

OPEN CHRONICLES · VOLUME 7

The History of Aristakes Lastivertsi

A reader's edition, based on the Open Chronicles source-
faithful translation

Aristakes Lastivertsi (Արիստակես
Լաստիվերտսի)

READER'S EDITION · NARRATIVE

Adapted for modern readers with AI assistance, edited by Paul McMurry.

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Based on aristakes-lastivertsi-translation@1.0.0

Twenty-five chapters and the author's own closing discourse, as the 1963 critical edition prints them. There is no twenty-sixth chapter.

The History of Aristakes Lastivertsi

Aristakes Lastivertsi's history of Armenia between Byzantium and the Seljuks, retold for modern readers

READER'S EDITION

Aristakes Lastivertsi (Արիստակէս Լաստիվերտցի)

Պատմութիւն Արիստակիսի Լաստիվերտցւոյ վասն անցից անցելոց ի յայլազգեան ազգաց որք շուրջ զմեր են

Source

Adapted from the Open Chronicles source-faithful translation of Aristakes Lastivertsi, *The History of Aristakes Lastivertsi* (volume 7, version 1.0.0), and from that translation alone. That translation rests on K. N. Yuzbashyan (ed.), *Patmut'wn Aristakisi Lastivertc'woy*, Matenadaran / Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, Erevan, 1963, printed pp. 21–145, read from page images of that edition.

No Classical Armenian was read for this edition, no page image of the 1963 edition was reopened, and no other English version was consulted. Readers who need Aristakes' every sentence, his textual cruxes, or his 498 back-of-book notes should use the source-faithful translation, which is published beside this one.

- Open Chronicles — Aristakes Lastivertsi volume page
- Open Chronicles — the source-faithful translation this edition is based on

Adapted for modern readers with AI assistance, edited by Paul McMurry

A narrative reader's edition adapted from the Open Chronicles source-faithful translation of Aristakes Lastivertsi's *History* with AI assistance; edited by Paul McMurry. It derives from that translation alone — not from the Classical Armenian, not from the page images of Yuzbashyan's 1963 critical edition, and not from any other English version. Syntax and paragraphing were revised for continuous reading and repeated formula condensed; no episode was cut, and no dialogue, events, motives or scenery have been invented. The author's dating, his numbers, his errors and his invective stand as he wrote them, and his scripture is translated from his own wording rather than replaced with a modern Bible's. Prefer the source-faithful translation for citation of exact wording.

Based on: `aristakes-lastivertsi-translation@1.0.0`

Limitations

Neither this edition nor the source-faithful translation it derives from has undergone independent Armenian-language review, philological review, or external scholarly peer review, and neither should be cited as though it had. This is a derived narrative edition, not a second independent translation from the Classical Armenian; prefer the source-faithful translation for citation of exact

wording, for the textual cruxes, and for the notes, none of which are carried here. Completeness rather than length is the integrity claim: all 26 units and all 170 running paragraphs of the frozen source-faithful edition are represented across 175 reader paragraphs, with 0 episodes cut, 0 paragraphs lost and 0 paragraphs invented, and a paragraph-level map traces every paragraph in both directions. On length, this reader's edition is about 5% shorter than the source-faithful text (41,669 running words to 39,579), against the 10–20% the Open Chronicles standard sets for the form. The shortfall is recorded rather than closed by cutting: the source-faithful translation was produced by a process that removed padding before adaptation began, so less was available to condense than the guideline assumes, and reaching the figure would have required cutting episodes or compressing the author's argument. Neither is permitted. Two presentation differences from the frozen base are disclosed and touch no substance: about 47 reverential capitals on divine pronouns are lowercased, the frozen edition having capitalised them inconsistently; and one terminal full stop sits outside its guillemets at Chapter 18, the only one of the work's 149 quoted spans not carried character for character. Chapter numerals and headings are transmitted source text and are kept rather than replaced with modern scene titles; the closing Discourse of Commemoration is unnumbered in the source and unnumbered here, and there is no twenty-sixth chapter.

Suggested citation

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A Note on This Adaptation

This is a reader's edition. It is based on the Open Chronicles source-faithful translation of Aristakes Lastivertsi's *History*, and on nothing else — not on the Armenian, not on the page images of the 1963 critical edition, and not on any other English version. Where the two editions differ, the source-faithful translation is the one to cite.

What changed and what did not

Sentences were recast for continuous reading: long periods split where every logical relation survived the split, participial chains resolved into finite verbs, doubled phrases reduced to one where the second added nothing. Paragraphing was adjusted five times across the book, each time recorded in the paragraph map.

Nothing else changed. **No episode was cut. No dialogue, motive, scene or detail was invented. No number, name, date or era-year was altered.** Aristakes' scripture is his own — where he quotes loosely, conflates two verses, or misremembers, the wording follows him rather than a modern Bible. His invective stands at the strength he gave it. So do his errors.

The result is about 5% shorter than the source-faithful text. The corpus standard sets 10–20% for a reader's edition, and this edition does not reach it. The reason is recorded chapter by chapter in the working notes: the source-faithful translation was produced by a process that removed padding before this stage began, so there was less to condense than the guideline assumes. Reaching the number would have meant cutting episodes or gutting the argument, and both are forbidden.

Chapter titles

The chapter numerals and headings are the work's own. They are collated in the 1963 edition's critical apparatus, which makes them transmitted text rather than a modern editor's labels, so they are kept as they stand — including the heading of Chapter 24, which breaks off unfinished in the printed edition and is left unfinished here. No modern scene titles have been added.

The closing *Discourse of Commemoration* carries no numeral in the source and carries none here. It is the author's own conclusion to his book. There is no twenty-sixth chapter.

Two marks on the page

Guillemets — « » — mark a quotation that the 1963 edition itself sets in guillemets: in this work almost always scripture, and almost always keyed by that edition's editor to a reference at the foot of his page. Straight quotation marks mark direct speech that the edition leaves unmarked and that the Armenian marks by other means. The two are kept apart because the edition keeps them apart, and nothing has been newly marked as a quotation.

One bracketed gloss survives from the source-faithful text, at Chapter 23: **Khach' [Cross]**. It is the translator's, not the author's, and it is left visible rather than absorbed into the sentence.

Words left in Armenian

Azat, nakharar, vardapet, curopalates, magistros, baban, dabekan, litr, amir, caliph, and a dozen others are carried untranslated, as in the source-faithful edition, because no English word covers them without changing what they mean. Where Aristakes glosses a foreign word himself — *a mandator, that is, a letter-bearer* — his gloss is kept beside the word.

Dates are his: *the four hundred and ninety-seventh year of this era of ours*, not a converted year. The source-faithful edition's back-of-book notes give the equivalents.

Review status

This edition, like the source-faithful translation it derives from, **has not undergone independent Armenian-language review, philological review, or external scholarly peer review**, and should not be cited as though it had. What stands behind it is a documented process: every unit of the Armenian verified against the 1963 page images before any English was drafted; clause-level quality assurance; a blind independent audit; comparator collation with no reading adopted; a whole-work terminology audit; and a final Armenian-to-English coverage audit across the printed text.

Readers who need certainty on a particular reading should go to the 1963 edition. Corrections are welcome and are published on the Corrections page.

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Twenty-five numbered chapters and one unnumbered authorial colophon, as the 1963 edition prints them. There is no twenty-sixth chapter. The numerals and headings are the source's own, not modern scene titles.

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Principal Figures

Everyone here appears in the *History*, and every description below is drawn from what Aristakes writes about them. Where he gives two accounts and chooses neither, both are listed. Where he is the only source for a claim, the entry says so.

The author

Aristakes Lastivertsi — a *vardapet*, a teacher of the Armenian church, writing in the generation that watched the Armenian kingdoms pass to Byzantium and then fall to the Turks. He says he saw some of what he records with his own eyes, names Arcn and the mountain of Smbat as the two places he witnessed, and twice stops to say his hands shake and he cannot carry his pen forward. He never names himself in the text.

In Constantinople

Basil — emperor at the book's opening, in the twenty-fifth year of his reign; campaigns east three times in Chapters 1–4, takes the Bulgar lands, defeats Georgi of the Abkhaz at Shghpha, and dies after fifty years, crowning his brother from horseback in the sight of the city. Aristakes uses him afterwards as the measure other emperors fail: *no enemy dared enter his land*.

Constantine, his brother — four years; peace-loving and generous, in Aristakes' account, and blinds Komianos of Vaspurakan a year after his conspiracy.

Romanus — married to Zoe and made emperor by Constantine; asks who the monks on the mountain of Seaw are and is told they pray for him, and answers that he has no need of their prayers; has the bishop of the Syrians shorn, paraded on an ass and sent to the mines; is beaten on the road by a force of Tajiks a fraction of his own; and is held under the water of his bath by his attendants, the queen consenting.

Michael — an obscure palace servant before his reign, and by Aristakes' account one of those who drowned Romanus. Tormented by a demon for the seven years and eight months of his reign; Aristakes gives three explanations for it and settles on none.

The caesar, Michael's sister's son — adopted by the queen, crowned, exiles her, is deposed by her sister Theodora and the city, blinded, and reigns six months in all.

Constantine Monomachos — thirteen years. Aristakes charges him with spending on women the money owed to the cavalry, and dates the ruin of the east to that.

Theodora — daughter of Constantine, and in Aristakes' phrase *the she-lion, roaring in her den with a beast's savagery*. Offers the kingship to any prince who will take the east, and rules two years herself when none answers. Buys off the Sultan with gifts; names an aged palace official king on her deathbed.

Komianos — a commander who gathers troops, refuses the emperor's offer of peace and of the curopalates' authority, wins a battle Aristakes calls the worst slaughter in one place among the Romans, and is made emperor with the patriarch's backing.

Diogenes — *the sixtieth from the great Constantine by the reckoning of the kings — a little more or less*. Splits his army, refuses to wait for the rest of it, and is taken at Manazkert when one division changes sides. Released by Alp Arslan; blinded and killed by his own people afterwards.

In Armenia

Gagik son of Ashot, of the Bagratuni — king at the book's opening, *a mighty man and victorious in wars*, who dies in old age and leaves the kingdom divided between two sons.

Smbat, called Yovhannes — the elder son, *ample in body and exceedingly fat, but in wisdom, they say, greater than many*. Receives Ani; is ambushed asleep on

the road; wills his cities to the emperor after his son Erkat' dies young.

Ashot — his brother, *stout-hearted and a lover of war*; goes to the Roman court for troops and returns stronger than any before him.

Gagik son of Ashot (the younger) — made king at Ani by Vahram and some thirty *azats*; goes down alone into Sargis' camp to take him; is lured to Constantinople by oath and by the cross, refuses to trade Ani for Melitene, and never returns.

Sargis — an *azat* who takes the treasures of the royal house and the pomp of reigning, is spared by Gagik as Saul spared Agag, and is later the voice that persuades Gagik to leave the city.

Vahram Pahlaw — *a mighty and renowned man, in piety exceedingly lofty, so that no one was his equal*; refuses Sargis, makes Gagik king, and dies with his son at the gate of Dvin.

Grigor son of Vasak — deeply versed in scripture; surrenders the key of Bjni and his whole inheritance to the emperor and receives the office of *magistros* and lands in Mesopotamia.

Dawit' Senek'erim — gives Vaspurakan to Basil for Sebastia; joins the rebels against Monomachos and then kills their chosen king himself.

Patriarchs of the Armenian church

Sargis — holds the throne at the book's opening; trained on the island of Sevan; dies and is buried at the monastery of Horomos. He is also the patriarch who unfrocks and brands Yakobos.

Petros — ordained in Sargis' lifetime; blesses the water at the Theophany in the emperor's presence and light shines from it; carries Yovhannes' testament; later gives the key of Ani to the emperor for a price, and is arrested at Arcn on the day of the broken chrism-vial. Aristakes records that he was *a great lover of treasures, for which many reproached him*.

Khachik — Petros' sister's son and successor; refuses to accept a tax on the sea under questioning and threats, and is released without it after three years.

Samuel — patriarch in Mananaghi; burns the Tondrakian farmsteads, brands six of their teachers, is arrested on Vrvr's accusation, and is the bishop the crowd crosses the flooded Euphrates for.

Beyond the frontier

The Sultan (Tughril) — called in the *History* the death-breathing, blood-drinking beast and man-slaughtering Sultan. Besieges Manazkert for a month, is beaten by a counter-battery, an iron hook and a rider with a jar of naphtha, and takes Artske through a shallow in the lake on his way home.

Alp Arslan — takes Ani in the five hundred and thirteenth year, and Diogenes at Manazkert. Vows privately to release the emperor if he takes him, and does: seats him at his right hand, honours him as a friend, and makes terms. Learning later that the Greeks had blinded and killed him, he wishes to avenge his friend, and dies before he can.

Apusuar — lord of Dvin, son-in-law of King Ashot; beats Asit at the gate of his city.

Khtrik — lord of Berkri; has a pit dug to the measure of a body, the bound prisoners killed over it until it is full, and washes in their blood.

Arsuban — an *amir* whose son Tatul wounded, and to whom Tatul's severed right arm was sent.

The Tondrakians

Aristakes gives the fullest surviving account of this movement. Every description of it in the *History* is his, written against it; no other contemporary account survives to set beside him.

Yakobos — bishop of Hark'; wore sackcloth, fasted and went barefoot; taught that the unworthy should not offer the sacrifice, that the worthy should offer it

three times a year, and that offerings do not help the dead who did not repent in their own person. Twice summoned before a synod and twice shielded by the district lords. Unfrocked, branded with a fox-mark, imprisoned, escaped; refused baptism at Constantinople, refused entry at Tondrak, and died at Muharkin.

Esayi — a monk of Karin who attached himself to Yakobos, gained his confidence, and reported him to the patriarch.

Kuntsik — a monk near Shirni, and the movement's carrier into Mananaghi.

Hranush, Akhni and Kamara — women of a leading family who, in Aristakes' account, held two villages and made them the movement's houses.

Vrver — their brother; before his conversion he built and endowed a monastery under an abbot named Andreas, kept the Lenten fast with the brothers every year, and gave alms. Afterwards he broke crosses in the fields, accused the patriarch Samuel before the royal judge, escaped judgement by becoming the adopted son of a bishop he had bribed, and died of a wasting illness.

Eghia — the royal judge who tried the case; prays at daybreak not to turn aside unknowingly from God's judgments, and then hands Vrver over to the bishop, in awe of Vrver's brother at court.

Episarar — the bishop who took the bribe.

The Lands of the History

Place-names are given in the forms the source-faithful translation uses. Aristakes' own names are kept; modern equivalents are not supplied in the text, and are not supplied here either where he does not give them. Locations below are as the *History* describes them.

The cities

Ani — the Bagratuni royal city, given to Smbat as the elder brother's portion, and the city the whole book circles. Held by a citadel and by the stronghold of **Nerk'i berd**; passed to the empire in the four hundred and ninety-fourth year by a key handed over rather than by a siege; taken by Alp Arslan in the five hundred and thirteenth. Aristakes says the walls were never breached — that the city fell when discord broke out among its own guards and princes and the troops outside came over the wall opposite.

Arcn — the market city near Karin, and one of the two places Aristakes says he saw himself. He describes it before its fall as a city whose merchants built and adorned churches and whose judges declined bribes, and then as a city of bribe-takers and silver-bought priests; the sack came at sunrise and the fire was fanned by wind until the sparks outshone the sun. More than a hundred and fifty parish priests died there by his count.

Karin, also **Theodosiopolis** — the fortified city of the district, rebuilt by an imperial prince who came with a poll-tax; the Sultan climbed a height above it in disguise, looked a long while at its preparations, and turned back.

Manazkert — in the district of Apahunik'; besieged for a month by the Sultan, battle twice a day at daybreak and evening, and held. The battle that gives Chapter 25 its title was fought at its borders years later.

Melitene — a royal city, its merchants *the glorious of the earth* and its buyers kings on ivory thrones. Taken by night and dug out from its foundations over twelve days.

Kars — struck on the night of the Theophany, with the choirs still singing the office. Whoever reached the fortress above the city survived; no one else did.

Urhay — handed to the empire by a widow's servant in exchange for rank and an inheritance in writing, and stormed before the transfer was complete.

Dvin — held by Apusuar; the city at whose gate Vahram Pahlaw and his son were killed.

Artske — in the midst of the sea of Bznunik', with an impregnable fortress beside it. Its people counted on the water and the rock; the water had a shallow place in it.

Constantinople — where Gagik was detained, where the patriarchs Petros and Khachik were taken, and where Yakobos was refused baptism.

The districts

Tayk' — the house whose ruin the book dates from the killing of thirty *azats* at Hawachich and the poisoning of Dawit' the curopalates.

Vaspurakan — the Artsruni land, given up by Dawit' Senek'erim in exchange for Sebastia two or three years before the rebellion against Monomachos.

Basean — the broad plain where the Roman army under three commanders was broken; also the district of the town of Okomi, destroyed twice in the book, on two separate campaigns, both times in winter and once on the feast of the Theophany.

Ekegheats', Mananaghi, Derjan, Khordzean and Handzit' — the upper districts, crossed and re-crossed by raiding columns. Mananaghi holds the mountain of **Smbatay Berd**, the second of the two places Aristakes says he witnessed, and the villages where the Tondrakian movement spread.

Hark' — the district of the bishop Yakobos, and of the market-town of Mankan Gom.

Taron — where Theodoros son of Aharon was prince, and where troops from the mountain of Simn — *called Sanasunk' after the name of their forefather* — destroyed a returning column.

Khaghtik' and **Sper** — the northern limit of the raids; **Chaneti** the western.

Beyond

T'urk'astan — Aristakes' name for the country the horsemen came from. He does not describe it except by what came out of it, and once by asking *what abyss is more unfathomable than T'urk'astan?*

The land of the Persians — his usual name for the power to the east, used for the Sultan's realm as well.

The house of the Greeks, the land of the Romans — the empire. He calls its ruler *king* far more often than *emperor*, and both words are kept where he uses them.

Abkhazia and the Georgians — Georgi, king of the Abkhaz, holds the north; Aristakes distinguishes Abkhaz, Iberians and Georgians and does not merge them.

The Mountains of the Moon, and the great river north of India — where, at the end of Chapter 25, he says the Lord summoned the nations from. He gives no further location, and none is supplied.

The Events Throughout This Land of the Armenians

*Days of torment came upon us,
And afflictions beyond bearing found us.
For the measure of our sins was filled and ran over,
And our outcry went up before God.
All flesh corrupted its way,
And the earth was filled with lawlessness.
Righteousness dwindled, and debauchery multiplied,
People and priest lied to God.
For which cause the foreign-born nations
Estranged us from our own dwelling,
And our glory was turned to corruption.
No breath was left in us,
And we perished in the cutting off of our hope.
Death grew strong and devoured,
And hell would not consent to say, Enough.
The hands of all rushed upon us,
And at the last, in these our days, time did not reckon
The remnant of the chastisement as discharged by the payment of those gone
before.
Successors took the place of successors,
And the yield that keeps alight the breath of life grew scarce.
Those firmly settled in the land, in their own exile,
Were exiled a second time and became outcasts
At the hand of exiles in revolt.
Torn from those they loved, they whom the sword had not destroyed
Were scattered like the stars that are called wandering.
Whereupon in these our days wars awoke from the four quarters:*

*From the east the sword, from the west slaughter,
From the north fire, from the south death.
Gladness was lifted away from the land,
The voices of the lyres fell silent,
The beat of the drums fell silent,
The cries of weeping were lifted up . . .*

And so much for that. It is time to begin the chapters of this history, so that the account may be easy to grasp.

Dawit' the curopalates was a mighty man and a builder of the land, munificent and a lover of the poor, and in truth the boundary of peace; for in his days every man rested, according to the prophecy, under his own vine and under his fig tree. After his death Basil, emperor of the Romans, marched out in the twenty-fifth year of his reign with a heavy force of arms, and, setting his face eastward, came by many halting-places to the district of Ekegheats'. The companies of the azat nobles of 'Tayk' ran out to meet him. Each was honoured with lavishly given gifts according to his deserts, attaining lordship, honour and rank, and they rejoiced greatly. But the prophecy of David, singer of the Spirit, was fulfilled upon them: «In the morning like green grass they shall spring up, in the morning like green grass they shall flourish and blossom; in the evening they shall wither, and dry up, and fall.» For the king passed into the land of Aghori and lodged for the night near the stronghold called Hawachich; and I do not know from what causes the western army, which is called the Rus, and the azat companies fell upon one another. In that same place thirty of the azats died, from among the most honoured.

This did not come upon them unjustly or to no purpose. On the day of Great Thursday they had mixed a deadly drug into the mystery of the offering and given it him to drink, and, choking the blessed one to death, took him out of this life — being weary of his living — for the sake of the promises they looked for from the king. For that cause the just judgement of God required them according to their deeds. From that day to this it has never gone well for an azat of the house of 'Tayk' to come forth and prolong his life; rather they were

despatched by an untimely death. The lofty Isaiah reproves them where he says: «Inasmuch as that people of yours has taken no pleasure in the water of Siloam that went quietly, but they wished to make Rezin and the son of Tabeel their own king — therefore thus says the Lord: I bring upon you the water of the river, the strong and the abundant, the king of the Assyrians and his glory.» And so much for that.

In that same place Bagarat, king of the Abkhaz, and his father Gurgen met him, and the emperor glorified them greatly: he gave Bagarat the dignity of curopalates and his father that of magistros, and dismissed them in peace. He himself went on through Hark' and Manazkert, took up his station, turned back over Bagrewand and came to the city of Ukhtik', taking possession of many districts and fortresses and cities. Over them he set agents and judges and overseers, and returned by his road in peace to his own royal city, Constantinople. This was in the year four hundred and fifty of this era of ours; and the land grew quiet and rested fourteen years.

The king then discharged the cares of the western region, taking possession of the land of the Bulgars, their districts and their cities, which from the beginning of his reign he had not been able with unresting wars to bring under his hand; but now the opportunities fell out to his purpose. For he who held that land — the victor in wars — died his own death, and his sons, because they were not subject to one another, gave themselves up and came out to the king; for «Every kingdom divided against itself cannot live.» So the land of the Bulgars was taken. But the king removed the sons of the tyrant from their inheritance, with their kindred and their nation, and gave them places in the land of the Romans; and the troops of that land he gathered by deceit into one place, as though to give them gifts, and, having taken their number in writing, sent them off into the east on a coming without return — and they, coming, turned these lands of ours into a waste. Woe to their coming into the east, and woe to the place where they passed and turned back! Behold, a nation evil and without pity, a nation bitter of heart and given to striking. It is fitting to say of them the prophetic lament: «Before it a paradise of delight, and after it a plain of corruption.» But let us return to the order of this history.

In the four hundred and sixty-fourth year of our era Bagarat, king of the Abkhaz, died, and Georgi his son reigned in his stead. To him the emperor Basil wrote a decree in this form: *What I gave to your father as a gift out of the curopalates' portion, give up; and be prince only over your own patrimony.* He did not accept it; rather, grown proud in his boyish years, he made a contrary answer: *Of that which my father has held by authority I will not give even one house to anyone.* The emperor, hearing this, sent an army to master the land by force. Against them near the great town of Ukhtik' came the brave men of Tayk', who turned the armies of the Romans to flight; but they did no wrong to the city or to the other inhabited places. This was the beginning of the ruin of the house of Tayk'.

Concerning the Kingdom of the Armenians

At that time the land of the Armenians too had a king: Gagik son of Ashot, brother of Smbat and Gurgen, of the line of the Bagratuni, a mighty man and victorious in wars, who held this land in peace. In his time the orders of the church grew resplendent and the children of the covenant of holiness were illumined; in his days «The earth was filled with the knowledge of the Lord, like many waters that cover the seas», according to the prophet's foretelling. For lord Sargis held the throne of the patriarchate, nurtured in the bosom of the church and trained in monastic asceticism on the island of Sevan; by the grace of God they seated him according to his worthiness upon the throne of our Illuminator, and living by that same one's rules he brought his life to completion in good contests.

There were vardapets in that time: Sargis and Tiranun and Yenovk', vardapets of the catholicosate; Samuel, abbot of the monastery of Kamrjats' Zor; Yovsep', head of the monastery of Hndzuts'; Step'annos Taronets'i, who composed the books of universal history in a marvellous arrangement, beginning from the first man and bringing it to its full compass at the death of Gagik — of whom this present history treats; Yovhannes from the same district, called by the added name Kozern, who wrote the books of the faith; Grigor, exceedingly wise in words; and many others, in whose days the horn of the church was greatly raised up by orthodox confession. But those who looked upon us with a grudging eye, their eyes cast down by these men's vardapet contests, went creeping like mice into the holes of the walls. And so much for that.

King Gagik governed long and became worthy of good remembrance, and ended his life in deep old age. His sons succeeded to the lordship: Smbat, whom they called Yovhannes, and Ashot his own brother. Smbat was ample in body and exceedingly fat, but in wisdom, they say, greater than many; Ashot had a well-ordered build, stout-hearted and a lover of war. The two fell out over the

portions of the land and came to need right and judgement. Georgi, king of the Abkhaz, won them over to peace: to the two-named Smbat, as firstborn, he gave the stronghold Ani and the districts about it, and to Ashot the inner part of the land, which looks toward the Persians and the Georgians.

Smbat agreed and turned back toward his own city; and halting on the road because of the heaviness of his body, he slept without care. But one of the princes on Ashot's side stood to plead before Georgi: *Shatik is my native place, which Smbat has unjustly carried off from me*. Stirred to a stern rage, Georgi sent troops after him, and they poured suddenly upon him, and he could not mount his horse. The princes behind him turned valiantly to flight and set up along the road many heaps of the corpses of their pursuers, as far as the gate of Ani. Turning back from there, the pursuers stripped the churches of the catholicosate of their ornaments; and drawing out the nails of the crosses they said in mockery: "We will carry them off and make crescents for the horses." For which, at the fitting hour, God the just judge requited them by the hand of the Romans — which we shall tell in its own place. Smbat they seized and took to Georgi, who kept him in custody and then, when he had taken three fortresses, released him.

As for Ashot — the magnates about his border had unjustly carried off many of his places, and he could not endure it — he left the land for the court of the king of the Romans. Finding favour there, he asked for troops as a help and passed with them into his own land; and with success coming to him from God he took possession of many districts and fortresses and grew stronger than all before him, so much so that many of the magnates left their patrimonial places to him and gave themselves up in obedience of their own will. Up to this point this history is pleasant to us.

But in the year four hundred and sixty-seven of this era of ours the emperor sent a certain Nicomedian prince, who laid a poll-tax upon this land of ours and, gathering a multitude of men, made a beginning of building Theodosiopolis anew.

In the year four hundred and sixty-eight lord Petros was ordained to the catholicosate in the lifetime of lord Sargis. In the year four hundred and seventy the emperor again marched out with a heavy army into the east and halted in the Broad Plain of Karin, and sent envoys to Georgi, ruler of the Georgians, that he should come into obedience. A bishop too, Georgian by nation, whose seat was in the city of Vagharshakert, went out to meet the king and gave assurance: *When you come out to Ekegheats' or to Karin, he will come to meet you.* Resting his confidence on that, the king waited, moving from one lodging to another. But Georgi would not come at the summons, for many of his own people were casting fear into him: *When he sees you, either you die or he makes you a prisoner, and you will not attain to your honour.* The king passed into Basean and sent two and three messengers, for he greatly wished to accomplish his journey in peace and that the land should remain in its prosperity. Then, the messengers spent, he gave command in anger to destroy with fire and sword and captivity the great town called Okomi and the villages and farms about it within that portion, and its captives he commanded marched off to the district of Khaghtik'; and he himself passed through Basean to the district of Vanand, to Karmir P'orak.

But Georgi, finding the fitting hour, came down upon the city of Ukhtik' and commanded his troops to burn its beautiful estates and carry off its goods as plunder — but to do no wrong at all to any man. Hearing this, the king was roused to anger more than ever and turned back against him; and the armies met near the lake called Paghakats'is and struck at one another with a terrible din. So that from the flashing of the swords and the glittering of the helmets lightnings of fire fell about the mountain, and from the clashing of the swords sparks broke off and fell to the earth. Looking on, even the king himself marvelled at the valour of the fighters; for as the torrents of rivers strike against a rock, so the armies of the Romans, striking against them, kept turning back on their heels. In that place the great prince Rat died: his horse met with marshes and could not get through, and the sword came upon him; and the killing of that praiseworthy man brought great mourning upon the house of Tayk'. Georgi made himself secure with his troops in the stronghold of the Abkhaz; and the king sent troops into the four quarters of the land, loosed raiding parties, and

gave stern command to have no mercy on the old man or the young, on the child or the one of full stature, on man or woman, nor at all on any age whatever; and with this undertaking he tore down and destroyed twelve districts.

In them was to be seen a sight pitiable and worthy of many tears. The high-vaulted mansions of royally built halls, raised with vast expense and by the ingenuity of craftsmen for the wonder of those who beheld them and the glad enjoyment of those who dwelt in them, burnt with fire and fell and were overthrown, and those who were their lords lay sword-slain beside them. Alas for this history, alas for that evil deed! How shall I, poor in knowledge and duller than all men, set down in writing the things that happened at that hour, or lament our miseries as they deserve? These things belong to the spirit of Jeremiah, who knows how to frame laments to match the misery. But we in few words set up as a monument these long matters, this history, for the hearing of the ears of the generation that is to come; so that the sons who shall be born may rise up and tell it to their own sons, and may not forget the works of God, who requites with a just balance all who turn aside from his ordinances, according to the words of Job: «He shall requite, he says, in the sight of those who hate him, and shall not put it off.»

Now come, reckon up for me what was done at that hour: the honoured and venerable grey hairs of the old men steeped in blood and in what is past enduring; the young men cut down by the sword; the countless that had eyes, whose lamps they darkened. I think these things passed over them fittingly, in return for this: that they drew out the nails of the royally stamped sign at the door of the holy cathedral, and said in mockery that they would make crescents for the horses. By this right it passed over them, and the bitter sight that goes with it. Azat women went out into the public square, the veil taken from their heads, and shamelessly, in the face of the sun, they fell into open shame; and those who on foot would scarcely go to visit the sick or to places of pilgrimage now walk bare of head and foot before their captors, stripped of their ornaments, fallen from honour, given over to a myriad of dishonours. As for the suckling children: some they took from their mothers' arms and dashed against

the stone; others they pierced with spears in their mothers' arms, and mingled the blood of the infants with the milk of the mothers; and some they flung down at the crossings of the roads and slaughtered them one and all under the hooves of the horses. O God, that forbearance of yours at that time! O the merciless commanding of the king! Yet for all this his anger was not quenched, but his hand is still lifted up, to add yet other evils on top of this one. And by this work, having made the well-built land empty of men, he kept it waste and desolate until the coming of winter.

But I do not know in what manner all this passed over them — whether according to an order of chastisement, or because of the multiplied impieties of the inhabitants of the land, or because of the savage manners of the western troops, gathered out of barbarous nations. The king returned to his winter quarters, the mild parts of Pontus, and lodged in the district of Khaghtik'. The patriarch Petros came after him, met him on the days of the great feast of the Theophany, and was made much of and honoured.

Now on the day of Illumination — on which it is the rule for Christian kings and princes who stand in piety to make themselves equal with the leaders of the church, and to go down on foot into the waters, and there to accomplish the mystery of the Lord's baptism — when the day came round, the king commanded the patriarch Petros to bless the water according to this canon of ours, and the bishops of the Romans according to their own. And as the patriarch poured the Lord's oil into the waters, jets of rays of light suddenly shone out of them, which all alike saw; and they glorified God, and the horn of this our faith was raised up. Honoured with still greater honour by the king and the officers, Petros returned to his own house. But it was there that the writing and letter of the ruin of the Armenians came to be; for Yovhannes had given the patriarch a charge: *Write a writing and give a testament to the king, that after my end I may give him my cities and my lands for an inheritance.* For he had no son to bear the crown of the kingdom, his son Erkat' having died early and not come to his father's dignity. The king went on to the winter quarters in the places said before; and the troops sold the captive people off into distant nations.

In these same times the holy and worthy patriarch lord Sargis passed from the world, and his tomb is in the monastery of Horomos.

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How the King Turns a Second Time Against the Land of Tayk', in Which the Troops of the Iberians Were Defeated

The emperor ended his winter quarters in the mild country of Pontus, and when the season that brings the spring came on he marched again by that same track against Tayk', and through many stopping-places encamped in the district of Basean. Now many of the princes of the Romans — men the king had cast out of honour and authority, time after time and on one pretext after another, and who were roaring like lions in cages — found here a fitting hour and gathered into one place. Taking evil counsel among themselves, a counsel they proved unable to make good, they resolved to rebel with one accord and set up as king whomever they should wish. Then they brought it into the open and encamped in the broad plain, where a countless multitude gathered, and began to thrust the royal dignity upon one another. Then, all being of one mind, they laid hold of the son of Phokas, whom they called Crooked-neck, who because of his father's offences had long since fallen from the honour of authority. He did not consent; but they did not slacken from their demand, and by force prevailed upon him until he took it upon himself.

When the emperor heard, he fell into a great perplexity and took refuge in the strongholds of a fortress called Magdat — for this is an old custom of the house of the Greeks. I do not know whether these are the divine ordinances, that it is not right for servants to rise against their lords, or whether it was at that time a particular grace granted to the king. This I know for a certainty, and I saw it with my own eyes: that those who rose up against him went out of this life by a laughable death. So, at the first, in the beginning of his reign, Vard who is called Siklaros rebelled and drew the Romans after himself — very nearly the whole of them, every one — so that the king had to ask for troops as a help from the curopalates of the Georgians. With these they struck the usurper and drove him

out of the land a fugitive, and he fell into Babylon, into the city of the Chaldeans. Then, after him, his namesake Phokas sickened with the same sickness and ruled all the East for seven years. And he, crossing the sea by night with four thousand men and no more, fell upon the rebel's troops in their tens of thousands; and out of so great a multitude not one man died but the rebel himself, and he outright. His head being cut off, he ordered the trumpet of peace sounded; the war ceased, each of the troops returned to his own home, and the king himself entered his own city Constantinople in great victory.

In the same way here too nothing was drawn out long for them — a thing built in childish play, or a building upon sand, which, when the floods beat against it, straightway fell and was overthrown. For Dawit', called Senek'erim, being pressed by the Persians, gave his ancestral inheritance, the house of Vaspurakan, to the emperor Basil, and received in exchange the city of Sebastia with its districts round about. This was done not at a distant time but two or three years before, and from that time and thereafter the Romans ruled the East. This man was at that hour in the counsel, of one accord with the rebels and trusted among them; and suddenly, like a man roused out of sleep, or like a strong man shaking off his wine, seeing the unseemliness of the deed, and because there was no other means whatever of thwarting the evil confederacy — then, on a certain day, at an hour that was not looked for, they took the man they had named king and went out beyond the camp as though for confidential speech; and suddenly, taking up a sword, he killed him. He cut off the head and speedily conveyed it to the king by his servant.

The people, when it had so fallen out, went out man by man, hurrying to reach their own houses unnoticed; and at once all their counsels were brought to nothing.

The king, seeing the head of the usurper, ordered it raised upon a pole in the sight of the whole camp; for there were many who, though they went after the king with the running of their feet, were of one accord with the rebel in word and in counsel. This he did according to his own deep wisdom, so that, seeing it,

they might stand off from their vain counsels and set their hearts straight toward obedience.

After this the king went down with his troops into the broad plain of Basean and sent horsemen from among the heathen troops to take the rebel Phers captive; and he himself marched to the far end of Basean, to the place called Salk'oray, and having thrown up a rampart with a deep ditch round about the camp, halted there a month of days, or longer still.

Those sent by the king seized Phers and Andronike his son-in-law and fellow in counsel, and brought them as far as the stronghold called Khaghtoy Arich at the far end of Karin; and having halted at the farmstead facing the fortress, they brought Phers and Andronikos forward and cut off their heads. For the king had given that command, because these men in their rebelling had become confederates of the Abkhaz and had promised to give him, as far as that place, land for his portion — because in an earlier time Dawit' the curopalates had held that place, yet not as his ancestral inheritance, but as gifts to him from the king on account of his single-minded obedience. And whereas he had promised that after his own death he would give his district to the king, they took no account of that, but were lavish with what was not their own. For that reason the king commanded there that their heads be taken off.

Concerning the Last Battle, which was at Shghpha

During the days the king stayed at Salk'oray he was demanding from Georgi three fortresses with their estates, which Gurgen had unjustly taken out of the curopalates' portion; and he kept sending envoys, writing in gentle words: "What is not your ancestral inheritance, let go; and remain in peace within your own portion; and do not obstruct my road that runs into Persia." But he did not consent. Afterwards the king sent Zak'aria, the bishop of Vagharshakert, whom we mentioned a little earlier; and he beguiled Georgi with persuasive words, and Georgi consented and wrote to the king that he would give what was demanded. Zak'aria took the letter and turned back rejoicing.

When he had gone one day's journey, to the halt where he was to lodge, couriers came hurrying after him in search of the letter, for the fool had repented; and they took it and went back. But the other went on, met the king, and reported what had happened. Then the king asked about the troops, and whether they were equipped for the contests of war. Zak'aria answered and said: "He has troops in such numbers as no one else, mighty in strength and ready to give battle." Hearing which, the king, moved to anger, said: "You too have come from among the rebels — you are putting me in fear." And he ordered him marched off to Constantinople, saying: "Go, stay there, until I come to you a fugitive." And he ordered those conveying him to cut out his tongue. He went, and returned no more to his own place, but remained there until his death.

After this the king left Salk'oray and marched with his troops to the former place, called Shghpha. Learning it, the Abkhaz — while they had not yet pitched camp and made themselves safe behind a palisade — worked a stratagem after this fashion. He sent as envoy a chief man among his own bishops, and came on himself behind the envoy with his troops, so that, falling upon them unprepared, they might turn them to flight with terror. These came at speed on horseback, each outstripping his fellow, not after the manner of war but as

though for plunder and pillage — just as in ancient times, in the days of Joram, the Moabites came against Israel and were struck down by the sword of bitterness, so it befell these also. For, having charged recklessly upon the horses, and failing in strength from the weight, the iron-forged arms and the long gallop at speed, the troops of the Romans took them into their midst effortlessly, on the instant, and cut down a countless multitude. Those who remained became fugitives together with their king and took refuge in the stronghold of the Abkhaz; and the troops went after them and cut them down until the setting of the sun. Then the king ordered the heads of the slain gathered into one place and one dahekan given to each who brought them; and they searched through all the borders and gathered the heads of the fallen before him. And he ordered them set in heaps along the road, for the astonishment and the terror of those who saw.

After this, when Georgi saw himself fallen away from all hope, he entreated the king for peace. Hearing which, he had compassion on him and wrote him a letter after this pattern: "Do not suppose," he says, "that because I have overcome you I am demanding anything more of you than before; only give me my patrimony, which the curopalates had given me, and give me your son as a hostage; and for the rest there is peace between me and you." Persuaded by this, he consented; and the king set princes over the district, and they divided it house by house and village by village and farm by farm, as it had been at the first. King Basil took the hostages and promised to send them back after three years; and he himself marched round about Armenia, encamped in the broad plain of Her, and ordered his troops to cut down the orchards of the city. But the man who was prince of the city begged to serve the king with tribute and remain in obedience to him.

And while he was of this mind — the whole land of the Persians, one and all, lay in fear, beset with terror, and they were seeking means of deliverance — the heavens of a sudden thickened and torrents of rain poured down; then a biting north wind turned the rain to hail and snow and ice and covered the face of the earth with thick-massed drifts. The season itself lent a hand, since they had come well on into winter. As the snow deepened and the frosts hardened, the

droves of horses and mules grew numb and could not stir. As for the footmen among the troops, from the bitterness of the frosts the ends of their feet and of their hands, as though burnt with fire, were severed and dropped away; and the cords of the tents and the pegs, bound fast to the ground by the violence of the bitter visitation, remained immovable. And this, as it seems to me, was the requital of their pitiless sword, which they had brought upon the Christians; for though those were delivered up because of their sins, it was for these to show mercy — as God said also to the Babylonian: «I delivered my people into your hand, and you did not show mercy upon them.» For that reason they were tormented with bitter frosts, and not upon high mountains but in the deepest plains and in places exceedingly warm, in the sight of their own enemies — just as in Moses' time Egypt was struck with hail and with hoarfrost, which was not according to the nature of that land; whence the barbarians knew plainly that the hand of the Almighty was making war upon them. So those who held out by force and strength mounted the horses together with their king, and, harried by the frosts as though by enemies, taking no care at all for their goods, went across into the district of the Artsrunis. Seeing which, the city made a sudden sally, and rushing upon them with great joy they were filled with plunder — horses and mules and tents and the rest of the baggage, which the others had not been able to use, being hindered by the cold. But the king, reviled by the plunderers, knew plainly that the hand of the Lord had delivered the Georgians into his hand, as it is written in the book of Kingdoms: «Not by his own strength,» he says, «is the mighty man strong; but the Lord makes weak the adversary.» Then the king set out with his troops, passed many lodging-places, and reached his own city, Constantinople. After staying three years he sent away the son of the Abkhaz with many gifts; and he himself burned with a mortal sickness.

But since Constantine, his own brother and colleague in the kingship, was in the district of the Nicaeans, the king ordered searchers sent for him in haste. Those who bore the orders gave assent in words yet kept them hidden, for they did not wish Constantine to reign. And when, after many peremptory messages, the emperor came to know their cunning, he ordered his attendants: "Bring me a horse." He rose from his bed, sat upon the horse, and went out from the palace

in the sight of the city. Seeing which, many out of fear went into their darkened houses and mourned. Then the searchers went out and brought Constantine in haste; and when the king saw him he set the crown of the kingdom upon his head and established him king, and gave him charge — as David to Solomon — concerning the troublers of the kingdom, and concerning those who did not wish his reigning over them, that he should not keep them alive; yet not as David, saying, "You shall hunt him down on a pretext." And he himself drew his feet into his bed and failed; and after two days he was taken from among them; and he had reigned fifty years. But at his death also some sign of marvels was shown from heaven: at the evening hour in which he breathed out his spirit, the upper aether was cleft and a flash of fire suddenly fell forth, which — seen by absolutely everyone — foretells, they say, the king's death.

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The Reign of Constantine

After Basil there reigned Constantine, his own brother, four years. Being a peace-loving man and generous, he remained quiet in the first year of his reign, and the land rested from its very great distress; and the princes whom the great Basil had appointed governors of the districts he confirmed in the same posts. But a certain Komianos — a brave man and a lover of war, whom the king's brother had set over the district of Vaspurakan, who showed great valour at the gate of the Persians and became renowned throughout the East — at the king's death cast an evil counsel into his mind and became the confederate of Georgi, to reign in the East. When the Cappadocian troops learned it they banded together and came suddenly upon him, cutting the cords of his tent and casting it down over him; and seizing him and his fellows in counsel they imprisoned them in a fortress and made it known to the king. This happened in the first year of the reign of Constantine, in which the years of this era of ours were four hundred and seventy-five.

The king, hearing it, brought no punishment upon him on the spot, but forbore a whole year until he had come thoroughly to know the matter. Then, when the second year came, he sent an executioner, who darkened his lamps and those of the men with him, about eight in number. Which is greatly worthy of lamentation — how such an honourable man, worthy also of good remembrance, was led astray and fell from his senses; for it was he who brought Archesh with its estates under the hand of the Romans.

When the second year came, the king sent to the East, as overseer of the land, a certain Nikit, a eunuch, who passed over into the district of the Georgians; and with deceitful words drove many of the azats out of their patrimonies and sent them to the court of the king. Seeing them, and rejoicing, he honoured them with great gifts and a princely seat, and gave them according to their deserts villages and towns, by writing and by signet, as an inheritance for ever. But when

the third year came in, Simovn the eunuch went out to the East with many troops — he who held the authority of half the kingdom, which in the Greek tongue they call parekimanos — and passed over into the land of the Georgians. He had no time to accomplish any business, for the evil tidings of the king's death came after him; and hearing it he turned back without delay and went with his troops to Constantinople.

How Romanus Reigned

Basil, mighty among kings and always victorious in battles, who trampled many lands under foot, had no leisure from his manly deeds of valour to take a wife and raise up sons as heir to the kingship, as is the custom of all kings. After him the aforesaid Constantine, his own brother, succeeded. And since he too had no son, but two daughters, he gave Zoe, the firstborn, in marriage to Romanus — one of the officers of the Roman forces — and made him king in his own place; and he himself, by death, hastened after all the earth-born.

This man, in the first year of his reign, mustered an army and made toward the regions of the Antiochenes, intending to march against the city called Halp and lay it waste. On his way he met the mountain called Seaw, and saw there a multitude of monasteries and hermitages of solitaries who, being in the body, bore the likeness of the bodiless ones. They are content with a single goatskin or coat, bearing the likeness of John; except that he was fed with locusts and wild honey, whereas these take an iron mattock in hand and labour to weariness at the sowing of barley, preparing the food that sustains their day. The delicacies and sweet dishes, with the gladdening wine the vineyards pour out, they have left to the lovers of the world. Raised to the summit of the mountain, and fellows in the assembly of the foremost prophet, they speak with God continually.

When the king saw them he asked his men of rank: "What is that multitude of heretics?" And they say: "These are all flocks of men of prayer, who make petition continually for the peace of the world and for the health of your lives." The king, giving answer, says: "I have no need of their prayers; rather, carry off archers out of all the monasteries into the service of this my kingship." For he had unreservedly given his assent to the Chalcedonian definition, being hateful to every orthodox faith. He also brought the bishop of the Syrians to Constantinople and made him a mockery and a laughing-stock, ordering his

beard shorn, and that he be set upon an ass and led round through the squares and the streets and spat upon; and afterwards he ordered him taken away to the mines, where indeed he died. Such a raw-minded man was the king, who did not bring to mind the former kings and their protecting care toward the nations under their hand, but by a command of his own will wished to make innovations in the churches of God, not remembering the Lord's unerring command, that «Everyone who is dashed against this stone shall be broken to pieces; and on whomever it falls, it shall scatter him.» Wherefore the well-deserved judgements of God came upon him from close at hand. For on that very road a force of Tajiks came out, not more than eight hundred or a thousand men, and falling upon the myriad multitudes made slaughter beyond measure; and taking as plunder the treasures of the king and the troops, returned to their own city.

The king, become a fugitive with great dishonour, fell at his horse's headlong rush into the city of his kingship. Brought low from his fierce arrogance, he was able to bring to mind the word of the Davidic song which says, «It is good to hope in the Lord and in the prayers of the saints, rather than to hope in princes and in the abundance of treasures»; for riches are of no help in the day of wrath. And from that time and thereafter he no longer went out from the city of the royal seat until the day of his death.

The Capture of the City of Urhay

The man who was prince of the city — whom they themselves called amir, and who held the inheritance of the place from his forebears — died without a son. And his wife loved one of her own servants, whose name was Salamay, out of a lustful craving, and installed him as lord of the city in her husband's place.

But he, fearing the leading men of the city would not submit to him, sent a trusted servant to Maniak — who then held authority on the frontiers of the Romans and resided in the city called Samosata, which they say was built of old by Samson — that he might make it known to the king, and the king give him authority and an inheritance in perpetuity, in writing and with the royal ring, within the land of the Romans. And I, he says, will give this city into his hands without a battle. When king Romanus heard this he wrote him a letter of consent, made him anthypatos patrikios, and honoured his wife with great and conspicuous honour.

But the townspeople, hearing the outcry and the blast of the trumpets, came out of doors panic-stricken and in turmoil, and heaped up like the waves of the sea they poured over one another. And when they could not make out how the matter would end, those accustomed to the Muhammadan law went out by night to the nearby cities, telling them of the sudden urgency of the crisis. When they heard, a call was given and multitudes of troops assembled; and coming against the city they breached its wall, got inside, and went on making great slaughter. Whereupon many from the city went up into the great cathedral and took refuge there, and others in strong places or in towers. But the besiegers ruined many places with fire, until they cast fire into the holy cathedral itself. And having opened the treasures of the house of the sanctuary — which the former kings of Armenia had laid up to serve the needs of the Lord's temple — and carried everything off in great haste, they went away to their own places.

And from that day to this the city has been brought into subjection by the hand of the Romans.

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The Death of Romanus

The king, worthy of no good remembrance, came forth in the palace on the great Thursday and spoke in public with his troops until at midday he gave out the royally bestowed gifts, each according to his authority. Then, free of the business, he ordered water prepared in a golden basin for him to bathe. And when he had entered the golden pool filled with warm water, the attendants laid hold of the hair of his head and covered him under the water until he was finished out of life, the queen consenting to what was done. He had held the kingship seven years.

The Reign of Michael

Daniel, in that prophecy of his which he saw — whose head was of gold, and whose back and hands were of silver, but whose middle and sides were of bronze: these have passed away. But the legs and the feet of iron mingled with clay — that is the kingdom of the Romans; for it is not carried on by descent, as among other nations a king and a king's son are. He who holds the rule from his fathers and forefathers, that is the iron; but the newcomer, who is not of the royal line, that is the clay. And this happens often among them, as we see even now in this king set before us. He was not of the royal line, nor a king's son, nor by office one of the illustrious officers, but an obscure man among the servants of the palace, for whom the queen conceived a passion with the raging sickness of a harlot; and on his account she had her husband drowned — and they say that this man too was one of the killers. Then, the satanic deed brought to its head, the queen called the chief men of the city and showed them the king dead, giving out that he had died suddenly; and hard upon it she brought forward this Michael, made him king and took him as her husband — whose deeds became plain to all. Having many kinsmen and brothers, he gave the highest authority into their hands. One brother he made magistros, giving him Thessalonica and entrusting to him the lands of the Bulgars and the western parts; another he named demeslikos and sent to great Antioch with the charge of Tachkistan and the southern part. The third, a eunuch and a monk called Ort'anoros, he established in the royal city Constantinople, making him sinklitos and giving all the charge and rights of the palace into his hands.

And he himself, being grievously smitten by a demon, would run even to the churches and to the resting-places of the saints; but I do not know whether this was vengeance for the death of Romanus, who died unjustly, or whether he had the demon-possession from birth. They give another reason too: that because the kingship had not fallen to him he went to the city of the Thessalonians, to a certain woman, a sorceress — as of old in Basil's day the young man's deeds are

told, wrought through the sorcerer — giving himself into the service of the father of all evils. And the queen, inflamed through the demon of whoredom, took him and set him up as king over the lands. But after the deed had been brought to its head, when by the custom of kings he went of necessity to the churches at the feasts of the Lord, the evil demon could not endure it, reckoning him a rebel against itself. And they confirm this by saying that the king often stayed at Thessalonica, where they supposed him to be with the sorceress. But whether it was in this way or in that, still to the very end the spirit that tormented him did not depart from him.

In his reign there was a great slaughter of the Roman troops at the fortress-town called Berkri, in the district of the land of the Artsrunis, which the Persians had seized long ago with its estates and held under their hand. Against it came a certain Kawasilas, governor of Vaspurakan, with a great force; he took the city and stationed horsemen as a guard. Then another succeeded to his command and, taking the rest of the troops, halted farther off at a place called Ardzak, for the abundance of fodder and the other needs of the horsemen. But the lord of the city, whose name was called Khtrik, shut up in the fortress, sent word to the chief men of the Persians. And they, suddenly passing word to one another, gathered and came upon the city and besieged it with a siege-work. But the Roman troops, sunk in dissolute doings and in wine, could not keep guard over themselves. Moreover the Keeper of Israel withdrew his help from them; and setting the sword upon them they cut down about twenty-four thousand men. And this came about not for the righteousness of the Persians, but for the lawlessness of our own troops, who were struck by the sword of bitterness according to the word of the Lord: «He will destroy the wicked with evil.» But the troops that were at Ardzak did not come in time to help them. And the Persian troops, taking the spoil and the plunder of the slain, went off to their own land. On the road, since they had many prisoners, Khtrik gave orders at the halting-place that the ground be dug out to the measure of a body, and that the bound men be slaughtered over the pit until it was actually full; and he went in and washed himself in the blood of the slain, to give rest to the fury of his heart.

At the coming of the second year the king sent other troops; and they, setting up engines and mangonels, began to bring down the wall of the fortress. And those inside, seeing no means of deliverance — for many had actually died — begged the commanders to let them go unharmed to their own land, and that the besiegers should hold the stronghold and its estates. Hearing this, they did as they had learned; and from that day the dominion of the Persians was taken away from that place.

At the beginning of his reign the sun was darkened, in the month of Arats, on the day of Friday, at the turning of the day; and it was the four hundred and eighty-second year of our era. Seeing which, many of the learned supposed that day to be the birth of the Antichrist, or else a foretoken of very great evils. And so indeed it came about, in our own days, into which the narrative of my account leads and carries us: the blows of God's wrath which we saw with our own eyes, and the strange chastisement which came upon this house of the Armenians for our sins. Moreover, in an earlier time, another great sign appeared, which brought great amazement to those who saw it, like the signs of the last destruction of Jerusalem, of which the Savior said in warning: «Those days shall be days of tribulation such as have not been under heaven since the beginning of the creation, and let there be no other.» — in return for this, that they raged against their Lord and Creator, supposing him a man. A man named Ananias, taking his stand in the middle of the city of Jerusalem, would take up a lament with a loud cry and say: "Woe, Jerusalem! Woe, city of blood! The days of your vengeance have come" — and the rest besides, which the great Eusebius sets down in the Ecclesiastical History. So too in our own time, like that man, a certain man unknown to all, without kin, without a place, came out from the eastern parts, passed through Apahunik' and the district of Hark', went down into Mananaghi and to Ekegheats' with a journeying that never turned back, and took these words into his mouth and said them without ceasing by day and by night, in a loud voice: "Alas for me! Alas for me!" — and he said nothing more at all. And if anyone asked him, "From where, or from what district are you? Or why do you say that?" he gave no answer, but said the same thing continually and did not cease. Seeing which, senseless men took him to have

fallen out of his mind; but the wise said: "That *alas* of yours is to be for the whole land." Now let the account come to a stand here; and let us turn back to the order of our history, to the king spoken of before.

He named his sister's son caesar; and having lived seven years and eight months in the kingship, he fell sick and burned with the sleep of death. But the queen, having made the caesar her adopted son, made him king in her husband's place; yet he, instead of thanking her for the good things she had done him, took counsel with his kinsmen to send her into exile to islands far off, so that the rule should be their own — which they actually did. But the queen's sister, whose name was known as Theodora, called the chief men of the city and made known what had happened. Hearing it, they passed word to the western troops and gathered them. And coming upon him by force they demanded, "Show us our queen glorious in the purple, who from fathers and forefathers holds the inheritance of that kingship of yours" — for many supposed that she was in fact dead. Seeing their violence and their concert he was afraid, and ordered the queen brought back in haste from exile. And when Theodora saw her sister she at once ordered the king seized, with their kinsmen and their intimates. But the king, become a fugitive, wished to enter the great church and hide beneath the altar and so be saved. He could not reach it; the pursuers came up in haste, seized him and brought him back, and in an unhallowed place threw him to the ground and darkened the lamps of his eyes, and of him who was called demeslikos, and of many others besides; and she ordered their houses turned to plunder, to devastation, to ruin. At this the whole city was stirred up and made many plunderings, pulling the great and beautiful mansions down to their foundations. And so heavy did the rioting mob become, inflamed for plunder, that they breached the wall of the palace and dug out many treasures from the royal treasuries; and the chief men of the city could hardly bring them to a stop, the sun helping them by gathering its rays into itself.

But the king who yesterday sat upon the golden throne and gave orders to the whole world, today, darkened out of the light, sits upon the seat of vanity and reproach; and those who supposed they would rule sea and dry land for ever, in a single moment lost the saving even of their own selves. And they became,

indeed, as the prophet has it, like grass upon the housetops, which withered before ever it came into the hand; from which the reaper's hand was not filled, nor were the bosoms of the sheaf-bearers filled; and the blessing of the passers-by did not drop into the ears. These are the daily records of the caesar, who reigned six months.

†

The Reign of Constantine Son of Theodos, Who Is Called Monomachos

This man too, by the prophet's vision, is of the portion that is clay; for his father held in the palace the dignity of the *zgayiosut'iwn*, from which all the judges of the realm are sent out. After the unfinished reign of the caesar the lioness roared over her mate in her lair, for no small perplexities besieged her: she had no one of her own worthy of the kingship, and the adopted son she had made lord and king of lands had paid her back the recompense we set down a little while ago. And what then does she do? She goes outside the canonical ordinances, calls this man forward, makes him her husband and seats him upon the throne. Many supposed him her paramour; but I do not know whether it is so or otherwise, since she herself wrote in her edict, as a benefaction to the realm: For the peace of the realm I did not spare myself, and for that reason I made bold to an unworthy deed.

In his first year the son Maniak rebelled, who held the western part, a brave and renowned man, and brought many into league with him. Coming with many troops as far as the gate of the royal city, he so prevailed by the strength of his valour that many submitted to him with unwilling will, supposing him king because of the many advantages falling to him. Twice and three times the king's forces went out and gave him battle, and being beaten came back in great dishonour. But at the last battle, upon which the minds of all were set — since after those victories all had submitted to him and were to make him king — because he did not purpose to reign with God but took refuge in the strength of his own might, sick from afar with Absalom's sickness, drunk with arrogance, he paid the very penalty that was Absalom's. In the middle of the battle line they found him fallen, his soul given over to a mighty angel, with no one having met him face to face. This the Lord and Creator of all has done and does in all wisdom — he who is able to gather in the spirits of princes, being more terrible

than all the kings of the earth; for «Let not the mighty man boast in his might, nor the great man in his greatness, nor yet the wise man in his wisdom» — as we have heard from the scriptures — «but let him who boasts boast in the Lord, and let him do judgement and work righteousness upon the face of the earth.» Such a one is worthy of much praise, and his memory abides for ever, and «his horn shall be lifted high in glory,» as it is written in the psalter. Such was great David, anointed king by the seer and receiving with the anointing a spirit of power and prophecy — who laid hold of the wild beasts and tore them apart like the kids of goats, and, trusting in these, took the field against the unconquerable giant, and shattering his skull with a sling-stone cast him to the ground, taking the reproach from Israel — yet, though often persecuted by Saul, forbore and waited on the command of him who had called him. Not only did he not seek to seize the kingdom by force: when his persecutor twice fell into his hands he spared him as though he were a benefactor, and to the man who wished to kill him he said in rebuke: «Do not lay your hand upon him, for he is the Lord's anointed.» Therefore God, being pleased with his will, said: «I have found a man after my own heart, who shall do what pleases me.» But this man brought nothing of the kind to mind and did not wait on God's command; he wished to reign of himself, without God, forgetting the divine word spoken through the prophet in reproach of the kings of Israel: «Woe to them, for they willed to reign, and not by me» — and the rest besides.

Now it is not that this king is worthy of any praise, and that God had compassion on him for that reason: rather, he honours the throne, and dams up the spring of arrogance — as the Savior said to the Jews when he taught: «On Moses' seat sit the scribes and the Pharisees.» Though these were hypocrites, yet for the seat's sake he commands men to be obedient. Whence great Paul also, instructing with that blessed voice, writes to the Romans: «Let every soul,» he says, «that is under authority stand in obedience; for authority is from nowhere except from God.» He does not speak of the prince but of the authority — that is, of the seat; for it is not that God raises up every prince. And he added: «He who resists the authority resists God's ordinance; and they who resist receive judgement upon themselves» — as indeed befell this man. For he was judged by

no man but by the just judgements of God, who judges everything by weight and by right; his eye is wakeful, and our hidden things are open before his all-seeing knowledge. As blessed David confesses to God: «You have known my last and my first.» So too the Apostle to the Hebrews: «There is no creature unseen before his face.» And the youths in the furnace in praise: «You who sit upon the cherubim and look upon the deeps, you are praised and exalted above all for ever.» — for by the height of the place they made plain the exactness of his knowledge, as the psalmist sings: «The Lord looked down from heaven upon the earth.» And the lofty Isaiah likewise: «The eyes of the Lord are on high, and man is afflicted; and the loftiness of the arrogant shall be brought low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in judgement and in righteousness, and the Holy One shall be glorified.» These things happened at the beginning of the reign of Constantine, in which the years of this era of ours were four hundred and ninety.

But after three years the end of the life of this house of Armenia came; in one year their term here below was finished, and both the true brothers Ashot and Yovhannes, who held the kingship of this land of ours, were taken out of life. In that year the throne of their establishment was shaken, and it never again stood firm; in that year the princes went out from their ancestral inheritance and became sojourners in a foreign land; in that year the districts were laid waste and went as plunder to the house of the Greeks. The settled towns became a dwelling for beasts, and their fields a pasture for wild beasts. Desirable houses, high-roofed and great, became dwellings for *hambars* and *yushkaparks* — the thing the holy prophets lament when they lament the desolating of Israel: «There the hedgehog brought forth her young and reared her offspring without fear.» The solemn places of the monasteries became caves of brigands, and the churches within them likewise — churches which bore the likeness of heaven for their shining fabric, their ornaments of splendid state, and the burning of unquenchable lamps and torches, whose vigour of light, spreading through the air and swaying this way and that, bore the likeness of the sea's waves when in calm seasons, under a sweet-breathing air, the ripples of the swell fold ridge upon ridge; and the vapours of the sweet-smelling incense, wrought by the fire

in proportion to the offerings, present the pattern of the spring mists that settle upon the mountain-tops and hold back the sun's rays. And as for those who dwelt in them, what words would suffice — the sweet-voicedness of the singing, the unceasing psalmody, the readings of the divine scriptures, the solemnity of the Lord's feasts and the honours of the martyrs, the will of men who take counsel with one mind, their straining toward the things of God, and whatever else besides.

Now those that were such, and so many, may now be seen empty and void of everything, stripped and plundered of all their good glory. In place of the sweet-voiced singing, owls and screech-owls are now the precentors; and in place of the psalm-melodies, the turtle-dove and the dove sing there, calling their young with sweet voices, as the prophet has it. The torches are quenched and the fragrance of the sweet-smelling incense is spent; and the table of the holy mystery, once adorned with exquisite ornament like a new bride in the bridal chamber, wearing a crown of glory upon its face, may now be seen — a pitiable sight, and worthy of many tears — stripped of its ornaments, filled with dust, become a lodging for ravens. All this needs a long discourse, and the help of the grace from above besides, that we may aim straight at the mark of this account. Now we must carry it back from the last things to the first.

When the great Constantine fell sick with the sickness of which he died, he gave command to those who stood near him: Go out and seek some man from Armenia, whomever you may find, and bring him here. The searchers found a certain priest named Kiwrakos, guest-master of the catholicosate, and brought him before the king; and the king, seeing him, gave him the letter that concerned the land of Armenia and said: Carry that writing and give it to the king of Armenia; and say: Since, like all who are born of earth, the summons of death has come to us also — take your writing, and give that kingdom of yours to your son, and your son to their sons, for ever. And he himself drew up his feet on his bed and died. But the man kept the letter by him until the time of Michael's reign, and sold it to him for much treasure. Oh, that bitter sale! For how much blood did he make himself a debtor! How many churches were laid waste by that sale! How many districts turned manless and desolate! How many great-

seated towns were emptied of their inhabitants! But let us tell the whole of it in its own place, and carry the account forward as we began it.

When the report of the kings' death reached the emperor of the Romans, and he had found the writing of the Armenian letter, he took thought to seize the city of Ani and the land as his own proper inheritance. But one of the chief azats of Armenia, Sargis by name, put upon himself the pomp of reigning over the house of Shirak and the districts round about; for he had found all the treasures in the house of King Yovhannes and gathered them to himself, having had charge of him at his death. But Vahram — a mighty and renowned man, in piety exceedingly lofty, so that no one was his equal, Pahlaw — together with his kinsmen, with sons and with nephews, some thirty azats, did not make common cause with him; rather, calling to themselves Gagik son of Ashot, they made him king over themselves, and by wisdom and contrivance brought him into the city.

When Sargis saw what had happened he took the treasures of the kingdom and entered the inner stronghold, the citadel of Ani. But Gagik, with manly boldness of heart, went down to him alone and won him over with coaxing words; and he came out and went to the fortress-town called Surmari, yet gave neither that stronghold into Gagik's hands nor the others he held; and there he plotted once more a worthless plot: to put what he held under the hand of the Romans and go over to them. But Gagik went with a few men into the middle of the camp, into the tent where Sargis was, and having seized him entered the city of his kingdom. And whereas he ought to have taken the rebel out of life, he took Saul's counsel: sparing this second Agag, he would seat him beside him in his chariot. For that reason he received Saul's requital — a life more bitter than death.

In those days the forces of the Romans pressed on, and four times one after another they entered the land of Armenia, until they had emptied the whole country of men with sword and with fire and with captivity. When I bring the tokens of those evils to mind, my soul goes senseless and my wits are stunned; and my hands, taken with trembling at the dreadful horror of it, cannot carry

the course of these lines forward — for this account is bitter, and worthy of many laments.

A land which once showed itself to those who passed by like a garden set thick with plantings — green and lovely, full of leaf, fruit-bearing, of splendid state, and happy; for princes sat upon the princely throne with glad-looking faces, and the troops, bearing the likeness of the flower-gardens the spring brings, stood before them in colour upon colour; and there were assemblies for nothing but songs and words of gladness, where the sounds of trumpets and cymbals and the other arts of song filled the souls of those who heard with joyful gladness. There the elders sat in the squares, flourishing with grave and honourable grey hairs; and mothers, taking their children into their arms, their inward parts wrung with tenderness, forgot for the abundance of their joys the sorrowful hours of their travail, fluttering over their new-fledged young after the manner of doves. And what shall I say of the brides in the chamber and the bridegrooms in the bridal bower — the kindling of their love-rich longings, the leaning of a nature that will not be held in? But we must carry our discourse higher still, to the patriarchal throne and the royal dignity. The one, thickened like a cloud with the gifts of the Spirit, dropped down the dew of life through the grace of the vardapet's teaching; and the garden of the Church, made fat by it, bore fruit, while he set those he ordained as wakeful watchmen upon its walls. And the king, coming out of the city in the morning hours — after the manner of a bridegroom out of his bridal chamber, or the daylight morning star which, rising at the head of creation, draws all sight to itself — glittered in his shimmering garments and his pearl-thronged crown and drew every man to gazing and wonder; and a white-maned charger, running before him in gilded trappings, dazzled the beholders with the sun's rays that struck upon it. And the multitude of the troops ran thronging before him, heaping themselves one upon another like the waves of the sea. The desert places too were crowded with companies of monks, so that in a good rivalry they laid hold even of villages and farmsteads and made them dwellings for monks. This, and what is like it, our land had in abundance. And I have written it so that when I tell the contrary I may move all men to tears.

Now the king has fallen from his honour and sits like a captive in a far-off place; and the patriarchal throne, made desolate of its occupant, shows a mournful face, like a newly wedded woman left in widowhood. The horsemen wander without a lord — one man among the Persians, one among the Greeks, one among the Georgians. The noble troop of the azats has gone out from its ancestral lands, fallen from its abundance, and wherever they are they roar like lions' whelps in their lairs. The royal palaces are a ruin and manless. The land that men inhabited is empty of its inhabitants. No voice of gladness is heard at the vintage of the vineyards, and no blessing among the treaders of the winepress. Children do not play before their parents, and the elders do not sit in state in the squares. No voice of weddings is heard, and the curtains of the bridal house are not adorned. All this has failed and perished, and «it shall not rise again,» according to the psalmist's voice. Everything has been turned to lamentation for us, and the robe of gladness into the dark garment of sackcloth. Oh, what ears could bear the telling of this wretchedness of ours! Oh, what heart of stone would not give way with sighing and break with sobbing! It is time for me to mingle some of Jeremiah's laments with our sighing: «The ways of Zion,» he says, «mourn, because there is no one who comes in.» These things were said then, at the desolation of Jerusalem; but they have been fulfilled now.

All this befell the Armenians out of that sale we mentioned a little while ago. This sale seems to me more inhuman than Judas's; for there, though the seller lies under reproach, the thing sold became the price of the redemption of the whole world. As great Peter writes in the catholic epistles: «Not with things of gold,» he says, «or things of silver were you bought and set free from the vain observances your fathers handed down to you, but with the blood of the Son of God.» But here the seller is exceedingly hard and inhuman, for he made himself a debtor for evils so many: the vineyard the Lord planted, which our Illuminator tilled with his fifteen years of sweating labour — he pulled down its fence, threw down its towers, and made it a thing trodden by passers-by, so that «the boar of the forest has ruined it, and the wild swine has fed upon it,» according to the songs of David. Now let the report of all this reach the Lord, and let judgement

upon him come from the Lord; and let us turn this discourse back to our own matter.

In the four hundred and ninety-fourth year of the era Ani was taken — not by the law of war, but by deceiving speech; for by oath and by the cross they persuaded Gagik, at the king's command, saying: Only at the sight of you I shall give back to you that kingdom of yours, and I shall write you heir for ever of that land and that city of yours. And since the wise man swears and the witless man believes — as the sayings of the wise also report; and again, that the words of liars are fat as a quail, and the witless swallow them down. He believed, because of the oaths and the cross — whether out of the rawness of his mind or the God-fearing temper of his character, I do not know — and gave the key of the city to Petros, who then held the patriarchal throne of our Illuminator, committing to him the whole charge of the land with a great compact and vow. He did not abide by the charge of Vahram and the other azats who had made him king, but listened to the prompting of the treacherous Sargis and went out from the city, travelling to the Greeks on a journey of no return — like a fish caught on a hook, or a bird in a snare. When the king had seen him he remembered neither the oaths nor the mediation of the cross, but detained him and kept demanding: Give up Ani, and I shall give you Melitene in exchange, and the districts that lie round about it. But he would not accept.

As this demand dragged on, Grigor, son of the brave Vasak, went out too and came before the king. And since he was a wise man, deeply versed in the divine scriptures as no other was, when he saw they were not going to let Gagik go back to his own place he came forward and gave the king the key of Bjni and all his ancestral inheritance; and being honoured he received the dignity of the office of magistros, and places to dwell in within the bounds of Mesopotamia, villages and cities, by writing and by a golden ring, from generation to generation, for ever.

But the chief men of the city, seated in Ani, when they saw that Gagik was detained among the Greeks, took counsel — at one time to give the city to Dawit' of Dvin, since Dawit's sister was his wife; at another to Bagarat, the king

of the Abkhaz. When the patriarch Petros saw such counsel — that this city was going to go, to whomever it might be — he sent to the man who held the authority of the eastern part, seated in the city of Samosata, which they say was built of old by Samson, and wrote: Make it known to the king — what will he pay us in exchange? — and I shall give this city and the other strongholds that are in this land. Hearing it, he made it known to the king with all speed; and the king satisfied his will with treasures and authority, and by that means they became masters of Ani and of the whole land.

But Gagik remained unrequited with the king; and out of humanity he gave him places, such as he himself chose, which fell far short of the worth of Ani and of the rest of the land. The thanks and the gifts of the giving they paid to the catholicos, from whom they had taken the city. And Gagik, at the king's command, took to himself as wife the daughter of Dawit' son of Senek'erim, and became master of his portion; for Dawit' had died having no other child to be his heir.

Now a certain prince named Asit, who had formerly held the lordship of the east — him too the king sent as his lieutenant over the city of Ani. He honoured the patriarch Petros with measureless honour and brought the land into subjection under his hand; then he marched with many troops against the city of Dvin. But Apusuar, the lord of the city, gave him battle and worked a measureless slaughter at the gate; and there died the great prince of the Armenians, Vahram, with his son — which brought great mourning upon the Armenians. And when Asit had lived in the lordship of Armenia, a certain Kamenas succeeded to his authority, in the four hundred and ninety-third year of this era of ours; and he did not honour the patriarch according to the former honour. He began to accuse him in writing before the king, and by deceits brought him out of the city, saying: The king has appointed you a place of dwelling in the district of Karin, in the town of Arcn. And the patriarch went out and came to this great-seated and royal city of ours, and filled with great joy the souls of those who saw him, who had longed for him. The season was near the feast of the holy Theophany; and when the great feast came he went down with a measureless multitude to the swift-running water from the mountains on

the northern side of the plain, and there performed the mystery of the day in glory, as was fitting. But at the hour of the pouring of the Lord's oil into the water, a certain Tachik man came forward out of the crowd and asked to be baptized. He asked the reason, and learning that the man desired to become a Christian, commanded him to go down into the water. But the bearer of the chrism, standing close by, took the vial in his hand and, striking with his hand, broke it, pouring the oil abundantly over the newly baptized man and over the water; and a fragment of the glass grievously wounded his hand, so that a flood of blood was poured out upon the ground. Seeing which, many put what had happened down to misgiving, saying: This is no sign of good — which indeed was fulfilled that very day. For while they were still at table at the dinner hour, captors arrived and took him, and carried him off to the fortress called Khaghtoy Arich. Then they brought from Armenia his sister's son, Khachik by name, and put him in the fortress called Seaw K'ar; and they remained there until near Easter, when they were brought out and carried to Constantinople before the king; for a certain eunuch, who held a dignity that was half the kingship, had earlier taken with him Anania, the elder brother of Khachik.

Concerning the Slaughter That Took Place in the District of Basean and on the Mountain Called Smbat

In these same years the door of wrath was opened from heaven upon this land of ours, and many troops were set in motion out of T'urk'astan, whose horses were swift as eagles and their hooves firm as rock, their bows strung and their arrows sharpened, valiantly girded, holding the latches of their boots fast beyond loosing. Coming out into the district of Vaspurakan they fell upon the Christians like hungry wolves never sated; and coming as far as Basean and the great estate called Vagharshawan, they ruined twenty-four districts with sword and fire and captivity. This account is pitiful and worthy of much lamentation and many tears. They ran upon them like lions, and like the whelps of lions they pitilessly flung down the corpses of the many as carrion for the beasts and the birds of heaven; and by that same enterprise they meant to come to the city of Karin. But he who set a bound for the sea, saying, «Thus far shall you come, and no further shall you add, but there within you shall your waves be broken», cast a thick darkness before them and held them back from their course. This he does according to his own unutterable wisdom, so that we may be chastised by the fear of them, and they may learn that it was by no strength of their own that they did what they did; but the hand that mightily held them back, that same hand made the road for their going.

He poured out his wrath upon us by the hand of a foreign nation, because we had sinned against him; and again he repented of bringing his own evils upon us, for he is merciful — wherefore he is not angry to the uttermost, nor does he keep his grudge for ever. By the one he is constrained by us, bringing the just judgment into the midst, for he is a righteous judge; by another he comes early to mercy, because he is the father of compassions; and by another he repents over our evils, since he is the God of mercies. So here too he showed us both:

according to the vengeance we had earned he made his hand heavy upon us, then turned and swiftly made his wrath pass by, that he might not destroy us utterly. But we fell sick with Pharaoh's hardness of heart, and with that of the utter fool among his own fellow-sufferers, who, tormented at one time, makes confession and says, «This is the finger of God»; and when the punishment of wrath had passed by, drunk with arrogance he says, «I do not know the Lord, and I will not let Israel go» — until he drew upon himself the last punishment and became a fellow-dweller of the abyssal deeps. But the wretch spoke well when he said that this is the finger of God; for the hand has its completeness for the work in ten fingers, just as there too, beginning from one, he finished the chastisement of the plagues at ten, and then let Israel go.

Now we, when the wrath was bared and the fire kindled and those murderous evils set in motion, were struck with terror at the fear of it, and greatly smitten with trembling we were appalled; but God had mercy, and with darkness he shut up their roads and checked the course of the raids of the lawless. The good became a thing of seeming to us, and in the matter of thanksgiving we were found no men at all. For whereas we ought, through the chastisement of our brothers, to have come to our senses, and gone early to the prophet, and learned from him the chastisement that saves — «Cease», he says, «from your evils, and learn to do good», and the words that come after — and by setting ourselves right to have reconciled God, quenched the punishment that blazes like Gehenna, and brought the uplifted hand down from wrath to pardon: all this passed into forgetfulness with us, and the knowledge of it never dawned in our hearts. Rather, he who was of the lawless did lawlessly, and he who was of the unjust did unjustly, until, after the fashion of wild boars, we drove ourselves upon the sword, bringing the whole of it upon ourselves. It seemed to us that they, being sinners, had borne the punishment, and that we had come off safe by our own righteousness; and there was no remembrance in us of the Lord's own charge, the chastisement that makes wise: «Those Galileans», he says, «whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices — do you suppose that they were sinners above all men? No. But unless you repent, you shall all perish in the same way.» But we were as in the words of Amos, with which he reproached

Israel — those who drank the strained wine, took their ease with sweet ointments, rested upon beds of ivory, and the rest besides, and grieved not for the breaking of Joseph. For God requires that, when he gives some over to torments, those near them should suffer with them, according to that saying, «To weep with those who weep». But they did the opposite: they were of one blood, and did not grieve at the captivity of the line of Joseph; for that cause the prophet set it to a song and laid accusation against them. So it fell out in our own case too.

For in the four hundred and ninety-seventh year of this era of ours, the second year of our captivity, the dregs of bitterness, full of wrath, were stirred once more out of the house of the Persians with a terrible surging; and they poured out over the broad plain of Basean and Karin, and the spattering of that torrent took the four corners of the land: to the west as far as the district of Khaghtik'; to the north as far as Sper and the strongholds of 'Tayk' and Arsharunik'; to the south as far as Taron and the district of Hashtenk', as far as the forests of Khordzean. It halted fourteen days, and spreading like a sea covered the mountains and the thicketed places and seized this land entire — which seems to me to have come out of that unmixed wine which the child Jeremiah, in his vision, poured with a golden cup and gave to drink to kings, to nations, to cities, to princes and their troops; and after all of them he gave the house of Sisak to drink. Behold, the event is the manifest fulfilment of that prophecy. For this house of the Armenians drank of that unmixed wine and was made drunk with an evil drunkenness; it drank, and grew numb and senseless; it drank until it had taken the whole of it into itself; and now it lies fallen at the crossings of every road, naked and shamed, and the passers-by trample it with reproaches. Gone out from its house, made a stranger to those who knew it, removed far from its household and its kinsfolk, a captive and a prisoner to all the nations.

It is time for me to utter that prophetic word: «What the caterpillar left the locust devoured, and what the locust left the young locust devoured, and what the young locust left the devouring worm devoured.» These too are mine, since in us all the words the prophets spoke beforehand have been fulfilled. Now that caterpillar and that locust have gone by; but the young locust and the devouring

worm are these, of whom our discourse has been set out. For at the first time, when the Persians and the other barbarous heathen nations came out and with man-slaughtering butcheries ruined many districts, and taking much plunder and many captives went down into their own land, they became bringers of good news to nations and kingdoms; and inviting them they say, as in the prophet, «Beasts of the wilderness, come, devour this that is in the forest.» And when the next year came, countless multitudes of troops, bowmen and swordsmen, gathered like eagles over food; and with great cheering, haste upon haste, they came out into this land of ours in the month of September, on the feast of the Holy Cross, on a Wednesday.

Here this account of ours is one of lamentations and mournings, and its scenes summon all men to beat the breast. For if the Ninevites, at the threats of the prophet — and that when a single person had entered the city, a man from a foreign land, unknown to them all, and without signs — were so struck with terror that from the king down to the one who sat at the hand-mill the beating of the breast was one and the same for them all, all of them clothed in sackcloth, all in dark garments, all cut off from food, forcing their nature to be lavish in lamentation, and even calling the women who lead the dirge to join their voices with their own: «Perhaps», he says, «God will repent, and his indignation will turn away from us» — how much more is our own case worthy of lamentation, where there were not threats only, but the punishment of wrath came and was carried through to its head, and we were reviled and overthrown and made a spectacle to the world, of which the Apostle too takes up the word concerning the saints, and we have left an evil report behind us from generation to generation. For cities laid waste and houses burned, mansions turned into furnaces, and royally built halls turned to ashes. Men slaughtered in the public squares, and women gone out of their houses into captivity, and suckling children dashed against the stone, and the fair faces of youths withered. Virgins fallen into open shame in the public squares, and young men run through with the sword before the elders; the honourable grey hairs of old men gone amid blood and what is past enduring, and their corpses tumbling over and over. The swords of the enemy grown dull, and their hands failing of strength; the strings

of their bows snapped, and the arrows spent out of their quivers; their own selves grown weary, and their hearts not come to mercy.

O that mercy of yours, God, who have borne so long with the lawless as they bluster over the flock of your pasture! Remember your people, which you acquired from the beginning by the coming of your only-begotten, and redeemed with the blood of your anointed one. Why have you cast us off utterly, God? You were angry in your indignation, and gave us over into the hands of lawless men, harsh and rebellious. Do not remember our sins, and do not turn your face away from us because of our sins; but remember your mighty hand and your uplifted arm, by which you were lord over us, and your name was called upon us. And now, behold, you were angry and we sinned; and for that cause we have gone astray in captivity among many nations, and have all become as unclean things. The winds have driven us away, and there is no one to call upon your name, or to remember to make you his refuge; for you have turned your face away from us and given us over because of our sins. Do not be angry with us for ever, and do not remember our sins even for a season.

Oh, and alas for the dawning of that day! For the light that on the first day came into being in bodiless form from the word of God, and on the fourth day, wrapped about with body, was divided into luminaries — becoming ruler of the day and of the night, and travellers of the world for ever, the one rousing man to his work and the other giving the beasts their liberty — today, at the noon of that day, was changed for us into darkness and became night; and the heathen nation, beast-like, who from of old roared in their lairs, according to the prophet's word, and sought their food from the flocks of God, when that day became night for us came out and spread over the face of the earth, found much prey, were sated, and left leavings for their young for many years. And although in every place prey enough was made ready for them — the land was found before them like a garden of delight full of fruit — yet most of all in the district of Mananaghi, at the mountain called Smbatay Berd; for there a numberless multitude of fugitives had gathered, and of beasts there was no counting. The lawless came upon them, ruined its defences, and going inside laid the sword upon them and slaughtered them all.

There was to be seen there a sight pitiable and worthy of much lamentation. Those who fell into their grip they put to death by the sword; those who fell into rocky places and made themselves secure there they pierced with arrows and killed; and, climbing above the cave, they crushed the heads of many with enormous stones, and the corpses of these, rolling head over heels and heaped one upon another like the piles of woodcutters, filled the ravine below. Woe and alas for the very bitter light of that day! The brave men, armed and boiling with fury, were mustering, and the cowards were fainting; the womanish were losing their wits and the young men playing the bold; but they could find no way out of the business, for on every side the rampart of the enemy had shut them in. There was no love there for those they loved, nor any lament for friends; the father forgot his pity for his sons, and the mother her love for her new-born children. What newly wedded woman could remember there the love of her bridegroom? And no man called to mind the desirable beauty of his wife. The songs of the ministers failed from the mouths of the priests, and the voices of the psalms were cut off from the lips of the psalm-singers; trembling and fear took hold of them all alike. And out of the violent distress many women with child miscarried their infants; and by such a work, having snared the mountain as with a hunters' net the whole day long — until they gave out and failed of strength.

When evening came they took the plunder and the captives and the spoil of the slain, and went from the place. After their going there was to be seen a sight pitiable, more pitiable than the first, and worthy of much lamentation. For the death-agonies were of many kinds. Some of the fallen were still alive in their souls, their tongues dried up with thirst; with a narrow, thin voice they begged for relief, and there was no one to give it. Others were grievously wounded and failing of voice, and breathed heavily. Others, cut through the throat, being half dead, rattled with difficulty. And some, convulsed by their grievous wounds, kicked with their feet and clawed the ground with the nails of their hands. But beside these there was yet another dreadful sight, one that would move even stones and the other breathless creatures to lamentation and groaning. For when the lawless brought the captives down from the mountain, they took the infants

from the arms of their parents and threw them on the ground, so that from the multitude of them the whole place of their camp was seething. Some of those thrown down were dashed against the stone and died, and the flanks of others were torn open and their bowels poured out on the ground; but the screaming of the living — what ears could bear it? For those able to run on their feet went wandering here and there seeking their mothers, and at the loudness of their weeping the echoes of the mountain rang after them; others, not yet steady on their feet, crawled on their knees and screamed; and those of a still more helpless age beat the ground with their feet, and, failing of voice from the crawling, could not bring out their breath. And with such pitiful voices and unceasing crying they bore the likeness of lambs which, newly parted from their dams, go in and out of the folds because their nature cannot endure it; and with ceaseless bleating they wounded the air and wearied the ears of those who heard.

These are your grievous histories, O mountain — a mountain not such as God was pleased to dwell in, but a mountain of blood, of trampling and of destruction. It is not possible to call you a mountain, but a pit of mire for the destruction of all the inhabitants of the land; for in you the wild beasts lodge, and the kites and the vultures have made their dwelling; in you the foxes go in packs, frisking, filled with food. O mountain, you were not made fat, as Hermon was, by the dew of heaven dropping upon you, but by the fat and the blood of the corpses slaughtered upon you. O mountain, you were no mediator, as the Sinaitic one was, of Moses' speech with God; but you silenced many priests from the songs of the psalter, who by their prayers were always in converse with God. Elijah, in terror of death, a fugitive from Jezebel, took refuge on Horeb and was saved; but these, having made you their refuge, were delivered over to the sword and became the portions of foxes. O mountain, I see you as of one accord with the mountain of Gilboa, upon which the nobles of Israel fell. Wherefore it is time for me to repeat over you what David said concerning that one. Mountains of Smbat, let no rain fall upon you, nor dew; for you drank of the blood of the faithful, of the men and women who fell upon you. But let the account of the evil report concerning that mountain come to a stand, though out of much I have said but little. Here I shall turn this account's speech to our

own case; and I mean, so far as my strength allows, to linger over the words, so that I may move the tears of all. I call also, along with Jeremiah, the women who raise the wail, that they may set the lamentation in order with me; for I am not making my account of mountains and caves and desert places, into which the meanest of the fugitives went and dwelt.

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Concerning the Merciless Slaughter of Arcn

But of a city — and such a city as was magnificent and renowned among all the lands, like a city set upon a mountain, with sea and land travailing and lavish to bring their wealth to it, as the exalted Isaiah prophesied concerning Jerusalem — this one, at first, crowned with the abundance of good things, had everything after its own mind. It was like a young bride, desired by all for the loveliness of her beauty and the brightness of her ornaments. Its princes were lovers of mankind, and its judges just in judgment and declining all bribes. Its merchants were builders and adorners of the church, providers of lodging and rest for monks, merciful and provident toward the poor. There was no deceit in the marketplaces and no fraud in the exchanges of commerce. The profits of usury and interest were held in reproach, and their offering, brought among the gifts of dedication, was despised and rejected. In all of them there was one zeal alone: for piety. Its priests were holy in life and devoted to prayer, obedient to the church's ministry. Wherefore its merchants were held in honor, and its rulers were as kings among the nations. And like some precious gem, radiant with a light-fair brilliance, this city of ours shone among all cities, altogether beautiful, wholly adorned.

But from the time when the Sextians and Pyrrhonists entered our churches, and the law of justice was turned to injustice, and the love of silver came to be esteemed above the love of God, and Mammon above Christ, then all the decency of order slipped and turned to disorder. Its princes became confederates of thieves, doers of violence, servants of silver; its judges were bribe-takers, and for a bribe they stole away justice. They gave no judgment for orphans, and did not incline to the cause of widows. Laws of usury and interest were set up, and the manifold profiteering in wheat, by which the earth is defiled and its womb withholds its fruit in season for the food of mankind. He who deceived his neighbor boasted of being wise, and he who plundered said, "I am mighty." The rich seized the houses of the companionless poor and the boundary-lines of their

fields, and the God-commanded curses written by the hand of Moses, the servant of the Lord, did not fall upon their ears — «Cursed,» he says, «is he who seizes the field of his neighbor.» Or that with which the exalted Isaiah, raising his cry, rebukes such as these: «Woe,» he says, «to those who join house to house and bring field near to field, that they may drive out their neighbor. Behold, all this has come as a report into the ears of the Lord of hosts» — and as for the rest of it, I pass over it in silence, sparing you. The vineyard of Naboth was not in their remembrance, nor Jezebel who seized it — what she suffered for it, a thing that even to this day rings like a trumpet in the ears of all. From the priests too fear was taken away, and the discernment of holiness; they press and crowd to draw near to the altar and to minister the ineffable mystery, which is fearful even to the angels, let alone to men — and that by the power of silver, and not by God. And the psalm was given over to oblivion that says: «Let those be despised who are chosen by silver.»

What shall I say concerning the accusation that touches women? What was said by Isaiah is enough; it has no need of my words. For he thus rebukes the women of Jerusalem for their finery-loving wantonness: «Because,» he says, «the daughters of Zion are proud, and go about with necks outstretched.» First he takes hold of the root of all evils — I mean pride — the mother and origin of all evils, which makes demons out of men and partakers of their torments. Now this passion is evil for everyone, but far more for the race of women. For this reason he judges them first, and then in order recalls the trains that drag along the ground, the anklets, the rings, the bracelets, the veils, the mantles, and all the rest. See, O hearer, their recompense as well: «Instead,» he says, «of ornaments of gold, baldness of the head.» For, stripping the head of its ornaments, they cut off their hair, making a mockery of them. «Instead of girdles of gold, a rope for a belt; and instead of precious garments,» he says, «they shall be clothed in sackcloth.» For when they were made ready for captivity, their captors granted them just that.

It was not for nothing that I have gone through all this, but that I might show that, just as our own transgressions match theirs in kind, so it was fitting that we too should receive chastisement to match — and all the more. For if they

suffered that without any example before them, how could ours not be worthy of far greater punishment, having had them as our example, and the teaching of Christ as well, who cries out and says: «If your righteousness does not exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.» And we are found wanting not in righteousness alone, but found even more abounding in sins — and what pardon of forgiveness can we have?

Now see the well-measured and fitting recompense. The Persians rose up against Jerusalem, and they rose up against us too; Jerusalem was laid waste, and our cities were laid waste too. The heathen nations entered the holy temple, carried off its ornaments as plunder, and defiled it; they entered our churches too, made bold to go where none should enter, defiled its holy things with unclean footsteps, and made spoil of its ornaments. The holy temple was burned; and among us, instead of a single house, many churches were burned, and their priests fell by the sword beyond number — and as for ours, who can give the count? It is time for me to pass into the words of David, and with his own voice to shape our lament: «Why, O Lord, have you stood far off, and paid no heed to us in our affliction?» — while the unjust one acts lawlessly against your holy things, and those who hate you boast in the midst of your feasts; for behold, the heathen nations have entered your inheritance, and have defiled your holy temple; they have burned your holy things with fire, and brought down to the ground the glory of your church; they have poured out the blood of your servants like water — not, as then, around Jerusalem only, but this whole land of ours was filled with the blood of the slain. And as for the count of the dead to be buried, who could so much as call it to mind?

But as for the many-sided and unbearable evils of our city, who could set them down in writing? For as it is written concerning the Sodomites, that «the sun rose upon the earth, and the Lord rained fire and brimstone upon Sodom, and burned it» — so here too, at sunrise, hordes came upon the lawless like ravenous dogs, surrounded the city, went in like reapers into a field of grain, and setting each man's sword to it reaped until the city was severed from the living. Those who had fled into houses or churches they struck with fire and burned mercilessly, thinking the deed a good work — as the Savior had foretold, saying,

«The time will come when everyone who kills you will think he offers service to God» — and he himself makes plain the reason: «And these things they will do to you for my name's sake, because they have not known me.»

The very air lent a hand on that day of ruin, for a violent wind fanned the fire into a blaze, until the smoke towered up and reached the sky, and the showers of sparks outshone the rays of the sun. There was a sight piteous and utterly terrible: the whole city full of the corpses of the fallen — market streets, narrow lanes and broad halls alike. And as for those who were burned, who could give their number? — for those who fled the flash of the sword and hid in houses were all burned to nothing. The priests whom they seized in the churches they consumed with fire; and those outside, some they killed, and, laying a great swine-carcass in their arms, made it a reproach to us and a mockery and derision to those who saw. And as for the number of priests who perished by sword and by fire, we found it more than a hundred and fifty — men who held a parish and a church of their own. But as for those who had come in from elsewhere, and those from every land round about who happened to be there, who can give their number?

These are your grievous histories, O city, happy and blessed, sated with abundance, renowned among the lands. Now lift up your eyes, and see your sons driven off into captivity, your little ones mercilessly dashed against the stone, your young men burned with fire. Old men of great dignity and glory, fallen in the marketplace; delicately-reared and well-nurtured virgins and women, fallen into disgrace, and driven on foot into captivity. In us the songs of David's laments have found their fulfillment: «He gave over,» they say, «their strength into captivity, and their villages into the hands of their enemies» — and the rest that follows; but Christ delays his awakening, not as he did then.

But let this sorrowful account concerning Arcn come to its close here, for we have not been able to set down in writing every one of these evil events; what we have left out, let the inquirer learn from the ruins themselves. These are the pitiable histories of two places — the mountain, and this city — what we saw with our own eyes and passed through in the trial of these evils, that alone have

we written; but as for the calamities that befell the other districts and cities, whose mind could take in the whole of it? Those would need a long account, and time; we, according to our own strength, have made our account short.

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Concerning the Great Battle That Took Place in the Plain of Basean, in Which the Romans Were Defeated

The prophet Isaiah, prophesying the devastation of the Egyptians, said: «The princes of Zoan have grown foolish, who were the wise counselors of the king» — and this too has befallen us. For the cavalry forces of the Romans guarding the east were not few; they say the army numbered as much as sixty thousand. Their leaders were Kamenas — whose name is interpreted "fire" — who held the lordship of the House of the Armenians; Aharon, son of the Bulgarian, who held the region of Vaspurakan; and Grigor, the mighty prince of the Armenians, who held the dignity of the office of magistros. And since the scriptures say that a multitude of rulers is a tumult, unfitting and near to ruin, this too befell them. For it was fitting that with one accord and a single mind they should call upon the Lord God, the giver of victory in battle, as was the custom of those who conquered before: «For it is not by his own strength that the mighty man grows strong, but the Lord strips away the strength of the adversary.» But they did not think so; whoever among them was disposed to lawlessness acted lawlessly, and they imagined that by human cunning they could quench the kindling of the insatiable fire. So they fell into wavering indecision and would not be persuaded by one another's counsels; for God had taken wisdom from their counsels, because they had not sought him. And this is plain from their deeds: they sought Liparit to come to their aid, like Saul running to the witch when afflicted, or like the Jews who loaded their treasures upon camels and carried them to a nation in which there was no hope of help. They did not call to mind David, who stood against the hill of flesh that with great arrogance was reproaching Israel, for whom one sling-stone was enough to shatter the casing of its brain; or Hezekiah, who by prayer alone hunted the hundred and eighty

thousand of the Assyrians down into the earth by the hand of the angel, with an invisible sword.

Liparit came, with many entreaties and lavishly-given gifts of treasure, and nothing was accomplished by it, for they were not of one mind with one another. So when the battle was joined, the son of the Bulgarian turned his men to the rear and gave boldness to the enemy, who with loud shouting urged one another on, and shutting Liparit in among them with his own brave men killed some of them, cut the sinews of his horse with a sword, and took him captive. Seeing this, the rest of the army turned to flight. The enemy pursued and wrought slaughter beyond measure — some by the sword, and many, the hour having grown dark with night, cast headlong from cliffs and out of caves; the rest escaped on foot wherever they could, stripped and plundered. The enemy, filled with plunder more and more, rejoiced; but our own were full of wailing and lamentation. And from that day to this, like ravening dogs, or like wolves of Arabia, they have never been sated with the blood of Christians, until they had consumed them and swept them away. The whole land became like a field come to harvest, after whose reapers there follow those who gather the sheaves, and afterward leave only the gleanings and the stubble as pasture for the wild beasts. After the victory they took booty and captives into their own land and filled the whole country with plunder beyond measure; and the prince of the Georgians they carried off and gave to the caliph, as something great, and more pleasing to him than all the other captives — whom he received with thanks and released in peace to his own land with great gifts. This much, then, up to this point.

How the Patriarch Petros Came to Remain in Constantinople, or How the Return Came About

When the king saw him he received him with great honor and esteem, and commanded that he be maintained with abundant provisions. But he kept him three years, suspecting that if he let him go to Armenia he would incite Ani to rebel. Then Atom, son of Senek'erim, took him as a pledge and brought him to his own city of Sebastopolis, and gave him as a dwelling place the resting-place of the holy sign, which he had built with manifold adornment and splendid magnificence; and having lived there two years, he passed to Christ. In his place they installed Khachik, his sister's son, who had long before received the ordination of the patriarchate. Hearing of it, the king sent men to seek him out and brought him to himself, along with the treasures they found both there and in Armenia; for Petros had been a great lover of treasures, for which many reproached him. But after three years Lord Khachik was released from the royal-seat city, and coming to the borders of Second Armenia, to the district called Tarntay, he settled there; for there they had assigned him a dwelling place.

The reason for his delay in Constantinople was this: they wished to subject him to tribute, and he would not consent, saying that what had not existed until his own time he too would not agree to. Then, having put him to questioning and testing, they added threats: he should not leave unless he took upon himself what had been commanded of him. But that blessed person, the successor of our great Illuminator, not at all daunted by their words, remained utterly steadfast in the same resolve. After this two men — one a prince, the other a monk, from among the Romans — came forward, whether to provoke him to jealousy or in earnest I do not know, and sought the oversight of the church, undertaking to pay the tax; and both died an evil death. Then, having come to repentance, he released him without tax, granting him by document and by a gold ring the places that were their own in Armenia, and two monasteries in Tarntay.

How the Gorged City Which Is Called Kars Was Struck Beyond Bearing

This city had known no trial of misfortune for a long time; wherefore they lived carefree and unsuspecting, grown rich from sea and from land. Now when the great manifestation of our Lord came, on the night when the choirs of priests, with the vast multitude of the people, were performing the office of the day with joyful voice, suddenly the forces of the lawless came upon them. And since the city was without night-watches they entered within, and setting the sword upon every man slaughtered all without mercy — a narrative most worthy of lamentation. For it is the custom of cities, at the feasts of the Lord, for men and women, old and young, to be adorned with much finery, according to their means, after the likeness of spring-blossoming flower-gardens. Finding them thus, the city was suddenly filled with wailing and lamentation. They silenced the priests from their ministrations and the psalm-singers from their psalmic songs; the song of blessing was cut off from the mouth of clerics and children. There was to be seen there a piteous sight, one that would move even the stones and lifeless creatures to laments of groaning — let alone sentient and living beings. Very wealthy and honored merchants were slain by a cruel death; young men and wrestlers cut down by the sword in the streets; the honored grey hairs of old men fallen blood-drenched beside them; and by such deeds the city was emptied of its men. Whoever managed to reach the fortress above the city, he alone survived. They remained the whole day and, setting to work with mattocks, dug up the houses; then, setting fire, they burned the city, and taking the captives and the plunder they went off to their own land.

Concerning the Coming of the Sultan

When the following year came it was the five hundred and third year of our era. In that same month, and on the same day of the month on which they had earlier carried this land into captivity and burned Arcn together with other cities and towns, the death-breathing, blood-drinking beast and man-slaughtering Sultan set out with countless troops, elephants, chariots and horses, women and children, and great equipage. Passing by Archesh and Berkri he encamped around the city called Manazkert, in the district of Apahunik', and occupied the whole broad expanse of the plains. He sent raiding parties into three quarters of this land: to the north, as far as the stronghold of the Abkhaz and the mountain called Parkhar and the foot of the Caucasus; to the west, as far as the forests of Chaneti; to the south, as far as the mountain called Sim; and he held the whole land as reapers take the swath of a field.

Now the evils they brought upon this land at that time — who is able to commit them to writing, or whose mind suffices to reckon them? For this whole land was full of corpses: inhabited places and uninhabited, roads and desert places, caverns and rocky wastes, dense forests and open plains; and in every settled place they set fire and ravaged houses and churches, whose blazing flame rose higher than the furnace of Babylon. And so they ravaged the whole land, not once, but turning back a second and a third time upon the same ground, until it was emptied of its inhabitants and the lowing of cattle ceased.

Seeing this deed done, mourning seized the land, and the earth was overthrown, for its inhabitants were overthrown; joy was lifted from the face of the whole earth; in every place, lamentation and groaning; everywhere, wailing and the gatherings of mourners; nowhere the songs of priests; nowhere is heard the glorification of God. Nowhere the books of the word for the instruction and comfort of hearers, for the readers lay slain in the public squares, themselves burned and turned to ash. Nowhere is heard the voice of weddings, nor the glad

tidings of newborn children; the old do not sit in their seats in the public square, nor do children play before them; the flocks do not gather in the pastures, nor do the lambs frisk in the meadows. The reaper does not fill his arms with the sheaf, nor hear the blessing of the passers-by; the threshing floors are not filled with wheat, nor do the vats overflow with wine; the voices of rejoicing are not heard at the grape-harvest, nor are the storehouses weighed down with their jars. All this has been lifted away, has perished and is seen no more. What Jeremiah could lament our ruin, drawing his laments out over the roads and the mountains? What Isaiah, deaf to those who would console him, could take his fill of lamentation? Woe is me, who tell this tale — being like that *himenats'i* young man, I have become a herald of grief, not for one village or one city, but for every land, from nation to nation, even to the end of times; for there is no time or deed that can make our own misfortune seem old, except what the books make known beforehand concerning the abomination of desolation. Now what shall I do? Shall I forbear from relating the unbearable evils that came upon the Christians — sparing you, though I should stir up laments and groans in all of you who share in this hell-sounding tale? But I know you wish to hear it; wherefore I too, laying aside my hesitation, will recount one by one the chief places of these unbearable evils.

When I recall Khordzean and Handzit', and what was done in them, I am broken with tears; my heart bursts; my mind grows numb; my hands are struck with trembling; and I am unable to carry my pen forward. Many and countless souls from the upper districts had gathered there because of the strength of those places. Upon them the lawless fell, swift as birds, merciless as beasts, seething with fury as avengers, and setting the mattock to the caverns and the dense forests slaughtered insatiably whomever they found — so that the blood ran as in the season that brings the spring, when from the warmth of the air the water melts and flows out of the snow, gushing stream by stream and sweeping the earth's soil behind it; so it was then also: streams of blood risen from the fallen corpses on the sloping ground, from the abundance of their flow sweeping the earth's soil along with them.

But you, then, call to mind the ranks of monks and priests caught there, or the flocks of old men, or the multitude of young men whose newly-sprouted beards, like a beautifully-fitted picture, adorned their cheeks, and whose curling locks, gleaming upon their brows, brightened the look of their faces with the vivid color of a rose — how suddenly, struck by the enemy's sword as if by hail, they fell, tumbling and rolling to the ground. Bring to mind also the reckoning of the children, whom they seized from their mothers' arms and cast to the ground, who with mighty groaning sought their mothers; and they tore the parents from them with blows of beating, in haste. What heart of stone, hearing this, would not be choked with tears at the constant recurrence of these manifold evils? Virgins fell into disgrace; young brides were parted from their husbands and given over into captivity; in a single moment the land, which like a city had been thronged with the abundance of its people, became empty of men — divided in two, either cut down by the sword or led captive. O Christ, Your forbearance in that hour! O our own evils! To how bitter a death were we given over!

As for the slaughter in Derjan and Ekegheats' and the borderlands between them — that too is beyond your power to commit to writing; but weigh it by what has been said. Those who entered 'Tayk', having taken the land and reached the great river called the Chorokh, turned back and descended into the land of Khaghtik'; and having taken the plunder and captives of the district they turned back, and coming as far as the fortress-city called Baberd met a company of Roman troops called Varangians, who, unaware of one another, clashed and fought face to face. And by the mercy of God the Roman company was strengthened, and having defeated the enemy they slew the head of the force and many with him, turned the rest to flight, and recovered all the plunder and the captives; but they did not dare pursue the fugitives far, fearing they might meet a heavier force. And the freed captives gave thanks to God and went to their homes. But those who went on against the Armenians put to the sword or sold into captivity whomever they found, and turned back laden with plunder. Coming to the borders of Vanand, the valiant princes under Gagik son of Abas met them face to face and wrought great carnage there. But the forces of the lawless came upon them and hemmed them in; and because, through the length

of the battle and the terrible slaughter, they and their horses had grown weak and could not break the enemy's barrier and get out, the enemy put the sword upon them and slew thirty men of the azats.

And they seized one of the azats, whose name was Tatul, a mighty man and a lover of war, and brought him before the Sultan. And since he had grievously wounded the son of Arsuban, the amir of the Persians, the Sultan on seeing him said: "If he lives, I will free you; but if he dies, I will order you offered up as a sacrifice to him." And after a few days he died. But he answered: "If the blow is mine, he will not live; but if it is another's, that I do not know." When the Sultan heard that he had died, he ordered him slain, and having cut off his right arm sent it to Arsuban for a comfort — that your son did not die by a weak arm.

Now what is it for me to set down in writing, one by one, the irreparable ruin of the Christians? It befell us as when a sea, churned up by violent winds, rises into terrible surging waves and foaming heaps from every quarter: the whole land was suddenly filled with turmoil, and nowhere was a place of refuge to be found; for on account of the unbearable evils hope of life was taken away from all men. This the Savior also foretold, likening these murderous evils to the turmoil of the sea, in which many among men, growing faint, could not keep their souls within them, from fear and from the expectation of what was coming.

But leave this aside, and come, marvel at the Sultan's folly and at God's manifold wisdom — at his folly, in that he proclaimed himself Almighty and a co-throned equal of God; and at God's wisdom, in that with a single trick he toyed with him and sent him back to his own land full of disgrace. Now attend to what I shall relate, in order. The first time, when he surrounded the city with his countless troops and they were unprepared in men and beasts, had he remained ten days more he would have taken it. But God, who is not wroth to the utmost, nor keeps his anger forever, nor deals with us according to our sins, cast into the Sultan's mind, along with everything else, a design of vanity. After three days he moved his whole camp down to Tuaratsoy Tap', and thence into the broad plain of Basean, by the impregnable fortress called Awnik, where he saw the land full of people and beasts and paid it no heed, for at a single glance he recognized it

was impregnable; and passing it by he came to the head of Basean, near the village called Du. Going up from there with a few men, unrecognized, onto the height that looks toward Karin, he saw the city armed with every preparation; and having gazed a long while he turned back. But the men of Manazkert, without suspicion, went out and abundantly prepared provision for men and beasts, for it was the season of the harvest; and while the Sultan, occupied here and there, had turned back, they remained free of care. Then he came, inflamed with fury, and gave battle against the city.

Now the prince in charge of the city, being a pious man, called upon Almighty God for help, disciplining himself with fasting and prayer; and armed with this he grew bravely bold in faith. He said to God, in the words of the psalm: «I will not fear evil, for you, Lord, are with me»; and the other, that: «I will not fear the ten thousands of their forces that surround me,» and what belongs with it. And he encouraged the men of the city and the troops, saying: "Take courage, my comrades and brothers, take courage and do not be afraid; this is an easy task for God. They come against us with chariots and horses; we will call upon the name of our Lord, and glory in God forever, and confess His name, for He gives strength and firmness to His people, who is blessed forever." He urged the priests to prayer and psalm-singing, and they cried out to God unceasingly by day and by night, who with cross and striking-board, with lifted voice upon the walls, besought God to come to the aid of those in danger. Wearied by this, the tyrant's ears asked what that unceasing outcry was, and learned from those who knew that they were crying out to God.

For a month's days he remained before the city, joining battle twice each day, at daybreak and toward evening. But here observe God's wisdom, how he knows how to win, by opposition itself, the fruit that belongs to his opponent. While the city stood in this uncertainty and danger, he cast a good design into the heart of a certain prince, very much among the Sultan's intimates, who made known to the city, by word or by writing, what he had learned in counsel from him. Many times, having written on a paper, he would bind it to the shaft of an arrow and, approaching the wall under pretense of combat, cast the arrow into the city; and by this he made known to them the whole plan of the fighting —

that: "Tomorrow, thus, and according to this manner, is the plan of the fighting; and at this marked place, in the night, they intend to dig beneath the wall and get inside. But you, stand firm and strong, and be watchful over those places."

This God does, who knows how to lay the foundation of great matters from far off — who made Balaam a prophet before Balak, for the oversight of his people, and gave the mute beast to speak with a human voice; and who fed Elijah for three years, by ravens, in the wadi of Cherith, during the famine. What wonder, then, if here too, by the hand of adversaries, he ordained the salvation of the city?

On whatever side they took their stand for battle, by night or by day, they were found armed and ready. After this the enemy set up siege-engines and fought with them. But a certain priest of ours, advanced in days, who was well versed in the art, set up his own trebuchet; and whenever they placed a stone in the sling of their engine and hurled it at the city, the priest released his own stone directly against theirs, so that the priest's stone, striking the stone of the lawless, cast it back upon them. The lawless did this seven times and could accomplish nothing; for the priest's stone prevailed over their stone.

Then they prepared another instrument of war, which they themselves called a *baban*, which was very dreadful, of which it was said that it had four hundred attendants who hauled the ropes; and they placed a stone of sixty *litr* in the sling and hurled it into the city; and before it they raised a rampart of bales of cotton and much other material, so that the priest's stone should not reach it. When they had arranged this they loosed a single stone which, striking the wall with great force, broke it down and hollowed it out. Seeing which, the city was seized with trembling and cried out to God with great groaning, beseeching him to come to their aid, while for the lawless there was great rejoicing. But on the second day the leader of the Daylamite force — for he was a valiant man — took his troops and gave battle against our men; and coming to the breach he was eager to force his way powerfully inside, and suddenly, going of his own accord, he fell. Those upon the wall cast an iron hook, caught him, and dragged him

down beneath the wall; and the enemy troops, seeing this, turned back to the camp full of sorrow, while for the city there was no small rejoicing.

Then a certain valiant man of the Roman troops prepared fire with naphtha and sulfur, poured it into a glass vessel, and, mounted upon a noble horse, being stout of heart and brave, having protected his back with a shield alone, went out through the gate of the city and entered the camp of the foreigners, calling himself a *mandator* — that is, a letter-bearer. Going up to the *baban* he passed around it, and suddenly lifting up the vessel poured it upon the *baban*; and at once the fire blazed up, a crimson flame burst forth, and he turned back swiftly. The lawless, seeing this, were struck with amazement, and mounting their horses pursued him but could not overtake him. And he entered the city in peace, by the help of God having no wound upon his person. But when the Sultan saw what had happened, in great wrath he ordered the guards cut to pieces.

Do you see God's loving care for mankind, how near his salvation is to those who fear him? Do you see how he knows how to conquer the great by small means — as with Moses against Og, whose height was nine cubits by a giant's measure; or the boy David against Goliath; or the giant-armored Sisera of the foreigners, by the hand of Jael, the wife of Heber; or Holofernes, by the hand of another woman? I say this so that we may not lose heart when we fall into the midst of unbearable trials. For God is accustomed to permit, for a time, such perilous afflictions, so that those who endure may be found worthy of the crown of glory, and the lawless may receive, from a just judgment, the recompense of their own evils. This too we see to have happened in the case of the furnace and the youths: for God permitted the king to bring forth into the light all the ragings of his fury, and the furnace was prepared, whose flame rose forty-nine cubits high; and he, in his violent arrogance, said: "Who is the god that shall deliver you out of my hands?" See, along with this, also the steadfast faith of the youths — how, standing before such a beast in judgment, they gave the boldest answer, which was a great scorn to the tyrant: "It is not necessary," he says, "for us to give you an answer concerning this." And then what? When the king's threats were carried out and they were cast, bound, into the furnace, then help

came swiftly to their aid, and he does not put to shame those who call upon him in truth. See here too the depths of God's wisdom, which no one attains to: for the fire divided itself in two — whomever of the Chaldeans it found, it burned; while an angel sprinkled dew upon the youths, who did not draw near to them at all, neither grieved them nor distressed them; who also brought the barbarian to his senses, so that, at these unspeakable wonders, he confessed and said: "Come forth, you servants of God, for I too, with you, bless Him who is blessed forever." So too here, by the hand of an insignificant man, he showed forth great wonders. Let this, then, be for us instruction and teaching.

Now Vasil, the prince of the city, ordered the common people upon the wall to revile and insult the Sultan with a great shout; and after two days he moved his camp and departed, and going on came upon a city called Artske, which lies in the midst of the sea of Bznunik' and has near it a strong and impregnable fortress; and the citizens, taking refuge in these two — the sea and the stronghold — remained free of care. But the blood-drinking beasts, finding a shallow place in the sea — whether under someone's guidance or by their own ingenuity — entered the city, and putting the sword upon them slaughtered them all; and taking the captives and the plunder of the city departed from the place. And this was a comfort to the Sultan's heart, and he went off to his own land in great sorrow, for he had not been able to accomplish anything of what he intended.

The End of the Reign of Monomachos

The blessed and divine Solomon writes: «A just king establishes the land, but the lawless man overthrows it.» And this too we have seen with our own eyes in this man's case. For it is the law of kings to attend to the peace and building-up of the world, as God provides beforehand for all that comes from him; but this man was not so. Ever given over to eating and drinking, he only multiplied his own filth; and the treasures he gathered from the taxes of every land — which it was his duty to spend on the cavalry, and to multiply the mounted forces that could have kept the world in peace by defeating the enemy, as the blessed Basil did, who reigned fifty years, so that no enemy dared enter his land — this man spent on harlots, and the ruin of the world grieved him not at all. So given to fornication was he, and so loved harlots, that not satisfied with the women of Constantinople he had women brought from distant lands, and spent the whole day occupied with them. For this reason the enemies grew bold; and as hungry wolves, finding the flock without a shepherd, slaughter without mercy, so in his time there came from east and west alike the utter ruin of the Christians, which we have set down above in small part. And having spent his life in such courses, he died, having reigned thirteen years and earned no good remembrance at all.

As for Theodora, daughter of the king Constantine, she took hold of the kingship as her own hereditary patrimony, against which no one could rise up. To her the Sultan of the Tajiks sent envoys with a letter in this form: "Either give me the cities and provinces which your forefathers took from the Tajiks, or else give a thousand dahekans every day." In reply she sent him horses and white-maned mules, much treasure, and purple garments besides. But he received it with disdain and detained the bearer, making him travel on with him into the land of the Babylonians; and it was the five hundred and fourth year of our era.

In that same year the Persian troops set out in the Sultan's name — though some say they belonged to Apusuar, who held Dvin and Gandzak and was son-

in-law of Ashot, king of the Armenians — and invaded the land of the Armenians. Before them the inhabited places fled and gathered into the city of Ani, but not all got inside in time, for the hour grew late and the gates were already shut. And the Persian troops, marching by night, seized the city gate and, putting them to the sword, wrought unbearable slaughter, and there was no one to help them; and taking plunder and captives they went back to their own land.

Now in the region of Taron, Theodoros son of Aharon — whom they called Awan in their own tongue, the letter being wanting — was prince of the district. To him came a troop from T'urk'astan, who submitted to him and wished to show their good faith; they entered the district of Khlat', took much plunder, and brought it to Taron. But troops gathered from among the Persians and from T'urk'astan sent word to Theodoros: "Either hand over these rebels of yours to us, or else we will carry your land off captive." He would not consent; after which they clashed twice and three times, and the prince displayed much valor, but afterward, grievously wounded, died after a few days. His death was greatly worthy of lament: youthful in age, in his handsome, splendid appearance bearing a likeness to the prophet David, and in courage surpassing many, he was cut off from among us before his time.

When winter came, on the days of the feast of the Theophany, the lawless troops marched by night to the market-town of Hark' called Mankan Gom, and catching them off guard while they were performing the night office put the sword to them and slaughtered them all, together with the villages and farmsteads round about; and taking captives and plunder they went to the village of Aratsani, since it lay on their way. And when they brought the plunder and the captives out onto the ice, suddenly the ice broke and covered under itself all who stood upon it.

O how bitter is this history, and worthy of lamentation! But perhaps someone will blame us, saying, "Until when will you set before us this recital of sorrows and afflictions?" How many threatening words did the prophets prophesy, of things that would come to pass after a time — and the people were reluctant to

hear them! But I am not a herald of threats; I relate things that have already happened and come to a head, so that I might stir tears in all who hear, at how bitter a time we have met with. This life of ours became a matter of doubt to us: whether the sins of our fathers came upon us, as the prophet, lamenting, accused his own people — then alas for us, that we pay the debts of our fathers' sins! And where is that which God spoke through Ezekiel, saying, "Son of man, what is this proverb that they use in the midst of Israel, saying, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? As I live, says the Lord, this proverb shall no longer be used in Israel; for all souls are mine, the soul of the father just as the soul of the son" — and the rest that follows in order — and he freed the son from the father's debt. And if all this came upon us on account of our own evils, then we are more pitiable than all mankind: the whole world dwells in peace, while we are captives and prisoners, cut down by the sword, our houses ruined, and stripped of our possessions.

Armenia had four thrones of kingship — not to mention the rule of the curopalates, and that which came from the Romans. And it had a patriarchate great and envied by all nations; and truth-speaking vardapets, equal to the first vardapets of old, who had attained to the depths of knowledge, before whose words all the phalanxes of the heretics bowed their necks and sank into the ground, unable to enter the fold of the flock of the faithful, for the gatekeeper would not admit them — he who knows his own and is known by his own. And our churches, like newlywed brides, were adorned in every beauty to please the will of the immortal Bridegroom; and newborn children, from the passionless womb of our mother Sarah, gathered like the young of doves and sang with full-throated voice the angelic songs.

Now come and see the evil and comfortless exchange we have received in its place. Where are the thrones of the kings? Behold, they are not seen. Where is the multitude of the armies, which, dense as a cloud before them, gleamed each in its own color, garment upon garment, like the flowers born of spring? Behold, they are no more. Where is the great and wondrous patriarchal throne, which the blessed man of God, the great Gregory, descending into the depth of the pit, won through fifteen years of sweat-drenched labor, and set his own throne upon

the apostolic throne? Today it is seen empty, void of inhabitants, stripped of adornment, filled with dust and spiders' webs, and the heir of the throne removed into a foreign land like a captive and a prisoner. The voices of the vardapets and their preaching are silenced; and the ranks of the heretics, who used to hide here and there among them like mice creeping into holes, hunted down by their theological words and their orthodox confession, today come out fearlessly from their lairs like mighty lions, mouths agape, to see whom they may devour among the innocent. And what shall I say of the Church, formerly so adorned and comely, richly fruitful and most blessed, which even moved the prophet to wonder — but today sits without splendor, unadorned, like a widow without a son, stripped of her ornaments, fallen from honor, sitting in torn garments without comfort? So it is seen here too: the torches quenched and the lamps gone out, the fragrance of incense and sweet odors spent, the crown of the Lord's table covered with dust and ashes. One may see her own children, who at her doors, having taken *bnakit* in hand, sang the songs of David; today they dance outside the demon-haunted dens which they call mosques, learning to recite what Muhammad handed down. And chaste and modest women too, who used to accept lawful marriage from their own men only under great entreaty, today are grown accustomed to unlawful and monstrous promiscuity.

Now if all this that we have related came upon us because of our own evils, call out to heaven, and to what is in it and what is above it; call out to the earth and the living creatures in it; call out to the mountains and the hills, to the trees and the dense forests — let them weep and mourn for our ruin. This too the prophets used to do in times of rejoicing: they commanded the mountains and hills to leap for joy, the rivers to clap their hands, the sea to rejoice, and the forests to exult. For all these are our kin: in our joys they rejoice with us, and they must likewise share in our mourning, just as in former times they bowed down with us on the day of our humiliation and affliction, since it was on our account that they came to be. But even this is no help to us for comfort: though one weep and beat the breast for the dead a long time, and shut them away in darkness, it brings him no benefit. What benefit was it to the Jews, the weeping of Jeremiah, or of Christ for Jerusalem, or for Judas? Tell me. None at all.

Wherefore, knowing this, we are bound to reconcile God through the rectitude of our own souls; for if this is set right, then the enemy's sword will fail utterly, and hard things will be turned into easy ones for us, and the rugged places into a level road, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. For if God is on our side, who shall be able to stand against us? For he himself commanded in the Law, saying, «I will be an enemy to your enemies, and I will destroy those who hate you»; and again, «I will not abandon you, nor cast you aside.» Only let us have peace with God, and call upon him with a whole heart, holding good deeds as a pledge between us, and there is nothing among our adversaries that can grieve us. And this too is a word of the Lord, written in Isaiah: «Before you have called, I will hear you; and while you are still speaking, I will say, What is it you seek?» — a saying that surpasses every warm-hearted father. But from the unworthy he washes his hands, saying, «Let not my soul be with them»; and again, «Though you cry out to me, I will not hear you; the wicked shall seek me, and shall not find me»; and again, «When you lift up your hands on high, I will turn my face away from you; and though you multiply your prayers, I will not hear you.» For what fellowship has light with darkness?

Let us fear, brothers, and give heed to these heavenly tidings. Let us not be among those unknown to him, lest he say, "I do not know you"; but let us be numbered among his friends, that he may say to us, «Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the life that is past telling.»

The Reign of Theodora, Who Is Interpreted as Astvatsatur

After the death of Monomachos, the she-lion, roaring in her den with a beast's savagery — the very one who had earlier appeared to Daniel in his vision — summoned the chief men of the city and the greatest of the princes and said to them: "If any of you dares go out with an army to the east, and put an end to the roaring of the Persians, and subdue the land to peace, then let him come boldly and sit as king; by God's own right he is worthy of the kingship. But if no one takes this word upon himself, I myself am regent enough." Hearing this, the princes went away without answering, each to his own house.

Now the queen sated the Sultan, like a famished beast, with an abundance of gifts, so that he forgot to rise up against us; instead he stirred up the war in Babylon and the regions around it, for the man was exceedingly fond of war. But our own borderers and neighbors, inflamed, did not cease summer or winter from ravaging our land of Armenia; they searched deliberately, and wherever they heard of an inhabited place marched by night and fell upon it unexpectedly, and with unheard-of blows mercilessly destroyed everyone without exception. And, careless of fear, they spent many days there, turning up every corner of the houses — if anyone had anything hidden away, drawing it all out — and having razed the place to its foundations, taking booty and captives, returned to their own land.

Now there was a town in the district of Basean, near the foot of the mountain called Tsiranis, and its name was Okomi, populous and prosperous. Against this the impious marched by night, on the great feast of the Theophany; and since in the harsh frost of the plain the hands and feet of these man-faced beasts had grown numb, when they drew near the settlement they found much hay heaped up as fodder for cattle, and setting fire to it, by the blaze's flaring the whole plain was lit up as if at midday; standing by it they warmed themselves, they and their

horses. Then, having strung their bows and bared their weapons, they fell upon the settlement as much at ease as in summer, and putting the sword to it slaughtered without exception about thirty thousand souls, leaving not one of the inhabitants except any who happened to be on the road. And having spent three days there, and loaded oxen and asses and horses with stores of wheat and hoards of goods and a little of what was useful, they took these as spoil and went off to their own land. But the manifold evils they wrought there — who could commit them to writing? And by such an undertaking the whole land was emptied of its inhabitants, with nothing left alive except perhaps in some stronghold.

Now the queen, having held the kingship two years and come to advanced old age, fell ill with the illness of which she died. The chief men of the city came and asked her: "While you still live, appoint someone as king, so that the city may remain without disturbance." The queen, agreeing, ordered a certain man brought from among the city's chief men, Michael by name, who in his fathers' time had for a while been among the officials of the palace, a man bowed with age in his grey hairs, and very wealthy. She set him up as king with the city's assent; and she herself, three days later, went the way of all the earth, where kings and poor men are together, according to the psalm of David. Now when the princes of the lands, great and small, heard of his becoming king, they all came to him in submission. And what he owed them — to gladden them all with conciliatory words and an abundance of gifts, and to win them over to submission under his own rule — instead, being no true man, and seized with Rehoboam's own affliction, he held some of the princes unworthy of authority. And speaking harshly to the great men he said: "Either go out against the Persians to war, and do not let the land be ravaged; or if not, I will pay your stipends as tribute to the Persians, and I will keep this land in peace." The princes, not agreeing, went out from before the king without answering, and having made a covenant together crossed the sea and gathered many troops, beyond number. Their leaders were Komianos — who indeed himself became king — and Kamenas; and having rebelled against the king, they swore an oath

not to submit to his rule. This took place in the five hundred and sixth year of our era, in which the Roman indiction was the tenth.

Woe to that year! Woe to the world-ravaging design by which the inhabitants of the land were brought down and ruined! For it turned back to its first unadornedness, according to the world's own story, which says: «The earth, he says, was desolate and unfurnished, for there was no man to till the earth.» For just as a man's fair face, in the flower of his age, shows lovely and desirable to those who see it, but when the ordering soul departs from it in death its former bright and beautiful adornments show fearful and without splendor, and pity too is cut off with it — as it is said, «I have been forgotten, like one dead, from the heart» — in the same way the land is to be seen. For when it grows rich with the dwelling of men, the farmers fill the fields with the seed of abundance; and these, when they sprout, make the countryside lovely with their green appearance and shoot upward with towering growth; and when they show the shape of their ears of grain upon their tops, then, cloud-like in their dense thickness, they present themselves to those who see them, and in the sweet-breathing air they sway and pace like the waves of the sea. So too the flocks of the open pastures, in the valleys of verdant growth by the cold springs, leap and play, and the land, like a nurse, is adorned by them with a fair countenance — as it is said, «Let the fields exult, and everything that is in them.»

But now we see the opposite: the land laid waste, empty of its inhabitants; cities brought down; and fields gone to fallow and briar, showing dreadful and terrible to those who pass by. And the flocks of sweet-voiced birds too, which by their gentle, man-loving ways were once tame among our kind, which made the countryside ring with sweet-toned melodies, and in the mornings, with their chirping songs and loud warbling, roused the farmers as if with a goad from the sluggishness of sleep, readying each to his own craft — but now the settlements are ruins, desolate and without people, and there is no place for them to dwell; for where do the birds build their nests, and where do the weak among the birds take refuge in them, according to the psalm's own word? Or where does the swallow prepare her wandering nestlings' little nest, rearing without fear those

born of herself? Now let this word rest here; let us make, from the beginning, the start of this hard-to-hear and evil history.

Now when the house of the Greeks was divided in two, the rod of iron became a crushed rod of reed — the very name by which the Assyrian, taunting the kingdom of Egypt, once called it; and the boiling pot that showed its seething to Jeremiah, which then poured its scalding out from north to south, now with a terrible seething poured it from south to north, and, burning, ravaged the Christian peoples. For according to the Lord's own word, a kingdom divided cannot live, but is brought down — and so it came to pass; for when the Persians learned of this strife and mutual contention among them, they came against us boldly, making ceaseless incursions, and brought the world-ravaging ruin to its full measure.

Now at the beginning of the year of which we made mournful mention, they were like night-ravaging wolves who come upon a flock that has no shepherd, and are not content with feeding themselves alone but strive to destroy all; so too the troops that came from Persia were not sated with plunder, but held an insatiable hunger for our destruction; for whatever they saw with their eyes it was impossible for it to escape their hands, and they reckoned this a great benefaction.

Now when war broke out among the Romans, there was a man named Ivane, son of Liparit, to whom had been granted for habitation the great town of Eriza in the district of Hashteank', with the estates around it. Hearing that the kingdom had been divided in two, he took by deceit the fortress called Eghants Berd, and having brought it under his hand returned to the district of Aghori, and to the fortress called Hawachich. And the city came out to meet him in friendship; and the judge who held charge of the eastern regions happened to be there at the time — and when Ivane saw him he at once ordered him seized. And having taken from him boundless treasure, horses and mules and everything he had gathered from the eastern regions, he put the man in prison at Eghnut, and went with all haste against the fortified city of Karin. For a while he tried by deceit, saying: "I have a command from the king; the city is mine — open the

gates, that I may enter." And when by this he could not bring them to submission, he gave battle, seeking to master the city by war. But the prince of the city at once sent word to the prince who resided at Ani and held the rank of magistros; who, on hearing this, sent one of the chief men, with troops, against him. But when Ivane learned of this, he raided the land and returned to his own place; and he sent to the Persians to bring troops to his aid — this was the beginning of the unbearable evils that came upon us.

When the impious host heard the summons, they called out to one another and, gathering at once in one place, hastened to reach him. But he, seeing the multitude of the troops, was struck with fear; and since there was no one to oppose them — for the prince on whose account they had come, learning of their coming, entered the great fortress and shut himself in — the troops that had come said: "Show us a way to plunder; do not send us back empty." And he, at a loss, gave them a guide from among his own men, who set out and, marching by night through desert places, came upon the district of Khaghtik'. And catching them off their guard, according to their own blood-drinking ways, they put to the sword every man they met, as far as the forest of Khrt'i in Chanet'; and taking booty and captives beyond measure, returned in great triumph. And coming to the leader of the evildoers they offered him rich gifts in thanks for the success that had befallen them on the road; and then they went off to their own land. And since they saw the land without a lord and without a guard, these servants of evil turned back at once and went out into it again; and coming down into the district of Mananaghi they divided in two. One part went to Ekegheats' and, falling by night upon the city that is there, found what was in it unprepared and unguarded. Of its disastrous and pitiable evils I am not able to give a full written account; for at the breaking of that tearful morning there was to be seen a sight full of turmoil, such as would have been enough to move even the stones and the lifeless creation to laments and groans. For whose heart, among those who saw it, was not broken, whose person did not shake with trembling, whose eyes' lamps were not darkened with a shadow of gloom, seeing the public squares full of corpses, and the houses, the broad halls, the narrow streets, and the rows of vineyards? Nearly the whole extent of the city was

stained with the blood of those slaughtered; where, moreover, many were still to be seen with life in them, gasping for breath with difficulty, and the men mercilessly, cruelly wounded further still: some had their bellies slit open and their livers pulled out and thrust into their mouths, and some they forced, while still alive, to eat of it. O Your forbearance then, O God! O the excess of our own evils! For it is thirteen years now that the Christian people have borne such unendurable sufferings, and the wrath of the Lord's anger has not been quenched; but His hand is still raised, to give to drink a full cup of unmixed wine — an evil draught. No longer for pardon and mercy, but for the repayment of hatred; with these they besieged the city and the villages and farmsteads around it, until not a living soul among mankind remained, except perhaps in some stronghold. And the impious, filled and sated with plunder, having put the city to fire and taken captives and spoil from the district, turned back. These are your grief-laden histories, O city — no longer a city of refuge, but a pit of destruction for those who dwell in you — a few of your manifold evils here set down.

And the impious came and reached the district of Karin, near the village called Blurk'; and since the inhabitants of the place had walled the hill round about, they had laid its foundations upon the earth, according to the Lord's own parable — for which reason, when the impious came like the surge of a swollen flood, at its striking it could not stand against them for a single moment, but was cast down at once, and its fall became a thing heard of throughout the world and unforgotten unto the very end of ages. Now what they had thought a hope of salvation and a place of refuge became for them a pit of ruin; and since the villages and monasteries on this side of the river Euphrates were all gathered there, and many besides from the town of Arcn, when the enemy came upon them they at once made a mockery of its strongholds. And once inside, at the flash of swords and the sound of the bowstrings, all of them, struck with trembling from fear, became as if bound in chains. And since there was no prince or leader to rouse them by courage and encouragement to strength of spirit against the enemy, urging on brave champions, as is the custom of all who go to war — being without a lord, at the very sight they gave way, they melted

and were thrown into confusion, they were shaken, and all their good sense collapsed. And they began to steal away from one another: some, at the coming of night, let themselves down over the wall and became fugitives; others gave themselves up of their own will; and those who remained inside, having abandoned any thought of fighting, dug hiding-pits and covered themselves with earth. Against these the impious grew bold and began to slaughter them, not after the manner of war, but as sheep penned in a fold: some they seized by force and, bringing them forward, cut off their heads with the sword. Twice over they were taken from life: by the sword's flash above them, which is more bitter than death itself, and then by the death-blow itself. And some they struck face to face, sword in hand, and, falling upon them beast-like as they met them, striking the sword into the heart, killed at once; but the heavy-set and the stout of body they forced to their knees upon the ground and, stretching out their hands to stakes driven in, bound them to the earth, and, tearing off their skin with the nails still on, from this side and that, along the arm and the back, to the very tips of the second hand, dragged and pulled it off by force, and made of it bowstrings. Oh! How bitter is this history!

But as for the priests and monks, what ears could bear the unheard-of evils that they suffered? Some of them, flayed of their skin from the chest upward, were led about, face and head still attached to it, and, tormented with such bitter torments, were only then put to death. For what other torment, more bitter and unbearable than this, could anyone conceive — such as is nowhere found to have occurred even in the sufferings of the holy martyrs?

In this manner they cut down and finished off all of them, turning up every corner, and those buried alive they killed by piercing them cruelly with spears; and the wailing of the tormented resounded in echoes throughout the mountains, all together. And when they had made an end of all their lives, they then pierced the bellies of all the fallen and drew out their gall, gathering it into vessels, and gave the captive women to carry it with them. Such was the end of this ruinous imprisonment; thus were we delivered into the hands of evil and pitiless men, and there was no visitation to us from the Lord, because we did not heed Him while we were still at peace. He called to us with a beseeching voice,

through the prophets: «Come, He says, hearken to Me, and your souls shall live in good; and if you willingly hearken to Me, you shall eat the good things of the land.» We held His words in contempt; for this reason He too did not hearken to us in the time of affliction, but turned His face away from us. And we were delivered into the hands of our enemies, and those who hate us afflicted us, and their arrow was drunk with our blood, and their sword devoured the flesh of our fallen and wounded, the men of our own fighting force; and they went off with this victory to their own land. As for the number of the fallen and the captives, seven thousand was the count given, and of the monks, sixty.

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Concerning the Devastation of the Land of Mesopotamia and Whatever Cities Were in It, and the Boundless Slaughter

As for what we mentioned earlier — that coming down into the district of Mananaghi they divided in two — the first division did what I have written. But the second, at a headlong gallop with swift-footed course, passed through Handzit' and Khordzean, turning aside neither to right nor left; and just as an arrow that leaves the archer's hand, driven by the force of the draw, goes and meets its mark, so they, giving no sleep to their eyes nor slumber to their eyelids, having become travelers by night, suddenly, in an unforeseen hour, like hail mixed with stones, poured down upon the inhabitants of the city of the south. And since the city had no defensible position its inhabitants surged like the waves of the sea and could find no way out. Woe to the deeds done there then! Upon them the impious set the sword, and slaughtered mother with child, and son in front of his father; and in an instant the well-built city became a pit of blood. And because, in the violent panic and the sudden onset of death, the love of kin and the affection of blood were forgotten, each contrived some device by which he might perhaps save himself from that hell-kindled wrath; and fleeing into the vineyards around the city they fell in among them and hid beneath the leaf-thick vines. But the impious learned of it, and having searched them out pierced them with spears and put every one to death. And the clusters of the grapevine were dyed with their blood. Those who afterward remained, bereft, found their dead among the vines and covered them with earth; but they could not bring themselves to harvest the vineyards or to taste of the grapes, saying that it was human blood they would eat. Now the impious, having done with the slaughter, turned back into the city; and turning up every corner of the houses, if anyone had hidden his goods in some hiding place, they dug it out again with great cunning. Then, having set fire to the city, they burned and

ravaged it, and taking booty and captives went out from the place. Likewise the villages and towns around it — all destroyed by sword and fire and captivity, until there remained not a living soul who opened his mouth and made a sound.

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The Reign of Komianos

Komianos, being open-handed and rich in treasure, gathered many troops to himself. When the king saw that circumstances were turning out favorably for him and prospering, he turned to entreaty and began to send ambassadors; he promised him gifts, and the authority of the curopalates in the East — "Only turn to peace, that we may require the blood of the Christians"; but he neither believed it nor agreed. Then, the embassies spent, those intimate with the king strove to subdue him by victory in war.

Having mustered many troops they came against him, and meeting one another they engaged in battle, where there was much bloodshed, of which they say that no one has seen such a slaughter in one place among the Romans; in that place many even of the chief men fell, and this from both sides; but the army of Komianos prevailed. And since the patriarch was on Komianos's side, he brought many of the city's chief men into agreement with himself; and having brought Komianos within, they made him king. And having made Michael a monk, they sent him across to an island; but they say that he went willingly. All this came to pass in this world-ravaging year.

The Destruction of the Royal City of Melitene

As a rod of torments, and not of correction, God took T'urk'astan and the house of the Persians into his hand, and by them judged us according to the justice of his own judgments; for the rod of correction belongs to a father, but that of torments to a judge, as David says of the torments of the sinful: «Many are the torments of the sinful; and your corrections shall teach me.» In agreement with this Paul too writes to the Hebrews: «For if you stand within the order of discipline,» he says, «God deals with you as with sons.»

Now Christ, in his life-giving gospel, having brought us to his own heavenly Father, set us near him in kinship, and commanded us in every way to become like him and to keep our kinship firm in the sweetness of good conduct — yet we rebelled against our sweet and good Father and became strangers to that kinship; for this reason, in the time of our affliction and our torments, he looked away from us, and we were handed over into the hand of a foreign people; and our enemies grew strong over us, and those who hated us seized us; and our souls were bowed down even to the dust, and our bellies clove to the earth. And as God, tormenting Egypt in Moses' day with the ten-plague rod, said, «This is my great power» — now all of it has befallen us. Their water was turned into blood; our rivers and streams, and nearly the whole soil of this land, were dyed with the color of our own blood. Among them the body swelled and boiled with sores; our whole body was hacked to pieces, cut limb from limb. Among them the dog-fly and the gnat, striking the lordly features of their faces with their stings, blinded them; but among us it was the onslaught of arrows, which wounded us the more bitterly still. Among them the light was turned to darkness for three days; but for us the light was quenched outright, for the very seat of light fell to death, and no more shall he see the goodness of the Lord in his life. Among them the loathsome worm crept into their houses; our houses and our churches — it comes upon me with dread even to say it — were corrupted, and left stinking, by corruption-working and, worse, grievous

plagues. Among them the death-bearing angel struck the firstborn; our whole house, with its inhabitants, was consumed and destroyed. The sea alone was lacking to us — but if you weigh it by the deed, you will see that too has befallen us: for what abyss is more unfathomable than T'urk'astan, or what depth of earth deeper, into which our captives were carried off and vanished, as though into the Red Sea, which was dyed with the blood of its own captives? From them the Israelites asked, as wages, ornaments of gold and garments, from those to whom they had been enslaved; but us they utterly stripped and plundered outright, though we have done them no wrong. Oh, alas and woe upon this inconsolable ruin! For the Egyptians the justice of their punishments was twofold: for the bitter servitude with which they oppressed Israel, for which God came to judgment and spoke against them; and because they served the creatures and not the Creator, who is blessed forever. We have a confessing tongue, though we are void of good works, and we suffer their sufferings — how pitiable we are, and how deserving of lament! O Lord and Maker and God, why hast Thou utterly cast us off, and made us the trampled ground of the heathen, the mockery and derision of our enemies' scorn? Awake, and rouse up Thy power, and come to save us; God of powers, turn again to us, and repay our neighbors sevenfold into their own bosom.

Now for other cities and districts the time of their devastation fell short by a matter of days — ten, or a little more or less; but this city, of which we have made our account, while it still stood was, like Moab, a heifer in the full vigour of its strength, tender and delicate; whose merchants were the glorious of the earth and whose buyers were the kings of nations, who reclined upon ivory thrones, drank strained wine continually, and anointed themselves with the finest oils. And since every evil takes its beginning from this, as Moses too brings accusation against Israel: «He grew fat,» he says, «he grew thick and gross, and forsook the Lord God his Maker» — so too the Sodomites, inflamed by such a life, fell into unbearable evils, as Ezekiel makes plain, that it was from fullness of bread and the surfeit of life that they grew wanton; and even the first man in paradise could not, for a single day, enjoy the good things without transgression. And since these are the bounds of our nature — in growing poor we murmur

and lay blame on God, and in growing rich we grow arrogant, and as though immortal we lay violent hold upon the world. For this reason, by turn and by change, he teaches us to keep within measure, and not to rise beyond our bounds, lest we fall the more greatly. For what is one to understand himself to be, beside base and lowly earth? — our beginning is from it, and our return is again to the same; and he who is the maker of our nature does not wish that anyone perish, and for this reason leaves no one wholly unrestrained: wherever there is occasion for correction, he corrects with gentleness and as a father; and when we grow deaf to correction, he punishes with lordly authority. Some among sinners he judges here, that there he may make their torments the lighter; some he keeps for the world to come; there are those punished both here and there, as the Sodomites; those punished here only, as Lazarus; and those punished there only, as the rich man. But let this rest here for now; let us return to the order of our history.

Now when the autumn of that sorrowful year had come, while the Romans were still preoccupied with the tumult over their kings, at the entering of the month of Areg another army went out from the Persians — whether of the earlier ones or new, I do not know — and it went through desert places with such caution that no one could perceive it, until it reached the district called Kamakh; and there it divided in two. One part went as far as Koloneia and, according to their custom, took the land captive — which we learned of only afterward, when they passed back on their return. But the other, having set its eye on Melitene, came upon it by night; and since a troop of Roman cavalry stood guard over the city, the garrison sallied out and made a sudden attack. As they engaged they wrought great slaughter on both sides; and as the battle continued the city — as many as could get out — escaped; and the fighting men who remained pursued the fugitives; but those they seized within the city they all put to the sword. They remained in the city twelve days and, digging it out from its foundations, laid it waste together with the estates surrounding it. And this was the recompense of their arrogance from the Lord, incorruptible and just, who repays to each according to his deeds.

But the districts from Ekegheats' downward, through which they had passed by night, when they learned of the evils that had befallen Melitene, gathered many companies of archers and seized the passes of the road. But the lawless, knowing no other road, and the mountains being covered with thick-packed snow, remained helplessly in that place five months, the whole winter through, until the month of Nawasard, and stripped the land of any hope of life; and the unbearable evils they wrought there they left as a memorial from generation to generation: for making sport of the children and other infants, playing with javelins and arrows, they cruelly pierced and destroyed them, and no pity of compassion dripped into their nature. I forbear to tell of those who, seizing children from their parents' arms, dashed them against stones; and as for the fair-formed women and the maidens who had been raised in seclusion — what need have we to set down their disgraces in writing as well? Do you see the measure of evils, when God gives men over out of his hands, how unbearable it is?

And because food failed for man and beast, they, driven by the force of need, went up through Khordzean; and since from fear of them the roads had been cut, and the snow still held the land in its thickness, they made their marches twice over: first, forming the horses and mules into a herd, they drove them unladen and opened a road, and afterward brought the captives and the baggage behind. By these marches they came to the head of the district, to the village called Mormreans. And since the village had a fortress, all the inhabitants had gathered there. When the Persian arrived he made camp, supposing cavalry lay within the fortress; the snow having packed hard, he made ready for battle. And their chief, going before the fortress, began to speak certain words to the one who was lord within it; the snow lay covered with many tents; and he, sitting upon it and holding his shield before him, spoke out hellish words with great-minded arrogance — but the lord within the stronghold, having waited for the opportune moment, at the tilting of the shield struck him through the throat with an arrow and killed him on the spot. And because a company of Romans was coming up behind, who at that very moment sounded their trumpets, when the lawless heard it they took to flight; and those in the fortress went out and

brought in as many captives and as much plunder as they could — but the Romans had not yet come up. Now when the Persian saw there was no other army, he turned back, cut down such of the plunderers as he met, and took the rest away with him. And going near the borders of Eghnut, they too went out and, giving battle, rescued many captives and were filled with plunder, which they brought into the fortress. But as for those blood-drinking beasts, driven back and forced into the passes, as they entered the borders of Taron, troops came down from the mountain called Simn, which by the custom of men is called Sanasunk' after the name of their forefather; and closing with them they conquered and cut down all of them; and having rescued the booty and the captives they returned rejoicing and glorifying God.

In this same year they burned the beautiful palace of St. Karapet, which a certain Hrahat, one of the officials of the great Grigor son of Vasak, had built with great effort while they were still lords of the land — the antechamber that stood before St. Karapet, which he had adorned with fitting beauty for the glory and honor of the great martyr and Forerunner of Christ; and also the other buildings, and the wooden-built church which they call St. Grigor. And it was the five hundred and seventh year of our era when this thus came to pass.

Concerning the Evil Sect of the Tondrakians, Which Appeared in the District of Hark' and Troubled Many

A certain bishop Yakobos, who held the oversight of the churches of the house of Hark', showed forth in himself at the beginning of his rule the outward form of virtue — clothed in sackcloth, fasting, going barefoot. And he chose priests who went about continually with him, coarse in dress and unadorned, cut off from delicious foods, always occupied with the singing of psalms. By this outward form he moved the distant and the near to wonder, and everyone longed to see him. And those greatly diseased with arrogance on account of power gave themselves over so entirely to obedience toward him that, had he commanded them to give up their very souls, no one would have resisted or dared to open his mouth and make a sound. But this was hypocrisy, and not truth; for the fruit is what makes the tree known, as we have heard from the Lord himself. In agreement with this the Apostle too writes: «Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light; what wonder then if his ministers also disguise themselves in the form of the apostles of Christ.» For just as men mix deadly drugs into familiar foods, and those who take them are seized by the drugs — just as those who cast the hook conceal it with bait, so that the fish, deceived by the bait, may be seized by the hook — so too the workers of lawlessness. For they do not dare show openly to anyone the pit of their own perdition, since who would consent to that, even had it strongly occurred to his mind, to sink of his own will into a pit from which there is no way to come up? For this reason, under the guise of our own pious religion, they disguise themselves so as to deceive the simple-minded, and with sweet-tasting words beguile the minds of the innocent; for their words graze like a cancer, and just as that disease is hard to cure, so too those seized by them can scarcely hold their footing.

Concerning them our Lord himself commands, in his life-giving gospel: «Beware of the false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves.» And the Apostle likewise teaches the Philippians the same thing, admonished by the Lord's own commands: «Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers.» For it is easy to be on guard against an outward enemy, but hard to escape wars that arise from one's own kin, as befell Abel and Joseph. Now if these men were of a foreign-speaking race, whatever race they were, it would be easy for us to guard against them; but as the blessed John writes: «They went out from us, but they were not all of us» — and to have knowledge of this is hard. Of one tongue, of one race with us, sweet water and bitter welling from a single spring — though holy James spoke of this as a thing beyond belief, yet this too has come to pass among our own people: from this same sweet spring which our all-glorious leader, descending into the depths of the earth with fifteen years of sweat-drenched labor, caused to well up for us — a spring of overflowing streams from the depth of the excavation, crystal-clear and pure according to Ezekiel's vision — into which the schismatic, rust-gushing rivulets could not make their entry. For the bulwark of truth had been firmly fortified upon the rock of faith, down to these latest times — which our very Illuminator himself foresaw with prophetic spirit: that the lambs would become wolves and pour out streams of blood. And this came to pass through the multiplying of men's lawlessness upon the earth, and through the sleep of the good householder who had been the sower of the wheat; then the enemy, finding his opportunity, sowed tares in the midst of the wheat, according to the parable of the gospel. And the dregs of bitterness were mixed in with the life-giving water that flowed as a spring from the house of the Lord; but the teachers of the church made it known in good time, and tore up the harmful tares by the root from the field of our faith, and pressed out and cleared away the dregs of bitterness, restoring the waters to health with the salt of truth, after the manner of holy Elisha's timely remedy. And so much for this; but it is time to turn our discourse back to its head, so that what we have said may prove faithful to us.

Now the firstborn attendant and confederate of the father of all evils — when the false good reputation that foolish men had spread about him had grown to

this degree of strength — began thereafter to become an archer against the mark of our faith, whose arrow-tips were hardened in the fire of oak. For the man was exceedingly eloquent, and with his artful tongue he bewitched the ears of many; and on that foundation he thought to overturn the holy church, not calling to mind the Lord's own commands and the unfailing promise made to Peter: «You are the rock, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.» He did not believe this, but heard it as though it were merely some man's private saying; for which reason, entering into contention, he thought to shave off the glory of the church — as that harlot of old did the locks of Samson — so as to betray to the foreigners that unconquerable person, that is, to the despoilers of the truth, the holy Church, which our Lord Jesus Christ purchased with his own precious blood, and, crowning it, glorified it with the all-conquering cross, setting up in it a mystical table after the pattern of the tree of life in Eden, whose deathless fruit we have surely come to know as the body of the Life-giver, according to his own unerring command: «He who eats my flesh shall never see death.» Now see for yourself his contrived cunning — how, serpent-like, through deceits he schemed to pour out corrupting poisons upon those sound in faith.

First he began to make a selection among the priesthood according to worthiness, and he ordered the unworthy to keep silence; and when this pleased many, he added yet another thing to it: he commanded that the worthy should offer up the sacrifice only three times in the year. And though it is written in the Nicene canons that, however grave a sinner a man may be, one must receive his confession, and grant him communion of the Lord's body and blood, and admit him to the sacrifice and to all the ranks of Christian rite — this he would not so much as receive into his ears. Instead he taught thus: that whoever had not, by his own person, through which he had sinned, and by that same person done penance, was helped neither by remembrances nor by offerings on his behalf; and with those who did his will he would set this to mockery and laugh, bringing forward a beast of burden and setting it before them, and saying: "O wretched four-footed creature, granted that this one sinned in his own time and died — what sin did you commit, that you should die along with him?" And

over this the people were divided in two; by some it was accepted, by others not; and as every man remained tossed about and in doubt, seeking to understand the outcome, so too those who at that time, in deserts and in caves, by solitary austerities continually performed what was pleasing to God, with great groaning and tearful supplications sought a visitation from the beneficent Lord. Moreover a synod was convened twice, of many fathers and patriarchs and priests and a mixed multitude beyond number. But because the lords of the district were, every one of them, bound as though by chains to his hypocritical outward form, they vowed to die first, after the manner of war, rather than deliver him into the hands of the synod. And he, Nestor-like, sitting at home with great self-assurance, made his answer to the synod by means of messengers, having put his hope in the help of the lords and not in God — not calling to mind David's own song, that «It is better to trust in the Lord than to trust in princes»; the wretched man thought to overcome the truth by the help of men. But God, who does not allow the rod of sinners to presume upon the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous stretch out their hands to wickedness — who does the will of those who fear him, and hears their prayers; who brings calm out of storms, and brings rain in time of drought, and did this too, at the prayer of one righteous man — he came to visit us and wrought the salvation of his people, he who knows, according to his own deep wisdom, how to lay the foundation of great matters from far off, and here administered it in whatever way was, as it turned out, most beneficial. And so it came to pass.

A certain monk named Esayi, from the district of Karin, of a pious lineage, who had gone and attached himself to him on account of his good reputation — when such stirrings and inquiries were aroused concerning him, he kept watch over him with attentive care; for the man was exceedingly wise, and by showing him great familiarity he made himself appear one of his trusted followers. And having seen and learned of his depraved practices, he went without delay and reported them to the holy patriarch Sargis. Who, hearing it and getting to the bottom of the matter, called the wretched man to himself with gentle words and rendered to him according to his desert; for, having released him from the priestly order and set upon his face the brand marked with a fox, the herald cried

out concerning him: "Whoever, having crept away from the faith of the holy Illuminator, shall enter and join himself to the man-faced beasts' fold of the lawless Tondrakians, let him bear this judgment and sentence." And he ordered the utterly wretched man confined in prison, since he wished that he might perhaps repent, and confess, and hold himself apart from the vile sect; for he had great pity for the ruined soul.

But since, according to the words of Jeremiah, fire cannot forget its burning, nor the Indian his blackness, nor the leopard his spots — so too the evil man cannot forget his own evil-doing: for, having broken out of the prison by night and become a fugitive, he crossed into the land of the Greeks and reached the imperial city of Constantinople, and became a slanderer of our faith, and asked to be baptized according to their own rite. But they, having informed themselves according to their own wisdom and gotten to the bottom of the matter, would not accept him, but said: "Him whom the Armenians have rejected and dishonored on account of his faith, we too will not receive." And when this did not succeed for him, he went off and passed into the district of Apahunik', to the dwelling-place of Satan, the assembly of the god-forsaken and the fold of beasts, called Tondrak; and there for a time he denned himself in silence. But they say that even they would not receive him, because of his still greater impurity; for which reason he went off to the mountain of Khlat', and there, finding some of his own people in the farmsteads and remoter places, stayed among them; and having passed his days there he died wretchedly in the city called Muharkin. Since he had not walked according to the canon of the scriptures, nor been in accord with Christians, he was to be left aside; for which reason he died like a donkey, and was buried like a carcass, leaving behind him an evil memory — so that everyone who hears this history will loose curses after him.

How the Fire of Error Blazed Up Also in the Territory of Mananaghi: It Must Be Told

Kuntsik, a certain monk of lewd name, who dwelt near the fortress-town called Shirni — whose farmstead they still call by his own name to this day — this man, far advanced in years, held within himself the leaven of defilement; for he had learned it from a certain monk of lewd character who gave himself out to be from Aghuank', but was the firstborn of Satan and the storehouse of his devisings, so that the smoke of the ever-blazing furnace of Gehenna went forth continually from his mouth, by which many, having taken it as medicine, perished. Now this Kuntsik, an active laborer for Satan, hunted down a certain woman named Hranush, who was of a leading and choice family and mistress of a farmstead bordering his own. And when she was filled with his death-breathing venom she was not content with her own ruin alone, but fashioned many helpers for her deceits. First and foremost two women who were her kinswomen, whose names are these: the one Akhni, and the other Kamara, who was indeed a true doer of Satan's will. These two were own sisters; seized by the raging disease of harlotry, as is the custom of their fold, and by the art of sorcery they became teachers for Satan, in whom the father of all evils grew strong; who «sharpened their tongues like a sword, as the psalmist's song has it, and bent their bows to shoot bitter things» — to be archers against the upright in heart, who struck and wounded many innocent souls with grievous and deadly wounds. And since from their ancestral inheritance they held two villages, they made these ready as dens and lodging-places for the crooked serpent-dragon, in which he lodged and poured forth his venom violently; and they, his cupbearers, gave those who dwelt round about to drink unto destruction. Concerning this very thing Moses wrote, saying: «Their wine is the fury of dragons, the fury of asps, for which there is no remedy.»

A certain prince named Vrver, brother to these partisan women, became the doer of their will. This man, formerly sound in the faith, was foremost in the practice of piety, so much so that he built a monastery on his own inheritance, gathering ascetic brothers into it; and with ample provision he kept their life free of want, whose leader was known by the name Andreas, greatly renowned in monastic contests. To these men this prince would come every year during the fast of the Forty, and share in their observance until the days of the great Pascha, and showed forth many other good works in their service; and in almsgiving to the poor and obedience to priests he showed himself more forward than many. This man the Evil One hooked by the hand of these same women, who fornicated with him indiscriminately, with a corrupting passion, giving no thought to the closeness of their blood. For these are the dens of their perdition. This is indeed also the fourth daughter of Solomon's leech. Concerning this the divine Apostle commands: «Not,» he says, «in the passion of lust, as also the other Gentiles, who do not know God.» Do you see that this passion is a pagan one? See what manner of demonstration the divinely blessed Solomon makes concerning it: «My son,» he says, "keep yourself from entanglement with strange women; for whomever she finds among the thoughtless young, with sweet words she persuades to remain with her; for the lips of a harlot woman drip honey, which for a time sweetens the palate of those persuaded, but afterward is found more bitter than gall; for she takes and leads her companion away like a dog on a leash, and like a bull-calf to the slaughter, and like a deer struck with an arrow through the liver; and he cannot be healed of it until she brings him, body and all, down to hell — for her house is the vestibule of hell."

Ensnared by these things, that lamentable Vrver stripped off his integrity, fell away from the faith, and became an enemy of God and of his saints. He forsook the Lord who had given him birth by the holy font, and forgot God who had fed him with his own body and blood. Having gone out from the house, having fallen from honor, he forgot the divine covenant and withdrew from communion with the ascetic order; and the place which had once been a gathering-house of monks — which he had built at great expense and labour, where choirs of psalm-singers and companies of ministers, with sweet-voiced

songs, blessed God in unison with the hosts above — today its voices are silenced, and the place lies waste and unpeopled. And after this, what then? The wretched man went and joined himself to those evil-demoned women, and to the farmsteads which were their native places, mentioned a little before, whose names are called the one Kashe and the other Aghyusoy; they brought all the inhabitants of those places into league with themselves; and then, raging with demonic fury, they turned the churches which had been built long ago in their own serpent-nested places into waste ground. And in the fields, wherever a fitting hour met them, they destroyed the sign of our salvation and the weapon of the Lord's victory, by which the victory over death was swallowed up and the crooked enemy's proverbs against us were removed — in which the blessed Paul, setting aside all created things, gloried in its very power: «God forbid,» he says, «that I should glory, except only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ» — these men, having become avengers for their father Satan, smashed it shamelessly. But since I have mentioned the cross, I will bring into my history another marvelous tale, which brings dread to all who hear it.

In a district of the Pakhra mountain, now called Gaylakhazut, there was a certain town of the early fathers which they call Bazmaghbyur, where a divine sign had been set up with manifold splendid adornment; and they have changed the village's own name accordingly, calling it Khach' [Cross] to this very day. On the night of the great feast of Pentecost — which is called the new Sunday — the will-doing labourers of Satan came and, striking with a hammer the crown of the God-receiving sign, broke it in pieces and cast it to the ground, and themselves stole away unseen into their serpent-dens. At this the heaven above marveled, and the whole earth was struck with dread and trembling; the morning star made lament for the deed, and the evening star mourned harshly. Now, according to the customary order, at the hour of matins the priest arose and came before the cross to perform the office of the great Sunday; and seeing the astonishing sight he laid hand to his collar and tore his garment, and with a loud cry at once gathered the inhabitants of the place, startled, to see it. And they, seeing the great wonder, took up lamentation, beat their breasts, and wept; and there was then, of men and women, old and young, one single voice of

wailing and groaning. And while they stood in this distress, understanding suddenly dawned upon them, according to God's ineffable wisdom: on the night the deed had been done, snow had unexpectedly fallen and whitened the face of the earth, which, having caught the tracks of the lawless men, led straight to their dens. And at once word was sent to the blessed patriarch Samuel; who, hearing it, arrived there with a great gathering, and having assembled the bishops and priests and fathers of the district, went with them and burned and destroyed the dens of the lawless men, cursing their goods and possessions, as Joshua did of old at Jericho, so that no one should dare take anything for himself. And six of them — whom they called teachers of the evil and foul rites — he had seized, and came with the assembly to the town called Jerma, and ordered their faces branded with the fox-mark, that this might be for them a mark forever, plain and recognizable to all, so that no one might unknowingly have dealings with them, but that they should be hunted from among all men like an evil beast. After this he blessed the people who had labored together with him, and sent them away in peace.

Now when summer came, a judge of the laws of the land was sent forth by the king, whose name was Eghia. When he arrived in the district of Ekegheats', that most evil Vrver went out to meet him and brought accusation against the honored patriarch Samuel, and against the other bishops who were with him, saying: "They carried off my house as plunder, and they laid waste my village and set it on fire." And he laid upon them a debt of many treasures and possessions. When the judge heard this, being further inflamed to anger, he sent soldiers to bring the blessed bishops before him by compulsion. Now when the soldiers came, the chief of the bishops wrote letters to the diocesan clergy of the church, to the priests and to the hermits, that they should assemble to him without giving thought to anything. And as the report reached them, it was as though notice went out to everyone by God's own providence; without delay a multitude gathered in one place — not only of the clergy, but even more of the laity, whose number I am not able to commit to writing. And the assembly went in a great multitude as far as the bank of the river Euphrates, where the Mananaghi flows into it. And at that hour came a downpour of rain, and from

its abundance the Euphrates rose and came full from bank to bank. Now the soldiers, having brought a boat, hastened to ferry the elderly bishop Samuel and his nephew Theodoros across to the town called Koter, since the judge was there too; but the people laid hold of the bishops and would not give them into the soldiers' hands. And they said: "First we will ferry these across, and then the people"; and having persuaded them with this word, they took the bishops with the boat and ferried them across. And having stopped the boat, he put the bishops in prison; and when the assembly understood their treachery — that they did not turn the boat back as they had promised — with a loud voice and with exhorting cries they encouraged one another that it was better to die crossing the waters than to hear reviling words spoken against the leaders of the faith. And since the hour had grown toward evening, and the sun, gathering its scattered rays to itself, was turning toward its setting, giving boldness to the heaven-spanning luminary, then the ranks of the priests, coming forward, did not divide the waters by the mystery of the cross, but, holding the very sign itself of the Lord's victory in their hands and raising it upon their shoulders, with firm and steadfast faith struck the high-heaped mounds of the waters, from which, like a grass-fed horse wrenched back by the bridle, the water gave way and yielded passage to the people, not one person of all that great multitude being harmed. And when they had crossed they sang songs of thanksgiving to God the whole night through, having as leader of their dance the immaculate Mary, who is the holy Church, holding the timbrel in her hand, that is, the truth of the faith — not voiceless and unskilled, fallen into the damp passions of schism, but warm according to the Holy Spirit, dry of those passions, and ready for resounding songs — which, struck with the Davidic tambourine, they sounded in everyone's hearing: «Praise the Lord, for he has done wonderful things,» and the words that follow; and with this loud voice they brought the whole night through to its close in prayers to God.

Now when the judge heard of the divine dispensation and the wonders of these miracles, he knew that the Lord was visiting our nation. Seized with trembling from great astonishment, he took refuge in prayer and called upon God for help, saying, "Let me not, Lord, unknowingly turn aside from your judgments." And

at daybreak — for it was Sunday — he went to the episcopal residence called P'rris, and having set forth a just proceeding he seated the leading men of the assembly for the trial and the judgment; and they summoned the unworthy and guilty Vrrer to come to the hearing of justice. And since there is a certain living creature which they call the cuttlefish, of which they say that it changes every color in order to escape its hunters — so too he, when he saw that he could not withstand the strengthening of the truth (for when the light dawns the darkness is spent, and when the truth is revealed falsehood perishes) — what then does he do, and what device does he contrive? He promises to become a Roman, and becomes the adopted son of the bishop, whose name was called Episarar, having stolen his mind with a bribe. And coming before the tribunal he entreated that he be granted to him as a favor, and the judge himself wished the same; for the brother of the lawless man was of princely rank and stout-hearted valor, one of the king's own chosen men, before whom the judge stood in great awe; wherefore he gave him over to the bishop's keeping, as he had asked. But as for the others whom they found among his accomplices, having tortured them with great blows and scourging, they made them outcasts, laying waste their houses; and the assembly blessed the judge, and they were dismissed in peace.

But the judgments of God had already gone before him: for although he escaped the human punishments, he was not able to escape the hands of the All-Knowing. For suddenly his body was set ablaze with a burning heat, as was Herod's, and the fingers of his hands withered, and could no longer assist his body in taking food; moreover, the food which he ate with great suffering — its passage was blocked, so that he had to discharge the working of his refuse in reverse, until the day of his death; and afterward his very body too was corrupted with leprosy. But he did not come to repentance, nor did he remember his former piety, but was carried away by that same demonic error until he was taken from among the living; and the torments of his body constantly brought to mind the memory of the hell for which he was destined.

But their depraved deed we have judged unfitting to commit to writing, since it is exceedingly filthy; and since not everyone is steadfast in hearing, the mention of many men's sins draws the hearers into prurient itching, and even leads to the

very commission of the deed; for this reason I too have kept clear of it. But what is manifest concerning them, and what must be told to us, is this: they did not accept the Church and the ordinances of the Church at all — neither baptism, nor the great and fearsome mystery of the eucharist; neither the cross, nor the ordinance of the fasts. But let us, who truly believe in the Holy Trinity, hold fast the unshaken confession of our hope, which we have learned from the holy fathers; and let us turn our faces away from their godless assembly, sending curses down upon them.

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Concerning the Slaughter of the World- Renowned City of Ani, by Which...

And now, mankind has fallen into many follies and delusions, and because of extravagance and an unyielding mind they have taken refuge in their own works: mighty giants of towering stature, invincible and unconquerable — these they called sons of god. And some, fortified with a tower, holding its height unapproachable, were unwilling to taste of the cup of the Lord's goodness — like that first structure of folly, much-toiled and easily thrown down. So too the inhabitants of Jericho, because of the strength of their towers, did not count themselves among the rest of the Canaanites, as to whether the right hand of the Lord ruled over them or the sword of the Almighty drew near. For it is the Lord who builds and who tears down, who gives strongholds over to trembling and lofty towers to ruin. For even the tower on the heights of Lebanon, which David built and fortified with sword and shield against Damascus, was no hindrance to Eder, who rose up as an adversary to Solomon. For holiness is the stronghold, and the choice works of piety toward God are a wall.

Now let us return to the order of what was set forth before. Let none reckon sins few or slight — those who do not repent or make atonement, or who draw upon themselves the punishment near at hand and the punishment of those who border them, which falls out according to men's transgressions: let the cypress mourn for the cedar's sake, and the bramble for the olive tree's. For it is not that all are worthy of death, according to the Lord's own word, upon whom the tower fell — but it stands as a warning that seizes those nearby on account of others' sins, and as instruction and caution for those far away. For it was not done long ago, nor has so much time passed as to blur the record of the calamities that befell Arcn; those who saw it with their own eyes were not few, and had no need of report. For there were many a land and city that survived that onslaught, but they grew stubborn in their minds, and by their very

fortifications rebelled — not against men, but against God, who gives high towers over to trampling and fortified cities to mounds of earth. They neither understood nor took to heart the fear of the Lord and the threats that come from him, and they reckoned as exhausted the dregs of wrath and fury that are poured down for sinners to drink. Above all the stronghold of Ani, and its daughter towns round about, being schooled all the more in arrogance, kicked against heaven itself — until God stirred up the king of the Persians to act in his own stead, to see what would be done in it. A work of war came upon the land of the Armenians, to extend their own habitations and to rule over the territory of another kingdom; and it was the five hundred and thirteenth year of our era.

Now the king came, advancing with many myriads and countless men-at-arms. Having entered our land he brought fear and dread upon those far and near. He trampled, he overthrew many lands, until he reached the city that held its own sins in full measure. He pitched his tent opposite the city of Ani and spread out his camp across the breadth of the land. He strove and contrived to tear away the iron gate and the bronze bolts that stood against his own dominion; and having grown hopeless on account of its strength, though he pressed the assault the harder, he was minded to march away. And he did not know that the Lord had cast discord and disunity, tumult and division, among the guards and the princes; whereupon they abandoned the work of war and turned to flight, and, panic-stricken, no one looked to kinsman or close friend, but each was seized with terror. And the armed troops fighting outside, seeing this, made a way for themselves up over the wall opposite them, and poured into the bosom of the city like a surge of the sea's waves, and, putting the Persian sword to work, spared no one. But a multitude of men and women rushed to the palaces of the kings, as though they might survive there, and others escaped to the stronghold called Nerk'i berd. And as for those who had fortified themselves within the city — when the enemy learned they were unprepared, having neither fighting men nor food and drink, they swiftly surrounded and pressed them with sudden distress, until they forced them out against their will.

There one might see the grief and the anguish of every age of life: infants snatched from their mothers' arms and mercilessly dashed against stone, and the

mothers drenching their children with blood and tears. One sword slaughtered father and son alike; for the old and the young, priests and deacons, received the same taste of death from the sword. For the city was filled from end to end, and the road itself was made of the bodies of the slain; for from the multitude of the slaughtered the great stream that runs by the city was dyed with blood, and wild beasts and tame became the grave of the corpses, for there was none to bury the slaughtered and cover them with the earth they were owed. And moreover, from the very fat of the injustice wrought within it, the high-built and beautifully-adorned mansions were burned down, and the whole habitation became like a heap of earth; and the usury and the deceit that were within it were brought to an end.

This is the portion of unjust cities, which build themselves up with the blood of strangers, grow rich from the sweat of the poor, and fortify their houses through usury and injustice; and they, holding their minds without mercy toward the poor and the needy, attend only to ease and luxury, and do not shrink from deeds of filthiness, but are wholly intoxicated by the lusts which have taken them to themselves. And now what befalls them at the coming of the Lord's wrath? They are consumed and waste away like wax before fire, whether it be a king or a prince, as we have learned from these writings. But the king of the Persians, having taken possession of many provinces, returned to his own land with countless plunder.

Concerning the King of the Greeks, Who Was Taken Captive by the King of the Persians

Now it is not fitting to become a narrator of things beyond one's reach and not to be undertaken, or to commit them to writing — matters for which no labor of others has been handed down to us, nor was it demanded of us by anyone, nor are we ourselves able to set our hand to it. For that reason we have passed over much of the necessary history bound up with these matters, leaving it to others more skilled and richer in mind, that perhaps someone among them may take it up; and in this I stir rivalry in those who are able. But we have reckoned it no small failing to pass over in silence the spectacle of war between the two kings; rather, let us settle great matters in few words.

Now the king Diogenes, who was the sixtieth from the great Constantine by the reckoning of the kings — a little more or less — when he saw that the king of the Persians had cut off no small part of land from his own kingdom, and had put the governors of the Greeks to flight, and had returned to his own land with great plunder and captives, then the king of the Greeks, ten years later, took upon himself the work of war, in keeping with his zealous and valiant nature, lest he appear cowardly and base and leave behind him a base memory. Vaunting himself, and with great fury, as though crossing the sea as over dry land, he passed over, and, encamping in the land of the Bithynians, gathered to himself a boundless multitude. For he still held the wide and spacious extent of the kingdom's border, from the valleys of the Phoenicians, where great Antioch stands, as far as the fortress of Van, and the whole land of Rshtunik' facing Her. Seeing so great a multitude gathered in one place he grew proud and was lifted up in his mind, thinking he would not be overcome by earth-born kings, and he did not call to mind the word of the prophet — that it is not a multitude of troops that can save the king, nor the giant by his own strength, but the right hand and arm of the Almighty.

Now he conceived some unseemly plan in his mind, and sent much of the army by another road under the hand of his generals; and he himself, with a great multitude, took the eastward road and came to the great city of Theodosiopolis, and there arrayed the cavalry. Grievous are sins, and they strip away sonship and wisdom from those who commit them; but arrogance still more so, by which princes and kings are led astray, and are not persuaded by the memory of the earlier arrogant ones who were brought to ruin — for this same disease of wickedness corrupts all who bear it, since it is not that anyone else stands opposed to the arrogant man, but God himself is his adversary, as the proverb-maker says. For this reason he did not allow the troops rest enough for other multitudes to gather to him, and encourage one another to valor and vigor, and become a great host terrible to the enemy; but chose instead to press the work of war forward with his own forces alone. He came swiftly to where the king of the Persians had encamped, at the borders of the district of Manazkert, and there pitched his royal tent facing the Persian host, fortified himself round about, and set a day for battle.

But the king of the Persians, out of fear, sought battle by cunning, lest the scattered troops, coming together, should reinforce the king, and the line of battle become unassailable to him. He reckoned it better to stand against two parts than against three. He stirred up urgent alarm, until at last the Greek line of battle was formed, against its own will, facing the arrayed line of the Persians. And when, vaunting themselves, they rushed upon one another, and clashed with warlike display, and as yet the defeat of neither host appeared — then suddenly one great division, among whom there was no piety, rebelling against the king of the Greeks, went over to the side of the enemy. On account of this there was great breaking of the troops; and from then on they advanced into the ranks with hesitation and not with valor, and, having provoked the Persians, they made them vigorous and unassailable. But the king of the Greeks, without cause and unaware, was filled with wrath against the troops of the Armenians and against their people, and looked upon them with an evil eye; but when he saw the single-hearted fighting and the valiant struggle of the brave men — who did not shrink before the skilled bowmen of the Persians, but stood opposed to

the contest with courage, and did not turn their backs, though many had fallen away from love of the king, yet with a single mind took death upon themselves, so that even after death a fitting memory of their valor, with singleness of mind, might be left behind — then he showed an ill-timed love, and promised gifts beyond the reach of undertaking.

There the king, looking up from where he sat and watching, kept his eye upon his rivals; and seeing his own troops panic-stricken and turned to flight, then and there swiftly put on the array of an armed soldier, and came like lightning to the line of battle. And among the brave men of the Persians he laid many low, strewn as corpses, and brought sudden distress upon the troops. But he did not know this: that the commander of the Lord's host was not with him — he who appeared to Joshua and gave the victory. Nor did the Lord go forth with our troops with weapon and shield, nor did he draw the sword against the enemy and bar their way, nor did the Lord of hosts gird himself about the waist, nor did the Lord become for us a horn of salvation and of hope. Rather, gathering his strength back into himself, away from us, he delivered us into the hands of our enemies and into the reproach of our neighbors, and gave us up like sheep to the slaughter. Our bows were shattered, and our weapons broken; our soldiers grew weak and gave way; for the Lord took away his strength and the heart of courage from our soldiers and from our princes, took the sword and the might from them, and gave it to the enemy, on account of their unfitting conduct.

Now that world-ruler and lord of the great throne, taken captive like some cowardly slave of sin, they set before the king of the Persians. But God, who strikes and who heals, whose loving-kindness is boundless in its sweetness, and who does not strike utterly down the one he corrects, but forbears with a brief trial, that we may know our own weakness — he spared and honored the lord of his own footstool-throne, and cast into the heart of the beast-minded king of the Persians love and care as toward a beloved brother; and with much ease and care released him.

And now, him whom God had freed and drawn out, snatched from the hand of the foreigner — his own people, with treachery and disgrace, darkened the lights

of his eyes and slew him, and shed indelible blood upon that kingdom. From that time the strength of the princes and of the soldiers was taken away, and victory was not granted to that kingdom; and the princes stood toward one another with treachery and envy, and abolished the justice of judgments; they only laid the land waste and worked no deliverance — until the Lord, in the anger of his wrath, summoned many nations to work their own vengeance, from the Mountains of the Moon and from the great river that passes to the north of India: foreign-tongued and evil nations, to come pouring like many waters upon our lands, to lay their foundations by the shore of the sea of Ocean, and pitch their tents facing the great city, and fill all the land with blood and with corpses, and abolish the order and the religion of Christianity.

But when the king of the Persians, Alp Arslan, saw such great victory as had come into his hand, and the success of three wars — for in the first, though Manazkert itself remained untaken, he laid low much land besides by sword and captivity; and in the second he made Ani a waste and a desert by slaughter of the sword and by fire — for this reason he came to meet the king of the Greeks with a fearless and haughty spirit. And he made a vow in his mind: "If he is taken into my grasp, I will release him with love and honor to his own kingdom." And by oath the covenant was confirmed, that there should be peace between the kingdom of the Persians and that of the Greeks. But when it came to pass that he was raised up in this war as well, and whatever he desired was accomplished, and he before whom the other had once trembled now stood in fetters at his feet, like one of his own servants — then he remembered the covenant he had made with God, and rising, seated him at his right hand, honored him as a faithful friend, and made a covenant with him, saying: "From now on let there be no strife between me and you; but hold your kingdom in peace, and we our Persian dominion. But what I took in war shall be mine, and let us invade your lands no more." And he released him with great honor. After this, when he learned that he had been seized by the treachery of his own nakharars, and they deprived him of his eyes, and he did not attain to the kingdom but died in torments, he was filled with turmoil and wrath, and wished to repay it for his

friend's sake; but death overtook him there, and he went out from this world after all the earth-born, where kings and paupers are together.

Discourse of Commemoration Concerning This Very Book

I have judged it needful to remind, by this writing, our beloved brethren, for the knowledge of matters made known — even as it was the beginning of my discourse to tell, in few words, of God's foreknowledge and boundlessness. How the swift-coursing and world-surveying element, beautiful and luminous — while it still shone with perfect light, and held the midpoint of its course, hastening with swift motion along its path into the shadowless hemisphere, holding the earth beneath it — cast upon itself a wide-spread garment woven of long-gathered sins. And it wrapped so thickly about it that it hindered the boundless brightness of its rays; and that which is not usually visible boldly to the eye appeared fainter than the stars, showing only its bare circle. This showed forth in itself, as a figure, the shadowless and luminous orders of the Church shut in by darkness; and the brightness of souls and the rays of the path of virtue, made invisible and dim. For from that time — which I spoke of before, in which was the year of the Armenians four hundred and eighty-two — even until now, the covenant of holiness and the order of the Church have been broken up and corrupted. And we heard no report of peace or glad tidings of good things; nor was any monument of victory raised up — neither for kings nor for princes. Nor was this all: not even could the monks find strength to set their face against the war-loving demon; but, grown feeble and powerless, intemperate and stubborn, fallen under the hand of enemies, the land became full and overflowing with tumult and wrath. For step by step its darkening proved a true prophecy; for from that time enemies rushed upon us, and clothed us with a garment of mourning and sadness, and joy was taken away from the world.

Now when such calamities of doubt and world-groaning birth-pangs had spread over all the earth, and a fire went forth from the south and consumed the high

strongholds, and melted away the unapproachable towers as though they were wax, kings and princes grew few and failed, and the hope of expectation of refuge was taken from us. But the wrath of the Lord's fury spread universally over us; for houses of prayer were pulled down, and stones anointed with the oil of holiness were laid as the foundation of the palaces of foreigners; and the service of holiness was taken away from our midst, and we became a mockery and a reproach to the heathen. And we wasted away and were bowed down, and our loins clove to the earth; and we became like dried bones, in which there was no hope of breath or of life; and the transgressions of our fathers were filled up and accomplished in us, demanding of us the debt of vengeance for our forebears. Sevenfold recompense we received into our bosom; for the name of Christianity was accounted a reproach and a mockery for scorn. For justice and judgment were taken from us, and there was no place for our tears and our groans; for their piety consisted in this — to defraud us, and to plunder us, and to kill us. Even the necessary garment that covered our shame seemed evil to them; rather, when they saw us naked and disgraced, at this they rejoiced the more. For amid the many afflictions that befell us, worn thin and troubled, we wandered upon the earth like a shadow, trembling and terrified; our food was without strength, and our drink bitter from fear and from the threats of our masters. For they did not believe that we had a God in heaven, or that our prayers and supplications could reach him. For the Lord willed to afflict us with such tortures, and to persecute and torment us, and to cast every age under torment; to expel and cast us out from his presence, as those liable to punishment and transgressors; to scatter and remove us far among foreign nations, that perhaps he might restrain our rebellious and disobedient mind, and our stiff-neckedness; to cast us beneath the rod of his correction, as Israel in the days of Elijah, and Samaria in the days of Elisha. For they had some portion of hope: the oversight of kings and of princes, and, above all else, the grace-filled and joy-bringing word of the prophets, by which they were strengthened, and were able to stand against the affliction of the trials that they received from the Lord. But ours is heavier and greater than all of theirs: without king and without prince; without lord and without overseer, in soul and in body, and

there is not one place of refuge for us to find; but we are grown faint and are made subject to stand beneath the kingdom of the heathen, and to receive day by day the fierce blow of their rod. For in that we did not serve the Lord, let us serve foreigners; and in that we despised the fear of the Lord, let us be tormented day by day with fear of these; and because we offered service to the Lord with sloth, let us serve and minister to these by day and by night. For it was not according to our transgressions that he disciplined us, but in compassion and mercy he cast us into the furnace of correction, to make us sober and to render us useful.

For if you should set our sins in the balance, they are heavier than the correction we have received from you, and your punishment is lighter than our debt. Cast upon us every extremity of torment, but do not cast us away from your face, O Lord; and stir up against us every wave of trial, but do not reject us from your love, O Lord. It is better to fall into your hands and receive from you correction and punishment, than to stand apart from you uncorrected; it is better to draw near to you through suffering and affliction, than to withdraw from you and live in ease and comfort. This is enough for us: that your holy name has been called upon us, accounting us to yourself as an inheritance, to acquire us for yourself as a people of the new covenant by precious blood. Now do not abandon us from your hand for the sake of your creative will, lest we be utterly tormented by the heathen who hate you; for all this, and more than this book can record, has come upon us on account of our sins.

And now we have judged it enough to write down all the surging waves of turmoil that occurred in our days; and to divide them into particulars — whatever befell, place by place, land by land, and city by city — whatever we suffered from the heathen. For not for a single day, nor for one season, did we meet with ease or comfort; but the whole time of our days was filled with turmoil and affliction, and day by day added yet more to our torments and sufferings. And not one of them was well-disposed toward us, though for many years they dwelt among us; their fury was not restrained, like that of a viper, nor was there any satiety of their greed, like that of fire; for all their designs concerning us are in wickedness, and their words are full of deceit. For every

morning they made a fresh beginning of evils; for this was the design of them all — to wear us down and consume us like a worn-out garment, and to remove our memory from among them, that they should never look upon us and see us alive; but that our graves should be left without trace beneath their feet.

For this reason we have felt the lack of the ancient chroniclers' history, that with fitting and well-suited words of their own they might set down this book, gathering together without error, into one, whatever befell of present things and of past, leaving behind them a record of the things that came to pass, as the historiography of the ancients shows. But what has been written here in this book is not in full, but only the beginning of the things that came to pass and passed over us; for we were not able fully to call to mind or to write the completion of these matters. But all this we have set down for this reason: that you may read and know that sin was the cause of all this that has passed over us. That, looking upon us, you may be struck with dread to fear before the face of the Lord, and to tremble at the terror of his power; to come before him early with confession and repentance, arriving before his chastisement is stirred up, and to stand against it.

Afterword

Aristakes tells you at the end what the book is for. *All this we have set down for this reason: that you may read and know that sin was the cause of all this that has passed over us.* He means it literally, and he has meant it since the first page. The verse proem that opens Chapter 1 states the case before a single event is narrated — the measure of our sins was filled and ran over — and every chapter after it is evidence.

This is worth saying plainly at the start, because it explains the book's shape. A modern history of the same fifty years would move from the annexation of the Armenian kingdoms to the Seljuk raids to Manzikert, and would treat the sermons as interruptions. In the *History* the proportions run the other way. Roughly half the book is argument: the ten plagues of Egypt set one by one against ten Armenian afflictions; the case that obedience is owed to the imperial seat and not to the man on it; the demonstration from Isaiah that a city which grows rich grows wanton; the four kinds of judgement and who receives which. The battles are the shorter half, and the shorter half is there to prove the longer.

What he saw

He names two places as his own: the mountain of Smbatay Berd, and Arcn. Both accounts stop the narrative dead. At Smbat he describes the crushing of heads with stones dropped from above a cave, the corpses filling the ravine below, and then the aftermath — the wounded still alive and begging for water with no one to give it, and the infants thrown down until the camp seethed with them. At Arcn he counts the parish priests. Twice elsewhere he breaks off to say his hands are shaking and he cannot carry the pen forward.

He also names what he will not write. The disgraces of the women at Melitene; the children dashed against stones there; the practices of the Tondrakians, which he calls too filthy to record and which he says would draw the hearer toward the deed. Those refusals are kept in this edition as refusals. He knew more than he set down, and said so.

Where he places the blame

Not where a reader might expect. The Turks and the Persians are in the book as an instrument: God's rod, and by Chapter 21 a rod of torments rather than of correction. The blame falls on Armenians and on Greeks, and Aristakes distributes it without much regard for whose side he is on.

He records that the *azats* of 'Tayk' poisoned Dawir' the curopalates in the chalice on a Great Thursday. He records that the catholicos Petros sold Ani, that the Greeks paid him the thanks and the gifts for a city that was not his, and that Petros was known as a lover of treasures. He records that Arcn's judges took bribes and its priests bought their place at the altar with silver, and then says that this is why Arcn burned. He records that the Armenian people watched their neighbours' chastisement and gave no thanks for their own escape, and drove themselves onto the sword like wild boars. He records that a bishop took a bribe to shelter Vrvr from judgement. Of the Greeks he records an emperor who spent the cavalry's money on women, another who told monks he had no need of their prayers, and a court that blinded the emperor the Turks had released.

And at Manzikert, where the battle turns because one division of the imperial army changes sides, he declines to name the division, notes that Diogenes turned his anger on the Armenians *without cause and unaware*, and then reports that the Armenians fought to the end so that a memory of their valour would survive them.

The Tondrakians

Chapter 22 and Chapter 23 are the fullest surviving account of the movement, and they are written by its opponent. There is no second contemporary witness to set beside him. What can be checked is internal: he reports Yakobos' teachings in enough detail to be specific — that the unworthy should not offer the sacrifice, that the worthy should offer it three times a year, that offerings do not help a dead man who did not repent in his own person — and he reports the church's response with the same specificity, including the branding of six men's faces so that they could be recognised anywhere. Readers should weigh both halves knowing they come from one hand.

The same chapter gives Vrvr ninety words of genuine piety — the monastery he built and endowed, the Lenten fasts he kept with the brothers, the alms — before it turns on him. Aristakes does not usually pause to say that a man he is about to condemn was once admirable, and the pause is his own.

What the book does not know

It ends in the years after Manzikert, with the emperor blinded by his own court and the Sultan dead before he could avenge him. Aristakes closes with an apology: what is written here is *not in full, but only the beginning of the things that came to pass and passed over us*. He was right about that in a way he could not have known. He is writing at the opening of the period that would end the Bagratuni kingdoms for good, and the last thing he does is call for the ancient chroniclers who could have written it better, and ask the reader to be afraid.

The reading text ends where he ended it, at the last sentence of the *Discourse of Commemoration*. The 1963 edition's back matter begins on the following printed page, and is outside this book.