



ASOĻIK

ASOĻIK (or AsoĻnik), “the singer,” the usual name of Stephen of Tarōn, the author of the *Tiezerakal patmuṭ'iwn*, a *Universal History* from the origins to 1004 A.D. Of his life little is known. In his *History* 3.7, Stephen gives a vivid description of the monastic renaissance in all districts of Armenia under the leadership of the Catholicos Ananias Mok'ac'i (946-68). He ends with the names of seven prominent learned *vardapets*, such as Ananias Narekac'i, and adds that he knew personally some of those old men when he was a little boy. The second testimony about Stephen is given in a discourse of Gregor Magistros (1041-57) who speaks of the very old AsoĻik. The same Gregor in a letter quotes a commentary on Jeremiah composed by AsoĻik. Stephen dedicated his work to the Catholicos Sargis Sevanc'i (992-1019). Finally, Aristakes Lastivertic'i, the author of another history up to 1072, tells that under the rule of Gagik I Bagratuni (990-1020), Stephen of Tarōn wrote an admirable book on universal history, from the first man to the death of Gagik. Therefore some scholars think that the portion of Stephen's *History* covering the period 1004-20 is lost.

Stephen's *History* is divided into three books. The author lists his sources in the Preface: the Bible, Socrates, Agaṭ'angalos, P'awstos Buzand, Movsēs Xorenac'i, Elišē Vardapet, Łazar P'arbec'i, Sebēos, Łewond, Šapuh Bagratuni, and John Drasanakertec'i. The two first books do indeed quote those authors. Book III, up to Ašot III's death in 920, is borrowed from Šapuh. The *History* is original only for the period 920-1004, although quotations are not always precisely verbatim. For instance 2.3, quoting Sebēos 25, says that Heraclius destroyed the great Atūr Višnasp in Ganzak and Hedak: the last word remains



unexplained.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Asolik's *History* was first published in Paris in 1859 by K. Shahnazarean. The best edition is that of St. Malkhasean, St. Petersburg, 1885.

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