

DANIEL KÖLLIGAN AND RONALD I. KIM

# Classical Armenian

Text Sample 1 – Movsēs Xorenac’i: Birth of Vahagn

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## Text sample 1: the birth of Vahagn

Երկնէր երկին,  
երկնէր երկիր,  
երկնէր եւ ծովն ծիրանի

ըրկն ի ծովուն ունէր եւ  
զկարմրիկ եղեգնիկ,  
ընդ եղեգան փող ծուխ  
ելանէր,  
ընդ եղեգան փող բոց  
ելանէր,  
եւ ի բոցոյն վազեր  
խարտեաշ պատանեկիկ.  
Նա հուր հեր ունէր,  
բոց ունէր մորուս,  
եւ աչկունքն էին  
արեգակունք.

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

*Erkn i covown ownēr ew  
zkarmrik ełegnik,  
and ełegan p'ot cowx elanēr,*

*and ełegan p'ot boc'  
elanēr,  
ew i boc'oyñ 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.

## Text sample 1: the birth of Vahagn

- *Erknēr erkin,*
- *erknēr erkir,*
- *erknēr ew cov-n cirani.*
- Heaven was in travail,
- earth was in travail,
- even the red sea was in travail.

<i>erknēr</i>	give.birth, be.in.birth-pangs- IMPF.3SG <i>erknem</i> (see <i>erkn</i> below)	<i>ew</i>	and, also
<i>erkin</i>	heaven (usually pl. <i>erkink'</i> ; <i>i</i> -stem)	<i>cov-n</i>	sea-ART
<i>erkir</i>	earth ( <i>a</i> -stem)	<i>cirani</i>	purple

## Text sample 1: the birth of Vahagn

- *Erkn i covow-n ownēr  
ew z-karmrik eṭegnik,*
  - *and eṭegan p'ot cowx elanēr,*
  - *and eṭegan p'ot boc' elanēr,*
  - *Ew i boc'oy-n vazēr xarteaš patanekik.*
- 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,

<i>erkn</i>	birth pangs (cf. denominative <i>erknem</i> be in birth pangs)
<i>cov-n</i>	sea-LOC.SG-ART ( <i>u</i> -stem)
<i>ownēr</i>	have, hold-IMPF.3SG <i>erknem</i>
<i>z-karmr-ik</i>	prp-red-DIMIN ( <i>karmir</i> 'red')
<i>eṭegnik</i>	reed-DIMIN ( <i>eṭegn</i> 'reed')
<i>and</i>	through (+ ACC)
<i>eṭegan</i>	reed-GEN.SG
<i>p'ot</i>	shaft-ACC.SG

<i>cowx</i>	smoke
<i>elanēr</i>	'go out-IMPF.3SG. <i>elanem</i>
<i>boc'</i>	flame ( <i>o</i> -stem)
<i>boc'oy-n</i>	flame-ABL.SG-ART
<i>vazēr</i>	spring, jump-IMPF.3SG <i>vazem</i>
<i>xarteaš</i>	blond-, red-haired
<i>patanekik</i>	boy-DIMIN-DIMIN ( <i>patani</i> 'boy' + dimin. <i>-ak</i> + dimin. <i>-ik</i> )

## Text sample 1: the birth of Vahagn

- *Na howr her ownēr,*
  - *boc' ownēr mōrows,*
  - *ew ač'kownk'n ēin aregakownk'.*
- He had fire for hair,
  - flame he had for a beard,
  - and his little eyes were suns.

*howr* fire-ACC.SG  
*her* hair  
*mōrows* beard-ACC.PL  
 (pl. tant. *mawrowk'*)  
*ač'kownk'n* eye-NOM.PL-ART; apparent  
 contamination of *ač'k'* 'eyes' and  
*akownk'* 'sources', semantically  
 differentiated plurals of *akn*

*ēin* be-IMPF.3PL *em*  
*aregakownk'* SUN-NOM.PL (← *areg* 'sun-GEN' +  
*akownk'* 'source-NOM.PL')

## Stylistics

- Watkins (1995:165ff.): repetition of verb by periphrasis with verbal noun and semantically empty auxiliary verb.

*erknēr, erknēr ... erkn ownēr* ‘was in travail...travail also held (in its grip)’

- Cf. Latin: Cato *De agri cult.* 141.3 *fundi terrae agrique mei / lustrandi lustrique faciendi ergo* ‘to the intent of purifying my farm, my land, my ground, and of making an expiation’
- Umbrian: Tab. Ig. Vla 27-28 *persei tuer perscler uaseto(m) est...tuer perscler uirseto airseto uas est* ‘if in thy sacrifice anything has been flawed...(if) in thy sacrifice there is a seen or unseen flaw’
- Greek: Aesch. *frg.* 44.1-2 (15 C 125.20) *ἔρᾱι μὲν ἀγνὸς Οὐρανὸς τρῶσαι Χθόνα, / ἔρως δὲ Γαῖαν λαμβάνει* γάμου τυχεῖν ‘Holy Heaven *is desirous* to impregnate Earth, *desire grips* (Heaven) to marry Earth.’

## Stylistics

- Watkins (1995:253–4):
- alliteration: *erknēr* ‘was in birth pains’, *erkin* ‘heaven’ (etymologically unrelated to *erkn*, *erknem!*), *erkir* ‘earth’
- discourse-initial verb *erknēr* (repeated three times in first stanza)
- repeated diminutives in *karmrik*, *eṭegnik*, *patanekik* (double diminutive!)
- *ač’kownk’-n*: diminutive, or literary creation for rhyme effect with following *areg-akownk’* ‘little suns’ (lit. ‘sources of the sun’)?

շնորհակալութիւն

Thank you for your attention!