1. My paper deals with the basic problem of the Neoplatonist impact upon the Armenian intellectual experience of Late Antiquity, 5th–7th centuries. It came to Armenia with the theology worked out by the eminent Fathers of the Church of Alexandria and (especially) Caesarea: Basil the Great, Gregory Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, etc.

This influence became more effective after the invention of the Armenian alphabet by St. Mesrop in 405. The enlightenment which followed this crucial event brought to creation the new (Christian) identity of the Armenians by the means of ‘writing space’. And the representatives of the so called Hellenophile scholarship (Yunaban Dproc’) were the bearers of this creative energy in various areas of spirituality.

Intellectualized Christianity was a combination of biblical and Greek traditions thought incompatible over long centuries. Plotinus and his adherents had summed up the main achievements of the pagan philosophy, and the Fathers adopted them in setting up the principal concepts of the Church. In this regard, the spiritual experience of Philo Judaeus (and his Christian followers: Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen) was also in high estimation. His works, it is well attested, were very popular in Armenia.

Overall, a Neoplatonist standpoint was quite perceptible in many areas of intellectual life in Armenia. Besides theology and philosophy, its influence was vivid in rhetoric, linguistics, hagiography, poetry and historiography. According to a common scholarly assumption, the historical style prevailed in the Armenian mentality. Owing to that, historiography occupied a specific position. It embraced the achievements of the other areas and promoted the new national identity in a way

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1 Martirosyan (1982), p. 27.
3 Chadwick (1966), pp. 133–135.
which was more distinct. This is explicit in the works of the eminent historians of the time: Agathangelos (Agat’angelos), Eghishe (Elišē) and Lazar P’arpetsi (Łazar P’arpec’i). And of course, Moses Khorenatsi (Movsēs Xorenac’i), whose History of the Armenians played an exceptional role in the Armenian intellectual experience.4

Despite modern (and contemporary) works dedicated to the problem, my research does not give attention to the question of the concrete time of Moses.5 Nor is it concerned with discrete (though sometimes important) details of the text of the History. I see my purpose as one of outlining its general idea on the basis of certain Neoplatonist concepts. For the sake of this holistic attitude it is quite sufficient to assume that the life and scholarly activity of Moses occurred in Late Antiquity. I believe that the results which I hope to gain will shed light on some basic aspects of the History and give a good opportunity for new interpretations of traditional problems.

2. One of the principal features of Moses’ understanding of history points out its parallelism with human life aimed at eutaxia and eudaimonia. The most effective way to reach this end was thought to be education and self-building. Started by the Sophists this anthropomorphic idea was brought to completion by the efforts of the Middle Stoa. It found expression in the works of Philo Judaeus as well. As to the Fathers of the Church, they saw in it the manifestation of God’s mercy both for individuals and for the social community. In this, they followed the Neoplatonist conception of anabasis which aimed to lead human beings back from the senses and the affections to the realm of intelligible archetypes.

Moses traces two poles of parallelism between history and human life. The bearers of them are, on the one hand, the Armenian community, on the other hand, the author himself. Both are to undergo deep transformations to gain the desired completion. The starting point in both cases is held to be a situation of the absolute predominance of the corporeal principle.

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5 The two opposite attitudes to the problem of the time of Moses Khorenatsi are still irreconcilable: the hypercritical attaching his life and scholarly activity to the later (8th–9th) centuries (Akinean [1930], pp. 150–181; Thomson [1980], pp. 5–64) and the traditional believing him to be an author of the 5th century (Traina [1991]); Mat’evosyan [1989]; Muradyan, P. [1992]).