

COLLÈGE DE FRANCE – CNRS
CENTRE DE RECHERCHE D'HISTOIRE
ET CIVILISATION DE BYZANCE

TRAVAUX ET MÉMOIRES
18

MÉLANGES
JEAN-PIERRE MAHÉ

édités par

Aram MARDIROSSIAN, Agnès OUZOUNIAN,
Constantin ZUCKERMAN

Association des Amis du Centre d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance
52, rue du Cardinal-Lemoine – 75005 Paris
2014

ORIENT ET MÉDITERRANÉE (UMR 8167) – BYZANCE
COLLÈGE DE FRANCE – INSTITUT D’ÉTUDES BYZANTINES

TRAVAUX ET MÉMOIRES

sont une publication annuelle paraissant en un ou deux fascicules

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ISBN 978-2-916716-51-0

ISSN 0577-1471

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ABRÉVIATIONS

- AArmL* *Annual of Armenian linguistics*. Cleveland.
- AnBoll* *Analecta Bollandiana*. Bruxelles.
- AnTard* *Antiquité tardive*. Turnhout.
- BHG* *Bibliotheca hagiographica Graeca*, 3^e éd. mise à jour et considérablement augmentée, Bruxelles 1957.
- BMGS* *Byzantine and modern Greek studies*. Leeds.
- Byz.* *Byzantion : revue internationale des études byzantines*. Wetteren.
- Byz. Forsch.* *Byzantinische Forschungen : internationale Zeitschrift für Byzantinistik*. Amsterdam.
- BZ* *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*. Berlin.
- CArch* *Cahiers archéologiques*. Paris.
- CCSG* *Corpus christianorum. Series Graeca*. Turnhout.
- CCSL* *Corpus christianorum. Series Latina*. Turnhout.
- CFHB* *Corpus fontium historiae Byzantinae*.
- CRAI* *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*. Paris.
- CSCO* *Corpus scriptorum Christianorum orientalium*. Louvain.
- DACL* *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, publié par F. Cabrol et H. Leclercq, Paris 1905-1953.
- DAI* Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, greek text ed. by Gy. Moravcsik, english transl. by R. J. H. Jenkins (CFHB 1), Washington 1967².
- DChAE* Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς ἀρχαιολογικῆς ἐταιρείας. Athènes.
- DOP* *Dumbarton Oaks papers*. Washington
- DOSeals* 1-6 *Catalogue of Byzantine seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art*. 2, *South of the Balkans, the Islands, South of Asia Minor*, ed. by J. Nesbitt and N. Oikonomides, Washington DC 1994; 4, *The East*, ed. by E. McGeer, J. Nesbitt and N. Oikonomides, Washington DC 2001.
- EI* *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, Leiden – Paris 1913-1938.
- EP* *Encyclopédie de l'Islam, nouvelle édition*, Leiden – Paris 1954-2009.
- Nov.* *Corpus iuris civilis*. 3, *Novellae*, recognovit R. Schoell, absolvit G. Kroll, Berolini 1895.
- OCA* Orientalia Christiana analecta.
- OCP* *Orientalia Christiana periodica : commentarii de re orientali aetatis christianaee sacra et profana*. Roma.
- ODB* *Oxford dictionary of Byzantium*, A. P. Kazhdan ed. in chief, New York 1991.
- PBE* *Prosopography of the Byzantine Empire*. 1, 614–867, ed. by J. R. Martindale, Aldershot 2001.
- PG* *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca, accur*. J.-P. Migne, Paris 1856-1866.
- PLRE* *The prosopography of the later Roman Empire*, by A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale & J. Morris, Cambridge 1971-1992.
- PmbZ* *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit*. Berlin – New York 1998-.
- PO* *Patrologia Orientalis*. Paris.

<i>RE</i>	<i>Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , Stuttgart – München 1894–1997.
<i>REArm</i>	<i>Revue des études arméniennes</i> . Paris.
<i>REB</i>	<i>Revue des études byzantines</i> . Paris.
<i>REG</i>	<i>Revue des études grecques</i> . Paris.
<i>SBS</i>	<i>Studies in Byzantine sigillography</i> .
<i>SC</i>	Sources chrétiennes. Paris.
<i>TIB</i>	<i>Tabula Imperii Byzantini</i> . Wien.
<i>TM</i>	<i>Travaux et mémoires</i> . Paris.
<i>VV</i>	<i>Византийский временник</i> . Москва.

“IMAGINED PAST, REVEALED PRESENT”: A REASSESSMENT OF ՊԱՏՐՈՒԹԻՒՆ ՏՐՈՒՆՅ [HISTORY OF TARŌN]

by Tim GREENWOOD

The *History of Tarōn* is a challenging work in several respects but at least some of the uncertainty surrounding the text derives from its uneven publication record. A version of the text was first published in Constantinople in 1719 but it was only in 1832 that it became more widely known, when it was edited and published in Venice by the Mekhitarists in two separate parts.¹ One was attributed to Zenob Glak, a purportedly fourth-century figure, and the other to Yovhannēs Mamikonean, a purportedly seventh-century figure who allegedly translated Zenob’s composition from Syriac into Armenian. Although unmerited, this partition has proved to be remarkably persistent. One might have expected that this would have been resolved through the publication of a new consolidated edition. Unfortunately whilst such an edition was published by Abrahamyan in 1941, it proved to be controversial and attracted several criticisms, notably over its use of Matenadaran 1328 as the primary text, the editorial conventions adopted and the presence of multiple errors and omissions in its apparatus.² Given its date of publication, Abrahamyan’s edition was also very rare and it seems very likely that this as much as anything else has contributed to the lack of sustained scholarly treatment. Fortunately a new critical edition, prepared by Hakobyan, was published in the *Matenagirk’* series in 2005.³ Hakobyan supplies a full description of the manuscript tradition, and his approach to it, in his introduction and there can be little doubt that this meticulous edition will be the starting point for all future research.

1. Պատմութիւն Տարօնոյ զոր թարգմանեաց Զենօր Ասորի [History of Tarōn which Zenob the Syrian translated], Venice 1832; Յովհաննու Մամիկոնենի եպիսկոպոսի Պատմութիւն Տարօնոյ [History of Tarōn of bishop Yovhannēs Mamikonean], Venice 1832. Both were reprinted in 1889.

2. Յովհան Մամիկոնեան, Պատմութիւն Տարօնոյ, աշխատասիրութեամբ և առաջարանով Ա. Աբրահամեանի [Yovhannēs Mamikonean, *History of Tarōn*, ed. and introd. by A. Abrahamyan], Erevan 1941; for a review, see Լ. Խաչիկյան, Տեղեկագիր [L. XACIKYAN, *Tetekagir*] 1–2, 1944, pp. 141–50.

3. Յովհան Մամիկոնեան, Պատմութիւն Տարաւոնոյ, աշխատասիրութեամբ և առաջարանով Ա. Յակոբեանի, Մատենագիրք Հայոց Ե. Հասոր Է. Դար [Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Tarawn*, ed. and introd. by A. Hakobyan, in *Matenagirk’ Hayoc’*: 5, 7th century], Antelias 2005, pp. 971–1126.

These historic difficulties in accessing the text sit alongside a series of other major questions surrounding its composition. Who were the above-named authors or should they be regarded as pseudonymous? When was the *History of Tarōn* compiled and in what circumstances? Did its form change over time and if so, how and why? Given its contentious nature, scholars have been reluctant to move beyond these questions and integrate the testimony into any wider study of the history of medieval Armenia. It remains a marginal work.

With regret, this is not the occasion to offer a sustained analysis of these questions or provide a complete resolution to every one of them. In relation to the identity of the authors and when they were active, I commend the careful study undertaken by Avdoyan.⁴ He aligned himself with the earlier Xalat'ean/Abeyan school of interpretation, those scholars termed “iconoclasts” by Avdoyan for arguing for a single author and a post seventh-century date for both parts of the text. Avdoyan extends this line of argument much further. Having noted that the text displays the influence of the mid seventh-century *History attributed to Sebēos* and the eighth- or ninth-century *History of Movsēs Xorenac'i*, Avdoyan observes that the *History of Tarōn* is not known or cited by any Armenian writer before bishop Uxtanēs of Sebastia, whose own *History* was compiled between 982 and 988 CE.⁵ Uxtanēs is also the first Armenian author to refer to either Zenob or the monastery of Glak and even he seems to have been unsure quite what to make of it, given that he ends up preferring the testimony of Movsēs Xorenac'i to that of Zenob on the identity of the Roman emperor who crowned Trdat.⁶ On the other hand, the near-contemporary *Universal history* of Step'anos Tarōnec'i, completed in 1004 CE, displays no knowledge or awareness of the work or indeed the monastery.⁷ For Avdoyan, this indicates the appearance of a work “which claimed antiquity but was really so new or ‘newly rediscovered’ that only [Uxtanēs] had access to it.”⁸ As discussed below, the lack of relationship between the *History of Tarōn* and the *Universal history* of Step'annos Tarōnec'i can be seen in other ways.

If Uxtanēs' citation supplies a *terminus ante quem*, Avdoyan identifies a series of distinctive features of the *History of Tarōn* which collectively support a *terminus post quem* of 966/67 CE, the year in which the Bagratuni principality of Tarōn was annexed by Byzantium and Grigor and Bagrat Bagratuni exchanged their patrimony for imperial

4. L. AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs Mamikonean The History of Tarōn* (Occasional papers and proceedings 6), Atlanta 1993, pp. 13–25; 42–8.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 1 and n. 1; 13–4 and nn. 35–6.

6. Ուխտանէս եպիսկոպոս, Պատմութիւն Հայոց, աշխատավրութեամբ և առաջարանով Պ. Յովհաննիսանի և Գ. Մարգելանի, Մատենագիրք Հայոց ԺԵ. Հատոր Ժ. Դար Գիրք Բ [Bishop Uxtanēs, *History of Armenia*, ed. and introd. by P. Hovhannisyan and G. Madoyan, in *Matenagirk' Hayoc'*. 15, 10th century. Book 2], Antelias 2012, p. 509. Bishop Uxtanēs observes that Zenob and Movsēs did not agree on when and by whom Trdat was crowned, Zenob identifying Պրօպա [Probus] and Movsēs preferring Diokletianos [Diocletian].

7. Սուեփանոս Տարանեցի Ասողիկ, Պատմութիւն արեգեական, աշխատավրութեամբ և առաջարանով Գ. Մանուկիսանի, Մատենագիրք Հայոց ԺԵ. Հատոր Ժ. Դար Գիրք Բ [Step'anos Tarōnec'i Asolik, *Universal history*, ed. and introd. by G. Manukyan, in *Matenagirk' Hayoc'*. 15, 10th century, Book 2], Antelias 2012, pp. 619–829.

8. AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), p. 46.

titles and unspecified revenue-generating estates inside the Empire.⁹ For Avdoyan, the absence of Bagratuni princes from the narrative mirrors their departure from Tarōn. But he argues that there are several other features of the text which support this dating. The acquisition of relics of the Apostles and early Church Fathers and martyrs is consistent with contemporary practice; and so is the foundation and endowment of coenobitic monasteries.¹⁰ Avdoyan, following Mēnēvišean and, more recently Hambarjumyan, maintains that the “vulgar style” of the language, *ašxarhabar/ramkakan*, employed in the narrative is consistent with a tenth-century date of composition.¹¹ The presence of particular terms is also significant. Thus Surtinos of Ephesus is described as being the *vardapet* of all the districts, an office whose remit is attested for the first time in the *Universal history* of Step'anos Tarōnec'i, when Step'anos the great *vardapet* is described as pasturing the western region of Armenia.¹² And Tirān the son of Vahan Kamsarakān is reported to have been appointed both *marzpan* and *demeslikos* of all the Romans by Heraclius;¹³ this is the same form of *domestikos* as that found in the *Universal history* and denotes a military command first attested in the second half of the eighth century.¹⁴ Toponymy also supplied some useful evidence. The city of Porp, for example, is referred to four times in the *History of Tarōn*, yet only once does this location occur in an earlier Armenian composition, namely in T'ovma Arcrunī's *History of the House of Arcrunik'*, when the *awan* of Porp features as the burial site of Ašot Haykazn, prince of Gelark'unik'.¹⁵

These arguments may be uneven when considered individually but collectively they are persuasive. Avdoyan is surely correct in maintaining that the *History of Tarōn* was composed in the tenth century, probably after 966/7 and before Uxtanē completed his own *History* in the 980s. Avdoyan does not, however, reflect upon the historical implications of his research and the new significance afforded to both parts of the *History of Tarōn*. For Avdoyan, this remains “a slight work” which “should not be used for historical argumentation,” a “highly readable, extremely successful representative of the genre of

9. Step'anos Tarōnec'i, *Universal history* (quoted n. 7), p. 757, for the date; Skylitzes: *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum*, rec. I. Thurn (CFHB 5), Berlin – New York 1973, p. 279 for the title awarded, *patrikios*, and the estates granted.

10. AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), pp. 32; 44.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 37–9.

12. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Tarawn* (quoted n. 3), p. 1008: զԱվտրինու Եփեսացի Վարդպատոն ամենայն զատացն; see AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), p. 75. Compare Step'anos Tarōnec'i, *Universal history* (quoted n. 7), p. 756: Ստեփանոս Վարդպատոն մեծ...և հովուր զարդարելով կողմն Հայոց.

13. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Tarawn* (quoted n. 3), p. 1122: դեմելեկոս առնել բովանդակ Հոռոմեց; AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), p. 159.

14. Compare Step'anos Tarōnec'i, *Universal history* (quoted n. 7), p. 748 and p. 759: դեմելիկոս. The earliest reference to the *domestikos tōn scholōn* is found in Theophanes, *Theophanis Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, Leipzig, 1883–5, p. 442, AM 6259 (766/7 CE).

15. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Tarawn* (quoted n. 3), p. 1080, զանոն բաղամին...Պորպէս; p. 1090, ի վերայ խալափին Պորպայ; p. 1124, ի Պորպ խալափի; AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), pp. 129–30; 137; 161. Պոլման Արծոնմին և Անամոն, Պատմոթիւն Տան Արծունեաց, աշխատախրութեամբ և առաջաբանով Գ. Տէր-Վարդանեանի, Մատենագիրք Հայոց ժԱ. Հասոր Ժ. [T'ovma Arcrunī, *History of the House of Arcrunik'*, ed. and introd. by G. Tēr-Vardanean, in *Matenagirk' Hayoc'*. 11, 10th century], Antelias 2010, p. 244: ի Պորպ յիւր ասան.

medieval forgeries.”¹⁶ I would agree with Avdoyan that the work is without merit for the study of the conversion of Armenia in the fourth century or for the travails of Tarōn in the first half of the seventh century. But as a composition of the late tenth century, reflecting the present through a creative reinterpretation of the past, this text obtains a completely different historical value. It serves to articulate something of the dramatic changes then underway in the newly-annexed district of Tarōn, showing how power and authority were in the process of being renegotiated following its annexation by the Byzantine state. It therefore offers hitherto unrecognised insight into an era of radical social and cultural change, when the established political structures and religious institutions were swept away, the written historical traditions were no longer controlled by the established elite, and new opportunities presented themselves for others to lay claim to the past. Far from being a time of universal gloom following the departure of the Bagratuni family and its supporters, this composition expresses a new dynamism and optimism for the future on the part of some of those who remained. Alongside the upheaval and dislocation, there were new possibilities within Tarōn for individual and institutional advancement. The *History of Tarōn* articulates how one such institution, a monastic community, sought to establish and consolidate its presence in a much-changed religious landscape, simultaneously asserting its antiquity and justifying its landholdings. The fact that this composition survives in so many manuscripts, and that its version of the past came to be integrated into mainstream Armenian historical tradition, illustrates its success.¹⁷ Let us now turn to consider the content of the text and its deeper meaning for the study of the later tenth century.

The first part of the *History of Tarōn* places the foundation of the monastery of Glak at Innaknean in the context of the conversion of Armenia by Grigor the Illuminator at the start of the fourth century. Locating its origins in this context provided the monastery with an unimpeachable pedigree. But this choice was also necessary. Promoting the antiquity and sanctity of the monastery of Glak, and its connection with relics of Yovhannēs Karapet/John the Baptist, required that the centuries-old centre of Christian practice and devotion in Tarōn, at Aštišat, be supplanted. Both the A and V recensions of the *History of Agat’angelos* attest that Aštišat was the centre of pagan worship in Tarōn and hence the focus of Grigor’s activities, which included the building of a martyrium for the relics of John the Baptist and the holy martyr At’anaginēs/Athenogenes.¹⁸ The *History of Tarōn* undermines the priority of this tradition by recording that Grigor performed similar deeds at Innaknean—destroying the idols of Gisanē and Demetr, driving out demons, building a martyrium for the relics of John the Baptist and Athenogenes—before he did so at Aštišat.¹⁹ Indeed the

16. AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), pp. 47–8.

17. AVDOYAN, *ibid.*, p. 6, refers to the work being preserved in complete and partial form in over fifty manuscripts. Avdoyan notes that both Kirakos Ganjakec’i and Vardan Arawelc’i exploited the work in their own compositions.

18. A Recension: Ազաթանգեղա Պատմովին Հայոց, բնական բնագիր Գ. Տէր-Մկրտչեան և Ս. Կանայեանցի [Agat’angelos, *History of Armenia*, ed. by G. Tér-Mkrtčean and S. Kanayeanc’], Tiflis 1909; repr. Delmar NY 1980, §§ 809–14; V Recension: G. GARITTE, *Documents pour l’étude du livre d’Agathange* (Studi e testi 127), Città del Vaticano 1946, pp. 154–7. For a translation and commentary on all the versions of both recensions, see R. W. THOMSON, *The Lives of Saint Gregory*, Ann Arbor MI 2010, pp. 417–25.

19. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Tarawn* (quoted n. 3), pp. 981–5; AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), pp. 55–8.

History of Tarōn asserts that the demons fled from Innaknean to Aštišat.²⁰ Therefore the tradition connecting Grigor with Aštišat was diminished rather than excised, presumably because it was so well-established.

This substitution, of Innaknean for Aštišat as the primary spiritual and devotional centre in the district of Tarōn, lies at the heart of why the *History of Tarōn* was composed. It legitimises the monastic community—and its religious leadership—at the former at the expense of the latter. But the work as a whole offers far more than a simple retelling of a familiar narrative in a different location. The narrative is reshaped, extended and elaborated and it is the presence of these new features which allow us to enter the social and cultural landscape of late tenth-century Tarōn.

In the first place, the narrative records that having set the foundations of the church and placed the relics in it, Grigor endowed it with twelve estates, *dastakers*, seven of which are named: Kuařs, Mełti, Parex (which is Brex), Xortum (which is Tum), Xorni, Kitełk‘ (which is Kełs) and Bazrum (which is Bazum), “which are the greatest *awans* as described in the book from the Mamikonean princes.”²¹ All but one of the estates was located in the immediate vicinity of the monastery. The phrase connecting them to the Mamikoneans is obscure but it implies that these sites were historically significant and had been associated with the Mamikoneans. Associating these estates with Grigor—and the Mamikoneans—afforded the endowments an antiquity and an authority which could not easily be impugned. It is not clear whether the monastery had legal possession to these estates in the late tenth century or whether this is being asserted. The critical point however seems to be that the community was deemed to be legally competent to hold such estates in its own right. In the aftermath of the Bagratuni departure from Tarōn, and the altered legal and judicial landscape in which the monastery of Glak found itself, advancing such historic ties could bolster claims to ownership of these properties. In this regard, it is worth observing that Step‘annos Ōrbēlean’s *History of the Province of Siwnik‘* preserves a rich corpus of charters dating from the ninth and tenth centuries (and beyond) recording a range of land transactions—donations, exchanges and purchases—for the benefit of individual monasteries and churches as well as the episcopal see of T‘atev.²² These confirm that individual foundations in Siwnik‘ were recognized as legal entities, capable of holding property in perpetuity and, through their clerical leaders, entering into legal contracts. A similar situation appears to have existed in Tarōn.

Intriguingly this passage in the *History of Tarōn* then defines the seven estates, not in terms of territorial extent—as in several of the charters preserved by Step‘annos Ōrbēlean²³—but

20. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Tarawn* (quoted n. 3), p. 1019; AvDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), p. 83.

21. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Tarawn* (quoted n. 3), pp. 1026–7: Խանզի ատան են սրբ մածամեծ ոռպէս ի գրի յիշխանացն Սամիկոնենիցն. AvDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), pp. 88–9. Twelve estates: երկուսան դաստակեռուս.

22. Ստեփաննու եպիսկոպոս Սիմեոն, Պատմութիւն Տան Սիսական, աշխատափրութեամբ Ն. Եմին [Step‘annos Bishop of Siwnik‘, *History of the House of Sisakan*, ed. by N. Emin], Moscow 1861; Պատմութիւն նահանգին Սիսական արքեալ Ստեփաննոսի Օրբէկեան արքեպիսկոպոսի, աշխատափրութեամբ Կ. Շահնազարեանից [History of the province of Sisakan produced by Step‘annos Ōrbēlean Archbishop of Siwnik‘], ed. by K. Sahnazareanc‘], Paris 1859; repr. Tiflis 1910.

23. For example, in Armenian Era 288 [1 May 839 – 30 April 840], lord Dawit‘, bishop of Siwnik‘ purchased the village of Arciv from lord P‘ilippē, son of lord Vasak prince of Siwnik‘ for ten thousand

in terms of their human and military resources. Thus Kuařs is described as comprising 3,012 houses (*երդահամարու*), 1,500 cavalry (*հեծելց*) and 2,200 infantry (*հետեւակս*); Melti consists of 2,080 houses (*երդու*), 800 cavalry (*հեծեալս*) and 1,030 infantry; Xrtum 900 hearths (*ծուխս*) and 400 cavalry; Xrtni 1,906 houses, 700 cavalry and 1,007 infantry; Parex 1,680 houses, 1,030 cavalry and 400 infantry; Ketek' 1,400 houses, 800 cavalry and 600 infantry; and Bazrum 3,200 houses, 1,040 cavalry, 840 archers (*աղեղնատրու*), 680 javelin-throwers (*տիզաւորու*) and 280 stone-throwers (*պարսաւորու*).²⁴ These figures are, of course, impossibly large but the notion that these settlements should be conceived in terms of households and military contingents could reflect the new status of the district of Tarōn after 966/7 as a Byzantine theme. In describing their resources in these terms, I would suggest that the author was reflecting the connection between land-holding and military service in the themes of the Byzantine Empire, well-established by this time through the so-called military lands, *stratiotika ktemata*.²⁵ Although military lands have long been the subject of debate among Byzantinists, there has been little thought given to how land within the newly-formed "Armenian themes" might have been held. Furthermore whilst six of the seven estates apparently generated either cavalry or cavalry and infantry, it is striking that Bazrum generated not only cavalry but also archers, javelin throwers and stone-throwers/slingers. These different specialised groups all feature in the tactics described in two tenth-century Byzantine military treatises, the *Praecepta militaria* (c. 965 CE) attributed to the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas, and a revised, expanded version of this treatise, the *Taktika* of Nikephoros Ouranos, composed in c. 1000 CE.²⁶

It has been argued that originally military lands were supposed to be wholly owned by the soldiers and their families on whom the burden of military service lay. However Górecki suggested that a crucial development occurred in the first half of the tenth century when military obligations began to be associated with the land which supported the military service rather than the families from whom military service was demanded.²⁷ This seems to be exactly the situation contemplated in the *History of Tarōn*, implying that land in the newly-formed Armenian themes was designated *stratiotika ktemata*, with military duties and responsibilities automatically attached to it. Admittedly we know little about the

dramas. The territory is defined by reference to the topographical course of its eastern, western and southern boundaries: Step'annos Bishop of Siwnik, *History of the House of Siwnik'* (quoted n. 22), pp. 149–50; *History of the province of Sisakan produced by Step'annos Órbelean* (quoted n. 22), p. 205. Two other ninth-century charters define their territorial limits according to the points of the compass.

24. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Tarawn* (quoted n. 3), p. 1027; AvDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), p. 89 (but with significant variations and omissions). Unless otherwise stated, *երդու* is always used for houses, *հեծեալս* for cavalry and *հետեւակս* for infantry.

25. J. HALDON, Military service, military land and the status of soldiers : current problems and interpretations, *DOP* 47, 1993, pp. 1–67. For an earlier restructuring of the defences, and the raising of local forces, in mid-fifth-century Roman Armenia, between Theodosiopolis and Satala, see C. ZUCKERMAN, Sur le dispositif frontalier en Arménie, le *limes* et son évolution, sous le Bas-Empire, *Historia* 47/1, 1998, pp. 108–28, here at pp. 108–12.

26. These texts have been edited and translated in the same volume: E. McGEER, *Sowing the dragon's teeth* (Dumbarton Oaks studies 33), Washington DC 1995, pp. 12–59 and 89–163. Indeed both texts begin by stating that the infantry should be raised from Romans and Armenians, both ὀπλῖται, heavy infantry, τοξόται, archers, ἀκονισταί or ρύπταρισταί, javelin-throwers and σφενδοβολισταί, slingers.

27. D. GÓRECKI, The strateia of Constantine VII : the legal status, administration and historical background, *BZ* 82, 1989, pp. 157–76.

administration of Armenian themes but the use of the term *dastakert*, estate, to describe the land-holdings of the monastery of Glak may be significant. Could it be that the pre-existing estates became the basis for assessing and raising military forces in Armenian themes? If so, the *History of Tarōn* offers a rare insight into local Byzantine provincial administration inside an Armenian theme, revealing that the existing patterns of landholding were utilised rather than displaced. This evidence suggests that the system within the Armenian themes may have been hybrid, retaining some features of social organisation which predated the Byzantine annexation, such as named estates, but utilising these by imposing set quotas of different types of military manpower upon them. This is not how *dastakerts* are defined by Step'annos Orbelean, or indeed any other Armenian writer. If these records do reflect something of the experience of communities in Tarōn after it had become a theme, this passage is of great significance and interest to historians of Byzantium, for whom provincial administration along the eastern frontier has been a lively area of discussion.²⁸

The reconfiguration of Tarōn post 966/67 can be seen in other features of the work. From the outset, the *History of Tarōn* establishes multiple connections between the activities of Grigor the Illuminator, the monastery of Glak at Innaknean and the metropolitan of Caesarea, Lewondēos. It opens with a letter purportedly sent by Grigor to Lewondēos whose very first sentence refers to Grigor's holy ordination by the latter.²⁹ It goes on to thank Lewondēos for the relics of John the Baptist. Both these traditions, that Grigor was consecrated in Caesarea by Leontios, and that he took relics of the Holy Karapet with him into Tarōn, are well-established in all the versions of Agat'angelos, bar the Syriac text of the V recension [V₃] which has him consecrated in Rome.³⁰ However the *History of Tarōn* develops new links. The region in which the monastery of Glak was situated is described in this opening letter as being "a land in Armenia IV, on the border of Armenia III," thereby seeking to orientate it by reference to historic Roman provinces.³¹ This supplies a westwards-looking, Byzantine context of composition. Furthermore Grigor reveals that he had left at Glak "two living confessors of Christ, Anton and Krōnidēs," both of whom had been presented to Armenia by Lewondēos. He now asks Lewondēos for additional workers, including Eliazaros, the brother of Zenob, and Timot'ēos, bishop of Agdēn, "whose knowledge of literature you yourself have greatly praised."³² Eliazaros is later identified as the bishop of Niwstra.³³ None of these figures feature in any of the versions of Agat'angelos, nor in the *Buzandaran* or the *History of Movsēs Xorenac'i*; indeed they defy identification—and verification. On the

28. K. N. YUBASHIAN, L'administration byzantine en Arménie aux X^e et XI^e siècles, *REArm* 10 1973–4, pp. 139–83; C. HOLMES, "How the East was won" in the reign of Basil II, in *Eastern approaches to Byzantium*, ed. by A. Eastmond, Aldershot 2001, pp. 41–56.

29. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Taraun* (quoted n. 3), pp. 981–6; AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), pp. 55–8.

30. Agat'angelos, *History of Armenia* (quoted n. 18), §§ 796–810; THOMSON, *The Lives of Saint Gregory* (quoted n. 18), pp. 398–419.

31. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Taraun* (quoted n. 3), p. 983; AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), pp. 56–7.

32. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Taraun* (quoted n. 3), p. 985; AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), pp. 57–8.

33. Niwstra/Nystra is unknown but Avdoyan notes that it could be a corruption of Lystra in Acts 16:1: AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), p. 175.

other hand, the inclusion of such figures serves to establish a certain dependence upon the see of Caesarea in terms of trained clerics of various kinds—monks, bishops and scholars—in the formative era, namely the mission of Grigor the Illuminator. There is no suggestion in the *History of Tarōn* that these figures had been sent from Armenia to Caesarea by Grigor or anyone else for training and preparation; rather they emerge fully-formed into the opening notices of the text, moving eastwards into Tarōn to take up leadership responsibilities, as abbots and bishops.

Thus the *History of Tarōn* records the transfer of several members of the clerical elite from the Byzantine Empire into Tarōn as well as the creation of a new ecclesiastical hierarchy within that district. Whilst these processes are located from a narrative perspective in the context of the fourth-century activities of Grigor—and justified through that association—they also fit the late tenth-century historical context in which the *History of Tarōn* was composed. For it is just at this time that we can observe, via the *Notitiae episcopatum Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, a dramatic eastwards expansion of the Byzantine episcopal network. *Notitia* 10, which is by convention dated to the end of the tenth century, implies that Tarōn had gained several new sees by that date.³⁴ These included the see of Tarōn itself, a second see centred on the city of Muš, another in the district of Xoyt' and a fourth at Katsoun, which is unidentified but likely to be associated with a site dedicated to the Holy Cross, *Surb Xac'*. All three came to be under the oversight of a new metropolitan, of Keltzene, Kortzene and Tarōn, although it is not entirely clear when this metropolitan see emerged, nor how it developed in the first decades of the eleventh century.³⁵ None of these sees can be associated with the monastery of Glak but it is striking that the *History of Tarōn* is unclear whether Zenob was the first abbot of the monastery of Glak, or the first bishop of the Mamikoneans, or both. If we turn back to *Notitia* 10, we find that the imperial church extended further eastwards, across the former Arcruni lands in Vaspurakan, following the departure of its king Senek'erim and his entourage in 1021. Three of the new dioceses established in Vaspurakan seem to bear the names of existing institutions in the religious landscape: Hagios Nikolaos, Hagios Georgios and Hagios Elissaios. The first of these is further identified as being in Artesion, the city of Arçēš, on the northern shore of lake Van, but it is not known whether this was a monastic community, a major church or both. What does seem clear is that the religious institution of Hagios Nikolaos predated the see. Therefore the relationship envisaged in *Notitia* 10 between new imperial diocese and prior religious community appears to be similar to that of bishop and monastic community proposed in the *History of Tarōn*.³⁶ Whether or not the monastery of Glak really did become the seat of a bishop is less important than the assertion that it had been in the formative era.

34. J. DARROUZÈS, *Notitiae episcopatum Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, Paris 1981, p. 336.

35. The four recensions of *Notitia* 10 are at odds with one another on this point, including Tarōn in the title of the metropolitan but also as a separate diocese as well. This suggests that the episcopal network overlaying Tarōn continued to develop. A seal of Basil metropolitan of Keltzene (11th c.) has been published: *DOSeals* 4, 66.1. Someone of the same name and office attended the council held at Hagios Alexios in Constantinople in 1072 CE and they are probably the same figure: See Basileios 181 and 20251 in *Prosopography of the Byzantine world* (2011), available at <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/> consulted on 9 February 2014.

36. This coincidence of bishop and monastery was also found at Xlat'/Chliat on the northern shore of Lake Van, according to the *Universal history* of Step'anos Tarōnec'i. Here the narrative notes

In respect of one of the above-named figures who transferred into Tarōn, the narrative takes a most unexpected direction. Following Grigor's plea to Ľewondēos for additional workers, including Eliazaros (the brother of Zenob), the patriarch of Caesarea replied, explaining that Eliazaros had already fled the city as a result of persecution, though by whom is not stipulated.³⁷ Grigor then appeals directly by letter to Eliazaros, acknowledging his period of exile but inviting him to return, it seems, to Armenia:

For since you knew that this king had been filled with the Christian faith and this land with service to God, why did you flee to that foreign and remote land, especially because you knew that bishops are needed for all the districts, as well as priests [...] Yet you have taken so many priests and have dedicated yourself to a remote and distant journey.³⁸

This is an obscure passage—how could Eliazaros have fled from Armenia surrounded by many priests, given that Armenia had not yet been converted? Nevertheless Grigor seems to be registering shock at the departure of bishop Eliazaros and his priests and an eagerness for him to return. His letter also holds out the prospect of territorial reward if only he will return, if not to his own lands, then to the lands in the neighbouring districts of Ekeleac' and Hark'. And although this does not immediately produce results, as Eliazaros travelled widely across the eastern Mediterranean, always one step ahead of the messengers bearing Grigor's letter, the narrative reports that they were reconciled when Grigor and Trdat were on their way to Rome, and that Eliazaros eventually becomes the first abbot of Eliazaruvank', the monastery of Eliazaros.³⁹ Although this account reveals nothing whatsoever about the events of the fourth-century, we should do well to remember that the departure of the Bagratuni family from Tarōn included some, if not many, of the clerical elite.⁴⁰ Might this story not be based upon a subtle appeal to those clerics who had left Tarōn in 966/7, that they could return if they wished to and could expect to be rewarded with territory? Or could it be justifying an actual return and reconciliation, on the grounds that a similar episode had taken place in the time of Grigor the Illuminator? Evidently this issue was current and meaningful at the time of composition.

that the Armenian church outside the walls was a bishop's residence but that it had previously been an Armenian monastery dedicated to the Holy Cross and St. Gamaliēl: Step'anos Tarōnec'i, *Universal history* (quoted n. 7), p. 817: Կախվառսարան, bishop's residence.

37. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Tarawn* (quoted n. 3), pp. 988–9; AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), p. 60.

38. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Tarawn* (quoted n. 3), p. 991: Զի մինչ զիտելք զրազաւոր ժրանոսական հասատով լցեալ եւ զաշխարին յաստածպաշտուրին, յատար եւ ի տարադէմ յերկիրդ ընկէ՛ր եղէլք հապաձական Մանասանդ զի զիտելք, եթէ ամենայն գաւառացն եսխվառսուր պիտոյ են եւ բահանային... Եսկ դուք այդշափ բազում բահանայս առևապ տարադէմ եւ հետի ուղեգնացորեան եսուք: AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), p. 62.

39. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Tarawn* (quoted n. 3), pp. 993–6; AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), pp. 63–6.

40. See Ս. Մաթվուզյան, Հայերեն ձեռագրերի նիշատակարաններ Ե-ԺԲ ԴԳ. [A. MAT'EVOYAN, *Colophons of Armenian manuscripts 5–12th centuries*], Erevan 1988, no. 75. This colophon dates from 973 AD and refers to the flight of Grigor bishop of the Mamikoneans from the district of Tarōn and the disorder which ensued thereafter in connection with the ordination of a bishop. It is tempting to associate his flight with the departure of the princely family of Tarōn in 966/7 CE.

Several other features of the *History of Tarōn* appear to reflect late tenth-century conditions and practices. As Avdoyan rightly pointed out, the letter of the patriarch of Caesarea, Łewondēos, to Grigor urges him to establish a coenobitic community at Glakavank' with a perpetual rule, under the supervision of abbot Epiphanius, who had been despatched with forty ascetics by Łewondēos.⁴¹ The alternative, an eremitical structure, "each one building a house to the Lord and a separate place to live" is explicitly rejected. Avdoyan notes that earlier in the tenth century, the Armenian catholicos Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i had commented approvingly on the eremitical life.⁴² At the cave of Mani in the district of Derjan, he encountered hermits; "these ones did not live together in one place but were scattered along the foot of the mountain."⁴³ Perhaps even more instructive is the extended account of tenth-century monasticism found in the *Universal history* of Step'anos Tarōnec'i.⁴⁴ Step'anos commends a series of monastic communities, including those at Kamrajor in the district of Aršarunik', who lived according to the rule of St. Basil of Caesarea, and at Xlajor in the district of Derjan, where the abbot Barseł was surrounded by a multitude of righteous men.⁴⁵ But it is striking that Step'anos also commends "the magnificently embellished virtues of hermits," such as the famous Vardik and the holy father Karmir, "who lived in solitude with the wild animals in the mountains and deserted places."⁴⁶ This approbation of the eremitical life is at odds with the prohibition referred to above and is not easy to interpret, beyond noting that the monastic communities recorded in the *History of Tarōn* were all founded and led by men who had come from Caesarea and the Byzantine Empire. There is a sharp and significant difference of opinion between these two works on this subject.⁴⁷

Another striking characteristic of the *History of Tarōn* is the prominence afforded to the translation and deposition of relics. Those of John the Baptist and Athenogenes have already been discussed above; they feature in both the recensions of Agat'angelos.⁴⁸ However there is no trace in any of the versions of Agat'angelos that Grigor also obtained relics of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, as well as Andrew and Luke. Yet the *History of Tarōn* reports that Grigor obtained relics such as those from the holy patriarch of Rome during his visit there; indeed the narrative refers specifically to Grigor being given the left

41. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Tarawn* (quoted n. 3), pp. 987–8; AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), pp. 59–60.

42. AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), p. 32.

43. Յովհաննես Դրախանակերտցի, Պատմութիւն Հայոց, աշխատափրեամբ եւ առաջանով Գ. Տէր-Վարդանեանի. Մատենագիրք Հայոց մեջ. Հասոր Ժ. [Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i, *History of Armenia*, ed. and introd. by G. Tér-Vardanean, in *Matenagirk' Hayoc'* 11, 10th century], Antelias 2010, p. 535: Եւ սրբ ոչ քրիստո միախուն ի միախն բնակեալ, այլ զան եւ զիր՝ առ սոռորոսվ լերինն կայանն...

44. A. and J.-P. MAHÉ, *Grégoire de Narek, Tragédie Matean olbergut'ean* (CSCO 584), Louvain 2000, pp. 9–13.

45. Step'anos Tarōnec'i, *Universal history* (quoted n. 7), p. 750: կանն կարգի ունեղով զահնանաբորբիմ սրբյն Բարսի հայրապետին մեծի; p. 751: Առ որ ժողովեալ բազմորեան արանց արդարաց.

46. Step'anos Tarōnec'i, *Universal history* (quoted n. 7), p. 752: Խոկ զմիայնաւորացն բազմազարդ առափնյութիմն...ամայորեամբ ընդ զազանն ի լերինն եւ յանապատ տեղին անստաղորեամբ կիմն.

47. J.-P. MAHÉ, *Érémitisme et cénobitisme en Arménie après l'Islam (IX^e-XIII^e siècles)*, *Revue théologique de Kaslik* 3–4, 2009–10, pp. 111–24.

48. See above, n. 18.

hand of Andrew.⁴⁹ These relics were then entrusted to Eliazar and placed in his monastery, Eliazaruvank'. It is clear from several other contemporary Armenian sources that in the second half of the tenth century, there was interest in acquiring such relics. A colophon securely dated to 965 CE records the visit of one Pantaleon, a priest from Vaspurakan, to the city of Constantinople. During his stay in the imperial city, he requested relics of the apostles Peter and Paul; this was denied.⁵⁰ Furthermore it is striking that this passage from the *History of Tarōn*, referring to the translation of the relics from Rome, is cited by Uxtanēs in his *History*.⁵¹ And in his *History of the Holy Cross of Aparank'*, Grigor Narekac'i records that Step'anos bishop of Mokk' obtained relics of John the Baptist, Stephen the protomartyr, James the brother of the Lord, the apostle Andrew and the Forty Martyrs of Sebastia, as well as the famous fragment of the True Cross given by the emperor Basil II and transferred to its own sanctuary at Easter 983.⁵² When taken together, these texts confirm a wide enthusiasm for apostolic relics, in Vaspurakan, in Tarōn and it seems in Sebastia as well, judging by Uxtanēs' interest.

The granting of fragments of the True Cross by the Byzantine emperor to Armenian princes in recognition of their loyalty and orthodoxy was a long-established tradition. In the middle of the seventh century, the *History of Atuanck'* records that Constans II gave just such a relic, amongst many other gifts, to Prince Juanšēr.⁵³ Moreover, shortly after he was reinstalled as patriarch of Constantinople on 26 October 877, Photios sent a letter to Ašot Bagratuni accompanied by "a blessed memorial from this preserved venerable Cross which received Christ."⁵⁴ A colophon dated 342 AE records how the pious prince of Armenia Ašot "who later became king," met the holy ascetic Maštoc' on the shore of Lake Sevan and there offered him "the eternal light which the king of the Greeks Vasil had sent him."⁵⁵ Therefore at a date before his coronation (26 August 884), Ašot Bagratuni gave this fragment of the True Cross to Maštoc'. Although the colophon states that his piety prompted him to do this, one could also speculate that the Byzantine association eventually proved to be too problematic for a prince whose political career had been predicated on loyalty to the caliph.

If we turn back to the *History of Tarōn*, we find that relics of the True Cross do not feature at all in the narrative until the penultimate section of the second part of the text attributed to Yovhannēs Mamikonean.⁵⁶ This describes how Heraclius recovered the True

49. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Tarawn* (quoted n. 3), p. 993; AvDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), p. 64.

50. MAT'EYOSYAN, *Colophons of Armenian manuscripts* (quoted n. 40), no. 71.

51. Bishop Uxtanēs, *History of Armenia* (quoted n. 6), p. 507, referring to the relics of Peter and Paul and the left arm of Andrew but omitting Luke.

52. Գրիգոր Նաւելկացի, Երկրորդ մատենա ճառից, աշխատասիրութեամբ Գ. Աւետիքեանի [Grigor Narekac'i, *Second book of writings*, ed. by G. Awetik'ean], Venice 1827, p. 23.

53. Մովսէս Կաղաննառացի, Պատմութիւն Աղուանից աշխարհի, աշխատասիրութեամբ և առաջարանը Փ. Յովհաննիսիսանի, Մատենագիր Հայոց ժե. Հասոր Ժ. [Movsēs Kafankatuc'i, *History of the land of Atuanck'*, ed. and introd. by P. Hovhannisyan], Antelias 2012, p. 238.

54. Ն. Ակինեան, Պատմելն թրոյն մեծի հայրապետին Կոստանդնուպոլիսի Փոսայ առ Աշոտ իշխանաց իշխան [N. AKINEAN, Copy of the Letter of the great patriarch of Constantinople Photios to Ašot Prince of Princes], *Handes Amsöréay* 82, 7–9 1968, pp. 449–50.

55. MAT'EYOSYAN, *Colophons of Armenian manuscripts* (quoted n. 40), no. 50.

56. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Tarawn* (quoted n. 3), pp. 1118–21; AvDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), pp. 156–9.

Cross from Khusro II in Sasanian Persia and then travelled back to Constantinople via Caesarea, distributing fragments to many people as he went. One Vahan Kamsarakan went to Caesarea and purchased a fragment from the patriarch John for thirty-six thousand *dahekans*. He then deposited it at the monastery of Glak. Six years later however, the relic was stolen by one Cicārnīk, at the request of Gorg the prince of Arjk' and with the collusion of the sacristan. He took it to the *awan* of Cicārnē. The loss was discovered when the kat'olikos Nersēs came to see the cross. The truth of what had happened was revealed to Vahan in a dream. The sacristan was blinded, Cicārnīk was beheaded and the prince of Arjk' was imprisoned in the fortress of Ołkan until he had paid the sum of one hundred thousand *dahekans*. The cross was entrusted to the bishop of Arjk' but apparently Vahan was divinely inspired not to remove the cross from its present location. The narrative ends by noting that it was composed in 130 Armenian Era [9 June 681 – 8 June 682 CE], equating to 427 of the Era of Rome and that copies were placed in both the church of Cicārnē and the monastery of Glak.⁵⁷

How should this passage be interpreted? Whilst acknowledging that it reveals nothing new about seventh-century affairs, it does offer several insights into how that era was conceived at a much later date and the intrusion of contemporary conditions. The twenty-five years of warfare between Persia and Rome has been simplified and reduced to a conflict between the two main protagonists, Khusro II and Heraclius over the True Cross. It dates from an era when time was conceived according to both Armenian and Roman chronologies. It seems unlikely that this would have been before the Byzantine take-over of Tarōn in 966/7 CE and it is striking that a colophon commemorating the copying of a commentary in the district of Tarōn in 973 CE is dated “In 422 of the Armenian Era and 725 of the Era of Rome...”⁵⁸ Secondly the passage establishes a direct connection between the relic and the monastery of Glak, one that was preserved in written accounts held in both locations. The historic connection between the two sites is obscure but it implies a dependence of Cicārnē upon Glak, one expressed through the translation of the relic, the cash penalties which were imposed and the retention of similar records. Thirdly, the presence in the story of the kat'olikos is a notable departure from the earlier narratives. As Avdoyan observed, the final two sections of the work, along with the colophon itself, are not found in all the manuscripts of the text.⁵⁹ Following other commentators, he maintained that these sections were added after the composition of the rest of the work. I agree that the narratives are separate and suggest that the presence of a kat'olikos offers further support to this argument. In his study of the abbots of the

57. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Taraun* (quoted n. 3), pp. 1120–1: Ե եղաւ այս ի բուկանորեանն Հայոց Ճ, և Հռոմեան Նի; AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), p. 158. The era of Rome (or the Romans), remarkably, is calibrated from the foundation of the city of Rome in 753 BCE and is thus the equivalent of *ab urbe condita*, from the foundation of the City (of Rome). The millennium of its foundation occurred in 248 CE during the reign of Philip the Arab, with the years starting again at 1 from 249 CE. See V. GRUMEL, *La chronologie*, Paris 1958, pp. 146–51; and A. A. MOSSHAMMER, *The Easter computus and the origins of the Christian era*, Oxford 2008, pp. 266–8. With one exception, found in the *Chronicon Paschale*, this dating system was never employed in the Byzantine Empire. It appears that it was revived briefly in Armenia at the end of the tenth century before vanishing once more.

58. MAT'EVOYAN, *Colophons of Armenian manuscripts* (quoted n. 40), no. 75: ի Նի բուկանորեանն Հայոց և Զի՞ Հռոմեան բուկանորեանն...

59. AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), pp. 25–7.

monastery, Lusararean stated that the future kat'olikos Grigor II Pahlawuni *Vkayasēr* (1065–1105) was its leader in 1044 CE.⁶⁰ If this were the case, it would be tempting to associate the addition of passages giving prominence to a kat'olikos with Grigor II, giving an approximate dating for this section of the middle of the eleventh century.

Thus far, this study has been focused predominantly upon the first “foundational” section of the text attributed to Zenob Glak. However the second “testimonial” section associated with Yovhannēs Mamikonean is also highly significant. The conspicuous absence of Bagratuni princes has been noted previously but this is all the more surprising when one considers that this second section is dominated by the heroic actions of Armenian princes against invading Persian armies. Figures from the Arcruni, Mamikonean and Kamsarakan houses feature prominently in a string of remarkably similar narratives, involving episodes of brutal single combat, graphically described and the triumph of the Armenian protagonist. Their success however is dependent upon their invocation to, and intervention by, the holy Karapet. Only a terminal—or recent—blow to the reputation of the Bagratuni house might explain their omission from these stories. Their departure from Tarōn could certainly have been viewed in this way and precipitated such a hostile reaction. It is also significant that three of the five principal heroic figures—Mušel Mamikonean, his son Vahan Mamikonean, and Vahan’s grandson Vahan Kamsarakan—were buried in the church of the Karapet in the monastery of Glak.⁶¹ Vahan’s son Smbat was buried at the entrance to the church of Step’annos in the same monastery.⁶² Only the fifth figure to appear in the narrative, Tiran, son of Vahan Kamsarakan, was buried elsewhere, at the door of the cathedral in the city of Porp.⁶³

At first sight, it might seem that these epic narratives offer little in the way of commentary on contemporary circumstances. Their literary qualities appear to dominate. But I would suggest that there are several features which reflect the conditions of the late tenth century. In the first place, the various representatives of the princely families are all related to one another in the narrative, to the extent that Mamikonean fathers sire Kamsarakan sons. This was never the case but it may be giving expression to the sense of disorientation and loss which accompanied the Bagratuni departure from Tarōn, providing a wistful contemplation of the past when the princely families were dominant.⁶⁴ Establishing such relationships also serves to link the narratives together, albeit loosely. That different figures could successfully invoke the assistance of the holy Karapet may also be significant, for it implies that the saint did not favour just one princely house but

60. Կ. Լուսարեան, Գաւազանագիրք: Յաջորդութիւնք վանահարց ուխտին Ա. Կարապետի Տարօնոց [K. LUSARAREAN, Catalogues : lists of the abbots of the monastery of the Holy Precursor of Tarōn], Jerusalem 1912, no. 32, p. 115; his list is reprinted in Կ. Սասոնի, Պատմութիւն Տարօնի աշխարհ [K. SASUNI, History of the land of Tarōn], Antelias 2013, p. 262, but the sources behind the original research are not identified.

61. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Tarawn* (quoted n. 3), pp. 1078; 1085–6; 1122; AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), pp. 128; 134; 159.

62. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Tarawn* (quoted n. 3), p. 1110; AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), p. 151.

63. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Tarawn* (quoted n. 3), p. 1124; AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), p. 161.

64. This sense of loss may also be reflected in the appropriation of the historic Pahlawuni name by the family of Grigor Magistros; if so, this would provide a lay analogue to the claims made for the monastery of Glak.

could be an effective intercessor and mediator for anyone. No longer were monasteries associated with, and endowed by, one princely family. Instead the epic narratives advertise the capacity of John the Baptist to come to the assistance of anyone, provided they had endowed the monastery. This is reflected in the long prayer of Pawlikarpos and the six other ascetics martyred by Persian forces.⁶⁵ They invite intercession through the holy Karapet for those who remember the monastery in their time of need: “whoever has taken refuge during their lifetimes and has done good in this holy church and whoever has served the holy Karapet and his monks, even though they may have committed many sins, yet if they have given liberally from their own sinful wealth to the holy Karapet, for them, may the Karapet be the mediator in return for their corruptible alms.” And following the prayer, a voice from heaven states: “May it be as you wish. Whoever, for the sake of my name shall go on a pilgrimage to [this church of] the Karapet, I shall release them on the day of my visitation.” The narratives therefore advertise the efficacy of generous endowment and pilgrimage to the monastery of John the Baptist at Innaknean/Glak. And we can be confident that this was recognized in the middle of the eleventh century through a passage preserved in the *History* of Matthew of Edessa, in which the mighty and brave T’ořnik, son of Mušel, invokes the assistance of the Holy Karapet and the monastery of Glak when fighting the impious Persian forces in Tarōn: “He turned and looked towards the monastery of the Holy Karapet and cried out in a loud voice ‘O monastery of Glak, O Holy Karapet, come to our assistance and make this day celebrated for those who believe’.”⁶⁶ This episode is dated by Matthew to the autumn of 1058 CE.

The epic narratives also possess a local quality. Many of the locations associated with the foundation of the monastery of Glak at Innaknean subsequently feature in these narratives. Mełti and Kuařis in particular appear frequently. These references support the contention that these sites are centuries-old, as is the monastery’s ownership of them. The narrative of great deeds, of ferocious engagements and brutal deaths is set against a very local backdrop, with the places and settlements in the immediate vicinity of Glak given greatest prominence (and their names accorded improbable etymologies). Even the principal city of Muš plays an incidental role. I would suggest that not only is the *History of Tarōn* the earliest example of an institutional history; it is also quintessentially a work of local history, populated by historical and quasi-historical figures, both prominent and unknown, yet largely confined to the north-western part of Tarōn.

Although the names of the major protagonists may vary, their identities are remarkably consistent, with Armenian princes on the one side and Persians on the other; the opponents are never presented as Roman, Greek, Arab or Muslim. Only in the final two narratives, whose later addition was proposed above, do Georgians and Taciks, Arabs, suddenly appear. This perception of Persians as implacable enemies does suit the general historical context depicted, the warfare between the Romans and Persians at the end of the sixth and beginning of the seventh centuries, but only if one accepts that Armenians were

65. Yovhan Mamikonean, *History of Tarawn* (quoted n. 3), pp. 1058–64; AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhanēs* (quoted n. 4), pp. 114–9.

66. Պատմոթիւն Մատթէոսի Առհայեցւոյ [History of Matthew of Edessa], Jerusalem 1869, p. 156: և դարձան հայեցա ի վանն սրբո Կարապէտին և ոժգինս ձայն արձակեալ ասեր “Գլակայ Վանի սուրբ Կարապէտ, հասիր մեզ յօգնորիմ, և ապս զօրս զայ երեւելի ի վերայ հաւասարելոց”.

always opposed to the Persians—and by implication therefore on the side of the Romans. Yet this is manifestly not the case, as the long years of loyal service to Khusro II of Smbat Bagratuni and others recorded in the *History attributed to Sebēos*, confirm.⁶⁷ Therefore this aspect of the text, too, is constructed. It is important to recognize however that such hostility to “Persians” would not have been out of place in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Both T’ovma Arcruni and Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc’i imagined the Sajid emirs of Atrpatakan at the start of the tenth century as Persian. T’ovma called Yūsuf b. Abi’l Sāj Պարսկաց քննաւոր, “the tyrant of the Persians,” whilst Yovhannēs described him living in Atrpatakan in Persia.⁶⁸ The *Universal history* of Step’anos Tarōnec’i likewise treats the Sajids and their successors in Atrpatakan as Persian.⁶⁹ Tellingly Step’anos records one particularly devastating raid across Tarōn during the first civil war of Basil II’s reign—and so between 977 and 979 CE—undertaken by *amir* Bat: “Using the sword and captivity he rendered the district of Tarōn deserted; he plundered the city of Muš, having massacred the priests in the church which is called St. Saviour’s, a piteous sight. The stains of their blood are evident even now in the church.”⁷⁰ This brutal campaign supplies a plausible context for the battle narratives, and the extreme violence, found in this second part of the *History of Tarōn*, although it should be noted that Bādh b. Dustuk, the founder of the Kurdish Marwānid dynasty, is never described as Persian and his territorial interests were located south of Armenia rather than in Atrpatakan. On the other hand, Matthew of Edessa identified the Seljuqs as Persians, as noted previously, and one could certainly make a convincing case that the sequence of attacks in the narrative mirrors the cycle of Seljuq raiding after 1047 CE. In creating episodes of heroic resistance to Persian aggression across Tarōn, the author was commenting on contemporary conflicts and the effectiveness of the holy Karapet as guardian and protector.

Given the prominence of the monastery of Glak, it may seem strange to discover that it does not feature in the *Universal history* of the eponymous Step’anos Tarōnec’i. In particular, book III of that composition contains a series of passages which record new monastic foundations in the tenth century.⁷¹ It is of course worth remembering that the *History of Tarōn* addresses the foundation of the monastery in the fourth century and its history in the first half of the seventh century, so we should not be surprised that it does not feature in book III, covering the tenth century, but nor does it feature in book II, which records, briefly, the career of Grigor the Illuminator and the conversion of Armenia, including Tarōn. Avdoyan suggested that Step’anos simply did not know about the *History of Tarōn*.⁷² It is however possible that another reason lies behind Step’anos’

67. T. W. GREENWOOD, Sasanian echoes and apocalyptic expectations : a re-evaluation of the Armenian history attributed to Sebeos, *Le Muséon* 1–2, 115, 2002, pp. 347–52.

68. T’ovma Arcruni, *History of the House of Arcrunik* (quoted n. 15), p. 251; Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc’i, *History of Armenia* (quoted n. 43), p. 537.

69. See for example Mamlān b. Abu’l Hayjā’ the *amir* of Atrpatakan and his Persian forces who attacked Armenia in 447 AE [22 March 998–21 March 999]: Step’anos Tarōnec’i, *Universal history* (quoted n. 7), pp. 817–21.

70. Step’anos Tarōnec’i, *Universal history* (quoted n. 7), p. 763: և սրով և զերպեամբ անմարդացոյց զգաստն Տարանոյ, խասի առնալ զբաղան Մոլց, խոլսողեալ զբահանայ յեկելեցողն որ սրով Փրկիչ անուանի՛ ողոմեկի տեսակա. յորով արեան ներկուածք ցարդ ևս ցուցանին ի նոյն յեկելեցոց:

71. Step’anos Tarōnec’i, *Universal history* (quoted n. 7), pp. 750–3; 755; 767.

72. AVDOYAN, *Pseudo-Yovhannēs* (quoted n. 4), p. 46.

silence. For Step'anos, the Armenian Church was characterised by a pronounced anti-Chalcedonian quality. This is expressed in various ways through the composition, notably in its approval of the kat'olikos Anania Mokac'i for rebaptising Chalcedonians and disapproval of his successor Vahanik, whose Chalcedonian leanings forced him into exile in Vaspurakan.⁷³ This confessional position is confirmed in the long letter composed at the command of the kat'olikos Xač'ik and addressed to the metropolitan of Sebastia which Step'anos elected to include in full in his work.⁷⁴ By contrast, one of the striking features of the *History of Tarōn* is the absence of a confessional dimension. Recalling the prominence of the metropolitan see of Caesarea in the conversion narrative, it is hard to reconcile the *History of Tarōn* with the attitudes expressed in the *Universal history*. One is left with the contention that the *History of Tarōn* was not composed in the context of anti-Chalcedonian animus but rather in the context of relationship and reconciliation with the Byzantine Church. The omission of the monastery of Glak at Innaknean by Step'anos Tarōnec'i was therefore intentional, on confessional grounds. This community was no longer under the supervision of the kat'olikos but rather looked westwards for recognition and support. The extent to which it was successful, at least in the short-term, is of course largely hidden from view, because we lack the evidence. That Uxtanēs exploited some elements of the narrative in his own composition might suggest that the reputation of the community spread rapidly. The appeal to the Holy Karapet and the monastery of Glak preserved in the *History of Matthew of Edessa* indicates that its prominence was well established by the middle of the eleventh century.

The above assessment does scant justice to the full historical potential of the *History of Tarōn* for studying late tenth- and eleventh-century Tarōn. It does however suggest that this little-studied composition offers significant new evidence for our understanding of this pivotal district. This composition expresses something of the new possibilities which opened up in Tarōn after the departure of the princely family and its followers in 966/7. Monastic communities, with their individual and independent traditions of sanctity, literacy and landholding, were well-placed to survive the displacement of the lay and clerical elite, and the monastery of Glak took advantage of these radically changed circumstances to consolidate its possession of—or perhaps lay claim to—surrounding estates and to assert its central role in the ministry of Grigor the Illuminator and the conversion of Armenia. As Avdoyan noted, this is the earliest extant work of “institutional” history, tracing the history of the monastery of Glak rather than the history of Armenia or the history of a particular princely house. At the same time, it should also be viewed as a work of local history, confining the dealings of the major protagonists to a small geographical area. That such a different kind of history should have been composed at such a time of social and cultural flux should come as no surprise. Monasteries were not only permanent features in a changing social and cultural landscape; they also became the repositories of Armenian historical memory, with profound implications for the preservation of the late Antique and mediaeval Armenian past. The *History of Tarōn* demonstrates that this was not always a neutral process.

73. Step'anos Tarōnec'i, *Universal history* (quoted n. 7), pp. 754; 756–7.

74. *Ibid.*, pp. 770–800.