Marius Canard, and to Ter-Ghevondyan's *Arab Emirates in Bagratid Armenia* recently translated by Nina Garsoian. My interest is in Thomas as a writer. For the first part of his work, where he recapitulates Armenian history from the time of Noah down to the rise of Islam, my prime concern in the commentary is to identify his sources and to indicate Thomas's divergences from prior accounts. For the longer part of the book, which covers the half century from Bugha's invasion of Armenia in 851 to the death of Prince Ashot Artsruni in 903, I am also concerned with parallels (especially in the *History* of John Catholicos). But of particular interest here is the way in which Thomas has adapted a wide range of sources in order to enliven his narrative. The deliberate echoes of Elishē, for example, are quite remarkable. It is to this literary aspect of Thomas's *History* that I devote most attention.

The first edition of Thomas was printed in Ortaköy (a suburb of Constantinople) in 1852, based on the sole surviving manuscript. In 1874 M. F. Brosset translated that Armenian text into French and added extensive notes—primarily dealing with dates and the identification of historical persons. In 1887 Patkanean published a more careful edition of the Armenian with some suggested emendations. (That edition was reprinted without changes in Tiflis in 1917.) A modern Armenian translation by V. Vardanyan appeared in 1978. This last takes into account the readings of some fragments in the Matenadaran, one of which (dated to 1172) predates the surviving manuscript of 1303. Vardanyan's notes are helpful in the identification of obscure sites not mentioned in other historians.

It is no reflection on Brosset's pioneering translation (reprinted in 1979) to suggest that a new rendering from Patkanean's edition may be worthwhile. There were some references that Brosset did not understand, and the Armenian text he used was often faulty. So I hope that this English translation will be of value to those who cannot read classical Armenian, even

though some passages remain obscure. But my main purpose—as with previous translations of early Armenian writers—is to use the English rendering as a vehicle for the notes. My aim is not to write the history of Armenia from a twentieth century point of view but to try to bring out the attitudes of Armenian historians to the problems of their own time.

Thomas's work did not attain the classic status of Agathangelos, Moses Khorenats'i, or Elishē; some of the reasons for this are discussed in the following Introduction. But Thomas did capture the ethos of Armenian life around the year 900. His *History* reflects the dynastic rivalries of the noble families: Envy, intrigue, and murder are matched by generosity or valour. Devotion to the Christian faith, even unto martyrdom, contrasts with self-seeking apostasy to Islam. Courage on the battlefield is relieved by the delights of hunting and feasting. The splendour of wealth enables princes to build churches and castles. The respect and dignity demanded by high rank reflect the love of worldly success, which is only tempered by fear of death and retribution in the world to come. Such were the driving forces of social life in Thomas's day, which he so vividly describes.

But Thomas is not only involved in secular affairs. He has a sincere interest in spiritual matters, and devotes many pages to theological questions. His famous descriptions of churches are inspired by a love of relics and holy objects. And if his accounts of heroic martyrdoms are replete with hagiographical commonplaces, it is hardly surprising that he follows patterns set in Armenian long before his time. Thomas should be read as a spokesman for the interests of a powerful Armenian noble family of the early tenth century. His *History* is graphic testimony to a way of life that would endure for little more than another century before Byzantine encroachments and Turkish invasions finally ended Armenian independence in Vaspurakan.

Transcription of Armenian

MY PURPOSE in this book is to render Armenian words in a form which will not disorient the casual reader. So the system used in the *Revue des études arméniennes*, for example, is not appropriate, since those unfamiliar with linguistic conventions would not recognize /kh/ in *x*, or /dz/ in *j*.

a	b	g	d	e	z	ē	ě	t'	zh
ʷ	բ	Գ	Դ	Ե	Զ	Է	Ը	Թ	Ճ
i	l	kh	ts	k	h	dz	ł	ch	
Ի	Լ	Խ	Ճ	Կ	Կ	Ճ	Դ	Ճ	
m	y	n	sh	o	ch'	p	j	ı	s
Մ	Ե	Ն	Շ	Օ	Չ	Ս	Յ	Ր	Տ
v	t	r	ts'	w	p'	k'	u	ō	
Վ	Տ	Ր	Շ	Վ	Փ	Կ	Ս	Օ	

Note to the Reader

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THE PAGE NUMBERS of the Armenian text of Patkanean's edition have been marked in the English translation. The notes are numbered to those page numbers, not to the page numbers of the present book.

The transliteration of proper names has posed various problems since the surviving text of Thomas is inconsistent in its spelling. In general I have rendered standard Armenian forms. In the case of Derenik, the anonymous continuator prefers the form Deranik; this I have kept in the translation but not in the notes. For Arabic names I have adhered to the Armenian rendering, but in the notes these names are transcribed in a form closer to standard English usage. Thus Yovsēp' is the usual form for an Armenian of that name, but Yusup' renders the Arabic Yusuf.

Like many Armenian writers Thomas often has long passages where the actors are not identified save by pronouns ("he," "they," etc.). I have been quite liberal in identifying persons by adding names in square brackets. Although this does on occasion spoil the look of the page, it does show the reader how ambiguous the original Armenian can be.

Abbreviations

<i>AB</i>	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
<i>BHO</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis</i> , ed. P. Peeters, <i>Subsidia Hagiographica</i> 10, Brussels, 1910; reprinted 1954
<i>CSCO</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium</i>
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
<i>EI</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Islam</i>
<i>GCS</i>	<i>Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte</i>
<i>HA</i>	<i>Handes Amsorya</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>NBHL</i>	<i>Nor Bārgirk' Haykazean Lezui</i> , ed. G. Awetik'ean, Kh. Siwrmēlean, M. Awgerean, 2 vols., Venice 1836, 1837
<i>OC</i>	<i>Oriens Christianus</i>
<i>PBH</i>	<i>Patmabanasirakan Handes</i>
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne
<i>PO</i>	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i> , ed. R. Graffin and F. Nau
<i>REA</i>	<i>Revue des études arméniennes</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studi e testi</i>
<i>TU</i>	<i>Texte und Untersuchungen</i>
<i>VV</i>	<i>Vizantiiskii Vremmenik</i>
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>

Introduction

THE *History of the House of the Artsrunik'* by Thomas (T'ovmay) Artsruni has survived in a single manuscript, which was written on the island of Alt'amar in Lake Van in A.D. 1303.¹ Although the exact date of composition of this *History* is not known, Thomas ends his account soon after 904. This means that a gap of four centuries separates original and copy. By Armenian standards that is not a long time. The biography of Mashtots' (inventor of the Armenian script) by his pupil Koriun, for example, was written in the fifth century; yet the oldest surviving whole text was copied in the seventeenth century.² And many early historical texts are known from manuscripts copied a good thousand years after the originals were composed. Nor is it unusual for a work to be known from only one manuscript. Eznik's treatise on God and the problem of evil, written in the fifth century, is known only from a unique manuscript copied in 1280.³ Indeed, given the devastating ravages of war and earthquake in Armenia, it is surprising that more texts have not disappeared entirely—like the lost *History* by Shapuh Bagratuni.

The popularity and influence of a text in Armenian cannot be judged solely by the number of surviving manuscripts. Few lives can have been better known than that of Mashtots' by Koriun; on the other hand, the work of Eznik, who was Koriun's con-

1. The manuscript is now in the Matenadaran, Erevan, Armenian SSR, but is not listed in the catalog of that institution's holdings, *Ts'uts'ak Dzeragrats' Masht'ots'i Anvan Matenadaran*, ed. O. Eganyan, A. Zeyt'unyan, P. Ant'abyan, 2 vols., Erevan 1965, 1970. There is a brief description in the Preface to Patkanean's edition of the Armenian text (St. Petersburg 1887), and the colophon is reproduced in Khach'ikyan, *XIV Dari*.

2. Matenadaran 2639 (A.D. 1672).

3. Matenadaran 1097.

temporary, was very rarely quoted in later times. In the case of Thomas there are several extracts in manuscripts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and one fragment dated to 1172.⁴ But it is remarkable how rarely he is quoted by name. Although Armenian writers are notorious for not identifying their sources, it was quite common for a historian to mention his predecessors at the beginning of his own work. Łazar P'arpets'i began the tradition (around A.D. 500).⁵ Asolik, i.e. Step'anos of Tarōn, writing just after A.D. 1000, was the first to list all earlier Armenian historians in chronological order.⁶ After his time it became standard practice. Yet no historian refers to Thomas Artsruni until Kirakos Gandzakets'i. Writing between 1265 and 1270, he lists Thomas after Łevond (who wrote at the end of the eighth century) and before Shapuh Bagratuni and John Catholicos.⁷ John wrote in the 920s, while the lost work of Shapuh was composed at the end of the ninth century. Kirakos refers to the contents of Thomas's *History* as follows: "the various evils which befell our land (from the Muslims in the ninth century), which you will find in the books of Thomas, of Shapuh and of other historians."⁸

Surprisingly, the later Mkhitar of Ayrvank' (modern Getard), whose *Chronicle* goes down to 1328, lists "T'ovma, vardapet" before Moses Khorenats'i.⁹ This implies that he was familiar only with Book I. But Kirakos clearly placed Thomas around the year 900, which is perfectly correct.

However, the surviving manuscript contains later additions (which have been included in the printed editions). The last few pages of Thomas's own *History* are lost.¹⁰ An anonymous author continued the story, first repeating in a different form some

4. Fragments of Thomas's *History* are found in:

Matenadaran 1404 (A.D. 1664)

Matenadaran 1882 (A.D. 1619)

Matenadaran 1889 (A.D. 1675)

Matenadaran 1890 (A.D. 1172)

Matenadaran 2559 (16th cent.)

5. Łazar, §1, refers to Agathangelos as "the first written history of Armenia," and to P'awstos Buzand as "the second written history."

6. Asolik, pp. 6-7.

7. Kirakos, p. 7.

8. Kirakos, p. 79.

9. Mkhitar, p. 261.

10. Thomas's *History* breaks off at the end of p. 261. (All references are to the pages of Patkanean's edition.)

earlier episodes; his prime concern was to write a rhetorical panegyric of King Gagik. It is this section which contains the famous descriptions of Gagik's palace and church on Alt'amar. This part too is incomplete; it breaks off before Gagik's death.¹¹ Another anonymous author has added local information down to the twelfth century when the manuscript was "renovated."¹² A further addition was made in 1303 by the scribe Daniel, writing in the monastery of the Holy Cross on Alt'amar.¹³ A long colophon was added to the manuscript in 1326.¹⁴

After Mkhitar's reference the *History* of Thomas is not cited by Armenian historians or by the chroniclers until the eighteenth century. The first great modern Armenian historian, the Mekhitarist Fr. Michael Ch'amch'ean, puts Thomas after Łazar and before John Mamikonean. Giving a brief description of his various sources, he says of "T'ovma vardapet Artsruni" that he was one of the pupils of Saint Elishē at the turn of the fifth century, and that he provides information about Saints Vardan (Mamikonean) and Vahan Artsruni and about the deeds of the Nestorian Barsauma down to about A.D. 500.¹⁵ Ch'amch'ean published the first volume of his *History* in 1784, and was clearly using a text of Thomas that ended after Book II, chapter 2. Yet in 1795 Khach'atur of Nor Julfa, writing in the journal *Azdarar* (Madras), presented a series of articles on Armenian history excerpted from various sources. He refers to Thomas Artsruni describing King Senek'erim going to Byzantine territory in 1021.¹⁶ This is not in Thomas's *History* but in the section by the anonymous continuator who brought the narrative down to the twelfth century.¹⁷

So although Thomas's work had not entirely fallen into oblivion—witness some fragments mentioned above¹⁸—it was little known. And truncated versions could be mistaken for the whole text, as demonstrated by Fr. Ch'amch'ean's ignorance of the major section dealing with the ninth century. Only in 1852 was a

11. Thomas, pp. 262–305.

12. Pp. 305–318.

13. Pp. 318–320.

14. Pp. 321–326.

15. Ch'amch'ean, *Patmut'iwn*, I p. 14.

16. *Azdarar* 1795, p. 120.

17. Thomas, p. 308.

18. See note 4 above.

text published; even then some sections critical of Islam were omitted. The full text appeared in 1887.¹⁹

All sources, including the anonymous continuator,²⁰ refer to the author of the *History of the House of the Artsrunik* as Thomas (T'ovmay). However, he only mentions himself once by name: "I Thomas . . . zealously undertook this great work, though devoid of wisdom, sense, and intelligence."²¹ Thomas frequently indulges in such self-deprecation, though Kirakos calls him a *vardapet*—that is, a celibate cleric who had attained a high level of scholarship.²² Since the group primarily responsible for serious writing in early and medieval Armenia was the better-educated clergy, such a title is to be expected. Lay scholars were rare; and Thomas's interest in theological matters would naturally lead to the assumption that he was a *vardapet*, even if he does not say so himself.

Thomas gives no details whatsoever of his own life, but he does refer on occasion to events he witnessed or about which he was informed by living persons. "I myself with my own eyes saw that man who struck him," he says, referring to the death of the emir Yusuf in 852.²³ In the same year Apusahak was martyred. Thomas describes this in some detail, adding: "This was told us by the great priest Samuēl . . . [who] had heard it from a certain Persian . . . who had been among the executioners. . . . The inhabitants of the province of R̄shtunik' also know this, for many of them are still alive."²⁴ And referring to Bugha's campaign of 853, Thomas adds: "Not without witnesses is our account . . . as indeed they well know who in these times survive and were then present there."²⁵ More vaguely Thomas refers to a pact between Prince Ashot Artsruni and Gurgēn, then lord of Andzevats'ik', made before 874, which had lasted "up to the present day."²⁶ The last event described by Thomas that he witnessed personally was the death of Ashot (grandson of the

19. The first edition was published at Ortaköy, a suburb of Constantinople. From this edition Brosset made his French translation, published in 1874. The edition of the Armenian by Patkanean (St. Petersburg 1887) is based on a re-reading of the original manuscript. His edition, without the notes and suggested emendations, was reprinted at Tiflis in 1917 as no. 15 of the *Łukasean Matenadaran*.

20. Thomas, pp. 317, 318.

21. P. 76.

22. For the title *vardapet* see Thomson, "*Vardapet*."

23. Thomas, p. 120.

24. P. 130.

25. P. 168.

26. P. 213.

Ashot just mentioned) in 904: “I indeed was beside him and knew precisely his firmness in the hope of salvation.”²⁷ (But the previous page describes Ashot’s terror at the thought of death and fear that his wicked deeds would not be forgiven!) If witnesses from the early 850s were still alive, Thomas could not have written his *History* much after 905.

The first continuator, who penned the praises of King Gagik, also was (or claimed to be) a contemporary of the events he described. When Gagik’s father had been killed, his widowed mother touched the young Gagik, her second son, on the shoulder as she mourned and prophesied that one of her sons would avenge the spilt blood. “We were informed by those who had witnessed the events and who carried the children in their bosoms.”²⁸ Referring to the death of Gurgēn, Gagik’s younger brother (which occurred after 924?), he notes that Gagik offered masses and prayers “according to my knowledge.”²⁹ And describing Gagik’s wise government and patronage of building, he says: “I offer and present to you not from reports of others as fables elaborated from fictitious accounts; but having seen with my eyes, heard with my ears, and touched with my hands, I recount for you faithfully the marvels which took place.” (Just as John describes his experience of Christ, so does the panegyrist refer to the incomparable Gagik.)³⁰

Thomas the *vardapet* is an unknown figure, but the patrons of his *History* are well-known members of the Artsruni clan. In his Introduction Thomas sets out in careful detail his objectives in writing this work, and explains that it was composed at the command of “you, Grigor, lord [*tēr*] of the Artsrunik’ and prince [*ishkhan*] of Vaspurakan.”³¹ This was Grigor Derenik, born in 847, who became prince of Vaspurakan on the death of his father Ashot in 874, and was killed in 887.³² But elsewhere Thomas refers to his patron as Gagik, the second son of Grigor Derenik: “At your command, Oh Gagik general of Armenia and prince [*ishkhan*] of Vaspurakan, [we] have undertaken an abbreviation of the stories of the past.”³³ And later: “To the best of our ability

27. P. 250.

28. P. 267.

29. P. 288.

30. P. 291; cf. I John 1.1.

31. P. 3.

32. There is a convenient genealogical table of the Artsruni princes in Canard/Laurent, facing p. 466.

33. Thomas, p. 45.

we have composed this abbreviated narrative which we have presented to you, most valiant of literary men, Gagik of Vaspu-rakan and great general of Armenia.”³⁴ If the text has survived intact, the conclusion must be that Thomas had begun his work in the time of Gagik’s father, probably shortly before his death, but that he did not complete the major portion of it until more than fifteen years later. But there is no indication in the *History* itself that Thomas took many years to write it, so the sole refer-ence to Grigor may be a scribal error for Gagik.

The anonymous continuator addresses his patron as: “My dear friend and foremost of brave men, who requested from me this *History*.”³⁵ Or: “We have offered this suitable and conve-nient account, as far as we could, in order to fulfil your noble interests, Oh great benefactor and ancestor of a heroic and dis-tinguished house.”³⁶ The patron is not explicitly named, but the implication is that it was Gagik. It is worth noting that “benefac-tor” (*argasawor*) is used by Moses Khorenats’i of his patron’s family, that of Sahak Bagratuni.³⁷ To Thomas’s debt to Moses we shall return later.

Thomas, therefore, has not described the date or specific oc-casion when he undertook his *History*; and since the ending is missing, we do not know when he finished it. From the refer-ences to surviving witnesses noted above, one must assume that Thomas wrote before Gagik was raised to royal status in 908. Although he refers to the historian John, Catholicos 898–924, as “blessed” (*eraneli*)—a term more appropriate to deceased per-sons—the epithet may be a scribal interpolation.³⁸ There is no indication that Thomas was writing twenty years after the events he describes, when the witnesses to Bugha’s campaigns would have been in their eighties.

If the precise occasion of the commission of the *History of the House of the Artsrunik* is unclear, its general purpose is spelled out in no uncertain terms. “In the narrative of this book I shall indicate the genealogy and nature of your [his patron’s] ances-tors . . . records relative to events . . . [concerning the] lords of the Artsruni family, so that their valour and virtue may be clearly revealed by name, place, and time . . . who they

34. P. 76.

35. Pp. 290–291.

36. P. 296.

37. Moses Khorenats’i, I 1.

38. Thomas, p. 243.

were . . . what sort they were, the manner of their reigns.”³⁹ This is a patriotic history of the Artsruni house with the emphasis on genealogy and on the description of great deeds, especially wars and victories.⁴⁰ However, Thomas will not neglect those who were victorious in the spiritual arena as well as those who triumphed on the battlefield: “In this history I shall expound for you, most valiant of literary men, those who for Christ’s sake fought the good fight and in victory rose from earth to heaven. By their prayers may the Lord enable me to write a straightforward and true account in this book, led by the Holy Spirit with the counsel of Christ, for your pleasure and that of your like.”⁴¹

It was certainly not new in Armenian historiography that a work would be written for a specific patron, and that it would glorify his ancestors. Łazar’s *History* was dedicated to Vahan Mamikonean, and Moses Khorenats’i dedicated his to Sahak Bagratuni. But Thomas was the first explicitly to *limit* his *History* to a specific family. His object was to provide the Artsrunik’ with a pedigree and glorious ancestry second to none. Just as Moses had explained the splendid antiquity of the Bagratids—which justified their new pre-eminence at the time he was writing⁴²—so Thomas provides the suitable background for the recent prominence to which Gagik had brought the Artsrunik’. They were no upstarts, but an ancient stock of impeccable antiquity. Unfortunately, their glory had not been recognized by all, and some of their noble deeds had been forgotten. Thomas will set the record straight. Not surprisingly, his version is not entirely in accord with that of earlier writers.

In addition to explaining the basic purpose of his work—to extoll the merits of the ancestors of the Artsrunik’ and the deeds of their worthy successors, his patrons—Thomas also puts for-

39. Pp. 3–4.

40. The emphasis on genealogy is brought out by the reference on p. 185 to “a certain Mukat’l of the nobility of Vanand” (unknown from other sources), who was travelling in Northeastern Armenia “to inform himself according to custom of each person’s station and eminence of rank, whether this was due to birth or place or province or family or valour or chance. It is usual in books to indicate both the event and the place involved, either to make them known or to render them famous.”

41. P. 4.

42. The date of composition of Moses’ *History* is one of the most controversial issues in the study of classical Armenian literature. See Thomson, Introduction to *Moses Khorenats’i*, with references to earlier literature. There a date in the eighth century is suggested; but such theories are not acceptable in the Armenian SSR, where a fifth century date is upheld.

ward explicit views on how history should be written. For the historian does not collect facts in a random fashion: only important and appropriate events are to be set down.⁴³ Thomas's prime concern at the beginning of his book is with genealogy, the lineage of the men who ruled over "our land"—that is, Vaspurakan and not Armenia as a whole.⁴⁴ Yet he does not "attempt to consider writing about those of whom no actions or valiant deeds are known"; in that case a mere listing of names is required "following the format of the other earlier historians."⁴⁵ He is here referring to Moses Khorenats'i, who was the first Armenian to integrate Armenian legends and traditions with biblical history and the empires of the past as known from Eusebius's *Chronicle*.

The topics treated by a historian are thus those relevant to the prestige of the great noble families. Then the method of setting them down also has to be considered. They must be recorded in proper "style"—*och*—which implies systematically, in a suitable arrangement.⁴⁶ "I shall carry my account forward in order."⁴⁷ And that order is a chronological one.⁴⁸ "Let us carry forward the order of our history, in detail yet briefly, for it is not the occasion for us to linger with praises and [thereby] neglect the thread of our historical narrative."⁴⁹ In other words, the writing of history is the progressive unravelling of the important events of the past, which follow a connected, chronological pattern leading to the present. Extraneous digressions only confuse this pattern. "I have decided to put myself beyond reproach for not setting down methodically and in order my description."⁵⁰

Since the material to be treated is so vast, the historian has to abbreviate and be succinct.⁵¹ "We have composed this abbreviated narrative."⁵² I shall "set it out in order, briefly and in short. I shall summarize . . . [and] abbreviate."⁵³ "We shall carry forward in abbreviated fashion our historical task. But do not

43. Thomas, p. 3.

44. P. 20.

45. P. 40.

46. Pp. 5, 45.

47. P. 124.

48. P. 44.

49. P. 47.

50. P. 198.

51. P. 45.

52. P. 76.

53. P. 153.

blame me, Oh lover of learning, for not including in this history all his [Gurgēn's] deeds in detail. . . . we have abbreviated them into a few words, as Paul was pleased to write in the Epistle to the Hebrews: 'Time does not suffice for describing the judges of Israel and the holy prophets.'"⁵⁴ "Let us halt this discussion and hasten on, lest by stretching out this refutation we fall behind in the composition that lies before us."⁵⁵

The most important desideratum is reliability. "Great labour have I expended in the search for what is reliable, perusing the written works of antiquarians and many historical accounts; and I have written down whatever I was able to discover."⁵⁶ "What we could not discover for certain we did not reckon worth putting in writing."⁵⁷ "And I did not consider it important to write down what we have not verified."⁵⁸ Commenting on the remarks of the martyr Apusahak at his trial, Thomas adds: "But because none of us was then present at the blessed one's responses, we did not consider it right to set them down in writing."⁵⁹ "Whether this was false or true is not clear to us; and I reckoned it better not to write down what is not certain."⁶⁰

These canons for the writing of history were not invented by Thomas. He has taken them directly from the *History* of Moses Khorenats'i, whom he often quotes in other contexts. Moses had spelled out an explicit philosophy of history: The historian deals with heroic exploits and notable deeds of wisdom and justice, with an emphasis on the tracing of genealogies. The historian must ensure that this elevated material (with nothing unseemly) is treated in a reliable fashion. Veracity and elegance are required in the narrative, and this is partly ensured by a strict adherence to chronology. If the historian is uncertain about the truth of his tale or the reliability of his informants, he must warn the reader. Nor, in turn, had Moses Khorenats'i invented these rules for himself. He had taken them from the historians and rhetoricians of antiquity.⁶¹ The interesting point as regards Thomas is that he does not think of history as a means to inculcate

54. P. 193; cf. Heb. 11.32–33.

55. P. 166.

56. P. 5.

57. P. 59.

58. P. 61.

59. P. 130.

60. P. 224.

61. Moses' canons for the writing of history and their sources are described in detail in Thomson, Introduction to *Moses Khorenats'i*.

moral purposes. History tells us about the glorious deeds of past generations which cast their lustre on the leaders of today. But it is not written primarily to warn the reader against the evil committed by wicked men and to encourage him to cleave to the good. In his general outlook, then, Thomas is a disciple of Moses Khorenats'i, not of Elishē.⁶²

Since Thomas refers to these earlier writers by name, it may be appropriate to turn to the question of his written sources. For in fact there were many authors to whom he was indebted in one way or another, all of whom he did not acknowledge.

Of all acknowledged sources Thomas gives pride of place to Moses Khorenats'i, "the world-famous teacher and orator [*k'ert'of*], the most accurate author." He refers to the "faithful account" and "eloquent composition" of "the world-renowned orator, whose *History of Greater Armenia* [is] a wonderful composition."⁶³ Thomas correctly refers to the contents "at the end of the second book,"⁶⁴ yet adds the startling information that Moses' *History* "begins with Adam and goes down to the emperor Zeno."⁶⁵ Moses does indeed mention Adam, though his emphasis at the beginning of his *History* is on the descendants of Noah's three sons. But his *History* ends with the deaths of the patriarch Sahak and of Mashtots' (in 438, 439). A possible explanation for the reference to Zeno (emperor 474–491) is that later tales about the relics of Gregory the Illuminator claim that they were discovered in the time of Zeno. Moses refers to the discovery of these relics;⁶⁶ so perhaps Thomas assumed that Moses' *History* actually extended that far. While there are some obscure references in Moses' *History* to a possible continuation of the book, no "fourth book of the promised *History* of Moses Khorenats'i" is attested elsewhere.⁶⁷

This is an aberration. However, Thomas is the first to give written expression to traditions about Moses Khorenats'i and other early writers that did become accepted as historical facts by later writers. Thomas claims that Koriun, "fellow student of Moses and pupil of Saint Mesrop," confirms this—i.e. the death

62. See especially Elishē, p. 140.

63. Thomas, pp. 6, 24, 58, 76. *Kert'of* means "poet, grammarian, or orator." For the title used by later writers of Moses see Thomson, *Moses Khorenats'i*, pp. 5–6.

64. P. 58.

65. P. 76.

66. Moses, II 91.

67. Moses, I 4, 12; III 67.

of Sahak at a ripe old age—"in his own accurate *History*."⁶⁸ Koriun's biography of his master Mashtots', called "Mesrop" only by Moses Khorenats'i and later writers, does describe Sahak's death. But he has no reference to Moses. It is in Moses' own *History* that the claim is first put forward that its author was himself a pupil of Mashtots'.⁶⁹ This Thomas accepted, and after Asoġik (who wrote just after A.D. 1000) there developed more elaborate legends about that circle of students: it included not only the attested Koriun and Eznik, then Elishē and the claimed Moses, but also the even obscurer David the Invincible Philosopher.⁷⁰ Thomas earlier had referred to a brother of Moses called Mambrē, who also figures in the later tales. Thomas, however, is the only historian to claim that Mambrē, Moses, and another historian, Theodore K'ert'oġ, had all "studied under Ľevond the priest, who was martyred in Persia."⁷¹ Ľevond is well known from the works of Elishē and Ľazar. Yet those writers have no reference to these "pupils" of Ľevond's. This particular idea did not become accepted in Armenian historiography. Since Thomas is here extolling the role of Vahan Artsruni as companion to the hero Vardan Mamikonian, his patent bias was perhaps too much for later generations to accept. In general it was the Bagratid version of Armenian history, canonised by Moses Khorenats'i, that prevailed in medieval times.

Thomas knew Moses' *History* well. He often quotes from it, or relies on it without so saying. Thus when he refers to the historians Berossus and Abydenus, to the divisions of the nations after Noah, to the history of the Assyrian empire and the involvement of Semiramis in Armenia, he follows Moses' first book, while introducing many details not found in Moses.⁷² For some of these he had recourse to Moses' own source, the *Chronicle* of Eusebius of Caesarea (on which more below). In some ways Thomas differs from Moses in his account of episodes attested before him only by Khorenats'i. For example, the descent of the Artsruni family from the son of King Sennacherib (Senek'erim) of Assyria was accepted by all.⁷³ But in his account

68. Thomas, p. 76.

69. Moses, III 61.

70. See Thomson, Introduction to *Moses Khorenats'i*. For tales about David "the Invincible Philosopher" see the Introduction to Kendall and Thomson, *David*.

71. Thomas, p. 44.

72. Pp. 3, 8, 9, 24.

73. See Moses, I 23; III 55. Sanasar's flight to Armenia is mentioned in Isa. 37.38.

of the war between Tigran of Armenia and Ashdahak, king of the Medes, Thomas has Senek'erim's sons play a prominent role unattested elsewhere.⁷⁴ Likewise, on the fall of the old Persian empire to Alexander the Great, Thomas informs us about the valiant Artsruni named Asud, who resisted Alexander's generals with "Herculean valour." When forced to submit, he said to Alexander: "When valiant men meet valiant men, audacious deeds need no excuse."⁷⁵

Artsruni princes—at least, so says Thomas—rendered services in times past to the Bagratids. According to Moses the Bagratids were of Jewish origin, and having settled in Armenia were frequently persecuted for their faith. When Arjam (father of Abgar, the first Christian monarch) had strung up Enanos Bagratuni on the gibbet, it was Jajur Artsruni who rescued him. The latter's son later married the daughter of Enanos, which was the first marriage alliance between the Artsrunik' and the Bagratids. This marriage is unattested before Thomas, though in the ninth century there were several such alliances.⁷⁶

Abgar, king of Edessa whose correspondence with Jesus Christ was well known in Armenia, had been turned into an Armenian king by Moses Khorenats'i. Moses also had known of the portrait of Jesus painted by Abgar's scribe Anan. But Thomas is the first to introduce the napkin imprinted with Jesus' face into Armenian tradition.⁷⁷ And more significantly, Thomas claims that it was an Artsruni prince, Khuran, who was the first Armenian to be baptised by Thaddaeus. This was a direct riposte to Moses' claim that the first Armenian Christian was a Bagratid, namely Tobias in whose house in Edessa Thaddaeus had lodged. Khuran Artsruni spent his last years in Jerusalem with Queen Helena (whom Moses had made the chief of Abgar's wives). It was he who took her gold and went to buy corn in Egypt—a claim to piety unmatched by any of Moses Khorenats'i's Bagratids.⁷⁸

In the internal history of Armenia, too, Thomas makes many improvements over his predecessors that would reflect on his patron's ancestors. Thus, Moses had described in detail, quoting

74. Thomas, pp. 36–40.

75. P. 41.

76. Pp. 45–46; cf. Moses, II 24.

77. Moses, II 32; Thomas, p. 46.

78. Thomas, pp. 46–49; cf. Moses, II 33, and for Khosran (his form for Khuran). II 29.

snatches of oral tales still sung in his time, the marriage of King Artashēs with Satinik, princess of the Alans. According to Thomas, Lake Van was Artashēs' favourite residence. Yet despite the urging of local Christian ascetics, Satinik clung to the worship of the idol Astlik, for she expected her husband to lead the way in converting to the religion of Christ.⁷⁹

When in due course Armenia was converted to Christianity, Thomas describes in some detail the further role of the Artsrunik'. For this he relies more on Agathangelos, P'awstos, Elishē, and Łazar. Before turning to these other classic Armenian historians, we should however note that Thomas elsewhere refers to Moses Khorenats'i, as for the story of Ara and Semiramis or the tale of Artavazd on the slopes of Mount Masis.⁸⁰ The anonymous continuator also has several reminiscences of Moses' *History*. The most notable are the references to Barzaphran bringing Jewish captives to Van, and the appearance of the cross in Jerusalem;⁸¹ and several phrases in his lament over Derenik's death recall Moses' lament over Sahak and Mashtots'.⁸² It is also worth noting that other texts ascribed to Moses were familiar to Thomas: the *History of the Holy Hrip'simeank'*, which contained details of Saint Gregory's building of churches in the region of Van and Varag, and the *Ashkharhats'oyts'*, which Thomas quotes, calling it the "geography of Ptolemy."⁸³ (The so-called *Primary History*, which contains a version of the settlement of Armenia by Hayk similar to—but not identical with—that of Moses, is quoted by Thomas.⁸⁴ But this text predates Moses, since the latter attacks its view of the local origin of the Bagratids.)

The *History* of Moses Khorenats'i served Thomas as a model in two ways. First of all it set the pattern for the integration of early Armenian history into that of the world at large. Moses had had in mind the interests of his patrons, the Bagratid family; the fact that Thomas stresses the part played by the Artsrunik' does not alter the generally received tradition. Whether all of Thomas's divergences are due to Thomas himself, or are the reflection of oral local traditions, is often impossible to tell; just

79. Moses, II 50; Thomas, pp. 52–54.

80. Thomas, pp. 215, 254.

81. Pp. 293, 306.

82. Pp. 265–268; cf. Moses, III 68.

83. P. 214, 28.

84. P. 23; *Primary History* in Sebēos, p. 50.

as the precise role of Moses Khorenats'i in formulating the Bagratid story, as opposed to recording tales only extant verbally, is impossible to judge.

Secondly, Thomas's emphasis on the veracity and faithfulness of Moses (even if he does not always follow his account!) is significant as the first witness to the very special place that Moses' *History* came to take in Armenian historiography. John Catholicos, writing about twenty years after Thomas, only refers to Moses once by name, though he has numerous verbal reminiscences of the latter's *History*.⁸⁵ But Moses Daskhurants'i echoes Thomas's enthusiasm;⁸⁶ and after the tenth century Moses' pre-eminence becomes unassailable.

There were, however, other Armenian historians who described events covered in the last part of the Moses' *History*. One of the earliest original compositions in Armenian was the biography of Mashtots' by his pupil Koriun. Thomas's sole reference to Koriun has already been mentioned;⁸⁷ it is worth noting that for his version of the career of Mashtots' Thomas did not go back to Koriun, but rather followed Moses.⁸⁸

Of uncertain date and obscure authorship is the description of the conversion of King Trdat (Tiridates) and the establishment of Christianity in Armenia by Saint Gregory the Illuminator. The extant Armenian text of the *History* of "Agathangelos" is not the earliest written version of these events. For variants in Greek and Arabic translations attest to an earlier Armenian version which was replaced (perhaps at the end of the fifth century) by the standard text of Agathangelos as we know it and as used by Moses Khorenats'i.⁸⁹ Thomas never refers to Agathangelos by name, although he must have been familiar with his *History*, for he mentions many details not found elsewhere (in Moses, for example). Most notable is his explanation of the role of Tirots' Artsruni, who escorted Saint Gregory to Caesarea when Gregory was to be consecrated as the first bishop of Armenia. Agathangelos lists sixteen noble families who formed the escort on that occasion; the Artsrunik' are in last place. Tirots'

85. John Catholicos, pp. 4, 278, 302.

86. Moses Daskhurants'i, I 8.

87. See note 68 above.

88. Thomas, pp. 72-76.

89. For a comparison of the various recensions see the Introduction to Thomson, *Agathangelos*. Since that work was published (1976) the Syriac version has been published by Van Esbroeck; see Bibliography.

is unknown elsewhere, but Thomas explains that he was of very “modest and humble character . . . [who] did not push himself forward to higher rank . . . being a studious reader of the holy gospel [which bids us] not to sit in the first rank. . . . For who is grander than the descendants of Senek’erim, the great glory of whose stock the outspoken Isaiah proclaimed to the Israelites, or whose splendid pre-eminence Alexander of Macedon inscribed with no mean eulogies in the books that contain archival traditions?”⁹⁰

Neither Agathangelos nor Thomas refers to Saint Gregory building the martyrrium of the Holy Hrip’simeank’, in which various relics of his were later preserved.⁹¹ Thomas had read the story in the work attributed to Moses Khorenats’i mentioned above, or at least was familiar with local traditions enshrined in that text. But there are several passages where Thomas seems to be recalling themes found in Agathangelos: the origin and nature of idolatry; a parallel to Gregory’s deep, gloomy pit, where the Illuminator lived among snakes; the insensitivity of a martyr to pain (though this is a common hagiographical theme); nautical imagery reminiscent of the preface in Agathangelos.⁹² Sometimes a reference could come from either Moses Khorenats’i or from Agathangelos. The anonymous continuator mentions the relics of Saint Gregory and the site of the pit where he had been imprisoned;⁹³ but there is no reference to the *History* of Agathangelos as such.

In the text of Agathangelos is a long catechism, supposedly preached by Saint Gregory to the Armenian court, which is longer than the rest of the *History*. This *Teaching of Saint Gregory* probably received its present form at the time that the extant Armenian recension took its final form. In Thomas there are several reminiscences of themes found in the *Teaching*, though direct dependence is not so certain: the revolving luminaries which mark time, and the seven ages of the world; Adam in paradise; the longevity of the patriarchs; the migration of birds; the waters below the earth.⁹⁴ In the Anonymous too there

90. Thomas, p. 58; cf. Agathangelos, §795.

91. Thomas, p. 63.

92. Pp. 23, 160–161, 171, 226. The references to Agathangelos are given in the notes to the translation *ad loc.*

93. Pp. 300, 310.

94. Pp. 1–2, 10–11, 14, 167, 230. The references to the *Teaching* are given in the notes to the translation *ad loc.*

are some parallels: man's immortal nature in paradise; the changing of the seasons; Jeremiah as "wine pourer"; the three just men.⁹⁵ But these and other possible reminiscences could derive from other sources. Although Thomas knew the *History* of Agathangelos, he did not necessarily have the text before him while composing his own work.

The struggle of the church after the deaths of Saint Gregory and King Trdat to win the allegiance of the Armenians at large is described by P'awstos (Faustos). Thomas was also familiar with this *History*, though he never mentions Faustos by name. However, the anonymous continuator refers to "the historian Biwzand" who "accurately expounded" the vision of Saint Thecla.⁹⁶ The spelling *Biwzand* is noteworthy. The earlier Łazar P'arpets'i and the title to Faustos's own *History* refer to *Buzandats'i*, though Łazar assumes that Faustos came from Byzantium.⁹⁷ "Byzantine" would be *Biwzand(ats'i)* as in the Anonymous. But the earlier *Buzandats'i* is a misunderstanding of *Buzandaran*, where the suffix *-aran* for collections has been replaced with the suffix *-ats'i* for toponyms. The *History* of Faustos proper begins as Book III of this *Buzandaran*, and each book of that *History* bears the title *Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk'*. (The problem of the identification of the first two books of the *Buzandaran*—assuming that they have not been lost altogether—is not our present concern.) Łazar's assumption that Faustos came from Byzantium was accepted in later Armenian tradition.

Thomas himself does not name Faustos, but he does refer to "the accounts of previous historians" who described the battles between Persian and Armenian armies in the fourth century.⁹⁸ Moses Khorenats'i too has recounted in somewhat different fashion many of the events described by Faustos. Although the plural "historians" may be rhetorical for an earlier source, whether one or many, it is certainly noteworthy that now he follows Faustos, now Moses. Thus the "good order" established by Khosrov echoes the former, not Moses; while in saying that the shah Shapuh appointed Arshak king he follows Moses, not Faustos.⁹⁹ Thomas describes the death of Hamazaspuhi, which

95. Pp. 262, 264, 265, 288.

96. P. 275.

97. Łazar, §3.

98. Thomas, p. 60.

99. Pp. 59, 60.

is in Faustos but not in Moses;¹⁰⁰ whereas on the same page he follows Moses' account of Jewish colonies in Armenia rather than that of Faustos. The most curious combination of sources is in the description of the apostate Mehuzhan Artsruni's death. Faustos said that Manuel Mamikonean put him to death; the pro-Bagratid Moses had claimed that it was Smbat Bagratuni. Thomas names him as Smbat Mamikonean!¹⁰¹

Thomas does not restrict himself to repeating what was found in earlier historians relevant to his theme. Some of his variations could be merely rhetorical embellishments, such as Mehuzhan's accusation of the martyr Zuit'ay before Shah Shapuh.¹⁰² Other changes are designed to enhance the position of the Artsrunik'. He introduces Mershapuh Artsruni (unattested elsewhere) as playing the major role in the cortege that laid the body of the patriarch Nersēs to rest.¹⁰³ And Thomas is the first to give details of the career of Vasak Artsruni, father of Alan;¹⁰⁴ the more famous son figures in Łazar's *History*.

Faustos's *History* ends with the division of Armenia into Persian and Roman spheres in A.D. 387. Łazar P'arpets'i picks up the story there, naming himself as the third historian of Armenia after Agathangelos and Faustos. Łazar's work goes down to 485, while Moses Khorenats'i also covers the same events as far as 440. Thomas has no reference to Łazar by name. In one of his frequent allusions to unspecified "previous historians,"¹⁰⁵ he speaks of the revolt of 450/1. This was described by Łazar, and in greater detail by Elishē. Since Elishē figures prominently by name in Thomas, we cannot be certain that by "historians" here Thomas had also Łazar in mind; the plural may be a vague reference to earlier writers, one or more in number. Even though Thomas's version does on occasion diverge from that of all his predecessors, there are indications that he was familiar with the *History* of Łazar as well as with the works of Moses, Koriun, and Elishē, which in part cover the same events: Thomas describes in some detail the vision of Sahak. This is a prominent feature of the first part of Łazar's *History*, mentioned only briefly by Moses. (Interestingly enough, the anonymous contin-

100. P. 63.

101. P. 67; cf. P'awstos, V 43, and Moses, III 37.

102. P. 64; cf. P'awstos, IV 56.

103. P. 67.

104. P. 69.

105. P. 79.

uator adds even more precise details of the vision, not found in Thomas.)¹⁰⁶ Thomas describes in a few paragraphs the later victories of Vahan Mamikonean against the Persians. These form the third part of Łazar's *History* and are briefly referred to by Sebēos. Here too Thomas mentions "many historians."¹⁰⁷ Łazar must be included in that number.

There is another source for the events surrounding the revolt of 451 to which Thomas refers in rather puzzling terms. Speaking of the Armenians killed at the battle of Avarayr, he adds: "And this is narrated in the abbreviated account of Abraham the Confessor."¹⁰⁸ Earlier he had referred to Abraham as a "blessed confessor" from the village of Arats, who had composed a history of the martyrs of the East.¹⁰⁹ Both Abraham and the history of the *Martyrs of the East* are known from other sources. The book is a compilation of Syriac Acts of martyrs who died in Iran in persecutions of the fourth century. It was put together by Marutha of Maiperqat, who died before 420. This collection of martyrdoms was translated into Armenian at a fairly early date; known as the *Vkayk' Arewelits'* it served Elishē as an important source of hagiographical material, though he does not mention the work by name.¹¹⁰

Abraham is known from the histories of Elishē and Łazar. Thomas has confused the Abraham from Arats, whose martyrdom in Iran both these historians describe, with the Abraham the Confessor who eventually returned to Armenia after many years of imprisonment and hard labour. He had been responsible for collecting money and provisions to alleviate the sufferings of Armenian prisoners in Iran. Thomas refers once to the return of Abraham.¹¹¹ Łazar had said that he later became bishop of Bznunik'.¹¹² According to Elishē "he chose a place away from the press of the crowd" and ended his days as an ascetic hermit.¹¹³ However, neither historian has anything to say about Abraham as author or translator. Thomas was clearly

106. Pp. 74, 314; cf. Łazar, §§15-17, and Moses, III 66.

107. Pp. 83-85; cf. Sebēos, p. 67.

108. P. 80.

109. P. 65.

110. For the edition of the Armenian text see the Bibliography, s.v. *Vkayk'*, and for secondary literature, s.vv. *Ter-Petrosyan* and *Van Esbroeck*. For the influence of the text on Elishē see Thomson, Introduction to *Elishē*, pp. 20-21.

111. Thomas, p. 208.

112. Łazar, p. 107.

113. Elishē, pp. 191-192.

familiar with the contents of the *Vkayk' Arewelits*, for he names three of the martyrs, and he is the first to ascribe it—or rather, the Armenian version—to Abraham.¹¹⁴ Presumably the “abbreviated account” of Abraham, which also described the battle of Avarayr, was different from the book of martyrdoms that took place in fourth-century Iran. That Abraham was the translator of the *Vkayk'* is possible; but no work on Armenian history by him is otherwise known. And, as we shall see, Thomas's version of Avarayr (which he ascribes to Abraham) is singularly suspicious in that an Artsruni almost supplants the leading role of the hero and martyr Vardan Mamikonean.

Elishē is one of the few earlier Armenian historians whom Thomas does acknowledge. Having given a resume of Zoroastrian doctrine, he adds: “It was not for frivolous reasons that we resolved to write these things, but because through this devilish doctrine much oppression and death have ravaged and destroyed Armenia—as the history of the saints Vardan and his companions indicates to you, which the blessed priest Elishē wrote.”¹¹⁵

However, when it comes to writing the story of Vardan and his companions, Thomas offers us a version completely at variance with that of Elishē or Łazar. There had in fact been two revolts against Sasanian suzerainty: one in 450/1, led by Vardan Mamikonean, which ended in defeat at Avarayr; another in 572, led by another Vardan Mamikonean, which ended with his flight to Constantinople. Elishē and Łazar describe the first revolt, Sebēos the second.¹¹⁶ But in Thomas these two accounts are combined into one composite occasion. It is unlikely that this composite version begins with Thomas, for John Catholicos has a similar story about the apostate Shavasp Artsruni and his death, and the destruction of the fire temple in Dvin. But John has distinguished two Vardans and two revolts, even though his chronology is not very clear;¹¹⁷ whereas Thomas says nothing about the later Vardan, jumping from Vahan Mamikonean in the 480s to the 590s in a single page.¹¹⁸

According to Thomas, with whose account the brief reference in John Catholicos agrees, Shavasp Artsruni apostatised in order

114. Thomas, p. 65.

115. P. 27.

116. Sebēos, pp. 67–68.

117. John Catholicos, pp. 59, 64.

118. Thomas, p. 85.

to gain Persian support in his bid to rule over Armenia. The Persians sent troops and a magus, Vndoy, who endeavoured to extirpate Christianity. Vardan, “enraged over the destruction of the holy faith and the ruin of Armenia,” gathered troops, killed Shavasp Artsruni, and burned Vndoy in the fire temple he had built at Dvin. Thomas’s chronology is in error, because he puts these events in the reign of Peroz (459–484) but says that they occurred before the reign of Yazkert (II, 438–457). John Catholicos claims that the Armenians obeyed Vardan all his days, and that there were many battles for the faith between Vardan and the Persians.¹¹⁹ But he has no reference to the famous confrontation at Avarayr in 451 when Vardan was killed.

Thomas, however, inserts the story of Avarayr after the deaths of Shavasp and Vndoy. He does not repeat the whole version in Elishē or Łazar. “I consider it superfluous to repeat what has already been described.”¹²⁰ He does add two paragraphs on the battle of Avarayr, at which—he claims—Vahan Artsruni “with splendid and outstanding bravery fought side by side with Saint Vardan. . . . together they died, those valiant and elect noble warriors, Vardan and Vahan.”¹²¹ But there was a problem. The well-known histories of Elishē and Łazar had no reference to Vahan, although they do say that Artsruni warriors participated in the battle.¹²² So Thomas provides an explanation.

Elishē in his *History* says nothing about himself, but later traditions helped fill the void. He came to be associated with the group of students led by Mashtots‘ and Sahak, as a fellow pupil with Koriun, Moses Khorenats‘i, and others. His relationship to Vardan Mamikonean is variously described; that he was the latter’s “scribe” seems to be an echo of the relationship between Agathangelos and King Trdat. In his later years Elishē was said to have become an ascetic hermit living in the province of Mokk‘, south of Lake Van. But once his fame had spread, he moved from there and dwelt in a cave near the shore of the lake, where he eventually died.¹²³ Thomas adds a curious twist to this story. He claims that the Nestorian Barsauma (bishop of Nisibis after 457 to c. 490) was trying to spread his heresy in the province of Mokk‘. He came to Elishē and borrowed the *History*

119. John Catholicos, p. 60.

120. Thomas, p. 79.

121. Pp. 79–80.

122. Elishē, p. 120; Łazar, p. 71.

123. For the various traditions see Thomson, Introduction to *Elishē*.

which the latter had written at the command of Saint Vardan. Because the prince of the Artsrunik' expelled the impious Barsauma, Barsauma in revenge "expunged from Elishē's *History* all details concerning the deeds of the house of the Artsrunik' and everything describing the martyrdom of Vahan Artsruni."¹²⁴ The book was returned to Mokk' after Elishē's death, but no one noticed the alterations; so it was in that adulterated form that Elishē's *History of Vardan* became known.

Barsauma's activity in southern Armenia is known from other sources.¹²⁵ The point of this peculiar tale bringing in Elishē—which is unattested elsewhere, and did not enter later Armenian tradition concerning the author of the *History of Vardan*—is clearly to explain away the modest role ascribed to the Artsrunik' by Elishē. Thomas had had no compunction in revising Moses Khorenats'i's version of early Armenian history in favour of the Artsrunik'. For the more recent and well-known fate of the Vardanank', on the other hand, he felt obliged to offer a reason for his divergence from the received account. (Whether local oral tradition earlier than Thomas had ascribed such a grand role to Vahan Artsruni is impossible to say. Thomas is the first—and only—written source.)

Thomas's debt to Elishē is not limited to using his *History* as a source of information about Vardan and the imprisonment of Armenian nobles and clergy in Iran after Avarayr. Elishē's interpretation of the revolt of 450/1 and of the attitude of Armenians towards the Sasanian shahs was extremely influential. Those deliberate echoes of Elishē in Thomas's description of Armenian-Muslim relations will be considered later, after the present review of his historical sources.

We have already noted that Thomas jumps a whole century from the time when Vahan Mamikonean became *marzpan* of Armenia in 485 down to the reign of the emperor Maurice (582–602). The wars of the late sixth and early seventh centuries between Byzantium and Iran, in which the Armenians were closely involved, are described by the historian Sebēos. Although Thomas never mentions Sebēos by name, his account of the fall of the Sasanian dynasty is taken verbatim from that writer's *History*. In general Thomas abbreviates Sebēos's account, with a few minor rhetorical expansions. These have all

124. Thomas, p. 81.

125. See Gero, *Barsauma*, Appendix 2, pp. 110–119.

been noted in the commentary to the translation below, so need no extra comment here.¹²⁶ But in his description of the life of Muhammad and the rise of Islam Thomas introduces a great deal of new material not in Sebēos.

No immediate source for Thomas's circumstantial (and polemical) account of Muhammad has yet come to light. While many of the details are unattested in Armenian before him, some of them have parallels in Greek, Syriac, or Arabic. These may be abbreviated as follows:¹²⁷

Parallels with earlier Greek sources:

1. The Arabs were idolators, worshippers of an idol called Khabar.
2. Muhammad was a merchant who travelled to Egypt and Palestine, and married his master's widow.
3. He became friendly with an Arian monk, though the latter's name, Sargis Bahira, is not attested before the time of Thomas.
4. Muhammad suffered from demonic possession.

Not found earlier:

1. Ali supported Muhammad.
2. Muhammad formed an alliance with the Jews of Medina after the Hegira, and took a Jewish wife.
3. Muhammad killed Sargis Bahira because the latter wished to be acknowledged for what he had taught him. (Later Greek sources ascribe the murder to drink.)
4. The Quran was written by Salman, a Persian.
5. Muslim ritual ablutions and Christian baptism are contrasted.

In later Armenian historiography such descriptions of Islam became frequent. Mkhitar of Ani (twelfth-thirteenth centuries), for example, and the later Vardan Arewelts'i used a text translated from Karshuni.¹²⁸ Whether Thomas put together his own account, or relied on an unidentified source, is not yet known.

Following his description of Muhammad's early career, Thomas turns to the Byzantine defeat in Palestine. Here again he follows Sebēos. At that point he adds his new material concern-

126. Thomas, pp. 85–104.

127. Pp. 98–103.

128. For a general discussion of Armenian traditions concerning Muhammad see Thomson, "Armenian Variations," and "Muhammad."

ing the Quran, and then turns to Muhammad's successors. Sebēos's *History* ended with the appointment of Muawiya as caliph in 661. So for his brief characterizations of the caliphs down to Harun ar-Rashid (786–809) Thomas had recourse to the *History* of Łevond. "The details of these reigns have been written down previously by others, so we considered it superfluous to repeat them."¹²⁹ Again, it is not clear whether Thomas meant that he had other sources in addition to Łevond (whom he follows verbatim on occasion without naming). Since Łevond ends with the accession of Harun, for his list down to Djafar al-Mutawakkil (847–861) Thomas may have had another source in mind—perhaps Shapuh Bagratuni, whose *History* has been lost.

In addition to the short descriptions of the caliphs Thomas also took from Łevond his information about an exchange of letters between the caliph Umar (i.e. Umar II, 717–720) and Leo (Leo III, emperor 717–741).¹³⁰ That Leo wrote to Umar is also claimed in non-Armenian sources. A Latin version is said to have been translated from Syriac, which in turn depended on the Greek original. But the Armenian version, much longer and quite divergent from the other, is an original Armenian composition.¹³¹ The actual text of the letter sent by Leo is not extant. Whether Łevond was responsible for the letter (and the brief query from Umar which introduces the long epistle that is nearly a third the length of Łevond's *History*) is by no means certain. It could well be a later interpolation. In this regard it is significant that Thomas gives no hint of the content of the letters. He merely exaggerates Umar's benevolence as described by Łevond, and adds the intriguing information that Leo's response was so persuasive that Umar expunged many of the most fabulous things from the Quran—though he did not dare to remove them all!

For the period from 850 to the end of his *History*—three-fifths of the whole—Thomas had at least one written source. Referring to the career of Gurgēn, he says: "Others have written [about him] before us and have set down a comprehensive account"; and "as the records which were kept before us indicate, and which it seems to me superfluous to repeat."¹³² The most

129. Thomas, p. 106.

130. P. 105.

131. See the discussion in Gero, *Iconoclasm*, pp. 153–171.

132. Thomas, pp. 198, 208.

likely candidate for “others” is Shapuh Bagratuni, to whom John Catholicos also refers, but whose work is lost. John also wrote a *History*, but some ten or twenty years after Thomas. That was known to the anonymous continuator: “[Yusup‘] inflicted on us many calamities, which another great orator, forceful and intelligent, has written down before us and entrusted to royal archives.” Thomas himself, however, only refers to John, who became Catholicos in 898/9, as a learned and saintly man.¹³³

For these fifty years Thomas had recourse to eyewitness accounts, as noted above. But from the literary point of view the main interest lies in how he expressed himself. Which earlier writers had influenced his habitual imagery? The answer to this question involves also a study of the non-Armenian texts known to Thomas (mostly in Armenian translation). So before studying Thomas’s literary sources in the second part, we should look back again at the first part where some of these sources are identified by name.

By far the most important of the works used by Thomas for the first section of his *History* was the *Chronicle* of Eusebius. Moses Khorenats‘i had led the way in co-ordinating Armenian tradition with the history of the ancient world as known from Eusebius.¹³⁴ Thomas often had recourse to the *Chronicle* himself, even when following the general argument of Moses. He names Eusebius often: “The multifarious researches of Eusebius and the faithful account of Africanus”; “this is confirmed for us by Eusebius of Caesarea and Julian of Halicarnassus.”¹³⁵ But Sextus Julius Africanus was not known independently in Armenia; Thomas’s reference comes from Eusebius or Moses. Likewise Julian of Halicarnassos, mentioned twice,¹³⁶ is a curious misinterpretation of Julius Africanus, confused with Dionysius of Halicarnassos. Thomas also refers to the canon table of Eusebius’s *Chronicle*,¹³⁷ in which the rulers and great events of the ancient empires were set down in parallel columns. In Book I, chapter 4, Thomas repeats information about the Assyrian kingdom verbatim from the *Canon*; he does add flesh to the bare bones by integrating comments taken from the first part of the *Chronicle*, the narrative section.

133. Pp. 243, 285.

134. For Moses’ use of Eusebius see Thomson, Introduction to *Moses Khorenats‘i*.

135. Thomas, pp. 6, 7.

136. Pp. 7, 9.

137. P. 9.

Another work by Eusebius of Caesarea was also available in an Armenian rendering: the *Ecclesiastical History*, which had been translated earlier than the *Chronicle*—from a Syriac version rather than directly from the Greek. This too had had a profound influence on Armenian historiography. Thomas refers to it as “the book of Eusebius of Caesarea,” basing his description of Philo on that in the *Ecclesiastical History*.¹³⁸ He mentions the “records of reliable historians”¹³⁹ for the conversion of Abgar. Here he had in mind the first account of that event in Eusebius as well as the later developments: the story of Addai (ascribed in Armenian to “Labubna”), and the elaborations in Moses Khorenats‘i. For his long discussion of apostasy Thomas takes the story of the Elkesites and Novatian from the *Ecclesiastical History*, though without acknowledging his source.¹⁴⁰ Likewise, his reference to cannibalism during the siege of Jerusalem is an unacknowledged reference to Eusebius.¹⁴¹ Once Thomas refers by name to Josephus (for the Massacre of the Innocents).¹⁴² But he is following Eusebius, who in turn had quoted Josephus. Such references at second hand to earlier sources, as to Africanus, are much more common in Moses than in Thomas.

As just noted, Thomas refers to Philo and borrows his description from Eusebius: “that noble man and very learned philosopher; a follower of the holy apostles, he provided the church with many teachings from the ancient Jews as fine examples.” Many works of Philo were available in Armenian, and several Armenian historians quoted them or used them in one way or another.¹⁴³ Thomas turns to Philo primarily for information about the ancient history of the Jews, the traditions about the patriarchs. Most of his borrowings are from Philo’s *Quaestiones in Genesin* (*Questions and Answers on Genesis*).¹⁴⁴ From this work he takes his description of the snake in paradise, his explanation of the rainbow, and his etymologies of “God” and “Seth,” the last with direct acknowledgement of Philo.¹⁴⁵ Some

138. P. 19.

139. P. 46.

140. P. 163.

141. Pp. 242–243.

142. P. 47.

143. For a recent discussion of Philonic works in Armenian see Terian, *De Animalibus*, Introduction, pp. 3–25.

144. But the “Explanation of the Hebrew Names,” quoted on p. 19, is not a Philonic work. It is a lost section of Eusebius’s *Onomasticon*.

145. Pp. 11, 12, 14, 19.

of the latter's works may also have been known to the anonymous continuator; for his eulogy of Gagik recalls some details of the description of Samson in the *De Sampson* (attributed in Armenian to Philo).¹⁴⁶

Thomas is the first Armenian historian to introduce non-biblical traditions about the early Jewish patriarchs into his history. Before him, Moses Khorenats'i had introduced Noah and his sons in order to place Armenian history in a biblical setting; while for the story of the flood and the coming of Xisuthra to Armenia he had relied on Eusebius's *Chronicle*. However, Armenians had long been interested in post-biblical apocrypha dealing with persons and events of the Old Testament.¹⁴⁷ For the first time Thomas integrates some of these traditions into his description of the early history of the world. Thus he accepts the suggestion that a daughter of Noah and the ark's designer with his family also entered the ark; after the flood Noah's daughter settled in upper India.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, Thomas rejects the suggestion that the ark was built in Phrygia.¹⁴⁹ He is aware of a tradition that the prophet Ezra, identified with king Salat'iel, was buried in Armenia.¹⁵⁰ Twice Thomas refers to Jericho and Sodom as examples of sexual evil. The surprising substitution of Jericho for the biblical Gomorrah has a parallel in the idea of Jericho as the type of hell, attested in Armenian biblical paraphrases.¹⁵¹ Such paraphrases also lie behind the comment of the anonymous continuator that the prophet Elias was nourished with fire.¹⁵²

Like all Armenian writers Thomas was thoroughly conversant with the Bible. The frequency and length of his quotations could be paralleled in Agathangelos before him, or in Aristakēs Lastivertts'i later. However, his long disquisition on apostasy, based on information about Novatian and the Elkasites in Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*, is unusually elaborate. Thomas is firmly of the opinion that one cannot keep the faith in one's heart but deny it with one's lips.¹⁵³ Feigned apostasies were a

146. P. 303.

147. For a recent survey of such texts with references to earlier literature see Stone, "Jewish Apocryphal Literature." The same writer's *Armenian Apocrypha* contains texts that have some parallels in Thomas; see notes 151, 152.

148. Thomas, p. 19.

149. P. 18.

150. P. 40.

151. Pp. 173, 213, and notes *ad loc.*

152. P. 313.

153. Pp. 162-166.

feature of Armenian political life in Sasanian as well as Muslim times. Thus Elishē, who regarded the writing of history as a lesson in moral truths, could not pass over the temporary backsliding of his own hero without indicating that the clergy had to receive him back into the fold.¹⁵⁴

Thomas primarily uses his biblical knowledge to enhance his narrative with apposite parallels, or to offer comments on the morality of certain behaviour. He is less interested in technical theological questions. So although he has several references in general terms to the “Nestorians” as heretics, he only once elaborates on the terminology used to explain the Incarnation: “Nestorians and Chalcedonians, with the other dyophysites, who in their error said that the Word took flesh from the Virgin as a house and tabernacle, and that the flesh was not in unity by nature with the Word.”¹⁵⁵ This is in accordance with the traditional Armenian position: there is “one nature of the divine Word incarnate,” which reflects the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria.¹⁵⁶ But Thomas goes on to make the strange suggestion that if Christ is different from his house and tabernacle (as the “Nestorians” said), then a church building dedicated to the Saving Name would itself be worshipped—“which is most ridiculous”—and the stones would be eaten, just as the body and blood of the Son of God which is offered in them—“which is even more ridiculous”!

References to the fathers of the church other than Eusebius are not found in Thomas, with one very unusual exception. Describing paradise as “physical and tangible,” he rejects the notion that it was “spiritual or between two worlds, as they report about Origen’s view.”¹⁵⁷ In the *De Principiis* Origen had suggested that paradise, “where departed spirits go,” was between earth and heaven. This work was not translated into Armenian, although numerous fragments of Origen’s biblical commentaries are included in Armenian catenae, and various homilies under Origen’s name circulated in Armenia. There are references to Origen in a letter of the eighth-century Stephen of

154. Elishē, p. 64.

155. Thomas, p. 255. For general references to the Nestorians see pp. 80, 244.

156. For a study of the development of early Armenian Christology see Sarkissian, *The Council of Chalcedon*, which has references to Armenian texts and earlier literature. For the general background in Eastern Christendom see Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*.

157. Thomas, pp. 28–29.

Siunik¹⁵⁸ and in the later florilegium known as the *Root of Faith*.¹⁵⁹ The author of the *Teaching of Saint Gregory* seems to have been familiar with Origen's biblical exegesis, though he does not name him.¹⁶⁰ Moses Khorenats'i does refer to Origen in a passage based on Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*. In the latter Origen's *De Principiis* is named, but there is no reference to the theory about paradise.¹⁶¹ The immediate source for Thomas's "as they report" has not been identified.

Much dearer to Thomas than questions of theology are the themes of hagiography. Armenia had produced its own martyrs in profusion, as Thomas himself was only too well aware. He was also familiar with the written accounts of earlier times, and with the lives of non-Armenian martyrs—witness his reference to the *Vkayk' Arewelits'* which he attributed to Abraham.¹⁶² So his descriptions of the martyrdoms of which he had personal knowledge follow the general pattern of pre-Muslim martyrologies.

Having described the raging fury, hidden by cunning deceit, of the judge—usually the caliph or a Muslim general—Thomas elaborates on the promises of gifts and honours if the Armenian martyr will apostatise.¹⁶³ On occasion, "although they had not intended to turn in the slightest from the worship of the Son of God . . . yet because [their faith] had no roots it was immediately dried up by the heat of the devil." There were those who "loved the glory of men more than the glory of God." These were circumcised as Muslims on the spot, following the wide road "which leads to irredeemable perdition."¹⁶⁴ Usually such blandishments were resisted. The martyr might offer an ex-

158. See the *Book of Letters*, p. 330. The same passage is repeated, *ibid.*, p. 493, in a piece purporting to be a discussion between the Armenian Catholicos Komitas and the Patriarch of Constantinople.

159. For a list of authors quoted in this text see Thomson, "The Shorter Recension," and Anasean, "Vardan Aygekts'i."

160. For parallels see the Index in Thomson, *Teaching*.

161. Moses, II 75; Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, VI 27. Cf. also Mahé, "Origène."

162. See above at notes 109–114.

163. For extended descriptions of martyrdoms see:

pp. 129–130: Apusahak Vahevuni;

pp. 140–142: Geörg Akēats'i, Khosrov Gabelean, and an unnamed Muslim;

pp. 153–162: Grigor Artsruni;

pp. 169–172: Atom Andzevats'i and companions;

pp. 185–188: Mukat'l, Solomon Sevordi, Kakhay;

pp. 188–190: Yovnan.

All of these include exhortations to apostatise.

164. Pp. 158–159.

tended defense of the Christian faith, perhaps including direct insults to Muhammad and Islam.¹⁶⁵ Sometimes the martyr would be sent out for immediate execution;¹⁶⁶ more frequently the refusal to apostatise was followed by a series of tortures. These would include the bastinado; dismemberment limb by limb; suspension from a gibbet; beating with iron rods (“scorpions”); being burned on a pile of wood.¹⁶⁷ Undeterred by such torments, the martyrs would then thank Christ for making them worthy to die for him and to receive the crown.¹⁶⁸ Thomas only once says that the martyrs were thrown into prison.¹⁶⁹ Normally death was inevitable. It was administered by the sword. A rare exception was the death of Solomon, who was shot by archers while still on his pile of wood.¹⁷⁰ Following their death, the martyrs’ bodies were given a decent burial by fellow Christians. The bodies of Atom and his companions were thrown outside the city. There they remained for many days; yet they were not contaminated nor did they decompose before they could be properly buried.¹⁷¹ And over the body of the converted Muslim shone a heavenly light.¹⁷²

Both in his general pattern for the description of martyrdoms and in his specific vocabulary Thomas shows his indebtedness to much earlier writers such as Elishē or the *Vkayk*, with one very interesting difference. Never are the bones of the ninth-century martyrs carefully gathered for preservation as relics. There are many references in Thomas to the relics of early saints, or to holy objects such as fragments of the true cross. Once his contemporaries were buried, however, annual celebrations to commemorate their heroism were the usual way to honour them. Elishē’s enthusiasm for bones is not reflected in Thomas.¹⁷³

The influence of secular texts—other than the historical and philosophical works already mentioned—is less significant. Tho-

165. See the martyrdoms of Apusahak and Grigor.

166. As Apusahak, Kakhay, Yovnan.

167. Pp. 140, 186–188.

168. Pp. 170, 186.

169. P. 161, of Grigor.

170. P. 188.

171. P. 171.

172. P. 142.

173. See Elishē, p. 182, for the cleaning and preservation of martyrs’ bones; p. 179 for Persians attempting to prevent the recovery of bones and their distribution, “at which people would be even more encouraged to go astray.” Łazar, p. 103, also describes in detail the burial of the flesh of the martyrs’ bodies, and the secret circulation of their bones as “tokens of salvation.”

mas was familiar with the Armenian version of the *Alexander Romance*, which had earlier been an important source for Moses Khorenats'i. He quotes at length from Alexander's letter to Olympias for his description of wonderful lands in order to bolster his argument that paradise was a real place on earth.¹⁷⁴ And he knows of Alexander's parentage—that he was the son of Nectanebo, "some magus and magician," who pretended to be the god Ammon.¹⁷⁵

Like other Armenian writers, Thomas was fond of an aphorism or a fable. The term *araspel* covered two kinds of saying. On the occasion of the apostate Mehuzhan Artsruni's death Thomas quotes with approval the saying: "Often the foxes planned to reign, but the dogs did not agree."¹⁷⁶ Speaking of the disunity of the Armenian princes, first he quotes the Saviour: "Every city or house divided against itself . . ."; and then he adds, "Equally appropriate is the old fable of the philosopher Olympian concerning the characters of the lion and the bulls."¹⁷⁷ This fable occurs among those attributed in Armenian to Olympian, and is also found in other collections, such as Aesop or Babrius. For such kinds of sayings Thomas relied most frequently on the Bible, in particular on the Psalms, Proverbs, and Wisdom of Solomon. Thus, commenting on fear and valour, he quotes "Solomon," "David," and "another wise man of the world." This last is Ahikar, whose aphorisms were popular in Armenia, as in most other lands of the Near East.¹⁷⁸

There was yet another kind of *araspel*. For the term also applied to tales about the pagan past, such as that about Ara the Handsome and the mythical creatures, the *aralezk'*, who cured by licking. These fables are not desirable models. "Let us not follow the tellers of tales or walk the untrodden path."¹⁷⁹ Here the influence of Moses Khorenats'i may be discerned. For the latter disapproved of the *araspel*; they could not be taken literally, because they were exaggerated, nonsense, false, or even obscene.¹⁸⁰

The preceding review of Thomas's literary sources has not

174. Thomas, pp. 29–30.

175. P. 21.

176. P. 66.

177. P. 123.

178. P. 228.

179. P. 166.

180. See the Introduction to Thomson, *Moses Khorenats'i*, p. 11.

produced anything startling or unusual for an Armenian author. All Armenians were conversant with the Bible. Thomas quotes it more often than many. But that is less surprising than the paucity of his references to patristic theologians. Like his predecessors, Thomas was familiar with a wide range of hagiographical material, which he used to good effect in recounting the real martyrdoms of his own time. He was, however, the first to integrate into his *History* many “apocryphal” traditions, indicating that this popular genre had gained acceptance in more sophisticated circles.

Thomas was naturally well read in earlier Armenian historians, even though he only mentions a few of his predecessors by name. Here he is significant for the introduction of popular tales about the great literary figures of the past. His selectivity in naming—as opposed to his catholicity in quoting—indicates that by his time certain Armenian historians had gained a pre-eminent position. The “classics” of Armenian historiography were to remain Moses Khorenats‘i and Elishē, rather than P‘awstos, Łazar, or Sebēos. And his use of Eusebius and Philo was typical of Armenian scholars before him, even if they rarely named the Jewish philosopher.

Thomas is also typical of Armenian historians in that he has a special interest in the fortunes—past and present—of one noble family, rather than of the country at large. Not that *all* Armenian historians were writing for a patron whose ancestors had to be flattered. But Thomas’s evident *parti-pris* toward the Artsrunik‘ is not a surprising trait.

In the ordering of his material, his avowed attitude to historical writing, his use of speeches and letters, Thomas shows the influence of earlier Armenian writers, who in turn were indebted to the traditions of antiquity. And if Thomas himself was not often read or quoted later, that is not because his work was not erudite. His subsequent obscurity is to be attributed to political and social causes. For the Artsrunik‘ did not become the dominant family in Armenia. It was the Bagratid tradition that prevailed. So the exaggerated claims to Artsruni pre-eminence in early Armenia gained little credence.

For the modern reader Thomas’s *History* has a special interest beyond its “typical” character as a sophisticated example of medieval Armenian historical writing. As a contemporary source it gives a lively picture of life in southern Armenia in the second half of the ninth century. The endemic rivalry of Armenian noble

society was never more clearly depicted. Thomas succeeded in capturing the ethos of a society that had changed little from that described by P'awstos half a millenium before. His *History* also has a claim to attention on literary grounds. For Thomas describes the Armenian attitude towards the Muslim caliphs in the same terms that Elishē used for the Armenian attitude towards the Sasanian shahs. The historical circumstances—the parallels and differences between the two powers to the southeast who dominated Armenia before and after the seventh century—are not our concern here. But the way in which Elishē's *History of Vardan and the Armenian War* served Thomas as a literary model for the depiction of ninth-century Armenia deserves further attention.

Not all parallels between Thomas and Elishē are of importance in this regard. For example, expressions common to them both abound in the descriptions of martyrdoms. However, such themes and figures of speech were part of a shared tradition of hagiographical literature. Likewise, the descriptions of battle scenes in Thomas have many parallels, not only in Elishē, but in other early Armenian historians. Again, they were all drawing on stock motifs, among which the Books of Maccabees were particularly significant.¹⁸¹ Nonetheless, there are many occasions when Thomas depicts his Muslims or contemporary Armenians with imagery taken directly from Elishē. This occurs too frequently to be coincidental. And since Elishē was well known to Thomas's readers, the effect is deliberate. The question, however, remains whether Elishē had merely provided a convenient framework in which to place the attitude of Armenians to their new Muslim overlords; or whether, by reminding his readers of Vardan and the heroic Armenian struggle, Thomas was holding up a model of conduct also relevant for his own day.

As noted above, Thomas skips two centuries (from the death of Muhammad to the time of Al-Mutawakkil, caliph 847–861) in just two pages. He then begins the main part of his *History* with the year 300 of the Armenian era (A.D. 851): "We have now to speak about Jap'r [i.e. Djafar al-Mutawakkil] and his evil deeds, not described by others, which he inflicted on Armenia over a long period of time, with the unbearable oppression that oc-

181. For the influence of the Books of Maccabees on Armenian historians, especially on their imagery for battle scenes, see Thomson, "The Maccabees." Elishē's more general debt is assessed in the Introduction to Thomson, *Elishē*.

curred in our days.”¹⁸² The following paragraph, at the beginning of Book II, chapter 5, sets the scene.

A certain man, Jap‘r, insolent and arrogant, began to lift his horns in impiety, to roar and butt at the four corners of the earth, to oppress and torment those who wished a peaceful life; for confusion and the shedding of blood were very dear to him. He was in continuous irresolution and agitation: on whom or on which regions to pour out the bitterness of his mortal poison, or where to loose and shoot out the multitude of arrows in the quiver of his evil and crafty mind. In his great folly, smitten by passion and with cancerous mien, raging like a wild beast, he began to attack Armenia. And in accordance with the subtle treachery of their wily race, with an amiable countenance he tried to carry out his evil desires gradually.

Not by chance is the imagery based on Elishē’s description of Yazkert II, the shah whose oppression in Armenia and attempt to suppress the free practice of the Christian religion led to the revolt of 450/1:

By his roaring he blew winds to the four corners of the earth. . . . Since confusion and the shedding of blood were dear to him, therefore he was agitated within himself: “On whom shall I pour out my poisonous bitterness, and where shall I loose my multitude of arrows?” In his great folly, like a ferocious wild beast he attacked the land of the Greeks. . . . the impious ruler . . . began to wound his own evil mind with hidden arrows, and he saw incurable wounds inflicted on his soul and body. . . . Although he worked this confusion among all nations, he especially strove against the land of Armenia. . . . He deceived some of them with gold and silver. . . . he was continuously enticing . . . he deceitfully humbled himself before all, speaking with them on the pretext of love, but hypocritically so that he might be able to seduce them . . . a murderous tyrant who exceeded the traditions of heathens in the shedding of blood.¹⁸³

Thomas returns frequently to his picture of Al-Mutawakkil as Yazkert: “He roared like a lion or like a disturbed bear. He flamed like a fiery furnace, and foamed like the piled-up waves of the sea tinged with purple blood.”

182. Thomas, p. 106.

183. Elishē, pp. 6, 7, 16–17, 22. This page of Thomas and the parallels with Elishē were discussed by Muyldermans, “Un procédé hagiographique.” But he did not bring out the pervasive influence of Elishē discernable throughout the rest of Thomas’s *History*.

Cf. Elishē: “Just as bears in their dying pangs fight more powerfully at the last gasp . . . He resembled the tumult of the surging wave-tossed sea . . . from the bottommost depths he rose in a mass of foam.”¹⁸⁴

“He boiled up and vomited out the bitterness of the fetid bile of his poisonous and evil disposition. Excited to an uncontrollable passion and a hot-blooded tempestuous furor, he began to pour out his mortal venom on the captives like the venom of a snake.”

Cf. Elishē: “The king became more bitter than gall. He spewed forth the sea of the willful bile in his stomach; from his nose and mouth issued hot vapour like thick smoke from a heated furnace.”¹⁸⁵

“[He] waxed haughty and raged in an excess of ferocious poison. He flamed and burned like a furnace to spew out mortal poison.”

Cf. Elishē: “Spewing out all his accumulated venom . . . He began to wax haughty.”¹⁸⁶

It is not only the caliph who is so described; other Muslim generals or emirs can be depicted in similar terms. So the emir Afshin “was a man who loved turmoil and hated peace, and was insatiable in his thirst for human blood—which characteristics he regarded as great personal renown.” Or the general Zhirak “began to discharge his fetid, intoxicating, and bilious poison . . . hiding the arrows of his quiver.” These echo the imagery of Elishē just quoted.¹⁸⁷

There was also the ferocious Bugha: “whose devilish intelligence was wicked and full of wiles . . . puffed up and haughty, he roared like a dragon.”

Cf. Elishē, of Yazkert: “thundering like a dragon and roaring like a wild beast.”¹⁸⁸

But for Bugha a more appropriate parallel is the vizier Mihrnerseh. “This man Bugha, in whom Satan with his power has made his lair . . . [whose] delight and pleasure were the flesh and blood of innocent men, and his horribly ferocious rage could not be sated.”

Cf. Elishē, of Mihrnerseh: “In whom lurked Satan with all his

184. Thomas, p. 114; Elishē, pp. 8, 44.

185. Thomas, p. 154; Elishē, p. 47.

186. Thomas, p. 210; Elishē, p. 6.

187. Thomas, pp. 239, 129.

188. Thomas, p. 126; Elishē, p. 44.

power. . . . The food he had craved since childhood was the pure flesh of the saints, and the drink of which he was never sated was the blood of the innocent."¹⁸⁹

If Elishē's Sasanians served as models for Thomas's Muslim tyrants, the former's picture of Armenian shortcomings was also relevant for Thomas. One of Elishē's main themes is the contrast between the unity of the covenant of those who vowed to uphold Armenian Christian values and the falling away of those who compromised with the Persians.¹⁹⁰ Thus his fourth chapter begins:

*Concerning the Secession of the
Prince of Siunik' and his Companions*

Up to this point I have not at all hesitated to describe the afflictions of our nation which were cruelly inflicted upon us by the foreign enemies of the truth. They were few who struck us but very many struck by us, for we were still united and agreed. Although some secretly had deceitful vacillations, yet to the eyes of outsiders our unanimity seemed imposing, so they were unable to resist us in two or three places.

So then, where discord penetrates, at the breaking up of unity heavenly virtue also departs; and when there is self-interest, weeping and mourning greatly increase. For when the limbs, which previously were part of a man's undefiled body, are severed and fall away, one turns to tears before the corpse beside him. One is filled with even more bitterness over the man who dies in both soul and body. And if this is the case for a single person, how much more so for a whole nation!

It is quite remarkable how closely Thomas models his own description of Armenian disunity on that passage from Elishē. He begins Book III in the following terms:

Up to this point we have not hesitated to relate the dangers and tribulations which befell us from the enemies of the truth. For although we were oppressed and tormented with various afflictions by the domination of the armies of the Muslim Tachik nations, yet these were few in number and for short periods of time; and many more were they whom we smote than we who were smitten. For the Armenian princes with their hosts of knights and troops were still living in unison and harmony and concord, though in secret they had suspicions of treachery. But

189. Thomas, p. 126; Elishē, p. 88.

190. For a longer discussion see the Introduction to Thomson, *Elishē*.

when discord began to insinuate itself within that unity, the grace of the divine power departed and withdrew. Concerted plans were disregarded in combat and in other matters affecting the administration of the country. And just as someone might cut into pieces all the limbs of a body until the form of the living man, that is the nature of his composition, has disappeared—whereas, if one of the limbs is lost, it is an accidental deprivation but the [whole] living person is not destroyed—in such manner was the unity of this country gradually destroyed, as each individual plotted evil against his neighbour and his brother.¹⁹¹

Although Thomas does not acknowledge his source, the borrowing is deliberate; he certainly expected his readers to recognise a familiar situation and to think of the struggle against the Muslims as a continuation of the heroic resistance to Yazkert. Likewise, he borrows Elishē's key phrase "the unity of the covenant" in referring to those who "broke away" from it and decided to sue for peace.¹⁹² As for those who actually apostatised, Thomas describes them in terms similar to the execrations levelled at Vardan and his companions who had feigned submission to Yazkert.¹⁹³

It is not necessary to repeat here all the verbal reminiscences of Elishē which permeate the second part of Thomas's *History*. (They are spelled out in the commentary below.) It seems clear enough that Thomas is not merely borrowing a few felicitous expressions in order to enhance the rhetorical effect of his own work. He is using well-known passages to remind his readers of common situations. So although Thomas has no explicit moral view about the writing of history as such, by casting the events of his own time in the mould of Elishē's *History of Vardan and the Armenian War*, indirectly he accomplishes two goals. In the first place, he views the struggle against the Muslims as the continuation of an old dilemma: How are the Armenians to combine loyal service to the caliphs with the observance of their own Christian traditions? The tension between the martyr and the apostate was as great for Thomas as it had been many centuries earlier. And secondly, if there are parallels in the general historical situation, then perhaps on Thomas's heroes there may be reflected something of the lustre of the greatest of Armenian warrior-saints, Vardan Mamikonean.

191. Thomas, p. 122; Elishē, p. 89.

192. Thomas, p. 133.

193. Thomas, p. 168; Elishē, p. 55.

Thomas's *History of the House of the Artsrunik* is thus of interest on various counts. In some ways it is representative of Armenian historical writing: in purpose—the glorification of a particular noble family; in approach—chronological, with an expressed disinterested view of historiography which is not always adhered to in practice; in the use of sources—earlier Armenian writers, often unacknowledged, and an important but small group of foreign works translated into Armenian, such as Eusebius, Philo, or the *Alexander Romance*; in imagery—the Bible is the main frame of reference, hagiographical texts come next, and then borrowing from patristic or secular writers.

In some ways Thomas breaks new ground—or at least, is the first witness to certain traditions. The most important in this regard are the stories about earlier Armenian historians which were accepted in later centuries, notably about Moses Khorenats'i and the lesser figures who were included in the circle of pupils around Mashtots'. However, Thomas's version of how Elishē's *History of Vardan* was disfigured by Barsauma did not gain general credence. Also new—apart from stories concerning the Artsrunik' not found elsewhere—was the introduction of "apocryphal" legends into the brief recapitulation of early history. Of even greater significance is the fact that Thomas is the first writer to use Moses Khorenats'i and Elishē as formative models. Moses provided the background, tracing the roots of Armenian nationhood into the remote past, and linking the Armenian legendary heroes to the descendants of Noah; while Elishē set a pattern for describing the contemporary situation where a small Christian nation faced an aggressive non-Christian overlord.

The "learned" aspect of Thomas is not necessarily the most interesting. His curious information about earlier centuries and his tendentious alterations to previous writers are more than outweighed by his direct appeal as a witness to certain aspects of contemporary life. Not all aspects of Armenian life—for Thomas was not much interested in commercial questions,¹⁹⁴ nor does he devote much space to scholarly pursuits. Though he does admire certain learned or holy men, this is because they were unusually holy rather than because they were devoted to schol-

194. Thomas has a low opinion of city life, referring to Dvin as "teeming with commerce and impurity" (p. 230), and to the "iniquities" of Tiflis (p. 173). Cf. the "bustling streets suitable for commerce" in Artamat, supposedly built by Artashēs (p. 53).

arship. He pays attention to only one aspect of artistic activity—building—and then only in one context—patronage. For patronage was the prerogative of wealthy princes, who by endowing churches, building palaces, and commissioning histories demonstrated their own glory and that of their house.

It is then with the pursuits and ideals of the ninth-century Armenian noble family that Thomas identifies himself. Their virtues and vices he depicts in a lively and open fashion. So the modern reader is not only informed about specific persons and events (sometimes a rather depressing catalogue of battles and rivalries); he can also gain some insight into the attitude towards life of those distant Armenians, of their underlying motivations and ideals.

Like his predecessors, especially Elishē, Thomas makes effective use of speeches and letters in order to convey those underlying motives. Although such speeches tend to repeat stock themes—and Armenians were familiar with the set-pieces of antiquity, witness the *Girk' Pitoyits'* attributed to Moses Khorenats'i¹⁹⁵—nonetheless, they convey a general impression which represents the ethos of the society that Thomas describes. Two themes may be distinguished: the responsibilities of princes and their rewards.

The first and overriding duty of rulers is to care for the prosperity of the land and the people they govern. The theme is prominent in Elishē, who has Shah Yazkert proclaim that if he does not fulfil his responsibilities he will have to give account to the gods.¹⁹⁶ Thomas, on the other hand, uses the argument most often as a complaint of Armenians against the exactions or oppressions of Muslim governors. Thus Prince Ashot writes to Yovsēp':

It is the duty of kings who govern the world to watch over and care for the prosperity of the country, to lighten the tyrannous yoke of heavy burdens and soften the severity of painful demands for taxes, lest the productive capacity of the country be completely destroyed. They should remove repressive measures of governors, complaisant [but] faithless citizens, the burden of taxes and the military, so that the land may be prosperous and

195. The *Girk' Pitoyits'* (*Book of Chries*, i.e. Greek *Khreiai*, "maxims, sayings") gives models of rhetorical composition based on both pagan and Christian themes. For the Armenian text see Moses Khorenats'i, *Matenagru'iwnk'*, 341–579; and for secondary literature Baumgartner, "Über das Buch," and Sgarbi, "Contributo."

196. Elishē, p. 46.

peaceful and royal taxes come in regularly. Such is our concern and [it is] for you to desire the same. So when we see your benevolent solicitude for the land and [your] friendly kindness towards us, we shall be most eager to serve you loyally and to fulfill your commands with great despatch.¹⁹⁷

Similarly Apumusē, prince of the Atuank', responds to Bugha's demand for capitulation:

It is customary for governors to come to a land with royal solicitude as to obedient subjects, to remove tribulations and relieve distress like guardians, but not to ruin [the land] like brigands and ravage it with sword and captivity. If you had come from court as a governor with peaceful intentions you would have brought benefits and prosperity to these people, not ruin and turmoil. So let it be clear that as long as my strength endures and I live, I shall oppose [you] with the power and force of the Lord God.¹⁹⁸

Apumusē, "son of a priest," continued his letter with extensive quotations from the Bible dedicated to the theme of resistance: "The Israelites slew all the foreigners [*aylazgi*—as often used by Thomas of the Muslims, or by Elishē of the Persians] and God was pleased with them, so too shall I deal with you and your army."

Occasionally Thomas refers to economic prosperity in more specific terms as promoted by building projects. Having described various churches and other constructions built by Gagik in and near Van, he adds:

Descending to the town of Marakan on the river called Karmir which runs into the Araxes, he built a stronghold impregnable to mounted raiders. There too in similar fashion he placed inside dwellings, streets, and buildings divided into rooms, sufficient for his needs, a little below the place called Dzork'. He found there a strong rocky place secure from military attacks, which he enclosed with ramparts. He established there a splendid palace, beautifully adorned for festivities. In this manner he was unstintingly mindful of all necessities, and accomplished everything that might serve the prosperity and peace of the land, involving himself in every useful activity—as is appropriate for kings and princes to care and provide for the prosperity of the country over whose direction they have been appointed by God. For not only was he [Gagik] concerned with its prosperity but he was also

197. Thomas, p. 117.

198. P. 178.

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ready to shed his blood and virtuously lay down his life for his sheep like a good shepherd.¹⁹⁹

But the argument of responsibility could be perverted. Treacherous Armenians, anxious to betray Prince Ashot, wrote to Bugha:

From the court you have received the superintendence of this land of Armenia, and in accordance with the command of the imperial king you hold subjected in obedience to your rule the princes and lords. . . . [You have authority] to punish by bastinado, prison, and various tortures rebels and opponents in a manner worthy of their villainy, and to remove from the country discord and from a peaceful land turmoil, as is right for peace-loving kings and royal princes as doers of God's will and his faithful, loyal servants. So we [numerous named princes] . . . having in our hands the oversight of this land, have written to you, Bugha, commander-in-chief of the Muslims and colleague of the great king. If only you will graciously allow us and our clan, the native habitants of our land, to remain in each one's dwelling and be at peace, we shall deliver Ashot into your hands—without arms or battles or warfare, and you will have to make no effort at all in this. Now you will not reckon us as rebels against his imperial majesty and your honour if you examine the matter properly. . . .²⁰⁰

When Ashot realised that they were plotting treachery, he exclaimed:

What is this that you are doing in secret, and why are you hatching clandestine plots among yourselves? If I seem at all evil in your eyes and have wronged you and have dealt with you falsely, give now a response before my face and indicate expressly one by one each harmful act I have done. . . . But if I have cared for you tenderly like a father, or as a hen gathering her chicks under her wings for protection, and you were everywhere kept in watchful security as in a fortified city, living without worries under my care—is this the compensation you pay me!²⁰¹

More interesting is the continuation of Ashot's speech, for he explains how a prince assured the loyalty of his subordinates:

Did you not reflect on even a single one of the benefits you have received from me? That according to each one's age I honoured every one of you with appropriate care and love. That the exten-

199. P. 254.

200. P. 134.

201. P. 136.

sive goods among my treasures I gave up year by year to plunder. With joyful heart I reckoned as mine the rapine of my house by you and for you—the like of which no one has ever heard that any earlier prince did. Of my despoiling I paid no heed, only desirous that you be filled thereby. On seeing your sons and children, in affectionate compassion I would clasp them to my bosom with great tenderness as my own offspring. So is this now the reward?

The second, longer, part of Thomas's *History* records in detail the endemic rivalry between the Armenian nobles—both feuding within an extended family and competition between families for control of disputed lands. The lure of ambition clearly emerges from his description of the escape from captivity of Ashot, *curopalates* of Tarōn. He had been imprisoned in the castle of Sevan, guarded by Hasan, son of the apostate Vasak:

Then the *curopalates* began to make false insinuations between Derenik and Hasan, who was the son of Derenik's sister, to the effect that Derenik was not treating him honestly but was aiming at taking the fortress from him and gaining control of the land. "Often," he said, "I have verified this from his trusted counselors. So do not remain unconcerned and unworried about this, but promptly look for a way to render his plans void." Now the fortress was quite impregnable, and no little treasure had been accumulated in it over many years, while he [Hasan] himself was very young in years, being at the time of his independence aged fifteen years; for "youth and folly are vanity," as Solomon says. So he fell for the guileful bait at that man's suggestion, hoping for the fortress and the treasures and casting his eyes on the desire for ambition—the gathering of troops, the forming of cavalry, the giving of gifts to magnates and lords of the land, the summoning of everyone to support and aid—so that as his advice proposed so indeed would he do. But he was unable to act openly, for it would have been unbecoming to form an army and prepare for battle. So he plotted with deceitful cunning to carry out the fickle intentions of his plan. He entered the fortress and feigned an illness that was nearly mortal.²⁰²

The tables were turned. Ashot of Tarōn was freed and Derenik imprisoned. Then the latter's supporters came to the castle

202. P. 223.

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of Sevan to try and rescue him. With a rare touch of sarcasm Thomas describes their negotiations with Hasan:

By wise and judicious counsel, with sweet and gentle words, they persuaded the young Hasan, offering him the reverence due his white hairs and the dignity of his princely station and such-like. The patriarch mediated a sworn peace treaty, that they would abandon to eternal oblivion the harm of the evil done. At the begging entreaties of the prince and great patriarch the proposals were carried out, and they extricated him from his captivity, leaving as hostages Gagik, son of Derenik, and the son of Grigor Artsruni.²⁰³

The corollary to ambition and success is revenge for defeat. Thomas refers to the blood of Apupelch shed by Hamza and the suggestion that the former's son might take revenge on the latter's grandson. And the Continuator speaks of a vendetta after Derenik's murder:

On that day the holy churches and ranks of ministers were arrayed in mourning. The golden-laced, arc-shaped coloured hangings were removed from the doors of the rooms, to be replaced by black ones, very rough and sombre. Messengers were despatched hither and yon from among the mourners to shut the windows of the splendid palace, at the order of the princess. "Lest," she said, "the sun in the unattainable height of heaven, as it moves through its vault casting its rays down below, illuminate my darkness. Or the moon, reaching its full measure, with the morning star and all the ornament of the stars, dissipate my mist. Until God gives me among my sons one as courageous as his father, who in my lifetime or thereafter will declare over his tomb that he will take revenge for the spilt blood of his father on the heads of those who plunged me into this darkness."

We were informed by those who had witnessed the events and who carried the [prince's] children in their bosoms that when the princess said this she stretched out her hand onto the shoulder of the splendid young Gagik. But I do not know if this was for the occasion, or whether the great lady Sop'i, blessed among women, did this prophetically.²⁰⁴

Compensation for the duties incumbent upon princes included more tangible benefits than white hairs and dignity. Thomas gives a long description of the death of Ashot Artsruni, elder brother of Gagik, at the age of twenty-nine:

203. P. 224.

204. Thomas, pp. 203, 205, 234; Continuator, p. 267.

For although Ashot ended the measure of his life prematurely, he acquired a surplus by exchanging the certain and unfailing dissolution of this existence for spiritual, eternal, and undying life, repenting and regretting his youthful inclination to easy and quickly accomplished evil deeds. For when the mortal pains gripped him, he no longer fretted over his youthful and premature departure from this world, his leaving the country with its numerous provinces and impregnable fortresses, his abandoning his splendid and delightful high-ranking brothers, and leaving the varied magnificence of nobility and what other sweet delights there are under heaven or earth: the glorious beauty of the sun and moon, with the splendour of the stars in their mutations through the firmament of heaven, of the sea and dry lands, of the pleasure of the magnificent rolling of the waves, and all the other congruous features of providence that reveal the image of the archetype. These and even more displays of material things he plunged into oblivion in his flight to the heavenly beings and the king of heaven.²⁰⁵

Surprisingly Thomas does not often refer to the favourite pastimes of Armenian nobles—hunting and feasting. P'awstos, Łazar, and Moses Khorenats'i frequently describe the pleasure of the hunt—for which special forests were often planted—and the sometimes dissolute feasting that was not infrequently the occasion for acts of violence and treachery. The continuing appeal of hunting is brought out in Thomas's description of Gagik's building at Van:

Furthermore, looking to the east in the direction of Chuashrot and the city of Getk', he constructed a splendid place of pleasure, surrounding with palatial buildings a hill from which one could look down onto the plain to the banks of the river Araxes. There herds of deer gambolled; there were lairs of boars and lions and herds of onagers, all ready for the pleasures of the chase—facing the mountains of Ayrarat, noble Masis, where Artavazd, son of Artashēs, fell headlong on the rough slopes.²⁰⁶

The purpose of the foregoing Introduction has not been to judge the historical veracity of individual episodes as narrated by Thomas Artsruni. Rather, I have been concerned with Thomas as a writer and with his work as a literary document. Emphasis was put on his sources, acknowledged and unacknowledged; on his outlook as a historian; on his models and his motivation. Thomas emerges as an

205. Thomas, p. 249–250.

206. Pp. 253–254; cf. Moses Khorenats'i, II 61.

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intriguing representative of a certain class in Armenia at the turn of the ninth century; he brings to his task the enthusiasms and prejudices of an old noble family that over many generations had risen to the second most prominent position in the country. Although his reliability as a historian of the pre-Muslim period is suspect, his very tendentiousness is important for an understanding of the ethos of Armenian nobles of his own time. He is significant as a source for many traditions concerning Van and Vaspurakan unattested elsewhere. He was not a great scholar, but was typical of his times in his knowledge of previous Armenian literature and of earlier Greek texts—secular and ecclesiastical—available in Armenian. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this *History of the House of the Artsrunik* is the way in which Thomas has adapted the methods and imagery of the classic Armenian historians Moses Khorenats'i and Elishē to portray the fortunes of a different noble family at a later date.

From the fifth century to the present Armenia has produced many notable historians. Thomas holds a worthy place in this long and important tradition. His *History of the Artsrunik* illustrates the remarkable longevity of immemorial ways of life in southern Armenia. In addition to being important as a source, Thomas is also interesting as a writer, for few Armenian historians offer us such a vivid picture of their times. His work, for various reasons, was not popular in the centuries that followed. Now, over a thousand years later, he is indeed a precious witness of a long-vanished culture.

*History of the
House of the Artsrunik'*

.

[1] *The Author's Preface to the History of the House¹ of the Artsrunik⁶*

In the resemblance of his image [God] honoured [man] with autonomous free will and named the being made from dust lord of the circular creation—as said the first of the prophets Moses.² Like words spoke the royally born and prophetically graced David: “With glory and honour you crowned him and set him over your handicraft; and you made everything subject under his feet.”³ He gave to serve him those luminaries established above, those eminent beings which circle around for the affairs and subsistence and needs of men, measuring the division of his works into day and night. As said the psalmist: “At the rising of the sun man goes forth to his work and the labour of his hands until evening.”⁴ And the Saviour said: “It is necessary to work while the day lasts: the night [will] come when no one can work.”⁵

I shall explain in brief: all things have been arranged for the advantage of men at the movement of the two hour-marking luminaries, to indicate the turning rotation of their timekeeping circular course with the stately progression through the air of the heavenly stars—to distinguish the length of days and months and the completion of years; for the measure of the discrete races of

1. For this use of *tun* see Adontz/Garsoian, pp. 342, 347, and Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 114–117.

2. See Gen. 1.27 for the “image,” Gen. 2.7 for “dust.”

3. Ps. 8.6–8.

4. Ps. 103.22–23.

5. John 9.4.

mankind, for wise men to make distinctions, for the differentiation of numbers and the fulfillment of periods.⁶ [2] Thereby the limits of the entire world are defined, according to the four diverse natures, as the opposing movements fuse in fours and threes from the rapid differing flowing currents of the air.¹ From their threefold constitution the seasons are divided three ways into 365 days. With these various sciences civilised men who care for political sagacity [have been occupied] in order to provide for man's livelihood: honourable men, grand and of high rank, honoured by kings, famous and rich, who have been instructed in these matters and diligently occupied themselves therein. Distinguishing the period of each event in numbers, they have established its measure, making the sum total of all time seven ages of a thousand [years].²

So the great Moses of the Hebrews, describer and prophet of the creation of the world,³ who was learned and versed in Egyptian learning, in works of laborious study, said that the circling luminaries were arranged by the Creator "for signs and seasons and days and years."⁴ And through them he encompassed the times of earthly life of men, beginning from our ancestor. Adam, he said, lived 230 years and begat Seth; and having lived 930 years he died.⁵ And the beings that succeeded him he likewise wrote about; and in the same fashion set down in order the various aspects of human activity. Similar to him were a certain Berossus and Abydenus, philosophers of the Chaldaeans, who, not very distant from Moses, set down in orderly fashion in the books of Chaldaean histories the discovery of hours and times and the behaviour of human races.⁶ All these documents, with much labour, others have written, coming down to our time, which kings held empires, for how many years and what periods they lived and ruled, which exceeded

6. For the sun and moon as markers of time cf. *Teaching*, §§267–268.

1. Thomas combines the commonplace of the four elements and their mingling (cf. Elishē, pp. 33–34) with the threefold cycle of the seasons (for which cf. Philo, *In Gen.*, III 3).

2. For the seven ages cf. *Teaching*, §§668–671; and in general Thomson, "Number Symbolism."

3. For Moses as describer of creation cf. *Teaching*, §311, Elishē, p. 35.

4. Gen. 1.14.

5. Gen. 5.3–5. Note that the Armenian and Hebrew do not always agree on the number of years assigned to the patriarchs.

6. Thomas here follows Moses Khorenats'i, I 4, for Berossus and Abydenus.

the other in care for the world.⁷ [They described] the order of wars and peace, the series of victories and defeats, the examples of virtuous and intemperate men, the solidarity and weakness of the valiant and the cowards, [3] the firmness and the slackness of the noble and the ignoble,¹ the inequality of the wise and the foolish, the separateness of the intelligent and the weak-witted, the delight in each one's habits of those who bring prosperity to the land and the negligent; how they ruled, pursued [the lusts] of the flesh or gave pre-eminence to [things] of the spirit; [how] they governed with a care for heavenly life or dragged [themselves] along the ground.² Also [they described] their succession from each other, the existence of various dynasties, the ruling over [different] countries, those who acquired honour in the same according to circumstances, and others who, gorged in tyranny and the piling up of wealth, won for themselves worldly glory. Some were raised to high status by the Lord, like David and Joshua and others who [lived] down to our own time. Each one's name and period, the "how" and "why" they have established by reckoning in numbers and have inscribed in their books of history. According to the different nations and various tongues they have included these in writing for the fulfilment of the church in various ways, so that those who succeed them in the same study and search for wisdom may easily without labour pursue their quest, made more knowledgeable and wise by these men.³

So I, who received the request to compose this work from you, Grigor, lord of the Artsrunik' and prince of Vaspurakan,⁴ have accepted your command which your fond desires imposed on you. In the narrative of this book I shall indicate the genealogy and nature of your ancestors;⁵ I shall set out in order the dates according to the birth of each one of them, bringing the account down in full to our own time. Concerning events in Armenia

7. Thomas refers to Moses Khorenats'i, whose information for the early history of mankind is based on Eusebius's *Chronicle*.

1. *Solidarity . . . slackness*: expressions reminiscent of Elishē; see esp. p. 14.

2. See Philo, *In Gen.* I 48, for this as a symbol of passion and lust.

3. Cf. Eusebius, *Chronicle*, esp. the chronological *Canon* which forms the second part.

4. The author of this *History* only once names himself as Thomas (*T'ovmay*); see p. 76. For Grigor Artsruni as Thomas's patron see the Introduction to this book. *Vaspurakan* is first used to designate a province (east of Lake Van) by the author of the *Narratio*; see the commentary of Garitte to §103.

5. *Genealogy*: *azgabanut'iwn*, common in Moses Khorenats'i (e.g. I 2, 5). For Thomas's emphasis on noble pedigree see the Introduction to this book.

wrought by the rule of the Muslims,⁶ with diligent obedience following your command I shall set to work. To the best of my ability I shall set out in this history in summary form the most important events and what are the appropriate ones.⁷ [4] I shall indicate in this history the least and smallest remnants of records relative to events and places from the earlier and previous historians of our native lords of the Artsruni family, so that their valour and virtue may be clearly revealed by name, place, and time. And I shall seek out the most important ideas as inspiration for this account: who they were, and when, [descended] from whom, where, how, how many, what sort they were, the manner of their reigns, and the ways in which they distinguished themselves; also concerning their wars and victories, whether they were victorious or were defeated, and how some of them for various reasons provided help and advantage to themselves or their comrades. Whatever descriptive information under these topics is included in [previous] accounts we shall abbreviate in this book,¹ using to the best of our ability the writings of the ancient prophetic histories and the newer teachers of Christ's church, and the secular² tales of industrious and ingenious men, who provided like nurses³ to us their followers the wholesome and unadulterated food of sweet and valuable nourishment, bringing us to mature and perfect knowledge in love of science and fear of God—intelligent and wise, zealous for his excellent and enduring riches and those here in this world.

6. *Muslims: Tachik*. For this term see Hübschmann, *Grammatik*, pp. 86–87. In the early Armenian historians it refers to the Arabs of northern Mesopotamia (e.g. Agathangelos, §23); Elishē and Moses Khorenats'i only refer to *Tachkastan* as a geographical area. But by Thomas's time *Tachik* was used to mean not merely "Arab" (as pp. 86 or 103 below), but more frequently "Muslim." Thus on p. 141 the unnamed martyr is called both *Tachik* before his conversion and "Persian." Thomas also uses the term *aylazgi* (foreigner) for Muslims. This has biblical overtones, being used in the Old Testament of Israel's enemies. See further p. 110 n. 3 below.

7. For Thomas's attitude towards the writing of history and his debt in this regard to Moses Khorenats'i, see the Introduction to this book.

1. Thomas is the only Armenian historian to devote a book specifically to the Artsrunik'; but histories of regions or families are common. Earlier writers have many references to the Artsrunik'; for Thomas's elaborations on such passing allusions see the Introduction to this book. It is noteworthy that Thomas often refers to Moses (Khorenats'i) but never mentions by name P'awstos, Łazar, or especially Sebēos, despite his debt to them.

2. *Secular: artak'in*, lit. "outside"—i.e. outside the church, in contrast to the books of the Old and New Testaments or patristic authors. This is a common phrase in Christian authors; cf. also pp. 10, 31, 228 below.

3. Cf. I Thess. 2.7.

The Author's Preface

In this history I shall expound for you, most valiant of literary men,⁴ those who for Christ's sake fought the good fight⁵ and in victory rose from earth to heaven. By their prayers may the Lord enable me to write a straightforward and true account in this book, led by the Holy Spirit with the counsel of Christ, for your pleasure and that of your like. Greetings in the Lord Christ. Amen.

4. *Most valiant of literary men: k'ajd banasirats'*, as on p. 76 of Gagik. For Thomas's patrons see the Introduction to this book.

5. Cf. II Tim. 4.7.

[5] *Book¹ One*

CHAPTER 1

It is [only] with great effort that one can discover the genealogy of the house of the Artsrunik' because of the far-off times and the disappearance of archives in Armenia.² But the pressing command of your lordship obliges us to pursue rapidly this search and to set down in proper style and to register in this book your desire in eloquent words. Great labour have I expended in the search for what is reliable, perusing the written works of antiquarians and many historical accounts; and I have written down whatever I was able to discover, beginning from Adam down to our own time.³

Since the order of the ten nations is accurately written in all accounts,⁴ the next task for us is to set down in order the divisions of the nations following Noah, arranging them according to tribe and the dividing up of the world. So I shall discuss, according to the manifold languages after the building of the tower, from which tribe the Artsruni family arose. And since the equality of the three nations, that is, of the sons of Noah, has been set down in order [6] in all books, there is no need for us to repeat that at length.¹

1. *Book: dprut'iwn*, in this sense a word with many biblical parallels.

2. For "archives" in Armenia see Thomson, *Moses Khorenats'i*, pp. 12-13, and the Introduction to this book.

3. *Style, reliable, antiquarian*. See the Introduction to this book for Thomas's attitude to the writing of history, and compare Moses Khorenats'i (Thomson, *Moses*, pp. 8-13).

4. The ten nations (*azg*) are the ten generations from Adam to Noah; see *Teaching*, §§291-295, *Moses Khorenats'i*, I 4.

1. Thomas is referring to the tables of the descendants of Ham, Sem, and Japheth found in *Moses Khorenats'i*, I 5 (which are based on the biblical genealogies but elaborated to include the Armenians).

Now, following the multifarious researches of Eusebius and the faithful account of Africanus and Moses K'ert'oł,² first I shall expound how the divisions of the nations came about. Then I shall set down the more unlikely and doubtful suggestions from other critical works for comparison, so that by your intelligent and wise erudition you may be able to cast aside the erroneous aberrations of these opinions. The story runs like this.

Noah begat three sons: Zrvan, Titan, and Yapitost'ē, who are Sem, Ham, and Japheth.³ Sem begat Elam and Asur and Arp'aksat' and Aram and Lud. Asur built the city of Ninos—which is Nineveh, called the capital of Assyria.⁴

Now Nebrot', [descended] from Ham, built Babylon, the first city, and was the first to rule on the earth. But because Babylon had fallen to Sem's lot, Nebrot' seized it for himself by force and established there the kingdom of the Ethiopians. Whereas Asur, son of Sem, built Nineveh, [as] the capital city of the kingdom of Assyria.⁵

But why do they say that it was a long time later that Ninos built Nineveh? He was the husband of Semiramis, and begat Ninuas, whose lineage extends as far as King Senek'erim in the time of Hezekiah, leader of the Hebrews, and our Haramay.⁶ It seems to me that it is not appropriate cursorily to pass over the reason for this enquiry. [Rather we should] expound it in toto and write down the truth. Was indeed Asur, who built Nineveh, the grandfather of Ninos from the offspring of Sem, from whom Nebrot' [was descended]; or is indeed the race of the Artsruni descended from Sem or from Ham by Nebrot'?'⁷ For, as has been written, Asur, descendant of Sem, built Nineveh, and Senek'erim [7] ruled over Nineveh by succession and was called king of Assyria. This is confirmed for us by Eusebius of Caesa-

2. Thomas did not use Sextus Julius Africanus directly, but is referring to Moses Khorenats'i, II 10. For the term *k'ert'oł* (grammarian, orator, or poet) see Thomson, *Moses Khorenats'i*, p. 5.

3. For this equivalence see *Moses Khorenats'i*, I 6.

4. *Sem . . . Assyria*. This is from Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 110.

5. For this paragraph see Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 109, and *Moses Khorenats'i*, I 5.

6. *Haramay*: Harmay in *Moses Khorenats'i*, I 5, the father of Aram; as Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 110.

7. Thomas views the Artsrunik' as descended from Sem; but *Moses Khorenats'i*, I 5, places Ninos in the line of Ham.

rea and Julian of Halicarnassos, [who]¹ aver that the kings of Assyria descended from the offspring of Sem, as is known from the established account. For the story runs like this. Titan dominated Zrvan, captured Babylon, and built his royal capital there. Zrvan was the fifth [generation] from Ksisutra.

Now Asur, third from Sem, was the first to build Nineveh. Ninos was the tenth from Sem and from Ham.² But Nineveh was really the lot of Sem, while Ninos is assured to be from the offspring of Ham according to Ariston the Chaldaean³ and Eusebius of Caesarea and Moses Khorenats'i and Julian of Halicarnassos. Because Kronos took as his wife Rhea from the family of Zrvan and seized for himself the kingdom, he did not allow any [descendant] of Zrvan to rule and made a sworn pact that whatever male was born from his wife Rhea of Zrvan's descent was to be slain at birth.⁴ But one child only, Dios by name, was secretly saved by his mother, like Moses in Egypt much later. Thus no [descendant] of Zrvan was able to reign save only a woman named Dionysia—very opulent, licentious, and sensual.⁵ She called herself Semiramis, after her grandfather Sem—which in the Armenian language is pronounced Shamiram. Captivated by her, Ninos of Bel's line took her to wife, for Shamiram was ensconsed in their native city Nineveh. So Ninos entered the roster of kings of Assyria through his wife Shamiram, since it was not the custom for the female line to be included in the genealogy of kings and legislators, save only according to the requirement of chronology—like Got'olia in Israel,⁶ and Cleopatra daughter of Ptolemy Dionysius in Egypt. [8] As a better-known example I can quote you our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ. Explaining his genealogy in the flesh, the evangelist Matthew counts [the generations] one after the other beginning from Abraham and coming down as far as Joseph, yet is silent about

1. Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 110. Julian of Halicarnassos must be a mistake for Julius Africanus. Cf. p. 9, where the reference to the "fourth book" of Julian of Halicarnassos is a reference to the lost book of Julius Africanus.

2. In Moses Khorenats'i, I 5, Ninos is ninth from Ham.

3. Ariston the Chaldaean does not appear in Eusebius. Patkanean (note *ad loc.*) suggests that Abydenos may be intended. But note that Moses Khorenats'i, I 5, refers to the Chaldaean historian Arios.

4. Cf. Moses Khorenats'i, I 6.

5. Cf. the decription of Semiramis in Moses Khorenats'i, I 15.

6. Cf. IV Kings, 11.1; II Chron. 22.2.

the genealogy of Mary.¹ Although Joseph had no share in the birth of Christ, he is included in the genealogy instead of his wife Mary, as I mentioned above. For it was not the custom to mention in the genealogy the list of the female line. Likewise you will find the genealogy of Luke set out from beginning to end; he says "as was supposed"² Jesus [descended] from Joseph, from Jacob, from Hełi, and so successively.

So also the woman Shamiram, from the progeny of Sem, ruled through her husband Ninus over Assyria legitimately,³ having rebelled against Ninus on the grounds that he had come as a foreigner to enter the kingdom of Shamiram [descendant] of Sem. Add to that what is written, that she palpitated with lasciviousness.⁴ But as has been explained, Shamiram of the progeny of Asur from Sem reigned in her own right over Assyria, their native empire; and her descendants [ruled] legitimately one after the other down to T'onos Konkoleros.⁵ Eighty-eight years later Senek'erim succeeded to the throne of his ancestral kingdom with great power.⁶ He captured Babylon and built Tarsus on the model of Babylon, a river running through the middle, as I shall describe in detail below.⁷ Then after the murder of Senek'erim by his sons, Adramelēk' and Sanasar came with a strong force to the mountain Sim, which mountain had been so named after their grandfather Sem—just as in Persian they call Zaruand after Zrvan.⁸ They stayed on Mount Sim until [the time of] Tigran Haykazn. But because Nebrot' had destroyed Nineveh when he overthrew the [descendants] of Sem and built Babylon in its place, when Ninus became king he captured Babylon and [re-]built [9] Nineveh and moved there [the capital of] the Assyrian kingdom. Furthermore, because Mestrim at the division of the nations and the world built Egypt and [the descendants] of Ham there flourished as rulers, the

1. Matt. 1.2–16.

2. Luke 3.23.

3. For the reign of Semiramis see Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I pp. 91 ff. Moses Khorenats'i, I 15, notes that Ninus fled from Semiramis.

4. A reference to Moses Khorenats'i, I 15.

5. Cf. Moses Khorenats'i, I 19.

6. It was forty years from Sardanapalos (= T'onos) to the first olympiad, i.e. the year 1240 from Abraham (as Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 100); and by the year 1289 Senek'erim was king (as Eusebius, *Canon*).

7. As Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 53.

8. See Moses Khorenats'i, I 6, for Sim and Zaruand, and I 23 for the coming of Adramelek' and Sanasar to Armenia. Thomas expands on this below, p. 36. For the geographical location of Sim and of Zaruand see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 316, 338.

Assyrians ruled separately. You will find in the canon table [of Eusebius] Ninos and Shamiram and Abraham and the sixteenth dynasty of Egypt,¹ and also in the fourth book of Julian of Halicarnassos,² as in the fourth book of Moses.³

So Ninos and Shamiram ruled over Asians and Egyptians and subjected them to tribute, but without removing those nations' legitimacy.⁴ I have set down this brief account merely to make known the nations.

Now since the order of my narrative has brought us to this question, we must first realize by what manner the Chaldaean books reckon the number of patriarchs as ten in accordance with Divine Scripture, yet differ [from Scripture] by calling them different names. Likewise they stretch out the periods of time to infinite myriads of years,⁵ which is not a convincing demonstration following one mode [of reckoning]—neither by the movement of the sun for identical periods of months and days according to the four seasons as they change through the year, nor again according to the waxing and waning of the moon. For although their writings are unreliable, yet they have alluded to many things rightly. They were the first inventors of writing, even if the Greeks presume to boast of Ptolemy for having at some time collected all the books of every nation and having them translated into Greek.⁶ But these zealous concerns were [merely] with a view to information from what others had said previously, and not a personal effort to invent writing—although before him, except as concerns the Babylonians, not only the Greeks but other nations also do not appear to have preceded him. For the Greek script was invented later by Cadmus, a Phoenician.⁷ Since we were anxious [10] to comprehend these matters critically and not skim over them, we must here make a

1. Eusebius's *Canon* begins with the first year of Abraham, in the sixteenth dynasty of Egypt, during the reign of Ninos, husband of Semiramis.

2. I.e. Africanus. For the contents of his lost fourth book see Gelzer, *Africanus*, I p. 29.

3. For the enigmatic fourth book of Moses (Khorenats'i) see below, p. 76 n. 1.

4. This is an elaboration on Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 98.

5. Cf. Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I pp. 10–11, for the Chaldaean records, ten kings, and myriads of years.

6. Cf. Moses Khorenats'i, I 2, for Ptolemy and the translations he had made into Greek. For the Chaldaeans as the first to write history see Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 7, echoed in Moses, I 3.

7. But Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 5, says that Cadmus brought writing from Phoenicia.

little pause in our narrative so that we may compare the tales of those outside [the church] with Divine Scripture. Then we shall set our sights on later events.

“God planted paradise,” says [Scripture], “in Eden to the east”¹—that is, in a country in the East about which there is nothing more to say than that in the East men inhabited it, rather than speaking of a western paradise or of it somewhere in between. Its unlimited size is indicated by the enormity of the abundant source, which having irrigated paradise sinks into the earth and re-emerges into the visible world from its invisible [bed] as four mighty and powerful rivers.² Its surpassing beauty what human mouth could describe, or the delightful sight of its divinely planted trees? With inconceivable grace, glory, and honour he [God] crowned man with sovereign authority [over it]³ and gave him paradise to enjoy, also endowing him with a term of life whose many years were as but a day.⁴ It had no need of a foreign source of light whereby it might become dark on the arrival of evening; there was no delay of the sun to dispel the darkness of the night of the luminous creation, which after the rank and station of the first was moved to second place. There was no flowing nourishment to fill any deficiencies of the incorruptible; it was but a very little below the angels. As for [Scripture] saying: “to till it and keep it,”⁵ this was not as if to complete the perfection of paradise or to guard it from harm, but rather it means to work righteousness and keep the commandment, so that by this modest service made like an offering he might thereby be raised to an even higher station⁶ according to the saying: “being faithful in this small matter,”⁷ and not merely have dominion over the planted [garden] but also attain the bliss of heavenly life.

But he gave way to the seduction of the rebellious serpent, who in his deceitful wickedness liberally poured his bitter advice [11] into the ear of the foolish woman. Thereby he trampled on the kindly benefits of the Creator and at the same time the command,

1. Gen. 2.8.

2. For the four rivers see Gen. 2.10–14; cf. the elaboration in the text in St. Martin, *Mémoires*, II pp. 398–405.

3. Cf. Gen. 1.28, and the elaboration in *Teaching*, §274.

4. Cf. Ps. 89.4.

5. Gen. 2.15.

6. Cf. *Teaching*, §270.

7. Matt. 25.23.

and fell into the camp of the murderer.¹ So it is now appropriate to call him deceitful and stupid. He was not content, for himself and his offspring, in his enchantment to abstain from the fruit,² but even desired divine glory³—to seize for himself in his effrontery even the honour of the Creator; in which attempt his deceiver the devil came to grief. As did also his wife, the first to taste [in her desire] to precede her husband in divine honour. Alas for this most false plan and foolish decision, whereby he forgot his composition of dust and intended to turn his back on his awesome God and Creator. He who sees all at a glance descended to seek out the lost one. With soft footsteps⁴ he indicated to him his approach, calling out in a friendly voice: “Where are you, Adam?”⁵ and tenderly bewailed his fall that perchance with His help he might be cared for.

But he, unreasonably refusing the direct recognition of his sin, ascribed the cause to God, saying: “The wife whom you gave [to be] with me, she gave me from the tree and I ate.”⁶ And if Adam [accused] his ilk and helpmate of such things, how could his wife not be blamed for accusing the serpent, who was the very worst of animals?⁷ Hence, according to the order of the sin, first on the snake and then on the woman fell the painful consequences of the curses. But if the worker of sin and the firstborn of all evils who nestled in the snake was not cursed, this indicates the guilt of the snake in finding a source of blame for the penalty, which [was wrought] not only by himself but also by the inventor of evil. To which we respond that in every way he is incurable by good; not a single honourable aspect does he have—if one were to speak without using curses. Likewise the vital aspect in him is not inclined to the good but will be eternally tormented, being indivisible from evil. [12] Philo of Alexandria teaches this about the snake wonderfully: before the occasion of this transgression he had the most wisdom of all breathing creatures;¹ but man was

1. For the names of Satan cf. *Teaching*, §278.

2. For Armenian views on the kind of fruit offered by Eve see Thomson, *Eṭishē*, p. 25 n. 3.

3. See Gen. 3.5. for man becoming like God, and *Teaching*, §§278–280, for man’s failure to attain divine glory.

4. Cf. *Teaching*, §282.

5. Gen. 3.9.

6. Gen. 3.12.

7. For the snake as the worst of animals see Philo, *In Gen.*, I 36.

1. Philo, *In Gen.*, I 31: The snake was the most cunning of creatures. In this work and in the *In Ex.* Philo stresses the sensual nature of the serpent.

able to see the thoughts of each of them even more distinctly [than any other creature]. Later, through the curse the two [good and evil] became understood. Notably by the spirit of prophecy this [knowledge] became helpful counsel for man to incite elimination of his error through repentance, and thus [to provide] some little caution to the other living creatures through their senses, even if these were useless.²

The Lord God dismissed him from the delightful garden to till the earth from which he had been taken.³ So what shall we do with regard to these matters [save] burst into sighs in our lament that the divinely blessed one left the land [of Eden] and exchanged it for this laborious and painful lot by an irremedial and pitiful exchange. Made in the image of God,⁴ he was rendered shadowy; set on high, he was brought low; sharer in immortal life, through the curse he was made dust;⁵ established in lordship,⁶ he was laid low with multifarious evils. He became the servant of woes, leaving to himself and his posterity as inheritance for his sons a life of labour with death and childbearing in grief.⁷ Here with many laments and groaning we must quote the prophet's saying: "Man was in honour and did not understand; he became equal to the irrational animals and was rendered like unto them."⁸

After this Adam approached his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain. He called him "acquired" and "through God";⁹ but [he was] not a worthy heir. She bore again his brother Abel. By the prescient spirit of God he said he was his son,¹⁰ for he would see with his own eyes his father's threatened punishment of death and himself mirrored in his son killed by Cain. Now as for the saying: "Any one who kills Cain will suffer sevenfold vengeance,"¹¹ is there really a sevenfold debt of sin? [13] If God's saying is to be understood according to the overplus of

2. *The two . . . useless*: the present author can make little sense of these five lines.

3. Gen. 3.23.

4. Gen. 5.3.

5. Gen. 3.19.

6. I.e. the lordship over creation; Gen. 1.28.

7. Gen. 3.16.

8. Ps. 48.13, 21.

9. For the etymology (*astuats* = *statsuats*) see Philo, *In Gen.*, I 58. (The later Vardan, *History*, p. 1, derives *astuats* (God) from *ast atsoł*, "bringing [into being] here.")

10. *His son*: reading *gol ordis*, Patkanean's suggested emendation for *golorshis goy*, "[his] breath."

11. Gen. 4.15.

rebuke, suitable for righteous judgment, then likewise it will be accompanied by mercy. Let us see if this seems good to anyone. For did by a series of seven evils this fierce [saying] evolve into harm, or will it seem of a single kind?¹

First of all, because after some days as tardy but not most honoured or important, and faulty but not irreproachable, [Cain] appears from the saying: "If you offer [a sacrifice] but do not divide it aright, you have sinned."² Conversely, Abel took from the firstborn and succulent.

Secondly, his state of vicious and fearless envy, why his [offering] was not regarded in the same fashion by God.

Thirdly, his barbarous deceit, that he in despair led him aside from his parents and slew him wrongfully.

Fourthly, because [it was] a brother and not some stranger. Neither fear of God nor natural compassion softened or weakened the hands of the bloodthirsty beast.

Fifthly, because he filled his parents with incomprehensible bitterness and new mourning.

Sixthly, because he masked his soul in the darkness of evil, even supposing God to be unaware, and answered with brazen face, when he asked him: "Where is your brother Abel?" saying: "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?"³

Seventhly, when he heard the sentence of his retribution from the Lord, he did not turn in terror with tears to efface his sin, but he sealed the judgment of his punishment with his own mouth. Departing from the face of the Lord, with pointless effort he built a city,⁴ not considered among the generations of the penitent and righteous patriarchs.

When Adam was 230 years old he begat Seth, which in the original language is translated as "drinking." This Philo of Alexandria, [14] the philosopher and teacher of old, renders as "drinker of water."¹ Perhaps his father indicated presciently the cause of begetting and the multiplication of humanity. For Adam had many other sons and daughters, but they were not worthy to be heirs of the legitimate father of the world. For only

1. Philo, *In Gen.*, I 75, interprets the "seven" as referring to the seven irrational parts of the soul.

2. Gen. 4.7.

3. Gen. 4.9.

4. Gen. 4.17.

1. Philo, *In Gen.*, I 78. But the rest of this paragraph, "Perhaps . . .," is not from this work of Philo's.

of him does [Scripture] add that: “He begat according to his form and according to his image”;² and again: “God raised up for me another son in place of Abel whom Cain slew.”³

When Seth was 205 years old he begat Enos.⁴ The latter had hope to call on the name of God.⁵ By what example was he emboldened to this? For he learned from his father to call the offspring of Seth “sons of God.”⁶ He was given a command not to mingle with the cursed descendants of Cain.⁷ Thereby he came to know the honour of God’s care, and had hope even more ardently to summon God to visit him.

When Enos was 190 years old he begat Cainan. When Cainan was 170 years old he begat Malaliel. And in the latter’s 135th year the first father Adam died, having lived for 930 years.⁸ So God gave the patriarchs long lives, having settled them opposite paradise, to teach them to regain that same life through repentance. And [he taught them] to be a model of righteousness and patience, not for themselves alone, but also for all mankind; sincerely to acknowledge the fear of God; to establish also natural laws for men, that like themselves others too might learn to avoid lewdness—which was the cause of the original fall, in that by foolish supposition [Adam] had wished to become divine. And that I might repeat the words of the saints: how all the saints received as it were a paternal inheritance, like fathers to hand on to their sons what they had received for safekeeping; whence this heritage has been preserved for us in successive descent.⁹[15] There are very many other things to say about the patriarchs who filled the world. But let us now follow the thread of our story.

Malaliel was 165 years old when he begat Jared. Jared was 162 years old when he begat Enoch—who received the ultimate gift of God’s grace: he was inscribed in the ranks of the immortals while still alive.¹ But before his transfer he made known the

2. Gen. 5.3.

3. Gen. 4.25.

4. Gen. 5.6. The numbers of the Armenian and Hebrew biblical texts do not always agree.

5. Cf. Moses Khorenats’i, I 4, where the theme of hope (Gen. 4.26) is elaborated.

6. Cf. John Chrysostom, *In Gen.*, XXII 3 (PG 53, 189). This explanation is also given by Ephrem, *In Gen.*; see Murray, *Symbols*, p. 221.

7. Cf. Klijn, *Seth*, p. 64.

8. Gen. 5.5. The term “first father” (*nakhahayr*) is not biblical.

9. For the longevity of the patriarchs cf. *Teaching*, §291; and for their handing on the heritage to their sons, *ibid.* §293.

1. Gen. 5.24; cf. *Teaching*, §294.

exterminating anger of God in destroying the race and sons of disobedience, who did not decide to obey the commandment of the holy patriarchs. To this bears witness one of the saints, that Enoch, eighth² from Adam, prophesied, saying: "Behold the Lord has come with myriads of angels to make judgment on all and to reprove all the impious for their works of impiety."³ Here too he mentions their blasphemous habits and all the arrogant words that the sinners and impious spoke about him. And that the number of the seventh he said to be eight by addition, seems to me [to be] because he reckoned the just Abel in the same list. But why [he is not counted] in the genealogy is because Abel did not have offspring.

Now Enoch was 165 years old when he begat Mathusala, and he lived in the latter's lifetime another 200 years before being transferred to immortality in the thirty-third year of Lamech.

Mathusala was 165 years old when he begat Lamech.⁴ Lamech was 188 years old when he begat Noah, and he lived in the latter's lifetime another 565 years until the construction of the ark. Noah was 500 years old when he received the command to make the ark with his sons.⁵

Here the divine Moses, [inspired] by the mouth of God, describes very well the extensive accusation of the impious, indicating each one's fault. When the sons of God, he says, saw the daughters of men to be beautiful, they took to wife any that they chose.⁶ But they had been given a command to keep away from them, whereby he reveals their ruinous corruption. [16] He [God] was cast into despair by the fact that whereas he had shown in them his honourable love by calling them his sons, they had overthrown the natural order by insolently opposing God's command. At the same time they disfigured the earth by

2. *Eighth*: In Jude 14 Enoch is called "seventh" from Adam, with which the *Teaching*, §292, agrees: Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Malaliel, Yared, Enoch. However, there were differing opinions about the numbers of generations before Noah; see Thomson, *Teaching*, §§291 n. 1, 292 n. 1. Here a corruption of "seven" to "eight" in the text of Thomas (ewt'-ut') is likely, since he refers to "eight" again just below, saying that Abel was omitted from the "seven."

3. Jude 14-15.

4. In order that these figures tally, the text of Thomas, *ch, k, e* (i.e. 165), must be corrected to *ch, k, ē* (i.e. 167), the reading of the Armenian at Gen. 5.25.

5. In Gen. 5.32 Noah was five hundred years old when he begat his sons; cf. also Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 121. Eusebius notes that it was another hundred years before the flood (as Gen. 7.11); but it is Thomas who emphasizes that the warning came one hundred years before the deluge.

6. Gen. 6.2.

the multifarious crimes they worked on it. For [scripture] says: "The crimes of men increased on the earth, and everyone assiduously plotted evil in his heart."¹ Furthermore the Lord God saw that the earth was corrupted;² for all flesh had corrupted its path on earth, no longer thinking thoughts of rational creatures, but wandering like wild herds in disorder and all kinds of dissoluteness, taking refuge in [their] strength of limb and unbridled in boasting of the strength of their arm. They had no concern at all for anything proper but only for the most vicious.

So God repented that he had created man.³

He reflected in his heart, he who knows and sees all things perfectly clearly before they come about; and with human voice he indicated his disowning [of them] to their complete destruction. So he commanded the just one to construct the ark as an indication of the obliteration of the impious.⁴

Listen and wonder here even more, how the mercy of the benevolent one overcame his righteous anger. He temporarily postponed the threatened punishment for a hundred years in his mercy.⁵ And there were visions even more striking and novel: the saints say that the sound of axes and the chopping of groups [of workmen] in hewing the wood⁶ rang like the thundering of clouds in the ears of everyone near and far for the terror and admonition of the heedless nation, that perchance they might turn and be saved. Not that God was unaware of what would befall them; but being naturally good, he remained in his unchanging nature and delayed the right compensation for the lover[s] of evil. As [Scripture] says elsewhere: "I am the Living Lord; [17] I do not wish the death of a sinner but that he may turn from his wicked path and be saved."¹

Now some say that the ark was built at Laodicea in Phrygia,² which of the three areas of the world is called the region of

1. Gen. 6.5.

2. Cf. *Teaching*, §295, for the pollution of the earth, based on Gen. 6.12.

3. Gen. 6.6.

4. Gen. 7.14.

5. Cf. above, p. 15 n. 5.

6. For the sound of axes and saws indicating the coming of the flood see "The Story of Noah," in Stone, *Apocrypha*, p. 88.

1. Ezek. 33.11.

2. Cf. p. 257 below. That the ark was built in Laodicia does not appear elsewhere in Armenian historians; but the Armenian version of Michael's *Chronicle*, p. 10, refers to Josephus and the idea that the ark landed in Pisidia. This does not appear in Josephus; cf. below, p. 19 n. 1.

Asia.³ But these reports are quite unreliable, because of the ten holy patriarchs not a single one seems ever to have been said to have dwelled in Asia Minor.⁴ But at God's command they dwelt opposite the garden,⁵ fasting and mourning in penitence, lamenting the fault of the first life, completely divorced from bodily interests, abstaining from meat and wine in a life of spiritual prophecy. After the flood it was commanded: eat meat, like vegetables and herbs.⁶ After the flood Noah drank wine; and because he was inexperienced in the matter he became drunk.⁷ And those not similar to these heard from the Lord: "Let my spirit not remain on these men for ever because they are flesh"⁸—that is, lovers of the body and not of the spirit. The just patriarchs remained in the same place, and there died. There the ark had been built and terrible evils abounded on earth. When the just one complained after a hundred years, he was commanded by the only and awesome God: "Enter your ark with your sons and the wives of your sons. For behold in seven more days I shall bring a flood of waters over the earth to destroy everything in which there is living breath"⁹—indicating [his] further mercy for the number seven.¹⁰

Oh the inexhaustible benevolence of God. Oh his incessant love for man, which is still said to pardon the senseless.

On that day Noah entered the ark with his sons, his wife, and the wives of his sons.¹¹

But some historians say that a daughter of Noah and the ship's architect with his wife and sons and intimate friends [also entered the ark].¹² This seems to me plausible. For after the flood the patriarch does not seem to have had any more sons, [18] while the land of upper India is said to be his daughter's. And Eusebius of Caesarea says that by custom up until today a

3. The threefold division of the world was based on Greek sources; cf. also Moses Khorenats'i, II 2, and the *Ashkharhats'oyts'*.

4. *Asia Minor: Mijerkreayk'*, lit. "Mediterranean."

5. Cf. *Teaching*, §287; but there of Adam.

6. Cf. Gen. 9.3-5; but there meat is forbidden.

7. Gen. 9.20-21.

8. Gen. 6.3.

9. Gen. 7.1, 4.

10. For early Armenian interpretations of the number "seven" see Thomson, "Number Symbolism."

11. Gen. 7.7.

12. This story does not appear in earlier Armenian historians.

woman reigns over the land of India.¹ But as for those who joined in building the ark, if it is most appropriate to say that those who trusted the just one and took refuge with him believed in his words and obeyed with fear his commands—why should it seem unbelievable that they too enjoyed salvation with him, just as [God] saved the harlot Rahab with her relatives from the wrath at Jericho because of his timely benevolence, or the Gabaonites from the slaughter of the Canaanites?² They were so worthy of care that vengeance for their blood was taken from the house of Saul. And when Scripture says “about eight persons,”³ that is an expression of incertitude. Of these we say that if this command was given them [only], yet through them others too were saved. Likewise, of the eight who entered the ark not all were elect, but through the just one the lesser too were saved.

Now Philo says that out of respect for his affection, Sem took the bones of Adam, as the father of all, and placed them in the ark—which I shall repeat a little later [when treating] of him.⁴

“And the Lord shut up the ark from the outside,” says [Scripture].⁵

Oh command of frightful anger for his last moment. Oh fearsome sounds and trembling of the foundation of heaven and earth. For if the course of a single thunderbolt and the crack of the clouds are sufficient to terrify even intelligent persons and cause them to faint, what did the souls of the survivors on earth then endure from the raging torrents that broke their banks and burst from the depths before the destruction of the flooding waters! Thereby all springs of the earth were rent open; the confines of heaven were opened⁶ to fuse heaven and earth in one uninterrupted sea. The spreading water exterminated every breathing and living creature; for a whole year the earth re-

1. This is not in the *Chronicle* or the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius, the only works of his translated into Armenian. The later Mkhit'ar Ayrivanets'i, *History*, p. 266, notes that Noah's daughter settled in Arabia Felix. See also Vardan, p. 10.

2. See Josh. 6.17, 23 for Rahab, and ch. 9 for the Gibeonites.

3. I Pet. 3.20 (i.e. Noah, his wife, three sons, and their wives).

4. That Noah took Adam's bones into the ark is asserted in the apocryphal *Death of Adam*; see Stone, *Apocrypha*, p. 30. But Philo does not report this. Cf. also the Armenian version of Michael's *Chronicle*, p. 11, and Vardan, *History*, pp. 9-11.

5. Gen. 7.17.

6. *All springs . . . opened*: Gen. 7.11.

mained in complete devastation.⁷ After the fulfilment of the divine command, the billowing waters brought the ark [19] from the East to the middle of the earth; it came to rest on the mountains of Korduk',¹ and the patriarch offered holocausts of thanksgiving to God. He who received the offerings promised no more to inflict that same punishment on men and established an eternal covenant: "I shall place my arc in the clouds,"² which is the rainbow. Some say that it is fire emerging from cloud, and those who worship the elements (say it is) the belt of Aramazd.³ But if Bel is the one who gives orders to Aramazd, how is it that Aramazd is deprived of his belt—at Bel's command?⁴ But we shall linger here no further on their fables. It is not fire emerging from cloud, otherwise it would have to be visible also at night. But in reality it is rays of the sun, hidden by clear air above the dense and compact moist clouds. Since it did not occur in the beginning, it is said to have come about in the time of Noah.

After this the sons of men increased and divided the world into three parts, according to the account of Herodotus, and as the great Epiphanius expounds in order.⁵ But we said we would repeat the account of Philo, that noble man and very learned philosopher; a follower of the holy apostles, he provided the church with many teachings from the ancient Jews as fine examples, as the book of Eusebius of Caesarea teaches us.⁶ In the *Explanation of the Hebrew Names* Philo says that Sem took the bones of Adam on a beast of burden and brought them to the land of his inheritance. When he reached a rocky overhang he stopped the beast. There by certain events the place came to be called "place of [the] stable," which was somewhat distorted in the Hebrew language, seeming to be pronounced Awawr-

7. The flood lasted one year and ten days; compare Gen. 7.11 with 8.14.

1. That the ark landed in Korduk' (south of Lake Van, see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 333) is noted by Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 37, and Josephus, *Antiquities*, I 3, quoting Berossus. This is also the opinion of P'awstos Buzand, I 10. Josephus, *Antiquities* XX 2.2, also mentions the idea that the ark landed at Carrhae.

2. Gen. 9.13.

3. Thomas follows Philo, *In Gen.*, II 64, for the "belt of Aramazd" and his general discussion of the nature of the rainbow. Cf. Josephus, *Antiquities*, I 3, for the rainbow as the bow of God.

4. This sentence is not clear. For Bel as father of Aramazd see p. 21 at n. 2 below.

5. Cf. above, p. 17 n. 3.

6. See Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, II 4.1, for Philo as a philosopher, and II 17.2 for Philo's relationship to the apostles.

shelim—that is, Jerusalem—which being translated means “my stable was completed.”⁷

Now the tomb in which the first father's bones were placed, a place of death and execution, the same is “summit” and “Golgotha” in Hebrew, with a double name.⁸ Ham seized it from the sons of Sem, and it was built up as a city of the same name. [20] Therefore the divine [command] in the time of Moses ordered him to take as vengeance on the Canaanites the border fixed by the patriarch. This David celebrates: “He remembered his eternal covenant and the word which he commanded for a thousand years.”¹ A little later he says: “I shall give you the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.”² For to Ham were given by his father Egypt and Libya and [the territory] as far as the Southwest. Japheth [was given] all of Europe from the mountain of Amman as far as the Northwest. And to Sem [was given] Asorestan with all its extent as far as the regions of the East.³

Noah lived after the flood during his sons' lifetimes for 350 years down to the eighty-third year of Eber,⁴ demonstrating God's will and the natural law to the nations that came after him. We have now recalled the genealogy of all mankind from the first patriarchs in brief, because our especial concern was to know the lineage of the men who ruled over our land⁵ and the kings of Assyria before them, son from father in succession down to King Senek'erim, who in the time of Hezekiah, king of Jerusalem, became the founder of this Artsruni house.⁶ These add up to the following thus far: Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Malaliel, Jared, Enoch, Mathusala, Lamech, Noah, Ham, Kush, Nebrot', who is also Bel.⁷ Of these enough has now been said.

7. The etymology is derived from *arwa* (stable) and *shlem* (completed), but it does not appear in Philo. See n. 144 to the Introduction.

8. Cf. Stone, *Onomastica*, p. 128: Golgotha is “a place of execution where the heads of the dead are buried.” Thomas may here see a parallel between *gagat'n* (summit) and *Golgot'ay*.

1. Ps. 104.8.

2. Ps. 104.11–12.

3. For this division see Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I pp. 108–109.

4. Gen. 9.28; but for Eber's eighty-third year see Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 134.

5. I.e. Vaspurakan, the land of the Artsrunik', not all Armenia.

6. Cf. above, p. 6.

7. For Nebrot' as Bêl cf. Moses Khorenats'i, I 5 (based on Eusebius). Thomas has here omitted Mestrayim (son of Kush), for whom see p. 9 above and p. 24 below.

CHAPTER 2

Concerning Bel and the Babylonians and their fables

Although the testimony of later [writers] concerning Bel and the Chaldaeans' heroic follies does not serve our present enquiry, [21] yet I shall pass over their ravings without blame, not regarding their ridiculous acts as valour, as they suppose. For they say that the first of the gods was some ancient Belos, father of Dios, called in Armenian Aramazd,¹ who lived 215 myriad years or more ago. Likewise there are other fables, that a book was written by him and guarded very carefully in Babylon—which book we know was [written] after the flood.

Others say that a certain Chronos was father of Aramazd, closer in time, who warned Ksisutra about the events of the flood. He wrote an account of his earlier deeds and placed it in a bronze vessel fastened with lead for safekeeping in the city of the Siparats'ik.² And others have in many various ramblings about times and events—which inconsistencies we do not think appropriate to put in writing in order to explain the fables. Now Nebrot, son of Kush a descendant of Ham, was much more powerful not only than the early fantastic [giants] but even than the later Hercules, the raving tyrant who [for] his warlike deeds at Troy and his valiant and powerful victories was named god by them.³ And he [was even more powerful] than the world conqueror Alexander of Macedon; for the latter through the deceit of some magus and magician said he was a son of Ammon and Aramazd,⁴ although he did not deny he was mortal. Whereas the former [Nebrot] said he was the timeless Bel of the ancients, not [merely] the father of the god but the commander of Aramazd.⁵ He was the powerful bestower of time on others. As to the men who [lived] before the flood [he gave] forty or more myriads of years and successive eras of different sorts and barba-

1. Aramazd is equated with Zeus (Dios) in all Armenian texts; see Garitte, *Documents*, p. 214. Here Thomas is quoting from Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 25.

2. Here Thomas is following Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I pp. 31–33. Cf. Moses Khorenats'i, I 7: Bel is Chronos, the father of Aramazd. Cf. also above, p. 19 at n. 4.

3. Hercules was associated with the time of the Trojan war; see Eusebius, *Canon*, year 826 of Abraham.

4. See *Alexander Romance*, §77.

5. For Nebrot (the biblical Nimrod) as Bēl see above, p. 20 n. 7, and as commander of Aramazd cf. p. 19.

rous—[called] *shar* and *ner* and *sos*⁶—so also he allegorised the names of the patriarchs as doubtful. He was arrogant and confident in the strength of his arm and his massive stature; for they say that his height was sixty cubits.⁷ The seeds of his folly were honoured by the Babylonians and preserved down to the time of Alexander of Macedon; [22] and a king of the Babylonians erected to him a golden statue, a monument as a record of his valour. Although he escaped the punishment of the true God, the evil became habitual and was unfailingly preserved. After a long time the expense of his needs was declared to be provided by the king, in accordance with his uncontrollable force and the size of his stomach, [namely] Bel's food. Just as the Greeks once reported that the god Heracles deflowered fifty virgins in one night,¹ calling valour things that are infamous and shameful, so also the Babylonians claimed marvels for Bel: that in one night he ate twelve measures of flour and forty sheep.² For that reason the king said to Daniel with joyful heart as a boast: "Why do you not worship Bel? Do you not see how much he eats and drinks?"³

Oh blind Babylonian with brains addled by mice and moles,⁴ unless you have anything else in mind good to say, why is the insatiable filling of Bel's stomach such splendour to you? Oh folly of the ancients, what madness and devilish inventions penetrated into the world in former times: rebellion against God and grief for the holy angels, the cause of perilous death for the servants of God in days to come. So it is [now] the appropriate time to make worthy excuse for the people of that time and many blameless: if so many piled barns of food were stored up for Bel's furnace, would not then his excretions be profitable for the glory of the Babylonians according to their reckoning? The divine judgment warns through Jeremiah: "On that day I shall seek vengeance from Bel in Babylon, and I shall take from his mouth what he has swallowed."⁵ For certain phan-

6. For the *shar* (3,600 years), *ner* (600 years), and *sos* (60 years) see Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 11.

7. See Daniel 3.1: the golden statue of Bel constructed by Nebuchadnezzar was sixty cubits high and six cubits wide.

1. Cf. *Book of Chries*, III 3 (p. 379), for Armenian knowledge of Heracles' nighttime impieties.

2. Dan. 14.2.

3. Dan. 14.3.

4. Lev. 11.30 refers to mice and moles as unclean animals.

5. Jer. 51.44.

toms and shadows of the ancients, according to each one's suppositions, were devoid of the inspired patriarchs' knowledge of God.

Nebrot⁴ of his own initiative declared himself a god⁶ and reigned in Babylon with mighty power. He worked apparent miracles by magic to the astonishment of all. [23] He ruled over all nations under heaven. He commanded in a fearsome fashion every one everywhere to set up his image, to worship it as god and offer it sacrifices.¹ This was the origin of idolatry. Not something imaginary as the ancients said of Bel, or other shadowy appearances, dreamlike and deceitful demons²—but he showed for worship [a statue] made by mortal hands. This custom one could attribute to P'ateg, son of Eber, or Añan, son of Taray; for these are said to have died before their fathers,³ and in their merciful compassion their fathers fashioned images of their sons, according to Solomon's saying: "A father, afflicted by untimely grief, made an image of his son who had died prematurely."⁴

But this custom was altered by the evil one into setting up images in honour of giants and heroes and barbarian kings. And in his time they became addicted to the cult of demons. It is appropriate to liken them to the example of Bel. In his raging pride he gave orders for a senseless cooperation on a vain task—to erect a tower from earth whose top would reach heaven.⁵ But by pre-emptive scattering from above [God] divided the single language of mankind into various forms. Only one person retained his own tongue, the patriarch of the Hebrews Eber, son of Sañay, who had not agreed to join the senseless project of building the tower. Hence we know that the original language was Hebrew.⁶

But the timeless Bel was exterminated in time by Hayk, son of

6. For Bel as god see Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 82.

1. For Nebrot⁴ as the originator of idolatry see the *Primary History*, p. 49 in Sebēos, p. 359 in Thomson, *Moses Khorenats'i*.

2. Cf. Agathangelos, §§59, 67, for demons persuading men to erect images, and idolatry as "dreamlike."

3. See Gen. 11.17–19 for Peleg, and 11.28 for Añan.

4. Wis. 14.15. The idea is elaborated in Agathangelos; see Thomson, *Agathangelos*, pp. xl–xlii.

5. *Tower: burg*, not the *ashtarak* of Gen. 11.4 or of the Armenian Eusebius. The Greek Eusebius has *purgon*, Aucher I p. 38.

6. Eber gave his name to the Hebrews: see Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 110; his was the original tongue, *ibid.*

Torgom of the family of Japheth, who rebelled [against him].⁷ He disclaimed the hunter⁸ [descended from] Ham and spurned him, saying: "Not only are you not a god but you are a dog, and a pack of dogs runs at your heels."⁹

Appropriate here are the prophetic blessings of the great patriarch and father of the world Noah, in his saying: [24] "God will increase Japheth and cause him to dwell in the house of Sem."¹ For eastern Asia was the lot of Sem; and when Hayk fled and removed himself from Bel and Babylon, he came to eastern Asia. Nebrot' with his haughty host pursued him; he was killed with his army by Hayk, struck by an arrow. Some historians say that he fled back to Assyria. But these are vain words; for the great orator Moses expatiates at length on this: the mode of his death, and how his embalmed corpse was taken to the province of Hark', in the sight of many.² The period of his tyranny was sixty-two years. Some historians say his father was Mestrim, called Metsrayim—that is, Egypt—because of [his] inheritance of the borders of Egypt. For Kush son of Ham is called Ethiopian, whom the Book of Genesis calls the father of Nebrot'; and Ethiopia is part of Egypt and of greater Libya.³

Now according to historians the order of genealogy goes like this: Ham begat Kush; Kush begat Mestrim. But the Book of Genesis says Nebrot', while according to other historians Mestrim begat Nebrot'. Nebrot' begat Bab; Bab begat Anabis; Anabis begat Arbēl; Arbēl begat Kayeł; Kayeł begat the other Arbēl; Arbēl begat Ninos, husband of Semiramis. And the fact that they say Ninos reigned after Bel and were unconcerned about those [in between] is because in the books of the ancients they had orders from the kings to write [only] about the notable exploits of valiant men and not about those of ignoble men.

7. For Hayk's destruction of Bel see Moses Khorenats'i, I 11, and the *Primary History*. Thomas emphasizes Hayk's descent from T'orgom (as Moses, I 5), but some Armenians emphasized Ashkenaz (this being the first word in Koriun's biography of Mashtots').

8. *Hunter*: Gen. 10.9.

9. This is from the *Primary History*, Sebēos p. 50, Thomson p. 360, not from Moses Khorenats'i.

1. Gen. 9.27.

2. Moses Khorenats'i, I 10–11. There is no Armenian tradition that Nebrot' (Bel) escaped back to Assyria. For Hark' see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 328.

3. Cf. Moses Khorenats'i, I 5. But in Gen. 10.9 the father of Nebrot' was Kush. Metsrayim (Gen. 10.6,13) is given greater emphasis by Eusebius (*Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 201), whom the Armenians followed.

They were to portray the character and images of valiant men as virile and splendid; while the feeble and effeminate [characters] of the ignoble and lower sort were to be indicated only by name.⁴

[25] CHAPTER 3

*Concerning the kingdom of the Assyrians;
how Zradasht and Mani'op became leaders of
the region of the East;
and their erroneous teachings*

As an exposition of those times that we mentioned above—from the days of Bel down to Ninos—nothing important or significant is found in the books of the ancients, perhaps because of many obstacles. First because the confusion of languages caused a lack of common concern, or because the base deeds of heroes were not written down by the Chaldaean historians. Furthermore, even if there were accounts, [only] the valiant deeds of Ninos were recorded. After the model of Bel he became even more arrogant, haughty, and egoistic; he said he was the original hero and first king. For, gathering the books of the ancients together with strict diligence, he ordered them to be burned so that no trace or record of others' names might remain save of him alone.¹ He is said to have reigned over all Asia and Libya except only for India.² He also restored to the honour of his own name the city of Nineveh, the first palace built by Asur which Nebrot' had destroyed.³ And having subdued Zradasht the magus, king of Bactria and Media,⁴ he pursued him as far as the borders of the Hephthalites, then reigned powerfully over all Khuzhastan and the eastern regions and Persia, even beyond Balkh and Depuhan, over Govmayid and Guzban, Sher-i-bamamakan and Khochihraстан, and altogether as far as the Indian Sea he ruled with great valour and bravery for fifty-two

4. For this paragraph Thomas is following Moses Khorenats'i, I 5. For Thomas's own ideas on the writing of history see the Introduction to this book.

1. As Moses Khorenats'i, I 14.

2. As Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 84.

3. *Ibid.*, I p. 110.

4. Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 91 (followed by Moses Khorenats'i, I 18) only refers to Zoroaster's defeat by Semiramis. See below at n. 6.

years.⁵ On his death, since his sons were very young, he gave his empire to his wife Semiramis, who ruled even more valiantly than Ninos. She also fortified Babylon with walls and put down the rebellion of Zradasht, whom she brought into submission to herself.⁶ [26] And since in her lascivious wicked life she paid no attention to her sons, thinking only of her lovers [and showering them] with expensive treasures and liberal honours, she appointed Zradasht as governor of Babylon and Khuzhastan and all eastern Persia.¹ She herself went from Assyria to Armenia in lustful desire at the report of a certain Haykazn. In what fashion she arrived, the war caused by her actions, the noble constructions of her workmen which are indeed worthy of wonder, and also the revolt of Zradasht, the death of Semiramis and the saying about her talisman—all this has been expounded by others.² She reigned for forty-two years.³ Then her son Zameay held sway, who was called Ninuas after his father. He reigned over Assyria, and for a while also over Armenia. He had no interest in expanding [his empire] but lived in peace, being of pleasure-loving and unwarlike character.⁴

As Zradasht held so many regions of eastern Persia, from then on he no more imposed tribute on Assyria. Similarly, condemning the [stories] about Bel and the other heroes as being very ancient and obscure, he composed a new fable about himself in order once and for all to separate the Persians and Medes from the Babylonians and that in doctrine and repute he might no more be said to have any connection with the Assyrians. He was perverse enough to say that Sem, Noah's son, was a new Zruan, the first of the gods. The latter, he said, desired to become father of Ormizd and said:⁵ "May I have a son Ormizd

5. For the fifty-two years see Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 82. The place names in Persia are not found in Eusebius. See Markwart, *Eranšahr*, p. 45 for Depuhan, p. 227 for Guzban (= Guzman), pp. 92–93 for Sher-i-Bamikan, pp. 44–45 for Kochihhrastan (= Khuzhahrstan). Vardanyan, note 50, identifies Govmayid with the river Gavmaha.

6. For the building of Babylon by Semiramis see Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 70; for her war against Zoroaster see above at n. 4.

1. See Moses Khorenats'i, I 17, for this sentence.

2. I.e. Moses Khorenats'i, I 15–18.

3. As Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 82.

4. As Moses Khorenats'i, I 19; cf. also p. 33 below.

5. The following tale, with slight variations, is found in both Eznik, §145, and Elishē, pp. 24–25. Thomas here follows Elishē. For his borrowings from Elishē elsewhere see the Introduction to this book.

by name, who will create heaven and earth." So Zruan conceived twins. Now the knavish one of them made haste to present himself first.⁶ Zruan asked him: "Who are you?" And he replied: "I am your son Ormizd." He said: "My son Ormizd is luminous and sweet-smelling, but you are dark and evil-loving." But since he greatly importuned him, he gave him power for a thousand years. After a thousand years Ormizd was born, and he said to his brother: "For a thousand years [27] I have been obedient to you; now do you obey me." Realising his defeat Arhmn rebelled and revolted against Ormizd, becoming an opposing deity. Ormizd created light, Arhmn made darkness; the former created life, the latter made death; the former created fire, the latter made water; the former created good, the latter made evil. And not to repeat every detail, in sum everything that is good is Ormizd's and noble, while evil things and demons are Haraman's.¹ Now as for whoever might think Zradasht's teachings most ridiculous and say that he was a foolish king, tell him that your unpaid god Ormizd does not labour in vain; perhaps your opponent [deity], being close by, at some time may get angry and destroy you.

Furthermore the same foolish Zradasht says that there happened to be a war between Ormizd and Haraman. Being greatly famished, Ormizd wandered over the land seeking food. Seeing a bull, he stole it and led it aside. He sacrificed it, piling up stones over it, and waited for evening in order to remove secretly his plunder and satisfy his hunger. When evening came, he was joyfully intending to gorge himself with food but found it bad and spoiled; for lizards and spotted lizards and newts and beetles had come up and eaten his prey.² So thenceforth woodlouse and every kind of insect captured in villagers' pots³ will come to the royal court to slaughter, because they became harmful for the deity. Much other raving nonsense he also legislated. And it was not for frivolous reasons that we resolved to write these things but because through this devilish doctrine

6. *First: nakhazhaman*, i.e. by prematurely emerging from the womb.

1. *Haraman*. This form is found in Elishē, not in Eznik; see also Hübschmann, *Grammatik*, pp. 26–27. For non-Armenian sources for this tale see Mariès, "Études de critique."

2. This tale seems to be a deliberate attempt at ridicule of the story of Ahriman's slaughter of the bull. See Zaehner, *Twilight*, pp. 262, 267, for the noxious insects created by Ahriman.

3. *Captured in villagers' pots: geawhjn* (gen. of "village") *kapchahamar* (from *kapich*, "socket, vessel"); I follow Vardanyan's rendering.

much oppression and death have ravaged and destroyed Armenia—as the history of the saints Vardan and his Companions indicates to you, which the blessed priest Elishē wrote.⁴ Even now the sons of the fire worshippers still say the same things.⁵

Manit'op, king of the Hephthalites, in a further elaboration affirms this:⁶ they do not say that fire is a creature of Ormizd, [28] but the nature of Ormizd.¹ And Hephaistos and Prometheus, who are the sun and moon, stole the fire from Ormizd and gave a part [of it] to mankind.² And earth is host to the god Spandaramet;³ it was not created by anyone, but as it now appears, so it [always] was and remains; and man is self-begotten.

Of this I have also been informed by many of those who are called Shakhrik'. I had occasion to meet some of them coming from the land of Aplastan,⁴ who called themselves *hamakdēn*—that is, “fully knowledgeable in the faith of fire.”⁵ These same things they affirmed with other abominable wickednesses. Our ancestor Adam they said was not the first man, but the son of someone else, Shurel, a camelherder.⁶ Persecuted in an unknown land and being found there untrustworthy, he was expelled; with his wife he came to the middle of the world, and leaving there became our patriarch. Following up his sayings I enquired: “Where do you say that unknown land was?” And they said: “There is an exceedingly high mountain beyond which no humans dwell.” I know from the geographies of Ptolemy that

4. Cf. Elishē, p. 125, for the “death” (*lit.* “sword,” as here) and “oppression.”

5. A rare reference in Armenian to Zoroastrians of Islamic times.

6. *Manit'op*: Vardanyan renders as *Manet'on*, a garbled reference to the historian Manetho. This is likely, because what follows has close parallels in Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 200, a passage taken from Manetho. But the association with Hephthalites, *Khep'talk'* (who are mentioned, for example, by Sebēos or Moses Daskhurants'i) is most peculiar.

1. For Aramazd (Ormizd) identified with the hot see Zaehner, *Twilight*, p. 202.

2. Cf. Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 200, and Moses Khorenats'i, I 7. But these writers say the sun derives from Hephaistos, who discovered fire.

3. *Spandaramet*: See Hübschmann, *Grammatik*, pp. 73–74, for further Armenian references, and Thomson, *Agathangelos*, §743 n. 1, for secondary literature.

4. *Shakhrik'*, *Aplastan*: Vardanyan, note 58, glosses the former as tribes dwelling near Tehran. The word is not found elsewhere in Armenian; it is not likely that it is a corruption of Shakhi in the Caucasus (cf. p. 261 below), since Aplastan is listed in the *Ashkharhats'oyts'*, §38, immediately after Sagastan. For Aplastan see also Markwart, *Eranšahr*, pp. 39–40.

5. *Hamakdēn*: “fully versed in [Zoroastrian] religion.” See Hübschmann, *Grammatik*, p. 177.

6. *Shurel*: The name does not appear elsewhere in Armenian. *Arertaboyts* is rendered by Vardanyan as “camel herder,” but is unattested elsewhere.

the mountain of Emawon in the East, which is truly the highest [spot] of the whole earth, has not been trodden by the feet of men.⁷ Even with attentive eyes only with difficulty can anyone descry the summit of the mountain, as it is close to the heavens. The people under discussion told me: “Many of us reached a part of that mountain and saw that the regions of the East were a very extensive plain, stretching for a great distance, level, not enclosed by any boundary, impossible for the eyes to take in, adorned with a strong light at night [giving] a diverse appearance; and in the daytime [it is covered with] a very dense cloud like soft felt, in the form of a very bright white mist. Of this they said that it was the foreign unknown land.” After comparing [this] with other accounts I rejected [them] and was strongly inclined to believe this last account—that perhaps this was the land inhabited by the first man. For in truth paradise was physical and tangible, and not spiritual or between [29] two worlds, as they report about Origen’s view.¹ Nor is it distant, as some suppose who do not know the Lord’s saying to the robber: “To-day you will be with me in paradise.”² Appropriate here are also the reports of Alexander of Macedon to Olympias;³ perhaps he reached a place outside the borders of paradise. And the circumstances of the wonderful unknown tree, which in one day grows with incredible rapidity and then suddenly shrinks; the drops of dew [on it] had an incomparable sweetness. And there are not only strange and incomprehensible forms and types of plants but also invisible guards of incomparable vigilance who torment those who approach with invisible power—which I do not believe is [even] said of the demons. “And we heard the lashing of the tormentors,” he says, “and saw the blows falling on the backs [of the punished], but we did not see the tormentors. But there was a voice [warning] not to gather and not to cut, otherwise that person would die and the group would be destroyed with a baneful disease. In frightened terror we left there.”

Similarly you can learn other marvels like these from the same book. After a little he says: “Frequently my friends begged me to

7. Thomas is quoting from the *Ashkharhats’oyts’* for Ptolemy and Emawon “the biggest of all mountains,” §40.

1. See Origen, *De Principiis*, II 11.6: “paradise, where departed spirits go, is between earth and heaven.”

2. Luke 23.43.

3. Thomas here begins to quote from the *Alexander Romance*, §209.

return, but I did not wish to do so because I wanted to see the end of the earth. From there we set out across the desert by the side of the sea. From then on we saw no more fowl or beast, save heaven and earth. We no longer saw the sun, but [marched] through gloomy weather for ten days. Then we arrived at a spot by the sea. Placing the tents and all the camp [equipment] on board, we embarked and sailed to an island in the sea, not far from land, whence we heard the voices of men [speaking] Greek; but we did not see the speakers. Some soldiers, risking death, swam out from the ship to the island, but a crab came out and dragged fifty-four soldiers into the water. We moved on from there in fright and in two days arrived at the place where the sun does not rise. As I wished to instruct servants to try and see where [30] the place of the blessed was, Callisthenes my friend advised me to penetrate [there] with forty friends, one hundred young men and twelve hundred soldiers only. Outside, after the journey, we came across a female ass which had a foal. We immediately attached her foal to the army. When we had entered fifteen miles,¹ two birds met us which had human faces and were larger than birds at home. They loudly cried out in Greek: 'Why do you tread on [this] spot to see the house of God, Alexander? Turn back, miserable one, because you cannot set foot on the islands of the blessed zones.'² Why do you invade heaven?'

"When I heard this, trembling and terror gripped me from fear and dread. I was forced to obey the wonderful divine voice which had spoken through the birds." It is most appropriate in this regard to call them angels. For rational [beings] are seen under these three guises: angels, men, and demons, but not as birds or other creatures.³ "Now the borders of the area were awesome and tangible, altogether outside the [realm of the] senses. They were guarded by diligent and alert, yet invisible, guards like a very secure fence that would have naturally growing roots needing little care, that might stand outside a fortified royal garden. Such seemed to me these places—to others as they please."⁴

1. *Miles: Lar* is not necessarily a "mile," but an indeterminate distance measured by a line. See further p. 152 n. 1.

2. *Zones*: reading *kamarats'n* with the text of the Armenian *Alexander Romance*. Patkanean prints *kamararats'n*, rendered by Vardanyan as "servants [of God]."

3. The comment on angels is a gloss by Thomas, not in the text of the Armenian *Alexander Romance*. Cf. Eznik, §114: "angels, demons and men's souls are immaterial."

4. *To others as they please*: This phrase is not from the *Alexander Romance*, but is added by Thomas; it ends the long version of the *Ashkharhats'oyts'*.

We shall take up other [tales] from these fables and similar motiveless stories according to their merits in order to refute them, which the benighted Easterners hand down to their believers in Zradasht and Mani'op. They say that Hephaistos stole fire from god,⁵ granted part of it to mankind, and kept most of it for himself. And they say Hephaistos was lame in both feet, and has glowing embers in his hand [and] tongs and hammers, and sits forging men.⁶ Now if this lame one stole Ormizd's half without his knowing, how could the divided half stolen by the lame one be god? Furthermore, since he worships [31] fire and not the sun, which is Hephaistos, saying it is part of a god, how is it that the thief and weak one is worshipped like a god? But how are they not ashamed to say that fire is part of a god? For sparks of it are produced by striking stone and iron, or also by rubbing sticks against each other—as happens with a wheel, when from the rapid motion of the carts the wooden poles catch fire. Likewise, if water is thrown into a clean clear glass and placed in the heat of the sun, with the substance of fire beside it, from the burning ray of the sun [the latter] will ignite. Now since these things are so, such must also be understood with regard to the worshippers of ashes,¹ “whose judgment will never be rendered void,” according to Scripture, “and whose destruction will never abate.”² Perhaps someone might propose the reason for this ignorance. But the divine Paul truthfully explains these things, saying: “They knew God, but did not glorify or praise him as God. But they became infatuated with their own thoughts, and their hearts were darkened in [their] folly. They foolishly held themselves to be wise and transformed the glory of the uncreated God into the likeness of corruptible creatures.”³

The protest is against the frequency of [their] rebellion, that first they dishonoured the laws of nature and [then] turned away from the face of God. Hence it was necessary first that they should at least know themselves, and then from things visible comprehend their architect.⁴ “For invisible, divine [things],” he

5. Cf. above, p. 28 n. 2.

6. That Hephaistos was lame and that he forged men were themes well known to classical mythology. But they are not attested in earlier *Armenian* texts.

1. *Ash-worship*: a common expression in Elishē, and Łazar, see Thomson, *Elishē*, p. 12 n. 4. Cf. also below, pp. 62, 70, 77.

2. II Pet. 2.3.

3. Rom. 1.21–23.

4. *Architect*: i.e. God; cf. Heb. 11.10.

says, "are known and seen from created things—that is, his eternity and power and divinity—so that they may not be able to answer at all."⁵ How is this known? The most sagacious of those outside [the church]⁶ say that every moving body is naturally moved by something else. For a body is not self-moving but [only] the spirit is self-moving.⁷ Now we see that the heavenly body has a regular, unceasing movement—that is, the sun and moon and stars and other such [bodies]. [32] And it is clear that they are moved by another; and if by another, then it is someone who moves the heavenly body. And because the movement of heaven is one and the same, it is clear that it is moved by a single someone and not by many. For if it was moved by many, its movement would be varied and confused, not regular. And because the heaven is eternally moving, it is clear that he who moves it has limitless power. For if he had limited power he would not be able to move the heavenly body ceaselessly. Whence it is clear that he is bodiless, because a body has limited power and is not able to move heaven continuously and regularly. From this it is clear that he is uncreated. For the created is from matter and form; what is made from matter is not bodiless and does not have limitless power. Now he is uncreated and unlimited and not brought into being by someone. And that which is uncreated, the same is incorruptible; and what is incorruptible, the same is also eternal. Now the eternal has no beginning and no end. So then it is clear according to this argument that he who moves the heavenly body is one, has unlimited power, is bodiless and uncreated and incorruptible, is himself not [created] by anyone, but all others [exist] through him. Now these [definitions] apply to no one of the created beings but only to one, God; and he is Creator. These are wise conclusions. But we, following Divine Scripture, have not established the truth from foreign [sources]. Away with that! But in accordance with the Lord's saying through Moses in order to reprove those outside [the church]: "to use the grease of a corpse for some exterior purpose, but not for food."¹

5. Rom. 1.20.

6. *Outside*: see p. 4 n. 2.

7. For the following argument cf. Eznik, §3, and David (the Invincible Philosopher), *Sahmank'*, p. 108.

1. Cf. Lev. 7.24.

CHAPTER 4

*How the kingdom of the Assyrians reached in succession
as far as Cyrus the Persian*

We continue our text with the order of the genealogy of the kingdom of the Assyrians that we carefully set out above. Its founder was Zamesos, [33] also [called] Ninuas, son of Ninos and Semiramis, in the fifty-third year of the life of the patriarch Abraham; he ruled over all Asia and Armenia. After the death of Zradasht he then exercised sole rule over all eastern Persia and subjected it to tax, [ruling] with peaceful life for thirty-eight years.¹ After him Arias his son, the fourth from Ninos, [ruled] for thirty years. All the kings of Assyria held power in succession from father to son; but none of them did anything worthy of record, and none of them held power for less than twenty years.² For their unwarlike and peace-loving character kept them in security. Since they sat inside the palace, no one saw them except concubines and eunuchs.³ Now the kings of Assyria in succession are the following. I shall indicate in resume their names and times and a little of what happened in their reigns.

Ninos, son of Arbēl, of the tribe of Ham [reigned] fifty-two years. He restored the kingdom of Nebrot' and called himself Bel.⁴ Semiramis his wife [reigned] forty-two years. Coming to Armenia in war she subjected it; and on her return she exercised sole rule over Persia. In her third year Isaac was born, son of the promise to Abraham.⁵ In her last year Esau and Jacob were born, called two patriarchs. . . . in his last year the Shepherds ruled over Egypt. . . .⁶

1. See Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 98, and *Canon*, year 58 of Abraham. For his "peaceful life" cf. above, p. 26.

2. See the list of reigns in Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I pp. 98–100; Aucher notes that there are conflicting figures for the lengths of some reigns.

3. *Eunuchs*: *ark' kanats'ik'*, lit. "effeminate men."

4. In what follows Thomas combines information from the text of Eusebius's *Chronicle* with the notices found in the *Canon*.

5. But the *Canon* puts the birth of Isaac in the year 100 of Abraham, long after Semiramis's death. For the promise cf. Gen. 17.19.

6. The manuscript of Thomas has lacunae here. The Shepherds are the Hyksos, see *Canon*, year 190 of Abraham. "His" last year thus refers to Xerxes Balēos.

In his twenty-fifth year the first Belochos became king of the Thessalians⁷ [and ruled] for thirty-five years. In his thirty-fifth year the flood of Ogeges is reported.⁸

Baleos [reigned] for fifty-two years. In his forty-third year died Jacob, who predicted the calling of the Gentiles.⁹

Aztadas [reigned] for thirty-two years. In his time appeared Prometheus, a wise man.¹⁰

Mamizos [reigned] for thirty years. In his fourteenth year Joseph died.¹¹

Mak'alis [reigned] for thirty years. In his time appeared Atlas, an astronomer.¹²

Zpheros [reigned] for twenty years. In his eighteenth year the prophet Moses was born.¹³

Another Mamizos [reigned] for thirty years. In his time there was another king in [34] Thessaly.¹

Sparet'os [reigned] for forty years. In his tenth year Moses went from Egypt and laboured virtuously in the desert.²

Askatadēs [reigned] for forty years. In his eighth year Moses became the leader and legislator of the Jews.³

Aminēs [reigned] for forty-five years. In his eighth year the prophet Moses died.⁴

There were from Adam until this year 3,730 [years] according to the translation of the Septuagint.⁵

7. *Thessalians*: sic! read "Assyrians." But this mistake must have already been in Thomas's copy of Eusebius; see below, p. 34 n. 1.

8. See *Canon* year 263 of Abraham.

9. As Eusebius, *Canon*, year 307 of Abraham. For the prediction see Gen. 49.10.

10. See *Canon*, year 332 of Abraham.

11. See *Canon*, year 361 of Abraham.

12. See *Canon*, year 379 of Abraham, where Atlas is called *astelagēt* (astronomer) as in Thomas, but also the "brother of Prometheus."

13. See *Canon*, year 424 of Abraham.

1. *Mamizos*: a corruption in Thomas's text for *Mamilos*. According to the *Canon*, in year 8 of Mamilos (= 436 of Abraham) Dimon became the first king of Thessaly. In the copy of the *Canon* used by Thomas (or his source) the word "Assyrians" had already been corrupted to "Thessalians," and "first" was misread as applying to "first king" rather than "the first Belochos."

2. See *Canon*, year 468 of Abraham.

3. The *Canon*, year 5 of Askatadēs, says that Moses received his vision of God on the mountain. The title "leader" (*arajnord*) is used in the *Canon* on the occasion of Moses' death, year 545 of Abraham; and the title "legislator" (*awrēnsdir*) is used by Eusebius in the *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 98, during the reign of Askatadēs.

4. As the *Canon*, year 545 of Abraham.

5. A direct quotation from the *Canon*.

Belok'os [reigned] for twenty-five years. In his time there were many kings in various places.⁶

Baleparēs [reigned] for thirty years. In his time there reigned a king of the Argives.⁷

Lampritēs [reigned] for thirty-two years. In his time Pegasus flourished, who is reported to have been a winged horse.⁸

Zovsarēs [reigned] for twenty years. In his time [occurred] the expedition of Dionysius against India.⁹

Łamperēs [reigned] for thirty years. In his time there were many kings in various places.¹⁰

Panias [reigned] for forty-five years. In his time the city of Tyre was built.¹¹

Sovsarmos [reigned] for fifteen years. In his eighth year took place the labours of Hercules.¹²

Mit'rēos [reigned] for twenty-seven years.

Mawtanēs [reigned] for thirty-one years. In his twenty-fifth year the city of Ilium was captured by the Athenians; and in his time the exploits of Samson were performed.¹³

Tewtesay [reigned] for forty years.

Ot'ineus [reigned] for thirty years.¹⁴

Derkiwłos [reigned] for . . . years. At that time David reigned in Jerusalem,¹⁵ and the kingdom of the Assyrians declined. Some of them remained as tyrants in the regions of Damascus.¹⁶

Lawost'enēs [reigned] for forty-five years.

Peritiadēs [reigned] for thirty years.

6. This was the second king of that name; cf. above, p. 33 n. 7. The *Canon* now introduces numerous reigns of Greek and other kings.

7. As the *Canon*, year 619 of Abraham.

8. The *Canon*, year 32 of Lambridēs (= 669 of Abraham) says that Pegasus was either a fast horse or Bellerophon's ship. The Armenian version has no reference to "winged," though that appears in the Latin version.

9. As the *Canon*, year 689 of Abraham.

10. *Many kings in various places*: another comment of Thomas's, based on the information in the *Canon* after the year 690 of Abraham.

11. As the *Canon*, year 745 of Abraham.

12. In Eusebius, *Chronicle* and *Canon*, Sovsarmos reigned for nineteen years. For Hercules see *Canon*, year 772 of Abraham.

13. *Mawtanēs*: a corruption of *Tawtamēs*. The *Canon* places the capture of Troy in his twenty-fifth year, and the beginning of Samson's reign in his thirtieth year (= 840 of Abraham).

14. *Ot'ineus*: the Greek *ho Thineus*; see *Canon*, year 892 of Abraham.

15. The manuscript has a lacuna. Derkiwłos reigned for forty years; in his twenty-ninth year (= 940 of Abraham) David became king.

16. There are no corresponding references to the decline of the Assyrian kingdom or to Damascus at this point in either the *Chronicle* or the *Canon*.

Ap'rat'ēs [reigned] for forty years.¹⁷

Ap'ratanēs [reigned] for fifty years.

Akrapalēs [reigned] for forty-two years.

Tovnos Konkōeros, called in Greek Sardanapalos, [reigned] for forty years.¹⁸ In his debauchery he was dissolute and corrupt in the affairs of his kingdom. Therefore many of his troops became wearied of him and caused him to be defeated in battle by Verbakes and Bēlos, the general of the Medes; as a result he immolated himself on a fire.¹⁹

The duration of the kingdom of the Assyrians from Bel and Ninos had been 1,300 years.²⁰ Verbakes the Mede destroyed the empire of the Assyrians; he exempted Paroyr Haykazn [35] from paying taxes, honoured him with the authority of king, gave him many troops in support, and re-established the kingdom of Armenia;¹ he also appointed Belesios ruler of Babylon. Then he himself transferred the palace to Media.² It lasted for 259 years; but according to some who include other earlier kings, the period extends to 298 years.³

In the time of those [kings] some Assyrians and Chaldaeans descended from the earlier kings found it appropriate, as a period of anarchy, to emigrate and assemble a numerous army in the regions of Damascus and Nineveh. After twenty-eight years of anarchy in Asorestan, under King P'uay they again ruled over Babylon and lower Assyria, called Khuzhastan; they restored the former palace abandoned by Bel, which is the house of Astorov.⁴ Unable to oppose the Medes and Persians, they debouched in war into the regions of Palestine and besieged Samaria. And because the kingdom of the Hebrews was divided into two opposing [factions], P'uay, having subjected Assyria, imposed on king Man-

17. Ap'ratēs reigned twenty years according to the *Canon*; the corruption of *i* to *kh* in Armenian is easy.

18. Again the number twenty in the Armenian *Canon* has been corrupted to forty.

19. See *Canon*, year 1196 of Abraham, for his defeat and immolation. For his corruption cf. *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 89, and Moses Khorenats'i, I 21.

20. The number 1,300 is found in Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 100, "according to some;" "according to others" it was 1,240, *ibid.*, and *Canon*, year 1196 of Abraham.

1. For Paroyr see Moses Khorenats'i, I 21; but he has no reference to taxes. Paroyr is not mentioned by Eusebius.

2. See Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 100, and Moses Khorenats'i, I 21.

3. The number 298 is given by Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 102. If the reigns of the Median kings as given by Eusebius are added together, the total is 256 (not 259).

4. For the anarchy see the *Canon*, year 1197 of Abraham, and for P'uay year 1231. Vardanyan glosses *Astorov* as "Astarte," note 69.

asses tribute of a thousand silver talents.⁵ From then on Israel was endangered by the Assyrians. After him there reigned over the Assyrians T'aglat'p'ālasar. The latter came out against Judaea and took captive to Assyria the majority of the people⁶ . . . Salmana he took captive ten . . . showing in the mountain of Media. And he destroyed the kingdom . . . which had lasted 250 years.⁷ After him the brother of Senek'erim reigned . . . was killed by Marut'ak' Bałdan; when . . . he had six months, he also was killed by someone who was called Nerełibd and who was a king. In the third year of his reign, Senek'erim gathered a numerous army against him, captured him with his allies, and established his own son Asordanis in Babylon.⁸ [36] He himself went to Mesopotamia and valiantly subjected Emat' and Arbat' and all the regions of Damascus and Cilicia and many other [places]. After that he attacked the land of Palestine and Jerusalem in order to blockade it. By God's command his army was destroyed and he returned to Nineveh.¹ His two other sons Adramelēk' and Sanasar plotted against him out of envy for Asordani being king; they killed him with the sword. He had reigned for eighteen years.² Then they themselves went to the Northeast, as was said above.³

Now the kings of the Assyrians from the other branch are these.

Twenty-eight years of anarchy.

P'uay, twelve years.

T'aglat'p'ālasar, twenty-seven years.

Salmanasar, fifteen years.

Nerełibos, four years.⁴

Senek'erim, eighteen years.

His son, eight years.

Samoges, twenty-one years.

His brother, twenty-one years.

5. As the *Canon*, year 1231 of Abraham.

6. As the *Canon*, year 1143 of Abraham.

7. The manuscript of Thomas is damaged: ten refers to the ten tribes, led through the mountains of Media, and 250 to the kingdom of Samaria; see the *Canon*, year 1170 of Abraham.

8. For these events see Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I pp. 41–43. *Neretibod* is a corruption for Eusebius's *Etibos*.

1. For the attack on Cilicia see Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 43; for the attack on Jerusalem and Nineveh, *Canon*, year 1289 of Abraham. Eusebius does not refer to Emat' or Damascus in this connection.

2. See Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 43, for the eighteen years and the death of Senek'erim. For Adramelēk' and Sanasar see IV Kings 19.37.

3. See p. 8 above. Cf. Moses Khorenats'i, I 23.

4. *Neretibos* is the *Nergilos* of Eusebius.

Nabupašaros, twenty years.

Nabugodonosor, forty-three years.

Amiřmarudak'os, two years.

Neriglisaros, four years.

Nabunēdos, fifteen years. In his sixth year he was deposed by Cyrus. After falling [from power] he lived on until the kingdom of the Assyrians and Medes was completely destroyed by Cyrus, who ruled . . .⁵

CHAPTER 5⁶

Ashdahak, king of the Medes, provoked a war against the great Tigran Haykazn, as the early historians indicate to us.⁷ He gathered cavalry to attack Armenia and carry out his evil projects. When Tigran the Great was informed of Ashdahak's steadfast preparations, he assembled the elite soldiers of many nations, brave warriors from Cappadocia, Georgia, Albania, [37] the ferocious and gigantic troops of Ayrarat,¹ and all the numerous companions of soldiers and the sons of Senek'erim, in full readiness and immense numbers, to hasten without delay to encounter Ashdahak, lest the Mede be considered more brave-hearted than the descendant of Hayk. They marched rapidly to the region of Makan, and camped in the plain of Media. Then no little danger befell Ashdahak from the arrival of Tigran to attack him with a massive army. Furthermore, the very astute Cyrus the Persian marched up with his own mounted warriors to aid Tigran. For Cyrus and Tigran had become mutual allies and were similar in every respect;² they were like-minded, very intelligent, and endowed with many noble qualities. But before Tig-

5. From Senek'erim to Cyrus Thomas is following Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I pp. 43-45. But see the *Canon*, year 1456 of Abraham, for Cyrus and the end of the kingdom of the Medes.

6. *Chapter Five*: This is so marked by Patkanean, but there is no chapter title in the text. Brosset, following the edition of 1852, does not begin a new chapter.

7. I.e. Moses Khorenats'i, I 29; but Moses has no reference to the troops of Senek'erim's sons. Whether the elaborations in favour of the Artsrunik' are Thomas's own invention, or were known orally before his time, is impossible to tell. Cf. the Introduction to this book for Thomas's numerous changes to attested stories. Thomas consistently writes *Ashdahak* for Moses' *Azhdahak*.

1. For the province of Ayrarat see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 278-283.

2. For the alliance of Cyrus and Tigran cf. Moses Khorenats'i, I 25. But Moses knows nothing in this regard of the role of Adramelek and Sanasar.

ran and Cyrus had joined forces, Ashdahak sent gifts to Cyrus and promised to give him control of a fourth part of [the lands of] the descendants of Senek'erim: the regions of Nineveh and Tmorik' with its fortress.³ That he did not just once but often, sending ambassadors with messages and presents. Xerxes was informed of these deliberations by Adramelēk' and Sanasar, the sons of Senek'erim; they then came to Tigran, king of Armenia, and informed him of Ashdahak's plans. For the sons of Senek'erim were greatly angered and irreconcilable towards Ashdahak on account of his being descended from Varbakes the Mede,⁴ who had seized the kingdom from Sardanapalos and the ancestors of the family of Senek'erim.

Then, after receiving a message from Tigran, Sanasar and his colleagues went with gifts to Cyrus. Taking him they returned to Tigran. With urgent speed they pressed the combat, heroes opposing heroes.⁵ Xerxes hurried up from the rear and seized the bronze-hammered muzzle of Ashdahak's horse, knocking him back onto its croup. Tigran with swift hand struck him [38] in the heart with his lance, pulling out his lungs. Cyrus, pursuing the army, wrought no little slaughter, putting all Ashdahak's forces to the sword. Then he reigned over the Medes and Persians.¹

Two of Ashdahak's offspring were captured by Tigran; he brought them to Armenia and reduced them to the rank of slaves.² Since they demonstrated obedient devotion, he appointed them to serve as bearers of eagles and falcons. Promoting them to the position of cupbearers at feasts,³ he eventually raised them to noble status and settled them in the province of Albag, later settling them in Jołakhel, in Vranjunik', and in Hakhrām.⁴ He waited some time, because he had previously given them in service to his sister

3. For Tmorik' see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 334.

4. For Ashdahak's descent from Varbakes cf. Moses Khorenats'i, I 22, based on Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 101.

5. *Heroes opposing heroes*: cf. Moses Khorenats'i, I 29.

1. For Cyrus reigning over the Medes and Persians cf. Eusebius, *Canon*, year 1457 of Abraham.

2. For the settlement of Ashdahak's retainers in Armenia cf. Moses Khorenats'i, I 30. *Slaves*: *strkut'iwn*; for captives as slaves see Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 127.

3. Moses Khorenats'i, II 7, explains the etymology of Artsrunik' as "bearers of eagles" (i.e. standards); the Havnuni were falconers, and the Gnuni cupbearers.

4. For Albag see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 335-336; for Vrnjunik', *ibid.*, p. 472; for Khram, *ibid.*, p. 435. Thomas's Hakhrām is Moses' Khram, and Jołakhel is probably Moses' Julay (Julfa on the Araxes).

Tigranuhi, wife of Ashdahak, before settling them in the places just mentioned.

When Croesus, king of the Lydians, heard of these events, in great speed and anxiety he assembled a host of numerous troops in order to offer battle to Cyrus.⁵ When Cyrus heard of his gathering of troops, he wrote to Tigran [asking him] to send him an army in support. In rapid haste [Tigran] entrusted the armies of the South and North to Xerxes and Arshēz, the latter's son, [with orders] to reach there quickly. They marched off and met him at Dmbuind in Persia.⁶ Advancing to Cyrus's vanguard, they engaged battle. They came to grips, attacking the main force of the Lydian army by shooting arrows at each other; after the battle had lasted for a long time, King Cyrus and Xerxes arrived. Arshēz surrounded the Lydian king with his shield-bearing soldiers, and great tumult ensued. For the Lydian king had covered his horse all over with bronzē armour from foot to head without a chink, so that he was impregnable in his armour. [39] Likewise on his own person he wore a plated cuirass, backpiece, shin guards, leg greaves, and helmet, so that he seemed almost entirely covered in bronze; and when disposed in his massive army you would think him unapproachable. The troops, attacking like champions, made the battle rage. Then Xerxes and Arshēz, full of cunning, shouted out—as if they were from the Lydian army—“Cyrus's army is defeated and the king has fled.” Rejoicing at the report, they [the Lydians] abandoned their fortified positions and rushed after Cyrus, jostling each other, while the king of the Lydians marched proudly behind his army.

Then Xerxes and Arshēz rapidly advanced to encounter the Lydians. They captured [Croesus], stripped him of his armour and his horse's armour, and brought him before Cyrus. Cyrus brought him back to Khorasan, and from there he returned to Babylon, taking the Lydian with him. He ordered his treasuries to be pillaged. When tortured cruelly,¹ [Croesus] gave him even

5. Moses Khorenats'i, II 13, says that Croesus was defeated by Artashēs, not Cyrus. Thomas elaborates on Eusebius, *Canon*, year 1470 of Abraham, and *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 103. See further below, p. 39 n. 2.

6. For Dmbuind see Markwart, *Eranšahr*, pp. 127–128.

1. *Cruelly*: *jlawk'*, lit. “with/by sinews”; cf. Elishē, p. 168, for this torture by squeezing, and further references in Thomson, note 5 *ad loc.*

his secret treasure; he was put to death on Cyrus's orders, bringing to an end the Lydian kingdom.²

When this venture had been successfully concluded, Xerxes and his colleagues returned, receiving as a gift Tmorik' with its fortress and the river banks of Nineveh.

Now when Cyrus had become sole ruler of the Persian kingdom, he captured Babylon and released the Jewish captives.³ The house of Gag, the nation of the Galatians,⁴ raised an army of 120,000 men to oppose him. Then Cyrus wrote to Tigran asking him to provide him with help: "For a wild barbarian race has attacked to wage war and to wrest from me the Jewish captives." In order to preserve intact his bonds of friendship with him, he sent this same Xerxes and Arshēz his son with 40,000 men. They went to meet him at the summit of the Taurus mountain. They protracted their march as far as Arzn in Aldznik', where the prophet Ezra, [40] King Salat'iel, died and is buried in Marbakatina in a hilly spot.¹ There they gave battle for not a few days, about a month, during which time the Armenian troops [performed] many acts of valiant heroism, astonishing the whole Persian army and the barbarians too. The army of the Galatians was destroyed, from the greatest to the least, and not a single one of them survived. Xerxes and Arshēz brought the sons of Israel to their own country, leading them as far as the holy city of Jerusalem.² They entrusted the leadership of the Jews to Zorababel, son of Salat'iël, of the tribe of Juda.³ Then they returned in great strength and notable victory.

These are the Gog and Magog mentioned in the books of the prophets Amos and Ezekiel.⁴

2. For the encounter of Cyrus and Croesus see Herodotus, I 76-91 (with comments on the Lydian cavalry), and Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, VII 1-3 (with a description of Croesus giving over his treasure.)

3. A quotation from Eusebius, *Canon*, year 1457 of Abraham.

4. *Gag*: i.e. Gog, as p. 40 n. 4. For Magog as the ancestor of the Celts and Galatians cf. John Catholicos, p. 11, Moses Daskhurants'i, I 2.

1. For Armenian traditions about Ezra Salat'iel, see Stone, *Armenian Version of IV Ezra*, pp. 36-40. Arzn is in the province of Aldznik': see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 248-251. Marbakatina I have not been able to identify.

2. Cf. below, p. 138: Cyrus himself led the Jewish captives home.

3. See Eusebius, *Canon*, year 1464 of Abraham.

4. Amos 7.1; Ezek. 38.18, 39.1, 11, 15.

CHAPTER 6

*After Cyrus [ruled] Kambyeses, Shmerges the magus,
Dareh Vshtasp.⁵ In the twentieth year of Dareh
died Tigran Haykazn⁶*

Now after these events had taken place, on the collapse of the Haykaznean kingdom people lived diversely, in confusion and anarchy, holding various lands, submitting to various leaders as circumstances of the moment might dictate. We shall not attempt to consider writing about those of whom no actions or valiant deeds are known; but we considered it sufficient merely to set down⁷ their names in order, following the format of the other earlier historians. So I set out in order their names in this book:

Tigran	Kings of the Persians
Adramelēk'	Xerxes
Ners	Artashēs longimanus
[41] Nersekh	Dareh
Marod	Artashēs
Arsham	Olok'os
Arshavir	Zarsēs
Asud	Dareh

Then Alexander the Macedonian, son of Philipp, became ruler of the world.¹

At that time reigned Alexander the Macedonian, ruling over the whole world. He rapidly attacked Dareh and killed him, exterminating the kingdom of the Persians.² Then after Dareh, Asud son of Arshavir waged war against Alexander's generals.

5. As Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 104.

6. The twentieth year of Dareh is year 1515 of Abraham; but Eusebius, *Canon*, has no reference to Tigran.

7. *Set down: kanonets'i*; cf. Moses Khorenats'i, I 22, *kanonelov*, at the head of the table of kings of the Medes.

1. The list of Persian kings is taken from Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I pp. 104–105. But Zarsēs is Arsēs; cf. the opposite mistake of Moses Khorenats'i, II 68, in taking the z of Zamran as a prefix. In the list of Artsruni princes, Ners, Nersekh, Marod, Arsham, and Arshavir are all unattested elsewhere. The only attested Asud is in Moses Khorenats'i, II 14, but he was a Bagratid. The following tale about Asud is unknown to earlier Armenian sources.

2. For the death of Darius and the end of the Persian empire see Eusebius, *Canon*, year 1686 of Abraham.

Attacking them with Herculean valour, like a hero he warded off the powerful generals of Alexander for a long time, amazing their armies, who let him retreat—until Alexander appeared before his haughty opponent. Looking into Alexander's face as that of heroic gods, he lowered his eyes and gazed at the ground. Then rapidly descending from his armoured horse before Alexander, reckoning as naught his impetuous deeds, he made haste to greet the king and say: "When valiant men meet valiant men,³ audacious deeds need no excuse, lest cowardice be more renowned than valour—which is more appropriate for the effeminate—even if they turn their soldiers' lives into torrents of blood." Astonished at his stoutheartedness and his wise argument, Alexander's generals Ptolemy and Seleucus requested Asud as a gift from the king. For although Alexander was full of wisdom and exceedingly intelligent, yet he was furious at the banditti who opposed him. So Ptolemy received Asud, had him brought to Egypt—the land he had been given by Alexander—and had a liberal stipend arranged for him until he himself should have a convenient opportunity to arrive.

[42] As for Vahagn Haykazean, who was Asud's companion in arms, he was established at the royal court and progressed through his great prowess in martial skill, [being ready] either to die on the sword of the enemy or to win the victory through his courage. After [ruling] twelve years Alexander died in Babylon, having lived for thirty-three years and reigning for twelve. He controlled the whole world for seven years.¹ On his death[bed] Alexander, who had ruled his kingdom alone strictly and fearlessly, appointed four generals for the four regions of the world: Ptolemy for Egypt and India; Seleucus for Asia and all the North; Antipater for Persia and all the East.²

Now by deceit and force Ptolemy held Jerusalem and Judaea for twelve years; many of them [Jews] he brought down from there and settled in Egypt.³ Then Seleucus Nicanor, called the Victorious, held the kingdom of Assyria and Babylon and the

3. Cf. above, p. 37 n. 3, for a similar phrase. Armenian troops did support the Persians against Alexander, see Arrian, *Anabasis*, III 11.7.

1. For the figures see Eusebius, *Canon*, years 1680, 1686, 1692 of Abraham; but there Alexander is given thirty-two years of life before dying in Babylon.

2. There are three names for the fourfold division because Eusebius's *Canon* has three columns. However, Thomas has confused Antipater (who ruled in Macedonia) with Antigonus.

3. This sentence is taken verbatim from Eusebius, *Canon*, year 1693 of Abraham.

upper regions.⁴ After Ptolemy had gained control of his inheritance he appointed Asud in his place, giving over to him all dominion over Egypt and India; then he removed himself to Babylon, following Alexander. From there he went to Jerusalem and there worshipped God. But although Asud was favoured with such splendour and the wealth of Egypt and India, yet remembering his original native kingdom of Assyria he was not happy to live enthroned in Egypt. His desire increased, so he went to meet Ptolemy. But although Ptolemy would have willingly agreed to this because of the man's noble valour, yet he did not dare reveal it to Alexander. For Alexander had never allowed anyone to suppose that somebody else could govern the world save Alexander. So after living many years he [Asud] died in Egypt and [his body] remains there.

After the death of Alexander his generals held the Macedonian empire; but this survived only in the Ptolemaic dynasty [43] down to the reign of an Egyptian woman, Cleopatra, much later in the time of Augustus Caesar.¹ Now sixty years after the death of Alexander and the anarchy in Armenia and Persia, Arshak the Valiant ruled over the Medes and Persians and Egyptians and Elamites, in the city of Balkh.² His brother Valarshak came to Armenia and imposed disciplined order on that troubled and confused country. He organized the noble families, introducing titles, positions, and ranks.³

As for the descendants of Asud, of the family of Sanasar,⁴ they lived as need and circumstance dictated, now thus now so: Shavarsh, Gōgean, Shavasp, Peroz, Shahak, Cyrus.⁵

This Shahak called his son Cyrus in remembrance of that man's nobility and his friendship to his ancestor Xerxes.⁶ Stripped of the authority which Tigran and Cyrus had given them, they lived

4. As the *Canon*, year 1705 of Abraham. But the following tale about Asud is not in Eusebius.

1. Cf. Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 249.

2. Cf. Moses Khorenats'i, II 2; but there is no reference there or in Eusebius to the Egyptians and Elamites in this connection. The Turks were later called Elamites; see below, p. 126 n. 1.

3. This organisation of Armenia is described in detail by Moses Khorenats'i, II 6-7.

4. Asud was descended from Tigran (p. 40 above), who was an ally of Sanasar (p. 37 above). But Thomas has not explained how Asud's descendants became related to Sanasar's descendants so that they could be called *Sanasareants'*.

5. This list is unattested elsewhere. Shavasp was a common name in the Artsruni house, see Acharean, *Dict. of Names*, s.v.

6. Cf. above, p. 37.

ignoble lives, as it were illegitimately,⁷ down to Cyrus [son] of Shahak.

When Arshak waged war against the Macedonians,⁸ Cyrus multiplied his martial deeds of bravery and valour. He almost surpassed the courage of Arshak the Parthian against the heroes of the Kushans, Medes, and Elamites. He gained a reputation for victory and even more so for wise intelligence, progressing in station, rank, and favour. For he was asked: "Who [are you], from which [ancestors], from which [father], when, and in whose time?"⁹ When Vatarshak had ascertained his family, province, land, the reason for his migrating, his settling, the why, the how, the mode, the circumstance, the occasion, and everything else, he requested him from Arshak, brought him with him to Armenia, and named him Artsruni, as being the first in the plain called Artsuik'.¹⁰ Furthermore, by chance he had the distinguishing feature of possessing an aquiline nose. But I do not know whether he named them Artsrunik' from the name of the country or for their physique.

[44] Secondly they were called Arzrunik' from the settlement of his ancestors Adramelēk' and Sanasar in Arzn.¹

Thirdly, they likened² them to eagles because of their noble courage and their eagle-like audacity and boldness in battle.

But although both reasons³ for their naming may be considered appropriate as seems fit to the philosophically minded, nonetheless, for me it is more pleasing to place confidence in the first.

The Ptolemies brought the period of kingdoms to a close, extending down to Cleopatra, daughter of Ptolemy Dionysius; she reigned over Egypt and Alexandria. Opening the depository of archival books, she found the lineage of Senek'erim, the acts of each one of them mentioned individually by name with his deeds of prowess; and likewise all the other [acts] according to family

7. *Illegitimately*: *pitkēn*, from *pitak*, "bastard."

8. Cf. Moses Khorenats'i, I 8, II 2; but this Cyrus does not appear in Moses. For Arshak's courage cf. Moses, I 8.

9. Cf. the Preface to Book V ("On Praise") of the *Girk' Pūoyits'*, p. 413, for these points. But Thomas is abbreviating the story in Moses Khorenats'i, I 8-9.

10. *Artsuik'*: in Siunik', see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 405. What follows is based on an etymology of Artsruni from *artsui*, "eagle." See above, p. 38 n. 3.

1. Thomas bases this on Moses Khorenats'i, II 8: Sharashan from the house of Sanasar (not mentioned by Thomas) was granted Arzn and the Taurus mountain. Cf. above, p. 39, with variant spelling.

2. *Likened*: *arakets'in*, from *arak*, "allegory."

3. *Both reasons*: i.e. geography and prowess.

and place: the deeds of the cowardly and insignificant indicated in accordance with their ignobility.⁴ She had the archives, which were written in Greek on parchment, taken with gifts to Tigran king of Armenia, who was the fourth king after Vatarshak the Parthian.

Up to here Alexander of Macedon had this written: from Senek'erim down to Ptolemy the Egyptian, after whom they named the Ptolemies. All this Ptolemy the lover of literature⁵ wrote down and arranged with accuracy. Then they placed it carefully in the archival treasure house until [the time of] Queen Cleopatra, as we explained above. Now these tales have come down to us through the chronicles⁶ of the earlier historians, from Mambrē Vertsanoł and his brother called Moses,⁷ and another Theodore K'ert'ot;⁸ they had [all] studied under Levond the priest who was martyred in Persia with the other holy bishops and priests.⁹ At the command of Vahan Artsruni they were entrusted with the urgent task of critically investigating and arranging in abbreviated fashion the genealogies of past families, and diligently reviewing these histories in no long-winded fashion.

[45] We too, at your command, Oh Gagik general of Armenia and prince of Vaspurakan, have undertaken an abbreviation of the stories of the past. So I shall press forward my narrative; in my rapid course I shall traverse the works of past historians; I shall note in order but merely succinctly the genealogy [of the Artsrunik'] until I reach the wide-spreading and extensive arena of written histories. One by one I shall expound [these matters] systematically and shall arrange them for your pleasure.¹

This Vahan whom we mentioned is the same Vahan whom the

4. For these "archives" cf. the "archive" in Moses Khorenats'i, I 9, also composed at Alexander's initiative (!), which was kept in Nineveh and which contained details of the Bagratids' glorious past.

5. For Ptolmey as a "lover of literature" cf. Moses Khorenats'i, I 2. Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 115, and *Canon*, year 1736 of Abraham, notes his interest in archives.

6. *Chronicles: mnats'ordk'*, "remnants," used of the books of Chronicles in the Bible, but not a standard expression for historical works.

7. I.e. Moses Khorenats'i. To Mambrē are attributed various theological homilies. Thomas is the first historian to associate Moses and Mambrē as brothers, a tradition which became standard.

8. A letter from Moses to "his pupil, a certain Theodore" may be found in Moses Khorenats'i, *Matenagru'iwnk'*, pp. 580-581.

9. The death of Levond in 454 is described by Elishē, p. 178, and Łazar, p. 101. But Thomas is the only historian to make Mambrē, Moses, and Theodore pupils of Levond, or to suggest that they wrote about the Armenian past at the behest of Vahan Artsruni—for whom see below, pp. 77-80.

1. For Thomas's patrons and his descriptions of the writing of history see the Introduction to this book.

Armenian nobles made king in the days of Saint Vardan—concerning which I shall write in its own chronological place.² For now let us continue the order: Cyrus, Vargēn, Vahan, Shambit', Jaj, Jajuř.³

When Arjam was king of Armenia he greatly maltreated the Bagratuni family for releasing the priest Hyrcanus from imprisonment.⁴ Arresting Enanos, the leading prince of the Bagratunis and *sparapet* of Armenia, with his family and all his relatives, he inflicted many torments on them; some he put to the sword, wishing to exterminate the Bagratid family at a single stroke.⁵

But Jajuř Artsruni set his hand to the affair. Approaching the king, he requested Enanos, for he was hanging on the gibbet. Obtaining his request, he brought down Enanos from the gibbet and saved his family from the murderous sword. Then he appointed Enanos Bagratuni to the same dignity in the kingdom. But Arjam could not agree to have Enanos in his company with any confidence, so he sent him to Armenia. Jajuř received him with respect and ready provisions, and settled him in the region of Aragats, in the village called T'alın.⁶ He was the first from the Bagratuni house to come and live in that part of the province of Ayrarat. Jajuř married Enanos's daughter called Smbatuhi to his son Sahak. [46] This was the first marriage alliance between the Bagratunik' and the Artsrunik'.¹ It took place in the eighteenth year of the king of Persia.

After living for twenty years Arjam died and his son Abgar became king.² Here we come to the history of Abgar, king of

2. See pp. 79–80 below, where Thomas says that the Armenian nobles planned to make Vahan king. However, he did not become king.

3. These names are not found elsewhere.

4. *Arjam*: Thomas follows the form in Eusebius, Armenian version of the *Ecclesiastical History*, I 13, although the following story is taken from Moses Khorenats'i, II 24–25.

5. Moses (see previous note) explains that the king wanted to force Enanos to abandon his Jewish religion. But Thomas has twisted the story to the credit of the Artsrunik' by introducing Jajuř (who is unknown elsewhere).

6. *T'alın*: particularly famous for its seventh-century churches; see Der Nersessian, *Armenian Art*, p. 36. For the area around Aragats see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 364.

1. This marriage alliance is unattested earlier. It is worth noting that Thomas's patron Gagik was the great-grandson of an Artsruni, Hamza, and a Bagratid, Hrips'imē; see the table in Canard/Laurent, p. 466.

2. Cf. Moses Khorenats'i, II 26: Arjam (Arsham) died in the twentieth year of Arshavir, king of Persia. The story of Abgar underwent a series of elaborations in Armenian: the Syriac *Doctrine of Addai* was rendered in a tendentious fashion by "Labubna"; to that version Moses Khorenats'i (who also used the brief account in the Armenian version of Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*) added further changes; and Thomas expands even more in order to enhance the glory of his patrons' ancestors.

Armenia, in whose days occurred the appearance in the flesh on earth of our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, our God, the beginning of the renewal of creation and the illumination of all men who are to come into the world.³ So it is a great pleasure for me, and especially for everyone—or rather, for all believers in Christ—to expatiate at length on these great events; [a pleasure] for you to hear and for me to write.

For he was the first of the heathen kings to believe in Christ, as the records of the reliable historians demonstrate—especially the evangelist and apostle John, son of thunder, who made the thunder of the good news of Christ's gospel resound in the world for those who were to believe in Him.⁴ For he says: "There were [there] some of the Gentiles who had come up to Jerusalem for the feast in order to worship. These approached Philipp, who was from Bethsaida, and said: 'We wish to see Jesus.'"⁵ They were presented to the Saviour with Abgar's letters; and they heard his symbolic response concerning the saving crucifixion on behalf of the world, which he called his glory.⁶ He also wrote a reply to the letter through the apostle Thomas,⁷ promising to send Thaddaeus to fulfil his [Abgar's] desired request. And Christ, the source of life, satisfied Abgar's longing by imprinting his desirable visage on a napkin in a glorious and ineffable manner.⁸

Here a new rejoicing suffuses this history concerning the honourable, co-regnant,⁹ and magnificent principedom of the Artsrunik', that great stock descended from Senek'erim, which as its noble families increased and multiplied had reached this [47] period of Abgar's rule and belief in Christ. With him there was also the great prince of the Artsrunik', Khuran, the chief general of the army and commander of the kingdom of Greater

3. Cf. John 1.9.

4. Thomas follows a standard interpretation of Mark 3.17 that the phrase "son of thunder" refers to the evangelist; see Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.v. *brontē*.

5. John 12.20–21.

6. Cf. John 12.23–41.

7. Cf. Moses Khorenats'i, heading to II 32. But Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, I 13, had indicated that Jesus' reply was written by Anan, Abgar's scribe; this is also Labubna's version.

8. The story of the napkin is not in Eusebius, Labubna, or Moses Khorenats'i, although the last two refer to the portrait of Jesus painted by Anan. The story of the napkin is first attested in the seventh century; see Dobschütz, *Christusbilder*, pp. 72–79.

9. *Co-regnant: hamat'or*. Thomas means that the Artsrunik' are equal in status to the Bagratids; for Moses Khorenats'i, II 33, had made Tobias the Jew (in whose house at Edessa the apostle Thaddaeus stayed) a Bagratid.

Armenia. This prince Khuran became the first [Armenian] believer in Christ and was baptised at the hands of the apostle Thaddaeus.¹ After his conversion to Christ he demonstrated a most upright and pious way of life worthy of his faith, pushing the practice of his religion almost to the extreme of virtue, as the precepts of evangelical doctrine exhort. We think this is sufficient indication for now of the nobility of the blessed man Khuran Artsruni, of his comprehensive intelligence and deep wisdom. So let us carry forward the order of our history, in detail yet briefly, for it is not the occasion for us to linger with praises and [thereby] neglect the thread of our historical narrative.²

Herod the foreigner, son of Antipater of Ascalon and whose mother was Eupatra, an Arab, was king of the Jews in the days of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ—as Josephus tells us, and also about what he did to the children.³ He had five sons, among them Herod and Philipp, whose wife Herod had taken, abandoning his own first wife, daughter of Aretas king of Petra. Angered at this, Aretas planned to take revenge for his daughter's dishonour, yet was unable to do so openly because of the emperor Augustus Tiberius Caesar.⁴ So he made an alliance with Abgar, king of Armenia, and with the great general Khuran Artsruni. Sending him gifts, he received in support Khuran Artsruni, a wise and valiant man, mighty with the bow and a well-armed cavalry man. When Khuran attacked, Herod's army was defeated, while Herod himself escaped by flight with his squire Urelan. He took refuge with his uncle, son of Hyrcanus the priest, in the city of Ascalon.⁵ Now although the alliance of Aretas with Abgar [48] and Khuran provided a reason, yet Abgar and Khuran in their love for Christ and for the fame of the Holy Saviour were resentful against Herod for what he had done—just as later they sought vengeance against Pilate for the murder of the Baptist and the

1. Although Khuran Artsruni is known to Moses Khorenats'i, II 29, 36 (in the form Khosran), as a general, Thomas's elaboration is a direct counter to Bagratid claims; see above, p. 46 n. 9. Labubna, p. 19, refers to a Khosron as one of the leading citizens of Edessa; there is no suggestion that he was an Armenian!

2. For Thomas's views on the writing of history see the Introduction to this book.

3. Thomas probably used Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, I 6–8 (where Josephus is quoted), for his references to Herod, rather than Josephus directly. Herod's Arab mother is called Cypros by Josephus, *Wars*, I 82.

4. Cf. Mark 6.17. Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, I 10–11, indicates that this was during the reign of Tiberius (emperor A.D. 14–37).

5. Moses Khorenats'i, II 29, briefly describes Herod's defeat with the help of the Armenians led by Khosran, but gives no details of Herod's flight.

torments of Christ.¹ And it was the sixteenth year of Tiberius Caesar.²

After the ascension of our Saviour and the death of the pious Abgar, Abgar's son Ananun became king. He had not inherited his father's faith in Christ, but abandoning the holy covenant he pursued the worship of idols that Abgar had scorned and rejected.³ He also trapped the great general Khuran Artsruni in the snare of his deceit into repeating his error, for which the latter was mocked and despised. Then Khuran took the greater part of the army and went to Sanatruk at Shavarshan. [Sanatruk] took him along in his attack on Abgar's son to deprive him of the kingdom he held. But before the war had come to a conclusion, a tower that Abgar's son was building collapsed on him and killed him—exacting vengeance for the death of Saint Addē.⁴

However, Khuran did not remain with Sanatruk but went to Greek territory, to the Caesar Tiberius, while the latter was waging war against the Spaniards because of the gold mines.⁵ There Khuran performed many heroic exploits and victories with the soldiers that had accompanied him from Armenia. Being very pleased with him, Tiberius honoured him with purple [robes] and a baton in the stadium. Tiberius died after reigning for twenty-three years; and in place of Tiberius, Gaius the Less reigned for three and one half years.⁶

Then Khuran heard that Queen Helena of Armenia, Abgar's wife, had been unwilling to remain in Mesopotamia because of the impious Sanatruk and had gone to the holy city of Jerusalem, where she lived in piety.⁷ So he too came to join her in Jerusalem. Taking the queen's and his own gold, he went [49] to Egypt to

1. Abgar's complaint to Tiberius about Pilate is found in Labubna and Moses; see Thomson, *Moses Khorenats'i*, II 33 n. 9.

2. *Sixteenth*: spelled out in the text of Thomas, not given in numerals. But according to Eusebius, *Canon*, Christ was crucified in Tiberius's nineteenth year.

3. See Moses Khorenats'i, II 34. But Moses says nothing of Khuran's apostasy.

4. Moses Khorenats'i, II 35, speaks only of Sanatruk's war against Abgar's sons (plural) after the death of Ananun, and gives a similar version of Sanatruk's death; but Khuran was not involved. Shavarshan was the site of Thaddaeus's martyrdom; see Moses, II 34, and Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 459.

5. For Tiberius's war in Spain see Moses Khorenats'i, II 33, and *ibid.*, II 2, for the gold mines. But Khuran's exploits there and his rewards are not mentioned before Thomas.

6. See Eusebius, *Canon*, year 2052 of Abraham, for Tiberius's twenty-three years. The *Canon* gives Gaius three years and four months of rule.

7. See Moses Khorenats'i, II 35, for Helena. Moses had already elaborated on the account in Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, II 12; but Thomas has added the further embellishments concerning Khuran.

buy corn in the days of the famine that occurred in the reign of Claudius, in order to distribute it to orphans and widows as well as all the impoverished believers in Christ—for whom the corn was sufficient. There Khuran lived and there he died at a good old age; in the world to come he will be crowned by Christ, with the queen Helena among all the saints of Christ our God. Amen.

CHAPTER 7

Calumny by Nerseh's nobles against Vach'ē [nephew] of Arshavir

When Khuran went to Tiberius Caesar he left his son Vach'ē and his brother Arshavir at Harran with Queen Helena. Then, when the queen went to Jerusalem, Vach'ē and Arshavir, being afraid to go to Sanatruk, went to Nerseh king of Syria, taking with them the written treaty of peace between Abgar and Nerseh and Khuran Artsruni.¹ Nerseh appointed them to the oversight of the government: Vach'ē he established at the royal court, so that via him everyone would have to enter or leave the palace and through him conduct whatever business they needed—from the greatest to the least; and Arshavir he appointed as commander of the army for war. But Nerseh's nobles took offence at them and induced one of Nerseh's relatives, Dareh by name, to approach Nerseh and say: "Why were you pleased to act thus, to appoint these men to run your country? Behold, they are descended from the family of Senek'erim in Nineveh; they [now] command your army along with their own. They may perhaps inflict harm on you and snatch the kingdom of Nineveh for themselves. For Khuran, [50] the father of Vach'ē and brother of Arshavir, had become friendly with Artashēs the king of Persia when Abgar went to Persia and they made a mutual treaty.¹ Perhaps, when they accomplish the evil deeds that they have plotted against you, as we have heard from their confidants, with the help of Artashēs they may depose your family and descendants from the throne of Syria. Either make their evil plots redound on

1. Vachē and Arshavir are unattested outside Thomas. Moses Khorenats'i, II 33, gives the text of a letter from Abgar to Nerseh, but mentions no treaty.

1. Moses Khorenats'i, II 28, describes this treaty.

their own heads, or let them go away whither they may desire.” Nerseh was attentive to Dareh, but he was unable to prove his allegations. However, because of these slanderers Vach’ē and Arshavir went to Artashēs king of Persia and remained there until the return of Artashēs, son of Sanatruk, who came here and reigned as king after killing Eruand.²

Now Sahak, Vach’ē’s son, had gone in flight by the regions of Media to Atrpatakan, and was residing with a certain general and magus called Peroz-Vram.³ Smbat, taking Artashēs, was residing at Zaravand in Atrpatakan;⁴ he wrote to Sahak [asking him] to return to Eruand so that perhaps there might be a way to make some plan concerning Eruand. He obediently went without delay, and explaining to Eruand the reasons for his flight said: “We brought up the sons of Sanatruk as foster parents;⁵ and you swore by Artemis⁶ and Aramazd that when you were king [we] should have no grounds for fear.” But Eruand continued his search for Artashēs. So Smbat took Artashēs and went to settle on the high mountain of Varag, while Eruand in pursuit encamped at the foot of the mountain at the head of the province of Tosp, and called the spot Eruandakank’.⁷ Sahak sent word to Smbat that he should not remain on the mountain but make haste to return to Her and Zarevand.⁸ “For,” he said, “Eruand will not advance with his army across the border of Media.” And he had the child’s needs taken to him day by day. When Eruand became aware of this he had Sahak taken in bonds to Armavir.⁹ There he remained in prison until he died.

2. For the death of Eruand see Moses, II 46.

3. Sahak Artsruni is only attested in Thomas. But a Peroz, governor of Nineveh, is mentioned by Moses Khorenats’i, II 33, in Abgar’s letter to Nerseh.

4. Smbat was the tutor of Artashēs; here Thomas is elaborating on Moses, II 37 ff.

5. *As foster parents: dayekabar*. For the Armenian custom of fostering (*dayeak* being the tutor, *san* the protégé) see Widengren, *Feudalism*, ch. 3. Cf. Elishē, p. 22.

6. The Greek Artemis is normally identified with the Armenian Anahit; see references in Thomson, *Moses Khorenats’i*, II 12 n. 7. But Thomas, like Moses, never refers to Anahit, the most famous of all pagan Armenian deities, by her Armenian name.

7. *Eruandakank’*: not attested elsewhere as such, Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 343, 426; but see below, p. 197 n. 4. For the name as a title of Artashēs see Thomson, *Moses Khorenats’i*, II 37 n. 5. Tosp is the region around Van, and Varag is to the east of Van; see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 340, 371.

8. *Her and Zarevand*: The Armenian *i hetewi zawrs and* is awkward. Patkanean suggests this emendation (Her and Zarevand being on the border of Media), which Vardanyan follows. A literal rendering: “to his infantry” does not make much sense in this context. For Her and Zarevand see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 338.

9. Moses Khorenats’i, II 39, notes that Eruand moved his court from Armavir to Eruandashat. For Armavir see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 405.

[51] Then Ashot, Vach'ē's brother, since he was very young in years, was taken by his tutor and brought before Eruand.¹ He had been unable to escape and go whither he might wish, he said, lest perchance on his way he be siezed and condemned to death. But Eruand kept the oath to his father and allowed him to go and settle and live wherever he might please. So [his tutor] brought him to the mountain Sim, to the place where his ancestor had dwelt in the land of Tarōn.²

At the same time Smbat took Artashēs and came down from the mountain. Among the rocks he made a refuge in a most unsuspected spot, a hiding place in a small cavern in a rocky hollow, opposite the southern side of the fortress of Van, near the place where a spring gushes out at the foot of a small hill. It was near the edge of the lake from which temperate breezes blow, freshening the parching heat of the summer caused by the sun's heat.³ There they stopped for many days in safety from distrust and fear of Eruand. For he was unable to discover the fugitive Artashēs. Since the latter was preserved in this way by God's providence, Eruand returned by the borders of Atrpatakan to the valley of Andzakh'. Now the valley of Andzakh' is so called for the reason that it contains many treasures in its jagged heights, its narrow defiles, in the safe fastnesses of the valley, in the chaos of the land that is uninhabited by men and free from the attacks of Eruand's brigands.⁴ So he came and stopped in the town of Nakhchavan, the capital⁵ of the land of Vaspurakan. Thenceforth Eruand was thrown into doubt; sleep did not calm him at night,⁶ nor food delight his palate. Then Smbat took Artashēs in the guise of a wretch who goes around begging his daily sustenance, and came in his woe to the court of Dareh [king of] the Medes.⁷ When Eruand eventually heard of this, he

1. This Ashot is unattested elsewhere.

2. For Sim and the ancestors of the Artsrunik' see above, p. 8. The text of Thomas generally has the Arabic *Tarun* in place of the standard Armenian *Tarawn* (*Tarōn*); see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 325.

3. Moses Khorenats'i says nothing of Artashēs and Smbat coming to the Van region; but for a similar description of the lake see Moses, I 16.

4. For Andzakh' see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 344. Thomas here seems to be proposing an etymology: *andzaw* (not *andzah*) means "secure place, cavern."

5. *Capital: ostan*. This term was originally used of royal lands, see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 460–461. But Thomas uses it for the capital town of any princely family. In the case of R̄shtunik', the *ostan* was the town called Ostan (modern Vostan). For Nakhchavan see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 455.

6. As Moses Khorenats'i, II 38.

7. As Moses, II 37.

wrote to Smbat in the hope that he might deliver up the young Artashēs. When Artashēs attained maturity [52] he went to the Persian king Artashēs; and demonstrating there many deeds of valour in heroic combats, he was honoured by Artashēs the Persian king to the extent that he supported him with the aid of an army and made him king over Armenia in succession to his father Sanatruk in the royal capital of the valiant Arsacids.¹ Vach'ē and Arshavir then returned with Artashēs, who had taken Eruand's kingdom in the thirty-first year of Artashēs, king of kings, and in the . . . year of the Greek emperor. . . .² He returned to them the land which Tigran Haykazn had given in inheritance [to their family], but which Sanatruk had confiscated to the court: the mountain of Sim and Ałdznik' as far as the borders of Asorestan.³

CHAPTER 8

The rule of Artashēs over Armenia

When the rule of Artashēs was flourishing in its systematic orderliness and prosperous administration, as the books of the historians explain, and he had married Sat'inik as queen of Armenia, he recalled his exile in the cavern that we mentioned above.⁴ So he returned to that spot for amusement. As it pleased him, he built a palace of rough rock as a royal autumn residence, a splendid building, beautifully walled, looking out across the delightful lake to the north. The sun's rays played upon the strollers; the fish seemed to be sporting on the waves as they jumped in and out; it looked across to the great mountain called Masik' with its lofty summit covered in snow of a glorious white⁵—like a splendid king with honourable white hairs diverting himself among his

1. As Moses Khorenats'i, II 43–47: the Arsacid Eruand was killed in his capital Eruandashat, and Artashēs was crowned there.

2. There is a gap in the text of Thomas, so the year and name of the Greek emperor are missing. Vardanyan supplies "second year of Titus," i.e. A.D. 79. Moses Khorenats'i, II 47, gives the date as the twenty-ninth year of Darius of Persia.

3. Moses, I 23, notes that the Artsrunik' held Sim and Ałdznik' in the time of Tigran; but he has no reference to a confiscation by Sanatruk.

4. See above, p. 51. Moses Khorenats'i, II 50, describes Artashēs' marriage with Satinik, and in II 50 his wise government. But Moses has no reference to Artashēs' interest in Van.

5. This is Nekh-Masis, modern Sipan-dagh; see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 324.

proud nobility [53] and seeing before him the shimmering bluish-purple of the wide-spreading lake. Around the shores he built vast estates, with bushy trees, wine-stocks, and various fruits; round the wall he established thickly planted gardens, blooming and smelling sweetly from the variety of flowers. Not merely did they dazzle the eye and their smell delight the nose but they also provided medicinal remedies of ingenious science following the teaching of Asclepius.¹ Around the fortress-like palace he encircled the hill with a wall of roughly hewn rocks, fortifying the valley [into] a populous city. Above the gushing spring he also walled in the steep rock with very strong constructions² in order to protect the source of water; and he strengthened the wall around the rock so that it was secure and inaccessible to attackers. He set it out with delightful precision, bringing the wall down to the depths of the lake. In the middle of the three-forked small hollow valley which runs down from the three hills he built a high tower with hollow centre; on top of it he set the image of Astlik, and nearby the treasure house of the cult of the idols.³ In it [the city] he arranged bustling streets suitable for commerce. On the highest hill to the southern side he discovered a lesser fountain, whose water he brought along an aqueduct through the valley.⁴ And for the improvement of the view, on the west of the plain and along the shore of the lake he arranged walls and had the enclosure filled with thickly planted vineyards in order to delight the eye.

When he had completed the construction of the city and made ready the inaccessible and secure fortress, he called the fortress Zard, that is, "splendour," for the splendid construction. He used to bring Queen Sat'inik for diversion in the autumn season to the fortified and beautifully built palace that adorned the

1. Lazar, §7, also describes the medicinal use of plants in his eulogy of the province of Ayrarat. For Asclepius as healer see Brock, *Ps.-Nonnus Scholia*, p. 132; Armenian text in Manandian, "Scholien," p. 285.

2. *With very strong constructions: amraguniwk' shinuatsovk' ew shēn marmargarit.* This last word might be a corruption of *marmareay* (marble), describing the wall, or of *margarit* (pearl), implying "precious." The passage is not clear; Vardanyan has abbreviated it in his modern Armenian translation.

3. There is no other reference in Armenian historians to Van being a site for the cult of Astlik, who was identified with Aphrodite; see Moses Khorenats'i, II 12, 14, and Garitte, *Documents*, p. 206. Agathangelos, §809, describes in some detail her shrine at Ashtishat. See below, p. 214, for the temple of Vaheavahan at Varag. The *History of the Holy Hrip'simeank'*, p. 302, refers to Gregory the Illuminator destroying idols in this region.

4. It is not clear whether Thomas is referring to the old Urartian aqueduct described by Moses Khorenats'i, I 16 (not mentioned above, p. 26), or to a new construction attributed to Artashēs.

castle.⁵ He named [54] the city Artamat, which when translated really means “the handiwork of Artashēs,” or “the coming of Artashēs,” because in Persian *mat* means “coming.”¹ For when Artashēs left this spot he no longer allowed Eruand to trouble him; but after going from here to the Medes and Persians, he returned in great force and with royal magnificence to reign over Greater Armenia. Following the barbarian rites of divination² he honoured this spot as where he began his change from the lowest to the highest [station].

Now the holy men of Sukavēt mountain, since they were fellow countrymen and confidants of Sat’irik’s and had followed her, sent one of their ascetics to the queen to reproach her vain and useless cult of the idols, as Saint K’rysi [sent] to Artashēs.³

Sat’irik was attentive to the advice of the holy men, but did not reject the image of the idol called Astlik because she distrusted the king and his sons, especially as she expected the king to turn first from idols to the worship of Christ the true God. But how the matter ended is not clear to us.

Sahak, son of Vach’ē, was established at Artashēs’ court in splendid and prominent authority. Artashēs entrusted to him the province of Ałbag, for some descendants of Ashdahak the Mede dwelt there—valiant men, well armed and good archers.⁴ But since their clan had diminished, they had no one powerful enough to wage war and serve the king, especially as the land had been devastated by a Persian raid about the time of Eruand’s death and Artashēs’ accession to the throne. But a certain woman of the race of Ashdahak dwelt in the castles of Jımay

5. *Zard*: As a place name this is only attested here. “Adorned,” *zardareal*, is a play on the meaning of *zard*, “adornment,” glossed by Thomas as “splendour,” *paytsarut’iwn*.

1. The etymology involving *mat*, “coming,” is used by Moses Khorenats’i, II 46, for the town of Marmet. See further Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 408. Thomas, p. 215 below, refers again to “the town of Artashēs.” His etymology as “handiwork,” *dzeřagorts*, may be based on *matn*, “finger.”

2. *Barbarian rites of divination*: *ēst barbarosakan hmayits’n*. Cf. Moses Khorenats’i, I 20 (divination by wind blowing the plane trees at Armavir), and especially III 27, *vasn hmayits’ inch’ hetanosakanats’*: pagan incantations involving the bones of the old Armenian kings.

3. This paragraph refers to the story of the martyrs Sukias and Oski (Armenian for “gold,” as the Greek Khrysos), who were Alans related to Queen Satinik but were put to death by her son. For their names and Mount Sukaw see John Catholicos, pp. 36–37. There are references to fuller and later accounts in *BHO*, s.v. *Sukhias*.

4. Moses Khorenats’i, II 8, 49, refers to the descendants of Ashdahak as holding land at the foot of Masis.

and Sring, in the province of Lesser Ałbag. The woman's name was Jaylamar, after which she had named the castle, and she had many treasures and a daughter called Anush.⁵ Sahak married the latter at the command of Artashēs, who confirmed and sealed the land for Sahak as his own inheritance. [55] The king took care of the woman for the reason that she had not gone over to Eruand nor served him in any fashion. After receiving his land as a gift, Sahak let his son Ashot establish himself in the mountainous regions of their first principality, to cultivate and inhabit it, and pass on the land in inheritance to their own family, descendants of the house of the Artsrunik'.

Ashot, by an unwise decision, entered the mountain where some brigands from the regions of Hashteank' were strongly established.¹ They came across each other, and through lack of caution he was killed there in this unforeseen encounter. He had been unable to cultivate the land, when shortly, in the eighth year of Artashēs, the king took over the land and ordered a temple built there to Heracles and Dionysius.² For that reason he was able to keep the land prosperous, with a large population. But when the Artsruni clan declined, no one remained save a single young man named Hamam,³ son of the aged Arshavir, brother of Khuran who was at the royal court. In consideration of his ancestors' efforts and services the king promoted Hamam to the rank and station of his forefathers, and gave him in inheritance the land of Ałbag. Just as he did for Sahak, so he did for Hamam. But Hamam was haughty and arrogant, cowardly and lazy in war, and only served the king with adulation. When the king heard of his weak and languid way of life, he appointed him overseer of the officials⁴ of the royal court, so that he might imbue the king's employees with the same subser-

5. Jaylamar and Anush are unattested elsewhere. But Jımar and Sring are often mentioned by Thomas; see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 335.

1. Moses Khorenats'i, II 8, stresses that Hashteank' was the domain of cadet princes of the Arsacid line. For the province see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 291–293.

2. Moses Khorenats'i, II 12, refers to the statue of Heracles erected at Ashtishat; Heracles is Armenian Vahagn, as Agathangelos, §127. Dionysius is identified with Mihr in the Agathangelos cycle; see Garitte, *Documents*, p. 210. But he is not mentioned by Moses Khorenats'i.

3. This Hamam is unattested outside Thomas.

4. *Overseers of the officials*: *verakats'ut'iwn gortsakalats'*; cf. p. 49 above: *verakats'ut'iwn gortsakalut'ean*, "oversight of the government." For the term *gortsakal* see Adontz/Garsoian, pp. 185, 339, and below, p. 209 n. 4. For *verakats'u* see below p. 107 n. 4.

vience, since [Hamam] was also familiar with the books of the archives. For in the past there was no interest in or care for either the protection of the country's prosperity or preparations for war, but at the royal court one could only enter and leave the archives and treasuries through the king's confidants.⁵ However, Artashēs sent Hamam as ambassador to the emperor Hadrian in the matter of the brigand Barkochba and his war in Syria. He went, and on his return found King Artashēs dead in Marand. [56] He himself died with the other flatterers in the land of Media at the town of Bakurakert.¹

After Artashēs there reigned Artavazd; then Tiran, son of Artashēs; then Tiran;² then the last Tigran; then Vałarshak. In the time of their reigns the generations of the Artsrunik' were: Hamazasp, Shavarsh, Asod, Babgean.³

Vałarshak became king in succession to his father Tigran. Waging war against the Khazars of the North, he was killed by those mighty archers. Then his squires, Babgean and the great *aspet* Ashot, together escaped from the great battle; returning in haste to Armenia they gave the sad news of the king's death and made king in succession to Vałarsh his son Khosrov with the cooperation of the Persian king Artavan.⁴

Having thus brought peace to the land they lived in tranquil ease as they pleased all the time of Khosrov's life. He reigned for forty-eight years.⁵

CHAPTER 9

The abolition of the Pahlavik kingdom and the rule of the Stahrian

While the land of Armenia was thus enjoying a tranquil and undisturbed existence menaced by no danger from anywhere, but rather inflicting troubles on others as we read, unexpectedly there arrived the news of Artavan's death and the domi-

5. Cf. Moses Khorenats'i, I 3, for Armenian archives and their neglect.

1. Cf. Moses Khorenats'i, II 60, for the revolt of Barkochba and the death of Artashēs; but he has no mention of Hamam. For Marand and Bakurakert see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 346-347, 412.

2. Vardanyan omits this Tiran, following the order of succession in Moses Khorenats'i, II 61-65.

3. These four Artsrunik' are only attested in Thomas.

4. For this paragraph see Moses Khorenats'i, II 65.

5. For the seventy-eight years cf. Moses Khorenats'i, II 74.

nation of Persia by Artashir the Sasanian from Stahr.⁶ Our king Khosrov was struck with dismay and attempted to revenge the death of his blood relative, King Artavan. This indeed he was doing until his treacherous murder by Anak his relative. Then the country fell apart and everyone scattered, hastily fleeing wherever he could.⁷ [57] They applied to the emperor Valerian to see if he could revenge the blood of Khosrov and bring an end to the tyranny of the Stahr. But although the emperor Valerian gave help to the Armenians with the army of Phrygia,¹ nonetheless the land was not pacified. No one was able to live in security, or keep possession of his patrimony; peace did not return until the emperor Probus, who made peace with Artashir.² Here I have no indication as to what happened to the Artsruni family, or how, where, or why. But we considered it merely sufficient to present the generations of the family as we have labored to discover them, down to the reign of Trdat and the beginning of the illumination of Armenia through the great Gregory the Illuminator. These are the generations of the Artsrunik' from Babgean: Mushet, Vahan, Nerseh, another Babgēn, Tirots'.

CHAPTER 10

Trdat's return from Greek territory and establishment on the throne of the kingdom of Greater Armenia with the help of the Greek king; and concerning his belief in Christ

The details of Trdat the Great's rule over the land of his fathers and of his deeds are known in writing: his belief in one God the Father, and in His only Son the Word [of] God, Jesus Christ, and in the one Holy Spirit, co-equal in nature and glory with the Father and the Son, in one perfect Divinity; and his baptism with a holy and pure confession in the Father and

6. On these events see Agathangelos, §§18 ff., and Moses Khorenats'i, II 67.

7. For Khosrov's murder by Anak see Agathangelos, §32, Moses, II 74. Agathangelos, §36, says the Armenians were "deported" rather than "scattered." For the anarchy cf. Moses, II 75.

1. For Valerian and Phrygia see Moses Khorenats'i, II 76; this is not mentioned by Agathangelos.

2. For Probus's peace with Artashir see Moses Khorenats'i, II 77.

Son and Holy Spirit at the hand of Gregory the Great, with all the nobility of Greater Armenia.³

From the house of the Artsrunik' among the magnates of Armenia there was baptised Tirots', son of Babgēn II.⁴ He was a mild man, [58] intelligent, thoughtful, modest in speech and modest in look, who tried to make himself recognised by a single person—that is, Christ—rather than by the multitude. For at the time when Gregory the Great was being taken to the city of Caesarea to be ordained into the priesthood for the illuminating instruction of Armenia, Tirots' accompanied the nobles. And as we said above, because of his modest and humble character he willingly undertook [this] and did not push himself forward to higher rank in order to act the grandee with the famous and the infamous. But being a studious reader of the Holy Gospel [which bids us] not to sit in the first rank,¹ he never claimed honourable and superior rank among the great nobles of Armenia. For who is grander than the descendants of Senek'erim, the great glory of whose stock the outspoken Isaiah proclaimed to the Israelites,² or whose splendid pre-eminence Alexander of Macedon inscribed with no mean eulogies in the books that contain archival traditions?³

Now as we said above concerning our important investigations in the chronicles,⁴ we have confined ourselves to an exposition of the Artsruni families alone and have not pursued the multifarious stories which previous [historians] set down in books, describing their deeds of valour performed at various times that are worthy of many and the greatest praises. But we have merely indicated the most famous [events]: the good fight⁵ of the saintly king and brave champion Trdat against both incorporeal and corporeal warriors; his translation from earthly toils to [heavenly] rest and

3. The work of Gregory and the conversion of Trdat are the main themes of Agathangelos's *History*. Moses Khorenats'i gives a résumé of these events, but does not describe Trdat's conversion and baptism.

4. Tirots' (like his ancestors at the end of the preceding chapter) is only attested in Thomas. In Agathangelos, §795, the Artsrunik' are listed in last place, as no. 16, of the nobles who escorted Gregory to Caesarea. The following description of the humility displayed by Tirots' explains away that lowly rank.

1. Mark 9.35.

2. Isa. ch. 37. "Outspoken" (*hamardzakakhaws*) is not a biblical epithet, but is also used of Isaiah by John Catholicos, p. 221.

3. For Alexander's role in preserving archival material see Moses Khorenats'i, I 9; that account (Mar Abas Catina) also speaks of Senek'erim as the ancestor of the Artsrunik'.

4. See above, p. 3.

5. *The good fight*: II Tim. 4.7.

embalming⁶ in great honour with royal pomp and fame, as we read in the eloquent composition of Moses the world-famous teacher and orator, the most accurate author of our illumination, as he relates at the end of his second book.⁷

Khosrov, son of Trdat, succeeded his father as king at the command of Constantius.⁸ A lover of peace, [59] he established good order in the country with the princes; nor did anyone have any worry of attacks from anywhere.¹ They submitted themselves to the authority of the Greek emperor alone, abstaining from paying tribute to Shapuh king of kings.² He [Khosrov] entrusted the army to Vahan Amatuni to take responsibility for warfare³—if indeed there should be occasion for it anywhere. He governed according to Christian principles following the worthy commandments of the Lord, and in everything had recourse to the advice of Vrt'anēs the Great; he reigned for nineteen years.⁴

He paid the tribute to the emperor at the royal court through the chief scribe.⁵ But we have been unable to discover for certain anything else about the Artsruni clan or what sort of deeds they accomplished, save only that they lived peaceably with regard to the king and the nobles. Mushet, Vahan [and so on]⁶ held each his own property given to them in hereditary possession by the former kings. What we could not discover for certain we did not reckon worth putting in writing, save only that they were very highly regarded and honoured by the kings.

After Khosrov the Less his son Tiran became king.⁷ At that time the office of *hazarapet* of Armenia was held by a man of

6. *Embalming*: *diazardut'iwn*, which refers to the dressing of the corpse. In Gen. 50.2 *diazard* renders "embalmer." Perhaps here Thomas merely intends "burial."

7. Moses Khorenats'i, II 92, refers to Trdat's piety and death, but he has no reference to his burial.

8. *Constantius*: *Kostandianos*; Moses, III 8, has the form *Kostandey*. In Armenian the names Constans, Constantius, and Constantine are often confused; cf. below, p. 102 n.1., p. 306 n. 8.

1. P'awstos, III 3, expatiates on the peace and order under Khosrov—unlike Moses Khorenats'i, III 8, who says that he gave no evidence of prowess or valour.

2. As Moses, III 10.

3. For Vahan see Moses, III 9; P'awstos, III 9.

4. Moses, III 10; Asolik; and the *Primary History* all give Khosrov nine years. Pawstos, III 11, gives no length of reign.

5. *Chief scribe*: *dprapet*. It is not clear whether Thomas is referring to an Armenian or a Greek official. Outside the Bible, this term is only used of Sasanian officials; see Elishē, p. 42 (and Thomson, note 8 *ad loc.*), Łazar, p. 64.

6. See above, p. 57.

7. Cf. P'awstos, III 12; Moses, III 10.

baneful and evil character who was called *hayr mardpet*.⁸ Approaching King Tiran, he began to calumniate in secret the houses of the Artsrunik' and Rshtunik', for they were distinguished and famous families, valiant and renowned, and respected by all. He said: "Unless you exterminate these two noble families, their intentions are inimical to your rule; for their hand is with Shapuh king of kings." The *mardpet* said this, supposing that: "If I am able to carry out this perverse plan perhaps I shall also be able to hound the house of the Mamikonean nobles to destruction." Tiran heeded him and ordered the proposition of that impious enemy of God to be carried out. When this cruel undertaking was made known to the Mamikonean generals, [60] armed and with drawn swords Artavazd and Vasak Mamikonean wholeheartedly rushed into the crowd, struck down many with their swords, snatched away Shavasp, son of Vach'ē Artsruni, and Mehēdak Rshtuni, for they were very young in age, and took them to [their] fortresses in Tayk'.¹ When the boys reached maturity they gave them their daughters in marriage. From them stem the descendants of the two Artsruni and Rshtuni families; but these did not participate in Armenian affairs for many years. As for Tiran, wallowing in his foul turpitude, he was betrayed to Shapuh. Having been blinded, he died a death worthy of his deeds; as he had treated the saints Vrt'anēs and Yusik and the great priest Daniel, so was it meted out to him. He had reigned for sixteen years.²

Arshak became king in succession to Tiran his father at the command of Shapuh king of kings.³ Gathering around himself

8. For the office of *hazarapet* see Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 205 n. 234, and Adontz/Garsoian, p. 340; for that of *mardpet* see Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 168. For the calumny of the baneful *hayr mardpet* against the Artsrunik' and Rshtunik' see P'awstos, III 18. For the province of Rshtunik' see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 339, and for the family Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 213. (*Hazarapet* is often used later by Thomas for the Muslim governors, whose proper title was *ostikan*; see below, p. 89 n. 2, p. 108 n. 2.)

1. But P'awstos, III 18, indicates that it was Mehendak's (note variant spelling) *son* Tachat who was a child and was rescued with Shavasp. The version of these events in Moses Khorenats'i, III 15, is farther removed from Thomas. For the province of Tayk' see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 276-278.

2. For the blinding of Tiran see P'awstos, III 20, and Moses Khorenats'i, III 17. Moses says that his death was vengeance for "that saintly man," i.e. Daniel (see Moses, III 14), and that Vrt'anēs died a natural death. P'awstos, III 11, indicates that Vrt'anēs died before Tiran reigned. P'awstos does not give the length of Tiran's reign; according to Moses he reigned for eleven years (variant, sixteen; see apparatus *ad loc.*).

3. As Moses, III 18. But P'awstos, III 21, IV 1, says that Shah Nerseh appointed Arshak.

the Armenian nobility, he learned about the Artsruni and Ršhtuni families and those of the Mamikonean nobility who had gone off and fortified themselves in the fortresses of Tayk'. On being accurately informed about the causes of this, he wrote via a certain Vahan of the Amatuni family [directing] them to return and live without fear and be promoted in rank and honour. The three noble families heard the wise Vahan Amatuni and followed him back in trusting confidence. For they knew that they themselves had done no harm, neither great nor small. Received by King Arshak as he had written via Vahan, they were installed without fear.⁴

But the evil-minded *hayr mardpet* never desisted from his typical evil plotting. About that time Arshak travelled to the West accompanied by Nersēs the Great, Catholicos of Armenia, and arrived at Ashtishat in Tarōn, at the martyrium of Saint John the Baptist and the martyr Athanaginēs, which had been built by our Holy Illuminator Gregory on his return from being consecrated to the priesthood.⁵ [61] After entering the holy place and performing their prayers, they came out to walk around and enjoy themselves elsewhere. The malicious *hayr mardpet*, the son of Satan, was not satisfied with working evil among men, but even had presumptions against God and his saints. Having opened his filthy mouth against heaven, like an insolent and shameless dog he drew his tongue over the earth.¹ Approaching King Arshak he said: "The former kings were not sensible, since they did not keep this place as a royal retreat for luxury and enjoyable entertainment. So may my suggestion please you. The saints do not take delight in grand places, otherwise they would not have lived narrow and circumscribed lives equivalent to death." But I do not know whether the king really gave way to his enticement or not. And I did not consider it important to write down what we have not verified.²

When Saint Nersēs heard of this evil and immoral proposition

4. This story is not in P'awstos or Moses. Vahan Amatuni's exploits in the reign of Khosrov are described by Moses, III 18.

5. This story is at variance with Moses, who has Nersēs travel to Constantinople twice (III 21, 29). According to P'awstos, IV 14, Hayr addressed Nersēs in similar terms at Ashtishat, but not in the presence of the king. For the building of the shrine and its relics see Agathangelos, §§810–814; for other references to Ashtishat see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 400–401.

1. As Ps. 72.9. For the "insolent dog" cf. Isa. 56.11.

2. For Thomas on historical writing see the Introduction to this book.

he heaped strong and violent curses on the *mardpet*. And the saint's words were fulfilled by deeds. At that very moment Shavasp Artsruni approached the *mardpet* and said: "Some white bears with fine hair are lurking in thickets in these deep forests. If it pleases you, let us go and hunt them." So they entered the forest with him. Drawing back his wide-arc'd bow to its fullest extent, Shavasp Artsruni shot [an arrow] in his back through his spine with an energetic motion of his powerful fingers. It pierced the malicious one's heart, and falling backwards he breathed out his soul into the hands of his counsellor Satan. The words of Saint Nersēs mingled with the living word of God, the more easily to bring retribution on those who despise his blessings and curses, accomplishing the task without delay. He received his just reward according to the merit of his intentions.³

[62] In those times the emperor Valens ruled over the Greeks, and Shapuh king of kings over the Persians. Arshak supported both kings, sometimes the Persians, sometimes the Greeks, or rebelled against both.¹

But the Armenian nobles, at Valens's instigation, were incited to war against Arshak. They were advancing to battle when Saint Nersēs interposed; he calmed and pacified the quarrel. Then the king begged Saint Nersēs to negotiate a reconciliation between Valens and Arshak—which he did indeed bring about.²

But Mehuzhan Artsruni did not heed Saint Nersēs, nor did he submit himself to the king; but he offered foul enticements to Vahan Mamikonean, who was Mehuzhan's father-in-law, and they passed over to Shapuh.³ Abandoning the Christian religion, they submitted to the false doctrine of the ash-worship of Ormizd.⁴ Shapuh, greatly delighted at this, promised to marry Mehuzhan to his own sister Ormzduhi.⁵

There was a great war between Shapuh and Arshak during Arshak's lifetime. At many times and in many places the Arme-

3. This story is from P'awstos, IV 14.

1. Moses Khorenats'i, III 29, notes that Arshak saw he had as enemies both Shapuh and Valens.

2. As Moses, III 29; but he does not refer to Valens's instigation.

3. As Moses, III 29. P'awstos begins to describe Mehruzhan's (note variant spelling) treachery at IV 23, but does not mention Vahan until IV 50.

4. *Religion: awrēnk'*, for the term see Thomson, Introduction to *Elishē*, pp. 12–13. *Ash-worship*: See above, p. 31 n. 1. For the fire of Ormizd cf. Moses, II 77.

5. *Ormizdukht* in Moses, III 36, and P'awstos, IV 50. But P'awstos says that Shapuh gave her as wife to *Vahan*.

nian and Persian armies battled against each other. But I consider it superfluous to repeat the accounts of previous historians.⁶

But after many battles, with deceitful trickery Shapuh summoned Arshak to him, apparently for peace and friendship and making no reference to the evils that had been done between them. He went, following the summons and full of innocence. But [Shapuh] bound him in iron bonds and had him taken to the fortress called Anush in the region of Ctesiphon.⁷ There he lived until his death at his own hand, according to the prediction made about him by that man of God Saint Nersēs.⁸

But here I shall expound in order the audacious acts [63] which the impious Mehuzhan inflicted on the Armenians. Mehuzhan and Vahan took the Persian army, entered Armenia, spread raiding parties across the whole face of the Armenian land, ravaged hamlets and towns and farms, plundered possessions and all patrimonies, and put to the sword all those they captured.¹ They entered the province of R̄shtunik' and sacked the house of Garegin, lord of R̄shtunik'. Escaping by the skin of his teeth, Garegin fled to the emperor of the Greeks.² They captured the princess of R̄shtunik', the wife of Garegin and sister of Vardan Mamikonian.³ Bringing her to Van Tosp, the city of Shamiram, they put her to torture and very cruel torments, trying to force her to abandon the Christian religion and to accept the religion of the Mazdaean cult of ashes. When the saintly princess Hamazaspuhi refused, they took her up to a high place in the castle, stripped off her clothes—that she might be clothed in the glory of Christ⁴—tied ropes to her legs, and suspended her from the northern tower.⁵ With thankful endurance⁶ she received the sentence of

6. Cf. P'awstos, Book IV; Moses Khorenats'i, III 35–37.

7. Moses, III 35, says that Anush was in Khuzhastan, as P'awstos, V 5. The fortress is called Andmēsh by P'awstos, IV 54.

8. For Nersēs' curse on Arshak see P'awstos, IV 15; Moses, III 24; but neither historian refers to it when describing Arshak's suicide (P'awstos, V 7; Moses, III 35).

1. For Mehuzhan (Mehruzhan) and Vahan see P'awstos, IV 55 ff., and Moses Khorenats'i, III 35 ff. But not all details in Thomas's account tally with the earlier sources.

2. P'awstos, IV 59, does not say "to the emperor of the Greeks." Garegin's flight is not in Moses.

3. Garegin's wife is named Hamazaspuhi by P'awstos, IV 59. This story is not in Moses; but see III 36 at n. 7 for a parallel.

4. Cf. Rom. 13.14; Gal. 3.27.

5. P'awstos says that the tower overlooked the lake.

6. *Thankful: gohats'ol*. For this theme in martyrdoms see Thomson, *Elišhē*, p. 123 n. 3, and below, p. 170 n. 4.

martyrdom. Her nurse, remaining below the gibbet, gathered the holy treasure in her bosom and brought it to rest in the martyrium [built] by Saint Nersēs. Then they transferred it to the place which is now called Dzoróy Vank',⁷ to the martyrium of the Holy Hrip'simeank', which Saint Gregory had built and where are preserved in perpetual memory of the illumination [of Armenia] by our father his holy altar, pastoral staff, engraved ring, and the girdle of his diligent waist.⁸

Mehuzhan and Vahan attacked another time, took Van Tosp, razed and destroyed the beautifully constructed fortresses, and led into captivity the inhabitants of the city—five thousand Jews and eighteen thousand Christians—and the Jews that Barzap'ran had brought captive at Tigran's orders; they marched them to Isfahan. Then they took Vafarshapat and Artashat,⁹ and [64] led into captivity the Jews who since the days of Saint Gregory had believed in Christ, causing them more harm than the other Jews because of their faith in Christ.

The blessed Zuit'ay, a priest from Artashat, followed them lest his flock wander astray without a shepherd in deserts and dangerous abysses and fall headlong among wolves.¹ But Mehuzhan came before Shapuh and began to calumniate the priest Zuit'ay, saying: "This priest has followed the Christian prisoners to oppose the commands of your majesty and the religion of the Mazdaeans and Aryans. Everywhere he is the cause of the Armenians' rebelling against the king of kings; and he dishonours fire and holds the sun in no esteem. So let his life be terminated—the command of your majesty will easily bring that about."² Immediately the saint was led before Shapuh. The holy one's responses to the questions were

7. P'awstos does not say where Hamazaspuhi's remains were buried. For Dzoroy Vank' see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 447. Oskean, *Vaspurakan*, I pp. 251–254, notes that John Catholicos and Thomas are the first historians to mention this monastery. See further below, p. 214 n. 6 (for Gregory's building of the monastery dedicated to Hrips'imē) and p. 238.

8. The Anonymous also mentions the relics of Gregory's altar, staff, and girdle. See below, p. 310 n. 4, for references in other historians.

9. For the capture of Van, Vafarshapat, and Artashat see P'awstos, IV 55; Barzap'ran and Isfahan appear in Moses' version, III 35. For Artashat and Vafarshapat see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 408–409, 469.

1. For Zuitay's martyrdom see P'awstos, IV 56. Moses Khorenats'i, III 35, offers an abbreviated version.

2. This accusation is not in P'awstos or Moses. The charge of dishonouring fire and the sun has parallels in Elishē and other texts; see Thomson, Introduction to *Elishē*, p. 20.

full of the perfect wisdom through the Holy Spirit that the saint possessed inseparably within himself. Having there fought the good fight,³ like a brave shepherd he gave himself for his flock,⁴ received the sentence of martyrdom, and was perfected in the glory of the Holy Trinity.⁵ The holy Zuit'ay travelled the good road of many martyrs in this land of Armenia, to the East and the West. After ruling for thirty-six years,⁶ Arshak died in the manner described [above].

During his reign Shapuh king of kings inflicted many insufferable afflictions on Armenia and Syria and Palestine. He led into captivity four million Jews, sacked Judaea and the holy city of Jerusalem, and poured out on the Christians all the mortal poison of vipers and asps.⁷ By him many saints were martyred for Christ; as is said, more than forty thousand holy men were martyred for Christ's sake,⁸ many [65] bishops, priests, and the other ecclesiastical ranks, and very many of the noblemen of the country and their wives, with terrible and cruel tortures at which I shudder. My mind is greatly amazed and astonished at their fortitude in enduring such refined instruments of torture as we read of in the book of the history of the martyrs which has the title *Araveleay* [East] and was composed by the blessed confessor of Christ Abraham from the village of Arats.¹ He was the pupil and follower of the holy Levondians, and wrote in that memoir the names of some rather than of all of them: Shahdosd, which means "lover of the king"; Gohsht'asd, which means "dyer of purple for royal clothing"; Bishop Shmavon, a rock of Christ's church; and in addition to him [the names of] another hun-

3. II Tim. 4.7.

4. John 10.11.

5. P'awstos says he was beheaded. For martyrdom as "perfection" see Thomson, *Elishē*, p. 78 n. 4.

6. Moses, III 35, says 30 years; P'awstos gives no precise number.

7. Ps. 57.5.

8. P'awstos, IV 57, mentions tens of thousands of victims, and also the tortures of nobles and their wives—but this was in *Armenia*. No earlier Armenian historian refers to Shapuh in Syria, Palestine, and Jerusalem.

1. Thomas is referring to the book of Syrian martyrdoms known in Armenian as *Vkayk' Arawelits'* (*Martyrs of the East*), originally composed by Marutha. By "composed" (*sharagreats'*) Thomas means "translated." Thomas is the first to associate this book of martyrs with Abraham, who is known from the histories of Elishē and Łazar as a survivor of imprisonment in Iran following the revolt of 451. However, he was not the Abraham from Arats; the latter was martyred. Cf. also below, p. 80 at n. 3. For Arats see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 403.

dred bishops and priests, who were martyred at the same time by the sword, in one day, on the great Friday of Easter.²

However, Mehuzhan was not content with carrying out the evils that he inflicted on the Christians, and especially on the land of Armenia; but taking the Persian army he came to rule over Armenia at the command of King Shapuh. In the company of Vahan Mamikonean he entered Armenia with fearless presumption, planning what he was unable to accomplish. For Samuel, Vahan's son, went to meet his father. Vahan expected to bring his son to an irreversible downfall. But Samuel took his father aside, as if they were to discuss the business for which they had come; and when they had gone some distance away from the Persian army, Samuel raised his one-edged [sword] and inflicted such severe wounds on him that he killed him instantly. Furthermore, he also slew his mother Tachatuhi, for they had both forsworn Christ. Then he himself fled from Persia to the regions of Khahtik'.³

But Mehuzhan did not abandon [his plans] to rule over Armenia. He amassed around him a vast multitude of battalions, flags, [66] and ensigns without number. On reaching the village of Dzirav in the province of Bagrevand, he wished to pass on to the royal lands of Armenia. But Smbat the *sparapet* of Armenia, son of Bagarat Bagratuni, opposed him with an army that included numerous Greek troops armed with shields and unfurled flags. The imperial trumpets sounded, and troop after troop of armed battalions surrounded Mehuzhan's force, preventing his rapid escape. Then the valiant Smbat came to grips with Mehuzhan. He hamstrung his armed horse, cast a rope around his neck, and said: "Good for you, king of Armenia. Come here that I the *sparapet* may crown you." Heating a circular spit [-iron] until it was red-hot, he set it on the head of the impious one. And thus the miserable wretch departed this world.¹

2. These three martyrs are listed at the beginning of the *Vkayk'*, but that book does not include the martyrdom of Shahdosd (Shahdus). The only etymology there proposed is for Gosht'azd: *ark'ayazat*, "royal noble," he being a *nerk'ini mets*, "grand eunuch." Shahdosd is indeed "shah's friend." But has Thomas interpreted *nerk'ini* as *nerk-*, thus *nerkagorts*, "dyer?"

3. For Samuel's killing of his parents see P'awstos, IV 58, and Moses Khorenats'i, III 48. But P'awstos names his mother Ormizdukht, while Moses calls his father Vardan. Instead of Khahtik', as Thomas, Moses says that Samuel fled to the emperor Arcadius. For the province of Khahtik' see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 432.

1. Thomas is following Moses Khorenats'i, III 37, for the battle of Dzirav and the death of Mehuzhan, rather than P'awstos. For Bagrevand see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 363. Smbat's speech is based on the role of the *sparapet* as the one who crowned the kings of Armenia.

In this regard the poetic fable seems opportune to me, which runs: "Often the foxes planned to reign, but the dogs did not agree."²

CHAPTER 11

The reign of Theodosius over the Greeks

On the death of the emperor Valens, Theodosius the Great ruled over the Greeks.³ Then Saint Nersēs took Pap, son of Arshak, and with a Greek army installed Pap as king over Armenia in the site of his native Arsacid monarchy.⁴ As king of Armenia Pap did not follow the advice of Saint Nersēs but travelled a perverse and contrary path, devoting himself to impurity and all forms of vice which it is not pleasing to repeat in this book.⁵ On being rebuked by Saint [67] Nersēs, he surreptitiously gave him a mortal poison to drink. So Armenia was deprived of the spiritual teacher and valiant shepherd Saint Nersēs. They removed the saint's body with a large retinue of Armenian soldiers, appointing Meršapuh Artsruni, general of Armenia, and Vahan Amatuni and Mehuzhan's brother as escorts to precede the cortège, and laid it to rest in the place of his ancestral martyrdom at T'ordan.¹ But when Pap rebelled against the emperor Theodosius, the Greek general Terentius captured him and marched him in bonds to the emperor. There they killed him at the emperor's command, after he had reigned for six years.² Following the death of Saint Nersēs, as archbishops of Armenia

2. *Fable: araspel*, as on p. 123 for the "fable" of Olympian. I have not identified this quotation.

3. Cf. Moses Khorenats'i, III 33. Theodosius I was emperor 379 to 395.

4. Thomas is following Moses, III 36, rather than P'awstos, V 1, who does not mention Nersēs in this regard but Mushel Mamikonean.

5. As P'awstos, V 22.

1. For the poisoning of Nersēs see P'awstos, V 23-24; Moses Khorenats'i's account, III 38, is very brief. The story of Nersēs' burial is different in Moses and P'awstos: he was buried in T'il. Thomas refers to the "ancestral" martyrdom because Nersēs was descended from Saint Gregory, who was buried at T'ordan. However, Thomas is the first to introduce an Artsruni, Meršapuh (unattested elsewhere), as playing the major role in the cortège. For T'ordan see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 284.

2. Here Thomas follows Moses, III 39, rather than P'awstos, V 32, who says that Pap died on capture. Moses gives Pap seven years of reign, as the *Primary History*, in Sebēos, p. 55. P'awstos gives no length of reign.

[there were] some descendants of Albianos bishop of Bznunik', an honourable man: Shahak, Zavēn, and Aspurakēs, who do not deserve a good memory.³

In place of Pap the emperor Theodosius made king a certain Varazdat from the Arsacid line, a valiant and warlike man who struck fear into both great and small. He rebelled against the emperor and sent word to Shapuh, king of kings, that he would submit to him.⁴ As ambassador he sent to Shapuh the brother of Mehuzhan Artsruni in order to confirm that intention. When he came to Shapuh, he reminded him about his own blood relative Mehuzhan: how he had been sincerely loyal to the king, the battles and raids and pillaging of Armenia performed by Mehuzhan, and his death at the hand of the valiant Smbat Mamikonean.⁵ Thus he incited the king to carry out the proposals of Varazdat, king of Armenia. While they were plotting this, the news reached the emperor through the general Terentius. And before a reply had come back from the king [Shapuh], an order from the emperor was delivered to Varazdat that he should present himself without delay. He [the emperor] had him sent to the islands of the Ocean where he died, having reigned for four years.⁶ When Mehuzhan realised what would happen to him from the emperor and the Armenian nobles, [68] he returned no more to Armenia, but lived and died there [in Persia], evincing no deed worthy of record.¹ And Zavēn had been appointed archbishop of Armenia, as said above, after the fourth year of Shahak.²

After Varazdat, Theodosius the Great made king over Armenia Arshak and Vafarshak, sons of Pap the Armenian

3. There are conflicting traditions concerning the names, order, and dates of the Armenian patriarchs; these are discussed at length by Garitte in his commentary to the *Narratio*. P'awstos, VI 2, calls Albianos "wicked"; as successor to Nersēs he has Yusik, while Shahak he places between Zavēn and Aspurakēs. Moses, III 39, says that Shahak was "not unworthy of praise"; he has the same order as Thomas. For Bznunik' see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 328-329.

4. Both Moses, III 40, and P'awstos, V 34, stress Varazdat's valour. Moses refers to his overtures to Shapuh, but has no reference to Mehuzhan Artsruni; nor does he name Terentius in this story.

5. *Smbat Mamikonean*: A telling slip. On p. 66 Thomas said that Smbat Bagratuni put the apostate Mehuzhan to death, following the tendentious Moses Khorenats'i; but P'awstos had said that it was Manuel *Mamikonean*.

6. As Moses, III 40; but P'awstos, V 37, says that Varazdat died in Greek territory.

1. Thomas must mean Mehuzhan's brother, the messenger mentioned above.

2. As Moses Khorenats'i, III 39. P'awstos, VI 2-3, gives Shahak two years as patriarch, but in a different order; see p. 67 n. 3.

king.³ Two years later Vafarshak died, having reigned with his brother over all Armenia.⁴ Soon the emperor Theodosius also died and his sons Honorius and Arcadius succeeded to the throne. Then the Armenian kingdom was divided into two, between Greece and Persia.⁵ Arshak went to the region of Mesopotamia, thinking it better to submit to a Christian king than to submit to the Persian empire.⁶ And many of the Armenian nobles followed Arshak to Arcadius, [including] Samuel Mamikonean, who had killed his father Vahan and his mother Tachatuhi because of their acceptance of the Persian Magian religion, and Vasak Artruni.⁷ Others of the senior nobility with all their strongly armed [followers] went to Persia to submit to the heathen and barbarian Sasanian race. Their submission was a cause of ruin to the land of Armenia. And they made the Persian king suppose that they accepted their religion.⁸

When King Shapuh learned what Arshak had done, he made a certain Khosrov from the Arsacid line king over Armenia.⁹ And Shapuh wrote a letter to the nobles, nullifying the reason for their emigration. For [he said]: "I have appointed a king for you from your own line and religion. Let it not seem hard for you to return here and occupy each his own inheritance. Do not stubbornly follow Arshak and completely abandon your ancestral homeland, to live as exiles, each finding by his sword position and noble rank. [69] But return here and hold your lands without trouble." They heeded him and returned each man to his own dwelling; and taking Arshak's treasures they brought them to Khosrov.¹ Following a great battle between Arshak and

3. As Moses, III 41, rather than P'awstos, V 44, where Manuel Mamikonean appoints Arshak and Vafarshak.

4. The "same year" in Moses. P'awstos does not mention Vafarshak's death.

5. For this division cf. P'awstos, VI 1; Lazar, p. 8; Moses, III 42. For secondary literature on the date (387?) see Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 152 n. 6, and Garitte, *Narratio*, p. 64.

6. Thomas has misread Moses in having Arshak go to Mesopotamia (which like Armenia was divided). As Lazar, §§5-6, Moses says Arshak went to the West thinking it better to live under a Christian king.

7. Moses does not name the nobles who accompanied Arshak. Vasak Artruni is mentioned by Lazar only as the father of Alan; Thomas is the first to give details of his career.

8. For this submission see Moses, III 42-43; but he speaks of *political* submission, not of a feigned apostasy.

9. For Khosrov see P'awstos, VI 1; and Moses, III 42; but only Moses gives the text of a letter from Shapuh.

1. For the treasure see Moses Khorenats'i, III 45.

Khosrov on the shore of Lake Gełam at the Marsh, Arshak fled to the province of Ekeleats' and there died, having reigned for seven years.²

Then in Arshak's sector the Greeks installed consuls and generals and counts, thenceforth appointing no more kings.³

But Vasak Artsruni went to Khosrov and took possession of his inheritance and his rank. He divided his attention between the two sides, remaining deceitfully inconstant and craftily uncommitted: with the Christians he pretended to be a Christian, and with the Persians one of theirs.

A few days later Khosrov rebelled against Shapuh. Putting his trust in the Greeks, he promised to submit the whole of Armenia to imperial rule. For after the death of Aspurakēs he had elevated Saint Sahak, son of Saint Nersēs, to the patriarchal see of Armenia, and had appointed the nobles who returned from Arshak to their proper ranks.⁴ Shapuh, angered at his having done this without his permission, sent his own son Artashir to Armenia. Removing Khosrov from the throne, he appointed in his stead Vatarsh, Khosrov's brother.⁵

Then Vasak Artsruni fled to Artashir the Persian, thinking that it was [inspired] by the great *sparapet* Sahak⁶ that Khosrov had promulgated his independence, and at the same time planning to take revenge on the Mamikonean family for the murder of Mehuzhan his grandfather. The most excellent Alan Artsruni, Vasak's son, was much offended at his father's senseless and irrational character [70] in behaving so sympathetically towards his kinsman the impious Mehuzhan, who should have been

2. For the battle see Moses, III 46. He says Arshak died of consumption, having reigned over all Armenia for five years and over half of Armenia for two and a half years. Lake Gełam is Lake Sevan; see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 417, and *ibid.*, p. 286 for the province of Ekeleats'.

3. Moses, III 46, mentions the "counts" (as Procopius, *Buildings*, III 1.14–15), but not "consuls," or "generals." For Byzantine rule in western Armenia see Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 193.

4. For Khosrov and the nobles see Moses, III 48; for the appointment of Sahak, III 49.

5. Moses, III 50, describes the coming of Artashir, the deposition of Khosrov, and the appointment of his brother. But all sources other than Thomas name the next king Vramshapuh. Lazar, §7, has a different version of these events.

6. I.e. Sahak Bagratuni; see p. 75, where he is called both *sparapet* and *aspet*. Moses, III 51, calls him *aspet*. For the titles see Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 325–326. But there is some confusion here, because the only two Sahak Bagratunis who were *aspets* of Armenia do not belong to this period; see Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 339.

hated and inflicted with as many evils as possible. So Ałan went to Saint Sahak;¹ throwing down his armour in front of him, he stripped himself of his military garb and mourned for Armenia—the decline of the power of the Armenian monarchy and the despotism of the Persians. Even more did he lament and bewail unconsolably over his own Artsruni family which, quickly forgetting the benefits of Christ, only ran after worldly glory and pursued the ash-cult of magism.² Ałan continued his lament, shedding torrents of hot tears before Saint Sahak, the great *sparapet* Sahak, and the other nobles until they too inclined to his thoughts about the future prepared for Armenia, like some prophetic vision. While they were all weeping and bitterly lamenting with inconsolable grief, Ałan fell on his face before Saint Sahak and the *sparapet* Sahak [asking] to receive the habit of the monastic state so he could adopt the life of a hermit. For a while Saint Sahak did not agree, saying: “Be silent for now. At another time I shall take care of what you desire. [We must beware] lest some deceitful and malicious flatterers approach Artashir with some falsehood about us, and your father Vasak make some suggestion to the king and stir up confusion and trouble, so that they suppose we are plotting rebellion. But God will accomplish what you desire and long for, as may be pleasing before the Lord.” Accepting his advice, the blessed Ałan waited for a suitable day.

After reigning for twenty-three years the emperor Arcadius died, severely punished for his offences against John Chrysostom.³ He was succeeded by his son, Theodosius the Less, [71] who gave much help and many kinds of support to Armenia, building the city of Theodosiopolis in the province of Karin¹ and providing a garrison of troops to guard [it] and resist Persian attacks. For Vram and Yazkert, having brought over half the country to themselves, had pretensions to rule over the whole of it.² Now on the death of Khosrov king of Armenia, who held

1. Łazar, §4, calls Ałan “blessed” (as at the end of this paragraph) and “excellent” (*sk'anch'eli*), as here. But the following story is unattested elsewhere. See further, p. 74, for Ałan's ascetic life.

2. *Ash-cult*: see above, p. 31 n. 1.

3. For Arcadius and John Chrysostom see Moses Khorenats'i, III 52. Arcadius reigned 395–408.

1. For Theodosius and Theodosiopolis (Karin, Erzerum) see Moses Khorenats'i, III 59; secondary literature in Garitte, *Narratio*, pp. 65–69, and “Saint Théodore.” For the town and province see also Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 287–289.

2. Vram IV ruled 389–399; Yazkert I 399–420.

power for four years,³ Yazkert decided not to make king of Armenia anyone from the Arsacid family. But in order that he might henceforth better be able to attract to himself the Armenian army with the nobles, he made king over them his own son Shapuh.⁴ When he arrived he did not care for the regular administration of the country but occupied himself exclusively with the pleasures of hunting and games. On seeing this, the Armenian nobles regarded him with derision and scorn. For example, Atom, prince of Mokk', while hunting called him a hero, so that puffed up by this he might be audacious enough to rush at the fire. Again in their exchange he called him effeminate. Then Atom went off in the direction of Media.⁵ Even more stoutheartedly, Shavasp Artsruni, while they were playing polo,⁶ spurring after him took the ball away many times, saying: "Girl, leave the stadium; effeminate man, know yourself." Shapuh then wielded his mallet in the direction of Shavasp, but scorning him Shavasp ostentatiously galloped off; boldly and openly he went at measured pace over to the general Anatolius. At the command of the emperor, Theodosius Caesar, he appointed him *hazarapet* of the [Greek] sector of Armenia and entrusted to him Mesopotamia as far as the passage over the river Euphrates. Shavasp remained with the emperor for four years.⁷

When Shapuh heard of his father's illness, he hastened to Persia. His father died, and on the same day he too was put to the sword by his own people.⁸ And because Hamazasp Mamikonean had died, who at the time had held the positions of *marzpan*⁹ and general of Armenia, [72] at the request of Saint Sahak to both the Greek and Persian kings thenceforth no one

3. According to Moses, III 50, Khosrov reigned for five years the first time, and for one year after Vramshapuh, III 55. Thomas does not make it clear that Khosrov died after Vramshapuh (whom he calls Vafarsh, p. 69 n. 5).

4. As Moses, III 55.

5. Following Moses, III 55; for Mokk' see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 331-333.

6. *Polo*: Thomas's expression "game with horses and balls" is more explicit than Moses' "game with clubs."

7. Moses has no reference to Shavasp's career after he "flew from the hippodrome." The four years were the length of Shapuh's residence in Armenia according to Moses, III 56. Anatolius figures in Moses, III 57, and also Elishē, p. 7. *Hazarapet* was not a title used for the governors of Roman Armenia, but rather of Sasanian Armenia; cf. Elishē, p. 23. See further p. 59 n. 8 above, and p. 108 n. 2 below for its use in Muslim times.

8. As Moses, III 56, following Łazar, p. 19.

9. For the office of *marzpan* see Toumanoff, *Studies*, ch. 1.

governed Armenia.¹ But people were dispersed and scattered in whatever direction anyone was pleased to run, for many brigands occupied the land.

When Vram, son of Yazkert, became king he summoned Saint Sahak, Catholicos of Armenia, to court.² Taking his grandsons Hmayeak and Hamazaspean, he went to the king in Ctesiphon. Now Vardan with the holy teacher Mashtots' had gone to the emperor Theodosius and to the archbishop Atticus with letters from Saint Sahak, taking with them also the script and examples of Armenian writing. The holy patriarch and pious emperor Theodosius received them with the five letters and five replies,³ and appointed the holy teacher among the pre-eminent and chief doctors of the chair of instruction of Saint John Chrysostom.⁴

On arriving at court with the nobles, Saint Sahak calmed and appeased Vram's anger and vengeful resentment against the Armenians for their insults to Shapuh and making a firm peace with the Greeks. At the request of the nobles and Saint Sahak, Vram II made king over Armenia Artashēs, also [called] Artashir.⁵ When Artashir became king, for a while the country had a respite from the disorders of the Persian army and the royal registers of taxes were re-established, since for the last five years taxes and troops had been withheld from the Persian court. But Artashir, haughtily and without shame, pursued a course of shameful lasciviousness, of homosexuality and lust for women—not only at night but also during the daytime in the light of the sun without distinction he worked his desires, even extending to bestiality. Exasperated by him, the Armenian nobles were nauseated at his impure conduct and decided that Artashir would no longer reign over Armenia.⁶ They approached Saint Sahak to inform him of

1. *Governed*: *arajnordēr*; for the ambiguity of this term see Thomson, *Moses Khorenats'i*, III 46 n. 6. For the death of Hamazasp and the ensuing confusion see Moses, III 55–56.

2. Vram V, 421–439. For the succession see Moses, III 56. Moses and Łazar describe not this visit to court by Sahak with his grandsons, but his second visit; see p. 73.

3. See Moses, III 57: there the five letters consist of three sent by Sahak and two responses. Thomas has doubled the number.

4. For Mashtots' among the leading "doctors" (*vardapet*) see Moses, III 57, followed by the Short Recension of Koriun. The reference to John Chrysostom in Atticus's response to Sahak (Moses, *ibid.*) has been expanded to "a chair of instruction" by Thomas.

5. For the appointment of Artashēs see Moses, III 58, and Łazar, §13. He was Vramshapuh's son. Thomas has followed Moses in calling the shah Vram II; he was the fifth Vram, 421–439. For the explanation see Thomson, *Moses*, III 56 n. 8.

6. Thomas has elaborated on the immorality of Artashir as described by Moses, III 63, and Łazar, §13.

their plan to turn to the Persian king. This indeed they carried out. They went to Vram and not to Theodosius, the pious and like-minded⁷ [73] Christian emperor; impiously and thoughtlessly they committed that foolish crime. Vram, most delighted, heeded them and was happy to abolish the Armenian monarchy. Quickly he summoned back to court Artashir and Saint Sahak with a host of Armenian nobles. He questioned them as to why they had lodged a complaint against Artashir, but Saint Sahak refused to write anything concerning the accusations against Artashir.¹

But the nobles opposed Saint Sahak as being unwilling to accomplish their wishes. Approaching Vram with Surmak—a certain fanatical and vainglorious monk from Artskhē²—they began to calumniate Saint Sahak with all sorts of scandal-mongering to the effect that he did not wish the Persians to rule over the Armenians and impose tribute and military service on them, but he preferred to see the rule of the Greeks.³ As corroboration they adduced the letters of Saint Sahak to the emperor and the patriarch; they cited the journey of Mesrop and Vardan to Greek territory, the coming of Anatolius, and the building of the city in the province of Karin. Although in discord, they toppled Saint Sahak from the archiepiscopal throne and Artashir from his royal status. In opposition to Saint Sahak they set up the raving Surmak, then the Syrian Brkisho, then Samuel—none of whom lived in accordance with the rule of canon law.⁴ They joined the *marzpan* Mshkan in administering the affairs of the country. This Mshkan held the country in place of Artashir our king at the command of Vram king of kings.⁵ But when the Armenian nobles saw the disorderly and unnecessary hardship inflicted on our country from both sides, they repented of the past course of events which they had willingly sought to bring about. Turning to Vram, they requested Saint

7. *Like-minded*: *zugap'ar*, *homodoxos*, i.e. of the same (Christian) belief.

1. Łazar, §14, and Moses Khorenats'i, III 63–64, expand on Sahak's opposition to the nobles' plan.

2. *Artskhē*: in *Bzrunik'*, see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 328–329.

3. Moses, III 63, says that both Sahak and Artashir were accused of sympathies with the Greeks by the Armenian nobles.

4. For Surmak, Brkisho, and Samuel see Moses, III 64–65, and Łazar, §15.

5. Moses calls the Persian *marzpan* Veh-Mihr-Shapuh; Łazar does not name him. According to Elishē, p. 96, and Łazar, p. 69, Mushkan was the Persian general who gained the victory at Avarayr. John Catholicos, p. 59, says that Mshkan (spelling as Thomas) was *marzpan* at the time of the revolt against Vndoy—for which see below, pp. 77–78.

Sahak as their Catholicos.⁶ But Vřam, being undecided, could not fulfil their request. In his suspicion he vacillated, wondering “lest perchance if I do not do what they ask, the nobles may abandon [me] and go over to the emperor, to pay him tribute and military service.”

But Vach‘ē, lord of the Artsrunik‘, and Hmayeak, lord of Ashots‘k‘,⁷ [74] and others who had been won over to them approved Vřam’s wishes and allowed the king [to appoint] whom-ever it might please him.¹ So he appointed that Samuel to the archiepiscopate. After five years he died, having lived a life outside the law.²

On the other hand, the general Anatolius appointed a certain Havuk Kukichats‘i as bishop of the Greek sector.³ In this fashion Armenia was plunged into confusion and turbulence; it remained disunited and full of disorder, following the inclination of Vach‘ē Artsruni.

It happened that on Saint Sahak’s return from Persia Alan Artsruni went to him again.⁴ Receiving from him a monk’s habit, he went to dwell alone in the province of Golt‘n, the place where Saint Mesrop had taught;⁵ he lived an ascetic and angelic life, blessed by men and feared by demons. Then, when those bishops appointed by the Persians had [all] died—who, without the [permission of the] bishop of Caesarea,⁶ had been consecrated by the blessed bishop Saint Sahak—the nobles of Armenia came in a body to him. Falling at his feet with great lamentations, [they begged him] not to remember their past behaviour against the saint, but to restore the throne of the patriarchate, and they promised to follow his command. But he would not listen to them. [Then he told them] the details of the vision revealed to him by the Holy Spirit indicating what would be done in the future: the removal of the archiepiscopate and

6. As Moses, III 64, Łazar, §15.

7. For Ashots‘k‘ see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 365.

1. For Vachē and Hmayeak see Moses Khorenats‘i, III 65; they are not mentioned by Łazar.

2. For Samuel’s avarice see Moses, III 65; Łazar, §15.

3. As Moses, III 65; Łazar does not mention Havuk.

4. The story of Alan is not in Moses; Łazar, *History* §4 and *Letter*, refers to his saintliness. Cf. above, p. 70.

5. Golt‘n was the first area where Mashtots‘ had taught; see Koriun, p. 11. For the area see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 346.

6. The *Narratio*, §33, emphasizes that from the time of Surmak the Armenians consecrated bishops for themselves—a brazen act (*authadeia*) which led to schism. For this break with Caesarea see the commentary of Garitte *ad loc.*

the monarchy from the Arsacid house, the rule of unworthy persons, the election of saints, the restoration of the patriarchate and monarchy from the same Arsacid line, the coming of Antichrist, Christ's coming, the future judgment, and the retribution to each according to his deeds—which he had seen on Holy Thursday.⁷

After all this had so occurred, having lived for 120 years Saint Sahak was removed from this world to the ranks of the angels.⁸ They laid the saint's relics to rest in Ashtishat of Tarōn, at the site of the martyrdom of John the Baptist and the martyr Athenoginēs.⁹ [75] That same year, six months later, the holy patriarch Mashtots' also died. Accompanied by a light in the form of a cross, a crowd of nobles led by Vahan Amatuni, who was at that time *sparapet* of Armenia, formed the cortège and laid [his body] to rest in the village of Awshakan in the province called Aragats-otn.¹

In the second year of Yazkert, son of Vram II, the monarchy was taken away from the house of Armenia. It had lasted 415 years before being abolished.²

After the abolition of the monarchy from the Arsacid house and of the patriarchate from the house of Saint Gregory, a certain Ľevond, a pupil of Saint Mashtots', became locum-tenens for Saint Sahak,³ and [then] Bishop Yovsēp' and Moses and Melēs.⁴ At the command of Yazkert the Persian general Mshkan occupied the position of the Armenian monarch.⁵

7. The vision of Sahak is described in detail by Łazar, §§15–17; Moses, III 66, only refers to it briefly. Cf. also Garitte, "La vision," for a Greek version of this part of Łazar's *History*, and Madoyan, "Nerses metsti tesilē," for the later influence of the vision in Armenian literature.

8. Łazar and Koriun merely say that Sahak died at a great age. Moses, III 67, gives him 51 years of episcopate. The *Narratio*, §29, says that he died aged 110 years.

9. Koriun, Łazar, and Moses agree that Sahak was laid to rest at Ashtishat. But they do not refer in that connection to the martyrdom of John and Athenogines, for which see Agathangelos, §810.

1. The burial of Mashtots' in Awshakan is described by Koriun, p. 94, Łazar, §19, and Moses Khorenats'i, III 67. There are some variations between these accounts; Thomas is closest to Moses. For Aragats-otn and Awshakan see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 364, 479.

2. For this Vram as the "second" see above, p. 72 n. 5. According to Łazar, §15, the Armenian monarchy came to an end in the sixth year of Artashir (Artashēs), i.e. in the reign of Vram; cf. Moses, III 64. But according to (Ps.-) Sebēos, p. 62, the Armenian monarchy came to an end after 405 years, in the second year of Yazkert.

3. Koriun, p. 66, refers to Ľevond as "the chief of the pupils [of Mashtots']," cf. Moses, III 60. But this is a unique reference to him as "locum-tenens" (*telapah*).

4. Łazar, p. 44, and Moses, III 67, emphasize that Yoseph was not a bishop but a priest, although he held the throne of the Catholicos. However, Elishē, p. 27, calls him "bishop of Ayrarat." This Moses and Melēs (Melitē) are only mentioned by Łazar, §53.

5. For Mshkan see above, p. 73 n. 4.

But Vardan Mamikonean, son of Hamazasp Mamikonean, grandson of saint Sahak, fled to the regions of Mokk', to the ravines of the Taurus mountain and the torrents of Jermadzor. He lived in a fortress which is now called popularly Zřtayl because of its fantastic solidity.⁶ After the death of the great Sahak Bagratuni, *sparapet*, *aspet*, and general of Armenia, the emperor Theodosius had entrusted the office of *sparapet* of Armenia to Hamazasp Mamikonean and his son Vardan.⁷ Therefore Vardan was frightened that the *marzpan* [Mshkan] [would disturb] his tranquil existence, and so came to the inaccessible area of Mokk' and remained [until] by the providence of God he could control Armenia. He summoned to himself the bishop of Mokk', Yohan; the bishop of Řstunik', Sahak; and the bishop of Andzevats'ik', Shmavon.⁸ And he established groups of ministers⁹ to perform the Lord's service day and night with indefatigable energy and liberal care for the poor, that they might obtain mercy from Christ.

This was the Sahak¹⁰ at whose command the great scholar Moses, the world-renowned orator, wrote his book [76] on the *History of Greater Armenia*, a wonderful composition which begins with Adam and goes down to the emperor Zeno. He lived a full 120 years [and died] at a ripe old age, as has been handed down to us in the fourth book of the promised *History* of Moses Khorenats'i, the section which refers back to them both.¹ This the blessed Koriun, fellow student of Moses and pupil of Saint Mesrop, confirms for us in this own accu-

6. For Jermadzor and Zřtayl (Zřayl) see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 331–332. But the story of Vardan taking refuge there is unattested elsewhere.

7. Moses, III 51, describes the appointment of Hamazasp by the shah (not the emperor), but does not suggest that his son shared the office.

8. Sahak and Shmavon figure prominently in Elishē and Łazar; but Yohan of Řstunik' is otherwise unattested. For Andzevats'ik' see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 342.

9. *Ministers*: *pashtawneay*, which could mean "deacon."

10. *Sahak*: i.e. Sahak Bagratuni, not the bishop just mentioned.

1. The *History* of Moses Khorenats'i ends with the deaths of Sahak the patriarch and Mashtots' in 438 and 439, whereas Zeno reigned 474–491. The Sahak who lived 120 years was this patriarch (as above, p. 74), not the patron of Moses' *History*. No Book IV is known, although Moses does refer in obscure terms to a possible continuation of his work: I 4 n. 9, I 12 n. 21, III 67 n. 7. Zeno, as promulgator of the *Henoticon*, enjoyed good repute in Armenia; he figures in the later additions to the story of Gregory the Illuminator and the discovery of the latter's relics; see Van Esbroeck, "Un nouveau témoin," §297, and "Témoignages littéraires." Since Moses, III 11, refers to the discovery of Gregory's relics, which occurred in the time of Zeno, by oversight Thomas thinks Moses had continued his *History* that far.

rate *History*.² Drawing on these, to the best of our ability we have composed this abbreviated narrative which we have presented to you, most valiant of literary men, Gagik of Vaspurakan and great general of Armenia.³ It is reliably confirmed by the eloquent compositions, full of wisdom and most impressive, of these teachers.

So I Thomas,⁴ who did not shamefully occupy the last rank but advanced to this position in their place, zealously undertook this great work, though devoid of wisdom, sense, and intelligence. But the command of your eminence forced me to this great undertaking, in which I shall outdistance the charlatan tongues of vainglorious persons.⁵

End of the first book of the history of Armenia, tracing the genealogy of the Artsruni clan.⁶

2. That Koriun and Moses were fellow students of Mashtots' is not suggested before Thomas. Moses himself had claimed to be a pupil of Mashtots'; but he refers to Koriun only once, III 60, despite his frequent use of the latter's biography of Mashtots'. For the development of later legends concerning Moses and the circle of pupils around Mashtots' see Thomson, *Moses Khorenats'i*, pp. 2-7. Koriun "confirms" the death of the patriarch Sahak at a ripe old age, but he has no reference to Moses Khorenats'i or to Sahak Bagratuni.

3. For Thomas's patrons see the Introduction to this book.

4. This is the only place where the author of this *History* names himself.

5. Cf. Łazar, §1, for the patron "forcing" the unworthy historian to the task. The "vainglorious" persons are not identified. But since throughout his *History* Thomas elaborates on earlier historians' references to the Artsrunik', one may suppose that he had in mind those who extolled the rival Bagratids. For Thomas's unworthiness, cf. pp. 111, 193, 226, 249.

6. *Genealogy: azgabanut'iwn*. This picks up the theme of the first line of the *History*, p. 5 above. For the theme see also Moses, I 1.

[77] *Book Two*

CHAPTER 1

After the extinction of the Armenian monarchy from the house of the Arsacids, then Persian *marzpan*s ruled the country. The princes of Greater Armenia fortified themselves in strong stone-built castles in every area and region, while the Persian tyranny waxed stronger and bands of tax gatherers made forays with terrible cruelties.¹

At that same time Shavasp Artsruni, brother of Vasak the father of Ałan Atrsruni, conceived the idea of ruling over Armenia.² Pursuing this foolish plan he went to the Persian king Peroz,³ accepted by self-induced error the mad ash-worshipping Mazdean religion,⁴ and asked the king for the principality of Armenia. [Peroz] fulfilled the request of his stupid vainglorious desire. Then he returned to Armenia, bringing with him as *marzpan* Vndoy, a chief magus of the Persians.⁵ When they entered

1. Thomas regards Mshkan as the first of these *marzpan*s; see above, p. 73. The succession of Persian *marzpan*s in Armenia after the time of Vahan Mamikonean (for whose career see Łazar) is described by Sebēos.

This chapter in Thomas incorporates material from Armenian accounts of *two* revolts led by a Vardan Mamikonean: one in 450/1, as described by Elishē and Łazar; one in 572, as described by Sebēos and later authors. Thomas does not refer to a revolt in the late sixth century. But John Catholicos, pp. 59, 64, does distinguish two revolts and two Vardans.

2. The Shavasp Artsruni mentioned above, p. 71, was noted for his opposition to the shah. John Catholicos, pp. 58 ff., has a story similar to Thomas's.

3. Peroz reigned 459–484; his death is correctly described on p. 79 below. But there Thomas has in mind the episodes that led to the death of Vardan at Avarayr in 451, during the reign of Peroz's predecessor.

4. For "ash-worship" see above, p. 31 n. 1.

5. *Vndoy*: According to Sebēos, p. 73, he was a Persian general at the end of the sixth century. John Catholicos, p. 59, says that he was an Armenian apostate.

the country they threw the covenant of Christianity into turmoil. Zealously they set their hands to ravaging and razing churches, destroying houses of prayer, overthrowing altars of the sacrament that works salvation, completely demolishing the font of the glorious illumination of the Holy Spirit, bitterly and cruelly torturing the priests, ministers of the New Covenants, casting men and women into prison and torments in their onerous demands for taxes.⁶ [78] Their purpose in this was to be able all the more easily to persuade [the Armenians] to renounce and abandon the holy faith of the pure Christian religion. Many more were those martyred with heroic endurance than those who wavered, regarding as naught the seizure of their goods and possessions and cruel death. After the impious Shavasp Artsruni had reached Artashat with the *marzpan*, they built in Dvin¹ a temple to Ormizd and lit therein the fire of their erring worship. So the country was in great and dangerous distress.

This bitter news reached Vardan Mamikonean the Great, who had fortified himself in Ziayl in the Taurus.² Unable to endure such perilous oppression as had been inflicted [on Armenia], and roaring in his soul with ferocious anger over the destruction of the holy faith and the ruin of Armenia, he hastily sent a letter of complaint to Tachat, lord of the R̄shtunik', and Vakhrich, lord of the Andzavats'ik', to inform them of what had happened.³ Immediately, without delay, they joined the great Vardan with their forces, bringing with them the troops from the mountains, no more than twelve hundred men; and with unexpected rapidity they suddenly attacked Shavasp and the *marzpan* Vndoy. As they were encamped at the junction of the Araxes and Metsamawr,⁴ Shavasp Artsruni advanced against them. But on him fell the valiant Vardan, roaring like a lion or

6. *Taxes*: Elishē, p. 23, emphasizes these rapacious impositions.

1. *Dvin*: The text of Thomas reads *duñn*, "gate," but the correction to Dvin is clear from the reference at the end of this page and from the parallel account in John Catholicos, p. 59; John has no reference to Artashat in this connection. Thomas has confused the capital at Artashat mentioned frequently by Elishē in the revolt of the first Vardan, and the later capital at Dvin, the residence of the sixth-century Persian *marzpan*s. For other references to Dvin see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 422.

2. See above, p. 75. John Catholicos, p. 59, does not say where Vardan was when he heard of the imposition of Zoroastrian teaching and the destruction of the "good order" of the church.

3. Tachat and Vakhrich are not mentioned by John Catholicos in this regard.

4. For the river Metsamawr see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 452.

lion cub;⁵ drawing his one-edged [sword] with force and rapidity he sliced Shavasp in two.⁶

But Tachat and Vakhrich, having surrounded the *marzpan* and his son Shiroy,⁷ captured them and brought them to Dvin. In the temple of Ormizd they had [the *marzpan*] consumed by his god in the blazing fire of the pyraeum;⁸ above the pyraeum they hung Shiroy on a gibbet. The garrison they drowned in the river or put to the sword, while the fugitives they pursued beyond the city of Nakhchavan; then they returned victoriously.⁹ They demolished the temple and, razing the site to the ground, [79] built with the same stones the great church of Saint Gregory at the place Blur.¹ There they transferred the Catholicos of Armenia, Giut.² The Armenian nobles each built royal palaces for themselves and splendid estates; the city they defended with an encircling wall, and they brought peace to the land. The royal residence of Trdat the Great they entrusted to Vahan Artsruni,³ for him to build a mansion [fit] for kings—acts in preparation, since they planned to make him king over Armenia as he was a spirited and powerful man, shrewd and wise, humble, liberal, and quick-witted. But after the Armenian nobles became disunited, they abandoned their plans for making Vahan king and went over to Vardan the Great. Following the nobles, Vahan too went at the very beginning to Vardan, who gave him the supervision of Armenia. And they obeyed him all the days of Vardan.

5. The simile is from I Macc. 3.4, describing Judas Maccabaeus.

6. John Catholicos, p. 59, says that Vardan slew Shavasp and put Mshkan (the *marzpan*) to flight.

7. According to John Catholicos, Vndoy had appointed his own son (spelled *Sheroy* by John) as chief priest (*k'rmāpet*).

8. *Pyraeum*: *krakaran*, "fire-holder," as Elishē, p. 175 at n. 6. John Catholicos refers to the "fire-temple" (*atrushan kraki*).

9. This sentence has no parallel in John Catholicos.

1. *Blur*: lit. "hill," i.e. Dvin; see P'awstos, III 8, Moses Khorenats'i, III 8. For the church of Saint Gregory there see Sebēos, p. 68, and secondary literature in D'Onofrio, *Chiese*.

2. Giut was Catholicos 461–478 (?); see Garitte, *Narratio*, p. 425, for Armenian sources. The "transfer" (i.e. from Artashat) was thus later than the time of Vardan. John Catholicos, p. 59, also mentions this transfer of the Catholicos Giut.

3. *Royal residence*: *t'agaworabnak tetin*. According to Agathangelos, Trdat's residence was in Vatarshapat. Elishē has no reference to that town, but he calls Artashat the *tagaworanist teti*, p. 28. This story about Vahan Artsruni is not found elsewhere; John Catholicos, p. 60, indicates that it was to Vardan Mamikonean that the Armenians gave their support "until the day of his death."

But the Persian king went away to wage war against the Kushans at the Chor Pass, so the land of Armenia was free from Persian raids. The king was killed there by the Kushans, and Yazkert ruled in his stead.⁴ He began to assail the nobles of Greater Armenia defiantly, as the records of previous historians indicate: the ravaging of Armenia, the multiplication of oppression, the numberless multitude of martyrs who died heroically for Christ, the brave valour of the holy priests, the good fight they fought there in the great desert of Apar, and all the rest. I consider it superfluous to repeat what has already been described.⁵

When the great battle took place between Saint Vardan and Mshkan and the Persian army on the plain of Avarayr in the province of Artaz, emboldened by God the Armenian troops, like holy and divine warriors, were martyred in Christ.⁶ There Vahan Artsruni, with splendid and outstanding bravery, fought side by side with Saint Vardan, [80] pressing into the midst of the valiant Persians like a fire through reeds.¹

When the two sides had joined battle and the left wing of the Armenians began to be overcome, Saint Vardan, spurring his horse, turned the Persian champions to flight and strengthened the troops of his own division. Then Vahan Artsruni intervened; he turned the Persian force opposing Vardan. Rapidly a large number of Persian soldiers were struck down one by one, about 140 men. Raising his eyes, Saint Vardan saw the impious Vasak, lord of Siunik'. Rushing after him they attacked the strongly armed batallion standing among the elephants. The valiant Vahan Artsruni supported [Vardan], and together they died—the valiant and elect noble warriors Vardan and Vahan. Gaining the name of martyrs, 696 men of the holy Armenian army were perfected in Christ.² And this is narrated in the abbreviated account of Abraham the Confessor.³

4. There is confusion here. Elishē, pp. 11 ff., describes Yazkert II's campaigns against the Kushans beyond the Chor Pass (i.e. the pass near Derbent). But it was Peroz who was killed there in 484; see Łazar, §73.

5. I.e. by Elishē and Łazar.

6. See Elishē, p. 118, and Łazar, p. 72. Neither mentions Vahan Artsruni, though both refer to Artsruni nobles participating in the battle. For Artaz and Avarayr see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 344, 410.

1. Joel 2.5. This simile is dear to Thomas; see also pp. 84, 152.

2. Elishē and Łazar number 1,036 Armenians who died at Avarayr. They also describe the end of Vasak of Siunik' (for the province see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 263–266).

3. For Abraham see above, p. 65 n. 1. No historical work of his is known, though the translation of the *Vkayk' Arewelits'* was an important source for Elishē; see Thomson, *Elishē*, pp. 20–24.

But why the story of Vahan's martyrdom is not related in the book of the historian⁴ I shall indicate to your erudite intelligence accurately and without hesitation.

CHAPTER 2

An historical report concerning the murderous Bartsuমা⁵

In the time of Peroz, king of kings, there was a certain Bartsuমা of the sect of Nestorius who had the title of bishop and most forcefully pursued the Nestorian heresy. Slandering the Armenian nobles to Peroz, he worked many bloody crimes.

At that time the chair of Saint Gregory [81] was proudly and splendidly held by Lord Christopher, Catholicos of Armenia.¹ He wrote to the regions of Asorestan warning them not to associate with the Nestorians, and wrote in similar terms also to the congregation of the orthodox in Khuzhastan. Furthermore he wrote to the district of Derjan,² and the inhabitants, sovereign lords, and bishops of the valley of Khałtik'. Bartsuমা seized these letters by deceitful means and had them taken to King Peroz, saying: "All that the Catholicos of Armenia writes proposes revolt against you and encourages the Armenian princes to submit to the Greek emperor. So you must look to this matter." Vindicating himself, Bartsuমা came to Arznarziwn³ and the land of Mokka' in order to sow there the seeds of the Nestorian heresy. Our holy teacher Elishē at that time was dwelling in the land of Mokka'; Bartsuমা came to him asking for the book of Armenian history which he had written on the command of Saint Vardan, and he fulfilled his

4. I.e. Elishē, whom Thomas follows rather than Łazar.

5. Vardanyan (note *ad loc.*) indicates that the fragments preserved in Matenadaran 1890 and 2559 have a shorter title to this chapter: "concerning the murderous Barsauma."

1. The existence of a Catholicos Christopher in the fifth century is not attested; the first Christopher known to John Catholicos, for example, was Catholicos 539–545; see Garitte, *Narratio*, pp. 428–429. The confusion arises from the fact that the following story of Barsauma's activity was taken from a letter addressed by the Syrian patriarch Athanasius to an Armenian Catholicos Christopher in the time of Muawiya; see Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, Syriac text, II pp. 426–427, Armenian text pp. 313–314. Thomas has substituted Christopher for Babowai; see Gero, *Barsauma*, pp. 12, 102.

2. *Derjan*: see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 287.

3. *Arznarziwn*: see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 321.

request.⁴ Then the great prince of the Artsrunik', Meršapuh, who was at that time fortified in the castle of Tmorik', hearing about him [Bartsuma] sent word that he was to leave the territory.⁵ He did not lay hands on him because of the Persian king, but merely sent messages with a warning threat. Angered at the ultimatum, [Bartsuma] took vengeance in his resentful rage. He expunged from the history book all details concerning the deeds of the house of the Artsrunik' and everything describing the martyrdom of Vahan Artsruni.

Now the teacher Elishē was at that time dwelling in the province of R̄shtunik' by the shore of the lake; at that spot the holy man of God Elishē fell asleep in Christ.⁶ So when the book was returned to the land of Mokk', no one paid any heed to the matter, assuming that the teacher had composed it in that fashion. Elsewhere I shall indicate what action [82] the Persian king took against the house of the Artsrunik' at the instigation of the impious Bartsuma.¹

The emperor Marcian ruled the Greeks [after] Theodosius II; he summoned the council of 636 bishops at Chalcedon,² and in his reign Saint Vardan and Vahan Artsruni were martyred.

Now Vasak Artsruni, father of the saintly Ałan, taking Tachat and his brother Goter went to the emperor to avoid the troubles of the Persian disturbances and the ruin of the country.³ The emperor Marcian received them in a friendly and peaceful fashion and promoted them to rank and honour with splendid dignities, since like brave champions for Christ's churches and the

4. This tale of Barsauma meeting Elishē is not found elsewhere. For the tradition that Elishē lived as a hermit in Mokk' see the *History of Saint Elishē Vardapet* translated in Thomson, *Elishē*, pp. 42–44. There Elishē is called "a soldier of Saint Vardan's"; and later he is described as Vardan's "secretary," see Thomson, *ibid.*, p. 44.

5. A Meršapuh Artsruni is mentioned by Elishē, p. 193, as being among the prisoners in Iran after Avarayr.

6. For this tradition about Elishē's death see the *History*, n. 4 above.

1. Thomas does not refer to Barsauma again. The preceding story is an attempt to explain away the modest role ascribed to the Artsrunik' by Elishē.

2. *Marcian*: emperor 450–457. For the 636 bishops see the *Letter of Movsēs*, bishop of Georgia, dated to A.D. 606, in the *Book of Letters*, p. 119; cf. pp. 364, 492, for 630 bishops. Very frequent are references to Nicaea as the council of the 318, to Constantinople as that of the 150, and to Ephesus as that of the 200.

3. For Vasak see above, p. 68 n. 7. Tachat is mentioned by Elishē, p. 193, and Łazar, p. 86, as being among the prisoners in Iran after Avarayr. Goter is only attested here.

holy orthodox faith they had heroically shed [their] blood and gained in addition the renown of confessors. But the emperor begged these honourable men Vasak,⁴ Tachat, and Goter, who were of the great nobility of the Artsruni house, to accept that council with the [other] three holy councils.⁵ They replied: "Since we were continuously preoccupied with Persian raids we had to abandon the study of the Holy Scriptures with a view to choosing an authoritative confession of faith. But while we were in our own country, our prelates did not allow us to accept those formulations in the definition of faith. Now we cannot agree zealously to flatter and please your majesty as your imperial dignity demands. But please let us write to Armenia, to ask the Armenian prelates and to receive replies."⁶

This reproof they also submitted to the emperor: "When you convoked the council, why did you not think it necessary to summon anyone from Armenia with a view to the unity of faith?"

Marcian responded: "Because the Armenian prelates were endangered by the Persian troubles."⁷ [83] Then our Artsruni magnates received permission to write to Abraham, bishop of the Mamikonean, who was a disciple of Saint Sahak, and they informed him of the emperor's request. In response he told them not to yield to the emperor's demand, and if any danger befell them to endure it just as they had endured [past dangers].¹ They took the letter and laid it before the emperor. Then he, realising that their minds were firm and inflexible, did not trouble them

4. *Honourable*: but on p. 69 Thomas describes Vasak's deceitful character.

5. I.e. the ecumenical councils of Nicaea (A.D. 325, at which the Armenian prelate Aristakēs had been present), Constantinople (381), and Ephesus (431). No Armenian representatives had attended the second or third council, nor were any present at Chalcedon in 451.

6. This tale is a doublet of the story about the Catholicos John II who went to Constantinople in 572 after the failure of the revolt of the second Vardan Mamikonean. For the letter sent to John from Armenia see Michael, *Chronicle*, Armenian text, p. 265. On the episode in general see Garsoian, "Le rôle," p. 136.

7. According to Elishē, p. 72, and Łazar, p. 74, Marcian did not give the Armenians help in 451 because he did not wish to break the pact with the Persians made by Theodosius, his predecessor. Neither writer mentions the council of Chalcedon. Sebēos often mentions Chalcedon, but does not give a reason for the Armenians' absence.

1. The only attested Abraham (of Tarōn), bishop of the Mamikonean, lived in the sixth century; see Sargisean, "Abraham Mamikonean."

but left them to their own wishes, to live as might please them. Staying there until the time of the emperor Leo I, Vasak and Tachat died there and were splendidly laid to rest in the cemetery of the Greek magnates.²

But the blessed Alan Artsruni, son of Vasak, returned to Armenia from the land of the Greeks. Having lived in the same religious austerity and angelic virtue, he left this world for the ranks of the saints. His bones were laid to rest with [those of] the other saints in the monastery of Hadamakert.³

The dangerous affliction of Armenia continued, as many historians show, until the time of Jamasp and Kavat, until King Khosrov.⁴ And the Armenian nobles endured grievous oppression from arms and battles.

But in the days of Valarsh, the young Vahan Mamikonean forcefully opposed the Persians.⁵ The Armenian nobles gathered around him and made a covenant and divine pact, through the mediation of the holy gospel, to demonstrate obedient service with true and sincere loyalty, and to revenge even with blood and violent martyrdom the Persian raids, the destruction of the churches of Armenia, the oppression and ravaging and cruel bloodshedding endured by the Christians and the monasteries⁶ of the holy church.

It happened in those times that Hazaravukht the Persian general attacked Armenia with a massive army,⁷ to give battle [84] to the Armenian forces, to ruin, take captive, and ravage the country. This [just] when the church of Christ, following the great war of Saint Vardan, was reviving again from the destructive invasion. Scattering raiders in every direction, Hazaravukht himself took the elite of the cavalry and the strongest warriors

2. Is this a reflection of the Armenians who stayed in Constantinople after taking refuge there in 572? Leo I reigned 457–474.

3. *Hadamakert*: the Artsruni capital; see p. 116 n. 3 below.

4. Kavat I was shah 488–531, and Jamasp reigned briefly, 496–498. Khosrov is Anushirvan, shah 531–579. See the Introduction to this book for Thomas's references to previous historians.

5. Valarsh was shah 484–488. Vahan Mamikonean's resistance is described in the second half of Łazar's *History* (but the struggle was primarily against Peroz). See §66 for the oath on the gospel.

6. *Monasteries*: *ukht mankants'*; the same expression is used by the Anonymous, p. 287 below. *Ukht* (covenant) can be used of the clergy or of a monastery. Cf. *Book of Letters*, p. 244, Yohannēs (John) Imastasēr Awdznets'i, *On the Councils in Armenia*, where he refers to "bishops, priests, deacons, and *ukhti mankunk' surb eketets'woy* (monks of the holy church)," who attended a council at Manazkert.

7. For the attack of Zairmihir Hazaravukht see Łazar, §78.

from among the armed Persian host, and marched through the regions of Hashteank' and Tsop'¹ to attack Vahan.

The valiant Vahan was warned that Hazaravukht with a large number of elite Persian troops was bearing down on him. Trusting in God, Vahan immediately hastened to encourage the Armenian nobles, saying: "Up, valiant [comrades], arm yourselves and your mounts; fight valiantly, do not fear the multitude of their forces. God it is who crushes warriors; battle is the Lord's. The Lord weakens opponents; the Lord is our hope."²

Straightway they armed themselves and made preparations; mounting each his own horse they went out to oppose them. But when they saw the multitude of the Persian army the [Armenian] force was disheartened. They abandoned each other and retreated until there remained only thirty men with the brave Vahan: Mershapuh and Yashkur Artsruni, Nerseh Kamsarakan, and some of the house of the Amatuni of whose names I am ignorant.³ Banding together, these three tens in number called on the Holy Trinity to their support, giving up the help of men. Forming a solid mass like a hill of bronze,⁴ as one man and repeating together as if from one mouth: "All nations surrounded me, but through the name of the Lord I defeated them,"⁵ in unison they fell on the Persian army. The latter thought it all a joke. Now the Armenians encountered the Persians at the village called Eriz.⁶ And as dust is whirled around by a tempest or fire runs through reeds,⁷ [85] so [the Armenians] struck with the sword and routed most of them; the fleeing survivors they pursued beyond the borders of Armenia. Victoriously returning they offered sacrifices to God and filled the needs of the impoverished widows and orphans. The mouths of all, filled with joy, gave glory to God.¹

1. For Tsop'(k') see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 294–300.

2. For the first three phrases see *II Macc.* 12.28; *I Kings* 17.47; *I Kings* 2.9. The last phrase has numerous biblical parallels.

3. Łazar, §84, describes the Persian attack on Hashteank' and Tsop'k', and Vahan's resistance with thirty men against three thousand. But he does not name Mershapuh (whom he calls Neršapuh) or Yashkur on this occasion.

4. Cf. *Jer.* 1.18 (but there a "rampart" of bronze, a figure used often by Thomas).

5. *Ps.* 117.10–11.

6. Erēz in Łazar, §§81–82. It is in the province of Ekeleats'; see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 425.

7. Cf. *Job* 21.28; *Joel* 2.5.

1. This encounter was not the climax of the struggle between Vahan Mamikonean and the Persians. But Thomas now jumps a century, from the 480s to the reign of Maurice (582–602).

CHAPTER 3

How the evil Persian kingdom of the Sasanian dynasty came to an end

In the eighth year of the Greek emperor Maurice, the Persian king Ormizd of the house of Sasan was murdered by his own trusted [nobles], and his son Khosrov, still very young in age, succeeded to the throne.² A certain Vahram Mehrevandak, who was a prince of the eastern regions, a man of great strength, valiantly smote the forces of the T'etalians and by force took control of Balkh and all the land of the Kushans even beyond the great river called Vahrot; he also seized for himself the kingdom of Persia.³ Ormizd's son Khosrov fled to the Greek emperor Maurice; his uncles Vndoy and Vstam took him and fled to the imperial court. They sent to the emperor Maurice noble men with splendid gifts and presents and a letter written at Khosrov's dictation as follows:⁴ "Great king, prince of sea and land, give me an army in support and establish me on the throne of my fathers. For if I am able to defeat my enemy and reinstate my kingdom, I shall be a subject son to you and shall give you the regions of Syria and all [86] Arevastan as far as the city of Nisibis;¹ and also [part] of Armenia, the area of *tanutëra*kan authority² as far as Ayrarat including the city of Dvin and the shore of the lake of Bznunik' and up to the district of Arest; and the greater part of the land of Georgia as far as the city of Tiflis.³ And we shall keep a peace treaty between us and our sons who succeed us as kings."

Coming to terms with him, the emperor Maurice sent him his nephew Philipikos; he had him take a letter of welcome, and received from him an oath. Then he gave him an imperial army in support, [including] John the Patrician from the Armenian

2. Maurice's eighth year would be 589/590. Ormizd IV was killed in the summer of 590. Thomas dates Khosrov II's rule from 590, disregarding the period before Vahram's defeat.

3. This sentence is from Sebëos, p. 73, where Vahram's name is spelled Merhewandak. The Vahrot is the Oxus.

4. Thomas abbreviates the account in Sebëos; for the following letter see p. 76. For other sources on these events see Goubert, *Byzance avant l'Islam* I.

1. For Arevastan see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 319–320. Nisibis is *Mtsuin*, in Sebëos *Mtsbin*. Vardanyan unnecessarily "corrects" to *Mtsurn*.

2. *Tanutëra*kan: see Adontz/Garsoian, pp. 180–182, 344; and cf. below, pp. 131, 214.

3. All these place names are quoted verbatim from Sebëos. The lake of Bznunik' is Lake Van. For Arest see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 341–342.

sector, Nersēs the *stratelat* from Syria, Mushet a valiant warrior and man of great strength, and all the troops of Greece, Armenia, Georgia, and Albania. This numberless force came to the regions of Atrpatakan in the province of Vařarat.⁴

Then Vahram wrote to Mushet and the other generals⁵ in this fashion: “I was of the opinion that when I fought against your enemies you would help me from your side, and acting in unison we would exterminate that universal scourge, the house of Sasan. But now you are coming to wage war against me! However, I shall not fear the assembled Roman priests⁶ who have gathered to attack me.

“But as for you Armenians, you have shown your loyalty to be untimely. Did not the house of Sasan destroy your land and principality, yet you come to oppose me? But now let it please you to abandon these [Romans] and unite with me. For if I am victorious, I swear by the great god Ormizd and the sun and the moon and fire and water and Mithra and all the gods that you will be given the kingdom of Armenia. And whomever you wish you will make your king. And [you will control] in Syrian territory Asorestan and Nisibis and Nushirakan⁷ as far as the borders of the Tachiks. And I shall not have the authority to cross the Zarasp.⁸ And I shall deliver so much treasure of the Aryan kingdom that it will be too much for you to count, and a multitude of troops—as many as you may need until your [87] kingdom is re-established.” So he swore according to the fashion of their religion, and he had salt wrapped in the declaration and taken to them.¹ But having received and read it, they did not respond to his proposals.

Then he wrote a second letter, saying: “I wrote to you to abandon that [side]. So if you do not wish to pay heed I am sorry for you. For tomorrow morning you will see armed ele-

4. Thomas abbreviates Sebēos, pp. 76–77. However, Sebēos only introduces Mushet in Vahram’s letter, and he does not mention the troops of Georgia and Albania (Ařuank’). The province of Vařarat is in the locative case, as in Sebēos; but since Thomas has changed the verb from “encamped in” to “came to” the grammar does not fit.

5. *The other generals*: “the other Armenian nobles” in Sebēos.

6. *Priests: eritsants’*, as Sebēos, presumably intended sarcastically. *Erēts* is literally “elder,” so Macler in his translation of Sebēos renders as “veterans”; but no other use of the word with that sense in Armenian is attested.

7. *Nushirakan*: Nor Shirakan; see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 319–320.

8. *Zarasp*: the text of Thomas reads *zAraskh* (z being a prefix), i.e. the river Araxes; but Sebēos reads *zZarasp*. That the mountain is intended seems clear from references in Sebēos, pp. 54, 126.

1. For salt as a token of sincerity cf. p. 96 below. Thomas here follows Sebēos.

phants and on them strong fully armed warriors who will rain down on you iron arrows and steel javelins with tempered shafts. They are mighty archers and their blows will be as many as Khosrov and you may need."²

Mushet wrote a reply in the following terms: "Having heard your proposal, I say that royalty comes from God³ and he gives it to whomever he wishes. But you should be sorry for yourself more than us. For I see that you are a boastful man since you rely on yourself and not on God, on the multitude of your forces and the strength of elephants. But I tell you: if the Lord wishes he will tomorrow envelop you in battle with brave warriors; they will crash down on you like the clouds of heaven. With their mighty lances they will pass through your host like flashes of lightning. For if God wills, the violent wind will blow away your power like dust."

Vndoy, Vstam, and the Persian troops there amounted to about eight thousand cavalry, apart from the Greek and Armenian troops.⁴ The next morning, while the sun was still rising, a fierce battle was joined, line facing line [in] a violent melee and terrible clash. They fought each other valiantly from dawn to evening until both sides were wearied in the great battle. So ferocious was the slaughter that great streams of blood poured out, irrigating the entire ground. Unable to resist, Vahram's army fled before the Greek troops, who pursued them until night was dark, covering the ground with corpses. [88] Many they captured and brought before Khosrov. On that day Khosrov's victory was ensured, while Vahram fled to Bahl Shahastan and was later killed at Khosrov's command.¹

So Khosrov was established on his royal throne, and he carried out his promises to the emperor. He gave over to him all Arevastan as far as Nisibis; Armenia as far as the river Hrazdan; the province of Kotayk' as far as the town of Garni, as far as the lake of Bznunik' and up to the region of Arest; and the province of

2. The text of the letter is somewhat abbreviated from Sebēos, p. 78.

3. Cf. Ps. 21.29. But Thomas is quoting Sebēos.

4. Sebēos refers to the eight thousand cavalry, but does not add "apart from the Greek and Armenian troops." Thomas's account of the battle is based on Sebēos, p. 79.

1. Thomas follows Sebēos, p. 80. For the battle and flight of Vahram see Goubert, *Byzance* I, pp. 160-163.

Kogovit as far as Hats'iwn and Maku.² And a great treaty of friendship was made between the two kings of the Persians and the Greeks.

It happened in the fourteenth year of King Khosrov and the twentieth year of the rule of Maurice that the Greek troops stationed in Thrace rebelled against the emperor and proclaimed as their king a certain man named Phocas. Marching in unison on Constantinople, they killed the emperor Maurice and installed Phocas on the royal throne.³

When King Khosrov heard news of this he was stirred to great anger [and decided] to avenge Maurice's blood. Gathering the host of his army, he wrought enormous and terrible damage in the Greek sector.⁴ After eight years Phocas was killed by Heraclius, who plotted against him and seized his throne.⁵ He sent messengers with lavish treasures and letters to King Khosrov to request peace from him in a most solicitous manner, saying: "I have taken vengeance for the blood of Maurice from his enemy, so may it please you to make peace with me and remove your sword from my land."⁶ But Khosrov did not wish to heed him, saying: "That is my kingdom, and I shall install as emperor Maurice's son. He [Heraclius] came and ruled without our permission; he offers us as a present our own treasures, unaware that I shall seek reckoning for this treasure and shall not desist until I seize him." Taking the treasures, [89] he ordered the present bearers to be put to death. He did not respond to Heraclius's proposals but caused terrible damage in many regions, [inflicting] ravage, captivity, and the sword.

The Persian army in Palestine and its general named Rāzmay-

2. For these regions given over to Maurice see Sebēos, p. 84. John Catholicos, pp. 67–68, has a very brief account of the agreement between Maurice and Khosrov and of the events described by Thomas, pp. 85–89; but he does give a more detailed description of Maurice's reorganisation of Byzantine Armenia. For the Hrazdan river, Kogovit, Kotayk', Gaṛni, Maku, see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 446, 364, 365, 344; and for Hats'iwn, Eremyan, *Hayastan*, p. 62.

3. Thomas jumps to p. 106 of Sebēos. John Catholicos, p. 73, offers a very brief resume of these events. The twentieth year of Maurice (when he was killed) was not the fourteenth year of Khosrov (604), but in that latter year the war began.

4. See Sebēos, p. 107.

5. See Sebēos, pp. 112–113. Phocas was killed in 610, eight years after Maurice; but Sebēos places the accession of Heraclius in the twenty-second year of Khosrov, i.e. in 612.

6. Sebēos does not quote the text of Heraclius's letter but merely says: "he sent messengers . . . solicitous manner." Khosrov's response is in Sebēos, p. 113.

uzan, also called Khoëam, discussed peace with Jerusalem.¹ For they [its inhabitants] had previously been subject to the Greek empire, and having killed the Persian governor² who was over them, were preparing themselves for war against the Persians. Then Khoëam Razmayuzan gathered his troops, camped around Jerusalem and besieged it. For nineteen days he attacked Jerusalem, then destroyed the wall by digging under its foundation. It was on the nineteenth day [of the siege] in the month of Margats', the twenty-eighth day of the month, in the twenty-fifth year of the reign of Khosrov called Parviz, ten days after Easter, that they captured the city.³ For three days they put it to the sword, killing every person in the city. They stayed inside the city for twenty-one days; then they went out and camped outside the city—which they set on fire. They ordered a count to be made of the fallen corpses: the number of the dead was found to be fifty-seven thousand people.⁴ They also captured the patriarch Zak'aria. Seeking the divine holy cross, they began to torture people; not until they had executed many of the clerics did they show them the place where it had been hidden. They took it off into captivity and also brought an immense amount of gold and silver to the king's court. As for the survivors in the city and its environs, a command was issued from the court to have mercy on them, to restore the city and re-establish everyone in his own position. The royal command was carried out immediately; they appointed a certain Modestos as archpriest over the city. Then Khoëam gathered many troops, marched to Chalcedon, and encamped opposite Byzantium, intending to cross over and destroy the royal capital.⁵

When the emperor Heraclius saw all the misfortunes that had [90] befallen him, he unwillingly decided to offer friendship.¹ Going out to meet them, to honour them as meritorious guests,

1. Thomas jumps to Sebëos, p. 115.

2. *Governor: ostikan* (plural in Sebëos). For this office see Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 176–179. The title was later used for the caliph's governors in Armenia, see Canard/Laurent, p. 408.

3. Thomas has abbreviated the account in Sebëos. The twenty-fifth year of Khosrov began in 614; the twenty-eighth of Margats' would be the nineteenth of May. This must be ten days after Ascension, not after Easter.

4. Sebëos, p. 116, refers to seventeen thousand dead and thirty-five thousand captives. In Armenian seventeen and fifty-seven (*zh ē, ts ē*) are easily confused.

5. Having followed Sebëos to the appointment of Modestos (p. 116), Thomas jumps to p. 122 for Khosrov's march to Chalcedon.

1. Thomas continues to quote from Sebëos, p. 122.

he received them with splendid presents, gave the general and all the nobles grand gifts, distributed donations of money to all the troops, and for seven days organised banquets and joyous feasts for the whole army. Then boarding a ship, he went to the middle of the sea to converse with the Persian general: "What do you intend to do," he said, "and why have you come to this place? Surely you did not reckon the sea as dry land, to fight with us thereon? God is able, if he should wish, to turn this sea into dry land before us. But beware lest perchance God should not be pleased and seek from you vengeance for the blood of the destruction of this land. For God did not bring this about because of your piety or benevolence or holiness, but because of our impiety against the Lord. Our sins have wrought this and not your valour. But what would your king seek from me by not making peace? Does he wish to destroy this empire? Let him not try, because it has been established by God and it is impossible to destroy it. But if it so pleases God, God's will be done. And if he says: I shall install another king, let him make [king] whom he wishes; let him send him and we shall receive him. Behold, here is the seat of empire. And if he seeks vengeance for the blood of Maurice, God [already] has sought vengeance for Maurice's blood from Phocas through my father Heraclius. And if he seeks land, here is the land before you. Whether we so wish or not, God has taken it from us and delivered it into your hands. If he seeks cities, here are great walled cities. [If] other treasures, let him say and I shall give as many as his hand may grasp. Yet he did not wish to listen² but was still thirsting for blood. How long will he remain unsated with blood? Were not the Romans able to kill him and destroy the Persian kingdom at the time when God gave him [91] into our hands? Yet they were merciful to him. So I shall say the same kind words and seek from him a treaty and friendship. And from you I shall seek three things, so hear me: spare the land sword and fire and captivity, and you will gain profit from these three. For you will not be overcome by famine, nor will royal taxes destroy you. Behold, I shall send to your king gifts and messengers with letters to seek from him peace for the land and a treaty with me." They accepted his requests and agreed to act according to his desires until they should see what response might come from

2. *And if he seeks land . . . to listen:* This passage is not in the text of Sebēos, which has a lacuna here.

their king and what he might command the army to do. Then the army left and wintered in Syria.¹

Now when the Persian king received the gifts brought from the emperor, he did not let the ambassadors depart nor did he respond to the messages, but commanded the army to prepare ships and cross over to Constantinople. Then there took place a violent naval battle at sea. On that day four thousand armed cavalry of the Persian army perished with their ships. On seeing such a loss, they had no more enthusiasm for that undertaking, but spread out and occupied the whole land.²

But King Khosrov continued to be aroused in his heart; for the Lord hardened his heart since he was about to destroy his kingdom. He wrote an insulting letter to the emperor, which ran like this:³ "Honoured by the gods and all kings, lord of earth and sea, offspring of the great Aramazd, King Khosrov to the senseless Heraclius and to our abject slave. You did not wish of your own accord to put yourself in subjection to us, but call yourself lord and king. You spend the royal treasure which I sent to you, unaware that soon you will have to give account. You deceive my servants, and gathering an army of brigands you do not allow me any rest but continually [92] wage war on me and say: I have confidence in my God. But where is that God whom you invoke? Why did he not save Caesarea and Antioch and Tarsus and Amasya and Jerusalem and Alexandria and the Thebaid,¹ and the other lands? Do you not now realise that I have subjected to myself the whole earth, sea, and dry land? So shall I be unable to take only Constantinople? But I forgive you all your sins and the harm you have done. Arise, take your wife and children and come here, and I shall give you farms, vineyards, olive groves, and seeds for you to sow and harvest; and we shall look benignly upon you. Otherwise, do not deceive yourself with vain hope. For that Christ who could not save himself from the Jews—but they captured him and killed him on the cross—so how will he be able to save you from my

1. *Until . . . Syria*: This passage is not in the text of Sebēos. But Thomas follows Sebēos, p. 123, for the next paragraphs.

2. *But . . . land*: This phrase is not in Sebēos.

3. This paragraph is an elaboration on Sebēos, who merely says that Khosrov wrote in his thirty-fourth year (i.e. 624/5) to Heraclius. The following text of the letter is close to the version in Sebēos.

1. Sebēos, p. 123, has only Caesarea (in Palestine), Jerusalem, and Alexandria. Sebēos mentions the capture of Tarsus, p. 115, but has no reference to Amasya.

hands? For if you descend to the depths of the sea, I shall cast out my nets and seize you.² So you will see me in a way you will not wish.”

When Heraclius received the letter he ordered it to be read before the patriarch and all the magnates. Then they entered the house of God and spread the letter before the holy altar.³ They fell on their faces to the ground before the Lord weeping bitterly, that the Lord might take cognisance of the insults which the enemy had inflicted on him.

Heraclius and all the senators decided to set on the royal throne Heraclius's son who was a young child, while Heraclius himself would sail to Chalcedon and prepare to march to the East. The army of the Persian king that was in the land remained ignorant [of this]. Heraclius gathered all the troops of the East, about 120,000, and attacked Khosrov. Making his way along the northern route he made straight for the city of Karin and passed on to Shirak. Reaching Dvin he sacked it, and also Nakhchavan and Ormi. Attacking Gandzak in Atrpatakan, he destroyed it; he plundered Hamadan and May, overthrew the great fire altar called Vshnasp, and filled the lake opposite the pyraeum with corpses.⁴ Humans [93] and animals, men, women, and children, they indiscriminately put to the sword. In terror King Khosrov prepared for flight, since Heraclius's victory was assured, and everywhere he came across the Persian army he would slaughter absolutely everyone, leaving no survivors.¹

This the ancient historian had previously realised, clearly foretelling their destruction.² What he said runs like this: “Woe to you, alas for you, land of Persia. When the massed forces of the Greeks assail you, they will penetrate and strike you with the sword and trample you with their hooves. Woe to you, alas for you, valiant man, renowned king, when the Most High will stretch out his hand to destroy you and break the rod of your

2. Cf. Ezek. 12.13, and Ps. 138.

3. Thomas continues to follow Sebēos, p. 124; for this passage cf. Isa. 37.14.

4. Thomas abbreviates Sebēos, p. 124, but adds the references to Shirak, Ormi, Hamadan, and May, and the phrase “and filled . . . corpses.” For the fire Vshnasp see Hübschmann, *Grammatik*, p. 85, and Nyberg, *Manual II*, s.v. *gušnasp*. For Shirak and Gandzak see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 364, 416–417. Ormi is Urmia; see Eremyan, *Hayastan*, p. 75.

1. These two sentences are not from Sebēos.

2. This paragraph is reminiscent of the prophecy concerning Tyre in Ezek., ch. 26–27. Cf. also the prophecy on p. 103 below. Such predictions of doom are common in Armenian historians.

haughtiness. Then the sun will strip you of its light and clothe you in darkness. Then heaven with terrible thundering will cast its lightning upon you; a rumbling echo and shaking will be heard from the depths; the thundering sound of the hooves of numerous hosts of horses and the tumult of many armed warriors will assail you. Then with shame-filled eyes you will see the gloriously shining standards of raised flags. Then impenetrable darkness will fall; fog and misty gloom [will cover] your mountains and plains. Then the sword will consume your warriors. Many woodcutters will come and cut down your great forests and newly planted tall trees. Then fire will come forth from you and consume you and the multitude of your sons and daughters, intending its flames for vengeance. For whereby you became high and mighty, thereby you will be humbled and fall. The magnificence of your palaces will be destroyed and ruined, demeaned everywhere. What you begat and cherished, you yourself will summon to death." All this was brought upon the Persians by the Greek sword.

But Khosrov decided to rally his troops and those [94] of the royal court called *hamharz* and *p'ushtipan*;¹ all the elite of the royal house gathered strength again to wage war against Heraclius. He opposed them with a mighty force. And there was fog and thick darkness over the face of the whole land.² The Persian army did not realise that Heraclius was bearing down upon them until he arrived and [the two sides] joined together in the clash of battle. The Lord so multiplied his mercy towards Heraclius on that day that all were delivered into his hands. They were slaughtered by the sword unmercifully; their general was also killed in the battle. Surrounding the few survivors [the Greeks] wished to slaughter them all, but they raised a piteous cry for mercy to Heraclius: "Pious and benevolent lord, have mercy on us, although we are not worthy of mercy." Then Heraclius ordered them to be spared. So there were left about four thousand men, wounded, barefoot, unarmed, and on foot.³ In the morning Heraclius ordered raids to be spread over all the land and that the whole country should be put to the sword.

1. *Hamharz*: adjutant; see Hübschmann, *Grammatik*, p. 177. *P'ushtipan*: lifeguard, *ibid.*, p. 255. See also Nyberg, *Manual II*, s.vv. *ham-harz* and *puštēpān*.

2. Thomas returns to Sebēos, p. 126. For "fog and darkness" cf. the preceding prophecy.

3. *So there were left . . . foot*: This sentence is not in Sebēos.

King Khosrov fled. Crossing the Tigris at Vehkavat⁴ he ordered the rope of the bridge to be cut. When Heraclius came up he encamped at the gate of the city of Ctesiphon. He destroyed and ravaged all the palaces of the king, burned them⁵ with fire, and seized the many stored treasures, an incalculable booty of gold, silver, and clothing, very many animals, and a multitude of prisoners as numberless as the sand of the sea.⁶ Now the wives, concubines, and all the children of the king and the royal horses were there in Vehkavat. Then Khosrov began to gather the surviving nobles and troops of his army who had escaped from the battle. He upbraided them with severe and terrible criticism and threats: "Why did you too not die [95] in the battle rather than run away to me in flight, giving encouragement to my slave and [causing] so much harm?¹ Did you indeed think that Khosrov was dead?" Then they all took counsel together and said: "Although we escaped from the enemy, yet we cannot elude his grasp. So come, let us think of some plan."

Then, taking oaths together, at night they crossed the ford at Vehkavat and captured all the king's wives, concubines, and children, and the royal horses on which King Khosrov had come to Ctesiphon. They seized them secretly at night without King Khosrov knowing anything about it. Then they made his son Kavat king, and he marched against [Khosrov]. Someone ran to give the sad news at once to Khosrov: "All the land of the Aryans has revolted against you, and they have made your son Kavat king. Behold, he is coming to attack you." Dismayed, fearful, and greatly terrified, Khosrov sought for himself a place of refuge. He cried out, saying: "A horse, a horse." But on entering the stable they came across no horse. Then King Khosrov disguised himself. Entering the royal garden, he went into the dense groves and stayed hidden under a thick flower bush—a myrtle. King Kavat ordered a search to be made. Entering the garden, they found him hidden in the bush, seized him, and brought him to the hall. King Kavat ordered him to be cast into one of the kiosks of the royal palace. Some nobles would come

4. *Vehkavat*: 14 km. north of Ctesiphon. Thomas is following Sebēos, p. 127.

5. *All the palaces . . . them*: Since *aparans* is normally used in the plural, this could mean "the entire palace." But Sebēos refers to "royal palaces around the city," clearly meaning more than one building.

6. *And seized . . . sea*: an expansion to Sebēos, p. 127.

1. Thomas adds the reference "to my slave" to Sebēos, p. 127; cf. the address of Khosrov's letter, p. 91 above.

to him, condemn, insult, and debase him, and leave. This went on for some days. Then King Kavat also found fault with him and decreed a sentence of death on him. He ordered some men to enter and kill him. They came in, hacked at him with axes, and killed him in the room. He [Kavat] also ordered his own brothers to be killed; in one hour forty men were put to death, all of whom had reached maturity.²

So King Kavat was confirmed on the throne of the kingdom [96] and made general peace both with the emperor and over the whole land of his dominion. To the emperor he gave everything he wanted. And while King Kavat was planning the restoration and peace of his country, the end of his life overtook him and he died, having reigned for six months.¹

After his death they made king his own son Artashir, who was a very young boy.² Then Heraclius wrote to Khoëam, saying: "Your king Kavat has died and his son is a young boy. So now the kingdom has devolved on you and I shall agreed and gave over Heraclius, emperor of the Greeks, Jerusalem, Caesarea in Palestine, all the regions of Antioch, of yours and I shall come to Asorestan;³ let us make a sworn pact between the two of us to rule in peace." Khoëam agreed and gave over to Heraclius, emperor of the Greeks, Jerusalem, Caesarea in Palestine, all the regions of Antioch, and all the cities of those provinces, and Tarsus in Cilicia, and the greater part of Armenia, and everything that Heraclius had ever desired.⁴ So he greatly rejoiced. Then Heraclius granted him the kingdom and promised as many troops as might be necessary. He also made requests of him: "First," he said, "I most earnestly entreat you to return the holy cross that received God which you took captive from Jerusalem." Then Khoëam swore to him: "Please send trustworthy men, and when I reach the royal court I shall that very hour seek the cross; when I find it I shall have it brought to you." He gave him surety in writing, sealing an oath with salt according to their custom. And he requested from him a small force of distin-

2. For this paragraph Thomas has elaborated somewhat on the account in Sebēos, p. 127.

1. Kavat reigned from February to September 628. This paragraph is an abbreviation of Sebēos, pp. 128–129.

2. Thomas continues to quote Sebēos, p. 129, more or less verbatim. Artashir reigned from September 628 to April 630.

3. *So come . . . Asorestan*: not in Sebēos.

4. Sebēos merely says that Khoëam gave up Alexandria.

guished men in whom he himself trusted. When Khoream had received the troops and had entered the capital, he commanded some others to kill the young Artashir. Then Heraclius sent the trustworthy men to Khoream for the holy cross that received God. He searched for it with great diligence until they were able to find it [97] in its original wrapping,¹ and he gave it to the men who had come [for that purpose]. On receiving it they immediately departed. Heraclius gave the bearers many gifts and dismissed them with great honours. Then Heraclius gathered all his troops, and with eager and joyful heart went out to meet the holy cross with the host of his army to honour the wondrous and heavenly treasure, and brought it to the holy city of Jerusalem.² Then on that day there was no little sound of weeping; from the excited fervour of their hearts, and their affected emotions, the emperor, princes, all the troops, and the inhabitants of the city shed copious tears. No one was able to sing or hear the blessing of the psalms from the piteous tears of the crowd and their overflowing joy. Heraclius set the holy cross back in its place on holy Golgotha. Distributing to all the churches and the poor of the city blessing and money for incense, he himself went to Syrian Mesopotamia to occupy and secure for himself the cities and all the borders which had been established in the time of Khosrov and Maurice. And the holy cross of the Lord remained in the divine city until the recapture of Jerusalem by the sons of Ismael.³

So Khoream received the kingdom. One day he was robed in royal garments, riding on a royal horse, and circulating among all his troops to show himself and encourage the army, when suddenly from behind some men fell upon him, struck him down and killed him.⁴

Then they put on the throne Bor, Khosrov's daughter, who was his wife, called Bambishn [queen]. They appointed as vizier⁵ at court Khořokh Ormizd, who was killed by the queen called Bor. Then Bor ruled for two years and died. After her they introduced a certain Khosroy, a young boy, and made him their king.⁶ He soon died. Then some of them made king [98]

1. *In its original wrapping: novimb kazmatsaw*; not in Sebēos.

2. Thomas jumps to p. 131 of Sebēos to describe the restoration of the cross.

3. As Sebēos, p. 131. For the removal of the cross to Constantinople see below, p. 102.

4. Thomas returns to p. 130 of Sebēos.

5. *Vizier: hramanatar*, as Sebēos; cf. Elishē, p. 24 n. 3.

6. *Khosroy: Khosrov* in Sebēos. Here Thomas abbreviates the account in Sebēos, p. 130.

Azarmik,¹ a daughter of Khosrov; while the army of Khoream made king a certain Ormizd in the city of Nisibis.² From then on the Persian kingdom was weakened and split. After all this Yazkert reigned in Ctesiphon;³ he held the throne in fear, more concerned with self-preservation than issuing commands. With him the Persian kingdom came to an end, as we shall describe a little later.⁴

Here the prophecy of Daniel is relevant, his vision of the grotesque statue of various materials standing on feet of clay and iron.⁵

CHAPTER 4

*How the evil kingdom of the Persians came to an end
and was succeeded by the even more evil [kingdom]
of the Ismaelites⁶*

In the time of the Roman emperor Heraclius the Persian kingdom reached its end. And at that time there came and gathered in the city of Edessa twelve thousand men from all the tribes of Israel, for they had seen that the Persian army had left and abandoned the city. They entered, closed the gates, fortified themselves therein, and began to rebel against Roman rule.⁷

But the emperor Heraclius commanded them to be besieged. The king's brother Theodore⁸ and the host of the army wished to slaughter them, but the king commanded them to leave his territory. They took the desert road and went to Arabia to the sons of Ismael, to the city called Madiam, which Israel had destroyed on leaving Egypt in its war with Bałak, king of Moab. And because the Persian power had become very weak, they fearlessly restored the city of Madiam and dwelt in it.⁹

1. *Azarmik*: Azarmidukht in Sebēos.

2. Sebēos does not refer to Nisibis.

3. Yazkert III reigned 632 to 651.

4. See the following chapter.

5. See Dan. 2.31–45.

6. This chapter heading picks up the theme of that to the previous chapter, p. 85 above.

7. Thomas jumps to p. 134 of Sebēos. But for his account of the origin of Islam he introduces material not found in Sebēos; see the discussion in Thomson, "Muhammad."

8. Theodore is not named in Sebēos.

9. *To the city . . . in it*: not in Sebēos. Thomas identifies the biblical Madiam (Midian, as Num., ch. 31) with Medina of the Hegira; see p. 101 below.

[99] They sent messengers to the sons of Ismael, indicating their close relationship: "We are the sons of Abraham—we and you, brothers. You must come to our help, and we shall take the land of our inheritance." But although the latter were persuaded, yet there was great opposition between them, because they were divided by the worship of idols according to each one's desire.¹

At that time² there were some despotic brothers in the regions of Arabia Petraea in the place [called] P'aran, which is now called Mak'a—warlike chieftains, worshippers of the temple of the image of the Ammonite temple called Samam and K'abar.³ It happened that one of them, called Abdla, died leaving a son of tender age called Mahmet. His uncle Abutalp took and raised him until he reached puberty. On attaining a sufficient age he dwelt with a certain wealthy man from among their kin. He served him faithfully, pastured camels, and was the steward⁴ of his house. When some time had passed, the master of the house died. His wife, seeing that Mahmet was a faithful man and very sagacious in all wordly affairs, married him and turned over to him all the supervision of the house and property. So he became a merchant by trade and skilled in commerce. He undertook distant journeys on mercantile business, to Egypt and the regions of Palestine. And while he was engaged in this business he happened to meet in the regions of Egypt a monk called Sargis Bhira, who had been a disciple of the mania of the Arians.⁵ Becoming acquainted with him and in the course of time becoming friendly, he taught [Mahmet] many things, especially concerning the old testaments and that God has by nature no Son. He tried to persuade him to follow the earlier faith of the Israelites: "For if you accept this, I predict that you will become a great general and the leader of all your race." He reminded him of God's promise to Abraham and of the rites of circumcision [100] and sacrifices and all the other things which it is not necessary to mention here in detail. On these the Ismaelites mediate ad infinitum.

It happened one day when he was departing from him that a

1. As Sebēos, p. 134.

2. From here to p. 101 Thomas introduces material not found in Sebēos.

3. I.e. Zamzam and the Kaaba. The Ammonite connection is mentioned by the Byzantine writers Theophanes and George Hamartolus; see Thomson, "Muhammad," nn. 13, 14.

4. *Steward: hramanatar*; used of viziers, as above, p. 97 n. 5.

5. For Armenian traditions about Bahira see Thomson, "Armenian Variations."

strange voice, an influence fearsome and demonic, fell on him and drove him out of his senses, as is now appropriate to indicate according to the following example. For they say of the woman from whom Antichrist will be born, that journeying from Egypt to the land of Palestine and desiring to see the column of Lot's¹ wife, she went and lingered there to rest. And as she dozed, a strange spirit cried out from the mouth of the woman turned into stone: "You will bear a son who [will] conquer the world." And, indeed, a daughter of the tribe of Dan conceived from fornication. Such things also occurred in his [Mahmet's] time. For when his travelling companions asked why he had lost his wits, he said: "Some fearsome angel's voice fell on me, and ordered me to go as a messenger² to my nation, to show [them] God the Creator of heaven and earth, to take upon myself the title of leadership and to refute and destroy the false faith in idols." Coming to P'aran he repeated these same words to his uncle called Apljehr. He said: "What is this new faith which is now being revealed by you? If you repeat it again you will be condemning your own self." Grieved, he went to his own house, for he was continuously oppressed by the demon; perhaps God allowed him to suppose that his loss of reason was caused by an angel. And many of them believed him when he said he was a messenger of God.

One day when he was depressed from his uncle's threats, Ali son of Aputalp came in and said to him: "For what reason do you sit depressed?" He said: "I preach God the Creator of heaven and earth, but they reject me with threats." Now Ali was a valiant man. He said to him: "Arise, let us go out, for there are many men with us. Perhaps there may be some good solution to this matter."

When they had gone outside Mahmet began to speak [101] the same words publicly. There was a great outcry among them and such a dispute that many of them drew their swords. Mahmet's side was defeated; many of both sides were wounded; and Mahmet and Ali fled with about forty men. They came to the city of Madiam which we mentioned above.¹ On hearing the cause of

1. *Lot's*: The text of Thomas has *Dawt'ay*, but this must be corrected to *Ławt'ay*; see Gen. 19.26.

2. *Messenger*: *patgamawor*, as p. 125, "prophet." See Nyberg, *Manual* II, s.v. *paitām-bar*.

1. See above, p. 98 at n. 9.

their flight, the Jews, like zealots for God and as sons of Abraham and mutual brothers, were emboldened to unity and to proclaim that his words were true. They joined him and made a pact, gave him a wife from their nation, and made ready to support him in whatever way his wishes might dictate. So one could say that it was by a command of God that this undertaking began. The Jews joined with the Ismaelites, forming a large army. Attacking P'aran, they inflicted a great defeat on their opponents, killed Apljehr and many of the Ammonite and Moabite troops, destroyed the images of Samam on the altar, and dared say that the temple was the house of Abraham. They subjected all the inhabitants of the neighbouring regions and wiped out by the sword all resistance.

When Mahmet saw the success of this venture and the concord of the Jews, he proclaimed himself head and leader of them all. He appointed as his officers² and generals Ali and Apubak'r and Amr and Ut'man. He sent a message to Theodore, the brother of Heraclius,³ that the Jews had co-operated: "God promised this land to Abraham and his seed, and it was in their possession for a long time. And if God was disgusted with their wicked deeds and gave it into your hands, let the period you have held it suffice for you.⁴ Now we are the sons of Abraham, and you know the promise made to Ismael our father. Give to us our land peacefully, otherwise we shall take it by war—and not only that [land] but also many others." He [Theodore] wished to show it to the king, but Heraclius died in those same days.⁵ His son [102] Constans¹ did not agree to respond as he [Theodore?] had wished, but² simply ordered caution and not to wage war against them until he saw the outcome of events. But the army of Ismael was vigorously straining for war. So wishing to defend the country [the Romans] went out against them. Leaving their horses, they opposed them on foot. The [Mus-

2. *Officers: hramanatar*, as p. 99 n. 4.

3. Thomas now returns to the account in Sebēos, p. 136 (who merely says "to the emperor of the Greeks").

4. *And it was . . . to you*: not in Sebēos.

5. Sebēos mentions Heraclius's death (in 641) later, p. 138; here he says that Heraclius rejected the letter.

1. *Constans: Kostandin*. Heraclius's son Constantine III died the same year (641). Constans II, who reigned 641–668, was the nephew of Heraclius. The names Constans, Constantine, and Constantius are often confused in Armenian; cf. above, p. 58 n. 8.

2. Thomas returns to Sebēos, p. 136; but he does not follow that account of the Byzantine defeat verbatim.

lims], having been at rest, attacked them. Exhausted by the weight of their arms, the heat of the blazing sun, the density of the sand which gave no support to the feet, and their tramping on foot, and distressed in every way, [the Romans] fell into the hands of the enemy, who slew them with their swords. Reaching the site of their camp, [the Muslims] seized a great amount of booty and began fearlessly to spread over the land because they had no worries of any battle.

Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem, seeing the perilous situation with no hope of help, took the divine holy cross of the Lord with other church ornaments and brought them in flight to the imperial capital to Constans.³ And Ismael ruled over all Judaea.

Now the Arian monk whom we mentioned above,⁴ Mahmet's teacher, on seeing his success rose up and went to Mahmet to show him his kind favour, as if he had attained such things on being instructed by his teacher. But since [Mahmet] was proclaiming that his mission was from an angel and not from a man, he was very vexed at this and killed him secretly.

At this very time there was another hermit in the regions of Persia who had a pupil called Salman. At the hour of his death the hermit gave him these instructions: "My son, on my death do not remain in this land lest you lose your faith among the infidels. But go to the regions of Egypt to dwell in the numerous company of brethren, so that you may gain your soul." When the hermit died, Salman intended to carry out his instructions. On his journey he happened to come to the city of Madiam; he had knowledge of the Scriptures, though not a perfect one. [103] When Mahmet saw him, he summoned him and attached him to him, and ordered him to write a book of laws for his nation at the hand of Abut'uraba the Ismaelite; for he himself did not know writing or reading. Salman agreed to write for him and set down a composite book, some of it from accurate memory, other parts being imaginary sayings. But Mahmet himself, moved by a raving spirit, had him write perverse [things], of which we shall give brief extracts.¹

He said that he was the Consoler whom the Lord Christ had promised to send to his disciples;² he said he was equal to the

3. *Constans*: "of Constantinople" in Sebēos.

4. Thomas now introduces more material not found in Sebēos; for Bahira see above, p. 99 n. 5.

1. For traditions about Salman see the art. "Salman-al-Farisi," *EI* IV.

2. See John 14.16.

Saviour, his travelling companion—in the words of Isaiah: “riding one on a donkey, and the other on a camel.”³ All this he applied to himself. Instead of holy baptism [he prescribed] continual ablutions with water, and reckoned this was sufficient for purification. The heavenly gifts which the Lord has promised for the future, the ineffable and angelic renewal, he said were vast quantities of food and drink; should one wish to eat insatiably one would find them ready. And there would be continual and insatiable intercourse with women who remained virgins. It is too long to repeat all his impure sayings, for they are very many and opposed to God. And all this he affirmed and set down for his nation, calling it the Quran.

Now come and I shall tell you with what laments the ancient writer bewails them, saying: “Woe to you, alas for you, nation of Arabs,⁴ men and women of all the cities by the sea, for the impiety of your tongue and filthiness of habits, whereby opening your mouth you spoke impious things. You have come before the mighty God. And now with new and amazing wounds he will judge you more than the whole world for the filthiness of your tongue, which you sharpened against the mighty King. He will slay you with heavy blows. The whole world will see you smoking, and fire will never leave you for ever. Like a potter’s furnace will you burn, and you will have no rest.”⁵

All these evils he accomplished, and even more [104] laws than these he established for his nation in his multifarious wickedness. Having lived for 20 years in this fashion he died, and himself appointed Apubak’r to the leadership of the Muslims. The latter lived for 2 years and died. Then the leadership of the Muslims fell to Amr, son of Hatap, for 20 years and 6 months.¹ He drove out the Greeks, and gathering a great army attacked the enfeebled kingdom of the Persians in the land of the Parthians and their king called Yazkert.² Yazkert fled before them but was unable to escape. For they caught up with him near the

3. Isa. 21.7. This proof text is discussed at length in the *Letter of Leo* incorporated into Levond’s *History*, for which see below, p. 105 n. 3.

4. Arabs: Tachik; see p. 3 n. 6. But this is really an anti-Muslim diatribe. For opprobrious epithets applied by Armenians to Islam see in general Thomson, “Muhammad.”

5. This prophecy is reminiscent of that on p. 93 above. For the burning furnace cf. Hos. 7.6–7.

1. Sebēos does not mention the death of Muhammad or the order of his successors. Abu-Bakr was caliph 632–634, and ‘Umar 634–644; therefore Vardanyan corrects “20” to “10.”

2. Thomas now returns to the account in Sebēos, pp. 163–164.

borders of the Kushans and slaughtered all his troops. In his flight he came on the army of the T'etals who had come to assist him. But they killed him on Ismael's order; he had reigned for 20 years. Thenceforth the kingdom of the Persians and of the race of Sasan was ended; it had lasted for 542 years.³

Now the reigns of the Persian kingdom begin with Cyrus [and go down] to Dareh, who was killed by Alexander of Macedon, and the years of anarchy—which some historians count as 60 and others as 70.⁴ That was followed by the reigns of the Pahlavik kings, called Parthians, down to Artevan, son of Valarsh, who was killed by Artashir, son of Sasan, from Stahr. He took over the kingdom of the Parthians, and [his line] lasted down to the time of Yazkert, the last king of the Persians, who was killed by the Muslims. And the years of these reigns, from Cyrus down to the rule of the Muslims, add up to 1,160 years.⁵

Mawi, 20 years and 3 months and a few days. There was a fierce war between Ali, son of Aputalp, and Mawi for 5 years and 3 months. For Ali claimed that the leadership of the Muslims was rightly his.⁶

Yezid, son of Mawi, for 3 years and 3 months.⁷

Abdilmelik', son of Mruan, 21 years. And there was a great opposition and war [between him and] Abdula, son of Zubayr, for 2 years and 3 months. In those same days there was severe affliction for Armenia from his malicious will.⁸

Vild, son of Abdilmelik', for 10 years.⁹ He planned even more evil. [105] By a deceitful trick he trapped the princes of Armenia

3. Armenian sources give differing totals for the length of the Sasanian kingdom. Thomas follows Sebēos, p. 164 for 542, whereas Ps.-Sebēos, p. 64, gives 532. Łevond, p. 7, gives 481; Asotik, 386; the Armenian Michael, 418. Later authors follow one or other of these numbers; see the discussion in Abgaryan, *Sebēos*, note 609 (p. 343).

4. For the 60 years of anarchy see Moses Khorenats'i, II 2, whom Thomas follows, p. 43 above. The figure 70 could be derived from Eusebius's *Canon*, which indicates that the Parthians under Arshak rebelled against the Macedonians in the year 1176 of Abraham, 74 years after the death of Alexander. Ps.-Sebēos, p. 52, gives 61 years, reckoning from the reign of Seleucus Nicanor; see *Canon*, year 1705 of Abraham.

5. According to the *Canon*, Cyrus's rule began in the year 1457 of Abraham, 558 years before Christ. If to 1160 we add the 60 years of anarchy (when there was no Persian kingdom), 1220 years after 558 B.C. brings us to A.D. 662, the end of the first year of the caliphate of Muawiya (*Mawi*).

6. Thomas omits the caliphate of 'Uthmān, 646–656. Ali was caliph 656–661; Muawiya, 661–680.

7. Yezid I, 680–683; two years and five months in Łevond, p. 14.

8. Thomas omits Muawiya II and Marwan I. 'Abd al-Malik was caliph 685–705; cf. Łevond, p. 15, for the war.

9. I.e. Walid I, 705–715.

and burned them all in the city of Nakhchavan and in the town of Khram which is below the monastery of Astapat on the bank of the Araxes.¹

Suliman, son of Abdlmelik', for 3 years.²

Umar, son of Abdlaziz, for 3 years. He was the most noble of them all. He wrote a letter on the faith to Leo, emperor of the Greeks; and receiving a response from him expunged many of the most fabulous things from their Quran, for he recognised the true power [of Leo's argument]. Although he did not dare to remove them all, yet being very confounded and ashamed he abandoned the falsehood that was refuted by the emperor's letter, and thereby showed great benevolence to the Christian peoples. Everywhere he showed himself obliging: he returned prisoners, forgave everyone their crimes, gave free pardon. And to his own race he demonstrated more friendliness than all his predecessors. Opening the stores of treasures he distributed them liberally to all his soldiers.³

Yezit, for 6 years.⁴ He was a pestilential man. Moved by a rabid spirit he inflicted many evils on the Christian race. He commanded the images portraying the true incarnation of the Saviour and his disciples to be ground to dust and broken in pieces. He also broke up the sign of the Lord's cross wherever it was set up. For the raving spirit strongly coerced him. He also commanded pigs to be killed and exterminated from the land the multitude of pasturing swine. Reaching the culmination of all evils, he himself was strangled by a demon and perished.

Sham, who is Heshm, for 19 years.⁵

Vlit', for 2 years.⁶

1. Cf. below, p. 252, for another reference to the burning of the Armenian nobles in the church at Nakhchavan. This is dated to 704/5 by Asolik and Vardan, see Muylidermans, *Domination*, p. 98. Łevond, p. 33, describes the episode in some detail; he says it took place in Walid's first year. For Khram (called Hakhram above, p. 38) see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 435. For the monastery of Astapat (dedicated to Saint Stephen) see Oskean, *Vaspurakan* II, pp. 506–527.

2. Sulaiman, 715–717; 2 years and 8 months in Łevond, p. 40.

3. 'Umar II, 717–720. The letters of 'Umar and Leo are given in Łevond, pp. 42–98; see Jeffery, "Ghevond's Text." However, the existing text is a later interpolation, having been written by an Armenian. See the discussion about its authenticity in Gero, *Iconoclasm during the Reign of Leo III*, pp. 153–171. For 'Umar's benevolence see Łevond, p. 42, and for the effect of Leo's letter on him, *ibid.*, p. 99: it increased his benevolence to the Christians, he returned prisoners, forgave everyone their crimes, distributed treasures to his soldiers. But Łevond does not say that 'Umar expunged things from the Quran!

4. Yezid II, 720–724. Thomas bases his account on Łevond, pp. 99–100, where his anti-Christian behaviour is described.

5. Hisham, 724–743. Identical wording in Łevond, p. 100.

6. Walid II, 743–744. Thomas omits Yezid III (744), called Soliman by Łevond.

Mruan, for 6 years.⁷

Abdla, for 3 years.⁸

Another Abdla, for 22 years.⁹

Mahadi, for 10 years.¹⁰

Mahmet, son of Mahadi, for 8 years.¹¹

Musē, for 1 year.¹²

Aharon, for 5 years.¹³

Mahmet, son of Aharon, and his wife Zupet, for 4 years.¹⁴

Maymawn, his brother, for 21 years.¹⁵

Sahak, son of Mahmet, for 9 years.¹⁶

Aharon, son of Mahmet, for 5 years and 6 months.¹⁷

Jap'ar, son of Mahmet, for 17 years.¹⁸

The details of these reigns [106] have been written down previously by others, so we considered it superfluous to repeat them.¹ Furthermore, their names and the lengths of reign have been given us in various forms, perhaps because of the troubled and contentious race that dwelt in the region of Damascus. Some [there] called themselves king, while others living in Asorestan called themselves king, down to the time of Abdla, who reigned alone over everyone and built a city and royal palace for the secure oversight of royal business, Baghdad. In the Hagarene language Abdla means "servant of God."² But this was the Abdla

7. Marwan II, 744–750. Thomas passes over the civil war that led to the establishment of the Abbasid dynasty in Baghdad.

8. Abdulla as-Saffah, 750–754. Levond, p. 126, describes the defeat of Merwan.

9. Abdulla al-Mansur, 754–775; 22 years also in Levond, p. 129.

10. Mahdi, 775–785.

11. Levond, p. 154, calls Mahdi "Mahmet-Mahadi." Thomas has misunderstood this and invented another caliph before Musē.

12. Musē, as Levond, p. 161, is al-Hadi, 785–786.

13. Harun ar-Rashid, 786–809. Levond's *History* ends at the beginning of his reign.

14. This Mahmet is Al-Amin, 809–813.

15. Al-Ma'mun, 813–833.

16. Al-Mu'tasim, 833–842.

17. Al-Wāthiq, 842–847.

18. Djafar al-Mutawakkil, 847–861.

1. Levond described in detail these reigns down to Harun ar-Rashid. No surviving Armenian historical text composed before Thomas's *History* gives the list of caliphs from Harun to Djafar. Thomas probably has in mind the lost *History* of Shapuh Bagratuni (on whom John Catholicos relied, pp. 7, 111, 131, 132, 141), but whom Thomas does not name, since he wrote for the rivals of the Artsrunik'.

2. I.e. Abd-Allah. *Hagarene* is Arabic. It is noteworthy that Thomas rarely describes the descent of the Arabs from Hagar (based on Gen. 16.15); but see Sebēos, p. 162, John Catholicos, p. 81, and the Anonymous below, p. 279. On p. 108 Thomas refers to a "son of a Hagarite."

whom his own nation called Abdlandē, that is, “servant of money,” and not of God, because of his tremendous covetousness and insatiable avarice.³

But we now have to speak about Jap‘r and his evil deeds, not described by others, which he inflicted on Armenia over a long period of time; and we shall describe the unbearable oppression that occurred in our days, which was the date 300 of the Armenian era.⁴

CHAPTER 5

Concerning the caliph Jap‘r, what he planned against Armenia, [how] he effected his evil desires; what [happened] in his time before the completion of the sixth jubilee and the seventieth olympiad, after the nineteenth indiction, when 222 years of the tyranny of the Muslims were completed, according to the reckoning of the Armenian calendar; a certain T‘ok‘l called Jap‘r reigned over the Muslims⁵

A certain man, Jap‘r, insolent and arrogant, began to lift his horns in impiety, to roar and butt at the four corners of the earth, to oppress and torment those who wished a peaceful life; for confusion and the shedding of blood were very dear to him.⁶ He was in continuous irresolution and agitation: [107] on whom or on which regions to pour out the bitterness of his mortal poison, or where to loose and shoot out the multitude of

3. *Servant of money*: *abd-al-dangē*, *dang* being a small coin. But it was Thomas’s second Abdullah (al-Mansur) who was renowned for his avarice; see Łevond, p. 135. Therefore Vardanyan, n. 314, changes “this” (*ayn*) to “the other” (*ayln*).

4. The year 300 began on 28 April, A.D. 851.

5. Jubilees are periods of fifty years; olympiads are periods of four years; indictions are periods of fifteen years. Thomas begins his calculations from the date when the Armenian calendar was reckoned to begin, 11 July, A.D. 551. So “before the completion of the sixth jubilee” means before 851 (as n. 4 above); “after the nineteenth indiction” means after 836. But this does not tally with “before the seventieth olympiad” which would be before 831. However, Thomas does not use “olympiads” or “indictions” in any strict sense; see below, p. 201 n. 1. The 222 years refer to the Muslim calendar; A.H. 222 began on 14 December, A.D. 836 (the end of the nineteenth indiction). But Djafar al-Mutawakkil became caliph in A.D. 847 (A.H. 232).

6. The verbal parallels between Thomas’s description of Djafar and Elishē’s description of Yazkert were noted by Muyldermans, “Un procédé.” But Thomas’s debt to Elishē is noticeable for the whole of his account of the Muslim period; see the Introduction to this book. For this paragraph see Elishē, pp. 7, 16–17, 22.

arrows in the quiver of his evil and crafty mind. In his great folly, smitten by passion and with cancerous mien, raging like a wild beast, he began to attack Armenia. And in accordance with the subtle treachery of their wily race, with an amiable countenance he tried to carry out his evil desires gradually.

In his time the ruler of the land of Vaspurakan was Ashot of the Artsruni house, a most renowned man and very highly distinguished.¹ Through him many notable deeds of valour were performed in battles and in single combat in view of drawn-up ranks.² He was more glorious and famous than those before him who had been princes of all Armenia, those in the East and the North, and especially those in the land of Vaspurakan who had been princes in positions of authority.

At that same time the caliph³ sent one of his senior nobles as overseer⁴ of Armenia with responsibility for the royal taxes; he was called Apusēt' in the Tachik language and was also familiar with Hebrew literature.⁵ He set out and approached the borders of Armenia with a numerous army, coming close to the borders of Tarōn, called First Armenia.⁶ Then Bagarat, prince of Tarōn, who was of the Bagratuni family, since he then held the highest rank of the Armenian princes,⁷ sent some of his magnates to meet him with presents of gold, silver, and honourable garments, urging that he not enter Armenia. But they [the Muslims] had decided that perchance by some deceitful trickery they might be able to dispossess them of each of their principalities. However, when he [Apusēt'] realised the indissoluble unity of

1. This is the first reference to Ashot (d. 874), father of Grigor Derenik and grandfather of Gagik, to both of whom Thomas had dedicated his *History*.

2. For single combat in front of armies facing each other cf. the account of Trdat's prowess in Agathangelos, §39–45, or the mutual taunting of young soldiers in Moses Khorenats'i, III 37. See also below, p. 110 at n. 2, p. 125 at n. 4, p. 183 at n. 1, p. 211 at n. 3.

3. *Caliph*: *ark'ay*, lit., "ruler," a term of general application, more commonly used of the Sasanian shahs than of the Roman emperors by earlier writers. The title "caliph" was not rendered in Armenian by a calque on its meaning of "successor."

4. *Overseer*: *verakats'u*, used by Elishē of the Sasanian governors of Armenia, p. 23 n. 5, and cf. Thomas above, p. 55 n. 4, or below, p. 134 n. 2, p. 155 n. 3, pp. 191, 218. John Catholicos, p. 117, calls him *ostikan*, the usual term for the Muslim governors, for which see above, p. 89 n. 2.

5. *Abusēt'*: Abu Sa'id Muhammad b. Yusuf; see Ter-Ghevondyan, pp. 41–42, Canard/Laurent, p. 137. There is a different version of his coming to Armenia in Ps.-Shapuh, p. 143.

6. *First Armenia*: so-called after A.D. 536; cf. Moses Khorenats'i, II 14. On the title and geographical area see Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 196, Adontz/Garsoian, ch. 6–8.

7. For Bagarat, prince of princes 826–851, see Canard/Laurent, p. 406.

the mutual pact between Ashot and Bagarat, he in no way revealed the wicked plans that they were plotting against them [the Armenians], but merely [108] indicated that the reason for his coming concerned taxes and other administrative matters. So they had the royal taxes and dues¹ given to him and sent him back whence he had come. He returned to Samarra and informed the caliph what he had done and how the Armenian princes were in mutual solidarity. Angered at the frustration of his plans, he [Apusēt'] greatly calumniated Ashot with letters of Muslims within Armenia. They informed about his deeds with more falsehood than truth, to the effect that: "He is continuously saying things opposed to Your Majesty." Likewise the governors of Persia alarmed the king with charges that Ashot had insulted the rule of the Muslims.

Now while the great vizier² was returning to court, he entrusted the oversight of Armenia and the royal taxes to a certain Musē, son of a Hagarite Zōrahay,³ who then ruled Arzn and the lower part of Aīdznik' near the borders of Tarōn.

CHAPTER 6

Concerning the war between Bagarat, prince of Armenia, and Musē; and his victory through Ashot, prince of Vaspurakan, who came to Bagarat's aid

At that time there was a great disturbance between Bagarat and Musē.⁴ On the pretext⁵ of the royal tribute Musē had gathered troops and come to the land of Tarōn to wage war against Bagarat. Bringing up the host of his army near to the city which was the Armenian prince's winter quarters, he camped with all his troops. Forming ranks, he drew out his line and closed off the whole of the flat valley. They were armed and fully prepared to face the Armenian army.

1. *Taxes, dues: hark, has*; for these terms see Thomson, *Efshē*, p. 22 n. 9, and p. 23 n. 9.

2. *Vizier: hazarapet*, a term used of the Sasanian governors of Armenia; see above, p. 59 n. 8, and cf. *Efshē*, p. 23.

3. I.e. Musa b. Zurāra; see Ter-Ghevondyan, p. 42.

4. For these events see Canard/Laurent, p. 146; Ter-Ghevondyan, p. 42. They are not described by John Catholicos.

5. *Pretext: patchar*, which could mean "reason"; but the taxes had already been paid, see at n. 1 above.

[109] When the Armenian prince saw the Muslim army drawn up and compared it with the paucity of his own troops, he hastily sent a begging letter to the valiant warrior prince Ashot, asking him if possible to come to his aid promptly and rapidly in person and with an army and arms. After the messengers had appeared before the great prince Ashot and he had read the begging letter and codicil¹ of the nobles [which mentioned]² their close relationship and the bond of the pact which they had confirmed between each other with oaths on the holy gospel and the Lord's cross,³ then he raised the entire forces of the whole land with all the nobles of the principality of Vaspurakan.

Immediately there reported in haste, each with his own troops: Prince Ashot and his brothers Gurgēn and Grigor with their forces; from the Artsruni family, Vahan and Vasak and Mushel and Apupelch and Gurgēn and Vasak and Apujap'r and Mushel and Apumayeay and Vasak and Vahan and Hamazasp and Vasak, son of Grigor, and Apumkdēm and Mehuzhan and Grigor—these all amounted to sixteen men from the house of the Artsrunik', with their troops; from the house of the Bagratunik', the son of T'ornik with his troops; from the family of the Amatunik', Shapuh with eight relatives and their troops; from the family of the Gnunik', Grigor son of Hazir with six more relatives and their troops; from the family of the Ēntrunik', Artavazd with seven relatives and their troops. And there were others from among the nobility of the princes of Vaspurakan: Smbat Apahuni, Grigor K'ajberuni, Vahan Havnuni, the lesser noble Davit', Gzrik Apuharaz, T'odoros Varazkh, Khosrov Vahevuni, Khosrov Akēats'i, Vardan Gabayelēn, Smbat Marats'ean, a lesser noble Sahak, the *patrik*⁴ Andzewats'i, Gorg Harmats'i, Davit' Gundsafar. And many others of knightly⁵ rank gathered, each with their troops. Marching together, they reached the battlefield while the two forces were being drawn up in line facing each other; [110] the trumpets were sounding, the flags were waving and the standards were flashing, shield bearers and lancers were shouting, the cav-

1. *Codicil*: *yishatakaran*, "memorial, colophon," perhaps here merely "signatures."

2. *Which mentioned*: The Armenian text reads "and," implying that what follows was included in the contents of the letter. But Vardanyan renders: "he [Ashot] recalled."

3. For pacts on the gospel and cross cf. Elishē, pp. 66, 76, 93.

4. *Patrik*: "Patrician" was a title bestowed by both Byzantine and Muslim rulers on Armenian princes, usually rendered as "presiding prince"; see Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 387, and Canard/Laurent, Appendix IV 1, "Le prince d'Arménie, pp. 400-406.

5. *Knightly*: *azat*, distinguished from the "nobles" (*nakharar*) or "lesser nobles" (*sepuh*). For these terms see the discussion in Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 115-127.

alry was galloping hither and thither, the champions were making forays to attack, and the archers were flexing¹ their bows.²

While the battle was being fomented in this manner, suddenly our valiant Ashot arrived. In a dauntless assault they fell on the Muslims³ and set on each other, one champion striking the other to the ground. When Prince Ashot raised his eyes he saw one of his troops being struck. Roaring like a lion, he rushed on the elite cavalry and broke its right wing, turning it round on the left. The Armenians made them all fodder for the sword; they attacked like brave heroes, roaring like eagles or lion cubs falling on their prey. From the violence of the attack there were many more whom they trampled down as corpses to the ground with their horses than whom they slew with the sword.⁴ No one could be found on the enemies' side who could resist them, not a single person. Those who survived the sword fled into the dense forests. Some even reached the capital Bitlis,⁵ having abandoned their own camp. But the princes pursued those who had fled into the fortified places and closely besieged the city and fortress, until its mistress came out on foot, full of lamentation, [asking] them to reckon as sufficient the deeds of valour which God had granted them through Ashot. She persuaded them to let them [the fugitives] go their way—for she was Bagarat's sister.⁶ So the Armenian troops put an end to the warfare, returning in great victory. They plundered the encampment and stripped the corpses; collecting much booty, they piled up masses of silver and gold, arms with decorated scabbards, the

1. *Flexing*: The verb *yural* is only attested here; see Achaëan, *Etym. Dict.*, s.v. Its meaning is not certain.

2. Much of the vocabulary used by Armenian historians to describe battles became stereotyped. See in general, Thomson, "Maccabees," with references to the major early historians. For "champions making forays," i.e. between the lines, cf. above, p. 107 at n. 2.

3. *Muslims*: *aylazgi*, lit., "foreigner, of a different nation." In the Old Testament it is the standard term for enemies of Israel; see p. 178 at n. 8. In Armenian usage it refers more to the Muslims being of a different religion than to their ethnic origin. Elishë uses it once, p. 108, where the Sasanians are likened to the Philistines defeated by David (and by implication, the Armenian warriors are compared to the Jewish heroes). It does not appear in Moses Khorenats'i.

4. There are close parallels to the last three sentences in Elishë, p. 77 (Vardan's victory over the Persians in Albania).

5. *Capital*: *shahastan*, a provincial capital; see Hübschmann, *Grammatik*, p. 209. Here the parallel with Elishë, p. 77 (see previous note) is continued, though Elishë is referring to Partaw. For Armenian references to Bitlis (Balesh) see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 324. At this time it was under the control of the emirs of Diyarbekir; see the art. *Bitlis* in *EI*.

6. Bagarat's sister was the wife of Musë.

ornaments and weapons of brave men, select horses and their decorations.⁷ So they returned to each one's place in great joy and merry jubilation.

Then, when the impious general Musē saw that [111] his wicked plan and inclination had not been fulfilled and that his army had suffered severe reverses, he made haste to send the bad news to court, informing the caliph of what Ashot, prince of Vaspurakan, had accomplished.

Now we must return to earlier events: the details of actions brought about by the army of the Muslims before the battle of Ałdznik', and how Prince Ashot opposed them and defeated them with the sword. The description surpasses our [ability], yet it is not appropriate to disregard in silence and forgetfulness such a great victory won by the troops of the nobility of Vaspurakan.

When Apusēt' returned to Syria and entrusted the oversight of the royal taxes to Musē,¹ he met coming from the court a certain vizier [in charge] of taxes, Tsovap'i by name, called Emir Ali.² Apusēt' sent him to the land of Vaspurakan, to remain there with many troops until all the taxes and royal tribute were brought to him from every region of Armenia and each individual territory. When he came to the province of Ałbag, he spread raids throughout all parts of the land of Vaspurakan; he ravaged, plundered, and pillaged, sacking and despoiling goods and possessions. They [the Muslims] seized men, women, and their inheritance. Ali also made a raid in the direction of the principality of Andzevats'ik', and there too they plundered on the excuse of needing provisions for the cavalry.

The prince³ sent him a message as follows: "You have come to Armenia at royal command to receive the royal taxes. Do you also have a command from court to capture, ravage, and ruin our country? Now we have never contravened the king's order nor held back the royal taxes like rebels, disobedient and insubordinate to the authority of lords; so when you enter any Armenian

7. The plundering, stripping of the corpses, amassing of gold and silver and of armour and decorations from soldiers and horses following a victory are often described by Armenian historians. Here the close, verbatim parallel with Elishē, p. 77, is continued.

1. Cf. p. 108 above.

2. *Ali*: Ala b. Ahmad al-Azdi; Tsovap'i being a corruption of Sawafi. See Ter-Ghevondyan, p. 42 n. 133. For the term *hazarapet*, "vizier," see above, p. 108 n. 2. (The following episode is not in John Catholicos.)

3. I.e. Ashot, prince of Vaspurakan.

city as governors⁴ have the right, we shall give you the [due] amount of taxes [112] and satisfy you. But do not mercilessly ravage and destroy my land.”

But he disdained the message, deeming it unworthy of a response, and in the same fashion began to move around the whole territory of Vaspurakan. Reaching the village of Archuchk¹ he stopped there and posted observers on the highest hills.

The prince was much angered at the insult, and in his great wrath took the host of his knightly forces,² each with his troops according to their various families, and attacked him, supported by the elite cavalry on their fully armed mounts. The scouts having warned the Muslim army, they too armed for battle against them [the Armenians]. As they faced each other, [the latter] were divided into three divisions: the first division was entrusted to Gurgēn and Vahan Havnuni, who was his companion-in-arms; the second division to Gurgēn Apupelch, whose companion-in-arms was Vahan Artsruni; the third division to the prince, who was the commander-in-chief for the battle. Bravely attacking with a valiant shout, he rushed on the enemy. [The combat] began at dawn, and all day victory was on his side. He turned the host of Ali's³ troops to flight; in the struggle Ali's brother was killed, and frightful torrents of blood flowed. Gurgēn, the prince's brother, and Vahan Havnuni fought bravely, gaining a notable victory and putting the enemy's side to the sword. The whole valley was filled with the corpses of the slain, and the streams of water that flowed down from the vales turned to blood from the multitude of those killed. Ali himself, escaping with a few men, fled in the direction of Berkri. But of the Armenian troops [only] a few insignificant men were killed, and Lord Gurgēn was wounded.

[113] Then the Armenian troops stripped the trappings and arms from the corpses of the valiant men and noble horses, collecting much booty, and went to each one's place vic-

4. *Governors*: *ashkharhakal*; *ashkharh* can mean either “world” or “region.” So this title is used either of emperors or of local officials. Cf. below, p. 178 n. 3.

1. The village of Archuchk' is not attested elsewhere (save in the Anonymous below, p. 278).

2. *Knightly forces*: *azatagund zawrk'*. For *azat* see above p. 109 n. 4. *Gund* is rendered by “division” in the second sentence following.

3. *Ali*: This and the two following references to Ali Tsovap'i are spelled *Ovay* in the text, a corruption of Alay easier in Armenian than in English.

toriously.¹ But because of these events a violent war was fomented by Vasak Artsruni through treachery and malevolence, and more especially through fear. For he had hidden much treasure in a barrel in the ground below his house, under the door of his dwelling, and he was fearfully anxious that the Muslims might penetrate and by discovering his store of treasure would reduce his power to nothing. He came to the caliph bearing letters full of charges against the nobles living in Armenia and piling [blame for] much damage to affairs of state on Prince Ashot. By their capricious terms these stirred up the caliph in hostile fashion against the prince. Likewise, the inhabitants of Ałdznik', unable to endure their sufferings, joined in these calumnies. The wives of the slain, together with the common rabble, with unveiled² faces, bareheaded, and having discarded the natural apparel of women, as is their custom especially for the nations of Muslims,³ came on foot to the royal palace. They complained, tearing their collars⁴ and pulling out their hair, scratching their faces and uttering loud shrieks in lamentation and tearful sighing, moaning and imploring: "It is Ashot who has wrought this harm, the stopping of the royal taxes and the slaughter of your army. He is the cause of all the rebellion of the Armenians against your kingdom, Oh valiant ruler equal to the gods in power, who has general authority over life and death."⁵ So was fulfilled the saying of the prophet Zephaniah: "On that day there will be a voice from the gate of discord, and lamentation from the second gate, and crashing on the hills. Mourn, inhabitants of [the places of] those massacred; for all peoples have resembled the Canaanites; and all those who boasted in silver have been slaughtered."⁶

[114] When the caliph heard this tumult of lamentation at the royal gate, he roared like a lion or like a disturbed bear. He flamed like a fiery furnace, and foamed like the piled-up waves of the sea tinged with purple blood. He uttered a great cry like

1. After this victory Ashot turned to help Bagarat, as described above, p. 109.

2. *Unveiled: Irbeni*, lit., "brazen." See also below, pp. 174 and 266 (in the Anonymous) for references to Muslim women wearing veils; for Armenian women wearing veils cf. Lazar, p. 110.

3. *Discarded . . . Muslims*: This seems to imply that at times of distress the women bared their heads and their breasts.

4. *Tearing their collars*: a common Armenian expression, cf. I Macc. 5.14.

5. For the caliph's power over life and death cf. below, pp. 150, 155. (On p. 186 it refers to Christ.)

6. Zeph. 1.10-11.

infernal rumbling from the abyss, like torrents of hail from the crash of the clouds.¹ His blood boiled around his heart in a fiery glow.² Carried away by choler, his mind stupified, he was plunged into great anxiety as he sought a solution to the events that had brought this grievous news to him. He assembled groups of counsellors³ and all the wise men of Syria and Babylonia to examine this matter.

At that time the patriarchal throne was occupied by Lord Yovhannēs, Catholicos of Armenia.⁴ In most wonderful fashion he embellished the institutions of the holy church of orthodox, apostolic faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He made covenants with the princes of the land of Armenia that they would walk worthy of Christ's faith, and that their deeds would bear witness to the repute of Christianity. But although they agreed and diligently heard him, yet they did not abandon the foul impurity of their execrable sodomistic vices; they followed the sins of the Arsacid house of our former kings.⁵ Gradually, step by step, they began to act in a filthy fashion until they brought mild-tempered God to anger—for the destruction of themselves, the devastation of the country, and the ruin of the patrimonial houses of their ancestral dwellings. For it is written: "A just king sets his country aright; the ruin of a country is an impious king."⁶ Continuously he urged them to renounce and abandon the wicked and harmful deeds they were working; he attacked them with biting words, having as his witness the saying of the prophet Isaiah: "Hear, princes of Sodom; consider the laws of God, people of Gomorrah."⁷ [115] This he said not because they were from Sodom but because they were committing the same impure and perverse sins as the Sodomites he called them Sodomites. As the prophet Ezekiel says: "Your father was a Canaanite and your

1. There are several parallels here with Elishē's descriptions of Yazkert: p. 8 for the simile of a bear, the furnace, the summoning of counsellors; p. 44 for foam; p. 47 for choler and heated heart.

2. For anger as boiling of the blood around the heart see David, *Sahmank'*, p. 44; Nemesius, *On the Formation of Man*, §21.

3. *Counsellors*: *sinklitos*, "senator," as pp. 115, 123. For this word, taken from Greek, see Hübschmann, *Grammatik*, pp. 379–380.

4. Yovhannēs (John) V Ovayets'i, Catholicos 833–855; cf. John Catholicos, p. 115.

5. P'awstos dwells at length on the sins of the Arsacids: e.g. III 14; IV 13, and especially 44; V 22. But Thomas is probably thinking here of religious aberrations as well as (or disguised as) sexual ones. It is noteworthy that the Tondrakian sect made its appearance in the time of John V; see Garsoian, *Paulicians*, pp. 142–143.

6. Prov. 29.4.

7. Isa. 1.10.

mother a Hittite.”¹ He returned to the same charge, and mindful of the oversight of a different land he repeated the prophet’s reproaches with threats: “Your rebellious princes,” he said, “are accomplices of thieves; they love bribes and are worthy of punishment. They do not provide justice to orphans, and they disregard the rights of widows.”² Again he says: “Let the king rule justly, and the prince govern by law.”³ And again: “Let them make just judgments and work mercy and justice, because my words are directed to you, Oh tyrants,” says Solomon.⁴ For God sends powerful justice to the powerful, while the common people deserve mercy. Such and even more was the advice and teaching of the holy patriarch and valiant shepherd Lord John, Catholicos of Armenia. But they paid no heed to the laws of the Lord and had ears only for the cruel viper and incurable asp.⁵ They were drunk with the wine of folly;⁶ they had eyes with which they would not see, and ears with which they would not hear.⁷ So eventually there fell upon us these terrible evils and irreversible downfall which, continuing [my] account, I shall indicate in its place.⁸ And the saying of the prophet Isaiah was fulfilled: “You shall hear and not understand; you shall see and not realise. For the heart of this people has hardened until cities will be abandoned by their inhabitants and house[s] emptied of men. And my people will again be delivered into captivity because they did not know the Lord. And many were their corpses through famine of bread and thirst for water.”⁹

At the beginning of the next year—which was the sixth jubilee and seventy-second olympiad and twentieth indiction, and the year 300 according to the Armenian reckoning¹⁰—the caliph with his counsellors¹¹ and [116] all the Babylonian magnates irrevocably decided to remove the princes of Armenia from each

1. Ezek. 16.3; but there “Canaanite” refers to the land of birth; the father was an “Amorite.”

2. Isa. 1.23.

3. Isa. 32.1.

4. Zech. 7.9; Wis. 6.9.

5. Cf. Ps. 57.5.

6. Cf. Ps. 59.5.

7. Cf. Ps. 115.5–6.

8. Thomas probably has in mind the campaign of Bugha, which begins in Book III, pp. 122 ff.

9. Isa. 6.9–11; 5.13.

10. The sixth jubilee is 300 years; the seventy-second olympiad 288 years; the twentieth indiction 300 years. Cf. p. 106 above. The year 300 began on 28 April, A.D. 851.

11. *Counsellors*: “senators,” as p. 114 n. 3.

one's principality, so that their inheritance would become "ours." First he would lay hands on Ashot and his house and on Bagarat and his house; for if they were to remove them "no one will be able to resist and oppose us."

Immediately gathering an army and forming a force of elite cavalry, with soldiers and generals, he entrusted it to a certain Yovsēp', son of Apusēt'.¹ And he made the country over to him in the stead of his father Apusēt'; for the latter had died on the journey, in the regions of Syria, when marching against Armenia to wreak harm on them as they had planned. He said: "If you carry out successfully the plan which we have resolved on against the Armenians and their princes, and matters turn out as we ardently desire, and you are able to bring to us in chains the Armenian princes—especially the prince of Vaspurakan, Ashot—then I shall give that land in inheritance to you and your descendants. So hasten, be firm, pursue them. Have no hesitation in these matters; be not lax nor delay in this affair."

Then the general left him, filled with the plans of his wicked cunning. He entered the province of Ałbag in the land of Vaspurakan through Atrpatakan and camped at Hadamakert, the Artsruni capital.² From there he began to scatter raiders, to plunder and pile up for himself a vast amount of booty. He summoned the prince, apparently in friendship and peace, for the matter of the royal taxes. But the prince was warned by the same group of Muslims not to visit him, as they informed him of his plans against him.

So the prince armed himself and made all preparations, [117] with the troops of his noble entourage as well. With all the lords of his principality he withdrew, going round through the regions of Mardastan and Dzor-Haskoy,¹ and sent messengers to the general. He wrote a letter in these terms: "It is the duty of kings who govern the world to watch over and care for the prosperity of the country, to lighten the tyrannous yoke of heavy burdens

1. The following account is at variance with John Catholicos, pp. 117–118, who does not mention Yusuf, son of Abu Said, and has the latter (i.e. Apusēt') himself killed by the Christians; see Ter-Ghevondyan, p. 42; Canard/Laurent, p. 146 n. 264. Ps.-Shapuh, p. 143, has the son of Apusēt' killed in Khoyt'.

2. *Hadamakert*: the *ostan* of the Artsrunik, see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 442, and for the term *ostan* (capital town of a province), *ibid.*, pp. 460–461. In earlier writers it referred to royal land; cf. above, p. 51 n. 5.

1. For Mardastan and Dzor-Haskoy (valley of Hask) see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 343, 444.

and soften the severity of painful demands for taxes, lest the productive capacity of the country be completely destroyed.² They should remove repressive measures of governors, complaisant [but] faithless citizens, the burden of taxes and the military, so that the land may be prosperous and peaceful and the royal taxes come in regularly. Such is our concern and [it is] for you to desire the same. So when we see your benevolent solicitude for the land and [your] friendly kindness towards us, we shall be most eager to serve you loyally and to fulfill your commands with great despatch." Many other agreeable and acceptable expressions in similar terms he included in his letter. Furthermore, the mother of Prince Ashot, sister of Sahak and Bagarat, prince of Tarōn, who was a woman wise in words and deeds, very intelligent and also pious,³ went with many gifts to meet Yovsēp', requesting him to establish a treaty and peace with her sons and the whole land of Vaspurakan. He accepted the gifts and carried out her request. Taking as hostages renowned and honourable men, he sent back Ashot's mother with great respect. He himself passed peacefully through the land of Vaspurakan with a minimum of damage, taking the hostages with him. Crossing the province of Bznunik', he reached Khlat'.⁴ For he intended to await the most suitable occasion to ensnare [the Armenians] by deceit and trickery.⁵

When the emir reached Khlat', he entered the city and encamped [118] in its fortress. Then he sent messengers to Bagarat with written invitations to come to him without excuses or fear. He wrote in the letter that he entrusted to him this land of Armenia so that he himself might go to court, using the severity of the winter season that had arrived and the fierceness of the freezing north wind,¹ which he was afraid he could not endure, as his excuse.

So Prince Bagarat, having no suspicion of faithlessness on the

2. For the duties of kings and princes see the Introduction to this book.

3. She was named Hrips'imē; see below, p. 143. For her Bagratid origin see Canard/Laurent, p. 465 n. 19. Thomas's patrons thus had both Artsruni and Bagratid blood.

4. *Khlat'*: on the north shore of Lake Van; see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 328.

5. *Ensnare . . . trickery*: cf. Ešhē, p. 17, where Yazkert plots to ensnare the Armenians.

1. There are frequent references in Armenian sources to the severity of the winters and the freezing north winds: e.g. Agathangelos, §30, Moses Khorenats'i, I 11 (where the "icy cold" of Armenia is an image for haughty conduct). Classical authors, notably Plutarch and Tacitus, also refer to the snow and ice encountered by Roman armies invading Armenia.

part of the king and his army, went with innocent frankness and loyal intentions to fulfil his military duty, in accordance with the divine command and the royal order.² He followed the messengers, quite unaware of the treacherous trickery whereby he had deceived him, and took with him the holy covenants of the divinely inspired Scriptures with a host of ministers of the priestly ranks. But [the emir] seized him and all his relatives from the Bagratuni house, bound them in iron bonds, and sent them to Samarra. He himself went to winter in the city of Mush,³ in Tarōn, keeping with him the hostages from Vaspurakan, both those of the Artsruni nobility and those of their knights.⁴ The inhabitants of the land he took into captivity, to sell them in the regions of Syria and all the area of the empire of the Muslims. But half of the captives they kept with them in the city to be their drawers of water and hewers of wood,⁵ causing them cruel torments in these tasks from the bitter winter cold. Those who escaped fled to various regions of the country. The whole country was devastated except for the mountain people who remained in their fortresses on the mountain called Khoyt'.

[119] CHAPTER 7

Concerning the murder of Yovsēp' by the mountain people of Khoyt'¹ and their history

In midwinter the weather became especially severe with fog and tempests. The thick snow, levelling the plain, piled up around the foot of the mountain where the city of Tarōn was built.² There the general of the Muslims was encamped, like a hibernating bear who has gone to ground in his den midway between life and death,³ surviving the days of winter on roots.

2. Cf. the loyal attitude of the Armenians in giving military service to the Sasanian shahs, Etishē, p. 10; and see below, p. 211 n. 1.

3. *Mush*: see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 326.

4. *Nobility, knights: nakharar, azat*; see above, p. 109 n. 4.

5. As Josh. 9.21 ff., of the subjected cities.

1. For references to Khoyt' in other sources see Canard/Laurent, p. 42 n. 26; Markwart, *Sudarmenien*, pp. 223–226; Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 236, 325.

2. I.e. Mush; see p. 118 above.

3. For the image of a hibernating bear see the *Physiologus*, no. 35. But *awrhasakan* (here rendered as “hibernating”) can also mean “in one’s dying pangs.” So Thomas has in mind the image of Yazkert as a bear elaborated by Etishē, p. 8.

But when the south wind blows, heating the ground with its warming strength and awakening to fertility the buried roots and plants that had been numbed by the icy blasts of the north wind, then the slumbering beasts and birds, when they feel the warmth of the air as day and night become equal, come out from each one's lair and nest in the season of spring.⁴ But many there are too who perish then: some are easy prey to hunters, while those who escape inflict much harm wherever they go, both on men and on other animals. In such fashion did that man Yovsēp', the general of the Muslims, spend the winter in order to attack Armenia with sword, captivity, and terrible afflictions, to take the magnates of the land into captivity, to set governors⁵ over the land who would run the country's affairs by their own orders and would install themselves with their families in the fortresses of Armenia.

Then, when the inhabitants of the mountain saw that their prince had been taken into captivity, they prepared themselves to endure the same anguish as had the lowlanders. [120] The light-armed¹ men of Khoyt' gathered together as a crowd to consider their stratagems for their protection that winter. Bearing the pikes they always carry in readiness against the beasts that lurk in the forest or the enemies that may attack them, they marched against the city and besieged it. They slaughtered the [emir's] troops with the sword, released from prison the hostages from Vaspurakan, freed the captives, and divided their booty among themselves.

But the self-imagined *marzpan*² fled for refuge to a very tall church which had been built by Prince Bagarat in the name of our Saviour at the expense of great treasure—about three hundred thousand [coins].³ He hid himself between the [inner and

4. Cf. the elaborate images of spring in the *Teaching*, §§649, 655–657.

5. *Governors*: *gortsavar*, not a technical term. No example of its use is given in the *NBHL*. Cf. *gortsakal*, p. 209 n. 4 below.

1. *Light-armed*: *meknazēn*. The word is used several times in IV Kings to render *monozōnos*; otherwise, the *NBHL* only cites examples from Thomas. John Catholicos, p. 118, says the inhabitants of the Taurus "were armed with a single weapon" (*zmi zinuorut'iwn zinuoreal*). John devotes only one paragraph to this episode: he says that Apusēt' was killed here in vengeance for Prince Bagarat, not Yovsēp'.

2. The term *marzpan* was used to describe the governors of Armenia in Sasanian times; see references in Thomson, *Elishē*, p. 61 n. 7. As with *hazarapet* (see above, p. 108 n. 2), Thomas is using an old term anachronistically—but deliberately—in order to recall his model, Elishē.

3. Thomas does not name the denomination of coin. Cf. the cost of Gagik's palace: 200,000 *litra*, p. 296 in the Anonymous.

outer] dome, quaking in most terrible fright. The armed men surrounded the church, and some of them reached him through the gap⁴ between the domes. One of them struck him in the middle of his back with his lance, penetrating under his armpits to his lungs. He breathed his last and was buried like a donkey.⁵

And I myself with my own eyes saw that man who struck him, and from him I learned the truth about it.⁶

Then the sad news was immediately brought in haste to the caliph: "Your general has been killed, and the land of Armenia has rebelled against your rule."

Here I shall expound in brief the nature of the inhabitants of the mountain: what sort and manner of people they are, how they manage to live and supply their needs at great labour and enormous trouble.⁷ They dwell in deep gorges, in clefts in the mountains, in deep forests, and on mountaintops. They live separately by families, so distant from each other that if one of their strong men were to shout from a very high place he would hardly be able to make his voice carry anywhere; you would think it a mere echo from the rocks. [121] Half of them lose their native tongue from living so far apart and never greeting each other, and their mutual speech is a patchwork of borrowed words. They are so profoundly ignorant of each other that they even need interpreters.¹ For food they use certain seeds, especially that known as millet, which some call bread at time of famine. This they sow in the middle of the forests and irrigate by means of their feet or with double-pronged hoes. They hide their nakedness with clothes of wool. For footwear they use a form of boot made from goatskin. And one food and one garment suffice them both winter and summer. As weapons they have pikes, which they carry with them continuously in readiness against the beasts that live on the mountain.

But when enemies reach their land, the mountain peoples unite to aid their princes, for they are loyal. Now as for the snow of unstable solidity which flows down from the clouds, they have

4. I.e. between the inner and outer domes.

5. *Like a donkey*: *z'atumn ishoy*. Cf. the burial of Vasak in Elishē, p. 140; but there *zēsh*, "like a donkey," has a variant *zgēsh*, "like carrion."

6. For Thomas's references to himself see the Introduction to this book.

7. John Catholicos, pp. 117–118, who describes briefly the death of Apusēt', has no description of the inhabitants of the Taurus mountain save that they are *alkhatroyz*, "coarse, rude."

1. Cf. the seventy-two languages of the Caucasus, p. 175 below.

invented for themselves wooden [shoes] wound around their feet with ring-like thongs, so they easily run over the snow as if over dry land.² They are savage in their habits, drinkers of blood, who regard as naught the killing of their own brothers and even of themselves. They are called light-armed and couriers, and dwell in the mountain that divides Ałdznik' and Tarōn. Because of their obscure and inscrutable speech and way of life they are called Khut', from which name the mountain is also called Khoyt'.³ They know the psalms in the old translation of the Armenian teachers, which they have continually in their mouths.⁴ They are the peasants of Syria who followed [to Armenia] Adramelēk' and Sanasar, sons of Senek'erim king of Assyria and Nineveh, from whose name they call themselves Sanasnayk'.⁵ They are hospitable and respectful to strangers.

2. Cf. the snowshoes used in Armenia that are described by Strabo and Xenophon; see Dowsett, "Ancient Armenian Roller-skates."

3. *Khoyt'*: *khut'* means "obstacle"; in the plural it can mean "rocks." But *khut'* would not give *khoyt'* by any regular rule of Armenian phonology. The reverse, however pertains: stressed *oy* becomes *u* in unstressed position.

4. Thomas implies that the old translation was from Syriac. Koriun, pp. 31-32, notes that the first translation of the Bible was later revised from texts brought from Constantinople. For the Armenian text of the Psalter see Baumstark, "Armenische Psaltertext," and in general, Anasean, "Astuatsashunch Mateani."

5. For Sanasar see above, p. 8. Thomas is attempting to provide an etymology for the province of Sasun. Moses Khorenats', II 8, says that Shavarshan from the house of Sanasar was granted the Taurus mountain; cf. Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 315.

[122] *Book Three*

CHAPTER 1

Concerning what became of Armenia in general; and division¹ among the princes, being mutually hostile and rebellious; and what [happened] under them

Up to this point we have not hesitated to relate the dangers and tribulations which befell us from the enemies of the truth.² For although we were oppressed and tormented with various afflictions by the domination of the armies of the Muslim Tachik nations,³ yet these were few in number and for short periods of time; and many more were they whom we smote than we who were smitten. For the Armenian princes with their hosts of knights⁴ and troops were still living in unison and harmony and concord, though in secret they had suspicions of treachery. But when discord began to insinuate itself within that unity, the grace of the divine power departed and withdrew. Concerted plans were disregarded in combat and in other matters affecting the administration of the country. And just as someone might cut into pieces all the limbs of a body until the form of the living man, that is the nature of his composition, has disappeared—whereas,

1. *Division* : *erkparakut'iwn*, a key term in Elishē. See Thomson, *Elishē*, Introduction, pp. 13–14; text, p. 3 n. 4.

2. *Enemies of the truth*: another reminiscence of Elishē, associated with *erkparakut'iwn*; see Thomson, *Elishē*, p. 89 n. 2.

3. *Muslim Tachik nations*: *ismayelakan azgats'n tachkakan*. For the Muslims as sons of Ismael see above, p. 97 n. 3. For *tachik* see p. 3 n. 6.

4. *Knights*: *azatagund*, as p. 112 n. 1.

if one of the limbs is lost, it is an accidental deprivation but the [whole] living person is not destroyed—in such manner was the unity of this country gradually destroyed, as each individual plotted evil against his neighbour and his brother.⁵ They sent letters and messengers to the caliph secretly from each other. [123] Among themselves they scattered words of slander so that not even two remained in accord, causing great joy to their enemies at the dissolution of their mutual unity. Many were the things they wrote that Armenians had not done; and all the damage and results of the revolt¹ they attributed to Ashot. To them applies the saying of the Saviour: “Every kingdom divided against itself perishes, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.”² Equally appropriate is the old fable of the philosopher Olympian concerning the characters of the lion and the bulls, of which erudite people are knowledgeable.³

Then the caliph once more took counsel with the magnates of his kingdom to plan sure and infallible destruction for the land of Armenia. From among many good suggestions, the counselors⁴ chose this plan as the only certain one. They said to the caliph: “Gather an army, assemble a force, march into the land of Armenia. From all the nations that are under your control, gather to yourself the elite of the cavalry and cross over the river. On reaching Armenia, first bring Ashot here in exile; then all the others will easily submit to you and you will indubitably set them all under the yoke of obedience to you. Do not merely endeavour to exact vengeance for their holding back taxes or troops or other service or for harming the state, but force them, once taken captive, to renounce the Christian faith and to serve the religion of our prophet and legislator.⁵ Then all our plans will easily be carried out. By inflicting them with the bastinado

5. This whole paragraph is modelled on Elishē, pp. 89–90, the beginning of his chapter on the secession (*erkparakut'iwn*) of Vasak and his companions.

1. *Damage, revolt*: there are verbal reminiscences here of the accusations against Vasak in Elishē, p. 133.

2. Matt. 12.25.

3. Thomas refers to the fable of Olympian in which three bulls are separated by a crafty lion and eaten separately. See Marr, *Sborniki Pritch Vardana* I, §449. The same fable appears as no. 44 of Babrius, or no. 321 in Aesop. It has nothing to do with the Roman jurist Ulpian to whom Vardanyan refers, following Brosset.

4. *Counselors*: “senators,” as on pp. 114, 115.

5. *Prophet and legislator*: *patgamawor ew awrēnsdir*; for *patgamawor* see above, p. 100 n. 3. *Awrēnsdir* is an epithet very commonly applied to Muhammad; cf. pp. 130, 156 below. Note the frequent references in Elishē to the magi exhorting Yazkert to extirpate Christianity: e.g. pp. 9, 19, 42.

and prison and various tortures, and by threats and persuasion and the deceitful [promise] of wealth, you will subject them to your royal will and extirpate the name of Christianity [124] from among them." This counsel seemed pleasing to the caliph, and he greatly rejoiced.¹

Here there is weeping, lamentation, and mourning not for a single clan or a single area but for all the clans and lands of Armenia. I shall carry my account forward in order²—though not with joyful enthusiasm but unwillingly and by compulsion shall I describe the opening of the gate of divine wrath upon us. This vengeful chastisement was inflicted because of the impieties that we had all committed, from the least to the greatest, as is written in the prophecy of Jeremiah: "The Lord opened his treasures and took out the vessels of anger,"³ which he had gathered and preserved there under seal for the day of retribution, to compensate us for our deeds and to strike our feet against a rock.⁴ The day of destruction has arrived close to our doors, for "behold the Lord has come in readiness against us," as Moses wrote.⁵ But the most terrible thing about the opening of the gate is that it is opened invisibly—the gate of destruction of souls rather than of bodies, [that is] erring from the pure, orthodox, apostolic faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Human power cannot prevent the opening of the gate to destruction; only for God, powerful and solicitous in all things, is the power easy, as it is written: "He will shut and there will be no one to open; he will open and there will be no one to close."⁶

Then he [the caliph] composed edicts and sent numerous messengers through all the regions of his empire, to the distant parts of Syria and Babylonia, Turkastan and Khuzhastan, Media and Elam, Egypt and as far as inner Tachkastan near the borders of Sakastan—to the troops and generals, governors of provinces and cities, [125] to viziers, prefects, and the magnates of those

1. For the following campaign see Ter-Ghevondyan, pp. 42–43, and Canard/Laurent, p. 147. John Catholicos, p. 118, merely says that the caliph gathered an army and entrusted it to Bugha (who is not named by Thomas until p. 126). Note John's emphasis also on hopes of converting the Armenians to Islam.

2. For Thomas's ideas of historical writing see the Introduction to this book.

3. Jer. 50.25.

4. Matt. 4.6; Luke 4.11.

5. Deut. 32.35.

6. Rev. 3.7; cf. also Job 12.14. Direct quotations from the Book of Revelation are rare in Armenian authors.

lands.¹ He set the time when they were rapidly to present themselves to him in their royal capital.² So everyone, in accordance with the caliph's command, gathered cavalry from his own region, and in the company of other fully armed detachments without delay quickly came to the appointed summons.

When the generals had entered his presence, the caliph began to speak, saying: "From the beginning of the rule of our ancestors, when God gave the thrones of many kings into their hands, and down to our time no one has been able to resist us, neither from distant lands nor from near ones. Nor has anyone inflicted such embarrassing reverses on us, our nation and army and our generals, as has Ashot prince of Vaspurakan. So take courage, be men; attack Armenia with famine, sword, and captivity. Bring hastily to us in bonds the princes, lords, governors, and prefects of that country, the nobility and their sons. And you yourselves will hold that land for your own habitation, and it will be your land as an inheritance for you and your children. But first bring Ashot and his family here, and do not worry about anyone else before capturing him."

He offered to each of the generals who had come to him gifts and crowns, also giving under seal villages and towns. He asked for the register³ of the number of troops; they searched and found it. He was furthermore informed about each battalion, about the valiant and powerful warriors by name; also, how many were fully armed, how many were shield-bearing infantry, how many lancers, what were the numbers of archers, how many company commanders there were in the army, how many officers were experts at single combat, how many champions,⁴ how many staff officers, how many commanders of couriers. He also sought information about how many flags there were, how many standards, into how many divisions the army was divided, [126] how many trumpets would sound, and how many drums would beat.

After he had accurately enquired into all this, he discovered that the largest number of all were the archers and stalwart bow-

1. Armenian historians like to pile up epithets or lists of near synonyms. These titles should not be taken as careful distinctions of different offices. Cf. Agathangelos, §24.

2. I.e. Samarra; see p. 108 above.

3. *Register: diwan*; see Hübschmann, *Grammatik*, pp. 143–144. Cf. the vizier's enquiry about enemy forces in Elishē, p. 96.

4. *Champions: ėmbshamartik*, "wrestler," used of athletes at the Olympic games. For single combat see above, p. 107 n. 2.

men of the Elamites and Arabians¹—adroit with both hands, who did not miss the target, like those powerful men in Israel of yore, the troops of the house of Ephrem and Benjamin. As general he appointed over them a man called Bugha, a Turk by race,² and he publicly commanded the multitude to heed his advice and obey his orders. He was the commanding chief³ of all the realm of the Muslims, and no one was able to contravene his wishes, from the greatest to the least; even the caliph himself obeyed his command. This man, whose devilish intelligence was wicked and full of wiles, undertook these malicious plans; greatly puffed up and haughty, he roared like a dragon,⁴ striking terror into those far and near.

This man Bugha, in whom Satan with his power had made his lair, immediately left the caliph's presence. His delight and pleasure were the flesh and blood of innocent men,⁵ and his horribly ferocious rage could not be sated.⁶

To him, it seems to me, applies the saying of the prophet Habbakuk: "See, contemptuous ones, and be amazed and undone. For I shall work a deed in your days, a deed you would not believe if someone were to relate it to you. For behold I shall stir up against you the cruel and swift nation which will come across the width of the land to inherit tents which are not their own. [They are] fearsome and splendid; their judgment shall take place of itself and their sentence proceed of itself. Their horses shall gallop faster than the leopard; they will be swifter than the wolves of Arabia. Their horses shall rush; [127] they shall dart like eagles on their food. The fate of the impious

1. Cf. Gen. 21.20: Ismael became an archer; so the descendants of Ismael—the Arabs, and by extension the Muslims—are good archers. "Elamites" is a term given to Turks by historians later than Thomas (e.g. Matthew of Edessa, p. 133, or the twelfth-century Continuator below, pp. 305, 316). Thomas himself generally uses the expression in a vaguer sense, in combination with other regions of Asia: e.g. pp. 43, 124, 142, 258. Here and on p. 131 Thomas may be referring to Turkish soldiers in the army of Bugha, who was a Turk himself; but it is more likely that he has in mind Isa. 22.6 (quoted on p. 132): "the Elamites took up their quivers." Cf. also Isa. 21.2, where the Elamites are associated with the Persians as they attack Israel. Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Aucher I p. 110, refers to the Elamites as the first race of Persians.

2. For Bugha and his career see the art. *Bugha-al-Kabir* in the *EI*. Ps.-Shapuh, p. 145, has a fanciful tale about his appointment as general.

3. *Commanding chief*: *hramanatar*, as of Mihrnerseh in Elishē, p. 24. Cf. also above, p. 97 n. 5.

4. As Elishē, p. 44, of Yazkert.

5. *Satan's lair, flesh and blood of the innocent*: as Elishē, p. 88, of Mihrnerseh. "Power," *zawrut'iwn*, may mean "host;" the same phrase is in Elishē.

6. Cf. Elishē, p. 7, of Yazkert.

shall befall those who oppose them. They will amass captives like sand. The king himself shall become weak, tyrants will be their laughing-stock, and at all fortresses they will laugh and joke."¹

CHAPTER 2

*Concerning Smbat Bagratuni, prince of Mokk'*²

At that time Bugha entered the city of Khlata', having marched through Apahunik'.³ He had divided his army into two divisions and had commanded them to enter the land of Vaspurakan, to spread ruin over the country, to take prisoners, to ravage, exterminate, and put to the sword; to depopulate the populous villages and towns and to lead the survivors into captivity [including] women with their children; to have Prince Ashot taken in bonds to the caliph so that he might suffer vengeance for the deeds he had wrought and his rebellion from the rule of the Muslims. Then he entrusted a part of his army to a general named Zhirak⁴ and sent him through Rshtunik'. Taking the rest of his host with him he crossed Apahunik', like hunters of lions or such-like surrounding the lair, to entrap the most mighty and valiant of men, Prince Ashot. He took care lest "perchance he elude our clutches, or unexpectedly attack us by night and cause a great disaster." Now because the pass of Hots' was open,⁵ Zhirak quickly reached the province of Rshtunik', rushing his troops into the valley of Aruank'⁶ on the border of Mokk'. There they came across the inhabitants of Rshtunik', who were scattered by these merciless, murderous, carrion-eating dogs. [128] Slaughtering them with the sword, they filled the land with blood. Taking some captive, they led them off with them. Setting fire to villages, towns, and farms they made it a desert devoid of men and animals. They brought the common people of the town of Noragiwl

1. Hab. 1.5-10.

2. Smbat does not appear until p. 137. The following part of Bugha's campaign is not described by John Catholicos. Canard/Laurent, p. 147 and notes *ad loc.*, adduces evidence from Islamic sources.

3. *Apahunik'*: see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 329-330.

4. *Zirak* in Tabari; see Canard/Laurent, pp. 642-643.

5. *Open*: *ëndardzak*, lit., "wide." The site of Hots' is not certain. Vardanyan, n. 346, places it in western Rshtunik'; cf. John Catholicos, p. 174 (who spells the village Hots).

6. *Aruank'*: see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 402.

in Ršhtunik' to the marketplace of the capital of Ršhtunik',¹ marching them at the point of the sword with ropes round their necks. From there they went to the valley of Atsan in search of those who had fled. On catching up with them, many they put to the sword or took captive.

But two of the commanders of the couriers, brothers, on reaching the defile of the valley, with shields on their backs, lance in hand, and armed with bows and arrows, attacked the enemy. With help from God they defeated the Muslims,² inflicting many wounds, and freed the mass of captives so they could go to the fortresses of the land. These two were named, the one . . . by the sword and was killed³ . . . "brother aided by brother like a secure and strong city,"⁴ or according to Isaiah: "At a single voice thousands will perish, and at the sound of five many will flee."⁵ A priest called Shapuh and one of the peasants of the valley swelled the number of the force. Supported also by a shepherd, they hurled stones with slings. In the battle they exhibited as much strength and heroic valour as if they had been [more] numerous. Their memory will be a source of courage and bravery to many, of strength to the cowardly and encouragement to the most valiant champions.

At that point one of the Armenian nobility of the Vahevuni family, a certain Apusahak, brother of Sahak the bishop of the capital city of Nakhchavan and of Mardpetakan, was captured.⁶ He was white-haired and his outer body was aged; but his inner being was rejuvenated and beautiful in the image of the Creator. Learned and familiar with Divine Scripture, wise and knowledgeable, [129] he sat digging¹ the narrow road of the path that leads to the supernal metropolis of Sion, to the camp of the heavenly army in Christ's royal kingdom. He was brought be-

1. The capital (*ostan*) of Ršhtunik' was the present Vostan on the southern shore of Lake Van; see Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 213, and Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 461. There were several different towns in Armenia called *Noragiwł* (new village); see Hübschmann, *ibid.*, p. 455.

2. *Muslim*: *aylazgi*, rather than the more usual *tachik*; see above, p. 110 n. 3.

3. Although the MS has no gaps, the text seems corrupt. "By the sword," *srov*, is Vardanyan's emendation for *orov*, "by which."

4. Prov. 18.19.

5. Isa. 30.17.

6. Apusahak and his brother Sahak are not attested elsewhere. For Mardpetakan see Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 169-170.

1. As Luke 6.48, of the man who built a house on the rock and "dugged deep." For the "narrow way" see Matt. 7.14.

fore the general Zhirak', who was pleased to see his tall handsome stature and the analogous beauty of his face, his gleaming appearance like the morning star set in the shining white hairs of his venerable head. So he began to discharge his fetid, intoxicating, and bilious poison² in the hope that he might be able to subject the blessed man to the foul enticements of his deathly infection. Hiding the arrows of his quiver with a sponge,³ he directed his destructive power against the saint, hoping to shake him from the refuge of the secure rock⁴ and to be able secretly to lead astray the holy one's soul, though he was armed with the protection of the Holy Spirit and had as sword⁵ the Lord's saying: "When they deliver you up, do not worry how or what you will say;⁶ for I shall give you a mouth and wisdom to which all your opponents will be unable to resist or respond."⁷

The tyrant began to speak fawning words;⁸ he ordered great gifts and honours to be proffered and promised to make him splendid and distinguished among the common multitudes at the royal court, that he would be in the caliph's presence with the foremost princes and share the rank⁹ of the caliph's magnates at the principal bench¹⁰ when the royal tribunal assembled. "Only abandon," he said, "the faith of Christ, submit to the great king,¹¹ and accept the religion and faith [that are] worthy of life and praise from the great king through obedience to our ruling and commanding king."

But the holy one, armed with the Holy Spirit, remembered what the Saviour had said: "Do not fear those who kill the body

2. Cf. Yazkert's poison and bile, *Elishē*, pp. 6, 47, with parallels in the *Vkayk'*.

3. The arrows of destruction are a common theme in *Elishē*, based on biblical themes. The *NBHL* notes a parallel to hiding with a sponge (*spung*) in a homily on repentance by John Chrysostom (no precise reference given), when Nathan met David.

4. This picks up the theme of Luke 6.48; see n.1. above.

5. *Armed . . . sword*: Eph. 6.14.

6. Matt. 10.19.

7. Luke 21.15.

8. For the following arguments and procedures before the actual death of the martyr cf. p. 140; they are traditional hagiographical themes.

9. *Share the rank*: *bardzakits'*, as Bugha, pp. 134, 138 below; or of Shapuh and the sun, Moses Khorenats'i, III 17.

10. *Principal bench*: *glkhawor bazmakan*. The order of precedence at banquets is a theme emphasized by *Elishē*, as p. 20. See further Adontz/Garsoian, pp. 214-215.

11. *Great king*: Vardanyan, n. 353, assumes that Muhammad is intended. But this is a standard expression in *Elishē* for the shah. Zhirak' means: "submit to the caliph and Islam," just as Denshapuh attempted to persuade the Armenian martyrs to submit to Yazkert and worship the sun; e.g. *Elishē*, pp. 162, 165.

but are unable to kill the spirit";¹² and: "Do not let a seven-branch candlestick [130] hide the shining of its light under a bushel, but let it be placed on the high candlestick" of the apostolic church, "so that they may see [it] and glorify the Heavenly Father."¹ So, opening his mouth with the word of God, he then set forth in beautiful but brief and unadorned form one by one the proofs of faith in Christ, the various gifts preserved by him for the one who abides in the true faith, and the torments of the apostates and the backsliders; he also cast much calumny on their tyrannical and erring legislator Mahumat'.² But because none of us was then present at the blessed one's responses, we did not consider it right to set them in writing.³

However, when the tyrant saw his inflexible intention, his unhesitating faith, his fearless and haughty responses, and the great indignity with which he treated him and their legislator,⁴ he became exceedingly angry and ordered him to be put to death immediately.

So the holy one went out with the executioners to the arena where his earthly contest⁵ would come to an end. Kneeling down, he prayed that he might be able with unfaltering faith to overcome the wiles of the devil who [assails] in secret and in open warfare. He said: "Creator of justice and righteousness [and what follows]."⁶ Raising his hands to heaven, he placed his neck before the executioners. One of them took a sword, struck the blessed one, and cut off his head.⁷ In this fashion was martyred the blessed Apusahak. He was the first fruit of the martyrs in the great tribulation which befell all Armenia. This was told to us by the great priest Samuēl of the town of Artamet; he had

12. Matt. 10.28.

1. A conflate of Mark 4.21 and Luke 8.16, 11.33. For the "seven-branch" candlestick see Zech. 4.2. For the theme of the church as a candlestick see Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.v. *lychnia*.

2. For curses on Muhammad see Thomson, "Muhammad," at n. 13.

3. But Thomas does indicate in the next paragraph that his account derives from an eyewitness. For the theme of the eyewitness in hagiography see Delehaye, *Passions*, pp. 182-183.

4. *Legislator*: Muhammad; see p. 123 n. 5.

5. *Arena, contest*: *asparēs, nahatakut'iwn*, common themes in martyrdoms, based on Pauline imagery. See Thomson, *Elishē*, p. 154 and notes; cf. also below, pp. 159, 170, 187.

6. Ps. 118.121.

7. For the theme of beheading with a sword as the deathblow after a martyr's tortures see Thomson, *Elishē*, Introduction, p. 18.

heard of it from a certain Persian from the valley of Shatuan,⁸ who had been among the executioners and had been present at the spot from the beginning of the martyrdom until the saint's death, and had taken to heart the psalm that the blessed one had spoken. The inhabitants of the province of R'shtunik' also know this, for many of them are still alive.

Following this Zhirak' left there, entered [131] Vantosp, and himself set fire to the great church in the town of Artamet.¹

But Bugha marched in pursuit of the prince, accompanied by the Muslims of Armenia who dwelt in various regions of the land and guided Bugha on his way in and out of the country.²

Prince Ashot, on the other hand, gradually surrounded himself with his relatives, including some of their nobility: Mushel Vahevuni who held the rank of *tanutēr*;³ the junior prince Vahram, the prince's bodyguard; Vahram Truni and Hasan and other retainers from among the lesser nobility. They entered the citadel of the fortress of Nkan in the province of T'oinavan, wanting to see how they might be able to find a way out of the danger that had befallen them.

When the Muslim troops discovered that the prince had entered the castle, they pursued him in large numbers and besieged the castle, making it an inescapable cage.⁴ They established their headquarters in the town of Lokoruat, keeping with them the mass of captives all crushed together.⁵ But Vahan of the province of Amatunik' had fled to the valley near the fortress where their lord was [besieged].

Then, after a few days, [Bugha] armed his troops for battle with the defenders of the castle in order to capture it. Their commander-in-chief, Bugha himself, mounted on his horse, armed himself for battle with the prince, and led out to the front the powerful archers of the Elamites⁶ and their elite cavalry.

8. This Samuel is unattested elsewhere. Shatuan, according to Vardanyan, n. 354, is in the northwest of Hayots'-dzor.

1. Artamet was southwest of Van itself; see above, p. 54 n. 1.

2. For the Arabs in Armenia at the time of Bugha's invasion see Ter-Ghevondyan, p. 43.

3. *Tanutēr*: see p. 86 n. 2 above. "Junior prince" renders *sepuh*, for which see Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 130.

4. *Castle, inescapable cage: amur anel garagil*, a verbal borrowing from Elishē, p. 19, who describes how Yazkert blocked the Armenian forces in the East. For Nkan and T'oinavan see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 455, 430.

5. *All crushed together*: lit., "piled up like earth." Cf. Hab. 1.9, captives piled up like sand.

6. *Elamites*: see p. 126 n. 1.

The others bore arms of various kinds: sabres and hatchets, swords and spears, axes and slings, catapults and projectile machines,⁷ shields and lances. They also carried for warfare fire and sulphur with naphtha;⁸ the fluid materials were placed in glass containers. They mixed finely [ground] sulphur with it and put this in the throwing arm of the machines with fire beside it, ready to be thrown at the fortress. [132] Those near the ramparts equipped the battle line and provoked battle. They put on garments made from woollen fleeces, pressed and glued together by powerful arms to strengthen the backs; they called the fine hairs "felt." Placed in water, it soaks it up like a sponge. Putting this on themselves as armour, they [the Muslims] render combat more intense since they are not frightened by the heat of the fire.¹ Their horses and riders they cover with armour: frontlets for the horses and shields for the croups, and leg coverings on the four sides; they also extend armour over the chest, and breastplates of haughty aspect, and collars that ring bells when they trample with their feet. They bind crescent-shaped ornaments to the forehead; the backs of the horses they reinforce with iron; each side of the horse's stomach they protect with plates affixed according to the size of the abdomen in the form of a shield, indicating the artistry of their armour.

They themselves wear a cuirass and on their heads a helmet; on their hands they put gauntlets and bind leg coverings on their thighs. They fashion their shoes like slippers, put a shield on their backs, gird themselves with a sword, take a lance in their hand, and keep their bows and arrows ready at their backs. Their ornaments and belts are embroidered with gold and silver. The flapping of their fringed banners makes the mountain echo. They set up flags, the trumpets and lyres sound, the drums beat. The sun shining on the armed array and glinting on the naked swords sends flashing rays around the mountain.²

The warriors attacked bravely, the generals shouted, the

7. *Catapults and projectile machines*: *mek'enayk' ew imbak'ark'*. The former is a very common expression; for *imbak'ark'* cf. I Macc. 6.51, *lithobolia*. Cf. also below, p. 209 at n. 3, "machine for hurling stones."

8. Partington, *Greek Fire*, describes the use of incendiaries of this type by Muslim armies.

1. Cf. the felt (*raʿ*, as here) worn as armour by the warrior from the Caucasus, Moses Khorenats'i, III 9.

2. This sentence echoes common themes of Armenian battle descriptions; cf. Elishē, p. 117, Moses Khorenats'i, III 37, and in general Thomson, "Maccabees."

champions called out; they put the battle line in ready order. This Isaiah described in a phrase: "The Elamites took up their quivers and mounted their steeds."³ The detachments of their line came near to our valiant Ashot, the elite general of the Armenians and greatest of the nobles. In such—and even greater than this—an array of armed preparedness, in horrible fright and great fear they trembled in awe of our heroic prince and victorious warrior [133] Ashot, and of those battalions of nobles in his company with their troops according to families from among the native lords of the principality of Vaspurakan.

But the prince mounted the wall in lordly and ostentatious fashion, striding like a lion cub, quite unconcerned and regarding as naught the marauders who had attacked and surrounded him. For he counted on his fellow warriors to be loyal and united, on the troops and commanders, the battalions of nobles who had entered the fortress of Nkan with him. But they [the Muslims] pressed ever more strongly for battle.

Then the prince took counsel with his relatives, Vahan and Mushet Artsruni and the groups of nobles in his company, whether they might perhaps be able to appease the [enemy] general to abandon the plans he had formed, disengage the warfare, and soothe the turbulence: he could do whatever he wished according to his desire, and they would hand over to him in sealed agreements villages and farms, and would pay royal taxes and give hostages for peace.

While they were considering and planning together in this fashion, all at once those enclosed in the castle broke away from the unity of the covenant.¹ Those of noble family there at counsel decided on an evil plan; feigning friendship as on the previous day and the day before that, they decided to go to the [enemy] general and seek peace. Despatching from their company [one] named Vahram, they had him take a letter to the general, full of the diabolical poison of their plans. Hidden from the eyes of the prince in lamb's clothing and sheep's raiment, on the inside they bore the insolence of ravenous wolves,² "like

3. Isa. 22.6. See above, p. 126 n. 1.

1. *The unity of the covenant*: a key phrase in the *History* of Elishē; see Thomson, *Elishē*, Introduction; pp. 10–14, and passim for "breaking" that unity (*k'akel*, as here). John Catholicos, pp. 119–120, gives only a brief description of Ashot's surrender, saying that his nobles were not in agreement (*hamamit*) with him.

2. Cf. Matt. 7.15, 10.16.

dumb dogs who cannot bark,” as the prophet Isaiah says,³ aiming at the Lord the frenzy and murderous force of their mortal poison, to destroy their lord and ruin their land as intriguing adversaries. They loved turbulence more than peace,⁴ destroying the unity of harmonious concord between brothers, relatives, and friends wherever they found it to exist.

[134] So they went out like the traitor of the Incarnate Saviour,¹ carrying with them the letter written in this fashion: “From the court you have received the superintendence² of this land of Armenia, and in accordance with the command of the imperial king you hold subjected in obedience to your rule the princes and lords, the prefects and governors, the rulers of cities and of borderlands of all Armenia. [You have authority] to punish by bastinado, prison, and various tortures rebels and opponents in a manner worthy of their villainy, and to remove from the country discord and from a peaceful land turmoil, as is right for peace-loving kings and royal princes and doers of God’s will and his faithful, loyal servants.

“So we, the chief nobles of the prince of Vaspurakan: Mushet from the family of the Vahevunik’, Vahram from the family of the Trunik’, another Vahram the bodyguard of our prince, and other groups of nobles and military leaders, having in our hands the oversight of this land, have written to you, Bugha, commander-in-chief of the Muslims and colleague³ of the great king. If only you will graciously allow us and our clan, the native inhabitants of our land, to remain in each one’s dwelling and be at peace, we shall deliver Ashot into your hands—without arms or battles or warfare, and you will have to make no effort at all in this. Now you will not reckon us as rebels against His Imperial Majesty and your honour if you examine the matter properly. But do not be ignorant of this too, that Gurgēn, brother of our prince, the other members of the Artsruni family, and a great number of nobles and their sons with their valiant troops of the principality of Vaspurakan have all gone with him to the region of Atrpatakan. There

3. Isa. 56.10.

4. As Elishē, p. 87.

1. John 13.30. John Catholicos does not describe these overtures between the Armenian nobles and Bugha or refer to a letter.

2. *Superintendence*: *verakats’ut’iwn*, see above, p. 107 n. 4. For the duties of kings and princes see the Introduction to this book.

3. *Colleague*: *bardzakits’*, as p. 129 n. 9 above.

have gathered all the troops and common people of the land, men strong and warlike, who do not flinch from the sword. If this state of affairs continues and the question of battle [135] does not quickly come to a head, perhaps under cover of night he will come upon you and inflict a terrible disaster on you and your royal army. For he is a valiant man and a warrior, and the troops with him are united; they will give themselves to death for the sake of their own homes and lands and families and clans. In their hands are many secure fortresses, Jmar and Sring, and the castle of Chakhuk.¹ And if they divide into three, four, or more groups and turn these strongholds to their advantage, they will cause you great trouble, frustrate all your plans, and inflict on you a shameful and humiliating defeat—as on the vizier who came from court before.² For he was unable to resist them, not even a hundred men against ten Armenian soldiers.”

When the great general had read the secret message of the nobles he cast his response also in the form of a letter. Confirming it with an oath, he said: “Whatever you wish and eagerly desire will certainly be done for you without doubt. Only let Ashot and his relatives not escape my clutches.”

Then the prince realised their treachery and hypocritical deceit and that they were not taking measures to prepare the stronghold in accordance with his orders. So he told them: “Arise, go to the general, see for sure, and we shall understand and know how we may be able to placate him towards peace.”

Then the mask of deceit was stripped from their obscene faces. They replied: “Arise and go yourself and hear in person from him what his pleasure is; and let their charge of your being a rebel against the caliph be lifted from you.”

When the prince realised that their wickedness had been revealed in their eyes, that they were speaking equivocally,³ were secretly grumbling, and were disobeying and neglecting his orders, [136] he responded: “What is this that you are doing in secret, and why are you hatching clandestine plots among yourselves? If I seem at all evil in your eyes and have wronged you and have dealt with you falsely, give now a response before my face and indicate expressly one by one each harmful act I have

1. *Chakhuk*: see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 335, 447.

2. I.e. the defeat of Ali Tsovap'i; see above, pp. 112.

3. *Equivocally*: *ayl end ayloy*; cf. Elishē, pp. 46 (of Yazkert), 93, 130 (of Vasak).

done. Let all the soldiers hear, and do not be ashamed to speak the truth. But if I have cared for you tenderly like a father, or as a hen gathering her chicks under her wings¹ for protection, and you were everywhere kept in watchful security as in a fortified city, living without worries under my care—is this the compensation you pay me! Do you not know what David said? ‘They repaid evil for good, hatred for my love,’² and what he says later as compensation for that: ‘Set a sinner over them; let Satan stand on his right hand,’ and what follows in that psalm.³ Have you not heard what Solomon said? ‘Who returns evil for good, from his house evil will not be lacking.’⁴ Did you not reflect on even a single one of the benefits you have received from me? That according to each one’s age I honoured every one of you with appropriate care and love. That the extensive goods among my treasures I gave up year by year to plunder. With joyful heart I reckoned as mine the rapine of my house by you and for you—the like of which no one has ever heard that any earlier prince did. Of my despoiling I paid no heed, only wishing that you be filled thereby.⁵ On seeing your sons and children, in affectionate compassion I would clasp them to my bosom with great tenderness as my own offspring. So is this now the reward, that with treacherous plotting you are aiming at my imprisonment, at facilitating for my pursuers the capture of myself and my children, [137] to throw [me] with all my family into the dragon’s mouth,¹ while you become the cause of carnage and captivity for the whole land?”

But since they kept with firm resolve unity in the traitorous plot with regard to the tyrant of the Muslims, they responded: “We are not able to oppose the irresistible force and might of the caliph. The fortresses are not as prepared for defence as we thought, nor are the stores in them sufficient even for the garrisons of some common people who will guard the forts, omitting mention of any one else. Because of all this you must go, so that the suspicion of your rebelliousness is removed and that the wretches who have trustingly come in vain flight may be sent

1. Luke 13.34.

2. Ps. 108.5.

3. Ps. 108.6.

4. Prov. 17.13.

5. For bounty as a princely duty see the Introduction to this book.

1. *Dragon: vishap*, as Elishē, p. 89, of Mihrnerseh.

back each to his own place, and that the country may see an end to the ravages of the enemy who have come to ruin and destroy. If you go of your own will, perhaps it will be of advantage for many including yourself. But by going unwillingly, if the oppressor has trouble in restraining [you], he may multiply the harm for you too, and so no one will be able to gain any advantage."

On hearing this he [Ashot] realised their confirmed treachery. Raising his eyes to God he prayed; he ate a little bread and wine, gave thanks, and turned sorrowfully to his family. Then he left the castle and went to present himself before the brutal foe, greeting him according to their custom. He asked: "Are you Ashot?" The latter said: "Yes, I am." When he [Bugha] had heard the same response two and then three times, he heaped many words of censure on him. On hearing observant and wise replies from him, he ordered him to sit down.

Then Smbat Bagratuni, whom we mentioned above,² the prince of Mokka', since he had been greatly loved by the general and had received the greatest gifts and honours, was unable to endure what had happened. In deep distress, he groaned and sighed in his soul. Going outside the camp, he wept copious tears over the fall [138] of Prince Ashot and the other nobles. But he was quite unable to help them because of the cruel command of the impious caliph. He burned and seethed secretly in his heart at the ruin of the country and the merciless torments of those taken captive by the enemy. Then he boldly entered the tyrant's hall, and fearlessly standing before the general without flinching, he said: "Since I have found favour with you, and you have honoured my person and have shown me greater respect and consideration than all the [other] Armenian princes and royal magnates—and they have all heard of your treatment of me—let not your regard for me be vain and hollow, so that those who greatly hate us and are our enemies may see and be ashamed, while our friends and those who love us may greatly rejoice."

Then the general promised with an oath to give him whatever he might request, as far as to appoint him his colleague¹ and equal in honour in his domain.

2. In the title to this chapter; see above, p. 127. Thomas has not explained how Smbat, prince of Mokka' and *sparapet*, came to be in Bugha's camp; though clearly he was one of the Armenian princes who had decided not to resist Bugha.

1. *Colleague: bardzakits'*, as above, p. 129 n. 9.

But he [Smbat] paid no heed to earthly greatness, for it is transitory; rather he sought to be the cause of gifts that are eternal and undying, that cannot wither, waste away, or be seized by thieves.² "Give me," he said, "as many of those captives as your desire may permit." Immediately and with unhesitant rapidity he ordered that no one could prevent Smbat [from taking] whomever he pleased. And he gave him messengers, lightly armed men, axemen, and men with maces, so that he might take the captives of Vaspurakan from the camp as he wished. So he removed them and brought them each to his native region, himself accompanying them, like Cyrus king of the Persians brought the people returning from captivity in Babylon to their own land.³ Thus the saying of the prophet Isaiah was fulfilled in Smbat: "He shall send to them a man who will save them and by judgment will deliver them."⁴ And again: "He will bring back the captivity of his people, [139] not by bribes and not by offerings, says the Lord."¹ So he [Bugha] dismissed him to his own home in great joy and cheerful rejoicing, making an appointment for him to return to him in his winter quarters at the city of Dvin.²

CHAPTER 3

The captivity and banishment from our country of the prince and the nobles and their families

In those days, while the prince and the nobles with their families were in bonds, he [Bugha] formed a detachment of soldiers and elite cavalry, fully armed and equipped, and sent away to Samarra the prince Ashot and his son Grigor, Vahan Artsruni and his son Gagik who was also called Apumruan, Mushet the brother of Vahan and the princess Hranush, and others of the nobility, bound and set on camels under tent-like canopies. He sent them to Persia, travelling via Atrpatakan, fearful lest perhaps Gurgēn or some other member of the Arts-

2. Cf. Matt. 6.19–20.

3. See above, p. 40.

4. Isa. 19.20.

1. Isa. 45.13.

2. Bugha spent the winter of 852/3 in Dvin; see below, p. 152.

runi family and their nobles, the mighty horsemen of Vaspurakan, "might catch up with them, snatch them away from the troops, and deliver him from my hands."³

When the prince reached the court, he [the caliph] had his feet bound with double chains and had him put in prison. He ordered armed soldiers to guard him until he might sit in tribunal and bring them to a judicial interrogation⁴ and examination of the [charges] concerning his conduct which had been heaped up against the prince.

His vizier⁵ had written and informed the monarch of whatever he had done up to that time.

[140] CHAPTER 4

For what cause some of them attained holy martyrdom

Some heroes¹ among the prisoners at that time had emerged from prison, were still girt with their swords, and had their shields on their backs. Raising their eyes, they saw their wives and children had been brought² among the lay captives. Unable to endure such oppressive affliction, they valiantly gained the pass of the valley and drawing their swords, rushed on the captors, whom the Lord delivered into their hands. Attacking them with the sword, many they killed and even more they wounded, while all the captives and their families they rescued from them and brought through the pass of the valley to the secure regions of the mountain. But the Muslim troops

3. John Catholicos, p. 120, merely says that Bugha sent Ashot "with his relatives, women and children" to the caliph (*amirapet*). This Gurgēn is Ashot's brother; see further, pp. 143 ff.

4. *Judicial interrogation: datastan harts'ap'ordzi*. For *harts'ap'ordz* see Elishē, pp. 132, 182, and a parallel in *Vkayk'*, p. 210. Note here the variation between "him" and "them" depending on whether Thomas is referring to Ashot alone or his companions as well.

5. *Vizier: hazarapet*, as on p. 108 above. But Thomas has hitherto called Bugha "general" or "commander-in-chief" (*hramanatar*, p. 126).

1. *Heroes: nahatak*, a term with associations of martyrdom, common in Elishē. See above, p. 130 n. 5.

2. *Had been brought*. The text reads again "they saw" (*sic!*). On the basis of the separate *Martyrdom of Gēorg Akēats'i and Khosrov*, in the manuscript Jerusalem I 3 (dated to A.D. 1418), Tsovakan (N. Połarean) has made some corrections to the text of this paragraph which have been incorporated into the translation. See also below, p. 170 n. 2, the martyrdom of Atom and his companions.

gathered to attack them; surrounding and capturing them, they brought them to the general and told him what deeds of valour they had accomplished. When they led them before him, he urged them to abandon the worship of Christ, [saying] they were worthy to receive honour and gifts from him rather than to be put to death with cruel torments. But reaching a noble decision, they preferred a valiant death to life with remorse.³ He spoke to them with cajoling words, but they would not listen to him. He had gifts brought, but even so they would not agree. He spoke with them in a severe fashion, but of that too they were not afraid. He tormented them with the bastinado, but they were even more confirmed in their faith, in the hope of blessings and in the love of Christ. Then he commanded their heads to be cut off by the sword, and they greatly rejoiced that they had become worthy to die for the name of the Lord.⁴ So they received the sentence of martyrdom and died as martyrs for the glory of the Holy Trinity. Their names are: of the first, Gēorg from the Akets'i family; and of the other, Khosrov from the Gabelean family.⁵

[141] Now a thrice-blessed young man, himself a Muslim and a Persian by race¹ who pursued the love of Christ's faith, came and attached himself to the *patrik*² Andzevats'i, asking to receive the Lord's seal³ in order to become perfect in working the Lord's commandments. But he [the *patrik*] had deferred and hindered his eager desire for piety. [The Muslim] had entered the fortress with the prisoners; and at the time when it was taken, they had urged the captives to abandon Christ and not be put to death. Many had been swayed and turned to Satan, while some suffered the rigor of death. But he rushed to the right-hand side of the martyrs, to offer himself to the sword as a living sacrifice⁴ to the Son of God.

3. Cf. John Catholicos, pp. 121–123, for Bugha's attempts to convert Armenian prisoners, who chose martyrdom. (John does not mention Gēorg or Khosrov.) For the theme of preferring death to life with remorse see also below, pp. 159, 204, 248; it is common in Elishē.

4. On these general procedures and a final martyrdom by the sword see also above, pp. 129–130.

5. Gēorg and Khosrov are not mentioned by other Armenian historians, but they are remembered in the *Synaxarion* on the fourteenth day of the month Ahekan.

1. *Muslim: tachik*. Since he was a Persian (*parsik*), *tachik* here clearly has a religious, not an ethnic sense. See above, p. 3 n. 6.

2. *The patrik*: i.e. Vahram. For the title see above, p. 109 n.4.

3. *Seal*: i.e. baptism; see Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.v. *sphragis*.

4. Cf. Rom. 12.1.

When Vahram saw him about to be slaughtered as the executioner was holding the sword above him, he cried out loudly: "Oh Muslim,⁵ why are you dying in vain and to no purpose?" But he shouted: "I am a Christian." But [Vahram] persisted and said: "Do not die, you are a Muslim." But he even more readily cried out, weeping tears: "I am a Christian, and I die for Christ. I am baptised in [the name of] the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, not by water but by my own blood.⁶ Did you not see me coming and entering the holy church with all the believers, while you tried to turn me away from faith in Christ? But I heard, when they were reading the gospel, that Christ said: 'Who will confess me before men, him shall I too acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven.'⁷ So go away, man, I am dying for Christ." And he ran through the camp, shouting, crying out, and waving his hands, saying: "I am a Christian, I am a Christian,"⁸ until the executioners, enraged, [142] fell on him pell-mell in the great square. Striking the blessed one with the sword, they cut off his head and went to inform the general. Then behold a bright light descended from heaven and shone over his holy body, surrounding the place wherever his blood had spattered.¹ And the whole host of the army saw it.

To this, it seemed to me, refers the saying of the prophet: "Let the foreigner who will come to rely on the Lord not say that the Lord separates me from his people."² A little later he says: "As for the foreigners who will come and rely on the Lord, to love his name and be servants and handmaidens to him, and all those who will keep my sabbaths and not profane them, and who will keep my commandments and remain in my covenant—I shall lead them to my holy hill and shall make them rejoice in the house of my prayers. Their holocausts and their offerings

5. *Muslim*: Here and two lines below, *molimanak*, which is not attested elsewhere but would mean "mad (*moli*)—?" There is a variant *molimanuk*, "mad youth," and Patkanean suggests a correction *mslmanak* from "Muslim." But its use on pp. 158 and 240 precludes the idea of youth.

6. For a martyr's baptism by blood see Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.v. *haima*, or *baptisma*; cf. also p. 170 below.

7. Matt. 10.32.

8. *I am a Christian*: as Blandina and Sanctus; see Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, V 1.

1. For the theme of a light shining over a martyr's body see Elishē, p. 180, and especially Łazar, p. 102.

2. Isa. 56.3. But for "foreigner" Thomas has changed the *awtarazgi* of the biblical text to *aylazgi*, a term he often uses for "Muslim"; see above, p. 110 n. 3.

will be acceptable on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all the heathen, said the Lord omnipotent.”³ Furthermore, the Saviour said likewise: “They are my sheep who are not from this fold; and them too must I lead hither. And they will hear my voice and become one flock and one shepherd. And I shall give them eternal life.”⁴

So the holy martyr was killed gloriously for the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. His name is written in the book of life.⁵ But to us he is known for his saying: “I am a Christian” according to the Scripture: “A new name shall be given to my servant, who will be blessed on earth.”⁶ This was written as a memorial for the saint.

After this Bugha despatched soldiers of all nations, from among all magnates and all governors, Persians, Elamites, Babylonians, and Arabs, who had come with him to wage war at the command of the caliph and the great general, more than fifteen thousand men. He sent them in pursuit of Gurgēn, that wherever he might be they were to bring him to him, be it by deceitful trickery and cunning fraud and falsity, or by war [143] and strength of arms, with all vigilance and by royal power—however they might be able they were to bring him to him.

But he [Gurgēn] crossed to the province of Orsirank¹ accompanied by a host of nobles and magnates from the Artsruni principalities and all their troops. They encamped on the mountain above the village of T’uay, in its valley called Lake of Blood. For there is a great lake there near the place which was the site of the battlefield where our valiant princes of Vaspurakan were martyred.² There gathered all the multitude of the numerous crowd of refugees from the provinces of Aġbag, Zarehvan, and Akē, and from the mountainous regions of Alz and Arnoy-otn,

3. Isa. 56.6–7. Here the biblical text has *aylazgi* for “foreigner.” “Heathen,” *her’anos*, is common in Elishē for the Zoroastrian Persians.

4. John 10.16.

5. Cf. Elishē, p. 120, where the martyrs whose names are inscribed in the “book of life” (Phil. 4.3) are contrasted with the “heathen.”

6. Isa. 65.15.

1. For the province of Orsirank’ (in Korchayk’) see Canard/Laurent, p. 147 n. 274, Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 335.

2. *Battlefield: asparēs chakatamart*. For *asparēs* as the “arena” of martyrdom see above, p. 130 n. 3. John Catholicos, p. 123, notes the martyrdom of Atom from the village of Orsirank’ and his companions at this stage in Bugha’s campaign; but Thomas introduces it somewhat later, pp. 168–171. For T’uay see Hakobyan, *Urvagtser*, p. 244.

one side of the mountain of Joł and the other.³ They were an immense multitude swarming around the mountain like locusts or the numberless sand of the sea. As in a great and impregnable fortress they had taken refuge in the valiant general Gurgēn and the Armenian troops with him. He had sent his mother, the princess of Vaspurakan, to the general Bugha so that henceforth he and his land might have peace:⁴ he would deliver into his hands the principality of Vaspurakan in exchange for his brother, while he and all his would render submission to the caliph, paying the traditional amount of royal tribute.⁵

When the princess had entered the camp and come before the general, she spoke with him politely in appropriate terms about the matter on which they had come. The general responded to her peaceably, saying: "Remain here until I dismiss you and fulfill the desire of your requests for which you have come." He ordered her to be left at liberty and arranged for her a daily allowance⁶ worthy of the great lady Hrip'simē.

The troops who had pursued Gurgēn reached the borders of the land where Gurgēn and his army were, and camped on the bank of the river called Zav.⁷ The generals of those troops were the following: Muk'adam, Yusp' from the city of Tiflis, Yusp' son [144] of Raham, and Abuheshm, lord of El;¹ with them was the army of Hamdoy,² emir of Persia. They sent messengers to Gurgēn [asking him] to come to them without hesitation or fear and without any suspicion; that they should merely meet each other in peaceable friendliness; he would be honoured by them with gifts at the general's orders, and he would rule in his brother's stead over his entire territory. But he sent as messenger to them a certain Abdlay who was known to the general, to see if they were making trustworthy proposals through the messengers or whether they were trying to destroy him by deceitful trickery. However, they did not reveal their wicked plot and sent him back to say that he [Gurgēn] should come to them

3. For Zarehavan, Akē, and Aīnoy-otn see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 427–428, 344, 342. Aldz is in Aldznik'; see Eremyan, *Hayastan*, p. 33. Joł is not attested elsewhere.

4. Cf. above, p. 117, for another mission of the princess (*bambishn*) Hrips'imē.

5. *Tribute, tax, due: hark, has, sak*; cf. Elishē, p. 23 at n. 9.

6. *Allowance: rochik*; cf. Elishē, p. 202, of the stipends allotted the wives of the prisoners.

7. I.e. the Zab; see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 427.

1. *El*: spelled Ayli on p. 260. See Markwart, "Parskahayk'," pp. 252–255.

2. *Hamdoy*: Hamdūyah; see Canard/Laurent, pp. 639–640.

without any hesitation. Two, three, and even more times they confirmed the same thing with oaths, that he should come to them fearlessly and boldly. They themselves sent all their troops off and came up to the Armenian force saying: "Behold, we have sent away from us our troops and there are but few with us. Do you likewise come with only a few men, more or less, and let us see each other." Then he entrusted his forces to Musheł [son of] Apupelch, brother of Gurgēn,³ and went himself to follow the messengers who had brought the invitation. When the greatest nobles restrained him he would heed no one, so they all burst into tears and wept. Before he reached the [enemy] generals but was still at a distance of about two miles from them, they had decided that if he were to follow the messengers "we shall seize him, his troops will be discouraged, and we shall easily defeat them."

When it was about the third hour of the day, on a Sunday, behold, detachments of cavalry advanced in the direction of the ruin called Smbat's castle,⁴ for it had been destroyed in previous times by the Persian army. The flags of each group glittered in the sun; the mountain was filled with a multitude of soldiers; and the army of the fugitives saw the gleaming of armour, the sparkle of swords, and here and there men fleeing in terror [145] like sheep from wolves. The troops were informed of the action, and they obeyed, for the voices of the army [commanders] were very loud. The earth resounded as the whole host raised a shout, as if the mountain would collapse from its foundations. There was an awesome thundering, shocks, and echoes. From the bright shining of the arms and glittering of the swords, from the glinting of the fully armed horses, the mountain seemed to be burning with fire. Or it was as if some thunderbolt, loosed from the clouds, was casting down flames as at the time of hail and rain. Such was the impression from the neighing of the horses and their rapid attack.¹

The Armenian army still remained unconcerned. The service of the day came to an end, the priests read the holy gospel in every part of the camp, and when they had finished their prayers

3. This Gurgēn is not Ashot's brother, but the son of Apupelch. Gurgēn Apupelch was mentioned above, p. 112; his later career is described in detail by Thomas, pp. 192 ff.

4. *Smbat's castle: Smbatay berd*; see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 467.

1. This echoes common Armenian battle imagery; see above, p. 132 n. 2.

and said blessings, they gave glory to God and said "Amen."² Then they sat down to eat bread. Only Lord Apumkdēm³ and his entourage kept watch by night and observed the intention of the [enemy] army. He was still on horseback when they rushed on the camp. He commanded [everyone] to arm and equip themselves with swords and to prepare the armour of their elite horses. He himself anxiously made haste to marshal the [Armenian] forces, to form line, and prepare for battle. His groom brought him his best horse; mounting, he rushed off after Gurgēn. On coming near he uncovered his sword, helmet, and cuirass which he had put on, and shouted at him so that perhaps at the sound of his voice, the shining of his armour, the gleaming of his sword, the neighing of his valiant steed, and his rapid gallop, he might be warned, turn at the noise, and be saved from the destructive course on which he was bent that would cast him into the teeth of those bloodthirsty beasts. It happened that he [Gurgēn] raised his eyes, saw the rider bearing down on him, and realised that it was a messenger of grievous news; "for he has a naked sword in his hand [146] and pursues us all by himself." He turned his horse's bridle towards him [Apumkdēm], and after encountering each other they returned to their camp. The troops, taking courage, ran each to his arms; mounting their elite horses, they came forward and stood gathered in one spot, forming a solid compact mass, a single man as it were, or a high rock. They stood firm and solid, having the impenetrable strength of iron. Like a wall of adamant,¹ so they set themselves as protection for the vast number of fugitives, ready to die like a brave shepherd for his sheep.² Before they had yet reached the Armenian force, the general Gurgēn made haste to send messengers to Apuheshm and the commanders with him to beg for peace until a response from the general-in-chief should reach him. But they did not heed his request. Although he promised to give them treasures, villages, and farms, sealed in writing and confirmed by witnesses, yet despite this they did not command their army not to go out to battle.

When the Armenian commander realised that he was unable

2. Cf. the preparations before battle, p. 147 below.

3. *Apumkdēm*: first mentioned above, p. 109; his Christian name was Sahak.

1. *Adamant*: cf. Amos 7.7-8. The image is popular; see also below, pp. 160, 183, or Moses Khorenats'i, III 37.

2. As John 10.15.

by any means to appease them but that they had given a general order to go out to battle, then Gurgēn ordered his own force to prepare, to form ranks and a line against the Muslims. He himself raised his hands to heaven, and praying with copious tears repeated the Thirty-fourth and Sixty-second Psalms. At that moment the Muslims attacked and joined battle, [their] captains rushing after the army. The Armenian force marched out to oppose them like an indestructible rock, in order of their various families:

From the house of the Artsrunik': Gurgēn and Vasak and Pelch and Mushel' and Sahak and Apumkdēm and Ashot. Gnumik': Vahan and Shapuh and Apusēt' and the *patrik* and Apuselm and Vardan.

Gazrikk': Apuselm and Vasak and Vahan.

Amatunik': [147] Mushel' and Asit' and Sahak.

Varazhnunik': Mleah and Rstom and Varazshapuh.

Ēntrunik': Gēorg and Yisē and Sahkawn.

Akēats'ik': Vasak.

Vahevunik': K'abarak and Khrakhat.

Andzevats'ik': the *patrik* and Gēorg, Davit' and Hasan and the general Davit'.

These set out and arranged the battle line. The commander Gurgēn himself stood on the left wing of the line in support of the force of infantry; the right wing he had entrusted to Apdlmkdēm.¹ The others took their places in order along the line and addressed petitions to the Lord in prayer. The deacons offered benedictions, while the priests raised up the holy gospel and their banner—the holy cross. The ministers completed the Lord's service and the choir sang the [song] of victory over Pharaoh: "The Lord crushes battles; the Lord is his name."² Others sang the benediction of the dew born [in] the furnace to summon the angel of God to their aid.³ As for the mass of the common people, some set their hands to battle with stones.

With a resolute assault they joined battle. They crashed into the Muslims' force, broke their ranks, and turned them. Roaring

1. *Apdlmkdēm*: more usually spelled Apumkdēm; cf. p. 145 n. 3.

2. Ex. 15.3. Cf. the preparations before the battle of Avarayr as described by Elishē, p. 114, or Łazar, p. 70.

3. A reference to Dan. 3.50 ff. (in the Armenian and Greek, but not in the English Bible).

like dragons, they struck like lions and smote like wild boars;⁴ they delivered [the enemy] to massacre and defeat, each striking his opponent to the ground and rushing after another. From the tremendous shock of mingled lances, from the shining of the armour and glinting of the swords and whistling of the bow-strings⁵ it seemed as if fire was shooting out like lightning from clouds, and the mountain appeared to be aflame. The battle continued until the tenth hour of the day. They inflicted terrible losses on the Muslims; the number of the killed was eighteen hundred, not including the many [148] wounded, those disarmed, and the prisoners. Even the priests among the multitude of fugitives took part in the battle, for it was a spiritual battle and not a physical one; they were fighting for the holy churches and the people of God.¹ They struck the [enemy] troops, turned them, and put them to flight. Some [of the Armenians] pursued the fugitives until the night had become quite dark. They expelled them from Armenian territory, some in the direction of El and others in the direction of Atrpatakan and Persia. A certain Ashkhē who had come with the royal army from Gard in Persia² did not join in the battle with them to be captured but remained aside with about two thousand men. When the army was defeated, they spurred their horses and were the first to flee. Then they [the Armenians] returned to plunder the dead.

But not only the valiant Armenian heroes fought in that great battle; there were also incorporeal, heavenly hosts fighting with the Armenian army. For when battle was joined and the lines faced each other, suddenly a man in the likeness of light came and stood in the ranks. He wore around himself a garment of blazing light, shining like the morning star. In his right hand he had a sword and in his left a censer full of incense. He was mounted on a white horse and fanned the smoke towards the enemy. There was a sweet smell as he wafted the smoke around their faces. As the smoke grew thicker the Armenians took strength, and when it lessened they had a little respite from the enemy.³

4. *Lions, boars*: as Elishē, p. 77, of the Armenians' attack.

5. Cf. the description of Avarayr, Elishē, p. 117.

1. Cf. Elishē, pp. 100 ff., for the priests' participation, and compare Esayi's exhortation, p. 177 below.

2. Vardanyan, n. 374, equates Gard with Gardiz near Gazna. Ashkhē does not seem to be attested elsewhere, unless he is the same as Ashkhēt', p. 174.

3. *Vkayk'*, p. 75, describes an angel on a white horse who gave support in battle. Cf. p. 161 at n. 1 below. For such apparitions see also II Macc. ch. 3, 5, 10, 11; and Zech. 1.8.

CHAPTER 5

Second [part] of the same; Gurgēn heeds the summons of Bugha, and what occurred; and the letter supposedly from the caliph himself

Then the generals became undecided in their plans because of the losses inflicted on their army by the Armenian troops. They were unable to write and inform the commander-in-chief, yet they could not hide it and keep it concealed.⁴ [149] They could not appease their commander by silence and excuses, yet they would not agree to indicate the number of the killed clearly and openly: that a mere nine hundred men had mightily vanquished fifteen thousand,¹ since they had discovered for certain that each [Armenian] had struck down two of theirs, let alone the wounded and the disarmed and the prisoners. Unwillingly they had to set forth the course of events in all its details. In their terrified awe of the commander they made reference to the event of the vision, when the angel of God had appeared from heaven. Thereby they somewhat calmed the mountainous waves and quieted the tumultuous billows, and appeased the tyrant's fury.² A command was sent throughout the whole country that each man was to return to his own land and [re-] possess his inheritance, to dwell in peace and be independent, and that no one was to be expelled from his own dwelling to a foreign land to live in exile. This command they put out to support their own deceitful trickery, whereby they hunted down and misled [the Armenians].³

Then once more he despatched Hamdoy the Persian emir and Hēt'm of the royal army, a Turk by race,⁴ accompanied by ten thousand cavalry fully armed and in a greater state of readiness than the former [army], with a letter written and sealed but full of deceit and treacherous falsity in accordance with the cunning of the sons of Ismael. Coming to the place where the Armenian army was encamped, they had the letter brought, full of the

4. Cf. the indecision of Mushkan after Avarayr, Elishē, p. 120.

1. Of the 15,000 total, 1,800 had been killed; see p. 147 above.

2. The imagery recalls Elishē, p. 102, describing Yazkert.

3. Cf. Elishē, p. 131, describing Persian policy in Armenia after the battle of Avarayr.

4. Hēt'm is not mentioned elsewhere; for Hamdoy see above, p. 144.

poison of devilish intent, like quivers full of arrows secretly poisoned to let fly from one's bosom at the target.⁵

When he had read the letter and the oaths made on the privy parts of their women and their erring legislator Muhammad agreeing to surrender to him the authority of his native principality,⁶ [Gurgēn] followed the desire of ambitious glory—of which he was frustrated.

As he approached the camp the various battalions of the army deployed before him. [150] When he entered the general's presence, the latter paid no heed to the damage and losses of troops, nor did he charge him with being a rebel. Rather he had the standards and flags unfurled, placed a princely crown on his head and royal garments on his person, girded him with a sword, and set him on a finely adorned mule. With an escort in front and behind in uniform and fully armed, to the sound of trumpets and the beating of drums and other musical instruments echoing around them, with a host of armed soldiers on every side, sergeants and axe bearers to push aside the pressing throng, a herald cried out: "The principality of the land of Vaspurakan has been placed in the hands of Gurgēn, to rule over them in the place of his brother Ashot."¹

After three days had passed they had a letter taken to Gurgēn; it had been written by Bugha and was full of gall. It was sealed with the caliph's ring as if it had come from the caliph personally and from court. This is the text of the letter which they forged and gave him: "To Bugha, commander-in-chief of the whole empire of the Muslims, [from] Jap'r ruler of sea and land, the equal of our legislator Muhammad and faithful mediator between God and man, king over all the nations of the southern realm, in whose hands are entrusted death and life."² I

5. *Quivers, arrows, poison*: as Elishē, pp. 6–7, of Yazkert. Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 17, for Yazkert's deceit and cunning in order to "hunt down" (*orsal*—as at the end of the previous paragraph) the Armenians.

6. Patkanean supposed that a word was missing here. But "Muhammad" had been misplaced by a line; once "Muhammad" is replaced beside "legislator" the sense seems satisfactory.

1. See p. 198 for the description of the investiture of Gurgēn Apupelch; p. 202 for that of Grigor, son of Ashot; p. 285 (in the Anonymous) for that of King Gagik. For the musical procession cf. also p. 184 below.

2. For death and life see above, p. 113 n. 5. Jap'r is Mutawakkil, see p. 105. But his titles are somewhat fanciful. Perhaps "and" should be omitted after "Muhammad"! "Southern realm" (*harawayin ar'orakalut'iwn*) is not a usual Armenian expression. Armenia itself is often described as the "northern region," references in Thomson, *Elishē*, p. 72, n. 7.

have sent you to attack all living things in the land of Armenia. And I have given into your control my army with my outstanding generals from all the races whose kingdoms have been subjected to me, so that you might rapidly deliver to us Ashot and his brothers. But now that you have reached Armenia, you have gone over to my enemies' side and joined those rebels, since you have delayed in [carrying out] my orders. So when this letter arrives, send quickly to us in bonds Gurgēn and his family and those nobles of Vaspurakan. [151] Otherwise, I shall see about you."¹

When they had given [Gurgēn] this letter which supposedly came from the caliph personally, [Bugha] said: "Read this; do not put any blame on me or think that I have come to you treacherously to treat you faithlessly and be false to our oaths. See for yourself and know that I have no guilt in this matter or authority to release you."

Then they put his feet into iron fetters, and likewise Lord Grigor Artsruni who rendered a fine confession in Christ before the caliph.² Setting them on camels, they marched them to Samarra and shut them in the royal prison where Prince Ashot and other nobles from the Artsruni house [already] were.³

At the same time, when the princess saw that her sons had been carried off into captivity, she herself followed them, tearing her hair, rending her garments, moaning, and sighing, as the prophet Amos said: "Shave and cut [your hair] over your delicate children; extend your rending like that of the eagle. For they have been taken from you to captivity."⁴

Then all the Armenian nobles began to scatter and separate. Each went to occupy his fortified place, and they made haste to enter the castles and fortresses in Vaspurakan. Their troops scattered and dispersed over the whole face of the land. This occurred so that the saying might be fulfilled: "Raise a sword against the shepherd and against his companion. I shall strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered."⁵ And again the aforementioned [prophet] says what the Lord said by the mouth of the prophet.⁶

1. A literal translation!

2. For Grigor's confession see below, p. 159.

3. See above, p. 139.

4. Mic. (not Amos) 1.16.

5. Zech. 13.7.

6. Mark 14.27.

Then the general realised that he had succeeded in everything as he had wished and in accordance with the impious caliph's order: the evil plan that they had formulated against the principality of Vaspurakan had been carried to conclusion; he had removed all the powerful men; henceforth there remained no one in a position to resist him. From then on all the races of Muslims⁷ began with fearless audacity to scatter and [152] spread over the face of our land; they had followed him [Bugha] with their families, and had set to dividing the land among themselves. They cast lots, drew boundary lines,¹ and dwelt unafraid in the castles of the land. For the man of whom they had been somewhat nervous—on that score they had been rendered even more secure. So there was great suffering throughout the entire land such as there had not been from the beginning of the world nor will ever again occur. Villages, farms, and towns were turned into ruins and stripped of their charm and grace; the different plants and trees in their varieties on the face of the earth withered. As the prophet Joel lamented over the misery which had befallen, saying: "The land was first like a delightful garden, but later [became] a plain of destruction. And as fire runs through reeds, so it happened to us. Just like the locust, the caterpillar, and the grub with the grasshopper" set upon the fruit-bearing trees and the sensitive pasture, in such fashion they destroyed and consumed the resources of the human race and their property, just as this is described in the book of the prophet Joel's vision.²

Having then given the order to sell the host of captives among various nations to whomever they pleased, he himself went to the city of Dvin which he had prepared as his winter quarters until the springtime.³ He kept with him many prisoners, having ruined our land both on coming and going.

7. *Muslims: Tachiks*, as usual. But here Thomas has especially in mind Arab settlement, for which see Ter-Ghevondyan, p. 44, Canard/Laurent, p. 150.

1. *Drew boundary lines: lars dzgein i veray sahmanats'*, lit., "drew lines over boundaries." *Lar* is an architect's line, often used in descriptions of the laying out of a building, e.g. Agathangelos, §758, or the Anonymous below, pp. 293, 294. (On p. 30 above it refers to a measured distance.) Here it is unclear whether Thomas means that the new settlers disregarded the old boundary lines, or simply that they laid out lines over what were to be boundaries.

2. Joel 2.3, 5, 25.

3. This was the winter of 852/3. Thomas returns to Bugha the following spring on p. 167, and dates the year on p. 172.

CHAPTER 6

*Concerning the evil undertaking of the Artsruni nobles;
and the confession in Christ of Lord Grigor Artsruni
and Lord Yovhannēs, bishop of Artsrunik',
and the priest Grigor; and their history*⁴

Our annals⁵ at this point of the narrative are grievous, sad, and full of bitterness, concerning the undertaking of our great [153] princes and nobles. My story is full of tears, and I am incapable of telling the details of their ruinous error in being false to the orthodox and pure apostolic confession of faith of the Catholic church in the Father and Son and Holy Spirit. I am reluctant to put in writing the perdition of our lords and the misfortunes they brought on their souls rather than their bodies. Nonetheless, though unwilling yet I am forced to set it out in order, briefly and in short. I shall summarize in a few words the history of these events, for it is impossible to pass over in silence or to hide the immense and terrible misfortunes which befell us. So I shall abbreviate what was done openly, so that you will believe without doubt the various details of the events accomplished in their time and later, [and trust me] as a truthful and honest historian.¹

It happened one day of leisure, while the prince² and his entourage with their families and others not related were still in prison, that suddenly the trumpets sounded with a strident blast to inform the city that the king³ had taken his seat in the tribunal. Heralds proclaimed that all the magnates of the city and the nobles and princes from the royal line were to gather there in order to subject the prisoners to an investigative enquiry.⁴ All the magnates with a mass of common people rushed [to the scene], not only to obey the king's command at the call of the trumpet and the royal heralds, but anxious to see who and what sort of people these were, the fame of whose valour had reached

4. The martyrdom of these Artsruni nobles is not described by John Catholicos.

5. *Annals: yishatakarak'*, lit., "memorials," as p. 142, "memorial for the saint." Cf. Etishē, pp. 104, 140, and Thomas below, p. 208 at n. 6.

1. For Thomas's views on the writing of history see the Introduction to this book.

2. I.e. Ashot Bagratuni.

3. *King: t'agawor*. Since the following passage is deliberately reminiscent of older martyrdoms, I have kept the literal "king" rather than rendering as "caliph."

4. *Investigative enquiry: handēs harts'ap'ordzi k'nnu't'ean*; see above, p. 139 n. 4.

the ends of the world. Despite all his powerful might the king had even been forced to assemble an army from among all the nations in his entire empire, the kings and royal princes subjected to his authority; [154] he had exerted himself with great effort and over a long time, incessantly by day and night; he had been weighed down by great uncertainty and suspense; sleep at night had not seemed sweet to him, and the delights of the daytime he had regarded as naught. He had found scarcely any way to draw them [the Armenians] into a deceitful trap through the astute dissembling and treachery of the generals of his empire. So everyone ran¹ to see them and to discover what the outcome of the tribunal would be.

The king came out, sat in the tribunal on a high dais in the midst of the vast multitude of common people, and ordered the prisoners to be brought so he could interrogate them and hear their response. He sat with eyebrows frowning; he was puffed up and full of insolence, acting in an arrogant and haughty fashion. He boiled up and vomited out the bitterness of the fetid bile of his poisonous and evil disposition. Excited to an uncontrollable passion and hot-blooded, tempestuous furor, he began to pour out his mortal venom on the captives like the venom of a snake, indiscriminately scattering and spreading it out to the ruin and destruction of many.²

When they were standing before the king, he questioned them disdainfully, in jeering terms full of presumption. With deceitful fraud he disguised his meaning, saying: "Who are you, and from what country, and what are your names? Have you perchance really rebelled against me?"

They responded saying: "Why, Oh pious king, do you speak with us as if we were obstinate³ subordinates, insignificant, wild, and ferocious? Before subjecting us to punishment with cruel tortures, by striking us with your words as if with stones you have plunged our souls into consternation. You know who we are, whence [we come], and from whom [we are descended]. What our names are [155] is perfectly clear to you. We are not rebels against your imperial rule. But our troubles have been

1. *Ran*: *ënt'anayin yachiwîr*. Brosset notes that *yachiwîr* is not an Armenian word; Vardanyan renders "ran towards the tribunal."

2. This paragraph is reminiscent of the descriptions of Yazkert in Elishê, e.g. pp. 6-7, and especially, p. 47.

3. *Obstinate*: *stambak*, a charge often made against Christians in such situations; see Elishê, pp. 84, 184, and *Vkayk'*.

multiplied. Since we have sinned before the Lord our God and have disregarded the rules of his commandments, God has delivered us into your hands. So behold we have come and stand before you, Imperial Majesty, ruler over life and death;¹ as the Lord may command, let it be.”

The king began to speak, saying: “From long since, from our royal ancestors down to our present time, we have held many races and kings in subjection to our empire, but we have not paid such care and consideration to any of them as much as we have to you and your country.² Yet you have been perpetually meditating resistance to me and refusing to accept the governors and overseers of our land, the royal administrators³ whom we sent you. You would gather troops, form cavalry, provoke battles and wars, draw up battle lines, and destroy our armies with the sword. Our kinsmen⁴ you used to beset with grave troubles, you ruined the land and held back the taxes due. But behold, we paid no attention to all that, in order that the affection and mercy which we claim to have for you might be manifest. However, since we now see you, personable and handsome, with noble countenance, decorous and elegant, [we realise that] you are true sons of kings of that country, worthy of compassion. You are men of valour, and from your appearance it is obvious that there is much strength in you. For you have done so much harm to me, yet here you stand in the tribunal before me with cheerful and joyful faces, like innocent and benevolent men, full of our kindness, with unrepenting audacity. But I, sparing you, will not execute you as your wicked deeds and [156] the damage you have caused me deserve. Without suffering tortures and cruel torments, submit to us and our legislator Mahumat⁵; receive [his] faith and divinely bestowed religion,¹ which is far removed from falsehood and full of whatever is opposed to falsehood. Abandon your vain and

1. *Ruler over life and death*. See p. 113 n. 5. for this title applied to the caliph; on p. 186 the martyr deliberately refers to Christ as “prince of life and death.”

2. Cf. the comments of Yazkert to his Armenian subjects, Elishē, pp. 44–45.

3. *Governors, overseers, administrators: hazarapet* (see p. 108 n. 2), *verakats'u* (see p. 107 n. 4), *khnamatat hogabardzuta'an*. This last is not a technical term, but see p. 117: *metsaw hogabardzuta'eam khnam tal*, of the duties of kings to care for the countries they govern.

4. *Kinsmen: azgatohm*. Thomas seems to be referring to the Arab governors rather than to the Arab settlers in Armenia.

1. *Divinely bestowed religion: awrēns astuatsatur*s, a key expression in Elishē, derived from Maccabees, for Christianity—more specifically, Armenian Christianity; see Thomson, *Elishē*, p. 102, n. 4, p. 105 n. 1, p. 184.

erring cult, which in your great folly you have built up concerning Christ. Then we shall disregard your harmful acts against us of which you are guilty; your lives will be spared, and you will live and rule over your land and your homes—you and your sons. You will not leave your habitation through death by torture and take up your abode in hell.”

The holy patriarch² Yovhannēs made answer with the great princes of Armenia: “In the religion of your royal empire and of your leader³ it is written that the witness of a single person is not veracious or reliable, but most trustworthy and acceptable is the witness of many concerning matters great and small, and concerning life and death. You disdain and reject the argument of one person unsupported and uncontrolled, as is your so-called prophet Mahumat'; for there is hardly a single person who bears witness to the truth with him as teacher, let alone many. Now there are one hundred and eleven prophets⁴ who produced true and accurate testimony of Christ's divinity in each one's time, as if from a single mouth, apart from the gospel and his apostles. We have received and believe in the truth; we cannot exchange the truth for your vain, fabulous, fabricated, fictitious, bedezined, erroneous teaching. In whatever fashion your desire commands, let punishment be inflicted on us. We are ready for bonds, prison, beating, fire, sword, water, for torments and every contrivance of torture.”⁵ These and more similar, elaborate and well contrived arguments they put forward for faith in Christ. But since nobody at the time set them down in writing, [157] as is the custom for kings,¹ we did not reckon it appropriate to repeat them.

Then the king was filled with anger; the colour of his face turned livid; he became insolent, and roaring like a bloodthirsty wild beast, ordered them to be taken out from the tribunal. He sent word that: “It is not the custom for our majesty to [allow] anyone to enter into debate or to give such long speeches as we have done for you.² We shall do it [no]³ more. Now, because I

2. *Patriarch: hayrapet.* But Thomas is referring to the bishop of Artsrunik', not the Catholicos John V.

3. *Leader: arajnord,* common in a Christian sense as “prelate.”

4. *One hundred and eleven prophets:* I have found no parallel for this number.

5. Cf. the ending of the Armenian response to Mihrnerseh, Elishē, p. 40.

1. For the hagiographical topos of the scribe who records the martyr's last words see Agathangelos, §99; further references in Thomson, note *ad loc.*

2. For the theme of the judge's patience see Elishē, p. 170, and further references in Thomson, note *ad loc.*

3. The sense requires a negative.

spoke to you in flattering terms, perhaps you were led astray by that, were deceived and confirmed in your folly. But I shall spare you, if you, without delay and without troubling me further, abandon the worship of Christ, save your souls and live. Then I shall forgive you the crime of your rebellion, and you will be on good terms with me and rule over your land.”

Although they had not intended to turn in the slightest from the worship of the Son of God since the faith of the holy apostles was implanted in their hearts, yet because it had no roots it was immediately dried up by the heat of the devil.⁴ For at his bellowing sparks were struck, and “through his nostrils came forth the smoke of a fiery furnace,”⁵ as it is written in Job. And because of their feebleness and their unstable and fickle minds, they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God. For: “This people serves me with [their] lips, but their hearts are far removed from me.”⁶ They turned aside from love of the Deity; terror of death fell on them; and especially since they did not wish to abandon the vain life of this transitory world, they said: “We accept the royal commands,” with the intention that outwardly they would appease the king, but inwardly they would preserve their confession in Christ.⁷ But [158] it is impossible for the two to dwell together; nor can anyone serve two masters, as the Saviour said and which in its place I shall be obliged to show.¹

Then they were quickly circumcised as Muslims on the spot,² following [the example of] Bagarat Bagratuni, who had been seized by another general in the city of Khlat'. He had been prince of Tarōn, was taken to Samarra, and became an apostate.³ He opened the wide and spacious road, the path of destruction which leads to irredeemable perdition—like Jereboam, son of Nabat, who sinned and made Israel transgress, as is written in the Book of Kings of Israel.⁴ The memory of his going astray,

4. As in the parable of the sower: Matt. 13.6; Mark 4.17; Luke 8.13.

5. Job 41.21.

6. Matt. 15.8.

7. Cf. the feigned apostasy in Elishē, p. 50.

1. Matt. 6.24; Luke 16.13. See the next chapter.

2. *Muslims: molimanak*, as p. 141 n. 5 above. For the immediate circumcision of converts to Islam see Thomson, “Muhammad,” n. 12.

3. For Bagarat's captivity see above, p. 118, and John Catholicos, p. 117.

4. IV Kings ch. 11–13.

whereby he seduced and destroyed many nations, remains from generation to generation for ever.

But that Vasak whom we mentioned above among the great nobles,⁵ since they were related to the Artsruni family, had gone to Samarra of his own will before their arrest and had apostatised. In him Satan had taken root with all his hosts; through all his snares he had cunningly bound with an indissoluble belt his thrice-wretched soul. Satan had formed him into a tool useful for every art of deceitful knowledge, as a convenient snare with poisonous arrows to be loosed in the darkness at benighted souls.⁶ So did this man act, putting on himself as an indissoluble and inseparable sheath the power of the devil. But lest I expatiate too long on his shameful error—wicked, selfish, unrepentant, and without scruple—let us eject him from the annals⁷ of the princes, since he did not hate the lawless one like the shameless one.⁸ For even worse than to sin is not to consider oneself among the transgressors, since for those of right mind that is shame [worse] than all cruel torments. So let his memory not be with those who, although they erred and perished, [159] yet repented and stood upright again after their return from the great camp of captivity and from the teeth of the tyrant.¹ But he, both in his going and his returning, kept to the same mind and the same error, wretchedly brazen. As they tell of him, he turned away from God and averted his face from the true confession of faith and from worship of the Son of God, as [Scripture] said: "They turned their backs to me and not their faces."² And in accordance with his perverse depravity he inherited the consequences of his perversity. Without an opponent he was defeated; without arms he was wounded; without a storm he was shipwrecked; in his self-willed obsession he went astray and followed the love of power, losing his soul to irredeemable perdition. His life was without faith and his death without hope.

On the other hand, the thrice-blessed saints Lord Yovhannēs, bishop of Artsrunik', the blessed priest Grigor, and Lord Grigor Artsruni, taking courage in God, stood up in the tribunal—the

5. See above, p. 146.

6. Cf. Elishē, p. 134, for Satan's snare, and *passim* for his poisoned arrows.

7. *Annals*: *yishatak*, "memory," as of Vasak in Elishē, p. 140. Cf. also above, p. 152 n. 5, for the related *yishatakaran*.

8. *Lawless*: *anawrēn*, frequent in Elishē of the shah, thus here of the caliph. *Anamawt'*, "shameless," is used in the Bible of sinners.

1. Cf. the return to the fold of the apostates in Elishē, p. 64.

2. Jer. 2.27.

great arena of spiritual warfare³—with fearless audacity. In brief but eloquent terms they expounded before the tyrant coherent arguments from the divinely inspired Scriptures concerning faith in Christ. They rebuked their erring legislator and trampled under foot their promised gifts, saying: “It is better to die for Christ than to enjoy [life] for a while in sin.”⁴

Then the tyrant ordered them to be bound in iron bonds and placed in prison. It was appropriate for Bishop Yovhannēs to take on the yoke of his homonym John the Baptist, who had been arrested by Herod and imprisoned.⁵ It was proper for Lord Grigor Artsruni not to disregard his homonym Saint Gregory and to endure being plunged into darkness in the deep, gloomy pit [160] in bonds.¹ It was very befitting for the blessed priest Grigor to be united with them and complete the number three, that Christ might not be separated from them, as Christ said: “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I too among them.”² And together they sang the psalm: “For your sake we die continuously. We have been considered as sheep for slaughter.”³

Then the tyrant realised that he had been worsted by these holy men, especially by the valiant Grigor. For he thought that it would be easy to ensnare them like those who had turned away from the faith. However, since his expectation was not realised but rebounded upon himself like a missile⁴ from a wall as strong as adamant⁵ whose head is Christ,⁶ he grew stubborn and ordered his servants to bind them with double chains and to cast them into an underground⁷ dungeon.

When the saints realised that battle with the evil one was not something transient, they too armed themselves for a lasting confrontation. With ceaseless psalm singing they perpetually sent their sweet-odoured prayers on high, looking for victory in the great battle from the all-victorious Christ.⁸ So they armed themselves for warfare, putting on the breastplate of righteousness and

3. See above, p. 130 n. 5.

4. Cf. Elishē, p. 72, and above, p. 140, or below, p. 204. But it is a common theme.

5. Mark 6.17–29.

1. Agathangelos, §122; but we are not there informed that Gregory was “in bonds.”

2. Matt. 18.20.

3. Ps. 43.22; cf. Rom. 8.36.

4. *Missile*: *mek'anay*, lit. “catapult”; see above, p. 131 n. 7. But here a missile fired from a catapult must be intended.

5. *Adamant*: see above, p. 146 n. 1.

6. Cf. I Cor. 11.3.

7. *Underground*: *nerk'in*, as of Gregory's pit (*virap*, as at n. 1 above).

8. For Christ as giver of victory see Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.v. *nikēphoros*.

girding themselves with truth, shoeing their feet with the readiness of the gospel of peace, girding themselves with the word of Christ as a sword, which is sharper than all two-edged swords; putting on their backs with all their heart unsullied faith as a shield.⁹ They raised their hands to heaven like a strong bow; the force of their prayers they shot forth like an arrow at the target from a wide-arched bow;¹⁰ decapitating Satan they struck him as a corpse to the ground. For their victory they offered thanks to Christ, saying: "Blessed is the Lord our God, who instructed our hands for war and our fingers for combat,"¹¹ and what follows. In that combat not only the blessed bishop [161] and the ascetic priest fought beside Lord Grigor but also the fiery hosts; for "armies of the Lord's angels surround those who fear him and preserve them."¹

The saints remained imprisoned for three years in the underground dungeon. They besought the most merciful God that they might fill out this temporal time in secure and firm faith; full of tears and sighings they recalled the heavenly Sion, the holy metropolis—like the people of God sitting beside the rivers and weeping as they recalled their Sion;² or like those three young men, bound and thrown into the terrible furnace, they repeated all night their same blessings and begged the giver of all, Christ, for the same dew of blessing.³ They were greatly consoled by the sweet saying of Christ's, which is an indestructible maxim for Christian souls: "Come to me all who labour and are laden, and I shall give you rest,"⁴ and: "Who denies himself for my sake will find himself."⁵ For these three years the saints were sustained by the work of their own hands, as Paul himself, adorned with the grace of God, said: "These hands served the needs of myself and of those with me."⁶

But in the fourth year that evil man set up instruments [of torture] even more refined than before, to cast Grigor into the crucible of affliction. For shining pure and refined gold attests in it-

9. For the imagery see Eph. 6.14–17; Heb. 4.12.

10. Cf. Wis. 5.12. (That chapter also contains imagery of armour and shields.)

11. Ps. 143.1.

1. Ps. 33.8. For the supporting angels see above, p. 148.

2. Cf. Ps. 136.1.

3. Cf. Dan. 4.12. The blessings are in the long prayer of Dan. ch. 3, not included in the English Bible.

4. Matt. 11.29.

5. Matt. 16.24–25.

6. Acts 20.34.

self the image of the Son of God.⁷ As Saint Gregory, the Illuminator of Armenia, said: “My habitation was among snakes, and they twined themselves around my limbs.”⁸ On the other hand, Lord Grigor dwelt among beasts in human form, in the company of ferocious barbarians who are crueller to us than poisonous beasts. But he had good consolation from the saying of the prophet: “A young child shall plunge his hands into a hole of serpents, yet they will not harm him.”⁹ He begged Christ that he might leave the body and enter God’s presence. Christ did not disregard his pleas, but permitted him to complete the holy Lent, being crucified with Christ,¹⁰ up to [162] the duty of Easter. And the champions rejoiced in the days of Pentecost; they sat at table with Christ like young men of the wedding chamber.¹ But fifteen days after the Ascension of Christ Grigor attained the call of Christ, as Christ said: “I, when I ascend to the Father, shall draw everyone to me.”² So he raised his hands to heaven, saying: “Remember me, Lord, when you come with your kingdom.”³ He blessed them all, entrusted those far and near to God’s grace, commended himself to the blessed bishop and the ascetic priest,⁴ and with a good confession, in the month of Hori, on the fifth day of the month, a Friday, fell asleep in Christ Jesus our Lord—to whom be glory for ever. Amen.⁵

When the believers saw that the holy lord Gregory had fallen asleep with a good confession, they offered thanks to the omnipotent Christ who had strengthened the holy martyr and put Satan to shame. The Christian nobles came before the king and asked for the saint’s body. Taking it away, they wrapped it and buried it in the tomb. All Asorestan celebrated the day of the saint’s death with great rejoicing in Christ Jesus our Lord—to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

7. According to Acts 17.29, the Godhead is *not* like gold! But the vocabulary here is reminiscent of the description of the heavenly Jerusalem in Rev. 21.

8. Agathangelos, §233. “And they twined . . . limbs” is not in the Armenian *Aa* or the Greek of *Ag*; but it has a parallel in *Vg*, §69: “the beasts crawling in it.”

9. Isa. 11.8–9.

10. Gal. 2.20.

1. Cf. Matt. 9.15; Mark 2.19; Luke 5.34.

2. John 12.32.

3. Luke 23.42.

4. Yovhannēs was the bishop, Grigor the priest. For their release see below, pp. 207–208.

5. This occurred in the fourth year, counting from the end of the previous chapter, i.e. in 856, when the Armenian year began on 26 April. Therefore 5 Hori fell on 30 May, which was a Saturday. But Thomas’s figures are wrong on another score, in that in 856 Easter fell on 29 March. Therefore fifteen days after Ascension (7 May) would fall on Friday, 22 May.

CHAPTER 7

*Concerning the heresy of Bagarat Bagratuni,
which was added to his apostasy from Christ
for the destruction of many; refutation in brief*

At the time of his apostasy Bagarat said that apostasy because of danger of suffering does no harm if one secretly keeps in one's heart the confession of faith. [163] This the Elkesites also [claimed]. But it seems to me that the heresy of the Elkesites was long ago quenched and suppressed by the valiant holy teachers whom God placed in the church.¹ It did indeed appear as a bitter root,² and many were contaminated thereby. So come, let us set forth a brief refutation of them from the Holy Scriptures, so that the impiety of that sect may be extirpated from the churches of orthodox believers. Let us turn to the Elkesites, who were those who at the time of persecutions fell into the error of idolatry. And he [Elkesai] had the thought that if anyone in danger of suffering turned to the worship of idols it was of no account, provided that his heart kept true the faith of Christ. At that time a priest Novatian in Rome despatched [people] to refute the Elkesites; and when the persecution ended he would not receive any of those who repented of sacrificing to idols.³ He prevented many from idolatry, although he also led astray by despair those who turned to repentance. He ruined the whole world by observing trifles, although later he did receive penitents. But both sides were at fault, although they went astray in the cause of piety. So lest we too fall into the same [error], let us learn from the divinely inspired Scriptures and travel the level road;⁴ let us not be diverted to the right or the left.⁵ Let us purify our lips by uttering a pure confession and keep our minds unsullied in the true faith. For if the two do not act with a single piety, then there is no profit for either. For if the sail of a ship is not deployed on both sides, a straight course cannot be steered, and it may be shipwrecked by the force of the

1. Thomas is referring to Eusebius of Caesarea and his account of the Elkesite heresy. In his *Eccl. Hist.*, VI 36, Eusebius notes that they claimed one could apostatise with impunity in time of persecution. The term "quenched" (*shijeal*) is a direct reminiscence of the *shijeaw* in the Armenian version of Eusebius.

2. Heb. 12.15.

3. For this description of Novatian see Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, VI 43, VII 8.

4. Cf. Luke 3.5.

5. Prov. 4.27.

furious wind piling up the waves. If a bird does not fly with both wings, it cannot rise to the heights. Likewise, unless the faith of the heart and the confession [164] of the lips are preserved intact, one cannot follow the true confession in Father and Son and Holy Spirit. "For with the heart we believe in righteousness, and with the mouth we confess salvation," as the apostle said,¹ like those who honour with the lips and disdain in their hearts. For "this people," says [Scripture], "honour with their lips, and their hearts have gone far away from me."² For it is quite impossible that he who believes with the mouth could deny with the lips, since: "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit," as the Saviour said.³ And elsewhere: "Surely they do not pluck grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?"⁴ Or: "Who denies me before men, him shall I too deny before my Father who is in heaven. And who will confess me before men, him shall I too confess before my Father who is in heaven."⁵ Thus both by threats and by promises he demands the fruit of our lips that confess his name. Again similarly Paul says, describing the pledge of the law: "The word is near in your mouth and in your heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach."⁶ And to Timothy he wrote that the power of the faith is trustworthy: "If we deny [him], he will deny us, even if we do not believe, he remains faithful."⁷ See also what the blessed Isaiah says: "I am a man and I have impure lips; I dwell amidst a people with impure lips."⁸ He does not accuse himself of this as regards any denial or because of the congregations, but because they had not reproached the king who had acted impiously outside the law.⁹ But if the prophet accused himself so much for a small matter, how much more worthy of laments and tears [165] are those who are impious with their lips towards the Son of God. As Paul, lamenting, says as a threat: "Think what severe punishment the man deserves who trampled under foot

1. Rom. 10.10.

2. Isa. 19.13.

3. Matt. 7.18.

4. Matt. 7.16.

5. Matt. 10.32-33.

6. Rom. 10.8.

7. II Tim. 2.12.

8. Isa. 6.5.

9. The king is Uzziah; he had been righteous, but turned false. See II Chron. 16.1, compared with v. 16 ff.

the Son of God, profaned the blood of the new covenant, and insulted the Spirit of Grace.”¹ See, beloved, that to insult is the utterance of the tongue. And the Creator of the tongue does not permit it to utter denial. For it is no one else who created the tongue, and there is no one else who made the heart. So away with it.

See also another [saying] similar to this one from the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Simon the Samaritan approached Philipp concerning the Spirit of the gifts of tongues, and for the duplicity of his heart how was he punished?² What [did] Anania and Saphira in the matter of the estate and the falsity of the same?³ Understand and consider. For unless honesty of heart and truth of the mouth are equally matched with confession of the faith, they are worthless, to be rejected, and alien to the holy, apostolic church. Since it is unbefitting that good and evil be set together, or light with darkness, or health with sickness, likewise it is not possible for the heart of the believer to be soiled by his lips. For it is written: the word is spoken from the abundance of the heart, since thought is a conception of the mind and speech is the offspring of intelligence.⁴ But as is the root, so are likewise the branch and the fruit.⁵ If the origin is pure, then is the root; what is the branch, the same is the species. Let these few words of mine suffice with regard to [those] heretical errors.

Following the divinely inspired Scriptures, let us keep unsullied the faith of [our] hearts, and the confession of [our] lips pure, according to the example of Saint Paul mentioned above: “The word is near in your mouth and in your heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach.”⁶ And David says: “In what I believed, the same I spoke.”⁷ And Paul: “We believe what we say.”⁸ And again Paul: “If you confess with your mouth [166] the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God arose [you

1. Heb. 10.29.

2. Peter cursed him; see Acts 8.9–24.

3. Acts 5.1–10.

4. See Philo, *In Gen.*, IV 85: speech is the utterance of the mind; IV 96, with reference to Gen. 24.15; *In Ex.*, II 110–111. For the influence of Philo on Moses Khorenats'i and Elishē see Thomson, Introductions to those histories.

5. Rom. 11.16.

6. Rom. 10.8.

7. Ps. 115.10.

8. II Cor. 4.15.

will live], since with the heart we believe in righteousness and with the mouth we confess salvation.”¹

Since so many testimonies have been brought together, let us not follow the tellers of fables² or walk the untrodden path. But when we are brought before kings and judges for testimony concerning me,³ let us keep a good confession [of faith] and bear witness like the Saviour before Pontius Pilate. As Paul said to Timothy: “Do not consider shameful the witness of our Lord.”⁴ and David: “I spoke your testimonies before kings, and I was not ashamed.”⁵ And the Saviour: “If anyone think my words shameful.”⁶

Here let us halt⁷ this discussion and hasten on, lest by stretching out this refutation we fall behind in the composition that lies before us—the matter of the history.

CHAPTER 8

What Bugha did after this in the city of Dvin; and a memorial of the martyrs

Just as a little above we described the sea dragon and its natural habits,⁸ so also now I shall again recall it for the sake of the plan of our history.

When the creatures that live in the fathomless depths feel the arrival of the warmth deep down where they have sheltered [167] from the blowing of the icy north wind, they stir; and when they feel the warmth they greatly rejoice, happily exulting and elated to reach the warmer places. They attempt to reach the ponds by the edge of the sea, and on the seashore they settle and spend the time of summer. But because of the gigantic and obese mass of their heavy bodies it is with difficulty that they

1. Rom. 10.9–10.

2. *Tellers of fables: araspelaban*, cf. Thomson, *Moses Khorenats'i*, Introduction, p. 11.

3. Cf. Luke 12.11. Thomas has kept “me” from v. 9, where Christ is speaking.

4. II Tim. 1.8.

5. Ps. 118.46.

6. Mark 8.38.

7. *Halt: zkay areal*, a correction of Patkanean (following N. Biwandats'i) for the *zvkeyal* of the MS.

8. Thomas has not previously described the habits of the dragon (*vishap*), though he did describe spring with the simile of a hibernating bear, p. 119 above. The general Bugha is likened to a *vishap*, p. 126 above; and the caliph is often depicted as a ferocious beast in terms borrowed from Elishē.

make their upward movement. And it happens that collapsing in narrow and shallow places in the water one may remain stuck there immobilised, and easily fall into the hands of hunters. But when it moves, all the fish and beasts of the sea are terrified, because these same fishes and serpents with other creatures are its food.¹

Again, when the strength of the warm south wind fades, the sun declines in its course, and the winter season stands at the door; when the northern wind blows, intensifying the cold, strips from the tops of lofty trees their leaves, and benumbs the strength of the roots; then the dragon is afflicted with distress and anguish by the power of this mighty force. Hastening to descend to the deep and warm places of the unfathomed depths, there he winters. And the creatures there he treats as those above—through them he provides for the need of his hunger until the spring. Thus he hibernates² just like the other birds and beasts who naturally divide the year into two or three summer and winter abodes in order to survive. They live during the spring on the high summits of mountains or in the clefts of rocks or on tall trees. When the north wintery wind begins to blow continuously, they hastily repair to lower ground, take cover in warmer places by themselves, and dwell alone according to their kind.³

In such fashion too, the general Bugha, when the summer warmth arrived, thrusting himself up as it were from the bottomless depths, [168] departed from the caliph's presence with a numerous and mighty army and came up onto earth in the northern region at the entrance to Armenia.¹ As he moved, fear gripped the whole country and its rulers; attacking them, he devoured like a dragon those he was able to strike.² Just as, because of its tremendous strength, we have drawn the example

1. Thomas seems to have in mind the life cycle of seals and walruses. Basil, *Hexameron* 69 A (a work well known in Armenian), refers to the monsters of the deep, but not in terms close to this passage. Closer (but not quite identical) is the Armenian fragment of Ps.-Origen on the whale (*vishap*, as here); see Mahé, "Origène et la baleine."

2. *Hibernates*: Patkanean's text reads *banay*. Vardanyan renders as *arandznanum ē*, "retires, withdraws." But a correction to *bunē*, "makes his nest, hibernates," seems in order.

3. The migration of birds is a prominent feature of the *Teaching*, especially §655–659.

1. This is the spring of 853. Earlier, p. 152, Thomas had said that Bugha wintered in Dvin, not in Samarra.

2. Cf. the imagery of the dragon (*vishap*) applied to Mihrnerseh who spent the winter in P'aytakaran before attacking Armenia, Elishē, p. 88.

of a dragon rising from the sea—that is, from the land [of Iraq] and the unfathomable depths, from the royal capital—in similar fashion one must understand the other less powerful whales³ and the smaller fish. For no one was able to resist him. And our account is not without witnesses, as we described above in our tale of him with the evidence of the prophets' words.⁴ Indeed from the outcome of events they know well who in these times survive and were then present there.

So the impious general, when he had carried out all his cruel intentions against the land called Vaspurakan, entered the warmer place, the city of Dvin, to winter there.⁵ He dismissed the troops with their various generals who had come to him from every clan in Armenia so they could winter each in his own home, having commanded them all that when the spring season approached they should hasten without delay to join him fully prepared. On entering the city he had with him numerous prisoners and captives without number whom he sold to foreign races to be led into slavery and depart far from the patrimony of their ancestral homes.

At the same time, when he had fulfilled all his wicked desires against the holy church and had destroyed many of the band of Christians, turning sons of light into sons of darkness, and heirs of God into the portion of Satan, and fellow heirs of Christ into companions of demons, and inhabitants of the kingdom into inhabitants of eternal fire⁶—then he planned to remove all the ministers of Christ [169] from loyal worship of the true God, our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus he became haughty in the false presumption of his mind. He ordered to be brought before him some of the blessed men of noble rank, and others of the cavalry, by clans and families.¹ But they did not agree to join the ranks of the apostates. Then he thought that through tortures he

3. *Whales: kēt*, as in Gen. 1.21. Here Thomas implies that Bugha emerged from Dvin like a sea monster from the depths, but that the caliph was also a dragon stirring in Samarra. By comparison with him, his subordinates such as Bugha were like a *kēt*. Cf. the elaborate description of Yazkert rising from the depths like a dragon (*vishap*) in Elishe, p. 44.

4. See above, p. 152, with quotations from the prophet Joel.

5. Thomas picks up the narrative from p. 152.

6. Thomas is referring to Armenians who apostatised, using imagery from Elishē, pp. 55–56, where accusations against those who feigned apostasy are elaborated. For the biblical parallels see Eph. 5.8; Rom. 8.17; Matt. 25.46.

1. The martyrs are named on p. 171, below. John Catholicos, pp. 121–125, gives an account of the martyrdom of unnamed Armenians, followed by an account of the “seven” who included Atom.

would easily ensnare them among those lost and gone astray from the faith of Christ. However, not even in the slightest were they deflected to his arguments; nor did they agree to be deceived by wealth; nor did they pay heed and obeisance to the glory of wordly desires. For they knew and realised that the life of this world is vanity and falsehood, an easily forgotten dream and quickly fleeting shadow;² whereas the life and gifts which God has prepared for those who love him and who endure in the true faith are eternal and perpetual and unending.³ Similarly, the torments for the impure apostates from the holy and pure Christian faith are eternal and everlasting. As precept we have to hand the Lord's saying: "Who denies me before men, him shall I too deny before my Father."⁴ And: "Whoever wishes to save his soul will lose it"; and: "Who lost his life for my sake will find it."⁵ And: "What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?" Or: "What ransom will a man give for his soul? For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost."⁶ Meditating on other such [sayings] that are written in the holy gospel, they laughed at, jeered, and mocked the tyrant, despising him as a worthless child or crazy old man in his dotage who cannot say what he wishes.⁷

When the tyrant realised that [170] his plans against the saints had not succeeded—as it is written: "The man who plans and is contemptuous is presumptuous and will accomplish nothing"¹—then in his great presumption and fierce wrath and immense irritation and unquenchable² fury his mind became foolish like a drunkard insensible from drink. He gave way not one whit nor did he give them an opportunity to respond, but ordered the executioners to carry out on them the sentence of death, to execute them immediately with the sword.³ They left the tribu-

2. Cf. Eccles. 1.1; Job 20.8, 14.2.

3. Cf. James 1.12.

4. Matt. 10.33.

5. Matt. 10.39.

6. Mark 8.36–37.

7. The images of the child and dotard appear in Elishē, p. 41 (further references in Thomson, note *ad loc.*). See also below, pp. 186, 189, 270, 285.

1. Hab. 2.5.

2. *Unquenchable*: correcting *arants' buzhaneli* to *anbuzhaneli*, following Tsovakan; see above, p. 140 n. 2. The martyrdom of Atom follows that of Gëorg in the Jerusalem manuscript.

3. John Catholicos, p. 124, gives a somewhat different account, involving torments before execution.

nal in great joy, very happy that they would rapidly leave this body to enter God's presence. Rejoicing with delight and exultation, with joyous and cheerful hearts and unsullied enthusiasm, they headed for the place of execution, like a young groom to the wedding and as happy as a husband joining the bride.⁴ They stripped in the midst of the crowd which had rushed to see the saints' martyrdom, throwing off the garments that hid the corruption of the sins of the old [man].⁵ Instead of the wedding robe they revealed the robe of baptism which they had put on by water and the Holy Spirit. Instead of a robe decorated with flowers and colours of many hues, they [covered] their saintly bodies with their holy, rose-coloured, red blood.⁶ Instead of the ornament of royal crowns laced with gold, they put on the worship of Christ, making the sign of the saving cross on their heads. And instead of necklaces they were to receive the shining sword on their necks.⁷

When they reached the place of execution and the arena of their martyrdom,⁸ they knelt to pray that they might receive the sentence of martyrdom with firm faith that had no hesitation or doubt, with much endurance and thankful blessing. Drawing swords the executioners rushed on them like bloodthirsty wild beasts; they smote them with the sword like someone cutting wood in the deep forest with a hatchet, [171] mercilessly dismembering [them] limb by limb.¹

So the blessed ones thanked for ineffable gifts Christ who had rendered them worthy to die for his name;² in unison they raised the cry: "God, look to help us; and Lord, hasten to succour us," and what follows.³ "Since we die for you daily, we have been

4. The joy of martyrs is a standard hagiographical topos: e.g. Agathangelos, §§193, 196, 201, 207. Note the liturgical parallels to the expressions of thanks, as in Agathangelos. §75; Elishē, p. 123 (further references in Thomson, notes *ad loc.*). Cf. also above, p. 63 n. 6, and below, p. 186.

5. Cf. Col. 3,9; Rom. 7.6.

6. For baptism by blood see above, p. 141 n. 6.

7. Cf. the emphasis on necks and swords in Elishē; see Thomson, Introduction to *Elishē*, p. 18, with references.

8. *Arena of martyrdom: asparēs nahatakut'eann*; see above, p. 130 n. 5 for arena," and p. 140 n. 1 for *nahatak*.

1. Cf. Elishē, p. 118, for the image of bodies like hewn logs; and p. 186 below for dismemberment limb by limb.

2. See p. 170 n. 4 above.

3. Ps. 69.2.

considered as sheep for the slaughter.”⁴ Thus they were killed as martyrs for the glory of God; they inherited the title of martyr for Christ and the honour of the All-Holy Trinity. Their names are the following: Atom Andzevats'i, Mleah Varazhnuni, Gēorg Bolkats'i, Vasak, and many others whose names are written in heaven.⁵ But the blessed Gēorg, while he faced the sword and the executioner was beating him like a senseless thing—and not the slightest sword cut was he able to make on the saint's body—turned to the executioner to ask and see why he was not wielding the sword.⁶ Taking the sword from his hand he looked this way and that, saying: “Oh, most feeble and cowardly of men, effeminate and wretched soldier, worthless dog to its master.” Then the executioner smote his neck and cut off his head. Astonishment gripped the whole multitude at the steadiness of heart, great fortitude, and valiant heroism which the blessed Gēorg displayed. The large number of Christians present there together praised the glory of God who had strengthened the saints and shamed Satan with his associates.

Then the general ordered the bodies of the saints to be dragged outside the city as food for dogs and birds of the sky. For many days they remained unburied, yet the saints' bodies were not at all contaminated, nor was there any foul smell on them.⁷ [Later] Christians took their precious bodies [172] and covered them with an honourable burial to celebrate year by year the festival of their death. They were seven in number, and the holy martyrs were killed in the year 302.¹

4. Ps. 43.22; also spoken by Gayianē at her martyrdom, Agathangelos, §207.

5. John Catholicos, p. 123, only names Atom “from the province of Aġbag, from the village of Orsirank’.” Mleah Varazhnuni was mentioned above, p. 147; but this Gēorg and Vasak are not mentioned in other sources (save later accounts of this same martyrdom).

6. For the insensitivity of martyrs cf. Agathangelos, §102: “Do you feel your pain?” §105: “Is this happiness?” “Yes, it is.”

7. Cf. Agathangelos, §201, for bodies thrown to dogs and birds, a theme from Ps. 78.2; cf. also *Vkayk'*, p. 34. For their preservation without the smell of decay cf. Agathangelos, §223, Elishē, p. 181.

1. *Seven*: as John Catholicos, p. 123. The year 302 began on 27 April, A.D. 853. John Catholicos notes that they were martyred on St. George's day (celebrated on 16 Ahekan, 23 April of the fixed calendar) and that their feast day was commemorated on 25 Mehekan.

CHAPTER 9

What occurred in the second year of Bugha's arrival, which was the olympiad [. . .];² concerning the war against Sahak the Ismaelite who was known as the son of Ismael; and concerning the siege of the city [Tiflis]

When the winter drew to a close and the season of spring approached, the air cleared of fog and mist and the warm south wind blew over the low-lying plain of Dvin. Roots took hold and plants began to gather strength, the birds and beasts recognised the time of their coming, the toiling labourers prepared for their work on the land,³ the hunters got ready their equipment and the merchants prepared plans for their distant journeys, shepherds gathered their sheep to drive them to the flowering meadows, and everyone in his own way made haste to go out one by one to the object of his labours.

But the general [Bugha] was forming his own destructive and ruinous plans. Intending also that lands and governors should not have respite or pause, he foamed in his plots like the sea which does not cease from churning up its waves.⁴ He remembered what he had done to Ashot and his land; he recalled his valiant courage; and since he had been unable to resist him, he spread fear, threatening to afflict them [the Armenians] with even worse torments and to trample them as he neighed like a spirited charger. Now he writhed like a snake, now he roared like a lion; he grunted like a wild pig, foaming, and [173] grinding his teeth.¹ To those nearby he feigned friendship, but on those distant he heaped evil threats. He commanded everyone to report ready at the plain of the city; he reassembled the forces they had previously had in each clan with their troops.² But all the other princes of the East fled from his presence; they retired and occupied the strongholds, castles, cities, and mountains, gathering around them the soldiers and inhabitants of their lands in full readiness.

2. There is no gap in the printed Armenian text. The year 302 would fall in the seventy-fifth olympiad of the Armenian era.

3. This passage is reminiscent of the *Teaching*, §655–657.

4. Cf. the description of Yazkert in Elishē, pp. 16, 47.

1. For the images of snake, lion, foam, and grinding teeth see Elishē, pp. 16, 42, 44; the grunting of a pig is reminiscent of Agathangelos, §212, 220, 727.

2. See above, p. 168, for the dismissal of these troops the previous winter. By "plain" (*dasht*) the local Campus Martius is implied.

But when Smbat Abulabas,³ *sparapet* of Armenia, realised that it was no use disregarding his [Bugha's] orders, he hastened to come to him. Welcomed by him, he [Smbat] and his people with their possessions lived without worry—especially as he had previously taken the precaution of ensuring by letters and gifts to the caliph and the general that he would follow their orders and make no plans or do anything contrary to their desire. He had previously sent Ashot his son⁴ to meet [Bugha] as soon as he had departed from the caliph; and the *sparapet* had acted as his guide in the warfare and on his departure from and entrance into the [various] provinces.⁵ He had indicated the strength of each province, the strongholds, the military capacity of the various clans. Then gathering a vast army much greater than before, he [Bugha] marched against the land of the East and ordered an attack on the city called Tiflis—which was previously named P'aytakaran. Their city had been built of pinewood: the walls, ramparts, palaces, all the houses of the city's inhabitants, and all the effects and furniture.⁶

I think it superfluous to expound in writing the individual iniquities of that city which, filled with evildoing, surpassed Sodom and Jericho.⁷ Bugha reached [174] the great river Kura and crossed when the rapid spring currents allowed his army to advance and besiege the city. No one was killed [in the crossing] except a single person called Ashkhēt', a distinguished man, renowned in the valiant army, who had under him a host of commanders as numerous as the sea.¹ Ashkhēt' himself wore armour, as did his horse; so some supposed that horse and rider were an iron statue

3. The Armenian text has a superfluous "and" after "Smbat." He was the Bagratid prince of Armenia 851–855; see Canard/Laurent, p. 406.

4. The future King Ashot I (d. 890).

5. For Smbat's collaboration see John Catholicos, p. 120.

6. The wooden structures of Tiflis were also known to non-Armenian writers; see Brosset, p. 142 n. 1 (for Syriac); Canard/Laurent, p. 147 n. 277, p. 642 (for Arabic). Thomas associates Tiflis with P'aytakaran (two hundred miles to the southeast, see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 267–268), because *p'ayt* means "wood." The same identification is made by Ps.-Shapuh, p. 159. Vardanyan, note to p. 187, suggests that the site of P'aytakaran had been forgotten by Thomas's time; but that is unlikely, since John Catholicos refers to it several times as inhabited. John does not describe Bugha's attack on Tiflis. (Matthew of Edessa, p. 278, mistakenly identifies P'aytakaran with Partaw.)

7. Thomas also associates Jericho with Sodom on p. 216. This surprising reference (when one would expect Gomorrah) has a parallel in the biblical paraphrase on Joshua, ch. 6, where Jericho is likened to hell; see Stone, *Apocrypha*, p. 119.

1. Ashkhēt' is only attested here, although Thomas mentions a Muslim general Ashkhē on p. 148 above.

as it were, only the eyes not being covered. When he approached the river bank, someone hiding in ambush drew a longbow and struck him with an arrow through the opening. His hand that held the bridle slackened. Then a second person hurled a spear at the same eye, and they caused Ashkhēt' to drown in the river. To those who found his corpse a few days later Bugha gave ten thousand [pieces of] silver, for the man was so respected by him.

Immediately he surrounded the city with a wall of fire, the flames roaring up from the piles of easily burning wood of cedar and juniper trees.² The commander of the city, Sahak, came out through the gate which leads to the castle of Shamshilde, dressed in sable³ and bearing a rod in his hand. Becoming deranged he lost his means of escape, though he was able to go wherever he wished. He sent a message to the general Zhirak':⁴ "Hasten to meet me." But the latter did not trust the envoys until they had been sent two and three times. Then Zhirak' went and seized him and brought him before Bugha, who was more astonished at his reckless coming to him than at his rebelling against him. When Sahak's wife heard that he had been captured, since she was a beautiful woman she hastened to appear before Bugha in the chance of being able to save her husband through her beauty and liberal treasures. But she became the cause of his death rather than of his salvation. Bugha ordered the executioners to cut off his head. His wife raised a shriek, saying: "My lamentation will reach the caliph." She went around the camp unveiled, which was not customary for the women of the Muslim people.⁵ But it was to no avail. Bugha had his head cut off and taken to court, and took the wife in marriage. [175] The woman again shrieked: "For my sake you killed my lord. I am not content to be your wife but the great caliph's [wife]." But Bugha kept her as his wife. Later he sent her to the caliph to be his wife. When the woman arrived, she told the caliph what had happened, of the complaint that she had raised and the evidence of witnesses that "I am not content to be your wife, but the caliph's," and of what occurred. This was the cause of Bugha's destruction, which I shall briefly demonstrate in its own place.¹

2. For the burning of Tiflis cf. the version in Tabarī, quoted by Canard/Laurent, p. 642.

3. *Sable: samoyr*, as worn by Vasak in Elishē, p. 136.

4. *Zhirak*: see above, p. 127.

5. Cf. above, p. 113, for veils as customary among Muslim women.

1. See below, p. 210.

*Concerning what took place among the Tsanars*²

Since no one anywhere was able to resist him in any of the acts that it was his inclination to perform, he began to subject in order all the lands of the East. With fearless audacity and arrogance he made forays throughout all the regions of their control. Indeed he attacked the regions of the North, the land called Tsanak.³ These people dwell in mountain fastnesses and live in peace undisturbed by outside enemies. The royal taxes and tribute remain in their own hands. They merely appoint someone to rule over them at their own will. They live in unity and concord among themselves, dwelling separately according to their tribes. Near to them is the mountain of the Caucasus, in which dwell tribes, each different in language, to the number of seventy-two.⁴ They live without a leader, and each has his own customs as he pleases, even marrying their mothers and sisters.

To these went the priest Grigoris, son of Vrt'anēs, to preach to them the word of life.⁵ Many among them joined him and believed in Christ, like the Tsanars and the Apkhaz.⁶ [176] The rest, paying no heed, went to their destruction up to the present day—which we do not have time to describe. By the hands of these barbarians Saint Grigoris received a martyr's death in the plain of Vatnean.¹

Now when Bugha with his numerous army arrived close to

2. For the Tsanars on the upper Terek see the discussion in Canard/Laurent, pp. 47–48 (with further references). For the defeat of Bugha by the Tsanars cf. the account in Yaqubi, quoted *ibid.*, p. 490. John Catholicos does not describe these events.

3. *Tsanak*: so the text of Patkanean. The normal form is *Tsanark'*, as in the title to this chapter, or the *Ashkharhats'oyts'*, §23, "where the Alan gate is." Vardan, *History*, p.101, offers a fanciful etymology from the verb *tsaneay*, "to recognise."

4. *Seventy-two*: The same number of languages in the Caucasus is given by Al-Hamadhāni, quoted in Canard/Laurent, p. 509.

5. The mission of Grigoris is described by P'awstos, III 5–6; Moses Khorenats'i, III 3; Moses Daskhurants'i, I 14–20. But none of these writers mentions the Tsanars.

6. *Apkhaz*: The text of Patkanean reads *Awihazk'*. Brosset renders "Awars," Patkanean suggests "perhaps Apkhaz," and Vardanyan renders "Apkhaz." A corruption *wi* from *p'* in Armenian is not implausible. For the Apkhaz (Abasgians) and Armenia see Canard/Laurent, pp. 49–50. According to an Arabic version of Agathangelos (*Va* §158) Gregory the Illuminator sent bishops to this and other regions of the Caucasus; see Garitte, *Documents*, pp. 201, 221–222, for comments on that passage. See also below, p. 198 n. 6, where Thomas notes that Grigor Artsruni had been there. The *Martyrdom of Abo* indicates that the Apkhaz were Christian in the previous century.

1. Thomas follows Moses Khorenats'i, rather than P'awstos. For the plain of Vatnean see Eremyan, *Hayastan*, p. 82.

their borders, he wrote messages, apparently peaceful in intent, that they should turn in friendship and unanimity to obedience to the caliph and receive honours, and through him accept the title of noble princes. But since they had taken refuge in impregnable fortresses and trusted in the number of their troops and the valour of their warriors, they did not submit in the least degree to his proposals or condescend to respond. They sent back his messengers in disgrace, having given them a severe beating. Then they descended the mountains and occupied the foothills, making preparations for war. And they closed the fortified passes and defiles of the valleys which led to the approach of their fortresses.

Then the general Bugha ordered his troops to attack them in battle. Approaching them, they arranged their line and gave battle to the army of the Tsanars. They surrounded the foothills like an encircling sea whose waves swell up by the force of the winds. Indeed, the whole earth roared like the billowing waves of the sea. The battle waxed fierce from dawn until the very end of the day, raging to the twelfth hour. The royal army was defeated and returned to their camp, and the mountaineers returned to their camp. After the interval of a day they again joined battle, and the royal army was defeated. After a few days had passed, once more battle was joined, and the royal army was defeated even more decisively. So they were placed in a great dilemma: they were unwilling to withdraw, for [Bugha] considered the action a severe disgrace, but neither were they able to continue their resistance, for [177] many of their troops had fallen. So they decided to return to the attack. They set up fortifications, built quarters,¹ and made dwellings. For nine days they remained there and attacked more than nineteen times. But the royal troops were severely defeated and were decimated by the army of the Tsanars. So they returned humiliated, covered with shame and ignominy, ridiculed and despondent.

Near the end of the second year since he arrived,² he marched to the regions of the Aḷuank'. At that time there ruled over the extensive territory of the Aḷuank' a certain Apumusē, who was noted as a reader and was known as "son

1. *Quarters: aparans*, which normally would mean "palace." But on p. 180 *aparans amurs* seems to mean only "strongholds," and here nothing elaborate is intended.

2. I.e. in 853.

of a priest.”³ When he heard that Bugha had brought troops and was already coming to attack him, he ordered his whole country to occupy the mountainous areas, intending to resist with force and courageous heart—especially as he had seen that he [Bugha] had been defeated and beaten by the Tsanars. “Let us not be more cowardly than the Tsanars,” he said, “for we have stronger and higher fortresses than they, and it is easier to secure the entrances to the defiles. Only let us with united hearts take refuge in God’s help. If it happens that anyone is killed, it will be considered a glorious thing for himself and his clan, and he will receive a martyr’s crown from Christ. For it will not be a death of a common sort, but one on behalf of the holy church and God’s people.”⁴ Such and more similar [exhortations] did the pious prince of Albania set before his troops.

Then Bugha, taking the mass of his army, descended to the plain of Gagrats’ik’ and entered the great city of Partaw.⁵ He began to rage and plotted to spew out his evil poison on the prince of the Ałuank’.⁶ He sent a summons, calling him to subjection. But the latter paid no heed to his words [178] because he was well aware of his deceitful habits. He gathered together the inhabitants of the land—all the men and women from the land of the Ałuank’ including a host of common peasants and a few legions¹ of soldiers from the secure mountain called K’t’ish,² as well as stores of provisions. When Bugha discovered what sort of preparations the prince of the Ałuank’ was making, he became hesitant. For although he had frequently waged war with them in previous battles, he had been unable to reduce their impregnable fortresses or the brave men in them. So in cajoling terms he summoned him [Apumusē] to obedience.

3. For Esayi Apumusē see Canard/Laurent, p. 143, and especially pp. 380–381, commenting on Moses Daskhurants’i, III 19. “Reader” is my rendering of *vertsanut’ean*; *vertsanot’* is a calque on *anagnōstēs*, for which ecclesiastical rank see Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.v., and compare Thomson, *Elishē*, p. 113 n. 3. That Apumusē was a priest’s son helps explain the long passage of biblical quotations which Thomas, p. 179, puts into his mouth. John Catholicos, p. 127, briefly describes the capture of Esayi, prince of the Ałuank’, by Bugha “deceitfully”.

4. Cf. above, p. 148 n. 1.

5. For Gagrats’ik’ (Gagarats’ik’ in the text, but correct on p. 216) and Partaw see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 273–274 and 353.

6. Cf. the description of Yazkert in *Elishē*, p. 6.

1. *Legion*: *lēgēon*, generally used in Armenian only of foreign armies.

2. *K’t’ish*: in Arts’ak, see Canard/Laurent, p. 148 n. 281. This campaign is also mentioned by Tabarī, *ibid.*, p. 643.

But the latter sent back a response in this fashion: "It is customary for governors³ to come to a land with royal solicitude to their obedient subjects, to remove tribulations and relieve distress like guardians, but not to ruin [the land] like brigands or ravage it with sword and captivity. If you had come from court as a governor⁴ with peaceful intentions you would have brought benefits and prosperity to these people, not ruin and turmoil. So let it be clear that as long as my strength endures and I live, I shall oppose [you] with the power and force of the Lord God. I shall not meet you in peaceful friendship, but I shall meet you with arms and a bow and a sword, with valiant men and select horses. If it pleases you to save yourself and your army, remove yourself from here and leave our territory. Otherwise you will soon lose your life through your mad passions, and scatter your bones in the desert, and become food for the beasts of the earth and the birds of the air.⁵ Let your will be done. I am innocent of your blood,⁶ especially because I regard it as [an act of] great piety to slay the enemies of God, as Moses did Amalek, or Joshua the Canaanites, or Samuel Agag, or David Goliath.⁷ And as the Israelites slew all the foreigners⁸ and God was pleased with them, so too shall I deal with you and your army. This is enough of verbosity [179] towards you on my part. In your hands lies peace or turmoil. If, as I said, you leave me there will be peace; but if not, [there will be] war and struggle and battle.¹ You are the target, and mine the bow that pierces;² you are the adversary, and mine the victorious warriors;³ you are the enemy, and mine the troops that condemn. Yours is the war, ours the victory; yours the body, and mine the lance; yours the neck, and mine the sword.⁴ Yours is the property, but we

3. *Governors: ashkharhakal*; see above, p. 111 n. 4. For the duties of rulers see the Introduction to this book.

4. *Governor: ostikan*, the regular title of Muslim governors in Armenia; see p. 89 n. 2.

5. Cf. p. 171 above.

6. Matt. 27.24.

7. Ex. 17.8–13; Josh. 12.18; I Kings 15.33; I Kings 17.50.

8. *Foreigners: aylagzi*, as often for "Muslims"; see above, p. 110 n. 3.

1. This long rhetorical passage, replete with biblical and patristic allusions, is appropriate in the mouth of a "priest's son." There are parallels to the alternation "you . . . we" in *Vkayk'*, pp. 105 ff. and 193–194 (but not verbal similarities).

2. Wis. 5.21.

3. Joel 2.7.

4. Reversing the argument in *Elishē*, p. 40 at n. 6.

are the heirs; yours the booty, but we are the plunderers; you are the brigand, we the thieves;⁵ you the reed, we the consuming fire;⁶ you the straw, we the boisterous winds;⁷ you the flower, we the withering simoon;⁸ you the flowering field, we the destructive hail;⁹ you the building without foundation, I the flood that overturns the foundation;¹⁰ you the carrion, my army the beast that tears;¹¹ you the toy, we the children who, grasping your power, play with you and all your haughty pride; you the wild animal, we the hunters;¹² you the bird, and we descend from the heights and take [you] in the net;¹³ you the sea serpent, and we the hook, dragging you up by your palate from unfathomable depths;¹⁴ you are like the stag without horns, and we the eagles [swooping down] on you, blinding your eyes, to throw you as carrion to my young and the foxes who live in dens.¹⁵ So again I say, this is none of your business. And lest you are pained by what I told your messengers, even more than [the damage you suffered] in attempting to entrap us, such perils will you run.”

When the tyrant heard these responses that were full of vigour and terrible indignity, he was thrown into great perturbation and stood seized with astonishment. All his plans had been destroyed and scattered. He did not know what to do. After conferring with much deliberation, as a consequence of their best perceptions they [the Muslims] decided to write and inform the caliph about that man. So they sent messengers to the caliph, while they themselves [180] invested the mountain until some order should be brought them in haste from court.

However, Apumusē, armed and accoutred in full array, descended to attack them. He inflicted great damage, took much booty, and returned to his position and encampment. Thenceforth [Bugha] dared not abandon his own camp without trepida-

5. Cf. Jer. 30.16; Ezek. 39.10.

6. Joel 2.5, a common figure in Thomas.

7. Job 21.18.

8. James 1.11.

9. Very common in the Old Testament.

10. Luke 6.48.

11. Ps. 78.2.

12. Lev. 17.13. (?)

13. Hos. 7.12.

14. Job 40.20–21. *K'ims*, “palate,” might be emended to *k'it's*, “nose, snout,” to agree with the Armenian text of Job; but the text of Thomas fits the image of a “hook.”

15. Prov. 30.17.

tion. Part of his army he put under the command of a certain general and stationed him to the north. He himself with the majority of his troops encamped to the east. They built strongholds,¹ carefully surrounded them with walls, set up fortifications, piled up stones, erected catapults, and made preparations. After a few days Bugha commanded them to go out to battle. They formed ranks and filled the line with the various companies of select troops according to tribes. Encircling the mountain, they set up their tall and long-flapping flags and standards. They formed in their groups companies of five hundred men to each ensign. Why should one enumerate individually the vast number of arms and armoured formations of horses and their riders? There are valiant men knowledgeable in this; those who are occupied with warfare can number all the arms and treasures in the caliph's treasury, which they brought with them loaded on camels. They went out to battle and fought, and the encounter grew ardent. Mingling ranks, they fell on each other. The royal army suffered severe losses, fled back to their camp, and entered the strongholds they had built. The mountaineer troops of Apumusē pursued the fugitives; they descended the mountain and turned to plunder the corpses. They returned to their encampment with a great victory, rejoicing with unsullied joy. Then they settled down [181] to keep guard over themselves and the whole mass of inhabitants of their principality.

After this, which was the second defeat for the Muslims, Bugha again commanded them to go out to war. When they approached the Aḷuank', suddenly about one thousand men from their elite clashed with them; they turned the Muslims in flight back to their camp and themselves returned safe and sound, without a single one being wounded. So they returned to their general with a great victory and much booty.

For the general Bugha this was a terrible disaster. Plunged into anxiety, he was greatly disturbed in his mind and driven frantic in his search for a solution. He shut himself up in his tent and took no respite or rest. Sleep fled from his eyes.¹ For ten days no one came in to him or went out, for he had entered his chamber with shame-filled visage. However, not a little fear

1. *Strongholds*: *aparans amurs*; see above, p. 177 n. 1.

1. As Elishē, p. 148, of the chief magus in his distress: a biblical phrase, cf. Gen. 31.40; I Macc. 6.10.

gripped him, so² many companies with drawn swords kept watch around him. But when the ten days had come to a close, his commander³ requested [permission] to enter his presence; taking him by the hand, he began to converse with him: "Why do you slacken your hand¹, mingle cowardice with their valour,⁴ and allow all [these] countries to prevail over you? Why do you yourself lose your reputation for bravery whereby you made every land tremble and shake, so no one was able to oppose you? Why do you weaken your mighty arms and hands? Surely you are not the very first to be defeated, or your army [the first] to fall, or yours [the first] booty to be divided? Have you not considered, that from the beginnings to the present time, everywhere that an army has been gathered and a war fought and swords and a battle waged, sometimes they are victorious, and sometimes defeated? Which of those who ruled the world was never put to the sword? Among the princes of the nations, in one place they grow powerful, elsewhere they grow weak." By continuing to speak with the general, [182] the commander removed the veil of gloom from his heart. Then leaving the chamber, they sat down to be merry.

At that very moment there arrived from court an order not to grow weary or discouraged, and not to give up waging war with him [Apumusē] until, willingly or unwillingly, he submitted to the caliph.

Then he commanded all the troops to go out to battle. As the host of soldiers put on their armour and swords and made preparations, there was such a great noise of trumpets, lyres, and harps that the mountain almost collapsed from its foundations. He brought the army near to the summit of the mountain, with them many standards one [for] each thousand elite men with noble mounts.¹ Scarcely anywhere had there been [before] such an awesome sight of a fully arrayed army of any of the kings who had held sway over the ends of the world—such a loud and fearsome thunder and crashing and flashing of arms as were then exhibited by the army of the Muslims. They marched out company by company rapidly and eagerly one after the other; and everyone who saw them was stricken with great fear. Lord

2. *So*: *zi*, lit., "because." Aware of the difficulty in the text Vardanyan renders "he was not much afraid because. . ."

3. *Commander*: *sparapet*, "general," but clearly subordinate to Bugha, whom Thomas calls *zawravar*, "general."

4. Reminiscent of vocabulary dear to Elishē, e.g. p. 19 n. 6, p. 71 n. 3.

1. On p. 180 Thomas refers to 500 men per standard (*nshanak*, but here *nshan*).

Musheł, son of the general,² was stationed in the open on a hill, and stood there watching in fearful and tremendous amazement. He raised his mind to the future coming of Christ and the awesome thunderings and crashings that will then occur: the bolts of fire and fearsome consternation on earth, and how the bands of angels will press forward one after the other, and how the Lord's cross will shine forth with awesome rays, and whatever accompanies these at the future coming of Christ on the last day.³ Then, putting aside all preoccupation with wordly illusions, he passed beyond the visible. And since he was versed in the divinely inspired Scriptures and was familiar with and knowledgeable of eloquent precepts, at that moment he set down his spiritual vision as a hymn that begins: "My soul looks with the undisturbed eye of the heart at the second coming." Five strophes from the eighth syllable.⁴

Now when all the host of the army had been assembled in one place [183] to the number of more than two hundred thousand, and they had formed ranks and drawn up their lines, and champions had called their opponents out to battle,¹ then Apumusē, called son of a priest, marched out to battle and confronted them. He was like a great iron hill or rock of adamant;² his troops formed a solid mass—as it were a single man. The army of the Muslims completely surrounded the force of the Ałuank' and fearlessly rushed upon them, but they held their ground, without anyone stepping in front of his comrade. While the former thought that they [the Ałuank'] had been delivered into their hands, the latter turned to prayer and invoked God to their aid. They attacked in four divisions, like the Lord's cross; they crushed the enemy line, broke their ranks, turned them back, and pushed them off the mountain, inflicting tremendous losses.

2. *General: sparapet*; this is Smbat Abulabas, *sparapet* of Armenia; see above, p. 173. Musheł was his second son, brother of the future king Ashot.

3. This is more elaborate than the description in Luke 21.11. There are reminiscences of the signs following the death of the martyrs in Elishē, p. 180.

4. *Syllable: vang*, glossed in the *NBHL* as "tone." But Dr. K. Maksoudian informs me that tone is rendered in Armenian by *dzayn*. There are four of these, each with an auxiliary (*kołmn*), but they are not numbered from one to eight. The first three words of the Armenian hymn (*erg*), *Anzbatel* (read *anzbateal*) *akan srti*, do form a line of eight syllables. But the meaning of the last sentence of this paragraph remains obscure. For a recent study of early Armenian hymnography see Winkler, "Armenian Night Office."

1. For this practice see above, p. 107 n. 2.

2. For the rock of adamant see above, p. 146 n. 1.

As straw is blown by the wind, or smoke dissipated by a storm,³ so did they disappear from before the army of the Aḷuank'. These turned back and amassed an incalculable booty. But why should I describe each detail of the battles one by one? I shall speak concisely and abbreviate my account.⁴ The war between them continued for nearly a full year. And not in a single confrontation did Apumusē turn away from Bugha. As is reported,⁵ the number of their battles was twenty-eight, and the royal army was defeated in that many encounters and actions.

When both sides realised that there was no solution or way to forge peace, then they agreed to write to the caliph, for the general of the Aḷuank' said: "Lest anyone suppose me to be a rebel against the caliph and for this reason to be attacking the army of Asoretan." But he piled up on Bugha responsibility for the rebellion and the losses to the army—of which indeed he informed the caliph in writing: "Now if there comes to me a letter from the court sealed with the caliph's ring, in which a command is written that I should go to you or to the court, I shall not disobey [184] his command. But if that does not happen, as I said you will see even more sword and battle than you have seen up to now."¹

Then the two of them sent messages to the caliph through reliable men, according to Isaiah's saying: "They shall send messengers who will weep bitterly."² They wrote and informed the caliph of what they had done and how the royal army had been defeated. Both sides settled down to guard their positions with great care and agreed with each other not to give battle until the messengers whom they had sent should return from the caliph. Now that great victory was granted through the general Apumusē so that the Lord's saying through the mouth of the prophet Amos might be fulfilled: "I shall break the lances of Damascus,"³ which is now called Dmishk,⁴ whence they had set out following Bugha.

3. Job 21.18 (as p. 179) for straw; Ps. 67.2–3 for enemies scattered like smoke. This is a common figure; cf. John Catholicos, p. 191.

4. *Concisely, abbreviate*: See the Introduction to this book for Thomas's rules of historical writing.

5. Thomas does not indicate whether his source was written or oral. John Catholicos, pp. 127–128, has no reference to these extensive battles.

1. See above, pp. 178–179.

2. Isa. 33.7.

3. Amos 1.5.

4. *Dmishk*: Thomas's contemporary John Catholicos uses the form *Damaskos*, as Sebēos and earlier writers. The later Anonymous refers to "the land of Sham," p. 275; Dmishk is found in Matthew of Edessa, Kirakos, and other writers, but is not standard.

While they were waiting to receive an order from court, the messengers returned rapidly bringing a letter from the caliph to Apumusē bidding him submit to them and go to Bugha. In it was written a pardon for the damage and losses to the army and the mass of booty, also an oath to confirm the spoken message and gifts of honourable and expensive garments with a decorated⁵ helmet and sword. Only he was to heed the caliph's summons and not disobey his wishes. The latter had written to Bugha not to plot or inflict any evil on that man but to have him taken to the caliph with great honour and consideration.

When the general of the Aḥuank' had read the caliph's letter, he hastened down from the mountain and presented himself to Bugha. Before he reached the general, there came to meet him companies equipped with arms and select horses. He had brought before him [Apumusē] richly adorned and noble horses as well as singers and rhapsodists with many musical instruments in front and behind while he was still outside their camp.⁶ Bugha treated him not at all unkindly, neither recalling what he had done, nor causing him any gloom; [185] but he received him in a friendly and peaceful fashion with splendid honour and gifts in accordance with the caliph's orders. After a few days had passed, he had him taken to the caliph accompanied by companies of armed soldiers and elite cavalry. So the valiant champion¹ Apumusē went on his way with fearless courage, strengthened in his mind and determination in accordance with his steadfast valour.

CHAPTER 11

In what fashion Mukat'l from the province of Vanand was martyred

It happened that there passed that way a certain Mukat'l of the nobility of Vanand to inform himself according to custom of each person's station and eminence of rank, whether this was due to birth or place or province or family or valour or

5. *Decorated: tsalkeay*, lit., "flowered."

6. Cf. the musical procession on p. 150 above.

1. *Champion: nahatak*, with overtones of martyrdom; see above, p. 140 n. 1. Thomas does not describe the fate of Apumusē, but notes his presence in prison in Samarra, p. 191 below.

chance.² It is usual in books to indicate both the event and the place involved, either to make them known or to render them famous.³ The Muslim soldiers arrested him and brought him to the general. They imputed to him much harm to state affairs, and falsely rather than rightly condemned him. Eventually a great and fearsome tumult was stirred up against him, and his calumniators cried with one voice before the tyrant, tearing their collars:⁴ "He is worthy of death; it is not right for him to live or have an opportunity to respond." By such a violent uproar of false testimony they excited the tyrant's full anger against the man, such anger as the general Bugha had never vented on anyone else for all that time. He commanded him to be brought into the tribunal where the group of generals were all assembled. [186] He interrogated him cruelly and with the authority of his position: "Abandon the faith of Christ," he said, "and I shall forgive you the great harm you have wrought; you will live and enjoy royal honours and gifts. Do not add to the great crimes you have committed, as I hear them described by your accusers, that of obstinate persistence in the faith of Christ whom you worship, so that you are deprived of life through cruel tortures. For I have nothing more to say to you."

The blessed Mukat'1 responded, full of faith and with a true confession in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: "Who allowed me to be martyred for the truth and die for Christ's name, to shed my blood in return for Christ's blood, to offer my body to death in return for his body, to mingle my torments with his torments, that I should be glorified with him? He is the Lord of Lords, King of Kings, Prince of life and death,¹ God for eternity, Jesus Christ. But your threats and tortures, which you say you will inflict on me, seem in my eyes as a joke of children or madmen, and your words like those of a senseless man or a crazy and raving dotard."²

Immediately the angry tyrant ordered that first the saint's

2. Mukat'1 is otherwise unattested. The implication is that he was writing a history, for genealogy was a prime interest of the Armenian nobility. See the Introduction to this book for Armenian historians' emphasis on "station and eminence of rank." For Vanand see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 363.

3. *Either . . . famous*: perhaps "either in so far as they are known, or in so far as they are famous" (*kam ěst tsanawt'ut'ean kam ěst patuoy*).

4. Cf. above, p. 113 n. 4.

1. An elaborate twist on the caliph's title; see above, p. 113 n. 5.

2. *Child, dotard*: see above, p. 169 n. 7.

tongue be cut out³ so that he could not further insult the caliph, their legislator [Muhammad], and himself. Then he ordered his two hands and his two feet to be cut off. Limb by limb they dismembered him;⁴ he offered himself as a living sacrifice⁵ to the Son of God. With great fortitude and thanksgiving⁶ he endured the tortures inflicted on him for the love of Christ. While he was still alive, [Bugha] had a massive and very tall gibbet erected; he was put on the top of it and suspended in a very high place. Then bringing him down from the gibbet, they cut off his head with a sword and set it back up again in the spot of his martyrdom, in Goroz near [187] the mountain K'shit',¹ where the camp of the Muslims was situated. So the holy, all-victorious champion of Christ Mukat'1 was martyred gloriously for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

In similar fashion, or even more wonderfully, the thrice-blessed Solomon, known as Sevordi, and Kakhay of the upper land² did not incline to the tyrant's proposals or heed his words that reeked of gall and putridity like the stench³ that emanates from an opened tomb—whereby he had seduced many away from the divine religion and the worship of the Son of God. But they battled valiantly and responded to the tyrant with great audacity, hoping in the one sole King of Kings and in the Lord of Lords, in Christ the Son of God. They said to the tyrant:⁴ "It is better for us to die for Christ's name than to enjoy [life] with you. By whatever death you wish, we are ready to submit to every form of torture that the master of evil, your father Satan,⁵

3. Cf. Agathangelos, §197, based on Maccabees.

4. Cf. above, p. 171.

5. Rom. 12.1. But it is a frequent simile; cf. above, p. 141.

6. For the theme of thanks see above, p. 170 n. 4.

1. *K'shit'*: thus in Patkanean's text; the correct form is K't'ish, as p. 178 at n. 2. Goroz is not attested elsewhere.

2. *Sevordi*: For these people (of Hungarian origin) who lived in Uti see Canard/Laurent, pp. 50–51. That some were Muslim is noted by the Anonymous below, p. 289. In Armenian *sewordi* would mean "black son" or "son of the black"; but John Catholicos explains it as derived from *Sewkoy ordik'*, p. 127, i.e. "sons of Sewuk" (or Sewik). But the only Sewuk attested in Armenian is a prince of Andzevats'ik' mentioned by Łazar.

The martyrdom of Solomon and Kakhay is not described by other Armenian historians. "Of the upper land" (*verin ashkharhets'i*) here seems to refer to the Caucasus; in Elishē, p. 158, *verin ashkharh* refers to Apar in Asia.

3. *Stench*: *nekhahotut'iwn*, reminiscent of the *nekh hot* which emanated from Antiochus before his death; cf. II Macc. 9.9, 12, and also Vasak's death, Elishē, p. 139.

4. *Tyrant*: lit., "king," which makes the biblical reminiscence "king of kings" more appropriate.

5. *Your father Satan*: as in Elishē, p. 175, of Denshapuh.

has taught you. We shall not abandon the love of Christ, nor shall we be deprived of eternal life or inherit eternal torments."

Then the tyrant raged like a furious wild beast attacking lambs to devour them. He ordered them to be fastened to stakes with their feet and hands bound.⁶ He had iron rods⁷ brought, and they tortured them with the rods for a long time until they seemed to have died. But they endured with great fortitude, thanking Christ the liberal bestower of unbounded gifts, who had made them worthy to die for Christ's name and to receive the crown of martyrdom.

While they were still alive and thanking Christ for the unconquerable power with which he had strengthened the saints for the great arena in the spiritual battle,⁸ the tyrant became even more enraged, flaming like a fiery furnace.⁹ He had wood brought, [188] and they placed the blessed Solomon on the wood. Near to the wood they set the holy Kakhay, so that perhaps the one, frightened by the other's torments, might obey the tyrant's order. But even more than previously they endured the tortures in order to be crucified with Christ.¹ They denied themselves, took up Christ's cross, and followed the summons. They lost themselves, that is the life of the world, in order to gain eternal life.² They died with Christ in order to reign with him.

Then there came an order from court to kill Saint Solomon on that [pile of] wood by shooting him with arrows. At the tyrant's command, the executioners in a circle shot arrows at him; so the blessed martyr of Christ gave up the ghost for the glory of God. Saint Kakhay he ordered to be slain with the sword. The executioner took his sword, struck the blessed one, and cut off his head. Immediately he surrendered his soul into God's hands. Thus the blessed ones were martyred to the eternal glory of the Holy Trinity.

With the captives from the mountain of Khoyt' was a man

6. Cf. the torture inflicted on Hrip'simē in Agathangelos, §198.

7. *Rods*: *k'uk'*, an instrument for beating (as III Kings 12.11) often rendered "scorpion." See also p. 198 below, where it refers to "fasces."

8. For thanks see above, p. 170 n. 4; for the "arena," p. 130 n. 5.

9. As often of Yazkert in Elishē, e.g. p. 8.

1. Cf. Gal. 2.20.

2. A conflate of numerous New Testament phrases: Matt. 10.39, 16.24-25; Mark 8.34-35; Luke 9.23-24.

called Yovnan.³ He it was who during Bugha's attack, from the beginning of his invasion into Armenia, had opposed him with the inhabitants of the mountain and had inflicted severe losses on the royal army. But when the Muslim troops attacked the people of the mountain and defeated them, they arrested the blessed Yovnan and had him taken in bonds to the royal prison.

One day the caliph ordered him to be brought before him. He questioned him about the death of Yovsēp' in revenge for⁴ his second heroic exploit when he [Yovnan] had resisted the general and reminded him about the revolt and his involvement in harm to royal affairs. At the same time he tried to intimidate him even more, that perchance thereby he might really be able to turn him away from the true faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When he put [189] before him the question of the harm, whereby he expected he would cast him into a snare of destruction, he said to the blessed one: "If you wish to live with me and enjoy the life of this world, to receive gifts and honours from me, submit to my command, abandon the Christian faith that you observe, and serve the true religion and faith that we have learned from the prophet Mahumat'. Otherwise, you will receive the opposite of this, torments and death, and be deprived of life by a cruel death."

But the saint, inspired with a noble resolution, said to the tyrant: "Why do you suppose me to be a young child¹ that you cast before me vain and fanciful deceit, promising me a deceitful and false hope in order to draw me away from the true hope, the truth of which I have comprehended since my youth?"

Said the caliph: "Do not despise my royal words and lose your life, to become like one of those condemned to death who have deprived themselves of life by a cruel death—such as has been prepared for you if you persist in the same stubborn faith in Jesus, son of Mariam a Jewish woman."

The blessed one said: "I see you speak as one of those mad fools.² I long since despised you and had not the slightest fear in my heart for you. In my disdain for you I put your general and his troops to the sword, his booty I distributed, and on the

3. *Khoyr'*: see above, pp. 119 ff. This Yovnan is not attested elsewhere.

4. *In revenge for: i vrezhkhndru'eann*. It is unclear whether this means "when [Yovsēp'] was seeking to punish [Yovnan]," or "[the caliph questioned him] in order to take revenge for . . ." The reference to "second" is explained by Yovnan on p. 189.

1. Cf above, p. 169 n. 7.

2. I.e. the senseless, crazy man; see above, p. 186 at n. 2.

second occasion I planned no little slaughter for your army. So shall I mingle cowardice with my valour³ and capitulate through fear of death? For the things of this world I have fought much, as you know and as you now hear from me. Shall I not then die for Christ and for eternal life, or shall I really be afraid of you? Far from it! Here stand I; do not hesitate to carry out whatever you wish to do."

When he [the caliph] heard such replies and more of the same tenor [190] delivered in a resolute and fearless manner with great audacity, then he ordered him to be put to death immediately by beheading with the sword. The executioners took the blessed one to the place of execution. He raised his hands to heaven in prayer that he might be able to overcome heroically, then offered his neck to the executioner who cut off his head. So the blessed Yovnan gave up the ghost with a true confession in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to whom be glory for ever.

When Bugha had carried out his plans against Armenia—the removal of the Armenian magnates from the country—he also brought it about that no one at all remained in security, and notably that no one continued to resist his control. He wrote individually to those who remained in their lands in strongholds to the effect that they should rapidly come to him from each one's territory without suspicion or fear; that they would receive their principalities and enjoy royal gifts and honours, and be subject to the caliph. Each left his territory, outstripping one another in response to Bugha's summons. Gathering in one spot, they came before the general of the Muslims. For a short while he forgave them with an appearance of peaceful friendship, until his affair with Apumusē had been carried through. But after the latter had been arrested and the general knew that from then on not a single Armenian prince remained who had not joined him, he then stripped off the mask of deceit which Satan had planted in his heart. He formed companies of armed soldiers, accoutred and prepared, according to the various families and the number of Armenian lords. At dawn one morning, while each was sleeping in his own tent, his troops surrounded them with swords, shields, lances, and lit torches. Entering at their general's command, they put [the Armenians'] feet into iron bonds, put them on camels, and brought them to Samarra.

3. Cf. above, p. 181 at n. 4. For "shall I mingle" (*khairnits'em*) the MS reads "you mingled" (*khairnets'er*), which makes no sense.

[191] These were their names:¹ Lord Smbat, *sparapet* of Armenia; Grigor son of K'urdik, lord of the Mamikonean; Atrnerseh, prince of Albania; Grigor, lord of Siunik'; Sahl son of Smbat, lord of Shak'ē, who had captured Baban;² the princes Vasak, lord of Vayots'-dzor, and P'ilippē, prince of Siunik', and Nerseh, prince of Garit'ayank'; and then Esayi Apumusē, who had waged many wars. There remained only Ashot, son of the *sparapet*, and Mushet and Smbat, brothers of Ashot, whom Bugha allowed to govern their land because of the earlier loyalty of their father to the caliph and the general.³ For he had followed their wishes with all his strength and devotion. In the principality of Vaspurakan there remained Gurgēn in the general's place⁴ and the other Artsruni families. So he removed all the powerful men from Armenia, then went himself to Partaw, to winter there and to see how he might complete the final destruction of Armenia.⁵ He despatched a certain Abraham and sent him as governor of Armenia and overseer of the royal taxes, to rule in the place of its princes.⁶

CHAPTER 12

*What took place after the removal of the princes,⁷
and [concerning] the wars*

After the principality had been abolished from the land of Vaspurakan, there remained various families of the Artsruni clan: the valiant Gurgēn, Mushet his brother, and Apujap'r, Apumk'dēm, Vasak, and another Vasak, and Mushet, and Ashot, and Sahak, and others from the house of the Artsrunik',

1. Of these John Catholicos, p. 127, mentions by name only Atrnerseh and Esayi; he adds two not mentioned by Thomas: Ktrich, prince of Gardman, and Step'anos Kon from Uti. For Shak'ē and Vayots'-dzor see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 211, 469.

2. The text of Thomas has Mahl for Sahl. For his role in the capture of Baban see Moses Daskhurants'i, III 20, and Vardan, *History*, p. 79.

3. Thomas refers to three sons of Smbat Aplabas, whose loyalty to Bugha is described above, pp. 137-138, and in John Catholicos, p. 120.

4. Gurgēn: brother of Prince Ashot who was in prison; see above, p. 139. "In the general's place" (*i tetwoj zawrarut'ean*—read *zawravarut'ean*?) is ambiguous. It could mean "in place of the general [Ashot]," or "in the rank of general."

5. The winter of 853/4.

6. Abraham was emir of Nakhchavan; see p. 195. He is not mentioned by other Armenian sources. For "governor" (*hazarapet*) see above, p. 108 n. 2, and for "overseer" (*verakats'u*), p. 107 n. 4.

7. *After the removal of the princes: zknī anishkhanut'ean*, lit., "after the anarchy"; but this chapter describes the period of anarchy, not the period *after* the anarchy.

and their knights.⁸ But they began to multiply further woes [192] on woes. For they fought and quarrelled with each other in their desire for the principality. Estranged from each other, they formed armies from among those who had escaped the sword and captivity of Bugha. Some of them proposed Gurgēn for the title of the principality, others Apujap'r, and some Vasak. In this regard the saying of the prophet Isaiah [is apposite]: "In that day a man shall strike his brother or his relative; and they shall say: Be our prince, and our nourishment shall be with you."¹ So the land fell into confusion and was filled with turmoil. Wherever they went they laid waste by raiding, plundering, and rapine. No man had mercy on his brother, in accordance with another saying of Isaiah: "Man shall fall on man," he says, "and man on his fellow. The youth shall smite the old man, and the unworthy the honourable."² For in the example of the Israelites, as in the days of their anarchy there were confusions and each man did as was pleasing to his eyes,³ so likewise now the same occurred. For the humble and weak through poverty wandered about in distress, while the more powerful and strong became ferocious like beasts, disturbing the whole country by their shameless and unimpeded brigandage.

CHAPTER 13

*How Gurgēn remained alone, and the many wars
in the country*

With especial pleasure I am happy to undertake the story of the noble, glorious, and victorious champion, I mean Gurgēn, member of a family that is most splendid, distinguished, grand, eminent, and prestigious. He descended from two royal lines, being a scion of Senek'erim and of the Mamikoneans from Chen. From both sides he inherited royal blood and station: from his father that of Senek'erim, and from his [193] mother that of the Mamikoneans, from whom he traced

8. *Knights: azatk'*; see p. 109 n.4.

1. Isa. 3.6.

2. Isa. 3.5.

3. Thomas is referring to the time of the Judges; see 17.6 and 21.25: "in those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

his genealogy down to the time we are considering.¹ Gurgēn deserves the most expansive praises; I should richly eulogise him and deploy my rhetoric to the fullest extent. But since this is the occasion to write history and not engage in panegyrics,² I shall avoid all reproach, especially since with my meagre erudition I am inadequate to expound the full measure of his praise. That I leave to other more competent and intelligent men, freeing myself from overwhelming censure. But I myself have no hesitation, reserve, or objection in considering him the equal of the martyrs³ and in praising as sacrificial his relentless struggles against the Arab⁴ raiders. He expended torrents of blood for his native land, and soul and body for the saints of Christ's church and the believers in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in order to preserve them safe and unsullied. As a good shepherd gives himself to death for his sheep,⁵ he modelled himself on the Son of God, as it pleased Paul to say: "Those whom he previously knew he previously summoned to share the image of his Son."⁶ Let this suffice for those who are logically minded and understanding. We shall carry forward in abbreviated fashion our historical task.

But do not blame me, Oh lover of learning,⁷ for not including in this history all his deeds in detail. For the deeds accomplished by others are one or two or so, whereas his surpass in number

1. This is Gurgēn, son of Apupelch, whose career is described in detail by Laurent, "Un féodal." Apupelch, prince of Vaspurakan (mentioned above, p. 109), had married a Mamikonean princess. The descent of the Mamikoneans from an eponymous ancestor from Chen is described by Moses Khorenats'i, II 81, where the ancestor is named Mamgon, and in the *Primary History* (Sebeos, pp. 56–57), where there are two heroes, Mamik and Konak. P'awstos, V 4, 37, merely refers to the ancestors of the Mamikoneans coming from the land of the Chenk'. Chen is in the Caucasus, according to Vardan, *Hawak'umn*, p. 37; and Zenob, p. 22, says that the land of the Chenk' is not far from Armenia. Adontz/Garsoian, equates the Chenk' with the Tzans. But in Moses a grander association is implied, for he describes their land of origin in terms taken from the description of China in the *Ashkharhats'oys'*.

2. *History, not panegyrics*: cf. Moses, II 92, eulogising Trdat, and also below, p. 273. For Thomas's unworthiness see p. 76 n. 5.

3. *Martyrs: nahatak*; see above, p. 140 n. 1. The following "sacrificial" renders *martirosakan*. In fact Gurgēn did not die a martyr's death. Thomas, p. 234, and John Catholicos, p. 177, say that he was thrown from his horse.

4. Arab: *arabats'i*, not the more common *tachik*.

5. John 10.11.

6. Rom. 8.29. "Modelled himself" (*patkerakits'*) picks up the quotation from Paul: *kerparanakits' patkeri*.

7. *Lover of learning: usumnasēr*, used on p. 80 above of his patron's "erudite" intelligence. But here Thomas could be addressing any reader, not specifically Gagik. For Thomas's emphasis on brevity in historical writing see the Introduction to this book.

the activity of many men. Therefore, for the moment we have abbreviated them into few words, as Paul was pleased to write in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Time does not suffice for describing the judges of Israel and the holy prophets"; in this account he includes only "those who by faith defeated [194] the kingdom."¹ In similar fashion John writes about the saving dispensation at the end of his gospel.²

Gurgēn, son of Apupelch, prince of Vaspurakan, in the troubled time of Bugha and when the patriarch Yovhannēs was Catholicos of Armenia,³ acted wisely in not opposing the evil one. But when Bugha entered the land of Vaspurakan, Gurgēn went to K'urdik, lord of the Mamikonean, in the province of Bagrevand and stayed there, for K'urdik was Gurgēn's uncle.⁴

When Bugha had completed his passage through the land of Vaspurakan and had marched to the East, Gurgēn went to the province of Sper.⁵ At that time the prince called [Grigor]⁶ of the Bagratuni clan had surreptitiously seized [from] the Greeks the castle called Aramaneak;⁷ [Gurgēn] was received by him with splendid honour. The general of the East⁸ came to wage war with the prince in order to recover the fortress, and there Gurgēn demonstrated much valour in opposing the Greek army—not once but many times. With forty men he attacked a thousand, killed many of the elite Greeks, and completely despoiled them, so that in his astonishment at his valour the general wrote to the Greek emperor Michael⁹ informing him about him.

Then the emperor wrote to his general in the hope that he would be able to persuade Gurgēn to come to the capital to the emperor, from whom he would receive gifts and honour and

1. Heb. 11.33–34.

2. I.e. that the world could not contain the books that would be written; John 21.25.

3. John V, Catholicos 833–854; see above, p. 114.

4. *Uncle*: his mother's brother.

5. *Sper*: see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 287.

6. *The prince called [Grigor]: Galabar ishkanik koch'ets'eal*. No such name as *Galabar* is attested elsewhere. Canard/Laurent takes it as a personal name; Brosset takes it to be *gotabar* (like a thief) and renders "à la dérobée," while Vardanyan takes it as *gahnabar* and renders "secretly, furtively." I render as "surreptitiously." Vardanyan takes *ishkanik* to be the name of this member of the Bagratuni clan. But although such a personal name is well attested (e.g. Ps.-Shapuh, p. 147, *Ishkanik*, nephew of Ashot Artsruni), the man in question is called *Grigor* just below. Patkanean lists him in his index as "Galabar Grigor, Bagratid prince."

7. *Aramaneak*: not attested elsewhere. Vardanyan notes that it is in Sper.

8. I.e. the Bagratid general.

9. Michael III, emperor 842–867.

promotion in rank. Gurgēn did not consent to go to the Greeks, but he did persuade Grigor to give the castle to the general and appease the emperor. [Some] Muslim soldiers from Bugha's army had come to attack the Greek forces in the castles. Gurgēn opposed them numerous times, inflicting no small losses on the Muslim army. Then he himself went to the prince in the fortress called Ashkharhaberd;¹⁰ after there [195] exhibiting most courageous resistance, he returned to the *sparapet* Smbat.

The latter informed Bugha about him, saying: "This man Gurgēn from the clan of the Artsrunik', a valiant warrior, from fear of you crossed over to the territory of the Greeks. Yet he frequently attacked the Greek forces that were waging war with your army, and caused no little shedding of blood to the Greek troops vicariously for your army. Now behold, he has arrived and awaits your orders. May you be pleased, valiant general, with his brave deeds against the Greek army." And Bugha sent word to the *sparapet* that Gurgēn should remain with the *sparapet* without fear and [accept] his profound thanks.

In those same days, when the survivors of the Artsruni house heard of the defeat of the royal army by the Tsanars,¹ they gathered their forces in one spot with the foot soldiers and mass of common people, being four thousand in number. As their leader they appointed Apujap'r Artsruni, and with him Sahak Apumk'dēm, Apujap'r's uncle, a brave warrior. Raiding the provinces of Chuash and T'ornawan,² they took plunder. But because Bugha had entrusted these provinces to the *sparapet* Smbat, he wrote to the emir of Nakhchavan whose name was Abraham,³ informing him about the troops of Vaspurakan. He [Abraham] rapidly marched to the city of Berkri, and in unison with the citizens went out to meet the army and commanders of Vaspurakan at a village called Khozaḡberk'.⁴ For the Muslims had retreated and fled before Apumk'dēm. In a single raid Apumk'dēm had slain eight men and stripped them of their horses, arms, and accoutrements. He had inflicted great losses

10. *Ashkharhaberd*: also in Sper, see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 400. "The prince" renders *ishkhanikn*. If *ishkhanik* were a personal name the demonstrative suffix would not be used.

1. See above, p. 177.

2. *Chuash*, *T'ornawan*: between Lake Van and the Araxes; see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 345, 430.

3. *Abraham*: see above, p. 191 n. 6.

4. *Berkri*, *Khozaḡberk'*: see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 341, 433.

on the Muslims and had again made incursions in pursuit of them. While he was riding along deep in thought, his wounded horse caught its foot in a small bush, as they say, and fell headlong, breaking its back [196] and throwing its rider, the valiant general Apumk'dēm. His enemies fell upon him, striking him with their swords. One of them stripped off his shoes, but he kicked the coward in the chest and killed him. Then they rushed on him, cut off his head, and brought it to their general Abraham. Taking courage, they turned on the Armenian force, inflicting grave losses. But Lord Apujap'r and those with him fought bravely against the Muslims and carried [the day].

When they [the Armenians] realised that their general had been killed and that their right arm had been crushed,¹ they turned in flight. Breaking ranks and destroying their line, they separated and abandoned the battle, every man fleeing where he could escape. There remained only the infantry, discouraged without a leader. [The enemy] fell on these and slaughtered them, filling the wide valley with the corpses of the slain. The springs there and the other muddy rivulets of water in the valleys below turned to blood. Abraham crossed over to the capital of R̄shtunik² and stayed there; [later] he returned to his own residence in Nakhchavan. Apujap'r went to the region of Albag. Troops gathered around him from every quarter; then they entered the capital of R̄shtunik' and appointed as their prince Vasak Kovaker, brother of Vahan.³

When news of the defeat of [the troops of] Vaspurakan by the Muslims and of Vasak's becoming prince reached the valiant Gurgēn, he rapidly marched to the land of Vaspurakan with the approval of the *sparapet*. As soon as he reached there, he quickly attacked the fortresses called Jmar and Sring, seized them, and captured Vasak, appropriating for himself the command of the entire principality of Vaspurakan. He began to make an orderly tour of the whole land, in which dwelt the Muslims who had remained there at Bugha's orders.⁴ He inflicted great losses on the Muslims, slaughtering them [197] with the sword and bow, and removed¹ all the tribes of Muslims who were living in the principality of Vaspurakan.

1. Cf. Ezek. 30.22.

2. *Capital: ostan*; see above, p. 51 n. 5, the modern Vostan (Gevash).

3. See the genealogical chart in Canard/Laurent, p. 466, no. 15.

4. For Muslim settlement in Armenia at this time see Ter-Ghevondyan, ch. 1, §§4-7.

1. *Removed: ebardz*, which could also mean "exterminated."

At that time a certain Butel² from the royal army came at Bugha's command to attack Gurgēn. With him were the citizens of Berkri called Ut'manik³ and those of the nobility of Vaspurakan who had joined the royal army, about two thousand men. They encountered each other at the village of Ordok' at the head of Hayots'-dzor which leads into the province of Aruant'uni.⁴ Gurgēn was encamped there with four hundred men, unworried and unsuspecting. Suddenly at dawn the force of Muslims attacked. Gurgēn hastily mounted his horse. They formed line and filled out the ranks; the shield bearers covered the front of the battle line, posted in support of the warriors of the infantry. Valiantly distinguishing themselves, the Armenian troops battled the Muslims for many drawn-out hours, inflicting great losses on their army. But the Muslim force recovered a little and stood firm. Then Lord Gurgēn, in his impatience, spurred the brave horse on which he was mounted and attacked the left wing of the Muslim army. Breaking their ranks he turned them back, and one wing of the Muslims fled before Gurgēn. He pursued them and slaughtered them with such vigour that there were more who perished by Gurgēn's sword than who survived. The troops pursuing the survivors expelled them from their land. But the right wing of the Muslims pushed back the force of Armenians, pursued them in flight as far as their borders, and then returned thinking they had completely destroyed the Armenian army. But it was the Muslim troops who were defeated by the valiant Gurgēn, and their power that was broken. From then on the Muslim army no longer dared to enter the land of Vaspurakan, for great fear had fallen upon them.

Now in addition to the many brigands who attacked Gurgēn, and the hard battles that he fought with victorious [198] heroism, not only [were there] enemies from the outside who surrounded him, there were also many troubles stirred up on the inside by numerous members of his own family, faithless relatives false to their pacts and oaths. But they [Gurgēn and his party], keeping their hope in Christ unbroken, acquired a glorious repute superior to all, raising the standard of victory. And the Lord omnipotent was with him wherever he wished.

2. I.e. Budayl; see Canard/Laurent, p. 270.

3. For the Ut'manikk' see below, ch. 18, p. 214, with further references.

4. Aruant'uni is the province of Eruandunik'; see Eremyan, *Hayastan*, p. 51, and *ibid.*, p. 75 for Ordok. For Hayots'-dzor see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 343.

When news of his [Gurgēn's] valour and strategic skill in mounting attacks reached the general, Bugha's heart turned towards him in peaceful friendship. He had brought to him, as the due of a general,¹ a princely sword to gird him and a noble belt to encircle his waist, rods as batons,² and a spirited horse that stamped its foot imperiously, ideal for riding to war. He appointed him prince to be trusted in his own stead, and thus promoted him to the highest eminence.³ Neither inner nor outer attacks were able to prevail against the victorious power of this man strengthened by Christ. But I must express my profound astonishment at how he could endure the insufferable multiplication of labour, the bodily effort of ceaseless perseverance in battle, not to mention his enthusiasm in combat. However, as earlier, I have decided to put myself beyond reproach for not setting down methodically and in order my description of the man. For it is impossible to gather in one spot the superabundance [of his deeds], or to indicate all the details, especially because some others have written [about them] before us and have set down a comprehensive account.⁴

After four years had passed, during which time Lord Zak'aria held the patriarchal throne of the Catholicosate of Armenia,⁵ Grigor the brother of Ashot prince of Vaspurakan returned from the land of the Apkhaz.⁶ With their support and that of elite Georgian troops he entered the land of Vaspurakan to wage war against Gurgēn. But when the troops who accompanied him realised the latter's [199] unshakeable valour, they returned to their own territories on various pretexts. So Grigor, unable to carry through his opposition, treated with him [Gurgēn] on terms of peace and friendship for the division of the land into two; they mutually agreed to peace. However, the

1. *As the due of a general: ǔst awrini glkhapetur'ean.* According to the *NBHL*, *glkhapetur'iwn* is only attested here. *Glkhapet* is tautologous, meaning "chief head."

2. *Rods as batons: k'urk'k' khizakhołk'*, the "fasces" of authority; cf. above, p. 187 n. 7. For the regalia in general cf. p. 150 n. 1.

3. Thomas's language is vague; no specific position or title is given, save the curious title noted above in n.1.

4. Presumably, Thomas means Shapuh Bagratuni. John Catholicos refers only once to Gurgēn, p. 177.

5. *Zak'aria*: Catholicos 855-876. The four years date from 854; cf. above, p. 191, and below, p. 201.

6. Grigor was Ashot's youngest brother; Thomas mentions him above, p. 109, but says nothing of his going to the land of the Apkhaz. That these were Christian, and therefore a likely place of refuge, Thomas had noted earlier, p. 175. Ashot was still in prison in Samarra; see above, p. 139.

disturbers and enemies of peace did not cease scheming against the good or increasing the evil—especially Vasak,¹ who attributed to himself the supposed title of prince. But although Gurgēn recognised those deceiving him, he did not requite for the evil done; but every time he seized him he let Vasak go in peace, treating it as a jest.

At the same time Vahan, son of Ashot and nephew of Sahak,² returned from captivity. Intending to seize the land he raised a force to oppose Gurgēn, but sustained a defeat rather than victory. Gurgēn was residing in the secure fortress of the capital of R̄shtunik³ when Vahan suddenly attacked him with the intention of acquiring some of Gurgēn's [land]. The latter made a sortie with a few men, rushing down like a torrent of water, and expelled Vahan and his troops. Descending to the plain, they mustered together, drew up line, and joined battle. Many they slaughtered, and Shapuh the prince of the Amatuni family was among the wounded who fell. Gurgēn encountered the large force of Vahan in a murky ditch; not a few swords struck at him, and a certain Juanshēr³ unexpectedly smote Gurgēn from behind, wounding him. But with rapid hand he drew his sword, hit Juanshēr in the face, putting out his eyes, and returned after this great victory to his fortified position.

After a few days Vahan went back to Samarra to inform Ashot what had transpired. But Grigor lived for one year after his return, and died. [200] They took him and buried him in the monastery of the Holy Cross in the province of Ałbag.¹

But Gurgēn pursued his course of heroic encounters in battle. Ceaselessly, day and night, he and the noble troops who had joined him did not merely demonstrate their prowess and victorious courage in certain places but everywhere rushed to the assault like champions. Like a single person, in armour and [bearing] a sword for battle, they attacked fortresses and beat down their garrisons with sword and bow, to the flashing of sword and lance, and even in combats by night. Just as the valiant general of Israel,

1. For Vasak's apostasy see above, p. 158.

2. For Vahan's captivity see above, p. 139. This is not the Ashot mentioned on p. 198, older brother of Grigor; see the table in Canard/Laurent, p. 466.

3. This Juanshēr is otherwise unattested.

1. *Monastery of the Holy Cross*. Many Artsruni princes and princesses were buried here in the family vault: Gurgēn, p. 204; Ashot, p. 217; Derenik, p. 228; Sophy, p. 229; Ashot, son of Derenik, p. 249. For the monastery in general see Oskean, *Vaspurakan* III, pp. 807–809; Cuneo, "Soradir"; Thierry, "L'église."

Joshua,² or Gideon, or even the very patriarch Abraham, attacking the Canaanites,³ waged a continuously victorious struggle and returned in great triumph; such or even more gloriously victorious battles did the great general Gurgēn win over the race of Ismael, setting up the standard of victory everywhere and in all places. Like the brave shepherd praised by the Saviour, he gave his life for his sheep opposing the ravenous wolves,⁴ mercilessly rushing to the assault, as he delivered all the violent oppressors of our country to blood and destruction, to slaughter and death by the sword. He was blessed and eulogised by those far and near, by the natives and foreigners⁵ in the land. The tribes of Muslims were altogether atremble at the sight of him and distraught with great fear, for they saw their demise confirmed without a doubt. He cleansed the land from the impurity and deceit of its oppressors, like Judas Maccabee purifying the impiety of Antiochus from Israel,⁶ and made peace for all his subjects.

[201] CHAPTER 14

The return of Derenik to Armenia, and the beginning of the Lord's restoration of the princes of all Armenia from captivity

The sixth year of the captivity of Armenia was completed, which was the 306th year of the Armenian calendar—equivalent to six jubilees and olympiads and indictions—and the third year of the patriarchate of Lord Zak'aria, Catholicos of Armenia.¹ It was the beginning of the seventh year that the princes had been at court, in accordance with the septennial measure of time, just as God had allotted for the people of Israel in captivity in Babylon, as it is written in the prophecy of Isaiah: "You will know the seventy-seventh and you will understand how to respond, from the issuance of the saying up to the

2. John 12.8.

3. The Bible mentions no particular victory of Gideon over the Canaanites, but cf. Judg., ch. 6. God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham, Gen. 17.8.

4. Cf. John 10.11–14.

5. *Natives and foreigners*: *bnakats' ew ekats'*, a common biblical phrase (e.g. Ex. 12.19), so it cannot be used as historical evidence for settlers.

6. For the importance of the Maccabees as a model in Armenian historiography see Thomson, "Maccabees."

1. The year 306 of the Armenian era ended on April 25, A.D. 858. But it is not clear how Thomas makes this six jubilees (300) and six (?) olympiads (24?) and six (?) indictions (90?). As above, p. 106 at n. 5, Thomas does not use these terms in any strict sense. Zak'aria became Catholicos in 855; cf. p. 198 n. 5.

Anointed [will be] seven weeks and sixty-two weeks." In like fashion Daniel makes the same declaration.²

So much do they [say]. As for us, we shall abbreviate the whole revolution into single numbers, [reckoning] the total of years according to tens of weeks, which is the most perfect of numbers—seven. To that period of time did God abbreviate his decree against this new Israel, that is [among] the heathen.³ Then abundantly he poured out the mercy of his creative care for his creatures, humanely pitying them at the intercession of the saints who had shed their blood for the true and unsullied confession in Christ, and for the exertions of the blessed Grigor Artsruni, the valiant champion and victorious martyr and confessor of Christ, and through the chief shepherd, Saint Yovhannēs the bishop, and the heroic priest Grigor.⁴ These continuously addressed pleas for mercy on high on behalf of the Lord's people, just as the angel of the Lord implored God, saying: "For how long will you not have mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Juda? This is the seventieth year."⁵ And he inclined them to the direction he wished.

The Lord heard their prayers and turned from the anger of [202] his wrath in pity and mercy, as the blessed prophets wrote.

After those days, when the caliph had delighted the Armenian princes in his banqueting hall and had promised to restore to each one his lands in inheritance, he then commanded Ashot and his son Grigor to be brought before him.¹ He clothed them with garments, set [in their hands] a princely banner, girded them with a sword and belt adorned with precious stones, [gave them] a select and richly ornamented horse, then despatched them from the chamber in glorious splendor and notable honour to the sound of singing and the blowing of trumpets.² Heralds proclaimed with voices loud and clear that the principality of the

2. Dan. 9.25 is the source of this quotation, not Isaiah. The latter (23.15, 17) refers to a period of seventy years. For the significance of "seven" in Armenian sources see Thomson, "Number Symbolism." The *Teaching* in particular emphasizes the seven ages of the world.

3. Although Armenian historians often looked to Old Testament heroes, and especially to the Maccabees, as models, they do not often refer to Armenia as "the new Israel." The "heathen" are the Muslims, just as Elishē applied the term to the Sasanians; see above, p. 142 n. 3.

4. For these three see above, pp. 152–162. Only Grigor Artsruni was martyred; Thomas describes the release of Yovhannēs and Grigor below, pp. 207–208.

5. Zech. 1.12.

1. For the imprisonment of Ashot and his son Grigor Derenik see above, p. 139.

2. For such investitures see above, p. 150 n. 1, with further references.

land of Vaspurakan had been given to Ashot and his son Grigor, holding in their hands the royal decree that the caliph had sent Grigor, son of Ashot, to his own country to rule over his land in the place of his father.³

Then Prince Grigor departed from the caliph in great joy and indescribable happiness, and entered his own land, the principality called Vaspurakan. He ruled his country with princely authority. When he sat on the throne of his father's dominions he was about ten years old.

In the eighth year of the captivity Gurgēn, Ashot's brother,⁴ returned to exercise sole control over his principality and domains, and to restore order to the land that had been troubled and ruined. For although [the other] Gurgēn⁵ had opposed with great energy the attacks of those who were striving for the princely title, or the violent and bellicose assaults of the Muslims from outside, nonetheless, the land was not secure. But raids by brigands, the constraints of famine, the afflictions of captors, the attacks of wild beasts, disturbances within and without openly gripped the land.

When the second Gurgēn arrived, he hastily moved to attack the first Gurgēn, for the latter had seized [203] and was occupying the castles of Sring and Jmar.¹ But when he reached there, he abandoned armed opposition for peace talks, citing the royal command of the leader of the Muslims that the whole principality of Vaspurakan was to be entrusted to Ashot. To this he was not unresponsive, and with wise courage abandoned the castles. The second Gurgēn sent him messengers to the effect that: "If you confirm a permanent alliance with me in a peace agreement, I too shall revolt against Ashot. Together we shall divide the land and live in security."

But Gurgēn did not agree to this, for two reasons. First "lest I appear to be in rebellion against the caliph² of the Muslims," who had heard of his prowess in many other wars and of the defeats he had inflicted on the Muslim army, and was suspicious of what he had done with Ashot.³ And second, because he did not trust

3. Ashot returned later; see below, p. 209.

4. For the captivity of Grigor Derenik's uncle see above, p. 151.

5. I.e. Gurgēn, son of Apupelch, praised in the preceding chapter.

1. See above, p. 196.

2. *Caliph*: here *brnawor*, "tyrant," as often in descriptions of martyrdoms.

3. Thomas refers to the exploits of Ashot and Gurgēn Apupelch who had defeated the emir Ali and the Muslim army; see above, p. 112.

Gurgēn, fully remembering what they had negotiated under oath and aware of what his own father had suffered from the other's father.⁴ Therefore he set out to travel around the regions of Greek territory, entrusting his cares to the grace of God; for his heart was consecrated to the Lord God omnipotent.

When he arrived at the city of Theodosius in the province of Karin,⁵ news of him reached the emperor Michael, king of the Greeks, who was prompt to arrange that he proceed to him without delay, in order that he might elevate him to the great honour of the consulate and decorate him with the insignia of the cross.⁶ While this plan was under consideration, two emirs, one called Bshir and the other Zk'ri,⁷ fell on [Gurgēn], captured him, and brought him to Ashot son of the *sparapet*.⁸ Although the latter was irritated at what had occurred, nonetheless he hesitated to let him go, fearful of the troublesome race of Ismael which still exercised tyrannical control, and [because] the captives and his father the *sparapet* were at court. So he informed the governor of the city of Tiflis. The latter demanded that [Gurgēn] come [204] to him, insisting and intimidating with threats that he abandon the Christian religion; then he would not be troubled. But he mocked him, choosing bonds and imprisonment, even death with valour for the name of Christ over life with remorse.¹ They bound Gurgēn with triple bonds and also put chains on his neck, sent him through Persian Atrpatakan, and brought him to the prison with the captives.² They frequently addressed him with various threats and persuasive words that he might abandon the Christian religion and join the other apostates from Christ. But not in the least was he perverted by the tyrant's words, because of his love for Christ.

He also clad Solomon Bagratuni with the weapons of Satan and frequently sent him to him with the same intention. But

4. The father of Gurgēn, Apupelch himself, had been killed by the father of Ashot and Gurgēn, Hamza, at the capital of Ršhtunik; see pp. 205, 234.

5. *Theodosiopolis*: see Moses Khorenats'i, III 59, and Garitte, *Narratio*, pp. 65–69, for Armenian traditions concerning the founding of this city (Karin, Erzerum).

6. Michael III, emperor 842–867. For the title of "consul" in Byzantium and its holders see Guillard, "Le consul." For the insignia of the cross cf. below, p. 239 at n. 1.

7. Bshir and Zakaré were emirs of Erzerum. "Emir" here renders *k'alak'apet*, *politarchēs* in Acts 17.6, 8; cf. also below, p. 226 n. 6.

8. I.e. Ashot Bagratuni, son of Smbat Aplabas *sparapet*.

1. For this topos see above, p. 159 n. 4.

2. I.e. to Samarra.

[Gurgēn] rejected him with smarting words as a servant of the devil.³

Then there appeared to him in the prison a handsome person in the form of a grey-haired man, shining with light,⁴ who said to Gurgēn: "Take heed, strive valiantly, arm yourself bravely, be a warrior of Christ.⁵ Do not incline to the false religion of those who have turned away from the truth, the race of Ismael, like those Armenian captives who were deluded." So he was even more confirmed and strengthened in the faith, in the love and hope of Christ. Cast into the farthest recesses of the prison, he endured everything with praise for the name of Christ—hunger and thirst, with great fortitude.

But [the other] Gurgēn lived one more year and then departed this world, having turned from the impiety of the apostates. They brought him and laid him to rest in their sepulchre in the monastery of the Holy Cross.⁶

Derenik,⁷ strengthened by the power of Christ, became glorious and renowned throughout the whole land of Armenia; and the country had respite from the confusions that had befallen it. The [205] country began to experience a renewal, the churches to shine with ornamentation and splendid rituals; those scattered rushed back to their own places to build, plant, and forget the pains and afflictions they had endured.

In those times, while Jap'rmot'ok'l was greatly puffed up and waxing haughty against the Christians—like Senek'erim our ancestor against Jerusalem and the people of Israel¹—suddenly his own son Mot'ēin attacked and slew him. He reigned in his father's place, and died after six months. After him the son of his uncle Muht'is reigned, and having lived for three months died.²

3. Solomon Bagratuni, presumably an apostate, is not attested elsewhere.

4. Cf. the vision of Łevond in prison, Elishē, p. 150, or the vision of Saint Gregory, Agathangelos, §733, or the appearance of the angel to Peter in prison, Acts 12.7. The shining light is a standard feature.

5. Cf. I Pet. 4.1; I Tim. 6.12; II Tim. 2.3.

6. I.e. Gurgēn, brother of Ashot, uncle of Grigor Derenik, who died in 860. "In their sepulchre" (*i tetwoj hangstaranats'n iwreants'*) refers to the family vault(s) of the Artsrunik' at the monastery of the Holy Cross; see above, p. 200 n. 1.

7. This is the first time that Thomas calls Grigor, son of Ashot, *Derenik* (he is called *Deranik* in the Anonymous). For the etymology see below, p. 280.

1. Cf. IV Kings 18.13.

2. Mutawakkil was assassinated on 10 December, 861. Thomas's Mot'ēin is Mutanasir, caliph 861–862. Muht'is is Mustain (son of Mutanasir's uncle), who was caliph 862–866. Therefore Vardanyan corrects "three months" (*amiss g*) to "four years" (*ams d*).

The Armenian princes remained in danger, seeking a way out of their troubles from Christ, from whom they had fallen away. But after the passage of many troubled days, Gurgēn was released by Christ's providence, saved from prison, and returned to his land. When the news reached Derenik, he moved to attack him, but was turned back and fled. Taking courage again, he returned to oppose Gurgēn, whose horse, galloping along and neighing haughtily, threw him from pain.³ For Gurgēn was still recovering from illness and from his sufferings and afflictions in prison. They [Derenik's men] came upon him, seized him, and brought him to prison in irons in the city of Hadamakert.⁴ A servant of Derenik's who was the jailer loosed him from his bonds and brought him into the room where Derenik was sleeping. The servant had the evil intention of killing Derenik and handing the principality of the land to Gurgēn, for this was a convenient opportunity. But Gurgēn preferred the love of Christ to the love of this transitory world. He did not seek vengeance for the blood of his father murdered by the other's grandfather;⁵ but addressing Derenik tearfully and holding in his hand a drawn sword, a sabre and axe, he said: "My son Derenik, greetings to you, greetings [206] to you, greetings to you. I have gone off to the territory of the Greeks." The other, stricken by fear, said: "My father, have mercy on me," and was unable to utter anything else.

Then Gurgēn hastily went out to conceal himself until he should succeed at Christ's will wherever he might go. He reached a village called Eragani,¹ and came to a monk who was priest in the monastery. As a fearer of God he trusted himself to him and begged him to protect him. The latter enclosed him in a tiny, narrow space, then made haste to put out the sad news that [Gurgēn] had died; he was a mad monk full of folly, [who did] what he had not been ordered to do: of his own will he carried out a crime against himself, for which he will pay retribution on the day of his judgment.²

But Derenik captured him and kept him carefully, doing him

3. I.e. because of his pain Gurgēn could not keep his seat.

4. *Hadamakert*: the capital of Vaspurakan; see above, p. 116 n. 3.

5. See above, p. 203 n. 4.

1. The site of Eragani is unknown; it was clearly in, or not far from, Vaspurakan.

2. Thomas seems to imply that the monk put out the rumour that Gurgēn had committed suicide. But the text does not make it clear whether "the mad monk . . . judgment" refers to the monk's claim about Gurgēn, or whether this was what happened to the monk himself later.

no harm save for the bonds in which he had fettered him, as compensation for his goodness.³ But he rendered him a ready hand and was blessed by Saint Zak'aria.⁴ For when the blessed Zak'aria heard that Gurgēn had been seized, he made haste to come with the bishops of the land, accompanied also by Ashot, prince of princes,⁵ and begged the prince Derenik to release him from bonds. The prince paid him heed and carried out his request. And the two made a mutual pact not to be mistrustful of each other. Derenik restored to Gurgēn the province of Mardastan,⁶ his own allotment. But Gurgēn suspected that Ashot might report him as a rebel to the leader of the Muslims, so he went out to live in the guise of a vagabond⁷ with brave courage, loved throughout all lands.

Now since the oversight of Armenia had been entrusted to Ashot, who was the prince of princes,⁸ he undertook the subjection of the princes of Armenia, Georgia, and Albania—which indeed he brought about. Gathering a force he entered Vantosp; Derenik [207] opposed him, but he [Ashot] captured him and put him in bonds like some disobedient [subject] and passed into the capital of R̄shtunik'.

When Gurgēn received news of Derenik and how he had been seized, he marched rapidly with all speed from the regions of Tarōn. They encamped four hundred men strong, armed with armour for men and horses, in Noragiwl' of R̄shtunik'.¹ He wrote to the prince of princes [bidding him] renounce any useless plans he might have. "Otherwise, he said, I shall see you with arms and armoured cavalry drawn up in battle array." He was planning to attack Ashot unexpectedly by night. But the prince of princes, wisely inspired, hastened to fulfill Gurgēn's request. And because Derenik's wife had just died, Gurgēn wrote to Ashot, saying: "Does it not seem a fine idea to you, most noble and eminent of all men, that there would be a trusting alliance between you and Derenik if you gave your daughter in marriage to Derenik as princess of Vaspurakan?" Without

3. I.e. in not murdering him.

4. The Catholicos; see above, p. 198.

5. Ashot Bagratuni; see above, p. 203, and n. 8 below.

6. *Mardastan*: Northeast of Lake Van; see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 343–344.

7. *Vagabond*: *shrjaberakan*, lit., "circular, carried around."

8. For the appointment of Ashot Bagratuni as prince of princes see John Catholicos, p. 133. Cf. also Ter-Ghevondyan, p. 53; Canard/Laurent, p. 255.

1. *Noragiwl'*: see above, p. 128 n.1.

delay the plan was carried out. He took with him Derenik and went to his own house in Bagaran.² They made a great festival for Derenik's marriage, in the 311th year of the Armenian era.³

CHAPTER 15

Return of the princes from captivity

In those same times benevolent God allowed the Armenian princes to return each to their native principalities; they lived safely in peace, subject to the authority of the prince of princes.

Among them the blessed bishop Yovhannēs and the ascetic priest Grigor, bearing the full title of confessor for their testimony⁴ as martyrs, were freed from the prison [208] where they had been thrown. They reached our land, bringing the good news of the release of the captives—like Khorēn and Abraham, confessors of Christ, who were freed from the cruel sufferings of their tortures in Persia and brought the happy news of the liberation of the Armenian nobles and the Lord's restoration of his captive people.¹

Now the blessed bishop Yovhannēs chose for himself a separate eremitic spot, devoting himself entirely to prayer and leaving his episcopal rank.² In his place³ they appointed a certain Yohan, a gentle and pious man, full of fear of the Lord, fit for the oversight of Christ's church.

But the *sparapet* Smbat and the princes of Vaspurakan⁴ re-

2. *Bagaran*: the Bagratid capital on the river Akhurean; see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 410–411.

3. The year 311 began on 25 April, A.D. 862. In 858 Grigor Derenik was "about ten years old" (p. 202 above), so he was a young widower; his first wife is not mentioned elsewhere. Ashot's daughter was named Sop'i. See John Catholicos, pp. 135–136, for his view of Derenik and the marriage. According to Ps.-Shapuh, p. 157, Derēn married Hranush, daughter of Ashot Bagratuni.

4. *Testimony*: *handēs*. Their companion Grigor had been martyred in the fourth year of their imprisonment; see above, pp. 154–162.

1. For Abraham and Khorēn see Elishē, pp. 187–192, and Łazar, p. 106. But according to them Khorēn died in Iran. To Abraham Thomas ascribes a "history of the martyrs" (the *Vkayk' Arewelits'*); see above, p. 65 n. 1.

2. As did Abraham, according to Elishē, p. 191.

3. I.e. as bishop of Artsrunik'.

4. Hriip'simē of Vaspurakan (wife of Hamza) was the sister of Smbat Aplabas, the Bagratid *sparapet*. For Smbat's captivity see above, p. 191; Hriip'simē had followed her sons, p. 151.

mained there [in Persia] and were added to the rolls of martyrs. For the leader of the Muslims interrogated and did violence to them both; but by the providence of God they were left to live openly without danger in the faith of Christ as they pleased. They died there and were buried gloriously according to Christian rite by the community of the Jacobites,⁵ who are the believing congregations there. Gaining the name of confessors, they were rendered glorious on earth and will be crowned by Christ with all the saints. Amen.

Gurgēn, however, daily increased in strength in numerous places—in Tarōn, Andzavats'ik', Arzn, and everywhere—as the records which were kept before us indicate, and which it seems to me superfluous to repeat.⁶ So after many turmoils and battles he succeeded in bringing the principality of Andzavats'ik' under his control in the following fashion.

Muşeł, lord of Andzavats'ik', was ill and at death's door.⁷ He had a son who was an infant, so Derenik planned to control the land. Muşeł set in writing that he would entrust him with the castle of Noraberd [209] and the surrounding territories, and that he would bequeath the other [lands] to his own son. When the lord of Andzavats'ik' died, his wife Helen¹ wrote to Gurgēn: "If it pleases you to marry [me] and you wish to rule over Andzavats'ik', do not hold back, delay, be slow, or fail to make haste." The plan of the lady Helen did please Gurgēn. He came to the castle of Kanguar,² carried out his aims, and ruled with great authority over Andzavats'ik'.

But Derenik exercised great ingenuity and caused himself much anguish in endeavouring to find some means whereby he

5. *Community of the Jacobites: ukht Yakobkats'*. *Ukht* could mean "clergy." *Yakobik* for Syrian monophysites is not common in Armenian, but see the *Book of Letters*, p. 234: Yovhannēs Imastasēr (Awdznets'i), *On the Councils in Armenia*, "six bishops from the Jacobite party" (*i Yakobik tanē*) attended the council at Manazkert in the year 175 of the Armenian era. *Ibid.*, p. 322, *Letter of the Catholicos Khach'ik to the Metropolitan of Melitene*, "those who oppose Chalcedon include . . . Armenians, Ałuank' . . . those inhabitants of Asorestan who are Jacobite (*Asorestaneayk' ork' en Yakobik*), all Egypt . . ."

6. Thomas returns to the life and exploits of Gurgēn, son of Apupelch. The previous records (*yishatakarank'*, as p. 152 n. 5) refer probably to Shapuh Bagratuni.

7. This Muşeł is otherwise unattested. For the province of Andzavats'ik' (southeast of Lake Van), spelled Andzevats'ik' by most Armenian authors, see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 342–343. Noraberd (New-castle) is only attested here.

1. This Helen is otherwise unknown.

2. *Kanguar*: in Andzavats'ik'. From the context it seems to be the main castle of the province; see further Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 342.

might wrest the castles from Gurgēn and control the country. He wore himself out from his many troubles and endeavours, from gathering troops and preparing for battle, from fitting out for armed combat and setting up the powerful machine for hurling stones.³ Making this vain effort, but remaining unable to gain the fortress, he returned to his own principality. However, Derenik did subject to himself half of Andzavats'ik' with the fortress of Noraberd [which he held] by officials,⁴ and he gave to Gurgēn the province of Mardastan as his personal portion, while he left his own agents there. But since Derenik had been false to Gurgēn, he expelled the officials. And in like fashion Gurgēn found a way to seize the castle, expel his officials, and rule alone over the principality of Andzavats'ik'. He pacified the land and made it safe and secure from bandits; he built churches and carried out the ceremonies of dedication in peace.

This was the sixth year of the captivity of the Armenians, and the 306th of their era. In the 307th year of the Armenian era Ashot, prince of Vaspurakan, returned from captivity.⁵

I promised above⁶ to write concerning Bugha, in particular the exaction of vengeance, but not the whole story.

[210] When Bugha returned to the court, he acted in a supercilious manner, was swollen and bloated full of arrogance; he would boast about the tremendous deeds he had accomplished, and suppose that by his own power he had presided over the destruction of Armenia—forgetful of the retribution for our sins inflicted by the Lord, as on Israel in times of old during the reign of Sedekia at the time of Nebuchadnezzar.¹ We have indicated the details [of the story] of the wife of Sahak, a son of Ismael, the death of Sahak and his wife's public lamentation of the reason for her husband's murder, and her declaration to the leader of the Muslims, Jap'r. The latter, with his habitual licen-

3. *Machine for hurling stones*: *mek'enay bakhmants' k'aradzgu'teants'n*; cf. above, p. 131 n. 7.

4. *Officials*: *gortsakal*, rendering *toparchēs*, e.g. in Dan. 3.2. It is very common in Moses Khorenats'i and other historians; see above, p. 55 n. 4.

5. This paragraph does not tally with other information in Thomas. On p. 202 above we are told that Ashot's son Grigor returned in the year 307 (A.D. 858/9), but not Ashot himself. On p. 166 below, Thomas says that Ashot died six years after returning from captivity, and on p. 217 that he died in 323 (A.D. 874/5). Vardanyan corrects 307 to 317 (A.D. 868/9), which fits the dates. But since Thomas next turns to Bugha's death (in 862/3), one may suspect that this paragraph is a later, incorrect, interpolation.

6. *Above*: p. 175.

1. Cf. II Chron. 36.

tious and foul insatiableness, waxed haughty and raged in an excess of ferocious poison. He flamed and burned like a furnace to spew out mortal poison on Bugha.² But he did not enjoy an open execution of his desires—first, because of [Bugha's] victorious and renowned accomplishment he thought it would bring opprobrium on himself; second, because of the battalions of the army. So he sent him to Khorasan, entrusting to him the government of that land. Jap'r himself strove to remove the army from him gradually, ostensibly in order to send raids into various lands. At the same time a command was secretly³ give to some people to deprive him of his life; on receiving the order, they directly carried it out.⁴

CHAPTER 16

*Concerning the return of Prince Ashot from captivity,
and Vahan Artsruni*

At that time the citizens of [the town] called Kzuin had revolted against the rule of the Muslims.⁵ So the leader of the Muslims gathered a force of cavalry from among the elite warriors of Asorestan and Arabia; among them was included our valiant [211] Ashot with his heroic strength who joined the royal army.¹ Musē, son of Bugha, was appointed general.² He had promised to bring about Ashot's return to his native principality, fixing the time at the completion of the campaign on which they had set out.

When they reached their destination, the armies of both sides

2. Cf. Elishē's description of Yazkert, pp. 6, 47.

3. *Secretly*: *yap'p'usop's . . . i gahnis*. The latter phrase is standard for "secretly"; the former is rare, but occurs in variant forms in IV Kings 2.14; II Chron. 16.21. It seems to mean "on the side."

4. For the death of Bugha (in 862/3) see the references in Canard/Laurent, p. 170 n. 268.

5. For the battle at Qazvin in A.D. 867 see the references in Canard/Laurent, p. 173 n. 321. Ps.-Shapuh, p. 149, refers to these events, speaking of an attack of Maghribites.

1. The role of Armenians in Sasanian armies is noted by Elishē, Łazar, and Sebēos. That the tradition was continued in Muslim times is clear from the agreement between Muawiya and Theodore Ršhtuni, quoted by Sebēos, p. 164 (the "pact with death and treaty with hell"). Whether the text in Sebēos is a verbatim record, or whether it is Sebēos who puts the explanation of an existing situation into vivid terms, is not our concern here. Thomas makes it clear that the overlords of Armenia obtained military service from their vassals. Cf. above, p. 118 at n. 2.

2. For Bugha's son Musē see the EI, s.v. *Bugha*.

faced each other in immense numbers. Line prepared for battle opposing line; the most valiant and splendid outdid each other in boasts of prowess. There our brave Ashot, feigning illness, reclined in his tent while they were seeing to preparations for the battle. Although the general Musē himself kept urging him to hurry and arm for battle, even more did he exaggerate the severity of his feigned illness and the grievousness of his pains. But while he feigned illness on his couch, the champions surged around. There was a fearsome thunder and frightful echoings and repercussions from the crush of the assault, like the crashing of hail and lightning from clouds.³ The army of the citizens [of Qazvin] had the upper hand over Musē, pushing him back around his own camp where our Ashot seemed to be ill. Vahan⁴ entered [his tent], begging and urging him not to linger until his repute for valour was thought by some to be tainted with cowardice,⁵ though he thought such suspicion unfounded. Immediately his groom made haste to mount him on his horse. Putting on his armour, taking his lance in his hand, and shouting encouragement to his band of noble warriors, he cried: "On, valiant Armenians; let them now recognise us and our prowess." With an impetuous attack surpassing all admiration, in the twinkling of an eye they routed the [enemy] cavalry, broke the ranks of their army, and struck down as corpses the champions in the front ranks as if they had been hit by lightning. As the wind blows the summer dust,⁶ that rapidly [212] did they bring the battle to an end. All Musē's plans against the enemy were accomplished. Yet Musē did not carry through without fail his promise concerning Ashot—that he would restore him to his principality. He reckoned it inappropriate to establish such an intrepid warrior in a place far from the royal court. However, Ashot escaped¹ and with Vahan openly² returned in peace to his own land, his heart full of joy. On his account they multiplied their thanks to God.

3. The description of the battle follows Thomas's usual clichés. For the taunting of champions cf. above, p. 107 n. 2. Ps.-Shapuh, p. 149, gives a fanciful version of the battle.

4. For the captivity of Vahan see above, p. 139.

5. The mingling of valour and cowardice is an important theme in Elishē; see Thomson, *Elishē*, Introduction, pp. 9–10.

6. Ps. 1.4; for similar imagery cf. above, p. 183.

1. *Escaped*: *verjotneal*, lit., "withdrew," as in Moses Khorenats'i, I 11. Ps.-Shapuh, p. 153, gives a more elaborate version of Ashot's escape.

2. *Openly*: the text has *bazmadēm*, "multifarious," which makes little sense. I emend to *bais'adēm*; Vardanyan omits it in his modern Armenian translation.

*Concerning Ashot's struggles for Andzavats'ik'
and the return to peace*

After this, when he heard of Gurgēn's ruling over Andzavats'ik',³ Ashot entered the land of Andzavats'ik' with a large force and encamped in the village of Blrakan.⁴ He despatched to Gurgēn Vahan Artsruni and the priest T'ēodoros, abbot of Hogeats' Vank',⁵ with this message: "I have come in peace at an order from court and not, like you, to engage in rebellion. So give over half of Andzavats'ik' to my son Derenik, and do not continue to act in opposition. Unless you do this willingly, he will bring constraint to bear, and by force will make you abandon what you do hold."

Gurgēn modestly and without pride answered him: "You have deprived me of [my] ancestral inheritance and expelled [me] from [my] fraternal portion. [213] Are you attempting to seize by force this [heritage] also which God bequeathed to me? Are you to be the only inhabitant on earth? The Lord will see, will judge and give me my rights, as a righteous judge¹ is wont to do."

He provided Grigor his nephew² and some elite soldiers with arms and horse armour, two hundred men. When informed about this, Ashot despised as insignificant the report and uttered haughty words. But suddenly, in the middle of the night, Grigor made a heroic attack; they surrounded [Ashot's] camp, dealing mortal wounds with sword and bow so that very many of his army fell. Ashot himself escaped alone on horseback, and fled as far as the capital of Ršhtunik',³ abandoning his camp. The others were scattered wherever they could escape. In the morning at dawn they plundered the camp with its baggage and the stores of treasure, which they took for themselves.

3. See above, p. 209.

4. *Blrakan*: from *blur*, "hill." This is the only reference noted in Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 414.

5. For the monastery of Hogeats' Vank' see Oskean, *Vaspurakan* III, pp. 759–778; Cuneo, *Basiliche*; and the detailed description in Thierry, "Monastères" I. The abbot T'ēodoros is not attested elsewhere. For the legend of the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary preserved at this monastery see the *Letter of Moses Khorenats'i to Sahak Artsruni* (in Moses, *Matenagrut'iwnk'*, pp. 283–296), also discussed by Thierry, *ibid*.

1. Cf. Ps. 7.12.

2. This Grigor is not attested elsewhere.

3. I.e. Vostan; cf. p. 196 n. 2.

However, Prince Derenik, unaware of what had happened, on that same day came with a numerous force and encamped on the southern side of the castle. When he was informed of what had occurred, he turned back and went his own way.

Then he gathered eight thousand mounted men [including] Sahak Bagratuni, son of the prince of princes, and Smbat, Shapuh, and Mushet the ruler of Mokk', and the troops of Arzn.⁴ They approached the castle of Kanguar; but although they waged war for two months, they were unable to accomplish what they wanted. Then Sahak and Smbat with the others were appeased and withdrew from the conflict; friendly love was established between the two parties, and they went each to his own land. Gurgēn and Ashot met each other, exchanged greetings, and made a peace treaty [which has lasted] up to the present day.⁵

[214] CHAPTER 18

Concerning the strife of Prince Ashot with the Ut'maniks and his freeing of the places which had been seized by them

Ashot went to wage war with the people who live on the lakeshore called Ut'manik, and who were secure in the impregnable rock of Amiuk.¹ For according to the demarcation² of Ptolemy and Alexander, or of our Artashēs son of Sanatruk, that province was reckoned among the provinces of Vaspurakan;³ and one hundred years previously it had been forcibly removed from the jurisdiction of Vaspurakan by the Muslims.

4. Sahak was the son of Ashot Bagratuni; the latter was appointed *prince of princes* in 862, and crowned king in 885. The text in Patkanean reads "rulers" of Mokk'; but only Mushet was prince of that province. The identification of Smbat and Shapuh is less certain, both names being very common in the Bagratid family. Vardanyan takes them to be the sons of Ashot; but Ashot also had brothers so named. Arzn is to the southwest of Mokk'.

5. *Present day*: See the Introduction to this book for the possible date of composition of Thomas's *History*. Ashot died in 874 (see p. 216 below), and the death of Gurgēn (in 895 [897?]) is described on p. 234.

1. For the Arab tribe of Ut'manik ('Uthmānid) see Canard/Laurent, pp. 389–391. Amiuk is on the northeast shore of Lake Van; see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 341.

2. *Demarcation*: *sahmanadrut'iwn*, which is a calque on *horothesia*.

3. For Artashēs fixing the boundaries see Moses Khorenats'i, esp. II 56. Moses refers to Ptolemy, I 30, but the latter figures more prominently in the *Ashkharhats'oys'*. The role of Alexander in fixing Armenian boundaries is more fanciful. Amiuk does not appear in Moses or the *Ashkharhats'oys'*, but the latter names the "thirty-six provinces" of Vaspurakan.

In those days the Ut'maniks, who lived in the fortresses [of that province] had killed Rstom Varazhnuni, who at that time held the rank of *tanutēr* of the land of Vaspurakan.⁴ So Ashot and his son Derenik gathered a force to attack them in the castle.

But because the castle was unassailable unless supplies ran out, the prince took Varag from the control of the Muslims. For they had seized it and subjected to taxation the monks of the Holy Cross, and had even captured the abbot of the monastery who was called Grigor, and put him in a deep and gloomy dungeon.⁵ Ashot sought to free him from his dangerous imprisonment. Then he turned against another stronghold, a free-standing rock to the east of the mountain of Varag above the village of Kokhpanik', opposite the church of Saint Hrip'simē which Saint Gregory had built above the village of Ahevakank' at the completion of the conversion of Armenia.⁶ For in that spot had formerly been the site of temples of Vahevahan.⁷

But when he had approached the stronghold to besiege it, [215] Yisē of Amida, son of Sheh, who held the position of commander-in-chief of Armenia,¹ hurried at the instigation of the chief of Manazav² and the Ut'maniks, and arrived in haste to attack Ashot with seventeen thousand armed cavalry. Abandoning the assault on the fortress, he turned with fearless courage to oppose him with the support of Gurgēn's troops. He took up his position on the other side of Vantosp in a rocky, stony hollow

4. Rstom Varazhnuni is not attested outside Thomas; see above, p. 147, for his appearance in the Armenian army. For the family see Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 222. For the term *tanutēr* see above, p. 86 n. 2.

5. For the monastery of the Holy Cross see above, p. 200 n. 1. The abbot Grigor is only mentioned here.

6. For the (legendary) activity of Saint Gregory in building churches in the region of Van and Varag see the *History of the Holy Hrips'imeank'* (in Moses, *Matenagrut'iwnk'*, pp. 297–303), and above, p. 63 nn. 7, 8, and below, p. 306. The villages of Kokhpanik' and Ahevakank' are not mentioned outside Thomas.

7. Thomas had noted above, p. 54, that Satinik had worshipped the image of Astlik in that area. *Vahevahan* (if the spelling in the text is correct) must be a variant of *Vahēvanean*, the name of a pagan temple at Ashtishat destroyed by Saint Gregory; see Agathangelos, §809. But it is not clear whether this derives from the deity Vahagn, or from Vahē; see note 1 in Thomson, *ad loc.*

1. *Yisē, son of Sheh*: 'Isā b. al-Shaykh al-Shaybani; see *El* s.v. *Diyār Bakr*. "Commander-in-chief" renders *zawrapet*. For 'Isā as governor of Armenia see Canard/Laurent, pp. 449–451.

2. *Manazav*: Manazkert; see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 449–450. The emir was Abu'l-Ward (*Aplbar* in Thomas) the Kaysite. See Ter-Ghevondyan, p. 57, for this episode.

between two hills that overlooked the plain of Erivarats'-arkman³ above the village of Lezu, where the fable is told that Ara the handsome, killed by the troops of Semiramis, was cured.⁴ The emir Yisē with his numerous army advanced towards the hill called the summit of Ak'alay.⁵

But Ashot spurred on his horse, which was covered in armour, and prepared for battle. He led the attack, seemingly mocking the [enemy] forces and reckoning his own small numbers in the thousands; for he did not have more than two thousand cavalry.

At that point Vahan, father of Gagik Apumruan, and Gagik himself attempted to reconcile the parties.⁶ Since [Ashot] did not agree, Vahan secretly struck the heel from behind and lamed the horse of the armed rider called Sēm, a confidant of Yisē's. He was advancing to meet the prince, and was in agreement with Vahan to aim at peace, calm the dispute that had arisen, and quench the conflict that had flared up. To these [proposals] Ashot was not heedless; he retreated and encamped in the town of Artashēs,⁷ while Yisē [encamped] in the city of Van. At the same time Derenik and Gagik came before Yisē, made peace proposals, gave hostages as an undertaking [to pay] taxes to the caliph, and made him return by the same road that he had come, not [216] allowing him to pass through the land of Vaspurakan. He [Yisē] returned to Partaw in the land of the Gargarats'ik'.¹ So our princes acquired glorious and splendid fame in Armenia. Thenceforth he never dared to enter the land of Vaspurakan.

Now Ashot was aged nineteen years [when he became prince]; he exercised the dignity of prince for sixteen years before the captivity of the Armenians, was five years in captivity, and lived

3. *Erivarats'-arkman*: unattested elsewhere. *Erivark'* is on the southwest shore of Lake Van. Vardanyan renders "[the plain] where horses are raised."

4. *Lezu*: lit., "tongue." The village is not attested elsewhere. See Moses Khorenats'i, I 15, for the tale of Ara and the *aralez* (who cured by licking). "Ara the handsome" (*zArayn getets'ik*) is Patkanean's emendation, following Biwandats'i, for *zawrats'n getets'ik* of the printed text. But according to Moses, Ara was *not* brought back to life!

5. *Ak'alay*: Vardanyan, n. 433, identifies this with the attested *Akanik'*, for which see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 395.

6. For Gagik Apumruan see above, p. 139. Vahan was mentioned in passing, p. 196, as the brother of Vasak.

7. *Town of Artashēs*: i.e. Artamet; see above, p. 54.

1. Partaw was the residence of the Muslim governors of Arminiya. 'Isā was governor and also emir of Diyār Bakr.

for six years after returning from captivity.² On entering his land, he resolutely practiced the Christian religion, repenting for his denial of Christ.

But what should I say here? For although they openly came back to the worship of Christ our God, yet they did not carry out the due canonical regulations—not only Ashot but also all the Armenian princes who had returned from captivity. They put aside the cowardice of their apostasy but remained outside the canonical statutes, leading scandalous Christian lives in debauchery and drunkenness, in adultery and lewdness, engaging in revolting and horrible homosexual acts which exceeded the foul bestialities of Jericho and Sodom,³ man shamelessly lusting for man⁴ and piling up infinite flames from heaven that surpass the devastating destruction of the flood. For they were mad for women, copulating with the daughters of Cain, and were destroyed by water;⁵ while the men who worked infamous deeds with men were consumed by fire mixed with sulphur,⁶ enduring in themselves the token of the eternal fire. At the second [coming] they will again undergo eternal torments, where the worm does not die and the fire is not extinguished.⁷ So as the Sodomites who paid the penalty with fire will be tortured again, [217] for those who will act in every evil fashion, what an expectation of torments will surpass theirs! See, sin over sin and torments over torments.

When the time for Ashot's departure from his world arrived, he was plunged into unfathomable remorse and regret; with flowing tears he made the confession of faith, hoping in the mercy of Christ and repeating the last words of the tax gatherer and the thief.¹ With faith he looked to the saving Body and Blood of the Son of God for the forgiveness of sins,² hoping in God's kindness. I do not despise or mock his remorse and re-

2. Thomas's chronology is not clear. On the next page he says that Ashot died in 323 (A.D. 874/5); the captivity was in 852. So either five must be changed to fifteen or six to sixteen. Since Ashot did not return in 858 (see above, p. 202) but later (see p. 209), it is likely that he returned in 867 and was ruler of Vaspurakan for six years before his death, aged fifty-seven.

3. Cf. above, p. 173.

4. Rom. 1.27.

5. Cf. Gen. 6.

6. Gen. 19.24.

7. Cf. Isa. 66.24; Mark 9.48.

1. Luke 18.13, 23.42.

2. Cf. Eph. 1.7.

penitence, for “who will utter the name of the Lord will live.”³ But it is unclear whether they were effective, for with difficulty are scars cleaned away by the exercise of words. However, in the house of Christ’s Father there are many mansions.⁴ Perhaps they will remain free of torments, although they will not enjoy the wedding with the bridegroom.⁵ He [Ashot] departed not in despair, looking to the kindness of God.

When Ashot had completed his life, he died in the province of Vantosp, in 323 of the Armenian era, in the month of Hori, the sixth day of the month, on a Thursday.⁶ They laid him to rest with his brothers in the monastery of the Holy Cross in the province of Ałbag.⁷

CHAPTER 19

Concerning the offspring of Derenik

Now Derenik daily increased and improved the prosperity and peace of the country, building, maintaining, administering. In his days there was a respite from brigands and marauders across the land; [218] the rites of the holy church of Christ were splendidly and properly performed; there was no fear or suspicion anywhere. He begat three sons: Sargis, also [known as] Ashot, in 326 of the Armenian era; Khachik, also [known as] Gagik, in 328; and Gurgēn—lively children, charming, fortunate, and loved by all. He also begat two daughters.¹

In those times Lord Zak’aria fell asleep in Christ, having occupied the patriarchate for eighteen years. He was succeeded by Lord Gēorg.²

3. Acts 2.21.

4. John 14.2.

5. There are many biblical parallels here, but see esp. Matt. 25.10.

6. The year 323 began on 22 April, A.D. 874. The sixth of Hori would be 27 May, a Thursday.

7. For the monastery of the Holy Cross as the Artsruni family’s burial place, see above, p. 200 p. 1.

1. The year 326 of the Armenian era began on 21 April, A.D. 877. On p. 228 below, Thomas indicates that Ashot was nine, Gagik seven, and Gurgēn five on the death of their father. The daughters are not named.

2. Zak’aria was Catholicos 855–876. His first year is dated by Thomas, p. 201 above; and Gēorg’s first year is dated on p. 230. So 18 is wrong. John Catholicos, p. 137, describes the change of Catholicos and notes that Zak’aria had held that office for 22 years. Gēorg, from Gaini, was Catholicos until 897; see p. 243 below for his death.

Now when the son of Sheh entered Partaw, he left there as governor of the city one of his trusted men, a certain Yamanik.³ But he withdrew from obedience to his chief with the leaders of the city. So Yisē waged war against the city for a year in concert with all the princes of Armenia. But being unsuccessful, he returned to Syria. This happened twice. [Then] Yamanik planned to march against Armenia, intending to rule over it. When the Armenian princes came to know his sinister⁴ schemes, with one accord they wrote to the court and asked for Ahmet' son of Halit' [as governor].⁵ For Yamanik was sending letters and messengers one after the other to the princes of the country, putting himself forward as governor⁶ of Armenia, veiling his treacherous deceit, [but planning] to remove all the princes of Armenia, especially the one in the highest rank, Ashot prince of princes.⁷ However, the leader of the Muslims carried out the Armenians' request, and sent to Armenia the above-mentioned Ahmat' son of Halit'. When he entered the town of Datuan,⁸ which they regarded as their own private inheritance, the Armenian princes went out to meet him from their own individual places: Derenik, Lord Gagik, and Lord Grigor, and another Lord Grigor prince of Vaspurakan, Ashot *curopalates*,⁹ prince of Armenia, Mushet prince of Mokk', Shapuh brother of the prince of princes, Aplbar Kaysik ruler of Apahunik',¹⁰ and various others. [219] All were fully armed and accoutred, generously loaded with gifts, and went to escort him into the city of Dvin. But Yamanik and Ahmat' and Aplbar, in concert with some more of the Muslims, came plotting the same wicked intentions. They¹ wrote a letter to Yamanik, saying: "When I enter the city of Dvin and take control of the royal taxes, let the Armenian princes have no

3. *Yamanik*: Muhammad al-Yamani; see Canard/Laurent, p. 451. On the following events see also Ter-Ghevondyan, pp. 57–60.

4. *Sinister*: *dzakhołaki*, frequent in Elishē, e.g. p. 8, of Yazkert's ministers.

5. *Ahmet'*: Ahmed b. Khalid, see Canard/Laurent, pp. 387, 451.

6. *As governor*: *i verakats'ut'iwn*. For the term *verakats'u* see above, p. 107 n. 4.

7. I.e. Ashot Bagratuni, later king.

8. *Datuan*: Modern Tatvan on the southwest shore of Lake Van; see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 421.

9. *Ashot Curopalates*: prince of Tarōn, not the "prince of princes" just mentioned. The title "prince of Armenia" belonged to the prince of Tarōn, as is clear from p. 220 below.

10. *Aplbar*: Abu'l-Ward the Kaysite. For the Kaysikk' see below. p. 245 n. 4.

1. *They*: the text of the letter indicates that it was written in the name of the governor Ahmad.

suspicion and come to me. Do you, on the pretext of war against me, gather an army and come out to do battle with me. Then together we shall lay hands on them and remove them from rule over Armenia.”

However, with his superior wisdom Ashot did not remain unsolicitous or unconcerned, but he ordered the bridgeheads to be guarded and the desert places and passes of the valleys. He was informed by various persons about the writing of secret [messages] to the effect that: “Some people on horseback are riding to such and such a place, and have enclosed in the panniers in a package² a letter, which they are taking in the direction of Apahunik’.³ So guard your road.” The affair turned out according to the warning. They arrested the messengers, took the letters, and kept the men under guard, letting no one know what had happened.

CHAPTER 20

Concerning Derenik’s capture of the curopalates, the prince of Tarōn,⁴ and his making David prince, who was called king.

While the princes were in accord without any thought of disloyalty, the governor, the son of Halit’,⁵ came from the court. Although they had been firmly and indissolubly united with bonds of mutual love, some calumniators adduced foul but alluring slander and divided the one from the other—as if they were indicating the evil deeds that were being plotted against the governor and [220] putting the blame on each other with secret insinuations. Others, who were close to Derenik, [claimed that] Ashot the *curopalates* was in revolt, full of envy, and was slandering [him] to the governor, and that he was attempting to eject him from his principality. But the certainty of his crimes was revealed and confirmed as regards the Kaysik Aplbar.

2. *In a package*: *i mēj bdedi*. *Bded* (or *bdead*) is a hapax, so the meaning is not certain; see Achaëan, *Etym. Dict.*, s.v.

3. To Apahunik’: i.e. to Aplbar Kaysik, emir of Apahunik’.

4. Here spelled *Tarun*; see p. 51 n. 2.

5. I.e. Ahmad, here called *hazarapet*, “governor.” For the title see above, p. 59 n. 8.

As the sun was getting warm, while they were paying a morning call¹ on the emir, mounted on elite horses as if to go hunting, with their near relatives and nobles from among the elite of Vaspurakan, he went off about two stadia. The mounted troops of the Kaysik followed him, realising the reason for his departure from the camp. Unsuccessful, they returned in shame and downcast, thinking that what they had done had not been noticed.

At the same time the *curopalates* followed Derenik with the same purpose of estranging him from the governor, as he knew what he was plotting with regard to the Armenian princes who had gone to him.² They were distant from the army five furlongs, when he [Derenik] recalled the slander they had reported about Ashot the *curopalates* with regard to Derenik—whether falsely or truly is not clear to us. So Derenik ordered Grigor his relative from the same Artsruni house to seize him and put him in the castle of Sevan; and he ordered Hasanik his nephew to keep him unfettered.³

Now there was a further reason for holding him, namely: he [Derenik] had married David the brother of the *curopalates* to his sister Mariam. Because of that, they say, he held him; for he was pleased to make [David] prince of Tarōn, who is called prince of Armenia;⁴ which indeed took place. Derenik ordered the troops of his own army to follow the ruler [David] in order to gain control [221] of the whole country with its castles. And Derenik wrote to the son of Halit' [asking him] to confirm him as prince by his own authority. So he [David] was prince over Tarōn for seven years before being gathered to his fathers;¹ he left a child named Ashot.

But [then] Yisē, son of Sheh, seized the land by force, secured it for himself, and set his own governors over it.²

1. *A morning call*: reading Patkanean's emendation *aygorealk'n* for the *ageworealk'n* of the text; cf. p. 222 n. 2.

2. I.e. because Ashot had intercepted Ahmad's letter to Aplbar.

3. *Grigor, Hasanik*: Grigor was presumably the son of Vasak, i.e. Grigor Apuhanza, praised on the following page. For the Vasak who was Derenik's brother-in-law and father of Hasan is always called "Vasak the Apostate" (or "Impious"), see p. 222 n. 3. Hasan (Hasanik) was the son of Derenik's sister and Vasak. His castle was in Vaspurakan (not near modern Lake Sevan); see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 478.

4. *Prince of Armenia*: see above, p. 218 n. 9.

1. Thomas mentions David's death below, p. 231, as does John Catholicos, p. 174; the latter calls him David Bagratuni, great prince of Tarōn. For David's career see Canard/Laurent, p. 330 n. 80. He was ruler of Tarōn from 887 to 894.

2. But on p. 231 below Thomas says that Ahmad, son of Yisē, took Tarōn on David's death.

When the Armenian princes left the emir,³ there remained with him only Mushet, ruler of Mokka, a renowned and high-ranking man; he was accompanied by Grigor, son of Vasak.⁴ He likewise was a lively man imbued with wisdom, splendid and famous among the Armenians, endearing to those who heard him and charming to those who saw him. In his great solicitude for wisdom and study and in everything else he surpassed his fathers and grandfathers. But they were suspicious of the governor in the camp, for Ahmat's intentions concerning them were apparent. Finding a suitable occasion they left the camp, freed like deer from the snares of hunters, and went peacefully to their own regions, leaving him dejected and full of shame.

After this Ahmat advanced with his Kaysik troops and entered the city of Dvin, in the hope that he might be able to bring his wicked plans to completion. The prince of princes⁵—who was the highest ranking and most judicious person in all Armenia and all under heaven—came out to him with the most splendid ceremony, bearing no few gifts and honours. But he persisted in the same obstinate and malicious intention. He wished to destroy the rampart of bronze,⁶ to break the rod of iron,⁷ to bring the shepherd to ruin and the flocks to destruction.⁸

However, the prince of princes Ashot could not endure that he accomplish his evil plans. So one day while the governor was preening and wallowing in such magnificent homage, the prince ordered his brother Abas, a mighty man [222] and *sparapet*¹ of Armenia, to put on solid armour, look to the arms and equipment of his troops, as was usual for brave heroes, and prepare horses, in order to thwart his evil plans. At the hour when the morning callers² were intending to enter his presence and he was expecting the great prince to come to him, then the great *sparapet* surrounded his tent with his armed troops bearing shields and lances, making a solid wall. He brought in the letter which Ahmat had treacherously written to Yamanik in the city of Partaw. Looking down at the ground and unable to lift up his

3. Thomas returns to the narrative of p. 220.

4. *Grigor, son of Vasak*: see above, p. 220 n. 3.

5. *Prince of princes*: i.e. Ashot Bagratuni, later king.

6. Jer. 1.18.

7. Ps. 2.9.

8. There are numerous biblical parallels, but none verbally identical.

1. *Sparapet*: for this title in the Bagratuni family see above, p. 69 n. 6.

2. *Morning callers*: as above, p. 220 n. 1.

gaze, he remained abashed; he lost his strength and assumed that his last hour had come. The *sparapet* took his hand and led him out, encouraging him to have no fear. He mounted a mule which they were holding ready by the door of the tent, and they brought him outside the wall of the camp to make him return by the same way as he had come. They sent off his army separately through the region of Apahunik', stripped of arms and horse armour [so they could] plunder no more, but they travelled with their luggage and horses. Ahmat' was escorted on his passage through the land of Vaspurakan by Shapuh, son of Ashot, until he reached the beginning of the road to Asorestan.

But the *curopalates* of Tarōn remained in the fortress of Sevan in the hands of Hasan, son of the impious Vasak.³ He found no means of escape from his dangerous prison in any quarter, although many were concerned for that honourable man, especially the great Catholicos of Armenia, Gēorg, who entreated Derenik to free him. Frequently he implored him by means of letters, but he would not agree. He even took the trouble to come personally with great solicitude to free [223] him from the misery of his prison. But even thus he was unable to obtain for him deliverance from his peril. Consequently, he left him to the care of the Creator, entrusting him to the grace of God. For the prince of Tarōn had great reverence for the office of the patriarch, and the latter exercised great solicitude for him, although he could not help in this particular matter. Then the *curopalates* began to make false insinuations between Derenik and Hasan, who was the son of Derenik's sister,¹ to the effect that Derenik was not treating him honestly but was [aiming at] taking the fortress from him and gaining control of the land. "Often," he said, "I have verified this from his trusted counsellors. So do not remain unconcerned and unworried about this, but promptly look for a way to render his plans void." Now the fortress was quite impregnable, and no little treasure had been accumulated in it over many years, while he [Hasan] himself was very young in years, being at the time of his independence aged fifteen years;² for "youth and folly are

3. *Impious: ambarisht*; see above, p. 158, for Vasak's apostasy. John Catholicos, p. 190, and the Anonymous, p. 274 below, call him "apostate" (*urats'eal*).

1. See above, p. 220 n. 3.

2. *Independence: andzishkhanut'iwn* (read *andznishkhanut'iwn*), i.e. when he became prince. The date of Vasak's death is not given by Thomas, but Vasak does not appear in the narrative after p. 158.

vanity," as Solomon says.³ So he fell for the guileful bait at that man's suggestion, hoping for the fortress and the treasures and casting his eyes on the desire for ambition—the gathering of troops, the forming of cavalry, the giving of gifts to magnates and lords of the land, the summoning of everyone to support and aid⁴—so that as his advice proposed, so indeed would he do. But he was unable to act openly, for it would have been unbecoming to form an army and prepare for battle. So he plotted with deceitful cunning to carry out the fickle intentions of his plan. He entered the fortress and feigned an illness that was nearly mortal.

He sent word to the prince⁵ that without the slightest delay he should hurry there. He followed the messengers with compassion for a relative, in the supposition that he had succumbed to a severe illness and was near death, as the messengers averred. When the evening drew on, the darkness [224] thickened, and everyone began to enter his own room for sleep, suddenly there was a glinting of swords and of lighted candles; the band of conspirators [arrived], and Hasan with them. They beat down the outer door where the prince had withdrawn; they seized him and brought him to the highest part of the castle and imprisoned him in the innermost room. He [Hasan] freed the *curopalates*, for him to go wherever fortune might bring him.

Straightway the bearer of this grievous news rapidly reached the glorious prince of princes and informed him of what had occurred. He was then besieging the city of Manazkert in the land of Apahunik¹, which was in the hands of Aplbar,¹ and the blockade was nearly complete; but when the messengers arrived, he abandoned the siege, sending them proposals for peace. Gurgēn, Mushet Bagratuni,² and he hastened with the Catholicos and camped near the fortress where Derenik was imprisoned. By wise and judicious counsel, with sweet and gentle words, they persuaded the young Hasan, offering him the reverence due his white hairs and the dignity of his princely station and such-like. The patriarch mediated a sworn peace treaty, that they would abandon to eternal oblivion the harm of the evil done. At the begging

3. Eccles. 11.10.

4. For the "ideal" life of an Armenian noble see the Introduction to this book.

5. *Prince*: i.e. Derenik.

1. *Aplbar*: emir of Manazkert; see above, p. 218.

2. *Gurgēn, Mushet*: It is not clear whether Gurgēn, Derenik's son, is intended (as Patkanean's Index implies), or Gurgēn Apupelch (as Canard/Laurent, p. 317). Mushet was the prince of Mokk'; see above, p. 221.

entreaties of the prince and great patriarch the proposals were carried out, and they extricated him from his captivity, leaving as hostages Gagik, son of Derenik, and the son of Grigor Artsruni.³

At the same time some people approached Derenik insinuating [supposedly] true charges against Gagik Apumruan, that he was plotting with the *curopalates* [to do] what Hasan had fruitlessly done. But whether this was false or true is not clear to us; and I reckoned it better not to write down what is not certain. However, Derenik himself was false to the oath of the peace treaty between himself and Hasan. He seized him and imprisoned him in the castle of Nkan⁴ and took his fortress from him, appointing [225] his own trusted retainers to guard it. He also took from him his home and lands, putting his own officials¹ in charge of the land.

But when Yamanik heard how Ashot had sent back Ahmat' in disgrace and had frustrated the plan they had schemed against Armenia,² he thought he was seeing his last hour upon him. He began to threaten and menace Ashot, openly and not in secret. By means of circular letters he set his hand to weaning away and estranging from him those subject to him—Derenik, prince of Vaspurakan, Aplbar Kaysik, ruler of Apahunik', and likewise those others whom he was able to seduce. Yamanik himself wrote to Ashot about Derenik [to the effect that] he was maliciously plotting against Ashot. So he managed to split and break apart the unity of the Armenians.

But Derenik proposed peace with Hasan, promising to return the fortress of Sevan and his land. "Only," he said, "send to me Gagik Apumruan by some strategem," because Gagik had gone and fortified himself in the castle of Chakhuk, being suspicious of Derenik on being informed as to what Hasan had done to Derenik. So at this proposal Hasan left Derenik, went to Gagik in the castle, and affirmed before him the complaints about Derenik. Gagik seemed very easily persuaded to believe him; so just as he [Hasan] had feigned a mock illness to Derenik, the same he now did to Gagik. While Gagik was sleeping without worry or suspicion, Hasan came on him at night armed with

3. *Gagik, son of Grigor*: Gagik was Thomas's patron; see the Introduction to this book. This Grigor was a brother of Hasan; see above, p. 220 n. 3.

4. *Nkan*: see above, p. 131, for this Artsruni stronghold.

1. *Officials: gortsakal*; see above, p. 209 n. 4.

2. See above, p. 222. On the following events see the general account in Canard/Laurent, p. 317.

drawn sword and accompanied by a small band, candles lit, and he bound him with iron bonds. Derenik hastened to come to him, took Gagik for himself, and sent him under armed guard to Vantosp, to the princess of Vaspurakan,³ to be securely imprisoned. After a few days Derenik went to the province of Chuash, to winter in the town of Maṛakan.⁴

Here it does not seem pleasant to me to continue my historical narrative. My mind becomes stupified on considering [226] the misfortunes that I planned to describe in these records. The course of my hands fails for strength to write.¹ Pains as of child-birth overwhelm me as I set down these woeful tales. I grieve for the blow whereby I am crushed by the reproachful. Fast bubbling tears as from a boiling kettle flow out in torrents. Despairing doubts surround me at these events. Even more than the foaming waves stirred up from the depths by fierce winds, piled up like mountains and thundering like dragons, with even more fearful turbulence than the tempest for persons [caught] in their thrice violent course, by the whirlings of the mind is a noble heart forcibly constrained within.² I need some, even all, wise men gathered together in order to express the wealth of my laments. For I have not the strength to sing the funeral dirge of so many calamities that have befallen. Therefore I have withdrawn from running a race that demands such great eloquence. When men of mighty intellect are lacking, my poor historical talent is unfit to carry out the course required. Only with assistants would I perhaps dare to engage in tragic elegies.³

When Derenik went to the winter quarters of the princes of Vaspurakan, he journeyed through the valley of Ĕntsayik' which opens into the province of the city of Her.⁴ He did not heed the noble troops who tried to prevent him. For they had heard

3. Derenik's wife was Sop'i, a Bagratid; for the marriage see above, p. 207.

4. *Maṛakan*: Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 450, notes that this is the only reference to the town.

1. Cf. the prelude to the death of Derenik's son, Ashot, p. 248 below, and in the Anonymus, p. 265. Laments form a notable feature of many Armenian histories, especially those of Moses Khorenats'i and Aristakēs.

2. Such imagery of the sea is reminiscent of the first paragraphs in Agathangelos, where the comparison between sailing a ship and writing a history is elaborated. For other Armenian parallels see Thomson, *Agathangelos*, notes to §§1-10.

3. For Thomas's many protestations of unworthiness see p. 76 n. 5.

4. *Ĕntsayik'*: or Andzakh; see above, p. 51 n. 4. The Anonymus begins his account with this episode. Though it is similar to Thomas's, it does differ in details; see below, pp. 264 ff. Derenik's death is briefly described in John Catholicos, p. 141.

through the circular letter that Ashot prince of princes had laid an ambush for him. They said: "Let us see the outcome of this report." Undaunted in his refusal [to heed them], he passed on and lodged in the village of P'eřotak⁵ opposite the city [of Her]. But the emir of the city, called Aplbers,⁶ with the help of the Persian army had been waiting for many days to inflict harm on him; gathering troops, he went out to meet him [Derenik]. [227] Early in the morning the messengers hurried out, saying: "Come, let us meet in friendly peace." And when the nobles tried to stop him, he would not heed a single one. Since the two districts are close to each other and contiguous, and the city is in a valley-shaped plain, it favoured the murderous beast to be courageous. He sent messengers to take him a response about their meeting. The emir's spies hastened to report: "Behold, he has left his army in order to go hunting, and is coming in this direction without concern or caution. So hurry to meet him, for God has delivered him into your hands." The armed cavalry galloped rapidly in a disordered attack. Derenik was riding grandly along and came face to face with the line of armed troops; he was alone in a watercourse. The enemy troops split to either side and forced him to come into the centre of their force. Their host immediately surrounded him and enclosed him as in a secure cave, casting a mortal net¹ around him for the destruction of the valiant hero. The emir had given a signal, like that of Judas on kissing the Lord,² saying: "When I give the sign by approaching to kiss him, do you wound him with your lances as strongly as you can."

Immediately with drawn swords and lances they rushed on him like bloodthirsty, man-devouring beasts.³ By his murder they brought darkness to the land of Vaspurakan where he lived. When the prince died he was forty years old.⁴ Then [everyone] turned piteous eyes on his valiant companions, to see whether there would be any who might bring him some aid. But

5. *P'eřotak*: No other reference is given by Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 477.

6. *Emir, Aplbers*: *k'atak'apet*, as above, p. 203 n. 7. For Abu'l-Fāris b. Abu Mansūr see Ter-Ghevondyan, p. 60. The Anonymous, p. 263, calls him "son of Apumsar."

1. *Net*: *varm*; there are several biblical parallels, e.g. Hos. 7.12.

2. Matt. 26.48; Mark 14.44.

3. *Man-devouring*: *mardakhandz*, as of lions in Ezek. 19.3.

4. Derenik was killed in 887. When he returned from captivity in 858/9 he was "about ten" (p. 202 above). Note the different version of Derenik's death in Ps.-Shapuh, p. 169, at the hands of the sons of Apumsar—closer to the version in the Anonymous, pp. 263 ff.

since the Lord had delivered him into their hands, as David said,⁵ the fear of the Lord was on them all. Each man escaped by the skin of his teeth, and they fled to their own lands. Only Apusakr, prince of Amatunik⁶, did they capture and bring to the city; and the corpse of the slain [Derenik] they took with them in triumph.

[228] Here one should recall the words of Solomon that were fulfilled: "The fearless falls into traps and pits, and into places where there will be no visitation for ever."¹ And with regard to the valour of the cowardly he says: "Fear will save the cowardly."² But if for the cowardly fear is to be reckoned valour, how much more for the brave does valour acquired through fear sustain them! As David says: "I was prepared and I did not tremble."³ And another of the wise men of the world said: "Do not travel with a fearless [man]."⁴ But particularly true are the words of Solomon, who said: "Woe to one alone. When he falls, who will raise him?" And: "Two are better than one; for if one falls, he will rise up."⁵

Merchants requested his corpse and delivered it to the bishop David of the same province;⁶ they placed it in a coffin in the church there. After a day had passed, Ashot, Derenik's son, came, took his corpse, and laid it to rest with his fathers in the province of Albag in the monastery of the Holy Cross.⁷ The land of Vaspurakan gathered, and for ten months they made deep mourning⁸ for him.

After that, Shapuh, son of the king Ashot, came and conferred the principality on Ashot, son of Derenik, in the place of his father.⁹ As for Gagik, also [called] Apumruan, he appointed

5. The phrase is too common in the Psalms to note a specific parallel.

6. *Apusakr*: he is only attested here and in the Anonymous, p. 282.

1. Prov. 19.23.

2. Prov. 18.8; but there "fear will *destroy* the cowardly."

3. Ps. 118.60.

4. *Wise man*: Ahikar; see the saying no. 11, Armenian text vol. II, p. 80. "Of the world" renders *artak'in*, on which see above, p. 4 n. 2.

5. Eccles. 4.9-10.

6. David, bishop of Her, is only attested here.

7. *Holy Cross*: see above, p. 200 n. 1, for this Artsruni burial site.

8. *Mourning*: *kots*. The *Kanonagirk'* is full of condemnations of (excessive) *kots*. On p. 251 Thomas refers to an unspecified period of mourning (*sug*) for Ashot; and the Anonymous, p. 287, refers to forty days of weeping (*lal*) for Gurgēn.

9. John Catholicos, p. 141, mentions the accession of Ashot, but has no reference to the role of the Bagratids. Note that Thomas passes abruptly from Ashot Bagratuni as prince of princes (p. 226) to "the king" Ashot here. He gained royal status in 885; see John Catholicos, p. 139.

him prefect¹⁰ over the land to rule as regent, for Derenik's sons were very young. Ashot was nine years old when Derenik died; Gagik was seven, Gurgēn five.¹¹ Although Gagik [Apumruan] cared for and nurtured the land, yet the mass of the nobility was not happy with him and was restive. But since Gagik was greatly endowed with wisdom, he deferred to all the provincial leaders and commanders of the country; he dealt with them wisely [229] and with profound skill; and by honouring each with the respect due his rank he honoured and appeased them.

After this Ashot the king of Armenia came to console his daughter and grandchildren,¹ increasing still further the stability of Ashot's principality and the prefecture of Apumruan.

But the princess Sop'i, living one year and eight months after Derenik's death, was gathered to her fathers.² They brought her and laid her to rest in the same monastery of the Holy Cross.

After this, her sons Gagik and Ashot and Gurgēn fixed the day of their [parents'] commemoration on the feast of the Holy Cross.³ They gave to the holy church four estates: the monastery of P'shots' and the estate of Ahavank', opposite the church that was on the island,⁴ and the rock of Manakert, which faces it on the southern side, and Berkri; and many other places, which after the death of their father and mother the king's sons gave over for the needs of the Holy Cross of Alt'amar.⁵ Their commands are as firm as the rock:⁶ if anyone tries to change them, by God's commandment he will not inherit his throne and kingdom. And if anyone wishes to affirm them, he will be unshakable in this world. Amen.

10. *Prefect: ostikan*, for which rank see above, p. 89 n. 2. Gagik Apumruan had married Ashot Bagratuni's granddaughter.

11. Thomas had placed Ashot's birth in 326 (877/8), p. 218 above; so he is consistent. But the Anonymus, p. 269, says that Ashot was "about twelve" at this time.

1. Ashot's daughter was named Sop'i; see above, p. 207.

2. *The Anonymus*, p. 269 below, places Sop'i's death seven months after Derenik's.

3. Since Gagik was a patron of this *History*, Thomas places him before his elder brother. The feast day of the Holy Cross is the Sunday closest to 14 September.

4. *Island*: Alt'amar. P'shots' and Ahavank' are not attested elsewhere.

5. The building of the cathedral of the Holy Cross on Alt'amar is described in detail by the Anonymus below. See also Der Nersessian, *Aght'amar*.

6. Cf. Matt. 7.25; Luke 6.48.

CHAPTER 21

Smbat rules in place of Ashot

In those times Ashot king of Armenia departed this world at a good old age, having enjoyed an abundant and happy [life]. “His hand was on all, and the hand of all on him.”⁷ He splendidly carried through the period of his reign: five years in the dignity of prince, [230] twenty-five years of leadership as prince of princes, four years in royal splendour. He died in the year 339 of the Armenian era, in the fifteenth year of the patriarchate of the Catholicos of Armenia Gēorg.¹ In his stead ruled Smbat, son of Ashot, an illustrious and very intelligent man, very energetic in all matters; as concerns things under heaven it is suitable and necessary to abbreviate the totality: “pleasing to God and elite among men.”²

CHAPTER 22

*The destruction of the city of Dvin
by a severe earthquake*

In the third year of his reign over Armenia,³ by divine anger the innermost depths clashed together with tremblings and shakings in the abyss like agitated torrents. The lowest part of the earth collapsed and was firmly locked in the region of Sandaramet;⁴ fierce winds blew over the darkened waters, trampling down the deep, solid foundations of the earth and causing its thick, dense and immeasurable infinity to heave, until it burst onto the surface of the earth opposite the city of Artashat, which is called Blur, where is the capital city Dvin. This populous [city], surrounded by fortified ramparts and swarming and teeming with commerce and all kinds of impurity, was overthrown from its foundations.⁵ Hell opened its mouth wide and swallowed into its depths very many people. For some their

7. Gen. 16.12.

1. The year 339 began on 18 April, A.D. 890. born in 819, Ashot became “prince of princes” in 862, and king in 885. Gēorg became Catholicos in 876.

2. Rom. 14.18. Smbat Bagratuni ruled 890–914.

3. I.e. in 892.

4. *Sandaramat*: the divinity of the underground; see Agathangelos, §743, and notes of Thomson *ad loc.* For the waters below the earth cf. the *Teaching*, §§259–260.

5. The earthquake which destroyed Dvin is described by John Catholicos, pp. 162–163, but without these obscure references to subterranean events. For Blur see above, p. 79 n. 1.

houses became their tombs, just as it swallowed up the houses of the army of the Korahites.⁶ He who earlier spared the repentant Ninevites,⁷ now had no pity for the stony heart⁸ of the citizens of Dvin. Even the holy places and houses [231] of prayer suffered the earthquake, their walls cracking and collapsing, as then on the death of King Ozias in the days of the prophet Isaiah, when at the voice of the seraphim the temple of the Lord was shaken and its doorposts destroyed.¹ Likewise in the time of Zechariah the prophet there was an earthquake as far as the Mount of Olives.² It is said that the number of people killed by the quake was more than seventy thousand. This earthquake was more severe than the one in the years of Zak'aria Catholicos of Armenia, after the seventh year of the captivity of the Armenians.³

There happened to be there also the blessed bishop Grigor, the prelate of R̄shtunik'. He was unable to escape with his companions, since they were then at prayer on the mountain. So some of them were buried in that spot by the same earthquake.⁴

But the blessed patriarch Lord Gēorg, more grievously afflicted than by the worldwide destruction in the time of Noah, with the bishop Grigor offered to benevolent God the supplication of Abraham of old on the destruction of Sodom.⁵ Abandoning his residence in Dvin, he went to reside in Nor K'atak' in the great church which the blessed lord Nersēs II, Catholicos of Armenia, had built in the name of Saint Gregory.⁶

In the second year after this⁷ the Greek army besieged the city

6. Num. 16.30–34.

7. Jon. 4.11.

8. *Stony heart*: cf. Ezek. 11.19, 36.26. (But there are many parallels.)

1. Cf. Isa. 6.4.

2. Zech. 14.4. But there the reference is a prophecy of the future, not a description of a past event.

3. Zak'aria was Catholicos 855–876; see above, p. 198. "After the seventh year of captivity" would be in 859/860, or later. John Catholicos, pp. 133–134, describes this earthquake; but Thomas had not mentioned it.

4. Bishop Grigor is not mentioned by other historians. The text of Thomas implies that Grigor did escape, but not with (all of) his companions.

5. Cf. Gen. 18.22–32.

6. Nersēs II (548–557) is an error for the more famous Nersēs III (641–661), named *shinol*, "the builder." The same mistake is repeated on p. 255 below. Nor K'atak' is Vatarshapat (Ējmiatsin); see Agathangelos, §150, and Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 469. For the church built there dedicated to Saint Gregory the Illuminator, and the improvements carried out by Nersēs III, see Khatchatrian, *L'architecture*, ch. 2. Sebēos, p. 147, notes that Nersēs built a church dedicated to Saint Gregory at Zuart'nots', which was "near" Vatarshapat; cf. Levond, p. 14.

7. *After this*: after the earthquake of 892, i.e. in 894/5.

of Karin, but turned back of their own will and abandoned it. In the same year the ruling prince of Tarōn died, and Ahmat', son of Yisē [son of] Sheh, seized the land to subject it.⁸ Gurgēn the prince, son of the *curopalates*, was deceitfully killed by Ahmat's commanders; he was a brave and famous man, renowned among the Armenians.⁹

But the sons of Derenik, Ashot and Gagik and Gurgēn, as they grew in body increased in vigour and stature; they were also endowed with no little intelligence in the concomitant growth of their minds. With lively and joyous [232] enthusiasm they had faith in the Lord's providential care for the prosperity of the land, and they turned the mourning and grief which afflicted the country because of Derenik's death into happiness and joy. Demonstrating the extent of their fraternal deference, with incomparable courtesy each regarded the other [two] as superior to himself, reckoning the dignity of their princely rank to be equally shared. Merely for his precedence did they agree to give the dignity of prince to Ashot. In this unopposed harmony they divided the land into three parts, giving to Ashot, as we said above,¹ the rank of the ancestral principality with most of the other parts of the country as far as the castle of Nakhchavan. On the other hand, Gagik [had] the area of R̄shtunik' with the neighbouring provinces and as much as he could obtain by force of the land of Mokk'. While Gurgēn [had] the eastern regions, from the end of Ałbag and all Parskahayk² around it as far as the beginning of Korduk', and wherever in this area he could control. And in such fashion they [divided the land].

But Apumruan, by reason of being prefect, and alleging the youthful age of these [princes], gradually began to gain control of the fortresses, loosening the bridle of his ambition for power: the fortress of Nkan in the province of T'ornawan, the castle of Kotor³ in the valley of Ęntsayik', the castle of Sevan in the gully of Lmbay.⁴ To the other nobility residing in fortified places he daily distributed gifts and honours, and happily spent time with

8. Yisē: the son of Sheh. But earlier, p. 231, Thomas had said that Yisē himself seized Tarōn when David died.

9. John Catholicos, p. 174, says that Ahmat' slew Gurgēn in battle. On these events see Adontz, "Taronites," esp. pp. 209–211.

1. Above: p. 228, where the role of Gagik Apumruan is emphasized.

2. *Parskahayk'*: see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 259–261, Markwart, "Parskahayk'."

3. *Kotor*: see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 441.

4. *Lmbay*: not attested outside Thomas; cf. also p. 275 below.

them in order to win them over. When the nobles of Vaspurakan learned the details of Gagik's intentions, they had no desire to continue supporting him, and tried to find a solution without disturbing the peace. Some proposed this, some suggested that. But the alternative intentions of a majority were carried through for a while.

The son of Apusech, Awshin,⁵ who had brought his Persian dynasty⁶ to a high point by notable victories, [233] attempted to lay hands on Armenia in order to spread farther his oppressive extortions. He frequently sent letters to each of the princes, especially to Prince Ashot and his brothers. Being acquainted with his tyrannical control over the Persian chiefs and what they had suffered, and reckoning that because of his neighbouring proximity to this country he might well inflict the Persian fate on us and our land, they agreed to submit to him and remain subject.

Ashot followed Awshin's messengers and went off fearlessly and courageously. But the Armenian king Smbat regarded Ashot's going to Awshin as inappropriate, lest other princes be induced to follow the same path. When he tried to restrain Ashot, the latter paid no heed. Immediately, moved by violent anger, King Smbat wrote to Gurgēn, lord of Andzavats'ik', and to Gagik Apumruan, saying: "By natural right the land of Vaspurakan was your inheritance, but Ashot's ancestors have set you aside. So advance on your land with a powerful army, and let the territory be yours to inherit."¹ They quickly carried out his command in their ambitious desires. Marching on the land, they divided it into two portions.

They came to attack the castle of the city of Van. When Ashot had gone [to Awshin] he had left there the princess of Vaspurakan, Seday,² and had entrusted the defence of the fortress to Yisē, brother of T'adēos, who were called sons of Sherep',³

5. *Awshin*: Muhammad Afshin b. Abu'l-Sadj, *ostikan* of Azerbaijan. See Ter-Ghevondyan, p. 60, for his relations with Armenia, and in general *EI*, s.v. *Sadjids*, no. 2.

6. *Dynasty*: *harstut'iwn*. Thomas has in mind the Sadjids rather than Persian domination in general.

1. For the marriage of Gurgēn Apupelch to the widow of the lord of Andzavats'ik', and his expulsion from Vaspurakan by Derenik, see above, p. 209. Thomas has alluded several times to Gagik Apumruan's ambitions over Vaspurakan.

2. *Seday*: Ashot's wife was the daughter of Gagik Apumruan; see the Anonymous, p. 270. Thomas had not mentioned this marriage when describing Gagik's sway over the three brothers.

3. *Sherep'*: He is only attested as the father of T'adēos; the latter is mentioned often below, but Yisē does not reappear.

from the Akēats'i family—valiant men, versed in military affairs. They waged battle there for thirty days and were unable to gain an advantage, but suffered defeat at the hands of Yisē rather than winning a victory. Eventually the castle's supplies ran out, water especially being short. So unwillingly [234] they abandoned the battle, ceased hostilities, and surrendered the castle to Gagik.

While peace was thus shattered in the land, news reached Awshin and Prince Ashot to the effect that: "The land is troubled and those who hold your fortresses are wavering. So hurry immediately to destroy the unity they have imposed by force." Brooking no delay, he came with troops of Awshin to attack them. They retreated into their fortresses, and the troops of Vaspurakan turned to support Ashot.

Now Gurgēn was planning to seize for himself a part of the country, especially the capital of R̄shtunik' which was the site of his father's murder, regarding it as the blood price.¹ However, Apumruan made excuses to Ashot, saying: "I have come to this land to prevent Gurgēn taking control of the castles of the country by force and winning over your troops by coercion. So talk peace with me, and remove the veil of deceit between the two [of us]." The gentle prince Ashot, mild and overflowing with all virtues, acquiesced in the proposal. They met at the valley of Kułan, where Gurgēn had encamped on the spot [called] Karkineank' with a numerous army.² Gurgēn spoke openly to Ashot of his plans, and since the prince did not agree they immediately prepared for battle. Although Ashot had a smaller force with him, he did not withdraw or shy from war. But Apumruan came between them, and calmed the lines prepared for battle. Gurgēn returned to his own castle of Kanguar, and a few days later his life came to an end. A mettlesome horse threw and killed that most valiant of lords, the brave commander and general of Greater Armenia.³

But Apumruan continued to foster ambitions of ruling over the country. Since [235] the three sons of Derenik, Ashot, Gagik, and Gurgēn, were indissolubly linked to each other with mutual confidence and trust like a strong city or rampart of

1. See above, pp. 203, 205, for references to the murder of Apupelch by Hamza at Vostan.

2. *Kułan*: see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 442. Karkineank' is otherwise unattested.

3. John Catholicos, p. 177, describes Gurgēn's death in greater detail. It occurred in 895.

bronze,¹ he was unable to carry out his plan. But as his ambition welled up inside him like raging waves, he persisted in his ambitions. They, having no suspicions with regard to Apumruan, came to him without mistrust; while he found a suitable occasion to seize them together and have them imprisoned in iron bonds in the castles of the country. Ashot was taken to the impregnable Nkan, Gagik to the fortress of Sevan,² and Gurgēn to the fort of Kotor. And he gave back the fortress of Sevan to Hasan, son of the impious Vasak.³

On seeing this the nobles of Vaspurakan were unable to endure what Apumruan had succeeded in doing. They came to Atom, son of the great Gurgēn,⁴ in the castle of Kanguar in order to find a solution: Yisē lord of Trunik', the son of Honawar; Varazshapuh lord of Abeleank'; T'adēos Akēats'i, son of Sherep'; and others with them. With their baggage and families they all abandoned their homes and ancestral domains in their sincere devotion to the sons of Derenik. They reckoned it better to live in foreign exile than to see the sons of their prince, the ruler[s] of the land, imprisoned and held in bonds. From their youth they had loyally paid due service in accordance with the fitting custom of subjects to masters, as [even] the teacher of the heathen⁵ enjoins.

At that point Shapuh, the king's brother, arrived and appointed Gagik lord of the principality of Vaspurakan, notably because Shapuh had married his daughter to Gagik.⁶ Atom procrastinated because of his [236] fear of the king. The nobles of Vaspurakan in opposition went off to the city of Amida to Ahmat', son of Yisē [son of] Sheh, who with great delight won them to himself as honourable men and powerful warriors, especially because they had often acquired a victorious reputation. Indeed he had previously known [of them] by reports, and was very well disposed to receive them. Having seized the region of Tarōn for himself, he was aiming at becoming the effective

1. Jer. 1.18.

2. But according to the Anonymous, p. 270, Gagik was imprisoned at Van.

3. *Gave back: dardzeal tay.* On p. 232 Thomas notes that Gagik had gained control of Sevan for himself.

4. Atom, son of Gurgēn Apupelch, is mentioned by John Catholicos, p. 177, as succeeding to his father's domains in Andzavats'ik'; but John does not have the following story.

5. *Teacher of the heathen:* Muhammad. For Muslims as "heathen" see Thomson, "Muhammad."

6. On p. 228 above Thomas says that Shapuh had conferred the title on Ashot. The marriage of Gagik Apumruan to a Bagratid princess is not mentioned elsewhere.

ruler¹ of all Armenia. For they earlier called Tarōn the “province”² of Armenia. So Ahmat’ received them and put them to forwarding his own purpose, so that he might win over the Armenian princes by respect and friendship, and thereby be secure from the suspicious messages which Smbat the Armenian king was continuously sending to him.

CHAPTER 23

*Concerning the campaign of Smbat, king of Armenia, with the princes of Georgia, Albania, and all Armenia, against Ahmat’ of Amida; the defeat of Smbat by Ahmat’ in the district of Ałdznik’ on the river T’ukh, which flows into the lake of Bznunik*³

As we briefly mentioned above concerning Ahmat’, he had seized the land of Tarōn for himself and withdrawn it from Armenian control. Smbat frequently wrote to Ahmat’ [asking him] to abandon that land and give it over to Ashot, son of prince David, promising him the position of governor of Armenia by royal decree with the homage of the Armenians. But Ahmat’ did not deign to heed his messages and scorned the proposals.

Then the king sent messengers to all [237] regions of his Armenian kingdom, to the Georgians and Albanians, to the citizens, governors and prefects,¹ and those who in friendly submission paid him tribute. Atrnerseh, prince of Georgia,² came to him. And they say that the number of his forces was about

1. *Becoming the effective ruler: bnabanapēs amirayapetel.* No other occurrence of this verb is attested by the *NBHL*. For Ahmad’s seizure of Tarōn see above, p. 231.

2. *Earlier . . . province: tun Hayots’ anuaneal arajin asēin zTarawn.* The problem here is whether *arajin* qualifies *tun* (thus “first province”), or is an adverb. Vardanyan takes the first alternative, though such separation of noun and adjective is not usual Armenian practice. But since the use of *tun* (house, province) for Tarōn is common in the early historian P’awstos (see Adontz/Garsoian, p. 243), I have taken *arajin* adverbially—again, not a usual Armenian idiom.

3. The lake of Bznunik’ is Lake Van; for the river T’ukh (T’ułkh in John Catholicos) see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 430–431. The printed text of Thomas offers variously Ahmat or Ahmat’. John Catholicos, pp. 174–177, gives a detailed account of this campaign; see also Ter-Ghevondyan, p. 64.

1. *Governors and prefects: hazarapet, gawaṛakal.* For *hazarapet* (used in the preceding paragraph for “governor” of Armenia) see above, p. 108 n. 2. *Gawaṛakal*, “holder of a province,” is not used as a technical term.

2. *Atrnerseh:* later king of Iberia, 888–923. John Catholicos does not mention him in this connection.

120,000. He marched along the edge of the lake of Bznunik' through the area of Apahunik', and camped on the bank of the river that descends from the ravines of Aldznik'. When news of his arrival reached Ahmat', he too assembled the forces of his province and those of Mesopotamia and the Get'ats'ik',³ and came out to meet him. Straightway, in the twinkling of an eye, the thickly massed cavalry, armed and prepared, formed ranks in martial opposition and incited a clash. The valiant warriors of Vaspurakan, whose names we recorded above, attacked like heroes. They surrounded the camp, turned back the commanders, and as the wind shakes thickets of reeds,⁴ so did they mow down the host of the [enemy] army.

When the king learned that the armies had joined combat, he hoped still to be able to bring the battle to an end. But threatened by his corps of warriors, he was unable to calm the raging fury and surging carnage. So he immediately turned his horse's bridle to advance to the fray. He demonstrated there many brave acts of heroism, but they were of no avail. Abandoning the battle, he turned in flight by way of Hołts.⁵ Ahmat' surrounded the [Armenian] army and inflicted merciless losses, especially on the rabble of foot soldiers with them. They say that the number of killed was more than 5,000, and for one year the bodies of the dead were left intact by beasts and birds. In that battle fell Ashot Haykazn, prince of Getark'unik', called the son of Sup'an.⁶ The wife of the *sparapet*⁷ came from Tarōn, and [238] finding his body by its insignia, took it to her town of Porp¹ and buried it.

3. *Get'ats'ik'*: Vardanyan (contra Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 312) identifies these with the region of Ket'ik in Aldznik', mentioned in the *Ashkharhats'oyts'*, §27.

4. Cf. Ps. 82.14.

5. *Hołts'*: see above, p. 127 n. 4. The next chapter indicates that the king fled to Van and on farther.

6. *Supan*: not attested elsewhere. John Catholicos, p. 176, says that "the inexperienced youth Ashot" was a nephew of the king (Smbat). *Getarkunik'* is on the northwest shore of Lake Sevan; see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 417.

7. *Sparapet*: a Bagratid title; cf. p. 222 n. 1.

1. *Porp*: in Tarōn; see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 446.

CHAPTER 24

Concerning the death of Apumruan

Apumruan kept Gagik, son of Derenik, unfettered, having extricated him from bonds and prison. But the latter plotted [even] more assiduously to murder him courageously. Members of the house of the Amatunik', Shapuh and Vahan and Saray, who were brothers, Apusakr Vahuni, and others conspired together with Gagik to murder Apumruan, whereby they might be able to release Prince Ashot and Gurgēn from bonds and win back their principality. So when Apumruan arrived at Vantosp with the fugitives after the king, they resolutely carried out Gagik's plan.²

When the king had gone away a distance of two days' journey, Apumruan went out to go riding. The nobles struck him from behind with their swords and slew him; cutting off his head, they sent it to the garrison. They freed Ashot and Gurgēn from imprisonment, and ruled over their native principality with great vigour, living thenceforth without worry or suspicion. Princess Seday, Ashot's wife, took the body and placed it in a tomb in the place called Dzoroy-vank', above the village of Ahavakank'.³

When news of what had been done reached the king, he made no other response save to say: "That deed was done worthily."

When the king arrived in his own lands, he had gifts and honours taken to Ashot in accordance with princely custom, [239] raising Gagik to the dignity of general of Greater Armenia, to carry before him according to the custom of the Byzantine emperors banners inscribed with the cross.¹ He endowed Gurgēn his brother with the position of governor in accordance with the highest rank of the Armenian kings, especially of the great king Trdat.²

2. The death of Gagik Apumruan is also described by the Anonymous, p. 271 below, by John Catholicos, pp. 176-177, and by Ps.-Shapuh Bagratuni, p. 177. These accounts differ among themselves. Shapuh Amatuni and Apusakr Vahuni do not appear in sources other than Thomas and the Anonymous, but Vahan and Saray Amatuni are mentioned by Ps.-Shapuh with other conspirators not named by Thomas.

3. *Seday*: Apumruan's daughter. For the monastery of Dzoroy-vank' above Ahavakank', supposedly built by Saint Gregory, see above, p. 63 n. 7, and p. 214 n. 6.

1. *Banners inscribed with the cross*: *nshanaks khach'adrawshs*; cf. above, p. 203 at n. 6.

2. John Catholicos, p. 192, refers briefly to Smbat's bestowing the title of *marzpan* ("governor") on Gurgēn when Gagik succeeded to the principality on the death of their brother Ashot. This was a title used for governors of Armenia in Sasanian times; see above, p. 71 n. 8, where it is associated with the position of "general of Armenia," *zawravarut'iwn*. The latter was not a term used for a specific position in Armenia as a whole. Thomas's reference to King Trdat indicates that he has in mind the rank of *bdeashkh*, the highest title given to Armenian nobles; see Agathangelos, §795. Moses Khorenats'i, II 85, refers to these four *bdeashkhs* as "generals," *zawravar*.

CHAPTER 25

How with deceitful friendship Awshin plotted evil against Armenia and its princes

Now since Awshin, son of Apusech, was a man who loved turmoil and hated peace, and was insatiable in his thirst for human blood³—which characteristics he regarded as great personal renown—he valued the ruin of a country more highly than its prosperity. Ceaselessly he moved around, contending with all lands, never resting. In his deceitful friendship for the land of Vaspurakan and its leaders he gave the impression that his affection was complete. One after the other he constrained them to hasten individually to his presence in order to render vassal service⁴—which indeed Ashot and Gagik and Gurgēn did. Willingly or unwillingly, they carried out his orders, going and returning one by one.

However, one day Gurgēn went to meet him in the city of Partaw, and stayed there for about a whole year. Awshin, that hater of good and lover of evil,⁵ continually plotted to effect great harm on Gurgēn, to cast him into prison and inflict deadly tortures on him, to seize his castles for himself, to put the land into the hands of his own officials⁶ and to treat its [inhabitants] in Persian fashion. [Gurgēn] learned what Awshin was plotting against him from some people [240]—or rather the providential and protective right hand of Christ sheltered him and saved him from destruction by fire and hail.¹ Help came from God, making him courageous, and snatched him away from the teeth of the wild beast.² He escaped under cover of darkness, accompanied by Shapuh from the Amatuni family, who had been an accomplice of Gagik's in the murder of Apumruan that we described above. So they returned to their own land, and filled the country with great joy as if they were to see someone returned from the dead.

3. *Turmoil . . . blood*: This description is parallel to that of Jap'r above, pp. 106–107. John Catholicos, pp. 177–178, also describes Awshin in terms reminiscent of Elishē's description of Yazkert.

4. *Vassal service: tsarayakan spasaworut'iwn*. The Anonymous, p. 278 below, uses the term *tsarayut'iwn* of obedience paid to Gagik by rebellious subjects. In Elishē it refers to the loyal service paid by the Armenians to the Sasanian shahs, p. 45. See further Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 117.

5. *Hater of good, lover of evil*: cf. Micah 3.2. It is also reminiscent of Elishē's description of Mihrnerseh, p. 42.

6. *Officials: gortsavar*, not a standard technical term; but cf. *gortsakal*, p. 209 n. 4.

1. Cf. Ex. 9.23.

2. Cf. Deut. 32.24.

But Awshin, thwarted in his plans, redoubled [his efforts] to accomplish his wicked desires in this fashion. With haughty mien he suddenly entered the city of Semiramis, Vantosp,³ growling and uttering cruel threats.⁴ However, Prince Ashot and his brothers retreated through the regions of Lesser Aġbag, near to the fortresses of Jġmar and Sring. Awshin entrusted the country to a certain minion Sap'i,⁵ a eunuch, from among the Greek captives; he had abandoned the Christian faith and accepted the Muslim⁶ religion, induced by its bloodthirsty teaching. They spread their agents throughout the land, save only that they were unable to gain the fortresses. In this fashion they acted without concern or fear, exacting tribute through officials.⁷ A strong force remained in the town of Hamboyrazan in the province of Mardastan, to which the episcopal see of Mardpetakan had then been transferred from the city of Nakhchavan.⁸ Here our three valiant brothers arrived with a small band of nobles in winter time. In the pale light [of dawn] they galloped upon [the enemy] and struck down more than a few with the sword. But since their horses were weary from their long journey and their energy was enfeebled by the drifts of thick snow, the enemy, being rested, returned to the attack with bows and lances. Some they captured, others they condemned to death, [241] and cutting off their heads raised these up on poles over the gateposts of the wall. The captives they sent to Awshin in Partaw; they were imprisoned, condemned to death, and slaughtered by being cut in half. In this fashion they inflicted a cruel death on all the prisoners by cutting them in half, terrifying all who saw their dreadful end. Only a certain Arshak from the family of the Varazhnunik' [survived] at the request of the daughter of Shapuh Bagratuni, whom Awshin at that time had impiously married.¹ The princes of Vaspurakan Seday, wife of Ashot and daughter

3. For Semiramis building the city of Van see above, p. 26.

4. This phrase is reminiscent of Yazkert in Elishē, p. 44.

5. *Minion*, Sap'i: *tsaray*, cf. p. 239 n. 4. Sap'i is not mentioned by other historians (except the Anonymous, p. 274).

6. *Muslim*: *molimanak*, as above, p. 141 n. 5.

7. *Officials*: *gortsakal*. In the previous sentence "agent" renders *gortsavar*; see above, p. 239 n. 6.

8. For the province of Mardpetakan and the episcopal see of Nakhchavan see above, p. 128; the transfer had taken place after 852. Hamboyrazan is unattested elsewhere.

1. John Catholicos, pp. 180–181, describes the circumstances of the marriage between Awshin and the daughter of Shapuh, the king's younger brother. Arshak Varazhnuni is not attested elsewhere.

of Apumruan, begged for him also, and they saved him from Awshin's sword.

CHAPTER 26

How Awshin and all his army perished through divine anger

What person or land did Awshin not destroy by various oppressive means—brigandage, rapine, murder by sword, and famine? For the famine became so severe that people not only ate animals regarded as unclean by the rules of purity² but even revolting and horrible things which wild animals pass over. They ate the corpses of the dead without remorse, dragging them from the graves after they had been buried for one or two years. And what was the reason for this if not what Paul had said: "Because they did not choose to abide by the knowledge of God, he delivered them to dishonourable intentions to work unworthy deeds."³ This the prophet at the time of the Babylonian captivity also expressed: "Fathers will eat sons, and sons fathers,"⁴ as happened in the time of Vespasian.⁵ But since the misfortune came from heaven and the wrath was sent by God, no one was able [242] to oppose him in war. However, he who struck, the same also healed.¹ For while the land was in such distress, they expected God's mercy to be multiplied, as God is accustomed to remember his compassion in his anger.²

A man named Yovsēp' of Greek origin had entered Awshin's service; a eunuch, he abandoned the Christian religion, accepting the erring faith of Mahumat'.³ He was a ferocious man, savage, unsparing in the drinking of human blood, but of mighty prowess in deeds of war, who cast fear into [other] nations;⁴ into

2. The *Penitential* of David of Gandzak has many examples of such rules of purity with regard to food.

3. Rom. 1.18.

4. Ezek. 5.10.

5. *Vespasian*: emperor A.D. 69–79. Thomas is referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 by Titus. Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, III 6.24 ff., (following Josephus) describes instances of cannibalism during the siege.

1. Cf. Deut. 32.39.

2. Cf. Hab. 3.2.

3. *Yovsēp'*: Ter Ghevondyan, p. 65, notes that he is called Wāsif in the Arabic sources, but does not name them.

4. *Mighty prowess, cast fear*: *zawrawor, aharku*, reminiscent of Neh. 1.5; 9.32. But there the references are to God!

his hands Awshin had entrusted power and force. But God, who in his providence alters the hearts of princes, separated and estranged Yovsēp' from Awshin. Leaving the city of Partaw, he took his troops and marched rapidly to the land of Asorestan. When Awshin learned of this, he was deeply stricken and made haste to write to Sap'i, who was residing at Vantosp and exercising the role of lord in Vaspurakan. Without delay and observing utmost speed, he went to Awshin in the city of Marakay.⁵ In just vengeance did the sword of the Lord, filled with wrath, fall on Awshin and his entire camp. The angel of God dealt them incurable blows in the fashion of Herod's disease:⁶ the body of that beastly man became bloated with pus and horrible swelling, and was filled with bloody corruption. First of all Sap'i, his dear friend, drank the strong poison. His bones and flesh were infected with incurable ulcers, and in the presence of Awshin he ended his life. In similar fashion all the soldiers and captains with the entire army perished; and also the herds of horses and donkeys and camels died from the same ulcerous infection. Awshin himself suffered dreadful torments; having tasted [a cup] more bitter than viper's gall,⁷ he went [243] on the journey to perdition. And hell below turned bitter on meeting him,¹ who brought with him an infinity of evils.²

So our country took breath, and everyone lived in peace according to his rank, from the greatest to the least, thanking the mercies of God. In amazement they considered him [wondering] who he was, what sort of man, and how he had perished, and saying: "How did the exactor cease and the tormentor pause;³ how did his glory go down to hell?"⁴

This happened in 347 of the Armenian era, in which year Lord Gēorg, Catholicos of Armenia, also died.⁵ He was suc-

5. *Marakay*: modern Maragha, east of Lake Urmia.

6. Herod's death is described by Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, I 8. Elishē borrowed from that passage in describing Vasak's end, p. 139. There are a few parallels between the following description in Thomas and the Armenian version of Eusebius; but Thomas is not quoting directly.

7. Cf. Job 20.14, 16.

1. Cf. Isa. 14.9.

2. John Catholicos, p. 189, describes Awshin's death and descent to hell; cf. also the Anonymous, p. 275.

3. Cf. Isa. 14.4.

4. Cf. Isa. 14.11.

5. The year 347 began on 16 April, A.D. 898. John Catholicos, pp. 181-182, describes the death of Gēorg and the election of Mashtots', but gives no date. Ter-Ghevondyan, p. 65, places Awshin's death in 901.

ceeded on the throne of Saint Gregory by the blessed Mashtots', who came from the island in the lake of Gelark'uni.⁶ He exemplified the way of life of John the Baptist; and if you will not mock at my words, it seems not inappropriate or reprehensible to call him by the same name. For the Baptist was commanded to drink neither wine nor strong liquor.⁷ But he not only did not get drunk on wine, but did not quench his thirst with water save by the merest damping; and he satisfied his hunger with austere herbs.⁸ But in scholarly learning he was deeply versed, dead to the love for possessions but lively in his generosity.⁹ He occupied the patriarchal throne for eight or nine months, then passed on to the throne of apostolic honour promised by our Saviour.¹⁰

In his stead the blessed lord Yōhannēs inherited the patriarchal throne.¹¹ He had been educated and had studied at the feet of Saint Mashtots'. Bedewed with the latter's learned instruction and scholarly discipline, he was a man of sweet temperament and modest disposition. He considered himself one with the common people, was foreign to haughty arrogance, and kept to the place of the mild praised by our Lord Jesus Christ.¹²

[244] CHAPTER 27

Concerning the miracle which was revealed in Ostan of Ršhtunik' in the years of Gagik's generalship

I have undertaken to give a true account of the marvellous manifestation of wonders that appeared during the time Gagik was general. But not a few regrets have fallen on me, which I shall now briefly expound, dutifully continuing my narrative.

6. I.e. the island in Lake Sevan. For the monastery see Mécérian, *Histoire et institutions*, pp. 293–294.

7. Cf. Luke 1.15; Num. 6.3.

8. For the abstention of Mashtots' from bread and water and his eating only a few vegetables, cf. John Catholicos, p. 182.

9. For the reputation of Mashtots' for asceticism and spiritual learning, cf. John Catholicos, p. 148.

10. See Matt. 19.28; Luke 22.30. John Catholicos gives Mashtots' seven months as Catholicos.

11. Yohannēs: this is John Draskhanakertets'i, the historian, Catholicos 898–925 (?). The date of his death is uncertain; see Maksoudian, Introduction to his *History*. The epithet "blessed," *eraneli*, would normally be used of a deceased person. But this may be an interpolation; for the *History* by Thomas predates the death of John Catholicos.

12. Matt. 5.5. See John Catholicos, p. 183, for his own description of his unworthiness for the position.

The four-armed cross of Christ had been fashioned in wood by a certain skilled craftsman, and a silversmith had enclosed the wood with pure and unalloyed silver seven times refined in the furnace—like the altar of propitiation and other vessels prescribed by Moses for the tabernacle [and fashioned] by the craftsmen Eliab and Besiel.¹ A new Nabuzardan or Zamri from the heresy of Nestorius appeared,² a thrice-miserable and wicked wretch, afflicted with the scourge of avarice. Penetrating in the darkness of night, he made his way into the secure walled hill and entered the holy shrine. While sweetly desired sleep overwhelmed those keeping the night watch, he raised his impure hand to the holy of holies and seized the holy cross of Christ. He got out through the window and hid himself to the west on the shore of the lake in a cave in the rock. But when he stripped the silver from the wood, straightway the evil demon afflicted him, causing him to roll down the mountain in a long fall as far as the level ground where the vineyards are. When what had happened became known, [people] rushed to search in the city and on the roadways in whichever direction anyone might have hurried, until they came upon the man [245] afflicted by an evil spirit, still lying half dead. Picking up the cross that had been broken and crushed into pieces, they brought it to the general and washed off the impure blood that had adhered to the cross from the tumble of the demon-possessed man. He ordered a goldsmith to be brought, and had the invincible¹ wood of the cross of Christ restored again. He rejoined the fragments in each one's position, and covered it with pure silver more splendidly than before, to the glory of the Christians and to the shame and ignominy of the enemies of Christ's cross. Then the wretch suffered the sentence of death, to pay in the world to come the penalty of the crucifiers.

But do not blame me for comparing the things of the law to those of the gospel; I am not ignorant of the greater and the less, of the example² and the truth. As Paul teaches: "Whoever

1. Cf. Ex. 35, 36.

2. Nabuzardan burned the temple; IV Kings 25.8. For the wickedness of Zamri see III Kings 16.9–20. For the heresy of Nestorius cf. the story of Barsauma, above pp. 80–81, and in more detail below, p. 255.

1. *Invincible*: *anyak'*; see Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.v. *nikopoios* (victorious) for such epithets applied to the cross.

2. *Example*: *awrinak*; see Thomson, *Teaching*, pp. 15–16, for a discussion of the theme of examples or types in Armenian theology.

despised the laws of Moses, died from the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much greater a punishment will we think that man worthy who trampled the Son of God," and so on.³

CHAPTER 28

Concerning the rebellion of the Muslims called Kaysikk⁴ and of the prince of Siunik' against the rule⁵ of Smbat, and the subjection again of them both

At that time the Armenian king Smbat assembled an army to attack the land of Apahunik'. For the sons of Abdrhman,⁶ who are called the Kaysikk', had revolted against the king's authority [refusing] to give tribute and military service as was due. Almost all the princes of Armenia, Georgia, and [246] Albania came with the Armenian army to attack the land of Apahunik'. With the princes were also the great prince of Vaspurakan, Ashot son of Derenik, accompanied by Grigor prince of Mokk¹ and the troops of Andzavats'ik'; for the princes of Mokk' and of Andzavats'ik' had submitted to the principality of Vaspurakan. The Armenian army crossed over and encamped on the plain of Awshakan² in the province of Manazav.

But the Kaysik who governed the land of Apahunik' gathered his own forces, including the neighbouring citizens and the Persian brigands who used to make raids against the Greeks. The Kaysik wrote to the king to seek peace and [offering] that whatever he wished should be done. So it was openly, but the secret later became clear. The king agreed to peace. But the Kaysiks

3. Heb. 10.28-29.

4. *Kaysikk'*: The Kaysites were a tribe of north Arab origin; see Ter-Ghevondyan, pp. 51-53, and the table on p. 184; also Canard/Laurent, pp. 386-389. The emirs of Manazkert were Kaysites; see above, p. 218 at n. 10.

5. *Against the rule*: The text of Patkanean reads *i t'agaworeln*, "during the reign of"; my translation follows Vardanyan's emendation to *i t'agaworēn*, "from the king."

6. Abu'l-Ward (see above, p. 218) had two sons, 'Abd al-Hamid and 'Abd al-Rahman. It was the sons of the former who refused to pay tribute to King Smbat; see Ter-Ghevondyan, p. 65. The following events are more briefly described in the Anonymous, p. 276. He defines the tribute (*harks*) as "head tax" (*harks . . . i glkhotis'*).

1. Grigor, prince of Mokk', is not attested elsewhere.

2. *Awshakan*: Not the same town as that on p. 75 above; see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 479. Manazav is Manazkert.

and their allies and the Persian troops were secretly provoking battle and rapidly marched on the Armenian army. The latter were encamped without concern [thinking themselves] in safety, when the former drew up their line and armed for battle. The king [and his army], taken by surprise, quickly fled from the camp by forced marches.

But Prince Ashot, the prince of Mokka', and the troops of Andzavats'ik' very bravely stood their ground. In full armour and on armed horses they attacked as one man. In a resolute charge they fell on the right wing of the enemy, where the bravest of the Muslims were drawn up. They broke their ranks, defeated their warriors, and in the twinkling of an eye routed their army. Pursuing the fugitives, they put their swords to good use, piling up the corpses. The survivors fled for refuge to the city of Manazav. The bearer of the news caught up with the king, and they turned back to besiege the city. But those immured in the city sent prayers and supplications to the great prince Ashot that he might effect peace between them.³ Not being indifferent, but rather overflowing with benevolence, Ashot made peace proposals to the king. [247] The latter was not unheeding and accepted the proposal, taking tribute and hostages including the fortress of Erikaw of Hałats'ovit, which the lord of Manazav had taken from the lord of Berkri.¹ These had taken it from the Ginuni² family descended from Mezhezh Gnuni,³ although Berkri had been part of Vaspurakan. So he restored it to the people of Berkri. They returned in great triumph and unlimited joy. This took place in the year 351 of the Armenian era, in the fourth year of the patriarchate of Yovhanēs, Catholicos of the Armenians.⁴

When the next year came round, Smbat prince of Siunik⁵ rebelled against the king of Armenia, prevented the payment of

3. *Between them*: i.e. between the Kaysite of Manazkert and King Smbat.

1. *Berkri*: This fortress on Lake Van had been in the hands of the Muslim Utmaniks; see above, p. 197. Erikaw and Hałats'ovit are not attested elsewhere.

2. *Ginuni*: so the text of Patkanean. It is either a misprint for *Gnuni*, or a form based on traditional etymology from *gini*, "wine"; cf. Moses Khorenats'i, II 7.

3. For Mezhezh Gnuni see Sebeos, pp. 131-133.

4. The year 351 began on 15 April, A.D. 902. John became Catholicos in the year 898/9.

5. *Smbat, prince of Siunik'*: At this time the ruling prince of Siunik' was Ashot, who died in 908; see the table in Canard/Laurent, p. 468. Among his sons were Smbat and Sahak; the latter is mentioned on the following page as Smbat's brother. Vardanyan's change from Smbat to his father Ashot seems unnecessary. See also n. 7. below.

tribute to the king, and endeavoured to direct the tribute and taxes to the tyrant of Persia. He himself gathered his own forces, ten thousand soldiers, and occupied the fortresses of Vayots'-dzor. Then the king rapidly sent messengers one after the other to Prince Ashot⁶ [asking him] to come quickly to him without delay. In one letter, recalling what Ashot had done against the army of Apahunik'—his victorious war and winning of glorious repute—he wrote as follows: "This further task will be accomplished by peace or war, [if] only you put aside distracting delays," and he promised to give him cities, provinces, villages, and estates. For he had [already] given him possession of the city of Nakhchavan for his victory over the Kaysik of Manazav.⁷ The king himself gathered a large army of more than twenty-five thousand, and crossed over the river Araxes; they camped at that spot.

The prince of Vaspurakan arrived posthaste at the rendezvous. At this the king greatly rejoiced, being freed from the fear that he had of the prince of Siunik'. At daybreak he crossed over the river Araxes to the plain of Sharur⁸ and camped beside the river. Then prince Ashot wrote to Prince Smbat, persuading him of the uselessness of his rebellion. He reconciled the two and made peace [248] between them; so Sahak, brother of the prince of Siunik', came bringing with him the tribute. Then he returned with many gifts and unparalleled joy.

CHAPTER 29

*Concerning the death of Ashot, prince of Vaspurakan,
in the city of Nakhchavan*

At this point not with ready willingness do I continue my narrative, for grief rather than joy overtakes me.¹ Infinite sadness springs up in the place of rejoicing; torrents of tears pour in streams from my eyes in the place of peals of laughter; I

6. I.e. Ashot of Vaspurakan, whose sister Sop'i had married Smbat of Siunik'. (Thomas only mentions this Sop'i's mother, Sop'i the wife of Derenik.)

7. King Smbat has previously given Nakhchavan to Smbat of Siunik'; see John Catholicos, p. 209. This transfer to Ashot of Vaspurakan had presumably prompted Smbat of Siunik' to rebel.

8. *Sharur*: see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 366.

1. Cf. the rhetorical introduction to the description of the death of Derenik, Ashot's father, p. 226 above. The Anonymous only briefly mentions Ashot's death, p. 277.

sink down rather than stand up straight; within me reigns broken heart rather than firm valour; my being is full of pain instead of health that opposes inevitable death. For what reason or cause? Because I am deprived of my valiant and great prince, of my hero and glorious chief. I speak of Ashot the honourable, noble, and grandly eminent, absolutely the most prominent among all the Armenians.

For when he went to lend his support to the king of Armenia, as soon as he left his house in the city of Van he was gripped by the pains of sickness, harbingers of death, which the aid of skillful physicians could not assuage. The nobility of Vaspurakan implored him not to go on that journey, adducing his illness; but he chose death for his uncle over life that would render [his loyalty] suspect.² When the pains of his abdominal sickness intensified [249] he entered the city of Nakhchavan. There he remained for forty days before departing this world, respected by all, especially because he was dear and beloved to everyone—high and low, poor and rich, grand and small. He had lived from 325 of the Armenian era, and was twenty-nine when he departed this world in the month of Areg, the fourth day of the month, on a Monday at the ninth hour of the day.¹ The princess Seday took his body and buried it in Ałbag in the village of Awsi, in the monastery of the Holy Cross.²

It would be appropriate to extend further rhetorical laments over him. But since the energy of my feeble mind is inadequate to compose a proper lament,³ let that now be left to another stronger person or to another time. To counter this affliction I have consoled myself with consummate and incomparable joy, by running after spiritual delights in place of physical pleasure. For although Ashot ended the measure of his life prematurely, he acquired a surplus by exchanging the certain and unfailing disso-

2. The theme of choosing death over life with ignominy is common in Thomas (and other Armenian writers); see above, p. 140 n. 3.

1. On p. 247 Thomas indicated that the rebellion of Smbat of Siunik' occurred in the year after 351. Therefore Ashot's death was in 352, which began on 15 April, A.D. 903. The fourth of Areg in 903 coincided with 14 November, a Monday as Thomas indicates. But Ashot could not have been aged twenty-nine if he was born in the year 325 of the Armenian era, or in 326 as Thomas said above, p. 218.

2. *Holy Cross*: See above, p. 200 n. 1, for the burial of Artsruni princes in this monastery. Awsi is not attested elsewhere. Seday was Ashot's wife; the text reads variously *Seday* or *Setay*. John Catholicos, p. 192, mentions Ashot's death but not his burial.

3. For Thomas's modesty see p. 76 n. 5.

lution of this existence for spiritual, eternal, and undying life, repenting and regretting his youthful inclination to easy and quickly accomplished evil deeds. For when the mortal pains gripped him, he no longer fretted over his youthful and premature departure from this world, his leaving the country with its numerous provinces and impregnable fortresses, his abandoning his splendid and delightful high-ranking brothers, and leaving the varied magnificence of nobility and what other sweet delights there are under heaven on earth: the glorious beauty of the sun and moon, with the splendour of the stars [250] in their mutations through the firmament of heaven, of the sea and dry lands, of the pleasure of the magnificent rolling of the waves, and all the other congruous features of providence that reveal the image of the archetype.¹ These and even more displays of material things he plunged into oblivion in his flight to the heavenly beings and the king of heaven.² In his concern for the future [life] he was meek to the clergy of the church. He summoned the elders of the new testament, the bishops and priests, before whom he delivered a full confession of faith: the illumination of baptism,³ repentance for past deeds, hope after death, the benevolence of Christ. He cited the pledges by enumerating the greatest [examples] in a short time: the adulteress,⁴ the tax gatherer,⁵ the brigand,⁶ and such-like. He poured forth sighing, tears, confession, piteous intercessions, sadness unto death,⁷ looking to the medicine of life—the Body and Blood of the Son of God⁸—for the forgiveness of sins, raising moanings and groanings with unbecoming⁹ sighs and great laments to Christ. He beat his face with stones, shed torrents of tears from welling eyes, tore out with his nails his newly blooming beard resplendent with gold and adorned with flowers,

1. *Image of the archetype: skizbnatipn patkerakerput' iwn.* The phrase is verbally reminiscent of Moses Khorenats'i, I 1, where Moses, following Philo, discusses intellect and reason. For this physical reality as an image of spiritual reality cf. also the *Teaching*, especially §311.

2. *Flight to heaven:* cf. Elishē, p. 5, where he also discusses the image of the heavenly.

3. For baptism as "illumination"—significant for Agathangelos, who describes the activity of Saint Gregory the "Illuminator"—see Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.v. *phōtismos*.

4. See John 8.3–11.

5. See Matt. 21.31; but there are several New Testament parallels.

6. *Brigand: awazak*, the "thieves" crucified with Jesus. For the pledge see Luke 23.43.

7. Cf. Matt. 26.38; Mark 14.34.

8. *Medicine:* This is a common patristic theme; see Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.v. *pharmakon*.

9. *Unbecoming: anyarmar;* cf. p. 228 n. 8 above for Armenian clerical opposition to excessive mourning. (But there *for* the dead, not of the dying!)

and insatiably performed further acts of penitence. Even the holy angels appeared in visible form; in terror at their sight his mind was dazed. As they surrounded him, he questioned: "Is there forgiveness for my wicked deeds? Will God forgive my frequent trespasses? Tell me, answer me." This he said, his face buried in his couch, mingling his laments with repeated moans and groans. I indeed was beside him and knew precisely his firmness in the hope of salvation.¹⁰ [251] Having tasted the Living Bread and the source of the Living and Life-giving Blood of the Son of God, he gave up his soul into the hands of the holy angels and fearlessly passed through the powers and principalities,¹ through the guardians of this dark [region] who have control over the souls of unbelievers, rather than those of believers and those who have repented, and deliver them to their perdition.

After the death of Ashot and the completion of the period of mourning for him,² his brother Gagik took control of the principality of Vaspurakan.³ The brothers Gagik and Gurgēn, born of the same father and mother, descended from the noble and high-ranking stocks of Senek'erim and David,⁴ came together in mutual harmony inspired by affable love for each other with no thoughts of evil. They combined noble intention and generous inspiration, putting aside all thoughts of hostile intent and folly, and embraced each other in their desire for the good and advantageous prosperity and peace of their native land, to which they devoted their diligent care. By their reforms they restored to order what had been disturbed, brought back those who had been deprived of or removed from their ancestral lands and homes, settled the confused and turbulent state of the country

10. For the date of Thomas see the Introduction to this book.

1. Cf. Col. 2.10. But for the role of the angels with these titles see Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite, *Eccl. Hierarchy*, ch. 8-9.

2. *Period of mourning*: ten months for Derenik; see above, p. 228.

3. According to John Catholicos, p. 192, Smbat conferred this dignity on Gagik after Ashot's death.

4. *David*: i.e. the king of Israel from whom the Bagratids claimed descent. The mother of Ashot, Gagik, and Gurgēn was a Bagratid, Sop'i the daughter of the late king Ashot. The Bagratid claim to Jewish ancestry is an important theme in Moses Khor-enats'i's *History*; but other than Thomas, John Catholicos seems to be the first Armenian writer to adduce David himself, p. 25. However, the Georgian branch of the Bagratid family had claimed descent from David since the end of the eighth century; see Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 328-329. For Senek'erim as ancestor of the Artsrunik' see above, p. 20.

into a course of calm and peace, and permitted each and every inhabitant of the country to live in security, undisturbed by marauders within or without.

The whole area of their principality they divided into two parts. The eastern and western regions that face to the north Prince Gagik received as his portion: the provinces of Chuash and T'ořnavan, Artaz, Mardastan, Garni,⁵ Arberani, Ałandřot, Bari-lovit, Palunik' and of Metsnunik', of Tosp, Rshtunik', Bogunik', Gugan the province of [252] Artashēs.¹ These were famous provinces, which in earlier times the father of treachery called *mard-pet* had made his own—the story of which we recorded above²—and especially the city of Shamiram, the most famous and glorious of all regions of Vaspurakan.³

On the other hand, Gurgēn *marzpan*⁴ of Armenia received as his portion the eastern part that goes down to the south: the valley of Andzahik', Krchunik', Khulanovit, the original province of Mardastan, Archishakovit, Arnoy-otn, Greater and Lesser Ałbag, Akē, Tambēr, Tagrean, Ęrnay, Zarehavan.⁵

But Tambēr, Ęrnay, and Zarehavan had been detached from Parskahayk', while the city of Nakhchavan and the province of Gołt'n had been detached from Vaspurakan a long time before, 211 years in fact, in the year when the church of Saint Gregory was burned and the Armenian troops suffered a horrible death.⁶ The province of Gołt'n [had been detached] at the time of the martyrdom of Saint Vahan, in the year 186 of the [Armenian]

5. *Garni*: not the town of p. 88, but the area northeast of Lake Van; see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 342.

6. *Tosp, Rshtunik'*: The two words are spelled as one in the text, and Vardanyan takes it as a name for one province. But Tosp is the town of Van and the surrounding province; while Rshtunik' is on the southern shore of Lake Van. For Arberani, Bari-lovit, Palunik', and Gugan see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 341, 345. For Ałandřot, Metsnunik', and Bogunik' see Eremyan, *Hayastan*, pp. 32, 70, 45.

1. *Artashēs*: See above, pp. 52–54, for Artashēs' interest in the Van region.

2. See above, p. 59.

3. For Semiramis and Van see above, p. 26.

4. *Marzpan*: see above, p. 239 n. 1 for this title bestowed on Gurgēn.

5. For Krchunik' and Archishakovit see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 345, 405; for Tambēr and Ęrnay see Eremyan, *Hayastan*, pp. 84, 53. Khulanovit and Tagrean are not attested elsewhere.

6. It was in 705 (?) that the Armenians were burned in the church at Nakhchavan; see above, p. 105 n. 1. Since Thomas seems here to be referring to the period soon after Ashot's death in 904, the figure of 211 does not tally. The reference to Gołt'n in this sentence is superfluous, since Thomas discusses that in the next sentence.

era when Saint Vahan, who was the son of Khosrov lord of Golt'n, was martyred.⁷

So they began to create prosperity and peace for the land through equitable justice, care for orphans and widows, vigilance in charity for the poor and embellishment of the church. Gagik fortified with walls the hill at Ostan in R̄shtunik' that had lain in ruins for many years; he rebuilt the church there dedicated to the Holy Mother of God, Mary, and embellished it with very valuable vessels. In it he also placed the cross which we mentioned above,⁸ through which miraculous powers had been revealed. He built a church in the rocky cave of Amrakan, at the summit of the rock,⁹ dedicated to the valiant soldier Saint George. He adorned it with similar embellishment, with a silver censer, worked in choice silver and emblazoned with the sign of Christ's cross. Right beneath Amrakan, in a hollow spot diagonally to the north, he built [253] a church, constructed in wonderful fashion from stones cut in the city of Manazav and [brought] to Vantosp, dedicated to the holy Sion in the holy city of Jerusalem.¹ To the right of the altar he built on the same foundation [a chapel] dedicated to the crucifixion of the Lord at Golgotha. Above it he constructed a church [dedicated] to the upper room of the mystical celebration of the transmission of the new covenant.² On the left side of the altar he built a church in commemoration of the Resurrection of Christ on the third day from the tomb, having pillaged hell.³ Above that he built a church [dedicated] to the Ascension to heaven and the sharing of the Father's throne, and in commemoration of the Second Coming, when he will come in the Father's glory with the angels to the apostles, bringing them the consoling and encouraging

7. Vahan's martyrdom is variously dated in the Armenian sources; see Muyldermans, *Domination*, p. 98. Thomas implies that it was in A.D. 737; cf. Kirakos, p. 66: in the reign of Hisham (724-743). John Catholicos, p. 99, places it in the reign of 'Umar II (717-720). The disagreement is also apparent in the hagiographical texts; see *BHO*, pp. 267-268.

8. See above, p. 244.

9. I.e. the rock of Van.

1. For Sion as the "mother of churches" see Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.v. *Siōn*. In the following constructions Gagik made a deliberate attempt to recall the sites of Jerusalem associated with the Passion of Christ. See also p. 257 n. 4. For the bringing of the stones across Lake Van see the elaborate description below, p. 257.

2. I.e. the Cenacle.

3. The Harrowing of Hell is a theme well known in Armenian tradition; see Der Nersessian, "An Armenian Version"; "A Homily."

gospel.⁴ He also built on the rock of Amrakan on the eastern and western sides banqueting halls decorated in gold, with verandahs, improving what had earlier been constructed by his father Derenik.⁵ On the southern side he provided a staircase cut in the rock to the cistern, rising from below up to the summit of the rock with easy access and egress, cemented with sand and lime. In his seemly wisdom he prepared a water tunnel underground, cutting channels for the passage of water out of the rock, so it could run from the summit of Mount Varag obliquely from south to north into calm wide hollows in the plain, and debouch at the summit of the rock of Amrakan.⁶ Thereby he provided for the various needs and requirements of his royal palace, his own construction that was built like a city, improving on the construction of his father.

Furthermore, looking to the east in the direction of Chuashrot and the city of Getk',⁷ he constructed a splendid place of pleasure, surrounding with palatial buildings a hill from which one could look down onto the plain to the banks of the river Araxes. There herds of deer gambolled; [254] there were lairs of boars and lions and herds of onagers, all ready for the pleasures of the chase—facing the mountains of Ayrarat, noble Masis, where Artavazd, son of Artashēs, fell headlong on the rough slopes.¹

Descending to the town of Marakan on the river called Karmir² which runs into the river Araxes, he built a stronghold impregnable to mounted raiders. There too in similar fashion he placed inside dwellings, streets, and buildings divided into rooms, sufficient for his needs, a little below the place called Dzork'.³ He found there a strong rocky place secure from military attacks, which he enclosed with ramparts. He established there a splendid palace, beautifully adorned for festivities.⁴ In

4. In this sentence Thomas has combined the themes of the Second Coming and Pentecost. The combination is also attested in one of the frescoes in Gagik's later church on Alt'amar. See Thierry, "Survivance." In a wider context cf. the long note 55 in Kitzinger, "Mosaics."

5. But Thomas has not described Derenik's own constructions.

6. Thomas does not mention the ancient aqueduct which Moses Khorenats'i, I 16, describes as still standing; but it was known to the Anonymous, p. 294 below.

7. For Chuashrot and Getk' see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 345, 418.

1. See Moses Khorenats'i, II 61.

2. *Karmir*: "red" river, see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 345.

3. *Dzork'*: see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 447.

4. The Armenian text adds here *druags*, a noun which means either "covering, incrustation" (stucco?) or "chapter, section of a book." One would expect an adjective qualifying "palace."

this manner he was unstintingly mindful of all necessities, and accomplished everything that might serve the prosperity and peace of the land, involving himself in every useful activity—as is appropriate for kings and princes to care and provide for the prosperity of the country over whose direction they have been appointed by God.⁵ For not only was he concerned with its prosperity but he was also ready to shed his blood and virtuously lay down his life for his sheep like a good shepherd,⁶ raising a lofty and grand memorial, an indelible covenant for ages to come. With rapid step he made his upward course to attain the mountain of the Lord and the house of our God,⁷ following the prophet's exhortation, soaring upwards from below to Mount Varag. There he worshipped the wood of Christ's cross that was crowned by Christ, a pedestal for God's feet, in which the ranks of kings who believe in Christ glory and by which they are crowned.⁸ He covered the holy cross of salvation with gold studded with precious stones, and set the wondrous rood with pearls; [255] he fitted it into sweet-smelling wood, leaving a part open from the golden covering, and on its front [fitted] a square cross-shaped wooden casket. This is the cross which we mentioned above when we described its appearance 259 years previously in the time of Nersēs II Catholicos of Armenia, and Vard the patrician of R̄shtunik', in the year when the Muslims occupied Armenia.¹ After splendidly adorning the cross Gagik descended the mountain to its base, where dwelt monks who wore the habit.

At the time that Gagik was supreme general² he had begun his

5. For the duties of princes and kings see the Introduction to this book.

6. See John 10.11.

7. Cf. Pss. 121.1, 122.1.

8. For the cross as "crown" see Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.v. *stephanos*.

1. Thomas had not mentioned the apparition of a cross "when the Muslims occupied Armenia." Again there is confusion between Nersēs III and Nersēs II; see above, p. 231 n. 6. Thomas does not indicate when the Muslim occupation occurred; the attacks began in 640, but Vard (the text erroneously reads *Vardan* here) succeeded to his father T'ēodore's position in 654. Ps.-Shapuh, p. 107, says that the cross appeared in the time of Vard. Nor is it clear from what date the "259 years previously" should be reckoned; for Thomas goes on to describe constructions begun by Gagik prior to Ashot's death in 903. For the cross of Varag see below, p. 306 (in the Anonymous). Thomas has awkwardly moved from Karmir to Varag; for the monastery at Karmir see Thierry, "Monastères" I.

2. *Supreme general: i tirakan zawravarut'eann*. This implies that what follows belongs to the period after Derenik's death, when Gagik was appointed *zawravar* (see p. 239 n. 1)—undated, but after 895—and before he succeeded to the principality of Vaspurakan in 904.

constructions. He built a high embankment at the village of Mahrast on the eastern bank of the river facing Ostan of R̄shtunik', where there had previously been the walled palace of the Patrician Vard R̄shtuni, descendant of Hayk.³ He appointed as abbot a certain priest named Yovhannēs from the province of Boguni and the village of Anstan.⁴ Here he organised a settlement of monks and entrusted their direction to the above-mentioned priest, who was a gentle man, humble and honourable in his way of life, most appropriate for [the position] to which he had been called. The general set aside for the monastery sufficient villages for the reception of pilgrims and the care of the poor.

There he built a splendid and glorious church dedicated to Saint Peter the apostle, the invincible custodian of hell,⁵ and to the right and left of the altar another two churches. At first Gagik, not rightly inclined to the faith, intended to name the church after the Saving Name.⁶ For this opinion is of the Nestorians and Chalcedonians, with the other dyophysites, who in their error said that the Word took flesh from the Virgin as a house and tabernacle, and that the flesh was not in unity by nature with the Word.⁷ But the holy apostles are the house of Christ, as also are called the groups of other saints, as Paul said: "You are the temple of the living God"⁸; and [256] [Scripture] again says through the prophet: "I shall live among them and shall go among them."¹ But Christ is not called his own house or tabernacle, but the one Lord Jesus Christ, perfect from God and man.² Otherwise churches which are called Saviour would be adored and

3. For the palace of Vard R̄shtuni cf. Ps.-Shapuh, p. 101, there called Maharesh.

4. *Anstan*: not otherwise attested.

5. According to Matt. 16.19 Peter received the keys of heaven, not of hell!

6. *Saving Name*: *p'rch'akan anun*. "Saving" is often used of the cross, and also of churches, especially the church of the Sepulchre; see Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.v. *sōtērios*. So it would fit with the dedications to Sion and other sites in Jerusalem mentioned just above. The following curious discussion hinges upon a literal understanding of the term "house."

7. There is a vast literature on the Armenian theological opposition to the Chalcedonians, who are usually classified as "Nestorians," as in the *Book of Letters*. For a general discussion with references to previous literature see Sarkissian, *Council of Chalcedon*. For the technical expressions "house" and "tabernacle" for Christ's body see the references in Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.vv. *oikos* and *skēnē*.

8. II Cor. 6.16.

1. Cf. Lev. 26.12; Ezek. 37.27. But this is a continuation of the quotation from Paul.

2. *Perfect from God and man*: This expression is basic to the *Tome* of Proclus, which was accepted as authoritative in Armenia; see Tallon, *Livre*. See also the *Teaching*, especially §368.

worshipped with divine worship—which is most ridiculous. And it is plainly clear without doubt that [if] the church were called God and flesh of the Word, it would be even more ridiculous. The stones would be eaten and the wooden and other metal utensils, just as the Body and Blood of the Son of God which is offered in them, especially as he is truly the Son of God; and again that is most ridiculous. Let this be enough said for now for intelligent and learned people, and let us leave aside the opinions of the foolish.

Furthermore, the general Gagik constructed [buildings] at the head of the valley of Awdz, which is so named because of the severity and strength of the bitter and mortal winds that blow [there].³ He transferred villages there and built up the hillock that formed the fortified encampment of the house of the Artsrunik'. He named the site after his own name Gagkakert,⁴ and brought there the boundaries of the villages he had transferred.⁵

Equally for his part the *marzpan* of Armenia, Gurgēn, built in splendid fashion the church in the city of Hadamakert in Greater Albag, in the native princely domain of the noble family of the Artsrunik'.⁶ The stones were hewn at a good distance—about three *stadia* away—and transported for the construction of the church⁷ by means of carts gathered from far and near. He made a vociferous proclamation, as though he meant a verbal warning, and had a clear announcement broadcast to inform [people] to prepare material for the completion of the holy church. In such fashion did the sound of hewing wood in the time of Noah announce by the carpenters' tools [257] the flood that poured down from heaven and covered the abyss,¹ in which the faithful man who trusted in God journeyed to safety by the efforts of his family. As the events of his time clearly had reference to the mystery of the ark, and salvation² prevailed for us over the insolence of the Phrygians,³ with valiant faith did they

3. Awdz: lit. "snake"; see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 479.

4. Gagkakert: "town of Gagik"; Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 415 notes only this reference.

5. This last phrase is obscure. Does it mean that Gagik extended the boundaries of the old villages as far as the new site?

6. Hadamakert: the Artsruni capital; see above, p. 116 n. 2.

7. Church: *koch'aran* (not the usual *eketets'i*, as just above). The word is a literal rendering of (*ek-*) *klēsia*; according to the *NBHL* it is not attested before the seventh century.

1. See above, p. 16 at n. 6, for the sound of the hewing of wood presaging the flood.

2. For the ark as an image of salvation see Agathangelos, §169, and n. 3 of Thomson, *ad loc.*

3. Phrygians: see p. 17 above.

press on with the house of God. Prince Gagik had formed a navigable route over the waves which went up and down like hills and valleys, when he brought hewn stones for the fabric of the church from the province of Manazav across the lake of Bznunik' in little wooden [ships]; these ran in majestic path across the azure blue in their course over mountain and plain.⁴ Thus he completed the splendid tower of the holy Sion with the other holy [buildings] dedicated to the sites of the dispensation of the Word of God made man. In like fashion Gurgēn completed on an eminence on the promontory with graceful elegance his construction of two further churches to right and left of the altar.⁵ These he splendidly adorned with very valuable vessels worked in gold, signed with the cross, and set with pearls and precious stones.

But perhaps you here doubt that I can demonstrate Gurgēn's enthusiasm for physical prowess and warfare. So I appropriately add for you an account of his valiant heroism, his endurance in combat, his intelligence, experience and diligence in military affairs, his willing and meritorious exercise of the office of *marzpan*. In such fashion had the glorious Trdat taken proper care to provide for military taxes against the raids of brigands.⁶ This regulation we find among the holy angels [established] by the providence of the Creator for the benefit of the world. You can read in the books of the prophets these details, as in the sixth vision of Daniel [258] and the discourse of Zechariah; and as Paul took care to explain the seven ranks handed down to the holy church by the Holy Spirit.¹

It happened, after the great battle which took place before the

4. See above, p. 253, for the church and the bringing of stones from Manazkert. The Anonymous, p. 297, and a later writer, p. 322, refer to the transport of stones over Lake Van to the island of Alt'amar. Here Thomas makes explicit Gagik's interest in the historical sites of the Holy Land.

5. This pattern of three churches was also followed by Gagik at Vostan; see above, p. 255.

6. This sentence is obscure. Neither Agathangelos nor Moses Khorenats'i refers to King Trdat taking measures against the raids of bandits. "To provide for military taxes" renders *zpatarazmakann harkanel harks*; but *harkanel harks* would normally mean "to pay tribute."

1. Thomas seems to mean that the angels also act as protectors. But his emphasis is on the seven ranks (*astichanean masuns*, a strange use of *masn*), though nine is the more usual division of the angelic orders. Dan. 9, describes the meaning of seventy weeks of years; Zech. 3.9 and 4.2 refer to visions involving the number seven. Paul refers to the gifts of the Spirit in I Cor. ch. 12, though he does not specify that they are seven in number. See further Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.v. *hepta*.

[events] I have been describing,² that [the Muslims came] to the chiefs of the province of Manazav and the plain of Yush,³ combined forces with the turbulent occupants of the cities, and vainly raided the land. There they received their punishment from the sword of the warriors of Vaspurakan, as we described. As soon as the sad news of those fallen in battle reached the Persian city⁴ and the borders of Atrpatakan, in the perverse custom of their religion, being bloodthirsty and without benevolence, and especially as they were filled with Satanic mischief, they raised a cry to all cities, and created a tumult in their wild raving. They launched an attack from their lairs like bees swarming out from their hives at the season of their procreation led by their queen bee,⁵ who in their rage against the human race plan to destroy it, but rather bring extermination upon themselves. In such manner the Persian throng attacked the land of Vaspurakan in their various tribes and cities from Media and Persia, from Elam and Khuzhastan, from Krman and Mukan, from Turkastan and Khorasan. Suddenly they fell on the province of Chuash to burn, plunder, and destroy from the very foundations the holy churches, the houses of prayer of the Christians, to slaughter the priests of the new covenant with their swords, to kill old men and women with the sword, to march young men and maidens away to captivity, to destroy and loot possessions and belongings. So the land was in great anguish, filled with terror at these calamities.

At that time T'adēos of the Akēats'i family, known as the son of Sherep', whom we mentioned above elsewhere in the great battle on the confines of Ałdznik',⁶ fortified himself in the castle of Shamiram. [259] He was lying in wait like a lion cub in its den.¹ He wrote to the holy bishop Grigor of the house of the Amatunik', who was residing at the tomb of Saint Thaddaeus

2. For the battle see above, p. 246.

3. *Yush*: not otherwise attested.

4. *Persian city*: Partav, residence of the Muslim *ostikans* of *Arminiya*.

5. *Queen-bee*: *ordnatsin*, lit. "born from a grub." The word occurs only here. For bees cf. Ps. 117.12, and esp. Deut. 1.44, of the Amorites who destroyed the Israelites. But Thomas's simile goes beyond the biblical images. In the Armenian version of Basil's *Hexaemeron*, VIII 4, the "king" bee is rendered *bnatsin*.

6. See above, p. 233; the following episode is also mentioned by the Anonymous, pp. 281-282.

1. See Pss. 9.30, 16.12.

the apostle in the province of Ardoz,² [asking him] to find some reason for the attack which had befallen them. He returned a response full of encouraging advice and exhortation to the hope of a martyr's crown: if in that battle it should happen that he be killed, then for the victory he would inherit the title of confessor, and he should strengthen himself in the power of the cross of Christ our God. With steadfast faith he rapidly advanced to the decisive battle. He left his fortified position with a small force, the garrison of the fortress of Shamiram; swooping like an eagle on its prey, they encountered the numberless host [of the enemy] at the village of P'aytakshtan. There, from a slightly higher position, they rushed down like a torrent to attack them, taking courage in Christ. In the twinkling of an eye they filled the surface of the plain with bodies of killed and wounded. Of the survivors, some fled before them wherever they could escape, while others raised loud and piteous cries, seeking deliverance from the sword of the valiant champion T'adēos son of Sherep'. So the land of Vaspurakan gained peace, and they lived in safety and security. No more did bands of Persian raiders attack the country.

Since Lesser Ałbag and the land of Korchēik'³ and Parskahayk' bordered on each other directly, and they were continually finding excuses for mutual quarrels—that is, the *marzpan*⁴ and those who governed Korchēik'—the *marzpan* marched against them, and took control of Tamber and the province of Ērnay and the castle called Apujap'r;⁵ and in the city of Vhri⁶ in Korchēik' he installed his own officers⁷ to guard the fortress. But the inhabitants of Parskahayk', marching in a confused rabble, secretly passed by untrodden paths to reach [260] the city of Vitahot¹ in the province of Mardastan. Attacking with the sword, they took captives and seized booty, then returned to Chuash and the province of Toınavan, passing through the province of Krchunik'. They took captives and booty from Lek, Ałzi,

2. *Ardoz*: read *Artaz*. For the tomb of Thaddaeus see Moses Khorenats'i, II 34, 74. Bishop Grigor Amatuni is not mentioned elsewhere.

3. *Korchēik'*: see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 255–259.

4. *Marzpan*: i.e. Gurgēn Artsruni, for whose holdings in this region see above, p. 252.

5. *Apujap'r*: This castle is unattested elsewhere.

6. *Vhri*: The city is otherwise unattested.

7. *Officers*: *ostikans*, normally used of the Muslim governors of Armenia; see above, p. 89 n. 2.

1. *Vitahot*: This city is otherwise unattested..

Krerik',² and from the province of Chakhuk. When news of this reached Shapuh, brother of T'adēos son of Sherep', he marched out to attack the rabble from Parskahayk'. There he exhibited many acts of prowess: he freed all the captives, and seized back the booty. But he was wounded by a sword, and died a martyr's death in the village of Giwlik in the province of Chuash, giving himself to death for the sake of Christ's sheep. Then the Muslims turned back and entered the provinces of T'rab and Shnawh.³

When the *marzpan* of Armenia Gurgēn heard the sad news, he pursued them with one thousand men, fully armed cavalry, and reached the province of Ayli.⁴ Informed of his arrival, the Muslims fled to a distance and occupied the strongholds, scattering over the mountains in secret hiding places.

When the next year came round, while they were still unconcerned and safe from fear of the *marzpan*, the latter took about seven hundred cavalry, armed and equipped, and marched by a circuitous route in order to attack the Persian supply camp. Leaving the city of Hadamakert at the ninth hour on a Friday, he passed by the lake of Ĕmbeay⁵ and by Varaz⁶ and Zrevhavan; at dawn the next day he reached the village of Erenay Yamats',⁷ and by evening had arrived at the river called the Taron. The next morning with weary horses they attacked the camp, whose entrance was unguarded. Straightway two men fell, Vlit'and Marachay. The *marzpan*'s horse was too weak to gallop, but with seemly defiance they boldly attacked the enemy, captured and plundered the camp, put more than a few to the sword, and reached a hollow at the village of Mhunik.⁸ But, as has been said, the horses were tired out from the long march, [261] and the riders overcome by lack of sleep, the blazing sun, and burning heat, and horses and riders alike were suffering extreme thirst. While they were resting and unprepared, suddenly they were attacked by a band of raging infidels including women, their children and kinsmen. In fearsome strength they

2. *Lek*: unattested elsewhere. For Krerik' see Eremyan, *Hayastan*, p. 61.

3. *Giwlík*: "little village" is unattested elsewhere. For Shnawh see Eremyan, *Hayastan*, p. 74, and for Trab, Markwart, "Parskahayk'," pp. 276-277.

4. *Ayli*: see above, p. 144 n. 1.

5. *Ĕmbeay*: otherwise unattested.

6. *Varaz*: Vardanyan corrects to Varazhnunik', for which province see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 326, 470.

7. *Erenay Yamats'*: otherwise unattested.

8. *Mhunik*: otherwise unattested.

fell on [the Armenians] with flailing swords and mercilessly butchered them. The Armenian force suffered a terrible disaster, only a few from the large number being able to escape with difficulty. On that day, in the unnecessary battle, there fell about five hundred famous men, whose place of burial has never been revealed to this day. They were the most illustrious men from the house of the Artsrunik' and other noble families—on whom may God have mercy.

Thenceforth the infidels¹ gained confidence, and began to gather bands of common people, an innumerable multitude like locusts, from those who were called Shekhetik'.² There were also others from various distant countries: Persia, Zhangan, Jurjan, the province of Vararat. They formed an enormous army in the province of Zarevan, and intended in their cruel spite to attack our land in order to destroy it completely. But the best and oldest among them temporized over this, especially those who are known as the [most] faithful in their religion, called Kurayk',³ their leader Hamis, and someone else from the regions of Zhangan. These said that it was not right to do this, according to their prophet. Furthermore, Prince Gurgēn continually wrote entreaties to their elders and nobles, presenting what had happened as a misfortune and accident, and [begging them] not to wreak their vengeance on their vassals and subjects. So peace was arranged after these great tribulations by command from on high. [. . .?]

(End of the *History* by T'ovmay himself)

1. *Infidels*: *anawrēn*, lit., "impious," a common expression for the Persians in Elishē. In the previous paragraph "infidels" is a literal rendering of *anhawat*, a term rarely used by Armenian historians for the Muslims.

2. *Shekhetik'*: Shekki in the Caucasus, with a Georgian suffix *-eti* (of place names) and the Armenian plural marker. See the *Ashkharhats'oyts'*, §26, for Shak'ē in Aḫuank'.

3. *Kurayk'*: i.e. the Arabic *qurrā'*, readers of the Quran.

[262] *Anonymous¹ Continuators*

He was given by the Lord another son, whom he named Gurgēn after his uncle.² He also demonstrated many acts of valour with the assistance of God, who fulfilled for him the inspired prophecy of the songs of David: "Everything that he shall do will succeed for him."³

He also recovered for himself and his successors the region of Stig⁴ of Tosp province at the foot of Mount Varag, which the wicked race of Ismaelites had seized a long time before. His ancestors had striven for it, but without success. Now the renowned and warlike prince, protector of his fathers' [claims], by his supremely wise resourcefulness, and especially encouraged by the assistance of God, with great bravery took the fortress by night and ruled over the province. He also plucked by force out of the hands of the Muslims the province of Ērnay, which the Muslims had seized so long before that no one was able to recall mention of it, or what had happened to it over many centuries.⁵ Likewise [he recovered] many other towns of Atrpatakan, over which he ruled with great magnificence. Through so many and such remarkable victories did he become famous and well known in Armenia.

But the cunning devil Satan—as once of old through the influence of the woman he tricked the gullible ancestor⁶ to taste the

1. Although there is no gap or new title in the text, the editor of the first edition noted that a page had been lost. The following section is not by Thomas but by an unknown author, who begins his supplement to Thomas's *History* by returning to the time of Derenik. See further the Introduction to this book.

2. *He*: i.e. Derenik. Gurgēn was his third son, named after Derenik's uncle Gurgēn, brother of Ashot. Cf. above, p. 218.

3. Ps. 1.3.

4. *Stig*: otherwise unattested.

5. See above, p. 252. Thomas says that Ērnay had been lost "211 years before."

6. *Ancestor*: *nakhahayr*, lit. "first father."

fruit, and rendered mortal the immortal nature that we had in paradise⁷—likewise here too he stirred up the fire of envy against the valiant and renowned prince. He cast resentment and jealousy into the hearts of some Armenians so they might become accomplices; he inflamed the enemies of the cross of Christ, who like blood-thirsty beasts gnashed their teeth against him. Descending to depths of wickedness, they revealed their plots and incited each other to find means, planning by secret treachery and feigned friendship to accomplish their ends. But they never dared reveal any of this: [263] “Perchance he may hear,” they said, “and swoop down on us like an eagle on flocks of birds, and make us fodder for the sword.” While all these secret conspiracies lay hidden fermenting, the prince, unsuspecting, enjoyed profound peace in accordance with the grace given him from above.

At this time he raised to high rank one of his kinsmen called Gagik, giving him the castle of Agarak and the province of Chakhuk, and making him commander on the Persian frontier.¹ But his eyes were covered with grease, like the blinded Israel;² he was ungrateful to his benefactor, and turned his back on the prince, overcome by the vice of rebellion. When the all-wise and mighty [prince] saw this, he undertook a sublime plan. In order to get rid of him he sent to him his nephew Hasan.³ Since Gagik had married Hasan's sister, he therefore received him in the castle in a friendly and peaceful manner. Finding a suitable opportunity, Hasan seized the fortress and wrote to the prince, describing how the affair had turned out. Immediately the prince arrived, put [Gagik] in chains, sent him to the town of Van, and imprisoned him in its fortress.

But as we said above,⁴ some traitors from Atrpatakan, and likewise those who were Armenian and whose accomplice this rebel Gagik had been, were continually plotting to carry out their murky plan. Since they were unable to harm the valiant [prince] in any way openly, they turned to a man who was very dear to the prince, the son of Apumsar from the city of

7. For man's immortal nature in paradise cf. the *Teaching*, §278. Thomas elaborates on this above, pp. 10–12.

1. *Gagik*: i.e. Gagik Apumruan, son of the sister of Derenik's wife Sop'i. *Agarak* (estate) is a common name; see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 393–394.

2. See Job 15.27, of the wicked man who opposes God.

3. *Hasan*: for the following story see above, p. 225.

4. The anonymous continuator does not disassociate himself from Thomas.

Kher.⁵ Shedding tears and sighs before him, they recalled to him their patriotic zeal, the pillaging of cities and possessions, the seizure of houses and destruction of castles, the slaughter of troops and the shedding of much blood by the sword of the mighty [prince], and they set before him the false ordinances of the religion of Mahumat'. Some other Armenians promised him riches and gifts. Just as [264] fire thrives on a large supply of wood, so did this man delight in promises and pacts. Thus they seduced him, and through him craftily set the mortal trap.

Matters were in this situation when winter arrived in accordance with the changing of the seasons, by which human lives are measured through the sun's motion.¹ Then the illustrious prince, as was his former habit, set off through the valley of Andzah and arrived in the plain of Kher, intending to reach as rapidly as possible the royal winter quarters in the province of Chuash at the town of Marakan.

At that time he had been preceded by the impious man, his deceitful and treacherous friend, pregnant with impiety, begetter of destruction, wicked suckling mother of mortal plots, nurse of darkness, accomplice of blood, advised by Satan, spurned by the virtuous, servant of the Evil One, key of hell, furnace of sin, ignited with the fire of envy by his own companions, mire of gloom, who engulfed in his abyss of perdition the shining pearl of the sea. Through evil messengers he begged the renowned prince of Vaspurakan to spend the night with him in accordance with his customary friendliness. The prince did not accept because he was hurrying to his own province. But the former, alleging that this was a violation of his pact of friendship, put pressure on the prince at least to let him see his glorious face. Taking a deadly present, he came to meet the mighty [prince]. When they met they were unable to embrace each other. For the prince had gone out hunting unaccompanied by his soldiers and without wearing armour, and the tracks through the vineyards were difficult to pass, and the [two] men were separated by a noisy rushing stream that was very deep. Neither the Mus-

5. *Apumsar*: Thomas calls him Aplbers, i.e. Abu'l-Fāris; whereas the Anonymus uses the patronymic b. Abu Manşur. See above, p. 226 n. 6. For a similar version of Derenik's death at the hands of Apumsar's sons see Ps.-Shapuh, p. 169. *Kher* is Thomas's Her. There are differences between Thomas and the Continuator in the spelling of many names; see Biwzandats'i, "Ananun."

1. For the theme of changing seasons see above, pp. 119, 166–167. For the significance of the sun as measurer see *Teaching*, §267.

lim nor any of our soldiers dared cross it, admitting their faint-heartedness and the hesitation of their horses, especially as the prince did not let anyone follow him. Then the valiant and mighty prince, spurring [265] his horse's flank, rapidly crossed that difficult torrent.

Now that foul Muslim, since he was unwilling to confront the mighty prince in person, having been previously advised by his accomplices, had taken with him some strong and athletic men secretly armed. He approached the prince, and throwing his arms around his neck gave him the kiss of Judas.¹ The troops nearby forcibly seized his bridle, and laid hands on his sharp steel sword so that the valiant [prince] was unable to gallop away. Then, striking him with the lance, they took the brave man's life. Since his offspring were young children, Ashot, Gagik, and Gurgēn, who had not yet reached maturity,² therefore there was no one to avenge his blood so unworthily shed.

We cannot leave the memory of the loss of this all-blessed warrior without considerable and worthy lament. Therefore I call on the bitter grape of the wine pourer,³ the prophet Jeremiah, saying: "Who made my head a reservoir of water, and my eyes rapid flowing streams?"⁴ so I may ceaselessly weep for the day of the destruction of the new Israel.⁵ I do not hesitate to summon the similar woeful laments of the great prophet, the wonderful Zechariah, and with him go up to a high watchtower to cry out to all nations and say: "Weep, weep, east to west, north to south, nations to nations, peoples to peoples. For the helper has left, the defender has become silent, the great leader with his princely splendour has today been taken away from our head. Heaven above and earth below mourned the loss of their fellow servant. Who would not lament that day, whose entrails would not be contorted, among us who have deserved to see and endure such cruel and terrible misfortunes?"⁶

For the noble troops, deprived of their lord and scattered over

1. As in Thomas's account, p. 227 above.

2. Thomas had given their ages as nine, seven, five respectively, p. 228.

3. *Wine pourer: matruak*, not used of prophets in the Bible: but it is applied to the apostles in the *Teaching*, §507, and that author goes on to speak of the *matruakut'iwn* of Jeremiah, §508. See the notes of Thomson, *ad loc.*

4. Jer. 9.1.

5. *New Israel*: i.e. Armenia. It is a common figure for the church; for Armenian claims to direct connection with the old Israel see above, p. 251 n. 4.

6. This passage is not a quotation from Zechariah, but is a lament modelled on Moses Khorenats'i, III 68. Since Moses there refers to Zechariah, the Continuator ascribes the phrasing of Moses to the prophet.

mountains and plains, bitterly filled the land with sighs, laments, and flowing tears; [266] from the anguished burning of their entrails they were struck to the ground like corpses, benumbed by the bitter taste of the mortal cup. The young men of his bodyguard, whom the prince had raised¹ and on whom he personally relied, put nooses round their necks and were anxious to shed their own blood, preferring death to life. Even the dogs who loved their master, grovelling at the spot of his murder and raging in nocturnal vigil, scattered the beasts of the desert by their baying and howling to heaven, until the streams of noble blood that fell to the ground had dried in the heat of the sun.

The news of this mighty loss spread over Armenia like a heavy thundercloud filled with wrath, especially over his own pre-eminent province of Vaspurakan. There women and maid-servants, putting aside the decorum of their female sex, heads bare,² dragged themselves along the streets and roads. In their deep and bitter grief they forgot to suckle their infant children with their accustomed milk, having time only for voicing their mutual lamentations. The palace of the great princess Sop'i, beautiful as the sun, resounded with the beating of breasts and foreheads and with shrill wailings. In their lamentations they cried: "Woe, the renowned prince is lost, and the land of Armenia remains without a lord."

The princess, who had trusted in the invincible power of the mighty [prince], said: "Why, Oh men, and for what reason did you have the arrogance to do this? There are no enemies anywhere; no war has engulfed [us] from anywhere. Who dared to do this? Who could seize my golden-feathered champion and noble cock, or trap him in a snare, without himself being torn apart and killed? Who was able to bring low the high-flying eagle with his resounding and fearsome cry? Who could approach and bridle the unconquered dragon, [267] and survive?" Such words as these, and even more, did the princess address to the mourners.

When the event had been confirmed and the news of his death verified, then she threw herself on her face to the ground, strewing ashes on her head and spreading gloom through the palace. She cast off her noble veil adorned with pearls, dressed herself in black, and prepared a dark-coloured covering for her head.

1. *Raised*: *dzernasun*, used of domestics or clients; see Thomson, *Elishē*, p. 200 n. 10.

2. *Heads bare*: a sign of mourning; cf. above, pp. 113, 174.

Summoning her daughters, she prescribed rites of mourning and arranged in groups Jewish¹ singers, and had them chant the laments of the kings of Israel.

On that day the holy churches and ranks of ministers were arrayed in mourning. The golden-laced, arc-shaped coloured hangings were removed from the doors of the rooms, to be replaced by black ones, very rough and sombre. Messengers were despatched hither and yon from among the mourners to shut the windows of the splendid palace, at the order of the princess. "Lest," she said, "the sun in the unattainable height of heaven, as it moves through its vault casting its rays down below, illuminate my darkness. Or the moon, reaching its full measure, with the morning star and all the ornament of the stars, dissipate my mist. Until God gives me among my sons one as courageous as his father, who in my lifetime or thereafter will declare over his tomb that he will take revenge for the spilt blood of his father on the heads of those who plunged me into this darkness."

We were informed by those who had witnessed the events² and who carried the [prince's] children in their bosoms that when the princess said this she stretched out her hand onto the shoulder of the splendid young Gagik. But I do not know if this was for the occasion, or whether the great lady Sop'i, blessed among women,³ did this prophetically. In those days of grievous mourning the hands of labourers and artisans forsook their tasks to be placed on knees and cheeks as they bitterly wept. [268] Lords and nobles gathered together and broke their hearts with cruel laments: "Where," they said, "have we lost the honourable pearl, the boast of Armenia, the invincible warrior, who waged great battles without an effort and gained a glorious name for himself and us? Where is the pleasant smile of his lips¹ which always gave joy to the numerous guests on golden decorated cushions and delighted us with the cup of hospitality? Where are the liberal gifts of his generous hand that continuously embellished us with splendid adornment? Woe and alas

1. *Jewish*: *ebrayets'i*. The grammar of the printed text makes this adjective qualify "singers," but Vardanyan takes it with "laments." References to *contemporary* Jews are rare in Armenian literature.

2. For the date of the Continuator see the Introduction to this book.

3. Cf. Luke 1.42; but there *awrhneal*, here *erjanik*.

1. *The smile*: reminiscent of Moses Khorenats'i's lament for Mashtots', as above, p. 265.

for our life. Why did that day not befall us in a great battle among the jostling spears of an army, [when] we might have lost our lives?" But then the ranks of patriarchs and hermits bestirred the minds of the princess and the other mourners² to the fear of God, and gradually drove away the misery of their bitter distress.

Here it would please me to describe in majestic style the lamentations. But to prevent the listeners' minds from being distressed, I shall refrain from saying anything about them, and we shall hasten on with the course of this history. Perhaps God will grant us success in bringing to a final conclusion the extensive story of the valiant men of the house of the Artsrunik'.

The end of the genealogy of the three sons of the renowned and valiant prince Grigor, in which [are described] his triumphant deeds, his death through the treachery of certain Armenians and Persians, and laments over him.

2. *Mourners: kotsot*. For Armenian attacks on excessive *kots* see above, p. 228 n. 8.

Anonymous Continuator, [269] *Book Four*¹

CHAPTER 1

The accession of Ashot his eldest son; and the death of the blessed and pious lady Sop'i

After the death of the blessed prince, his eldest son Ashot was confirmed on his father's throne at the age of about twelve years.² The renowned lady Sop'i oversaw the remarkable progress of her children, especially that of the young Gagik; for even from that young age he shone out with wonderful éclat among his brothers. On seeing this, the princess took hope and steadied her heart; and he ruled his principality like a man with the help of her father Ashot,³ king of Armenia.

Since Apumruan was the son of Lady Sop'i's sister, she therefore released him from imprisonment at the command of her father⁴. Now Sop'i herself, incomparable among women like the turtledove devoted to its mate,⁵ separated herself from all delights of this earthly existence; being so attached [to her husband], her heart was unable to endure the pain, and after seven

1. The original manuscript does not have a title here. Vardanyan numbers this chapter as no. 2 of "The Anonymous," while Brosset continues as Book III, ch. 30. Patkanean starts a Book IV.

2. But, on p. 228 above, Thomas gave the age of Ashot on his father's death as nine.

3. Sop'i was the daughter of Ashot Bagratuni; see above, p. 207.

4. For the imprisonment of Gagik Apumruan see above, p. 263.

5. The faithfulness of the turtledove to its mate is an old topos; found in Basil's *Hexaemeron*, it goes back to Aristotle. See also *Physiologus*, §§32, 33, and *Teaching*, §656.

months⁶ she peacefully departed this world to sleep with her ancestors, leaving her children young and tender in age.

Then several of their relatives murmured, plotting disloyalty to the youths; but they were unable [to do anything] from fear of the great Ashot, king of Armenia. Following this, King Ashot lived for a year and a half before leaving the world, gloriously buried for [eternal] glory.⁷ [270] Their relatives found this a suitable occasion to begin seizing various places from the control of the young [princes]. Then Apumruan came forward with a plan, for he wished to rule over the principality of Vaspurakan. He won over to himself the minds of the lords and nobles of the country by the following argument: "I shall rule the country as a substitute in the name of Ashot, and he will persuade the inhabitants of the land to acquiesce." When Ashot reached his majority he remained according to his custom respectfully submissive to Apumruan, for he had become his son-in-law.¹

Then, when there were a few days of leisure, he [Apumruan] summoned Ashot with his brothers to the castle of Kotor on pretext of congratulations. There one night he seized and bound them. He sent Ashot and Gurgēn to the castle called Nkan, and had them imprisoned and guarded with great circumspection. But Gagik he marched off to the province of Chuash, to the castle of Shamiram.² For he had tricked Ashot like a young child³ by giving him the castle of Agarak with the province called Chakhuk, in return for taking for himself the castle of Nkan and the provinces of T'ornavan and Chuash, where he fortified for his own account the [castle] of Shamiram.

Furthermore he put abroad among the people another type of fraud by saying: "I am a man without heirs, save only for my daughter whom Ashot has married. I am afraid that perchance Ashot may become puffed up against me." By this he persuaded and convinced his audience. But being himself suspicious and overcome by irresolution, now he would release the younger Gurgēn and take him around with him, then again he would have him imprisoned once more. So he released Gurgēn, but

6. *Seven months*: Thomas had said "one year and eight months," p. 229.

7. Thomas, p. 230, places King Ashot's death in 339 (A.D. 890/1).

1. Prince Ashot married Seday, Apumruan's daughter; see above, p. 238.

2. *Castle of Shamiram*: i.e. Van. But Thomas, p. 235, had said that Gagik was imprisoned in Sevan castle.

3. *Like a young child*: cf. p. 169 n. 7.

was perplexed with regard to him, not knowing what to do. For his heart was torn for thinking about the youth, and he was waiting [for an occasion] to kill him secretly. But God did not permit him to dip his hand in innocent blood.

[271] CHAPTER 2

The glorious effulgence and appearance of God's grace over the young Gagik; and the killing of Apumruan at his hands most valiantly; and praises concerning him

In his foreknowledge Christ the king of all had previously designated the blessed youth Gagik as a chosen vessel¹ worthy of his grace. Knowing that he would become such a person, he bestowed on him the spirit of power and wisdom,² fulfilling in him what had been said by the prophet: "A just king re-establishes the land."³ Through him he did indeed save Armenia from very grievous afflictions that unremittingly had followed on each other, and from frequent wars that occurred in his generation. Even from a youthful age he was a budding source of virtue. Hence the youth is a great source of amazement to me: although he had neither gifts nor possessions to grant anyone, nor with princely authority could he impose taxes on anyone, yet the lords and nobles of the land always treated him in a friendly way. For wisdom flowed from his lips purer than gold, and the grace of sweet modesty coupled with brave valour shone out over him, filling the hearts of all with hope.

His valour was already exhibited before he was yet fifteen years of age, when he made the decision of a true warrior to kill Apumruan.⁴ When the moment was favourable, he took his conspirators⁵ with him, attacked [Apumruan], and put him to death by the sword in a park⁶ of the town of Van. Throwing him at his horse's feet, he cut off his head—which he brought to the fortress of Ashinot⁷ where Gurgēn was, and likewise to the

1. Cf. Acts 9.15.

2. Cf. Isa. 11.2.

3. Prov. 29.4.

4. *Fifteen*: according to Thomas, p. 218, Gagik was born in A.D. 879.

5. Thomas names some of these conspirators, p. 238 above.

6. *Park*: *asparisin teli*, i.e. a place for riding or games.

7. *Ashinot*: otherwise unattested.

castle of Kotór in the valley of Andzakh were Ashot was. Both of them had despaired of deliverance. [272] Liberating them, he gave [the] ring¹ into Ashot's hands, and made him master of his own inheritance with the dignity of prince.

It was God, as I suppose, who permitted him to take vengeance for his father's blood from Apumruan, since he was one of the accomplices of the Evil One, as we mentioned above.² So I do not hesitate to extol his virtues assiduously. Truly I am very eager to compose descriptions and praises of him and his deeds. Because for a nation that was in darkness he placed a shining torch on the highest point of a castle that was fortified around with the power of God. It was preserved unextinguished from the hostile winds that blew fiercely from four directions. Not only was he himself [not]³ obscured, but through his firm faith he made the enemies of his father's house totter, and he utterly consumed them.

He was a tall tower built with strong stones bonded in lead, like a wall of bronze, firmly nailed, unbreachable by the enemy; likewise, similar to an iron pillar⁴ on secure bases set up with inconceivable strength and hope in God over the sublime principality of Armenia; a place of refuge to which one could flee from the face of the enemy. He was a rational sword, blazing with the power of the heavenly [angels], glittering and casting rays over the heads of the enemy; casting terror into them, he brought to a halt those who waxed insolent against the church and the institutions of the church. From a youthful and inexperienced age he rose up like a lion cub⁵ delightful in his proud stride, raising his arms over the backs of the enemy, plunging those lying in ambush from the paths of their feet. With fearsome summoning voice, through messengers and decrees he wrested for himself many treasures and stores from foreign nations, controlling more of their castles and provinces than his fathers.

[273] But since it is no longer the time for praise but for history,¹ let us hasten back to the course [of our narrative].

1. *Ring: matani*, the symbol of princely authority; see Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 134–135.

2. *Above*: see p. 264.

3. The sense requires the negative.

4. *Wall of bronze, iron pillar*: cf. Jer. 1.18. Some of the following epithets are too common in the Bible to note specific sources.

5. Cf. Num. 23.24.

1. Cf. above, p. 193 at n. 2.

Now the prince Ashot was supported by the grace and high arm of the valiant and brave youth Gagik, according to the saying of the wise man: "A brother helped by a brother will become like a strong city."² He began to render himself daily ever more illustrious on his father's throne with victorious glory. Seeing this, Smbat the king of Armenia sent his brother David³ to beg Prince Ashot not to become detached from him, nor to preserve rancour for his captivity by Gagik son of Vahan.

Smbat asked this favour of Ashot his nephew because he was fearful that perhaps Ashot might once again follow the summons of Ap'shin, like the first time which we described above.⁴ For Ap'shin was sending to Ashot many promises of gifts and treaty engagements. These Ashot did not accept, but he returned them since he had disregarded him during his days in prison. And he came to Smbat in friendship and peace, [saying]: "Many trials have befallen us" because the prince did not go to the emir Ap'shin.

Ap'shin came to Armenia with a numberless armed force and attacked Smbat, who escaped by the skin of his teeth and fled to Georgia. He then turned to besiege the castle of Kars, and opening up the stores of amassed treasures he took much booty.⁵

Then Ashot, prince of Vaspurakan, travelling through the province of Bagrevand, rapidly returned to his own land. But Smbat, the king of Armenia, sent a messenger to ask Ap'shin for peace, giving as hostage his eldest son.⁶ Taking the latter, he turned to attack Ashot with many threats, resentful of his despising his summons. He reached the province of T'ornavan in the wintertime.

Ashot took counsel with his brothers and all [274] the nobles of his army. They said: "These are hard days and time of war. Who knows whose will be the victory?" In order to spare the

2. Prov. 18.19.

3. *David*: John Catholicos, p. 194, describes Smbat's brother; but neither he nor Thomas refers to this message. For Smbat's recognition of the three Artsruni princes see above, pp. 238-239.

4. *Above*: see p. 239. Note the variant spelling of Ap'shin, not Awshin as in Thomas.

5. Thomas, p. 240, describes Afshin's attack on Vaspurakan, but not Smbat's defeat. See John Catholicos, p. 178, for the capture of Kars; and Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 440, for the city.

6. See John Catholicos, p. 180, for Ashot Bagratuni, eldest son of King Smbat, going as hostage to Afshin.

holy churches and the faithful, he went to Ap'shin, risking death. With protestations of friendship they engaged in negotiations, falsifying to each other their true wishes. He sent back Prince Ashot in great honour and with many fine gifts. But since suspicion had not departed from both their hearts, Ap'shin asked for hostages. So he gave his brother Gagik; seven months later he sent his youngest brother Gurgēn, and [Ap'shin] returned Gagik.

On the arrival of spring Gurgēn escaped from Ap'shin and reached his brothers, breaking the pact of friendship [with Ap'shin].¹ The latter pursued him to the city of Tiflis, causing Smbat no little loss, and taking much tribute.² From there he advanced as far as the city of Van in the land of Vaspurakan with a numberless host. But Prince Ashot with his brothers and all his troops retreated and fortified themselves in the valley of Orsirank'.³

Then Hasan, son of Vasak the apostate, whom we mentioned above, gave support to the emir Ap'shin. That impious, baneful, and insolent man, father of brigands, mother of murderers, begger of all impiety, was overcome by the raging wickedness of his father, scarcely preserving his faith intact.⁴ He inflicted much damage and destruction on the believers and on the holy churches; the traitor⁵ opened the gate to misfortunes, and set mortal traps, being familiar with the wiles of Satan.

However, leaving two eunuchs, the first of whom was called Sap'i, as governors with many cavalry in the great [city] of Van and the town of Ostan, the emir himself went to the province of Albag and stopped at the town of Hadamakert. He sent a eunuch named Yiwsr⁶ with a large army to wage battle with the prince. But because they were secure [275] in the village of

1. See Thomas, pp. 239–240 above.

2. Thomas does not mention Afshin's attack on Tiflis; but see John Catholicos, p. 185.

3. See Thomas, p. 240.

4. See above, p. 158 for Vasak's apostasy. Hasan is mentioned by Thomas, p. 222, and by the Anonymous, p. 263. But he does not appear in Thomas's version of these events, p. 240. "Apostate" renders *denadardz*, whereas Thomas calls Vasak "impious," *ambarisht*, and John Catholicos, "denier," *urats'ed*. *Den* is normally used of non-Christian religions; see Thomson, "Maccabees."

5. *Traitor: andznamatn*, "betrayed of self."

6. *Yiwsr*: not attested elsewhere. He is not the same as the eunuch mentioned on the next page, whom Thomas had named *Yovsēp'*, p. 242 above.

Kakenk',¹ which was difficult [of access], the eunuch returned in great shame, having been unable to harm them because of the strength of the site and the valour of their soldiers.

After the emir crossed into Atrpatakan with great haste, leaving the two eunuchs in the two towns, as we described above.

When spring arrived, a eunuch whom he had appointed to govern the city of Partaw gathered an army, rebelled against Ap'shin, and went as far as the land of Sham.² When the emir heard of this, willy-nilly he summoned to his presence the men whom he had left as deputies in the land of Vaspurakan, while he himself hastened to the city of Partaw. There he met with vengeance for the evils he had inflicted on Armenia. God did not spare him, but smote him with a painful ulcer through a holy angel—as once [he smote] the emperor Valens through the valiant martyrs of Christ by the vision of Saint Thecla, as the historian Biwzand has accurately expounded to us.³ Here two of his sons and many of his troops suffered painful deaths before his eyes; and after them he too received his end with cruel suffering. After this the land of Armenia was at peace from raiders of the malicious race of Ismael.

Then Prince Ashot remembered the wicked service that Hasan, son of Vasak the apostate, had rendered the emir Ap'shin. So he despatched a force to besiege the castle of Sevan, which Gagik, son of Vahan, had seized and then given over to Hasan while Ashot was still in prison. Since it was wintertime, when there was no possibility of waging battle with cavalry, Hasan gathered troops and came out on foot to oppose the army of the prince, which was in the village of Płuank' in the province called Lmbay P'orak.⁴ Attacking them in the middle of the night, he expected [276] to gain the victory, not understanding the [saying] of the sage: "A man will not succeed by injustice."¹

1. *Kakenk'*: not attested elsewhere.

2. *Sham*: Arabic for Damascus or Syria; this form is also used by John Catholicos, e.g. p. 99. Thomas once uses the Arabic form *Dmishk*; see above, p. 184. This eunuch is Yovsēp'; see p. 242.

3. *Biwzand*: i.e. P'awstos, IV 10: Thecla appeared in a vision with a multitude of martyrs, two of whom (Sarkis and Theodore) killed Valens in an unspecified way. Thomas does not refer to Thecla. Note the form *Biwzand*, following Łazar's interpretation from "Byzantium," §3; not *Buzand* as in the text of Łazar or the title to P'awstos' *History*. See also the Introduction to this book.

4. See above, p. 232: the castle of Sevan was in the gully (*p'or*) of Lmbay. For Płuank', in Palunik', see Eremyan, *Hayastan*, p. 76.

1. Prov. 12.3.

The power of divine providence came to help the prince's troops; although they were fewer in number, they severely smote and defeated the nocturnal attack of the undisciplined bandit Hasan. The roof of a house weakened and collapsed, and the ceiling fell in, making an inescapable trap for him and covering him over; so he was delivered into the hands of the brave warriors, that the saying of the prophet might be fulfilled: "He who dug the pit will fall into the abyss which he made himself."² Then he was captured, and dragged in double bonds to the gate of the castle of Sevan, where Prince Ashot with his brothers hastily preceded him, having been informed by messengers. They besieged it for a few days, then put out Hasan's eyes and took the fortress.

Gagik, the prince's brother, had intervened and made many efforts to save Hasan from the punishment of blinding; but he was not successful. Hasan was deprived of the light of this world, but the eyes of his soul were opened. Straightway he became a monk, and lived a holy life until the day of his death.³

But the years of Ashot's principality did not run peacefully as he wished, sometimes because of his brothers, sometimes because of many other people.

About that time Smbat, the king of Armenia, arrived in the province of Apahunik' to demand poll taxes from the tribe called Kaysik. But they resisted, and raised the flag of war. Then King Smbat summoned to his aid Prince Ashot, who, remembering the sympathetic bond of related blood, came in great haste. When battle was joined, Smbat with his army fled from the face of the infidels. Then Ashot, prince of Vaspurakan, intervened with a few troops, and with much help from on high, inflicted a great defeat on the enemy.⁴ He returned to the city of Nakhchavan [277] which he had put under his own control. But falling prey to a mortal illness, he departed this world aged about twenty-nine.¹

2. Ps. 7.16; cf. also Prov. 26.27; Eccles. 10.8.

3. Thomas did not describe the attack on Hasan. John Catholicos, pp. 190-192, has a variant account: he describes his own role and blames the treachery of those who captured and blinded Hasan.

4. See Thomas, pp. 245-246, for the Kaysikk' and these events.

1. See Thomas, p. 249, for Ashot's death in Nakhchavan, aged twenty-nine, in 903 ([?] see n. 1 *ad loc.*).

CHAPTER 3

The beginning of the principality of Gagik after his brother Ashot, and his valiant deeds

After this Gagik, Ashot's brother, succeeded to the throne of the principality. Like two fountains near each other, when one of them abated, the other would shoot forth its stream all the more. Or like two dragons or lion cubs: one hidden, the other would be even more domineering. Or to speak more majestically, like the Queen of the Night,² which circles through the thick clouds for fifteen days hidden from men, all its splendour lost, then returning to the same cycle of brightness, in the twinkling of an eye robes itself in powerful light, and at the command of the supernal regent³ clears away the gloom in the air, and pours the rays of its pure light onto the earth. In his pleasure at this, one of the saints said: "Sweet is the sun after clouds, as rest is sweet after labour."⁴

In such manner with prudent intelligence did Gagik, prince of Vaspurakan, fulfill in himself these parallels that we mentioned above in accordance with our descriptive style,⁵ in the fashion of historians. He calmed the land of Vaspurakan, which was disturbed and troubled by many disorders of neighbouring and bordering foreign nations, and at the same time by [disorders] of inhabitants of the land, of the clan called . . . ,⁶ who were rebels, thieves' accomplices, ravagers of the land and contemptuous [278] of authority. One of these was Shapuh, son of Maymanik,¹ who by a deceitful ruse had seized the castle of Agarak and the province of Chakhuk, and was occupying the castle for himself with haughty insolence, supposing himself to be a great personage. In those same days Grigor, son of Vasak, known as Apuhamza,² had rebelled in similar fashion and was holed up in his lair at the castle called Archuchk'.

2. Ps. 135.9.

3. *Regent*: *karavarut'ean*, the abstract noun "governance," from *karavar*, which renders the "charioteer" of Greek philosophy.

4. I have not identified this quotation.

5. *Descriptive style*: *banazardut'iwn*, not found in the *NBHL*: *ban*, "word," *zard*, "ordering, or embellishment." For the views of Thomas on the writing of history see the Introduction to this book.

6. There is a gap in the text here.

1. Shapuh, son of Maymanik, is not attested elsewhere.

2. *Grigor Apuhamza*: praised by Thomas, p. 221, whose daughter Gagik married, p. 279 below. See also Achaëan, *Dict. of Names*, s.v. *Shahishan*.

When the valiant and wise Gagik, prince of Vaspurakan, saw the simultaneous activity of these two plotters, he attacked Shapuh, and laid such strict siege to his castle that no one could escape. On seeing the great vigour of this most wise hero and the daily shining of God's grace upon him, Shapuh realised the dire straits in which he and his accomplices were placed. Suddenly, like a fruit that falls of its own accord from high branches into the bosom of the gatherer, in such fashion did he descend from the impregnable heights of the fortress and fall at the feet of the blessed prince Gagik, begging for his own life³ and those of his clan, [promising] gifts and tribute for ever and that he would remain true at the royal palace.⁴ The prince accepted the gifts and spared them; then the whole clan came to do homage⁵ at the hero's feet. However, their hearts were not straight,⁶ neither with regard to the prince nor to the Lord Christ.

When news reached the ears of Gagik, prince of Vaspurakan, that Apuhamza was audaciously going around with his sons causing devastation in his province, he despatched an army against them. Having captured him, they brought him with his sons before him. And they raised a cry, pouring forth tears and laments, and saying: "Do not completely deprive us of our inheritance."

The valiant hero, as mild as he was powerful, heeded their entreaties, especially because in the great invincible power of his brave heart he never dreamed [279] of being afraid of them. Just as a lion sated from the hunt pays no attention to harmless deer, likewise the mighty warrior had pity on them: first because he was merciful and very benevolent towards friends and enemies, and second because he had taken the daughter of Apuhamza to wife. So he spared them, and having destroyed the structure of the castle to its foundations, he confirmed for them their hereditary right to the province so they could dwell without fear of the mighty hero. In all this he succeeded by the grace of God, and then marched to the land of Vaspurakan.

After the land had been pacified, with compassionate and joyful heart the renowned prince Gagik summoned his brother Gurgēn, and gave him as his lot Arniotn and [the land] from the

3. *Life*: lit., "blood."

4. *True at the royal palace*: *anneng kal i dran ark'uni*. This seems to imply that he would work no deceit (*neng*) at the Muslim court, *ark'uni* referring to the caliph.

5. *To do homage*: *i tsarayut'iwn hnazandel*: see p. 239 n. 4 for *tsarayut'iwn*.

6. Ps. 124.4.

valley of Ĕndzahk' as far as the two fortresses of Sring and Jmar.¹ For he loved him with a very affectionate and joyous heart, was as kind to him in his thoughtful oversight as a father to a son, and openly aided him in raiding and recovering what had been captured by the race of Hagar.² So he seized the province of Eli,³ routed its inhabitants, and completely obliterated their memory from the land. For he was a harsh man, brave and very obedient to his brother Gagik, prince of Vaspurakan. In addition to being truly affectionate towards each other, they contributed to the prosperity of the land by a mutual exchange of provinces and castles. Gagik, prince of Vaspurakan, gave the castle of Agarak and the province of Chakhuk, and received the castle of Zrēl⁴ and the province called Jermadzor, which is part of the land of Mokka', so that the former's [holding] might be closer to the latter's, and the latter's contiguous with the former's.

So the fortunes of Gagik, prince of Vaspurakan, continued to prosper and increase, and the Lord Almighty was with him. By God's power he subjected to his authority and made vassal to his principality all his neighbours and those who lived around his territory. When the lords of Mokka' saw that Gagik's hand was raised against everyone, they took refuge in their fortresses, [280] and refrained from paying tribute, terrified by the threats of the great prince Gagik. Immediately, the renowned prince gathered troops and raided the land of Mokka' in the wintertime.

Here amazement grips me at the valour of the most blessed and renowned prince in easily overcoming two difficult obstacles and winning a brave victory. In the first place the land of Mokka' contains very high mountains, caves, and dense forests; secondly, the whole land was completely frozen over with a covering of snow. But he advanced over the high summits of the mountains as if marching on a flat road. The lords and nobles of the land with all the inhabitants fled, escaping by the skin of their teeth to their castles, unable to resist the powerful [Gagik]. Having plundered the land, he returned to the province called

1. For the division of Vaspurakan between Gagik and Gurgēn see the more detailed description in Thomas, p. 252 above.

2. *Hagar*: mother of Ismael. Thomas rarely uses this common epithet for the Muslims, though he once refers to Arabic as the "Hagarene" language; see p. 106 n. 2, p. 108 "son of a Hagarite."

3. *Eli*: *Ayli* in Thomas; see above, p. 260, for Gurgēn's attack.

4. *Zrēl*: *Zrāyl*; see above p. 75 n. 6, and Eremyan, *Hayastan*, p. 52.

Eriwark. There he captured the fortresses of Pał and P'arhuk.¹ Proceeding to the valley of Aruank', he seized that fortress too and took control of its provinces.

Now a long time past the Muslims had seized the province on the shore of the lake where the wonderful and impregnable fortress of Amiuk is situated. In numberless battles they had attacked our pious former princes; and still up to that time it was swarming with men of the tribe called Ut'manik, who had fortified themselves there.² The house of the Artsrunik' had struggled against them with mighty efforts, but had been unable to prevail over them at all. Especially the valiant, victorious, and renowned prince Grigor, called Deranik, which translated means "sought by vows from the Lord,"³ had made many efforts; but he was sadly killed without attaining his goal. So the castle of Amiuk with its province remained a great unhealed wound in the hearts of the princes of Vaspurakan, on which no poultices of former [princes] had made an impression. This state of affairs had lasted about one hundred years, up to the time of the brave Gagik.

Therefore patriotic zeal burned in him to oppose them in war; afflicted by them, he [in turn] afflicted them. So [281] conceiving a grand plan, he stole on the castle by night; putting the inhabitants of the castle to the sword, he exterminated them from the earth. Their troublesome chieftains he cast headlong into the depths of the lake, there to have their hidden tombs until the warning sound of the last trumpet, when they will be judged for their works.¹ As for the amazing castle of Amiuk, which I might describe as looking to heaven and neck-tiring [to observe],² at much expense and with numerous artisans he embellished the eastern side. He completely fortified it with impregnable strong

1. For Eriward, Pał, P'arhuk see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 329.

2. *Amiuk, Ut'manik*: see above, p. 214. Amiuk had been captured by the Muslims "one hundred years previously" in the time of Ashot, Gagik's grandfather; but that period of time is applied to Gagik just below.

3. *Deranik*: Ps.-Shapuh calls the prince Derēn, and on p. 111 gives the etymology of *Derēn* as "son of a monastery," because he had been born after his parents made a vow to Saint Gregory at the monastery of Ashot. The name would thus be related to the Syriac *daira*, "monastery." But since he was the eldest of three sons, and *andranik* means "eldest," it is plausible to regard the name as a popular or pet form of the adjective. The anonymous continuators spell the name Deranik, but Thomas himself uses both Deranik and Derenik. Since the latter is the usual form, I have kept this spelling in the translation of Thomas in order to avoid possible confusion.

1. Cf. John 5.28–29; I Cor. 15.52.

2. As in the description of Gagik's palace, p. 295.

walls from the topmost summit down to the surface of the lake. When the mischievous³ races of Ismaelites, Medes, Persians, and all the warriors of Atrpatakan heard of this, they in concert marched to wage war against the great prince, the valiant Gagik. Roaring like bloodthirsty beasts, they came as far as the city of Sałamas.⁴ They made sworn oaths with each other to take vengeance by ravaging and razing the land of Vaspurakan until they retook Amiuk and revenged the blood of the Ut'manik tribe.

But the brave and thrice-blessed prince Gagik, assembling many troops, marched to the province of Mardastan and sent his brother Gurgēn to the city of Hadamakert. They armed themselves to offer resistance and guard the passes of the roads, in the hope that through them God would prosper the battle with victory.

The wise and foresighted prince Gagik had also appointed a general to command the province of Chuash and the castle called Shamiram: someone from the house of the Akēats'ik', a loyal and brave-hearted man called T'adēos, who had demonstrated many acts of valour in war, and shone out as a glorious and famous soldier in the Armenian army.⁵ He was full of good works in giving to the poor with liberal heart; he was magnanimous and zealous in the decoration and building of churches; he received orphans and widows, gave repose to all the weary, [282] and placed his hopes not only in his own armour but in the power of God. Scouts came to him, saying: "Behold, a force of Muslims crossed into our land tonight in infinite numbers." He set off in pursuit with a few troops, and came upon them in the plain of Gerat¹ at the very moment when the Muslims were about to put to the sword many of the people of God. Then the valiant T'adēos, raising his eyes to heaven, called on the Lord Christ for help. And in accordance with Scripture: "God is found ready for those who request him,"² the power of God immediately came to the support of the Armenian army, although they were very few. Raising their swords, they fell to the slaughter and filled the surface of the plain with fallen bodies densely packed together.³

3. *Mischievous*: *ch'arahnar*, as of Mührnerseh, Elishē, p. 88.

4. *Sałamas*: see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 338.

5. *T'adēos*: see Thomas, pp. 258-259; but the account here is more elaborate.

1. *Gerat*: otherwise unattested.

2. Ps. 144.18.

3. *Densely packed together*: a verbal reminiscence of the battle of Avarayr, Elishē, p. 118.

Taking many prisoners, they victoriously brought them before the prince. Then the renowned prince Gagik decorated and honoured the victorious T'adēos with many outstanding gifts.

When the Muslims saw what had happened, they said: "Since we have suffered this [at the hands] of a few, how shall we be able to resist the numerous troops of the prince, especially where the prince himself will be organising the battle?" Struck with fear, they beat a retreat, and their evil plans were frustrated.

On seeing these events, Smbat, king of Armenia, developed a grudge and tried to arouse the Muslims a second time against the prince. But since he had no success in this, then by treacherous words and promises he deceived the man whom [Gagik] had put in charge of the fortress of Amiuk; he was called Apusakr and was from the house of the Vahunik'.⁴ Like Judas he accepted the price, as did he who sold God,⁵ and gave the fortress into the hands of Smbat, king of Armenia.

After Smbat had gained control of the fortress, he then sold it again to Prince Gagik, receiving from him many treasures. From that day suspicion of evil intentions fell into both their minds, [283] and therefore they did not support each other in friendship and peace as they had done previously.

At that time the oppression of the Muslims against the Christians waxed more severe. By royal command a certain great *ostikan* gained the ascendancy over Persia and Armenia; he was named Yusup', son of Apusach,¹ a proud and notable man, more fearsome than the many who had preceded him. He was moved to great wrath against Smbat because of his holding back the royal tribute.² Not a few envoys with messages passed between them, but no peaceful solution was agreeable to them. Since the emir Yusup' had heard of the repute and the valiant deeds and also of the wise intelligence of the prudent and renowned prince Gagik, he had desired for a long time to see him. So he then suddenly sent messengers with letters and many promises to summon the prince with many entreaties to meet him. He heeded the summons promptly in peaceable friendship. And when they encountered each other, he honoured the prince with great éclat.

4. *Apusakr Vahuni*: see Thomas, p. 238.

5. Matt. 26.15.

1. *Yusup'*: *Yusp'*, i.e. Abu'l-Kasim Yūsuf b. Abu'l-Sād̄j, brother of Afshin; see the *EI*, s.v. *Sadjids*, no. 3, and Ter-Ghevondyan, p. 67.

2. For Yusuf and Smbat cf. John Catholicos, p. 195.

When the tyrant beheld his glorious youthful figure and the wondrous beauty of his lovely face, he was amazed. On questioning³ him in profound and inscrutable terms, he received replies of vast erudition that were at the same time profound and enigmatic, whereby he liberally and freely explained his obscure questions, and opened before him gates that were locked and inexplicable to mankind, becoming for him a mother of understanding and a nurse of wisdom.⁴ Since the Persian ruler Yusup' was a man of powerful mind, but the most disagreeable among all the sons of men, he therefore submitted the splendid and blessed prince to an arduous investigation.⁵ Raising his eyes, he observed him and measured his deportment on sitting and rising.⁶ In every aspect of royalty he found him refined and [284] endowed with charming modesty like gold tested in many furnaces. He opened before him royal edicts, revealed to him uncertain plans and deeds, asking him for a solution; and he was assisted by him in gaining the wisdom that flowed copiously from him. He showed him in royal fashion precious stones and beautiful luminous pearls derived from land and sea. He related to him the tales of ancient kings from century to century, and the wars that had occurred in their times. He questioned him on the dynasties and thrones of kings and pre-eminent families, and the borders of each one's lands, beginning with the Medes and Persians, Judaea and Jerusalem, the Assyrians and Egyptians, the Greeks and Indians,¹ all Armenia as far as the Gates of the Alans and the Caspians²—which [information] is very pertinent for kings. He found him versed in everything and exceedingly learned. He interrogated the undefeated champion and splendid prince on the battles he had fought, and surrounded him with warriors to observe him. He found him like a high mountain, immovable by the blasts and shouts of war. In all this and even more did the Persian ruler Yusup' observe the grace of God manifested in the valiant and divine prince Gagik, and he greatly rejoiced at his visit to him.

3. *Questioning*: *harts'ap'orts*, as p. 139 n. 4.

4. *Nurse of wisdom*: cf. Moses Khorenats'i, I 2, describing Greece.

5. *Arduous investigation*: lit., "furnace of investigation."

6. Cf. Lam. 3.63.

1. The list of peoples is reminiscent of the beginning of Eusebius's *Chronicle* (on which Thomas had greatly relied).

2. *Gates of the Alans and Caspians*: a stock phrase for the farthest reaches of Armenia; cf. Agathangelos, §842, or Moses Khorenats'i, II 86.

But when the news reached the ears of Smbat that Gagik, prince of Vaspurakan, had made an alliance with the Persian ruler Yusup', in his jealousy he raged against him with profoundly evil intent. Smbat himself did not seek the pursuit of peace or the giving of royal tribute, as the Lord commanded through Peter to pay the tax of the firstborn to those who demanded the *didram*, saying: "Give what is Caesar's to Caesar, and what is God's to God."³ He thus worthily indicated [285] [that one should pay] royal taxes. He even sent Peter to the sea to pluck the *sater* from the teeth of the fish cast up from the deep,¹ [thus] satisfying those who had asked him. This he gave for the chief of creation and the head [apostle] Peter.² But Smbat, disregarding the Lord's command, brought many evils on the holy church and the Lord's people.

Therefore Yusup' was greatly angered, and attacked Armenia with an enormous armed host. He inflicted on us many calamities, which another great orator,³ forceful and intelligent, has written down before us and entrusted to royal archives. When Smbat saw that he had no means of resisting the Persian ruler, he fled and fortified himself in the castle of Kapoyt. But the tyrant surrounded and besieged the castle, and after a few days captured him like a weak child.⁴

Seeing that there was no one who could rule and control Armenia save only Gagik, whose qualities he had tested and knew, he did not leave him to his own independent wishes, but made him king over all Armenia. On his head he placed a crown of pure gold, artfully made and set with pearls and valuable precious stones, which I am unable to describe. He clothed him in a robe embroidered with gold, a girdle and sword shining with golden ornament, which surpasses the understanding and ability of historians to describe. He set him on a horse splendidly ca-

3. Matt. 22.21. But for the *didram* as the tax "of the firstborn" (*andranik*) see Neh. 10.36.

1. Matt. 17.24-27.

2. For Peter's pre-eminence see the *Teaching*, §467.

3. *Orator*: *hretor*, i.e. John Catholicos, who is mentioned by Thomas, pp. 243, 247, but whose *History* was written after Thomas's.

4. For the capture of Smbat cf. John Catholicos, pp. 234-235. For the theme of the child see above, p. 169 n. 7. *Kapoyt* (blue) was a common name in Armenia; see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 438-439. John's version of these events is quite different from that of the Continuator: he dates the capture of Smbat to 913, and the crowning of Gagik to 908, p. 209. John's description of Gagik is by no means as flattering as that here.

parisoned with a golden harness, shining like the sun among stars. To right and left were hosts of troops in full armour. There was the rolling of drums, the glittering of swords, the cry of trumpets and blowing of horns, the sound of flutes and sweet lyres and harps; standards before and behind; and to this awesome noise the camp of the royal army shook.⁵ In such splendour did he entrust into his hands the whole land of Armenia with its grand cities and all its embellishments. I do not hesitate [286] to say that his anointing was invisibly performed by the Holy Spirit according to the apostle's saying: "There is no authority save from God; and what is, has been established by God."¹

Then the emir Yusup' went to Persia in rebellion against the court.² Flouting their orders, he captured many cities and put the royal army to flight, making them stay inside their gates.

When the chief of the Muslims, known as Jap'r in their books and also called by the name of Mokt'gir,³ knew that Gagik was reigning over Armenia, he sent him a crown and wonderfully decorated robes, and entrusted to him [the collection of] the royal taxes.

For me this is prodigious to relate, this for me is amazing to hear; it far surpasses my own history and those of others; no one has ever heard tell of it or seen it, to be able to reveal that anyone was honoured by the [caliph's] court with the dignity of wearing a crown, especially a Christian and orthodox believer and son of a king, the hereditary and legitimate⁴ ruler of Armenia. I do not reckon it too audacious to repeat a second time that the tyrant was forced to do this by the will and command of the All-Highest and the Lord of all.

Now when the emir Yusup' went to Persia, King Gagik went to the province of Kogovit. Laying siege to the impregnable [castle] Dariunk', he took it by stealth at night, being granted success from above. He also captured the castle of Maku. Ad-

5. Cf. the descriptions of investitures in Thomas, pp. 150, 198, 202.

1. Rom. 13.1.

2. For Yusuf's activity in Persia cf. John Catholicos, p. 314.

3. *Mokt'gir*: Abu'l-Faql Dja'far b. Aḥmad Al-Muqtadir, caliph 908-932. For *Jap'r* see above, p. 105 n. 18.

4. *Son of a king, hereditary, legitimate*: Thomas nowhere suggests that Gagik's father was a *t'agawor*, but his mother Sop'i was the daughter of King Ashot. *Hereditary*: *sep'hakan*, also used of the nobility lower than the *nakharars*; see p. 297 n. 2. *Legitimate*: *bnatur*, "naturally given," not attested in the *NBHL*.

vancing from there, he took the castle of Ulē, and imposed his control over those provinces, from Kogovit as far as the middle of Ulē and Maseats'-otn.⁵

About that time noble messengers⁶ were sent from court accompanied by numerous troops with orders to cross into Atrpatakan. They brought for the second time a crown and splendid garments from court, and honoured King Gagik with a second glory even greater [287] than the one we described above. They requested the king in the name of the caliph and with letters filled with friendship to lend them his assistance in their passage through the land of Armenia. The monarch escorted them according to the royal request. So they went to make war in the region of the East. Putting to flight the troops of the emir Yusup', they captured him and took him to the royal court. He was imprisoned for eight years, and then released at the caliph's orders. The latter delivered to him the whole land of Persia and all Armenia, as well as the great cities which he had seized by force in the days of his rebellion, including Ray and the great city of Basra.¹ With the award of such a large number of cities and lands that had been given to him, he had no time to visit Atrpatakan, but he sent faithful prefects² to whom he entrusted [that land]. He also sent a crown and splendid garments to the king of Armenia Gagik to confirm the land of Armenia in his possession.

At that time Gurgēn, the king's brother, departed this world, peacefully falling asleep and joining his fathers.³ The day of his death was occasion for great mourning for all the land of Armenia. The monarch wept for him with great lament for forty days,⁴ and then revived his mind to the fear of God, understanding the saying of the wise man: "The mourning of a wise man lasts seven days, but that of a fool all his life."⁵ He reflected on the vicissitudes of this ephemeral and perishable life that soon

5. *Maseats'-otn*: the "foot of Masis," see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 451. For Dariunk' and Ulē see Eremyan, *Hayastan*, pp. 49, 75.

6. *Messengers*: *patgos*, a hapax in this form; see Achaëan, *Etym. Dict.*, s.v. For this episode and the capture of Yusuf see *EI* s.v. *Yusuf*, and cf. John Catholicos, p. 314.

1. Yusuf was released in 922 and made governor of Rai and Azerbaijan; cf. also John Catholicos, pp. 326, 330.

2. *Prefects*: *ostikan*, as of the Muslim governors of Armenia.

3. John Catholicos, p. 328, indicates that Gurgēn was still alive after Yusuf's release; and p. 358, that he was alive when John himself visited Gagik in 923/4.

4. For the period of mourning cf. Thomas, pp. 228, 251.

5. Sir. 22.13.

comes to an end; he raised the eyes of his mind to the lasting state of the eternal and incorruptible life; he lifted himself up with brave fortitude and perfect knowledge; he granted prosperity to the land and [brought about] renewal of the holy churches and of the monasteries,⁶ whereby he perpetually glorified the souls of those who had departed this world. He offered masses and sacrifices with myriad treasures to provide for the crowds of poor, of orphans and widows, of the indigent and afflicted, who thronged to him. So by the liberal [288] benedictions of his prayers and entreaties, according to my knowledge,¹ and especially in accordance with the preaching of the saints—or, it would be better for me to say, the word of the Lord—this offering [of his] was equivalent to that of the past three just men: Abel, Noah, and Abraham.² Through the immortal offering of the essential³ Word of the Father, sacrificed in the flesh⁴ for our sake, a pleasing gift was offered to the Father in a sweet odour.

Not only did he multiply so many [offerings], but daily he remembered compassion for this life as well as love for death. Taking piles of treasures and splendid garments, horses and mules, herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, in the four corners of the land he gave these to monasteries of holy and ascetic⁵ monks; he established days of festivity and forty-day periods [of fasting] to be observed continually and with unfailing commemoration for his brother, who had gone to eternal glory and rebirth in that everlasting age without end. He reckoned that perchance he might, on that last fearsome day of the Coming, have the opportunity to embrace his brother among those standing in vigilant glory on the right hand side,⁶ and hear him say: "Greetings to you, my brother, who saved my soul from the gates of hell. By your good services to me while you remained behind, you have raised your soul to life with mine."

6. *Monasteries: ukht mankants'*, as above, p. 83 n. 6.

1. For the date of the Anonymus see the Introduction to this book.
2. *Three just men*: It is noteworthy that the Teaching, §§289–298, discusses Abel, Noah, and Abraham, but passes over the other patriarchs.
3. *Essential: ēakan*; for this term applied to the Son see *Teaching*, §702.
4. *In the flesh: marmnov*; cf. Thomson, *Teaching*, pp. 17–19.
5. *Ascetic: handisawor*, referring to spiritual combat; see Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.v. *athlētikos*.
6. See Matt. 25.33.

So the king himself, armed and adorned with incomparable valour, ruled as monarch over all the land of Armenia; over the countryside he poured out peace in flowing torrents like a river or sea, which our speech is really insufficient to describe. On no occasion before him did our land encounter such bounty, and it is impossible to imagine that in the future [it will see his like] after him.

[289] CHAPTER 4

About the end of the great mourning; the king's pacification of the land; and events concerning Yusup' son of Apusach

Now after the end of the great mourning, the king pacified the land from the wars stirred up by the Persians and the Sevordik' of Hagar, who [inhabited] the mountainous regions.¹

At that time Yusup', son of Apusach, was still ruling tyrannically over the Persians and Armenians. Unable to resist the valour and wisdom of the king, he abandoned his ferocious evil deeds and turned to peace and real friendship. He entrusted to the king the lands of Armenia and Georgia, and having made [with him] a peace treaty, he went to Persia. While he was planning to enjoy a peaceful existence, suddenly royal messengers arrived with orders that he should go to wage war against the army of the South, which had marched to attack Babylon and its territory.² He set off with a numberless host of troops, leaving as prefect of Persia one of his favourites named P'ēt'k'.³ On reaching the royal palace, he took many more troops as reinforcement. They came across each other in the land of Osit;⁴ when the armies joined battle, Yusup's troops were completely defeated and he himself captured. A little later he was killed, but I do not know what sort of death befell him.

1. *Sevordik' of Hagar*: i.e. specifically the Muslim ones, for the majority were Christian. See Canard/Laurent, pp. 50–51, and cf. above, p. 187 n. 2.

2. These were the Ḳarmatians; see the *EI* s.v.

3. *P'ēt'k'*: Abu'l-Musāfir Fath, son of Afshin and nephew of Yusuf, who was given his uncle's governorship; see *EI* s.v. *Sadjids*, no. 4.

4. I.e. Wasit.

CHAPTER 5

Concerning the anarchy in Persia

Then, after these events, the land of Persia fell into anarchy. But although the house of Apusach, the sons of maidser-vants and slaves, had advanced and consolidated their position, [290] supposing themselves to be significant, they suddenly began to slaughter each other, completing for themselves the saying of the wise man: "Alas and woe to you, Oh city, you whose king is the son of a maidservant."¹ Again elsewhere he says: "A land is shaken by three things, but it cannot resist the fourth. If a slave rules, he shakes the land; and if the fool is sated with bread, he will act likewise."² In truth the land was shaken as these slaves thought to rule. But because none of them did any deed worthy of record, we did not set out their names and weave them into the narrative of this history.

CHAPTER 6

Concerning the prosperity of the land [engendered] by the great king Gagik, the restoration of many sites, and the wonderful construction of the town of Ostan

But now it is very pleasant for me here to undertake a most splendid task, leaving it as a memorial to those who will come later, and especially for the glory of the house of the Artsrunik', as I record the wise and intelligent acts of Gagik, the great king of Armenia. In his valour and love for peace and prosperity, he cared for this land of Armenia as a father and guardian. In his benevolent mercy he took care of the poor, returned captives, protected the deprived, rendered justice to orphans, and gave their rights to widows³—making this the summit and apex of all his virtuous works, and becoming worthy of the greatest praise. And these matters, my dear friend and foremost of brave men, who [291] requested from me this *History*, I offer and present to you not from reports of others as fables elaborated from fictitious accounts; but having seen with my

1. Eccles. 10.16.

2. Prov. 30.21–22.

3. *Justice . . . widows*: as Deut. 10.18, of God.

eyes, heard with my ears, and touched with my hands,¹ I recount for you faithfully the marvels which took place.²

These sayings are familiar to all who love reading: "An avaricious man considers it preferable to be decapitated than to pay one penny of his silver as a fine."³ And if he sees the sun casting its rays for the sustenance of the world at the command of God the provider, he addresses it: "Why instead of your light do you not shower gold on me?" And if he sees a spring of crystal-pure water, he says: "I am not thirsty, and I shall never drink water from you. Offer me silver." But the character of a king who is not avaricious remains free and unsullied by such a fearful affliction; he cares not only for his personal amusement, but for the whole land of Armenia. He gives piles of treasure into the hands of workers and artisans in order to fortify with walls the summits of hills and impregnable fortresses in the provinces and centre of the land, to serve as refuges for those fleeing from brigands and from the convulsions of foreign nations.

Of the many castles fortified in his name, [Gagik] was especially pleased with two places and watched over them personally. One was at the edge of the lake; its name was Ostan⁴ in the province of Ršhtunik'. The climate was very temperate, as the winds blew there from the four corners of the earth. It flourished with fruit-bearing trees, and was graced with many vineyards. Sweet springs flowed around the city, providing for the many needs of men. Nearby on the southern side of the fortress was the very high mountain Artōs,⁵ which in the spring conserves and preserves the verdure of plants and flowers and the stores of snow piled up for the needs of kings and everyone who might wish to take some. From the summit of the mountain descend [292] rivers in murmuring torrents, by which the whole land is irrigated. Flowing into the lake, they furnish small fish for the luxury of the inhabitants of the land,¹ and provide many items for the treasures of kings, which the ruler takes and offers for the alleviation of the poor.

1. I John 1.1.

2. For the Anonymus and his patron see the Introduction to this book.

3. For the theme cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *On Usurers*, PG 46, 437. Penny: *dang*, rendering *assarion* in Luke 12.6; cf. Manandean, "Poids et mesures."

4. *Ostan*: i.e. Vostan; see above, p. 196 n. 2.

5. *Artōs*: *Toros* in Ps.-Shapuh, p. 101. See Eremyan, *Hayastan*, p. 41.

1. For the famous fish of Lake Van, the *tarekh* widely exported, see Manandian, *Trade*, pp. 147, 150, and Arabic sources in Canard/Laurent, p. 79 n. 32.

The summit of the fortress looks out over the lake and is exceedingly charming. If the lake is stirred up by winds, the waves ripple like flowers and appear quite delightful. If the air is clear, the extensive views attract the eyes to admire them.

Therefore the king undertook to build there a palace and pavilions and splendid picturesque² streets, and all sorts of ornament which I am inadequate to describe. He walled the side by the lake with massive stones, placing the foundation at a fearful depth. And on top of the wall, facing the sea, he built a pavilion for gatherings which was decorated with gold and various colours, so that it glittered like the rays of the sun to give delight to the eyes and joy to the heart of himself and his guests. The gates he designed in the form of vaults to provide air and refreshing [shade]; and he provided windows to let in the glittering rays, which at dawn and dusk shine over the lake, illuminating the interior of the palace. As they move round, they light up the multicoloured images, pictures,³ and various decorations, astonishing the mind of the beholders, and exceeding the ability of the historian [to describe].

Such in brief is what we have to say about the city of Ostan.

CHAPTER 7

Concerning the building of At'amar; and those who constructed there a few buildings unworthy of mention before the undertaking of the king

Now although we have happily undertaken (these) pleasing histories, we passed over many stories, [293] especially those that would be full of interminable prolixity—profitless for us to relate and useless for the audience to hear. So setting these outside our plans, we shall proceed to review the profitable stories. From the beginning of the settlement of Armenia many buildings and constructions were raised in our land by Hayk the Archer and his descendants, and by the amorous and lascivious

2. *Picturesque*: *patkerakerp*, as of the picture of Hrip'simē painted for Diocletian, Agathangelos, §140. (See p. 250 n. 1. for the noun *patkerakerput'iwn*.)

3. *Images, pictures*: *drawsheal patkeratipn*. The former word is common in the Old Testament; it implies a sculpted image, e.g. Ex. 34.13, *ta glypta*. *Patkeratip* is only found here, according to the *NBHL*; *patker* is a general word for "image" and this form would mean "like an image, in the form of an image."

Semiramis, queen of Assyria, [which have been described] by others with unerring indications.¹ These we have visited in person and seen with our own eyes, travelling to distant parts: as far as Kłarjk' and the Shushetats'ik'² and the foot of the Caucasus mountain, and to Ahiz as far as the entrance to Gał,³ across Tayastan⁴ and all the northern regions and the East. Travelling on foot, we have seen the works of valiant men and [our] ancestors. But our mind and sight were struck most of all by the splendid, marvellous, and wonderful Ałt'amar.⁵

Before this Ałt'amar is said to have been built up by Dawit' Sakhruni⁶ and Rāsham Ršhtuni⁷ and Bazap'ran.⁸ This last led into captivity the land of Palestine with the high priest Hyrcanus, and settled them in our land. But all these lived as in tents or fruiterers' huts on that famous island Ałt'amar up to the time of Gagik, the great king of Armenia.⁹ In his excellent wisdom, seeing the pleasantness of the spot and recognising that it was a refuge from enemy raids, he undertook to build on it¹⁰ in a fearsome and amazing fashion. He commanded many artisans and innumerable men to cast heavy, massive hewn rocks into the depths of the terribly deep lake. After continuing his effort in this way for a time, the great king astonishingly succeeded in forming a stone embankment raised five cubits above the surface of the lake;¹¹ to the mind's eye this row of solid rocks extended as if on dry land. On top of this he drew a line¹² [294] and raised a fortified wall around [the island], as it were five stadia. The wall was amazingly constructed, fearsome and

1. *By others*: It is not clear whether this refers to descriptions of buildings—notably Moses Khorenats'i, I 6, 10, 12, and esp. 16—or to persons responsible for constructing buildings.

2. *Shusheti*: *Shawsheti* in the *Ashkarhats'oys'*, §25, there included in the provinces of Georgia. For Kłarjk' see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 356.

3. *Ahiz, Gał*: not otherwise attested.

4. *Tayastan*: an unusual form for *Tayk'*, cf. p. 60 n. 1.

5. For a general study of Ałt'amar and the surviving church see Der Nersessian, *Agh'tamar*.

6. *Dawit' Sakhruni*: A Dawit' Saharuni is attested as a seventh-century *marzpan*; see Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 214, and Canard/Laurent, p. 401.

7. *Rāsham Ršhtuni*: unattested elsewhere.

8. *Bazap'ran*: see Moses Khorenats'i, II 19. The Parthian governor of Syria was transformed into a Ršhtuni prince, who settled Jews in Van. Thomas, p. 63, echoes this.

9. However, Sebēos, p. 134, describes T'ēodoros Ršhtuni as building up (*shineal*) the island in the seventh century.

10. *Build on it*: *himm arkanel zna*, lit., "make it a foundation."

11. *Embankment*: i.e. around the island; this was not a causeway to the shore.

12. *Drew a line*: *lar edeal dzgē*; see p. 152 n. 1.

adorned with very high and broad-based towers and raised bastions, which had in them deep niches with pleasure seats, where the king often took his ease with his sons and noble courtiers. The end of the wall he led into a narrow cavern difficult of access, and brought the sides close together. At the junction of the deep constructions in the sea he set gates, fearful to behold, solidly fixed, and strengthened with nails. In this way he cut off part of the sea on the island side, making a wonderfully calm and secure harbour for many ships—a construction superior to the city of Alexander of Macedon.¹ And in my opinion it surpassed in wonder the excavated chambers of Semiramis [in the rock of Van] and the aqueduct at the foot of Mount Varag.² For the latter at least is on dry land, whereas this, built in the depths of the lake, transcends all the concepts and accomplishments of wise men previously achieved.

Then there gathered at the king's court the princes and lords, nobles and common people, bishops and monks, so that they might all straightway confirm [plans for] the buildings and constructions, and that he might order that the place should become a refuge from all the raids of the enemy. The king in his mercy did not refuse these requests. And five years after they had begun to build, the constructions of the city had been raised in unprecedented magnificence.

Then the king in his wise understanding, with many artisans took up the architect's line³ to measure and sketch and indicate at the foot of the mountain—which is the highest point of the island—splendid places for enjoyment that were sites worthy of the king's recreation. He extended walls, laid out streets and terraced gardens and residences for the princes, according to their rank, and [295] gardens and parks, distinguishing the areas for parks and flower gardens. All this he quickly brought to completion. And he planted many trees, which were watered from a sweet and never-failing spring, which by the foresight of provident God flowed in the middle of the city.

There were many artisans assembled at the royal court, hon-

1. I.e. Alexandria; for its harbours see Moses Khorenats'i, III 62. The text is corrupt, reading "of Alexander in the city of Macedon!"

2. For the chambers and aqueduct built by "Semiramis" (of Urartian origin) see Moses, I 16. The water tunnel described by Thomas, p. 253, was underground.

3. *Took up the architect's line: zlar chartaru'ean i dzein areal*, a verbal borrowing from Agathangelos, §758, of King Trdat founding chapels for the martyred Hrip'simē and her companions; cf. above, p. 293 n. 12.

ourable men gathered from all nations of the earth who could unerringly carry out the king's plans. So according to his orders the work was quickly completed. Then the king ordered one of these men, a wise and skillful architect,¹ to construct a square palace, forty cubits wide and deep and equally high. The thickness of the wall was three large strides deep, a mass of pure mortar and stone, as it were a fusion of lead and bronze mixed together. The construction of the palace, from its foundations to its summit, took the form of a bird in flight, without the support of any pillar. It was truly worthy of admiration surpassing understanding. It had vaulted domes and niches and beautifully decorated surroundings, innumerable and incomprehensible to the mind and eye. It also had domes like heaven,² ornamented with gold and shining with light. If anyone wished to look at them, as if honouring a king first he must remove his head covering, and then twisting his neck³ he will scarcely be able to distinguish the various beautiful representations.

The structure of the palace is extraordinary and astonishing, and so surpassing and incomprehensible to the imagination that if an intelligent man were to examine only one section of one dome⁴ for many hours, on coming out he would be unable to tell anyone anything of what he had seen. For [the pictures] include gilt thrones, seated on which appears the king in splendid majesty surrounded by shining young men, the servants [296] of his festivities, and also lines of minstrels¹ and girls dancing in an admirable manner. There are bands of men with drawn swords and wrestling matches.² There are also troops of lions and other

1. *Architect*: He is named Manuel on p. 297.

2. *Domes like heaven*: *gumbēt's erknahart's*. The theme is common in Armenian, see Thomson, "Architectural Symbolism." *Erknahart'*, not attested in the *NBHL*, would mean "smooth, polished (like) heaven." "Domes" in the previous sentence renders *khoran*, also used of "tabernacle, altar, or pavilion."

3. *Twisting his neck*: cf. above, p. 281, of the castle at Amiuk.

4. *One section of one dome*: *mi karg khorani mioj*. For *khoran* see n. 2 above. Since the palace was a single building, "pavilion" would be a misleading rendering. The use of *karg* (here "section") implies arrangement in some specific order. For the inability of the spectator to grasp the whole building cf. Procopius's description of Hagia Sophia, *Buildings*, I 1.

1. *Minstrels*: *gusan*, the singers of secular songs and epic tales, see Moses Khorenats'i, I 14. Many church authorities disapproved of the *gusans* attached to princely courts; see references in Dowsett, *Movsēs Dasxuranc'i*, p. 52 n. 3.

2. *Wrestling matches*: *ëmbshamartats' paterazmunk'*. *Ëmbshamartik* is used of contestants at the Olympic games, e.g. Moses, III 40, and also of military champions; see p. 301 below.

wild beasts, and flocks of birds adorned with various plumage. If anyone wished to enumerate all the works wild beasts, and flocks of birds adorned with various plumage. If anyone wished to enumerate all the works of art in the palace, it would be a great labour for himself and his audience.

The splendour of the palace is extraordinary and wonderful. Doors have been fitted that are inlaid with detailed ornament and amazing decoration. They have two leaves,³ which on opening admit refreshing breezes. But when they are closed, they appear as a single piece.

A trustworthy official,⁴ one of the superintendents of the city, told us that two hundred thousand *litra* of iron⁵ went into the construction of the palace. And he has certainly modified his account rather than exaggerating it. Indeed, the glorious site of the palace appeared from all sides of the province as a great hill in the middle of the city, no less high than the rocky summit of the island.

He [Gagik] also walled with unassailable strength the summit of the castle, and constructed there enormous storehouses and magazines, and also depositories for treasures and measureless numbers of arms and armour.⁶ But if anyone wished to praise in suitable detail all the ornament of the construction, the golden streets, the domed halls,⁷ and various throne rooms which out-shine each other in diversity, I think that he would fall into incomprehension and hesitation. But we have offered this suitable and convenient account, so far as we could, in order to fulfil your noble interests, Oh great benefactor⁸ and ancestor of a heroic and distinguished house.

3. *Two leaves*: *erkbats'ik*, as of the doors of Solomon's temple, III Kings 6.34. There are few direct parallels between the description of Gagik's palace and the temple, but they both begin with precise measurements for length, breadth and height.

4. *Official*: *ostikan*; cf. above, p. 89 n. 2.

5. *Litra of iron*: *erkat' lters*. *Lter* also refers to value, cf. John 19.39; for weight see Manandean, "Poids et mesures." Thomas, p. 120, refers to 300,000 (unspecified coins) as the cost of the church of Our Saviour in Mush.

6. *Arms and armour*: *zēnk'*, *aspazēnk'*; i.e. arms and armour for soldiers and cavalry.

7. *Domed halls*: *gmbēt'akap khoranayarks*. *Gmbēt'akap*, "covered by a dome," is not attested in the NBHL. *Khoranayark* is found elsewhere; it implies a room with a ceiling (*yark*) that is curved (*khoran*). Cf. above, p. 295 n. 2.

8. *Benefactor*: *argasawor*, used by Moses, I 1, of his patron's family.

*Concerning the most splendid and glorious church in the city
of Alt'amar, for which material and stones
were brought from distant lands. We shall give
a faithful picture of it and its site*

At the time of the construction of the splendid, famous, and stupendous city of Alt'amar, our Saviour Jesus exalted the arms of his anointed Gagik in order to vex the savage race of Ismael. These he bound by his own hand, through his well-grounded plans and warlike force and bravery. Restraining their cheeks in a bridle,¹ as it were, he broke their force, beginning from the Medes and Persians, all of Atrpatakan as far as Khu-zhastan. Whom he wished he spared, and those from whom he wished nothing he exterminated. He threw some onto others, and slaughtered with his wise sword thousands and myriads of them. Advancing on others in war, he put them to the sword and mercilessly slew them, sometimes in person and sometimes by means of his troops.

While the king was making these [expeditions], he increased his attacks on Asorestan and captured and destroyed many provinces with their castles. And seeing near the gates of Asorestan a fortress in the principality of Ałdznik' in a village called Kotom, which was the hereditary possession of the tribe called Zurarek,² he completely destroyed and exterminated that tribe. Demolishing the construction of the fortress to its foundations, he removed its stones over the waves of the lake to use as material in the building of the holy church,³ forming [with them] a temple of glory in place of the impure houses of idolatry.⁴ Thus was accomplished the saying of the prophet: "Who re-

1. Ps. 31.9.

2. *Zurarek*: the Arab tribe of the Zurarids; see Ter Ghevondyan, p. 42, and the genealogical table, *ibid.*, p. 182. "Hereditary possession" renders the adverb *sep'hanabar*; cf. above, p. 286 n. 4. Kotom is not attested elsewhere.

3. Cf. the transfer of stones across Lake Van from Manazkert described by Thomas, p. 257. The dedication to the Holy Cross is mentioned above, p. 229, and later, p. 310.

4. *Idolatry*: *bagnadzew*, a hapax according to the *NBHL*, "in the form of an altar," *bagin* being generally used of non-Christian altars. For Muslims as "idolators" see Thomson, "Muhammad." When describing the overthrow of pagan *bagins* by Saint Gregory the Illuminator, Agathangelos stresses that the sites were converted to Christian use, but he does not explicitly say that the original stones were used to build churches. Indeed at Ashtishat, §813, the stones and wood were destroyed without a trace.

moves the honourable from the unworthy will become as my mouth.”⁵ There the Holy Spirit always rests, enrolling men into the shadeless light.

Because the architect was Manuēl, whom [298] we mentioned above,¹ a man full of wisdom and proficient at his work, he skillfully built the church as a marvellous and wonderful construction. To the monk whom we mentioned above² he entrusted the decoration of the sculptural relief [depicting] in a true likeness [the figures] beginning with Abraham and David down to our Lord Jesus Christ. He arranged the ranks of prophets and apostles in each one's place, wonderful to see. He created and brought together on the walls of the church herds of deer and flocks of birds, and also groups of wild beasts, boars and lions, bulls and bears, facing each other, drawing attention to their struggle for existence, which is very pleasing to wise men. He extended around the back and sides of the church a splendid frieze arranged in detailed sections, depicting grapevines interlaced with vintagers, and wild beasts and serpents, whose forms reproduced their kinds with the various differences according to each one's species.

On the four sides at the summit of the exedrae³ he accurately depicted the images of the four evangelists, who are worthily the crown of joy of the holy church and superior to all [other] saints.

He represented on the vault of the west apse⁴ the cross-nimbed⁵ image of our Saviour, who for our sake put on flesh and appeared as a man.⁶ In a true likeness he arranged opposite the Saviour the glorious image of King Gagik, who with proud faith raises the church on his arms like a gold vessel full of manna, or a golden box filled with perfume;⁷ he stands in front

5. Jer. 15.19.

1. On p. 295 Manuēl was not named.

2. *Monk*: *krawnawor*. No individual monk was mentioned above, but monks were included in the gathering at court, p. 294.

3. *Exedrae*: *srbut'eants'*; the reference is to the apses of the four side walls.

4. *Vault of the west apse*: *i kamars arewmtakan khoranin*. *Khoran* above referred to the interior of the palace, but here it refers to the *exterior* of the church.

5. *Cross-nimbed*: *teārnagrelov*. Although *teārn* is the genitive of *tēr*, literally “lord,” the verb means “to inscribe with the sign of the cross.” The halo with cross is clearly visible in the photograph of this particular figure in *Der Nersessian, Aght'amar*, nos. 4, 5.

6. *Put on flesh and appeared as a man*. For these expressions see Thomson, *Teaching*, p. 18.

7. For the miniature models of churches see Cuneo, “Modèles.” For the image of the church as a “vessel” or “box” see Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.v. *kibōtos*.

of the Lord, depicted as if begging forgiveness for his sins. Although there may be words [of blame] in our history, yet the king will not miss the gifts he seeks, hoping in the future compensation.

Furthermore, on the south side of the apse⁸ above the door of [299] the church is set a gallery with a vaulted staircase going down from top to bottom, to act as a place of prayer for the king, restricted and closed to the public, where he may converse with God privately¹ and undisturbed.

In the interior he fashioned the wonderful holy of holies with elegant paintings and with silver doors; it is filled with gilt ornaments, with images encased in gold and precious stones and pearl ornaments, and with various notable and splendid vessels, which wonderfully show us the second Jerusalem and also the gate of Sion on high.²

Here are fulfilled the prophetic canticles: "Rejoice, thirsty desert,"³ and again: "The earth will rejoice and many islands shall be glad."⁴ Truly this was once a thirsty desert, but is now the city of the great God, watered by two ever-flowing springs—from the holy font and the incorruptible blood of the Son of God, which give drink to the thirsty in spirit.⁵

Embellishing the day of dedication with groups of bishops and princes, he celebrated a great and joyous festival with grandiose splendour to be remembered from generation to generation. So we have said what concerns the holy church.

8. *Apse: khoran*, as in n. 4. above.

1. Privately: lit., "in his mind."

2. *Jerusalem, Sion*: Cf. the emphasis on the holy places in the naming of Gagik's and Gurgēn's churches as described by Thomas, pp. 253, 257. For the "second Jerusalem" cf. Thomson, "Architectural Symbolism."

3. Isa. 35.1.

4. Ps. 96.1.

5. John 4.14., 19.34. For baptism as a "spring" see Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.v. *pēgē*, and for patristic exegesis of the blood that flowed from the side of Christ, *ibid.*, s.v. *haima*.

CHAPTER 9

Concerning the great war with the Arab at the gates of the metropolis of Dvin; and the various valiant deeds of the great king of the Armenians, Gagik, and his victorious accomplishments

We described above the anarchy in Persia, according to Scripture: "Israel had no judge, and everyone acted as he pleased."⁶ At that [300] time a certain man, Arab by race,¹ versed in warfare and military deeds, with haughty arrogance puffed himself up and reckoned he would become independent. So gathering an army, he unexpectedly and rapidly passed by Gott'nastan and the city of Nakhchavan, forcibly occupying the province called Sharur, and reached as far as the great metropolis of Dvin. He rapidly despatched tax collectors and prefects² to the province of Ayrarat and as far as Aragats-otn, the holding of Abas, son of Smbat,³ which he subjected to his own authority. Since Abas was unable to oppose the tyrant who had risen up against him, he appealed to the king⁴ through messengers and letters to come and save him from the violent brigands who were demanding tribute. The king, mindful of the tender [bonds] of related blood, came with a numerous force to seek vengeance for his relative.

Then Abas, son of Smbat, in his pride came down to the plain of the city of Vafarshapat, wishing to precede the arrival of the great king of Armenia, Gagik, in order to gain glory for himself. But the Muslim, since he knew that he [Abas] was not versed in warfare, fell upon him with a few troops and put him to flight. Putting some four hundred of his men to the sword, he plundered the army and the inhabitants of the land. Then setting the torch to the whole land, he returned to the city⁵ victoriously

6. Judg. 17.6. For the anarchy see above, pp. 289–290.

1. He is not named by the Anonymous. Vardanyan identifies him with Al-Lashkari, emir of Gilan. Ter-Ghevondyan, pp. 78–79, discusses this passage and notes that he must have been one of the emirs of Azerbaijan, Muffih, Lashkari, or Daysam. See also the discussion in the *EI* s.v. *Dvin*, col. 680. The date of these events is not given, but was probably in the 930s.

2. *Prefects*: *ostikans*.

3. *Abas, son of Smbat*: Bagratid king 929–953.

4. *King*: i.e. Gagik, whose mother was the daughter of Ashot Bagratuni, grandfather of Abas.

5. *City*: i.e. Dvin.

with much booty. Abas escaped in flight by the skin of his teeth, and took refuge in Georgia.

When the king heard the sad news of this disaster, he immediately marched to the gate of Dvin, to the bank of the river Araxes opposite the holy pit from which the great saint Gregory emerged to illuminate the land of Armenia.⁶ Now the Muslim saw the great king's camp spread out by the mountain called the hill of Gēn⁷—and truly the hill was prophetically named, for as if with pure wine it intoxicated and made the king happy [301] in its appointed place; though it was from on High that he received the grace of victory through the intercession of the Holy Illuminator, whose festival is celebrated on the tenth day of the month Sahmi.¹ But the hill too is blessed and is not without praise in this *History*. Then the impious man gathered an army of some thirteen thousand men and attacked the king, supposing him to be like other people. While the sun was casting its glow over the vault of heaven at the third hour, and he [the king] was still reading the holy gospel, one of his couriers came and said: "Why does my lord the king extend and prolong his prayers? Behold the front line of the Muslims has approached the holy camp of the Lord." Then the king with calm heart and tranquil courage did not raise his eyes or his voice to the messenger, but finished his customary prayers, comprehending the [saying] of the wise man: "Battle is the Lord's,"² and: "The Lord opposes the haughty, and gives grace to the humble."³

Then the king, donning his armour and putting on a valiant mien, took the troops of his Christian army and calmly advanced, disposing the ranks of his battle line in suitable fashion. The armies, with drawn swords, straightway came to blows. Crashings and thunderings [resounded], and flashings as [of

6. Dvin is not on the Araxes; Artashat is opposite Khor Virap. Perhaps "gate," *duin*, here means "approach to."

7. *Hill of Gēn*: west of Artashat, see Moses Khorenats'i, II 61, and Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 419. The etymology of *Ginoy*, genitive of *Gēn*, as derived from *gini*, "wine," rests on a confusion with *ginwoy*.

1. The battle took place when Elishē was Catholicos, between 936 and 943. From 936 to 939, the tenth of Sahmi fell on 14 June; from 940 to 943, on 13 June. There are several festivals for Saint Gregory the Illuminator; but the reference on p. 300 to Gregory emerging from his pit indicates that Saturday of the second week after Pentecost is meant; see Grumel, *Chronologie*, p. 329. That is sixty-two days after Easter. But Easter was not celebrated on 12 or 13 April during the patriarchate of Elishē.

2. I Kings 17.47 (David to Goliath).

3. Prov. 3.34.

lightning] were seen shooting downwards from the clouds.⁴ The day began to wax fearful. The king and his troops were strengthened by help from on High, especially because the holy patriarch of Armenia, Elishē the Great,⁵ going to the summit of the hill of Gēn with groups of priests, held aloft his hands like Saint Nersēs until the second Amalek was defeated.⁶ Passing through the ranks of the Armenian army, the king reached the middle of the Muslim force, where there were about four thousand champion⁷ armed foot soldiers. Striking those impious ones like a spark among reeds,⁸ he routed the Muslim ranks. [302] Then the vast number of corpses of those who had fallen to the ground lay thickly over the surface of the plain, like sheaves in a full field in the days of harvest. So about eight thousand men fell to the sword or were drowned in the river. And taking many of them prisoner, he sent some in chains to the impregnable [castle] of Dariunk'. He spared the lives of about two hundred men, more or less, and ordered them to be freed so that they might go to the city and relate what they had seen.

The king himself rapidly crossed the river Araxes, wishing to burn the city from end to end with the surrounding countryside. But the elders of the city fell at his feet, begging for peace and offering tribute and hostages. Taking these, the king returned in peace to the fortress of Dariunk', having stripped the men and horses of the Muslim army of their arms and armour in immeasurable amounts. The king did not fine any of the many of his own troops who had seized plunder, but let them take openly whatever they had gained.

4. Such battle imagery is standard in Thomas and other Armenian historians.

5. *Elishē*: Catholicos 936–943.

6. *Nersēs*: see P'awstos, V 4, when Nersēs stood on Mount Npat. For the "first" Amalek see Gen. ch. 17.

7. *Champion*: *ēmbshamart*, as p. 296 n. 2.

8. Wis. 3.7; Isa. 5.24.

CHAPTER 10

The attack of the Delmikk' on the city of Hadamakert and the province of Aġbag; and the victory of the Armenian army by the grace of God

In those days a group of Delmik¹ troops advanced, intending to cross to the land of Asorestan. Reaching the city of Hadamakert and the province of Aġbag, they pillaged property and took women and children captive to the extent they could manage. When the king heard of this, he ordered the valiant cavalry of his army to pursue them. On receiving the royal command, they rushed off immediately, and came upon them when they least expected it in the land of Andzevats'ik'. They attacked the Delmik troops, who were brave warriors armed with lances, and trampled them down [303] like stubble of the plain¹ under the feet of the Armenian horses. Setting on them with the sword, they slaughtered about two thousand men. Having plundered their camp and released the captives, they returned to their own abodes after a great victory.

CHAPTER 11

Descriptive portrait of the person and glory² of the great king of Armenia, Gagik

Since in his foreknowledge and providence God knew that he would become such a man, from his mother's womb he had filled him with the spirit of wisdom.³ Therefore he also bestowed on him a luminous visage and glorious stature, unparalleled among the entire rational race of mankind. [He was] elegant and upright, noble and splendid of face. The hair of his head was dark, long, and curly, carefully arranged above a dazzling white forehead in very thick and dense waves. He had two

1. *Delmik*: the Daylamites; see Ter-Ghevondyan, pp. 93–94, and *EI*, s.v. *Daylam*, col. 192, for their expansion in this direction.

1. Isa. 41.2; Jer. 13.24.

2. *Glory*: *p'ark'*, the personification of royal power common in Armenian sources: e.g. Moses Khorenats'i, III 42, Agathangelos, §127, Etishē, p. 165, Łazar, p. 149, P'awstos, IV 24. *P'ark'* corresponds to the Iranian *farr*, for which see Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems*, ch. 1–2, and Garsoian, "Prolegomena."

3. Luke 1.15 (of John the Baptist); III Kings 4.29 (of Solomon).

black arched eyebrows, pupils, and eyelids that shaded the eyes like a lily flowering in valleys, spreading in wonderful fashion. His nose was wide and elegant; his ears, quick to hear and believe good news, shone with a luminous colour. His lips were like a red line; his teeth were close to each other and free from stain.⁴ His fresh beard flowered like violets on beautiful cheeks, giving him the appearance to onlookers of angelic form. Truly such gifts of grace and glory [were given] him from on High.

For he reigned like Josiah over a new Israel,⁵ but [in a way] superior to him perfected the institutions of the holy church. Thus it is very pleasing to me at this point to take (examples) from [304] the land of India and the city of Topaz;¹ especially the golden topaz from the commerce of the gem cutters and the Ałēbasarats'ik² and Thebans, and lace it into his crown on the days of royal pleasure; notably when on the Lord's saving feast of Easter, he arose like a groom from the wedding chamber similar to the morning star.³ Likewise rays of light shone out from the decoration of coloured gems interwoven with pearls on the head, breast, and croup of his mettlesome steed; and at the outpouring of the fiery brilliance before him, the booming of drums and sounding of trumpets, myriads of people were stirred. Every eye desired to see him, every soul cried out: "Lord, save the king and hear us."⁴ In truth God's anointed,⁵ superior to all kings of the earth, merited such and even greater praise.

For he was the cause of peace and prosperity.

He was a firebrand⁶ to brigands and repelled them.

He weighed laws and judgments justly.⁷

He clipped the wings of the high-flying mighty.⁸

4. The description of Gagik follows the general order of that of the beloved in the *Song of Songs*, ch. 5. There are greater similarities with the description of Samson in the Armenian version of (Ps.-) Philo, *De Sampsonē*, p. 561.

5. IV Kings 22-23; Josiah was a just king who destroyed idols; "before and after him there was none like," 23.25.

1. *Topaz*: It is not clear if this is meant to be a proper name. Cf. Job 28.19: "wisdom more precious than the topaz of Ethiopia."

2. Vardanyan renders this curious term as "marble workers."

3. *Groom*: Ps. 18.6. The simile of the "morningstar" is very common in the Bible.

4. Ps. 19.10.

5. I Kings 24.6, of Saul; but it is very common in the Bible.

6. Amos 4.11.

7. Jer. 20.12.

8. Bringing the mighty low is a common biblical phrase.

He brought down many holed up in high castles.

He was an inescapable trap for rebels.

He foresaw the secret deceits of enemies, ensnared and destroyed them.

On his friends and supporters [he bestowed] gifts unfailing. He was also a sweet-smelling garden, filled with resplendent flowers.

For his own house he was a verdant plant with golden leaves, full of divinely inspired love, joyous news.

To his sons he was a school of virtue and an ever-flowing source of wisdom.

To all artisans his door was open, and he was an unerring model.

Against the stormy threats of tyrants and their fearsome winds he was a high mountain and unshakeable rock.

He was a consuming fire for the knavish and deceptive letters and messages sent him by the Muslims.

In the hearts of the Babylonian, Mede, Persian, Greek, and barbarian tyrants he was a burning, perpetually turning nail.

He questioned wise men about the depths of the sea or [305] the heights of heaven which are inaccessible.¹

He sat at banquets on his golden throne, grand in his majesty like a powerful lion, and heightened in the Lord's glory by his faith.

He retired for sweet sleep at night to gilded chambers like a dragon.

The awe of his might spread over the whole of Armenia; like an impregnable wall of bronze² he preserved [Armenia] from fear and from the secretly fired arrows of her enemies.

Over his neighbours and his subjects he was a shade of secure defense, and swift . . .³

1. Cf. p. 284 above, for Yusuf questioning Gagik on all topics.

2. Jer. 1.18.

3. This section is incomplete.

*Concerning the course of events in Armenia; and concerning the pious prince Abdlmseh and his sons*⁴

After the death of King Gagik Artsruni, son of Deranik, and the suppression of the independence of Armenia,⁵ the saying of the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled for the land of Armenia, and even more so for the province of Vaspurakan: "My peoples will wander without a lord."⁶ The race of Hagar ruled over us; making perpetual raids for booty and plunder, they oppressed all the Christians, inflicting the greatest and the least with famine, sword, and captivity. Nowhere was there any hope or expectation;⁷ only a few remained of the Armenian princes, who had fallen into decline; and with difficulty did they control the strongholds and fastnesses. So our sins and those of our fathers reigned over us, and the Lord delivered us and the surviving [Armenians] into the hands of the impious, money-minded,⁸ perversely wicked, criminal race of the Elim—that is, [306] the nations of the Turks.¹ They ruled over the world from the eastern sea to the western sea; and there remained not even a cave which God did not deliver into their hands. They had the nature of bloodthirsty beasts; for they were people of awful appearance, and the sight of their faces terrified and dismayed onlookers.² Their dwelling was in mountains and plains and the wilderness, like that of wild animals, and they ate carrion like

4. This chapter is not by the author of the previous section, the Anonymous who claimed to be an eyewitness of the reign of Gagik; for this writer describes events of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Vardanyan entitles the chapter "Supplement," while Brosset numbers it as Book III, ch. 41.

5. Gagik was still alive in 942/3; see Ter-Ghevondyan, p. 93. Asofik p. 281, gives 943 as the date of his death. But the suppression of the independence, *ishkhanut' iwn*, of Armenia refers to the end of the kingdoms of Vaspurakan and Ani in the eleventh century.

6. Jer. 2.31.

7. Phil. 1.20.

8. *Money-minded: artsat' akurts*, not attested in the *NBHL*. *Artsat'* is "silver, money," *kurts* "breast, heart."

1. For the Turks as the race (*zarm*) of Elim see above, p. 126 n. 1.

2. Cf. the description of the first Turks to invade Armenia in Matthew of Edessa, pp. 57 ff., and the horror they caused.

beasts. They did not honour the mighty; they did not spare the white hairs or the exigencies of the aged; they did not pity the youth or child, or spare any young person. They are a nation wicked and cruel, a nation that has not directed its heart aright or set its soul towards God.³ This nation God and our sins gave as ruler of the land of Armenia, according to the words of the holy prophets, companions of Anania: "You delivered us into the hands of the most impious and wicked king in the whole world."⁴

At that time [there lived] a certain renowned man, related to the great king Senek'erim, of whom the prophet Isaiah speaks. He had the same name as his ancestor Senek'erim, and his brother was the great prince Deranik.⁵ These, through God's help and the providential care of the Holy Spirit, ruled over their own ancestral provinces of Vaspurakan. Resisting the Muslims, they did not permit them to ravage the land. For they held the impregnable fortress built by Shamiram, the town of Van, and the impregnable fortress of Amiuk, that looks up to heaven and hurts the neck [to see].⁶ So they despised the continual attacks of the Muslims, which God's assistance always repulsed.

In their time appeared the treasures of the divine cross on which the Only-Begotten Son of God had shed his blood. It had been brought to the mountain of Varag, to its rocky summit, by the holy lamb and royal virgin Hrip'simē and revealed by God.⁷ As in the days of the emperor Constantius and the patriarch Cyril,⁸ so likewise [in] the province of Vaspurakan on the mountain of Varag [307] the sign of the Lord's cross shone out. At the third hour it soared from the rocky summit and settled in a hollow on the same mountain, where there are sweet springs. The holy king Senek'erim built on that spot churches at great expense; and at the foot of the mountain he constructed the

3. Ps. 78.8.

4. Dan. 3.32; but this is not an exact quotation from the Armenian version.

5. This is Senek'erim, last king of Vaspurakan, 1003–1021. For the Artsruni claim to descent from the Assyrian Senek'erim (Sennacherib) and the reference to Isaiah see above, p. 58. According to Vardan, p. 92, Deranik was the nephew, not brother, of King Senek'erim. See further the table in Grousset, p. 643.

6. See above, p. 281.

7. For the cross at Varag see above, p. 255, and for Hrip'simē, p. 214.

8. For the appearance of the cross in Jerusalem see Moses Khorenats'i, III 12, and references in the notes of Thomson, *ad loc.* Vardanyan wrongly renders *Kostandianos* as "Constantine"; cf. above, p. 58 n. 8.

splendid and famous metropolis of the monastery of Varag.¹ In it he established faithful men, and he adorned it with many monks and heavenly ranks² of holy priests. He arranged allowances for them, and they lived in peace in the province of Vaspurakan, which became a place of security for refugees and captives from all lands.

Now because of our sins the race of Elimats'ik' attacked us, as we said above, and continually vexed the nation of Christians and put them to the sword. Then King Senek'erim thought of the Lord's command: "If they expel you from one city, flee to the next."³ There was no assistance anywhere else save from the Lord, and the Lord's help supported the emperor of the Greeks. At that time the imperial authority and the divinely protected city of Constantinople were held by a God-loving and pious man named Basil.⁴ The emperor of the Greeks had no control over the land of the Armenians, but these all freely ruled over their provinces, although they could not endure the onslaught of the Muslims. Then the survivors of the house of T'orgom⁵ turned to the emperor of the Greeks as a son to his father. The Greeks, filled with divine love, had compassion for the appeal of their children, and summoned them from their various provinces.⁶ They gave them gifts, appointed them at the royal court, gave them great cities in exchange for their cities and in return for their castles, impregnable fortresses and provinces, villages, estates, and holy hermitages. So the Artsrunik', descendants of Hayk [and] Senek'erim, exchanged their ancestral homes [308] in the year 470 of the Armenian era,¹ and moved into Greek territory with fourteen thousand men,

1. There had long been a monastery at the base of Mount Varag. Thomas implies, pp. 254–255 above, that in Gagik's time there were no churches on the summit, where the cross was kept. *Metropolis: mayrak'alak'*; there are several examples in Armenian of a large monastery being called a "metropolis," a term in its religious sense usually associated with a bishopric.

2. *Heavenly ranks: erkknagumar dasiwk'*. *Erknagumar* (*erkin*, "heaven"; *gumar*, "assembly") is not attested in the *NBHL*. For the theme of priests as among the angelic ranks see Mal. 2.7., and the elaboration in Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite, *Cel. Hier.*, ch. 12, and *Ep. VIII*.

3. Matt. 10.23.

4. For a similar picture of the "benign" Basil (Basil II, emperor 976–1025) see Matthew of Edessa, p. 61.

5. *T'orgom*: ancestor of the Armenians; see Thomas, p. 23 n. 7.

6. For the resettlement of Armenians in Byzantine territory see Matthew, p. 61, and Aristakēs, p. 34. Neither of these historians describes it in such glowing terms.

1. The year 470 began on 16 March, A.D. 1021.

not including women and children, passing under the yoke of servitude to the Romans. Likewise the Bagratid Gagik, son of King Yovhannēs, also exchanged his ancestral [lands] in the year 490 of the same era, and went to Roman territory. They ruled over the eastern part of Armenia, the great city of Van, the province of Vaspurakan, the royal city of Ani, and the land of Armenia.²

When news of the kings' departure from Armenia and the Roman control [of that country] reached the camp of the impious, bloodthirsty, ferocious race of Elim, then the ruler of the Elimites, who was called Sultan Tullup,³ launched a cavalry attack like an eagle swooping on flocks of birds. Reaching the metropolis of Ani, he besieged it; having captured it, he put [the inhabitants] to the sword.⁴ From the flowing of blood the land was irrigated as at the time of flooding. Many of the witnesses said that the blood from the fallen corpses of children reached the river which flowed by the city gate. In similar fashion, a certain eunuch, baneful and licentious, devoted to the service of Satan, bloodthirsty and an eater of carrion, Srahang by name,⁵ came to the province of Vaspurakan and plundered it. He reached as far as the city of Van, besieged it and inflicted terrible disasters. Its [populace] he put to the sword, and the habitations he burned with fire. The same he did to the city of Archesh in the province of Gnunik'.⁶ There remained no place of refuge for the Christians save only the impregnable fortress of Amiuk and the island of Alt'amar, where God dwells. These enjoyed a beautiful position, defended by the waves and the proud height of their walls. For them was accomplished the saying of the inspired psalmist David: "The islands shall be

2. The year 490 began on 11 March, A.D. 1041. But Ani was not finally surrendered until 1045. This author passes over the resistance described by Matthew of Edessa, pp. 91 ff., and Aristakēs, pp. 58 ff., after the death of Yovhannēs in 1040. For a general account of these events see Grousset, ch. 11–12.

3. I.e. Tughrul, sultan 1038–1063.

4. But this sack of Ani occurred in 1064 when the city was captured by Tughrul's nephew, Alp Arslan. See Matthew, pp. 176 ff, and Aristakēs, pp. 134 ff., for a similar description of the carnage.

5. *Srahang*: not a personal name, but Persian for "general."

6. *Archesh*: For the town see Hübschmann, *AON*, p. 329. This attack occurred in the campaign of Tughrul (see n. 3 above) in 1054, described by Matthew, p. 140, Aristakēs, p. 84. See Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 205, for the lands of the Gnunik' on the northern shore of Lake Van.

happy and all the inhabitants therein";⁷ they rejoiced in delight according to Solomon's exhortation. Like a cock strutting among forests, or a goat in front of flocks, or [309] a king in his army, so were they renowned and glorious in the land.

The Lord had chosen as overseer and guardian¹ of these divinely protected and impregnable fortresses a man related to King Senek'erim, from the province of Amiuk and the family of the Artsrunik', named Abdlmseh.² He had survived like a spark from thunderbolts of fire, protected by the omnipotent right hand of God from shipwreck in the dangerous storm-tossed deep. Just as God chose Noah,³ from whom all races sprang and multiplied; and as God chose Abraham and blessed him and the offspring of his loins;⁴ and as the Lord blessed the great David, blessed the fruit of his loins and granted him invincible power⁵—so too did God choose this all-wise *protocuropalates*⁶ Abdlmseh, son of the great prince and holy martyr T'oïnik. The latter, on the day of the great feast of the Lord's birth and baptism, had become worthy to receive the crown of martyrdom with many elect men in the province of Mokka' at the village of Atichank'.⁷ His son too was strengthened by the gracious gifts of God, and was filled with wisdom and the Holy Spirit.⁸ Over him the Lord had poured his sevenfold grace, the spirit of knowledge and of piety, the spirit of power and wisdom, the spirit of counsel and intelligence, and had filled him with the fear of God.⁹ He was superior to all nations [in being] modest, humble, liberal, merciful; a lover of prayer and of the saints; he looked after widows

7. Ps. 96.1.

1. *Overseer and guardian*: *tesuch' ew verakats'u*. For the latter term see above, p. 107 n. 4; *tesuch'* is often used for bishops, being a calque on (*epi*-)skopos.

2. *Abdlmseh*: the Arabic name of a fourth-century martyr in Iran. The Armenian version of his Life was translated from Syriac in 873; details in Anasyan, *Matenagitut'yun*, I p. 40–45. But as an Armenian personal name it is only attested in this supplement to Thomas, according to Achaëan, *Dict. of Names*.

3. Gen. 6.8–9.

4. Gen. 15.

5. II Kings 22.40.

6. *Protocuropalates*. On p. 315 below he is called *curopalates*, a common title borne by many Armenian princes; see Guiland, "Etudes: le Curopalate," who notes that the title *protocuropalates* only came into use in the eleventh century.

7. The martyrdom of this T'oïnik is not mentioned elsewhere. Note that the birth and baptism of Christ are celebrated together (on 6 January). Atichank' is not attested elsewhere.

8. Luke 2.40.

9. For the seven gifts see Isa. 11.2–3.

and cared for orphans; he never made a false oath to his fellow, nor was falsehood found on his lips; he continuously reflected on the laws of the Lord, day and night. He was handsome of person, distinguished and of tall stature, with curly hair and fine appearance, softly spoken and sweet-voiced like a turtledove. He had married the daughter of Grigor, *dux*¹⁰ of the East and grandson of the splendid and powerful prince of princes Aluz, who was lord and master of the provinces of Tsalkotn and Kogovit and of the great town of Angeltun.¹¹

[310] Now the holy lamb of Christ, Mariam by name, most noble of ladies by birth, had been raised in holiness and piety and fear of the Lord. In accordance with her name¹ she was devoted to the love of God, and was superior to all saints [in being] compassionate to everyone, merciful, firm in faith, prudent and chaste, in no way inferior to holy queens; a lover of prayer and of the poor, she continually served the holy clergy who were in the holy cathedral,² in the divinely adorned and beautifully decorated, glorious holy church dedicated to the Holy Cross. For God had chosen it and was pleased to dwell therein. She placed for safekeeping [there] the divine treasures: the throne of our Holy Illuminator Gregory the Parthian, the sanctifying altar of the divine mystery, the girdle of the holy waist, the staff of the all-powerful right hand which tended the Lord's people and was superior to the two staffs of the great prophets Moses and Aaron, the slippers of the labouring feet of the holy virgin Hrip'simē, the scarf tinged with the holy blood, the arm of the holy martyr, the young Abdlmseh, who was related³ to the *protocuropalates* and bore the same name, and many other relics of the mar-

10. *Dux*: *duk*. For the dukes of Asia Minor at this period see the *Cambridge Med. Hist.*, IV pt. 2, p. 32.

11. For Angeltun and Tsalkotn see Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 399, 363. This Aluz and Grigor are not attested in other historians.

1. *In accordance with her name*: *ēst anuanakoch'ut'eann iwrum*. It is not clear whether the author is proposing some etymology, or is just making a general comparison with the BVM or with Mary, sister of Martha.

2. *Clergy, cathedral*: *ukhteats'n, kat'olikē*. *Ukhteats'* is a dat. pl. from *ukhti*, not attested in the *NBHL*, but see Meillet, *Elementarbuch*, §36m, for this type of adjectival derivation (here, from *ukht*, "clergy"). *Kat'olikē* refers to the main church of the monastery (the *mayrak'atak'*) at Varag.

3. *Related*: *azgakits'*, i.e. figuratively, by name; the martyr was the son of a Jew. For "related" see also p. 311 n. 5.

tyrs;⁴ also the sign of the Lord's cross, on which there was a drop of life-giving blood, mounted with gold and pearls, which the Lord had given through the holy and blessed patriarch, the archbishop Lord Dawit', and which is still called the holy cross of Aparank'.⁵ For the lord Dawit' was related to the *protocuropalates*, and they were both holy and elected by the Lord.⁶

Previously the Holy Spirit had chosen to be overseer and guardian⁷ of the house of Vaspurakan the great prince named Khedenek, a kinsman of King Senek'erim and of the royal branch of the Artsrunik'.⁸ He begat Prince T'oïnik, a powerful man [311] and a warrior valiant in deeds of bravery, and his brothers the holy, most praiseworthy and blessed valiant shepherds, Lord Dawit' and Lord Step'anos, the great crowns of the church, and also Lord Grigor of the same name as our Illuminator. These shone out in the universe like the sun among stars. From T'oïnik was born the great prince T'adēos, a man excellent in warfare. By the help of God and their own bravery they did not permit their provinces to be undermined by the incessant raiding of the enemy. From T'oïnik, son of T'adēos, was born the saintly and pious Abdlmseh, who in his divine wisdom exceeded all his ancestors. They were brave and valiant in warfare, but he lived out his life in peace, filled with wisdom and understanding. For in his days was accomplished the Lord's saying: "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and in many places there will be famines and plagues and earthquakes;¹ and in heaven a sign in the sun and the moon and the stars, and on earth agitation of the heathen."² In his time the brave nation of the Franks came out and freed the holy city of Jerusalem from the hands of the Muslims, and many other lands in the year 546.³

4. For the altar, girdle, and staff cf. above, p. 63. John Catholicos, p. 181, refers to the altar and staff of Gregory. Vardan, p. 116, mentions Gregory's altar and staff, and also Hrip'simē's slippers and scarf.

5. For the monastery at Aparank' see Grigor Narekats'i, *History of Aparank'*, in his *Matenagrut'iwink'*, pp. 371-390 (with the story of the cross); Oskean, *Vaspurakan* III, pp. 821-838; Hübschmann, *AON*, pp. 332, 401; Thierry, "Monastères" VII.

6. Dawit' was one of the sons of Abdlmseh; see p. 312 below.

7. *Overseer and guardian*: as p. 309 n. 1.

8. Vardan, p. 124, refers to a Khedenik, descendant of this Khedenik, in the 1130s.

1. Matt. 24.7.

2. Luke 21.25.

3. The year 546 began on 25 February, A.D. 1097. Jerusalem was not captured until 1099; but the Crusaders took Nicaea in June, 1097, and had made alliance with Armenians in Cilicia before the end of that year.

The land of the East was being oppressed at the hands of the impious; by continuous attacks of Muslims, who spread their raids over the surface of the earth like flowing torrents, or like thick clouds blown in confusion by thundering winds and fiery lightning in the dark hours of the night. Our flight took place in winter and on the sabbath day, according to the Lord's warning;⁴ and there was no hope or expectation for the Christians save only in the pious and elect royal monarch, the *protocuropalates*, related to the great and valiant martyr Vardan Mamikonean.⁵ For through the prayers and supplications of the holy fathers and his relatives, the Lord had strengthened his anointed. For [312] he lived his life peaceably, and strove for peace with everyone. He gave his property and possessions for the payment of taxes, and did not criticize the taking of any of his own for the requirements of tax exactors. He did not govern by menaces, nor by terror or threats or usury; but he cared for all, consoled them, and was compassionate to them as a father for his children. Long since he had learned the saying: "Be compassionate, even as your heavenly father is compassionate."¹ He begat seven sons and five daughters; and from his offspring the Lord chose one, named Dawit'—as with Jesse of Bethlehem, of whose sons the Lord chose David. And he blessed him with unsurpassable blessing for ever and ever.

He resembled the great David and was even superior to him, for the Lord wished to raise up the horn of his church.² He was brought up in the Lord's house under the shadow of the divine treasures that we mentioned above, which were kept in safe-keeping on the island of Alt'amar, the residence of God. He resembled the prophet Samuel, raised in the temple of the Lord and successor to the high priest Hehi. But he was superior to him,³ having from his youth taken the yoke of humility by fasting and prayer and strict asceticism, warring with brave and valiant endurance against the devil; armed with weapons and armour, by hunger and thirst and vigils he overcame the artful enemy, in accordance with the apostolic saying of Paul, the

4. Matt. 24.20.

5. *Related to: azgakits'*, as above, p. 310 n. 3. For Artsruni-Mamikonean connections see Thomas, p. 60, and for Vardan, p. 80.

1. Luke 6.36.

2. I Kings 2.10.

3. Because Samuel married and had sons; I Kings 8.1.

citizen of heaven:⁴ "We do not have combat with flesh and with blood, but with principalities and powers and with the governors of this dark [region] and with evil spirits under heaven."⁵

Now he carried to fulfilment the exercise of mortification and chastity, since those who live their lives in chastity [313] are superior to the angels. He reckoned as naught this world and its glory and the delight of this [present] existence, for he had continually heard from the prophets the likeness of man to grass and a flower that is shaken,¹ its similarity to a passing frivolity,² a daily hireling,³ and vanity.⁴ He spent his life in all deeds of virtue according to the Lord's saying, when he enjoined his saints: "It is not you who chose me, but I chose you."⁵

He resembled Melchisedek, previously chosen by the Spirit to indicate the coming of the Saviour and the distribution of his Body and Blood, running to meet the patriarch Abraham while he was coming from battle.⁶ He resembled Joshua, son of Nav; for he was a virgin holy and brave, who with his lance protected the Lord's people in the Promised Land.⁷ He resembled Aaron with his robe and ephod decorated with twelve pearls, in accordance with the number of the holy apostles and a type of the twelve nations that believed in Christ.⁸ He resembled Elias the prophet who saw God, who from the womb of his mother was nourished by angels with fire,⁹ and who through his chastity closed up heaven for three years and six months; and no dew fell on the earth, until by the word of his mouth [it rained].¹⁰ He resembled the great prophet John, son of Zacharias, who heard from the archangel the good news concerning the birth of John,¹¹ who laid hands on God the Word in the Jordan.¹²

He resembled John the son of Zebedee, who through his chas-

4. Eph. 2.19.

5. Eph. 6.12.

1. Isa. 40.6-7.

2. *Frivolity*: a common biblical theme, cf. Ps. 4.3.

3. Job 7.1.

4. Eccles. 1.2.

5. John 15.16.

6. Gen. 14.18: he brought bread and wine.

7. Josh. 8.18; Joshua was unmarried.

8. Ex. ch. 28. For the interpretations of the number twelve see Thomson, "Number Symbolism," and Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.v. *apostolos*.

9. *Fire*: See Stone, *Apocrypha*, p. 140, for Elias eating the fire provided by angels.

10. III Kings 17-18.

11. Luke 1.11-20.

12. Matt. 3.13; Mark 1.9; Luke 3.21; John 1.33.

tity was named son of thunder,¹³ who from the heights thundered forth the word of God, who reclined on the Lord's breast¹⁴ and was purified like gold in fire. He imitated these in purity and chastity, being granted grace from the most liberal giver of gifts, God. He received the honour of the priesthood and episcopate and archbishopric and Catholicosate. The Lord sat him on the throne [314] of our Holy Illuminator Saint Gregory, and joined him to the ranks of the previous holy fathers, Saints Aristakēs, Vrt'anēs, Yusik, Grigoris, Nersēs and Sahak.¹ For the Holy Spirit had previously indicated by a vision to Saint Sahak the calamities that would befall Armenia,² the collapse of her independence, and servitude to foreign nobles; her becoming opposed to the truth, like Surmak and Samuel, who were in opposition to the divine grace;³ and then in the second part of the vision⁴ the parchment which indicated in letters of gold and red ink the elevation of the saints, and the line and a half in black ink, and the erasure [indicating] those opposed to the truth; then the repeat of the other line, which expressed the model of our holy patriarch, the divinely honoured Lord Dawit', the elect and anointed of the Lord, who sat on the throne of our Holy Illuminator. For the former saints were like their fathers, and he even more so resembled his fathers the holy patriarchs and martyrs; since by their prayers and supplications and by the shedding of the blood of the holy martyrs Vardan and his companions, [and] of T'ornik and his companions,⁵ relatives of the holy patriarch Dawit', the Lord strengthened him more and more.

Now another of his offspring, the youngest of the brothers, was named Step'anos according to his father's side; and on his mother's side his godly mother, most illustrious of ladies, named him by her grandfather's name, Aluz. In his advancement he received honour from the holy kings and great renown. He made up for any failure in his paternal and maternal ancestors,

13. Mark 3.17. But this etymology is not found among the references in Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.v. *brōntē*.

14. John 13.23; but the disciple is not named there.

1. These were all direct descendants of Saint Gregory. Grigoris alone was not a Catholicos, being bishop of Aṭuank' and Georgia; see Thomas, p. 175 n. 5.

2. The vision of Sahak is described by Łazar; see above, p. 74 n. 7, where Thomas gives a shorter précis.

3. *Surmak and Samuel* (Shmuēl): see above, p. 73.

4. *Second part of the vision: norogil tesu'ean*, lit., "renewal of the vision," i.e. the second half in which an angel explained the meaning of the first part.

5. T'ornik, like Vardan, had been martyred; see above, p. 309.

and became the most illustrious in his whole family. Just as Isaac blessed Jacob,⁶ and the Lord heard him and the Lord blessed Jacob by the mouth of his father—because the blessings of fathers sustain sons⁷—so also was the great prince Aluz blessed by God and by his father Abdlmseh. For he was a God-loving and pious man and obedient to his parents, [315] since he had learned from God's commandments: "Honour your father and mother,"¹ and he had heard elsewhere that: "A disobedient son shall go to destruction";² so he was obedient without any temptation. The Lord established him on the throne of his father as [he had established] Solomon on the throne of his father David;³ and just as in his days the Lord had made peace for his kingdom, so also [did he] in the reign [of Aluz]. The great and most wise Abdlmseh the *curopalates* divided his patrimony, and gave over into the control of his son Aluz the heaven-like and impregnable fortress of Amiuk, for he was able to resist the impious races of the Ismaelites. And he exceeded in wisdom all his fathers.

Now the very renowned and God-loving *curopalates* Abdlmseh lived his life in peace. He saw his sons glorious and well praised: one, endowed with spiritual and wordly riches, succeeded to the throne of the patriarchate, and was dedicated to the observance of the divine commandments and nailed to fear of the Lord;⁴ the other he saw a lord and prince, splendid in glory, fortunate and successful in all his deeds; and his other sons and daughters he saw [endowed] with glory and honours. He also saw the sons of his sons, and was blessed by the Lord. He himself at a good old age fell asleep with his father, and was buried in that same island of Alt'amar, inhabited by God, at the monastery of the Holy Cross, having been rendered worthy to receive daily from the Lord the new freedom of adoption⁵ through the holy and immortal liturgy, which his relative Lord Dawit', Catholicos of Armenia, offered incessantly in intercession for his pious parents. It was in the year 570 of the Armenian era⁶ that the ruler Abdlmseh

6. Gen. 28.1.

7. Gen. 49.26.

1. Ex. 20.12; often repeated in the Bible.

2. Prov. 13.1.

3. III Kings 1.

4. Ps. 118.120.

5. Rom. 8.

6. The year 570 began on 19 February, A.D. 1121.

died. His godly wife lived for two years after the death of her husband, then she too quietly passed to Christ and was joined to her fathers; she was buried in the same tomb, having entrusted her sons to God's grace.

After their departure from this world [316] the wind from the north began to blow ever more strongly with bitterly cold air, and green plants began to disappear from the land. The saying of the Lord's parable was fulfilled: "Rains fell, rivers rose, winds blew."¹ But they were unable to shake the great rock of faith, the gloriously splendid prince Aluz. For he remained on his own in Armenia like a ship in the midst of storm-tossed waves of the sea, having no help from anyone—neither from kings nor princes, neither from magnates nor his fathers, deprived of his possessions and robbed of all his goods. But the walls and buildings that were destroyed he renewed again with much effort. For cruel days had fallen upon the land, since the Lord's saying was fulfilled: "Those will be days of oppression such as have never occurred."² But to his support came grace and wisdom from supernal help, as to King Hezekiah. Just as the latter turned back the evening hour to noon and was saved by God's help,³ so also [Aluz] was saved by God's grace and filled with wisdom. By various means he survived and made peace with his implacable⁴ enemies, the race of Elimites. From them he received gifts and honour, and was rendered glorious and renowned in the eyes of the unbelievers by his judicious knowledge. Not sparing his goods or possessions, but with eager heart he gave his sweat for the salvation of the Christians, both paying tribute to the Muslims and also organising cavalry and providing them with stipends. Thus he made peace with everyone, according to the saying: "Seek peace and follow it."⁵ Aluz resembled the great patriarch Noah, and his castle the ark. For the latter had with him chosen deer⁶ and other animals, while the former had with him nobles, free men and the sons of nobles, magnates and princes from every province. He was resplendent in the universe for his noble cavalry, like the full moon in the vault [of the sky], or like the sun in the days of

1. Matt. 7.25.

2. Matt. 24.21.

3. IV Kings 20.11.

4. *Implacable*: *anhasht*, as Elishē, p. 84, of the enmity between Byzantium and Iran.

5. Ps. 33.15.

6. *Deer*: *erē*, not named in the story of Noah in Genesis.

summer. [317] God had granted him a brilliant son, a beam of light, named after his ancestor Khedenik; he was pleasing and beloved in the eyes of all for his splendid beauty, since his father, the great prince Aluz, was fair of visage and tall of stature and powerful.

The Only-Begotten Son of God revealed him to be a glorious boast for us, having given him grace like his ancestors the Artsrunik'. He strengthened him with invincible power, like the impregnable fortress Amiuk granted him by God. By his wise knowledge he strove for peace with everyone, that perchance life might be peaceful for himself and his own [people], undisturbed by the tumult of agitated and surging waves.

In his peaceable time all the land was troubled; and especially the province of Vaspurakan saw no calm, but was particularly oppressed by dangers. Yet God's right hand protected him and his fortress. Just as Joseph fed all the land during the famine of Egypt,¹ so likewise he became a cause of prosperity for the house of Vaspurakan. He was bread for the famished, refuge for the fleeing; he restored captives, and wiped all tears from every face. He was desired by all who saw him, and longed for by those who saw him not. His name was famous from one end of the earth to the other, and he was praised by all tongues. He was the support of the faith, the glorious crown of the holy church, the mother of all piety. He exceeded himself in prayers and supplications, imploring the salvation of the country; he was undistracted in the midst of his people like one of the humble. He repulsed thieves and brigands, and pursued all impiety. He contented himself with the sweat of his face and the labour of his hands.

He acquired this book of T'ovmay the historian,² and had it renovated as a memorial to himself and his good parents [318] and the divinely bestowed fruit of his loins Khedenik; for from the fruit of righteousness grows a tree of blessings.¹

By his luminous flower and fruit he was desirable to all. For in his splendid beauty he resembled the morning star, rising at dawn, or the sweet-smelling rose with its multicoloured beauty that reveals its hues in the springtime.

1. Gen. ch. 41.

2. The writer implies that "The Anonymous" was considered part of Thomas's *History*.

1. Gen. ch. 41.

May his memory be blessed, and the prayers of the saints rise on his behalf. Amen.²

Glory to the Holy Trinity and single Divinity, threefold [yet] equal, triune [yet] one in essence, who in his boundless love for men and liberal bounty gave strength to this weak, pitiable and miserable sinner to reach the end of this [book]. Praise and ceaseless glorification with worship, now and always and for ever and ever. Amen.³

By the grace of the omnipotent God, Father and Only-Begotten Jesus Christ, and the true Holy Spirit, here is terminated and finished this beautifully composed *History*, which the invincible and knowledgeable *vardapet* T'ovmay wrote with accuracy,⁴ beginning from Adam down to Noah; and then he progressed in descending order detail by detail with much labour in his true account down to the clan of the Artsrunik'; [319] one by one he set down the people and events and their causes. How they endured many efforts and labours with wars against the Muslims, and removed their wicked [presence] from many places so far as they were able. Most especially the divinely crowned, pious and most wise king of Armenia, Gagik, who by his wisdom and orthodox life and by God's will reigned over many lands—as is recorded in this book—and protected [them] in peace all the days of his life from enemy brigands. He was responsible for the building of churches, in particular this most famous and wonderfully constructed holy church of the Holy Cross of Alt'amar, in whose shade was copied this *History* in the year 752 of the Armenian era,¹ and in the imperial reign of Łazan,² at the order and expense of the venerable, blissful and thrice blessed, wise patriarch of Armenia, Lord Zak'aria,³ who is truly good and liberally minded, and a lover of the poor and endowed with divine gifts. [It was copied] at the request of the divinely wise and worthy *vardapet*, Lord Step'anos, dignified with the archi[episcopal] rank, who is the gem of the East

2. This implies that the present section was written after the death of Aluz, presumably one generation after the death of Abdlmseh in 1121.

3. This colophon is included in Khach'ikyan, *XIV Dari*, as no. 14 (p. 13).

4. This scribe also does not distinguish Thomas from "The Anonymous."

1. Copied: *sharagrets'aw*, normally used of the composition of histories. The year 752 began on 5 January, A.D. 1303.

2. Łazan: Il-khan 1295–1304.

3. Zak'aria: patriarch of Alt'amar 1296–1326: not the patriarch of Armenia at Sis, the Catholicos Grigor Anavarzets'i, 1293–1307.

and the holder of the throne of the great house of Siunik'.⁴ If you wish to investigate his ancestry, none of the princes or of those who hold sway in eastern parts is superior to him, for his family and ancestors are the most renowned for valour. And he is as glorious and resplendent among them as is the sun among the stars. Because of his divine love he requested this *History* from Lord Zak'aria, the godly and pious holder of the throne of our Holy Illuminator. At great effort he had this copied to satisfy his request. Even more eager for this task was the most wise and high-minded, modest and humble brother of Lord Zak'aria, Amir-Gurgēn. May the Lord God [320] grant them many days and preserve them safe in soul and body from the snares of enemies visible and invisible all the days of their lives. Amen.

I, the most sinful and unworthy and inconsequential among the ranks of scribes and monks, Daniel by name,¹ in my weakness undertook to copy this at the monastery of the great and splendid Holy Cross of Alt'amar, which we mentioned above. Furthermore, falling on my face, I beg the kind readers and request their pardon for the faults of this book, whatever may be found extra or missing therein, be it a full stop, a line, a comma, or any other expression,² or [changing] from *kh* or *h*.³ For the learned know well that in the ancient writings no attention was paid to such matters. Since I am ignorant of these things, what I heard of these expressions from the ecclesiastical books,⁴ that I wrote down; and what is beyond them I do not know how it was. So I beg you that according to your pious pleasure, you should merely grant me and my parents a "Lord have mercy" so that you too may find mercy from God on the eternal⁵ day of his coming. And may he be blessed, praised and lauded by all creatures, spiritual and tangible, now and always, for ever and ever. Amen.

4. I.e. Step'anos Orbelean, metropolitan of Siunik' c.1285–1305. "Gem" renders *akn*, which could also (in the singular) mean "eye" or "fountain."

1. The scribe Daniel also wrote other manuscripts at Alt'amar; see Khach'ikyan, *XIV Dari*, nos. 54, 62, and Sanjian, *Colophons*, pp. 50, 52 (dated to 1306 and 1307).

2. *Expression: bar*, lit., "word."

3. For *h* to *kh* as a peculiarity of the Van dialect see Adjarian, *Classification*, p. 52. It is noticeable, for example, that the town Her in Thomas, p. 226, becomes Kher in the Anonymous, p. 263.

4. *Ecclesiastical books: ekelets'akan grots'*; the same expression is found in Koriun, p. 31, for the unspecified biblical or other religious writings translated by Sahak from Greek into Armenian.

5. *Eternal: anerek*, lit., "without evening." For this term as applied to the future kingdom or the day of judgment see Lampe, *Lexicon*, s.v. *anesperos*.

I also beg that you recall sincerely to the Lord my teacher, the honourable priest Simēōn, who taught me a few books from his many skills, and his parents. To Christ and our God glory for ever. Amen.

[321] After all this had so taken place, as is written, we must inform you, Oh dear sons and faithful true brothers, [that there was] a certain man, renowned and adorned with divine glory, noble and of noble parents, raised in purity and righteousness, who had attained the wisdom of the divine holy testaments, orthodox in faith and in Christian confession. His name was Baron Sefedin Ark'ayun.¹ As by God's summons he came to this impregnable island of Alt'amar, the abode of God, which is the throne of Saint Gregory the Illuminator of Armenia and the residence of the most glorious and renowned holy cross. Khedenik² loved Ark'ayun as if he were his own son; he gave him his own daughter as wife in legal marriage, and as her dowry the half of Alt'amar. After a short time when Khedenik grew old, he sold to Baron Sefedin in his poverty the other half, receiving as its price much gold for his bodily needs. After a few days the Lord God provided fruit for his loins, a thriving and fine son, the lord Step'anos. When he had acquired instruction and attained maturity, he had him ordained to the patriarchal throne of Saint Gregory. But aged about forty, he departed this world after a prematurely short life and few days, leaving inconsolable grief to his father Baron Sefedin.

But since God is merciful and compassionate to everyone, he looked down on the fervent woes and tears of his heart and granted him sons, blessed by God and pleasing to God: the natural brothers, the modest and sober Amir-Gurgēn and the young, wise Zak'aria.

[322] When the hour came for Baron Sefedin to travel the road of his fathers and depart from this world, he did not have the time to confirm with his own hands Zak'aria on the throne of his brother Lord Step'anos. So he was given over to instruction in the

1. This last colophon is not dated, but it mentions persons who lived a generation after the death of Zak'aria in A.D. 1326. Baron Sefedin is also mentioned in a colophon of 1306; see Khach'ikyan, *XIV Dari*. For the term *Ark'ayun* see Marr, "Ark'ayn"; he derives its origin from the term used by the Mongols to describe Chalcedonian groups. See also Monneret de Villard, *Leggende*, p. 164. It is used by Vardan, *Hawak'umn*, p. 158, in the mouth of Hulagu for "Christian."

2. *Khedenik*: son of Aluz; see above, p. 318.

divine Holy Scriptures, and became versed in the Old and New Testaments. He had no one as support and helper, save only his brother Amir-Gurgēn [as] father and head of the family, and Baron Kuřchbēk and Baron Nuredin, his father's brothers. These, by God's will, gathered together and summoned holy bishops, *vardapets*, and many monks. Having prayed together, they blessed and ordained Lord Zak'aria to the patriarchal throne of his brother Lord Step'anos. There was great joy and rejoicing for our see of the Holy Cross of Alt'amar, residence of God. Like an unshakeable rock, like an iron rampart, and like a gate of bronze,¹ he resisted the wicked Muslim² warriors. He was a lover of building and [responsible for] many constructions. Filled with God's Spirit, he built in the land of Vaspurakan on the island called Lim the beautiful, luminous, and domed church of Saint George the General, which he adorned with many furnishings. He also built a house of prayer and living quarters and palaces; he established many monks at the monastery of the church of Saint George the General, and by their prayers may Christ God have mercy on us. Amen.³

Furthermore, at his patriarchal see on the island of Alt'amar at the monastery of the Holy Cross he built on a beautiful and spacious site behind the Holy Cross the great oratory⁴ for the days of winter. On the western side [for] the summer days [he built] the spacious vaulted [chapel], finely worked and bound with mortar, bringing its stones from the land of Khlāt' with much labour over the deep lake.⁵ He had copied in memory of his soul the book called *Tōnakan*—for it [323] includes the feasts of the Lord, of the holy apostles and prophets, patriarchs and *vardapets*, generals and virgins.¹ By their prayers and intercession may the Lord God Jesus Christ have mercy on Lord Zak'aria and his natural brother Baron Gurgēn and his son Sahmadin, prematurely dead, and all his relatives. Amen.

Also he built many beautiful and charming summer lodgings

1. Jer. 1.18.

2. *Muslim*: *aylaseř*, lit., "foreign, of a different stock"; cf. *aylazgi* used regularly by Thomas and the Anonymous.

3. For the monastery on Lim (in Lake Van) see Oskean, *Vaspurakan* I, pp. 3–51, and Thierry, "Monastères" VIII.

4. *Oratory*: *zhamatun*, first attested in Aristakēs according to the *NBHL*. For the term see Khatchatrian, *L'architecture*, pp. 40–41.

5. For bringing stones over the lake see also above, pp. 257, 297.

1. *Tōnakan*: composed in 701 by Salomon of Mak'enots'; see Van Esbroeck, "Salomon de Mak'enots'."

as an upper story on top of the palace that Baron Sefedin had constructed for his son Lord Step'anos; and many other inhabited and deserted places he [re-]established in faith and hope. Reflecting through his superior solicitude and foresight, out of love he decided on a good plan: "After my death and departure from his world, who shall occupy our patriarchal throne if not one of my kinsmen and descendants?" Then he proposed his spiritual son, the wonderful and wise youth Lord Dawit', son of his full brother Baron Gurgēn. Numerous bishops, monks, and priests with large congregations, by prayer and rituals blessed and ordained Lord Dawit' as heir and co-heir of his see. There was no little happiness and rejoicing to his parents and his entire family.

Now Lord Zak'aria arose like the sun at dawn, melting the freezing ice of winter frosts and of the Muslim enemies of Christ's cross. He resisted the hurricane of evils, Ali Pasha² and others of his ilk, who waxed haughty against the holy churches and the faith of the Christians. He prevented [the payment of] numerous taxes and *haraj* from monasteries and monks; he endured many tribulations and efforts, suffered great wounds, and bore many scars on his soul and body. For his nephew Lord Step'anos [324] had his relative, the daughter of his sister, delivered to the Muslims, mixing milk with their blood. Many monasteries and churches were beset with great distress and misery, because they [the Muslims] seized total control of the beautiful and impregnable island of Alt'amar, and many other places and palaces, lands¹ and estates, legally or illegally.² After this had so come about, then in the year 775 of the Armenian era³ occurred the death and departure from this world of the holy patriarch Lord Zak'aria. With a good confession and orthodox profession of faith he gave up his soul and went from this transitory world to the world of the living, to the supernal Jerusalem and the residence of the just. By their prayers and those of all the saints may the compassionate and merciful God make Lord Zak'aria a companion and sharer of the holy fathers and patriarchs past and recent.

2. *Ali Pasha*: Ali Pādshāh, Ilkhanid governor of Baghdad, mentioned in a colophon of 1336; see Sanjian, *Colophons*, p. 76.

1. *Lands*: *okhvits'*, not an Armenian word, omitted by Vardanyan. Perhaps it is a corruption of *hoł (hokh)*, "field."

2. *Legally or illegally*: *grov ew angir*, lit. "with a deed (writing) or without a deed."

3. The year 775 began on 30 December, A.D. 1325.

After a little time the death of Step'anos and of Shamish-Khat'un⁴ took place; they departed this world and went there where are the true accusers and examiners and exactors of words, deeds and thoughts. After this had happened we had no king or prince or judge or overseer or leader or saviour and rescuer who could free us from foreigners⁵ and wicked enemies. For they imposed many exactions of treasure, of gold and silver; so whoever had claim to the throne of that patriarchate had to give many riches. Otherwise, the Muslims would seize convents and churches, monks and priests, virgins and abbesses,⁶ common people and all Christ's flocks. These disasters and great misfortunes were seen by Lord Dawit', bishop of Armenia, who had been ordained by his brother Lord Zak'aria. Since at that time his father the great Baron Amir Gurgēn and his elder brother Amir Sahmadin had departed this world, there was no one to help or support him. Then Lord Dawit' rose like a shining star, like the sun at noon, like [325] a cloud gleaming with lightning, or like rays of light appearing at night in sublime and beautiful fashion, valiant of body and charming of person. With his two handsome full brothers, called Amir Kurchbēk and Amir Sēfēt'in, who were wise, intelligent, eloquent, and fluent, he held council. They addressed each other like the brave and valiant Saint Vardan, or like the holy Atom and his companions.¹ They plunged into this great battle and contest, saying to each other: "It is not right to abandon our holy places, our home and ancestral inheritance, lest foreign Muslims enter therein, or some other wicked men or heretics or adversaries." With much affliction and pain, with ceaseless comings and goings, much labour and endurance of vexations and opprobrium, partly justified partly not, some they implored, others they entreated, some they praised, others they punished according to their merits, striving to resist this great oppression and struggle, and to be freed from the exaction of many possessions and incalculable treasure. Again they said to

4. Step'anos was Zak'aria's nephew. Shamish-Khatun is not otherwise attested, but was perhaps Zak'aria's niece, married to a Muslim; see p. 324 above, the "relative delivered to the Muslims."

5. *Foreigners: aylaseṛ*, see p. 322 n. 2. "Muslims" just below renders *aylazgi*.

6. *Abbesses: kusakal*. Derived from *koys* (meaning "area") the term is common for "governor"; but here it is derived from *koys* meaning "virgin, nun."

1. For the martyrdom of Atom and his companions see Thomas, p. 171. The emphasis on "ancestral" in the following speeches is reminiscent of an important theme in *Elishē*; see Thomson, Introduction to *Elishē*, pp. 12-13.

each other: "Dear brothers, let us be bravely united through the bond of the Holy Spirit, lest our ancestral inheritance fall into the hands of foreign Muslims." May the Lord and merciful God, who is liberal with good gifts and brings peace to the whole world, grant them strength, wisdom and knowledge, patience and endurance in their resistance to Muslim enemies of Christ's cross, and may he free them in soul and body from calamities and the deceit of Satan. Amen.

Also we request, beg, entreat and supplicate you, the merciful Father, and the compassionate God Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the true God—we the unworthy monks and priests and all believers in the Holy Trinity. In faith and hope [326] we request from your liberal benevolence that you again strengthen the throne of our patriarchate as before, and free it from debt and illegal exactors; and that you make our patriarch Lord Dawit' shine out like the sun over the land, like the moon among the stars, to an advanced old age with many years of life, together with his brothers and their sons and posterity. Amen.

And to Christ our God, glory, praise, and worship for ever and ever. Amen.

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Robert Thomson, Harvard University Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies and director of Dumbarton Oaks, has published extensively in patristics, studies of the Armenian language, and Armenian philosophical and historical material. Among these are *The Teaching of Saint Gregory: An Early Armenian Catechism* (1971) and translations of works of the Armenian historians Moses Khorenats'i and Elishē (1978, 1982).

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Southern Armenia circa A.D. 900



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B



1 L. Coripidis

2 KORDUK

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