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Classical Armenian

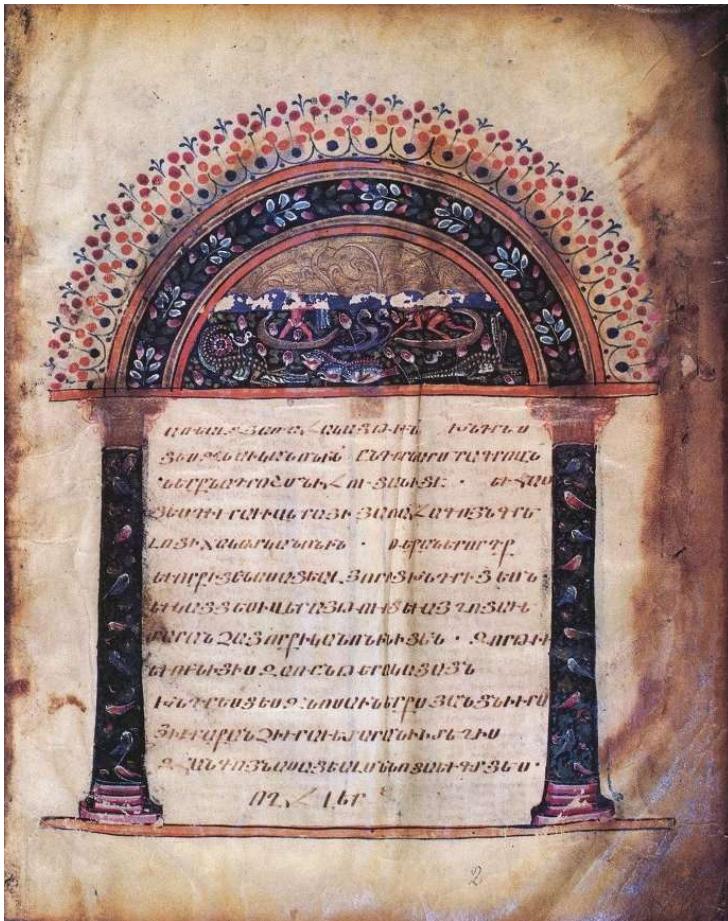
Introduction – Part 2: Literature

Roadmap

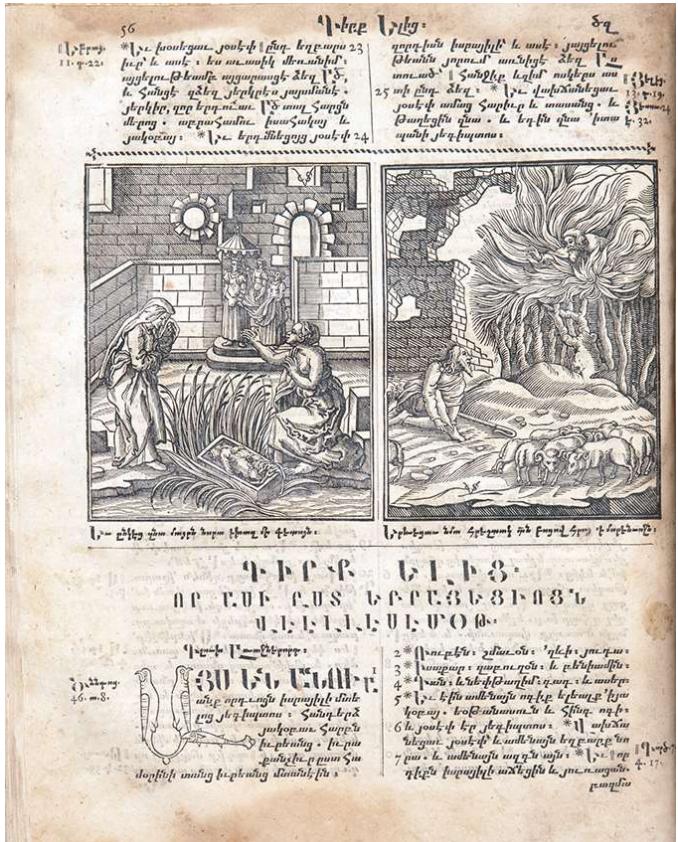
- Classical Armenian literature: the Bible
- Translations, historians, theologians, later authors
- Manuscript collections
- The Hellenizing school
- Pre-Christian literature: the birth of Vahagn

Classical Armenian literature: the Bible

- The first translated text was the **Bible**, translated by Mesrop Mashtoc' and his pupils around 410. First version probably made from the Syriac version (Peshitta), then corrected by using the Greek text.
- Oldest surviving manuscripts from 9th c.:
 - “Queen Mlike Gospel” (Venice, Mekhitarian Library, San Lazzaro, Ms. 1144/86), from 862;
 - “Lazarian gospel” (Moscow, now Yerevan, Matenadaran nr. 6200), from 887.
- First printed book *Owrbat'agirk'* 1512 (Venice)
- First printed Bible 1668 (Amsterdam)



Left: "Queen Mlke Gospel"
Right: "Lazarian Gospel"



Left: Bible, Book of Exodus, ed. Oskan Yerevanc'i
Right: *Owrbat'agirk'* 'book of Friday prayers'



Classical Armenian literature

- **Translations** of Greek and Syriac patristic literature
- **Original works: historians**, e.g.

Koriwn, pupil of Mesrop, bishop in Georgia: *Life of Maštoc'*

Agathangelos: *History of Armenia* (*Patmowt'iwn Hayoc'*), on the Christianization of Armenia by Gregory the Illuminator (*Grigor Lowsaworič'*)

P'awstos Biwzandac'i (Faustus of Byzantium), or rather **Bowzandaran**

Patmowt'iwnk: *History of Armenia* (*Patmowt'iwn Hayoc'*), c. 450?

Movsēs Xorenac'i (Moses of Choren): *History of Armenia*, 7th c.

Łazar P'arpec'i (Łazar of P'arp): on the Armenian uprising against the Persians and the battle of Avarayr (451)

Elišē: also on the battle of Avarayr

Classical Armenian literature

- Theologians:
 - Eznik Kolbac'i** (Eznik of Kolb), bishop of Bagravand: *Against the Heresies (Ełc alandoc')*, c. 400
 - Yovhannēs Ojneč'i** (catholicos 718-729): *Against the Paulicians*, compilation of canon-law
- Later medieval poetry and prose, e.g.
 - Grigor Narekac'i** (950-1011): *Book of Lamentations*, confessional monologue
 - Vardan Aygekc'i** (d. 1250): book of fables

Manuscript collections

- Libraries with largest holdings:
- **Matenadaran**, Yerevan (www.matenadaran.am)
- Mekhitarists' libraries in **Venice** (San Lazzaro degli Armeni),
Vienna (Mekhitarist Monastery).



Some online resources

- Texts:

<http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/indexd.htm>

<http://www.digilib.am>

<http://sd-editions.com/LALT/index.html> (proprietary)

<http://digitale-sammlungen.ulb.uni-bonn.de/topic/titles/17269>
(Sammlung Goussen; scans only)

- Modern Eastern Armenian:

<http://eanc.net>

- Dictionaries (classical and modern):

<http://www.nayiri.com>

<https://calfa.fr>

Classical Armenian literature: the Hellenizing school

- Greek or **Hellenizing school** (*hownaban dproc'*)
- Numerous artificial features created under the influence of Greek grammar, e.g. gender distinctions in the pronoun (*sa : sē*)
- Between 475 and 730; in Armenia and/or in Constantinople?
 - Philo of Alexandria (*De providentia, De animalibus* etc.),
 - Dionysius Thrax (Τέχνη γραμματική)
 - Book of *Chrie*
 - Irenaeus (*Adversus haereses* iv-v, *Demonstratio praedicationis evangelicae* Εἰς ἐπίδειξιν τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ κηρύγματος, now extant only in Armenian)
 - the Alexander romance (*Pseudo-Callisthenes*)

Classical Armenian literature: the Hellenizing school

Thimoteos Ailuros, *Refutation of the Council of Chalcedon*

Aelius Theon, *Progymnasmata*

Aristotle, Περὶ ἐρμηνείας, Κατηγορίαι;

Iamblichos, Commentary on Aristotle's Περὶ ἐρμηνείας; Commentary
on Aristotle's Κατηγορίαι;

Porphyrios, Εἰσαγωγή

Corpus Hermeticum

Classical Armenian literature: the Hellenizing school

David Anyałt'/Anhaght (David the Invincible): Prolegomena to philosophy; Commentary on Porphyry's *Eisagoge*; Commentary on Aristotle's *Categories*; Commentary on Aristotle's *First Analytics*
Elias, Commentary on Aristotle's *Categories*
(Pseudo-)Zeno, "On nature"
Commentary on the grammar of Dionysios Thrax
Bishop Eutyches, "On the difference between nature and person"
Basil of Caesarea, "On the birth of Christ"
Pseudo-Aristotle, Περὶ κόσμου
Plato, *Apologia*, *Leges*, *Eutyphron*, *Menon*, *Timaeus*

Classical Armenian literature: the Hellenizing school

George of Pisidia, *Hexaemeron* (7th c.)

Aratus, *Phainomena* (3rd c. BC)

Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* (5th c.)

Pseudo-Dionysius, *Areopagita* (6th c.)

Nemesius, *De natura hominis* (c. 400)

Cyril of Alexandria (5th c.)

Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio* (late 4th c.)

Nonnus, Scholia on five sermons of Gregory of Nazianzus (4th-5th c.)

Classical Armenian literature: the Hellenizing school

- Example: Aristotle, *De interpretatione* (περὶ ἐρμηνεῖας) 17a.8
"Εστι δὲ εἴς πρῶτος λόγος ἀπο-φαντικὸς κατά-φασις, εἴτα ἀπό-φασι
"A simple affirmation is the first kind, a simple negation the second of
those propositions called simple."
ew ē mi araǰi ban bac^c-erewakan stor-asowt^ciwn, apa bac^c-asowt^ciwn

- Retranslation: λόγος → *ban*;
- ἀνα-λογία → *ver-a-ban-owt^ciwn*;
- ἀνά-λυσις → *ver-lowc-owt^ciwn* with *lowc* corresponding to λύ(ω).

Pre-Christian literature: the birth of Vahagn

Երկնէր Երկին,
Երկնէր Երկիր,
Երկնէր Եւ ծովս ծիրանի

Երկն ի ծովուն ունէր Եւ
զկարսրիկ եղեգսիկ.
Ոնդ եղեգան փող ծուխ
Ելանէր,
Ոնդ եղեգան փող բոց
Ելանէր,
Եւ ի բոցոյն վազէր
Խարտեաշ պատանեկիկ.
ևա հուր հեր ունէր,
բոց ունէր մօրուս,
Եւ աչկունքն Եին
արեգակունք

*Erknēr erkin,
erknēr erkir
erknēr ew covn cirani.*

*Erkn i covown ownēr ew
zkarmrik ełegnik.
ənd ełegan p'oł cowx elanēr.
ənd ełegan p'oł boc'
elanēr,
ew i boc'oyn vazēr xarteaš
patanekik.
Na howr her ownēr,
boc' ownēr mōrows,
ew ač'kownk'n ēin
aregakownk'.*

Heaven was in travail,
earth was in travail,
even the red sea was in
travail.

The birth pain also held the
red reed in the sea,
out of the reed came smoke,

out of the reed came a
flame,

and out of the flame jumped
a blond-haired little boy.
He had fire for hair,
flame he had for a beard,
and his little eyes were suns.

Pre-Christian literature: the birth of Vahagn

- Preserved in Movsēs Xorenac'i, *History of Armenia* 1.31
- One of the few survivals of pre-Christian poetry in Old Armenian literature
- Poetic devices (alliteration, anaphora, etc.)

PIE inheritance and Armenian reinterpretations

- Movsēs Xorenac'i: pre-Christian deities were deified prehistoric kings. Vahagn king of son Tigran. But Tigran killed *Aždahak* (= Avestan dragon *aži dahaka*), king of the Medes, whose wife Anoyš is “mother of dragons” (*mayr višapac'*).
- Similar story in Indian folklore: Indra withdraws into a lotus, exhausted after having killed his enemy, the snake Vṛtra.

շնորհակալութիւն

Thank you for your attention!