

## INTRODUCTION

### *Purpose and Scope of the Present Work*

The purpose of this short guide is to acquaint the reader with the present state of research on the ancient Armenian translations of classical texts. It is primarily destined for those, not expert in Armenian, who nonetheless wish to become familiar with the transmission of the classical tradition in Armenia. Such persons will find below a survey of the classical texts translated into Armenian, as well as references to translations of them into modern languages, when available, and to studies in languages more accessible than Armenian. More specifically, in preparing this Repertory we had classicists in mind, who might be curious about the potential contribution of the Armenian versions to the knowledge of the text of the Greek originals. This kind of study was inaugurated exactly a hundred years ago by Frederick Conybeare's works on PLATO<sup>1</sup> and on the Aristotelian texts<sup>2</sup> and has been continued successfully by a number of scholars, notably, in recent decades, by Giancarlo Bolognesi and his students. It is not our aim to present the results obtained by such studies in detail, but rather to direct the reader to the books and articles in which they may be found. Thus we are presenting a bibliographical guide which we hope will fill a void in the *instruments de travail* presently available.<sup>3</sup>

All the texts included in this survey were originally written in Greek. No Latin text is known to have been translated into Armenian in

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<sup>1</sup> Small caps are reserved for ancient authors who are included in the Repertory.

<sup>2</sup> See the Repertory the entries on ARISTOTLE and PLATO.

<sup>3</sup> The older works of Zarphanalian and Anasyan, of course still contain much important information. See [G. Zarphanalian], *Մատենադարան Հայկական Թարգմանութեանց Նախնեաց* (Library of Ancient Armenian Translations), Venice: 1889; H.S. Anasyan, *Հայկական Մատենագիտություն* (Armenian Bibliology), 2 vols., Erevan: 1959, 1976.

antiquity. All the texts except one were translated directly from Greek; the reader will note the curious thirteenth-century attempt to translate *The Elements of Theology* by PROCLUS DIADOCHUS from Georgian. The definition of a "classical" text has been extended for the purposes of this Repertory to its largest conceivable limits, yet it necessarily excludes the largest bulk of ancient Armenian translations, to wit the Bible and Christian theological texts.

No complete consistency could be achieved in the choice of the texts. Thus we include DAVID, the Neo-Platonist from Alexandria, but not Bishop Nemesius of Emesa, the author of a popular treatise *On Human Nature*, although both are Christians and both belong to the classical tradition of learning. DAVID's Christianity barely marks his philosophy, while Nemesius' treatise is more a work of theology than of natural science. Applying the same criterion to Christian adaptations of non-Christian texts, we list the mildly retouched *Sentences* of SEXTUS but not the thoroughly Christianized *Physiologus*. In any case, the reader can make a stricter selection himself and little harm is done by our erring on the side of inclusiveness.

#### *Translations of Classical Works so far Unpublished*

As its title indicates, this Repertory lists only published Armenian translations of classical works. No attempt has been made to go beyond the published texts and studies to search the manuscripts, or even the manuscript catalogues, for additional classical texts. As a matter of fact, such a search might well turn up documents that have not been noted. This may be particularly true in fields such as medicine where little has been published.

Thus, in a recent survey, S. Vardanyan asserts that ancient Armenian translations of Asclepiades, Democrates, Hippocrates and Oribasius existed, as well as of Galen.<sup>4</sup> These have not been published and the authors, therefore, do not appear in the Repertory. Indeed, it appears that of Asclepiades, Democrates, Hippocrates and Oribasius only extracts survive and beyond that simple fact, little is known about the Armenian translations of Democrates, Hippocrates and Oribasius. Asclepiades, however, is quoted for

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<sup>4</sup> S.A. Vardanyan, "Ancient Armenian Translations of the Works of Syrian Physicians," *Revue des études arméniennes* NS 16: 1982, pp. 213–219.

his treatise *On the Four Natures of Man* and a concise and penetrating review of this Armenian translation has recently been published by J.-P. Mahé.<sup>5</sup> At least two treatises by Galen also appear to have been translated into Armenian,<sup>6</sup> yet no information was available to us on the extent and the exact nature of most of the fragments, and, of particular significance as far as Galen is concerned, on the date of the translations and the language from which they were made. Another text with an oblique connection to medical texts, though clearly outside the limits of the present survey, is a recently-published Greek-Armenian dictionary to Galen.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Quotations from Classical Works in Armenian Sources*

Some references to the classical texts or brief quotations from them exist. The *Book of the CHREIAI*, for example, refers to two lost tragedies, *Peliades* by Euripides and *Augê*, also most often attributed to the same author. A markedly Christian collection of gnostic sayings contains a quotation from Euripides' *Cretes*. The first few lines of Pindar's ninth *Paean* as well as some unlocated verses from Aeschylus appear in PHILO's *De Providentia*. A useful overview of such minor finds by Moreno Morani is now available and they are not included in the present Repertory.<sup>8</sup>

#### *Lost Armenian Translations of Classical Works*

Finally, the Repertory provides no entries dealing with classical texts which may once have existed in Armenian but were subsequently lost.

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<sup>5</sup> J.-P. Mahé, "Asclépiades," *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, vol. I *Abam(m)on à Axiothéa*, ed. R. Goulet, Paris: 1989, pp. 618-619.

<sup>6</sup> Some very approximate data may be found in L.A. Oganessian (Hovhannisian), *История медицины в Армении* (A History of Medicine in Armenia), Erevan: 1946, vols. 1-2.

<sup>7</sup> J.A.C. Greppin (ed.), *Bark' Galianosi: The Greek-Armenian Dictionary to Galen*, Delmar, NY: 1985.

<sup>8</sup> M. Morani, "Problemi riguardanti le antiche versioni armene di testi greci," *Autori classici in lingue del Vicino e Medio Oriente*, ed. G. Fiaccadori and M. Pavan, Rome: 1990, pp. 189-198; cf. idem, "Situazioni e prospettive degli studi sulle versioni armene di testi greci con particolare riguardo agli storici," *ibid.*, pp. 39-46.

Collecting references to such texts could be a significant research project in its own right, complicated by the fact that the significance of these testimonies is often rather uncertain. To acquaint the reader with the problems involved, it is enough to quote a well-known passage from Letter 21 of the eleventh-century Armenian scholar Gregory Magistros (see the entries below on EUCLID and PLATO). Gregory claims that he himself translated PLATO's *Timaeus* and *Phaedo*. Moreover, he had access to an old translation of Olympiodorus—also mentioned by DAVID—including “admirable and marvelous poems equal to any philosophical discourse,” as well as to works by “Kalinchos and Andronikos.” The only sure conclusion which can be drawn from Gregory Magistros' statement is that in addition to the *Timaeus* which is preserved, there was an Armenian translation of the *Phaedo* which has been lost. Beyond that, we can only speculate why poems are attributed to Olympiodorus and who Callinicus and Andronicus were.<sup>9</sup> The distortion of Greek names in the Armenian transliteration is often a problem and moreover, we must remember that allusions to classical texts by Armenian authors do not necessarily prove that these texts were available in an Armenian translation. Throughout the Middle Ages, many Armenian scholars knew Greek and could have become acquainted with classical texts by reading their Greek originals.<sup>10</sup>

### *The Character of the Translations*

Almost all these translations display one striking quality: they render the Greek into Armenian in a most literal way, often at the expense not only of the beauty of style, but even of clarity and of the natural flow of the Armenian language. An artificial syntax is created which follows the Greek slavishly, and artificial composite words are calqued after the fashion of the Greek words. These peculiar features characterize what scholars call the “Hellenizing” or the “Philhellene” school of Armenian translations. Not all the translations from the Greek into Armenian, however, were executed in

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<sup>9</sup> See M. Leroy, “Grégoire Magistros et les traductions arméniennes d'auteurs grecs,” *Annuaire de l'Institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales et slaves* 3: 1935, pp. 263-294, esp. pp. 279-283.

<sup>10</sup> Of course, the very witness to the existence of a Greek text in the Middle Ages is sometimes significant in itself, but this matter is well beyond the scope of our discussion.

this style. Most notably, the translation of the Bible is considered to reach an acme of beautiful Classical Armenian and most church literature too, is rendered into good literary Armenian. The *Sentences* of SEXTUS, hesitantly included in the present Repertory, are another example of this sort of translation. Nonetheless, most classical texts were translated into Armenian of the Hellenizing style.

The literal character of Armenian translations, of course, enhances their value for the textual criticism of the Greek originals. This was the main point of Conybeare's pioneering monograph on the Aristotelian texts and of Raabe's reverse translation of Armenian (PSEUDO-) CALLISTHENES.<sup>11</sup> It is further emphasized in many entries below. However, the first comprehensive study of Hellenizing translations as a cultural phenomenon, the definition of the corpus, and indeed their very attribution to a distinct school are due to H. Manandian whose book discusses almost all the texts which we present, even though we do not refer to it explicitly in each instance.<sup>12</sup> Prominent recent contributors to the discussion of the Hellenizing school, include Sen Arevšatyan, Charles Mercier, Giancarlo Bolognesi and Abraham Terian.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> See the entries on ARISTOTLE and (PSEUDO-)CALLISTHENES in the Repertory.

<sup>12</sup> H. Manandian, *Յունարան դպրոցը եւ նրա Ջարդացման Երջանները* (The Hellenizing School and the Stages of its Development), Vienna: 1928.

<sup>13</sup> S. Arevšatyan, "A propos de l'époque de la traduction en arménien des dialogues de Platon" (in Armenian with a French résumé), *Banber Matenadarani* 10: 1971, pp. 7-20; Ch. Mercier, "L'École hellénistique dans la littérature arménienne," *Revue des études arméniennes* NS 13: 1978/1979, pp. 59-75; G. Bolognesi, "La tradizione culturale armena nelle sue relazioni col mondo persiano e col mondo greco-romano," *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Atti del Convegno internazionale sul tema: La Persia e il mondo greco-romano*, Rome: 1966, pp. 569-603; idem, "Traduzioni tardo-antiche ed alto-medievali in Medio Oriente," *Processi traduttivi: Teorie ed applicazioni*, Brescia: 1982, 11-38; A. Terian, "The Hellenizing School: Its Time, Place, and Scope of Activities Reconsidered," *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*, ed. N.G. Garsoian, T.F. Mathews and R.W. Thomson, Washington: 1982, pp. 175-186 (with numerous additional bibliographical references, notably to studies in Armenian by N. Akinian).

Citing criteria which are for the most part stylistic, scholars divide the Hellenizing translations into three or four groups which they arrange chronologically. While on the whole they agree as to the attribution of given texts to one or another of these groups, scholars disagree quite significantly about the absolute chronology of the Hellenizing school as a whole. None of the translations bears a clear date in a colophon or elsewhere. Only very rarely does a quotation from a translated text occur in a more or less securely dated work and provide a *terminus ante quem* for the translation. This situation explains why the chronological frameworks proposed for the activity of the Hellenizing school differ as widely as the fifth-early seventh century C.E. at the one extreme (Arevšatyan) and the late sixth-eighth century C.E. at the other (Terian).<sup>14</sup>

There is probably little point in exposing non-Armenologists to the details of an argument of which the available evidence scarcely permits a resolution. Enough be it to point out that the sixth-century dating—indicated in our survey for some of the texts—seems to provide the best approximation. The major disagreement as to the date of translation of PLATO's dialogues should, however, be noted as a special case (see *Repertory*, s.v.).

#### *Procedures and Transliterations*

On the technical side, we were confronted with the obvious problems involved in presenting bibliographical items produced not only in several languages but also in three different alphabets. The following principles have been adopted for Armenian and for Russian. Authors' names have been transliterated and all titles have been translated. For books the titles are provided in the original language as well, while for articles we give only the translation of the titles of articles. The transliteration of the Armenian follows the system of the *Revue des études arméniennes*.

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<sup>14</sup> In a letter, Dr. M. Shirinian informs me of a forthcoming article by G.S. Mouradyan, "Concerning the Dating of Two Sources of Xorenac'i," in which the latter demonstrates that "Lazar P'arbec'i utilized, both in his *History* and in his *Epistle to Vahan Mamikonian*, some new terms created in the translation of Philo, so that P'arbec'i can serve as a *terminus ante quem* for the latter." [This article since appeared in *Patma-Banasirakan Handes* 4 (130), 1990, pp. 94-104.]

Complete consistency could not be achieved in the transliteration of Armenian, however, for in many cases authors transcribe their names and the Armenian words they quote according to different rules. A major inconvenience which could not be overcome is that the name of one and the same author can appear in a slightly different form depending on the alphabet from which it is being transliterated. For example, "Arevšatyan" and "Simonyan" would appear thus when transliterated from Eastern Armenian, but would appear as "Arevshatian" and "Simonian" if the source were in Russian. Moreover, in trying to locate the book in a library catalogue, the reader might find it under either form. Following normal practice, Armenian surnames ending in *-աւի* are usually given as "-ian," but those using the Eastern Armenian spelling *-յւի* are transliterated "-yan." SMALL CAPITALS mark the names of authors or works which have an entry dedicated to them in the Repertory.

C.Z.