

*Editions:*

Մրրոյ Հօրն մերոյ Մովսէսի Խորենացոյ Մատենադրութիւնք (The Works of our Holy Father Movsēs Xorenac'i), Venice: 1865 (2nd ed.), pp. 341-581; G.S. Mouradyan, Գիրք Պիտոյից (Book of the Chreiai), Erevan: 1993.

*Studies:*

A. Baumgartner, "Über das Buch 'die Chrie'," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 40: 1886, pp. 457-515, with a survey of the contents on pp. 272-274; R. Sgarbi, "Contributo allo studio delle fonti dell' opera *Yalags Pitoyic'* attribuita a Mosé Corenese," *Rendiconti dell' Istituto Lombardo Accademia di Scienze e Lettere* 103: 1969, pp. 78-84; G.S. Mouradyan, "The *Girk' Pitoyic'* and its Greek Exemplar," *Patma-Banasirakan Handes* 1984, fasc. 3, pp. 111-124 (in Armenian); S. Peter Cowe, "Christianizing *Progymnasmata* Surviving in Armenian Translation," *The 17th International Byzantine Congress 1986. Abstracts of Short Papers*, Washington: 1986, pp. 85-86.

The *Book of the Chreiai* (χρείαι), traditionally attributed to the historian Movsēs Xorenac'i, is a systematic introduction to rhetorical theory (*progymnasmata*); it provides definitions of the basic notions of rhetoric and illustrates their use by exemplary speeches. The book starts abruptly with the category of the *chreia* which usually appears in this kind of manual in the third place; hence Baumgartner's argument that the text which reached us had been mutilated by the loss of the first two chapters and possibly of an introduction. Baumgartner shows, moreover, that the theoretical definitions in the manual are a translation from the Greek *Progymnasmata* of the fourth-century rhetorician APHTHONIUS. Nevertheless, he supports the book's attribution to Movsēs Xorenac'i, whom he considers to be the author of the speeches.

The exemplary speeches, which occupy by far the largest part of the manual, are most remarkable, as they feature classical and mythological heroes side by side with biblical figures and situations taken from the New Testament. Classicists know the text for its rather brief references to two lost tragedies, Euripides' *Peliades*, and *Augê*, most often attributed to Euripides as well. In announcing a new study of these "Christianizing *progymnasmata*," Cowe claims that nothing in their contents necessarily indicates an Armenian origin. He suggests that the entire *Book of the Chreiai* might be a translation of a Greek rhetorical compilation which is now lost. According to Cowe, in style the *Book of the Chreiai* resembles the translations produced in the late sixth century by the Hellenizing school. The text is quoted, in any case, in the *History* attributed to Sebēos and thus cannot be later than the second half of the seventh century.

The first edition was published by Zohrabian in 1796<sup>15</sup> and a new edition has been completed by G.S. Mouradyan and was published in Erevan in 1993. G.S. Mouradyan comments, in a private communication, that "although nothing in the content of the book indicates an Armenian origin, as indeed Cowe observes, the great number of textual parallels with Armenian Philo and with some other translations, leads us to conclude that only the definitions were translated from APHTHONIUS, while the *progymnasmata* are original compositions, a large number of them being based on their archetypes by APHTHONIUS."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> J. Zohrabian (ed.), *Մրրոյ թերթողահօր մերոյ Մովսէսի Խորենացոյ Խախակրթութիւնք հոնորական ասացեալ Գիրք Պիտոյից* (The Rhetorical *Progymnasamata* of the Father of History, Moses of Xoren, called "Book of Chreiai"), Venice: 1796.

<sup>16</sup> Communicated in a letter from Dr. M Shirinian, dated May 5, 1991.