ARMENIAN SCHOLARSHIP GETS SHORT SHRIFT

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Category: Opinions

Rev. Dr. Vrej Nerses Nersessian, 28.02.2014

Dear Editor,

I read with surprise the repeated assertion of Dr. Rouben Galchian's that "Armenia and Iran could claim an existence of over 2,000 years… while Georgia became to be known as they are now, only after 2,000 years". The author shows lack of awareness of primary sources. What European cartographers present is not the whole 'truth'.

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For his knowledge of the period in question, he should rely on the Classical Armenian sources such as Movses Khorenatsi, Goryoun, Pavstos Puzant, Movses Dskhurantsi, the Ashkharhatsoyts, and the countless colophons and chronicles of Armenian manuscripts. In Classical Armenian sources the name for Georgia is **Վիրք** , the name of the country from which derives the modern Armenian name **Վրաստան** . The English name Georgia is used in modern cartography to refer to the geographical territory K'art'li and for united country, Sak'art'velo, the Armenian of which is **Virk'**. None of the maps the author is referring to have the name Hayastan or for that matter Iran. Do we then conclude that Hayastan and Iran did not exist? Of course they existed. They were called Armenia and Persia respectively.

Khorenatsi says, "For whilst he assembled his legions of Atrpatakan, he summoned the powerful mountain peoples of the Caucasus and the armies of Albania and Georgia and descended into Mesopotamia", or 'The Albania and part of Georgia joined forces with all the mountain peoples and invaded the land of Armenia in great force".

Movses Dskhurantsi in his History of the Caucasian Albanians (English translation by Prof.C.J.F.Dowsett,1961) chapter 14 is headed by 'A short account of St. Gregory, the Illuminator of Armenia…as catholicos of Albania and Georgia , his arrival in Albania'(p.19). In chapter 47, the historian gives an account of the separation of the Georgian Church from the Armenian Church in 608/609 AD

"ի ժամանակս Աբրահամու՝ հայոց կաթողիկոսի, բաժանեցան **Վիրք** ի Հայոց միաբանութենէ" .

Goryoun, the biographer of Mesrob Mashtots, makes St. Gregory the Illuminator's grandson St. Grigoris bishop of '**Virk' and Aluank' .** When referring to the missionary work of St. Mesrob in chapter 21 Goryoun informs "And thus all over Armenia, Georgia, and Albania, throughout his lifetime, in summer and winter" he witnessed "the name of Jesus the Saviour" .

S.T. Eremyan in his magnificent introduction to the 'Armenia According to the while commenting on Ptolemy's *Asiae tabula tertia*, writes "in his map of Sassanian Iran he represents the political divisions, which existed in his time, which included also the Transcaucasian countries, i.e. *marzpanide* Armenia (**Arm**, **Virk'** in order to score cheap points. The author can make a rapid survey of the colophons of thousands of Armenian manuscripts to realize how damaging his type of declarations are to the reputation of Armenian scholarship.

Yours,

Rev. Dr. Vrej Nerses Nersessian