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THE OXFORD  
ENCYCLOPEDIA OF  
**ARCHAEOLOGY**  
IN THE NEAR EAST



PREPARED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE  
AMERICAN SCHOOLS OF ORIENTAL RESEARCH

Eric M. Meyers

EDITOR IN CHIEF

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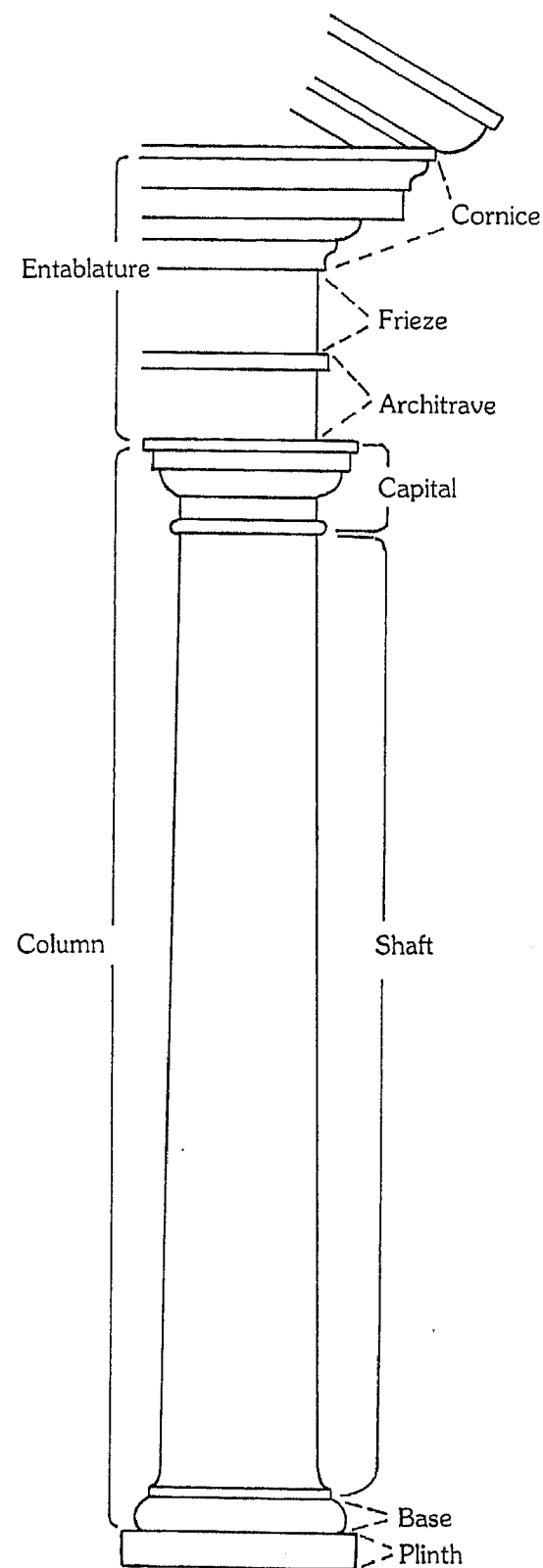
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ARCHITECTURAL ORDERS. Diagram of various architectural features of public buildings. (Courtesy T. N. Howe)

shade; this aesthetic forms the basis of Late Antique and Byzantine ornament.

The hybrid use of Hellenic types of columns and Near Eastern elements continues throughout the Roman period. The Trajanic kiosk at Philae is in a fully traditional Egyptian form, whereas the temple tombs at Petra and the Temple of Bel at Palmyra combine canonical orders with "Assyrian" crowstep merlons and Egyptian cavetto cornices. At a number of centers, buildings with partially or fully native plans adapt the architecture of the edicular screen or arcade as engaged or low-relief surface patterning, but without the fixed relative proportions or syntactical rules of Hellenic types (e.g., the Temple of Gareus at Uruk; the "peripteros" and the "Freitreppenbau" at Aššur).

[See also Architectural Decoration.]

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THOMAS NOBLE HOWE

ARCHIVES. See Libraries and Archives.

**ARMENIA.** Any study of Armenian archaeology is hampered from the start by fundamental handicaps: the chronology remains insufficiently precise and not yet universally accepted, so that terminologies used by local and foreign scholars vary. Despite the extensive work done in eastern Anatolia and northwestern Iran, the majority of the evidence comes from the present Republic of Armenia, comprising, at best, one-fifth of historic Armenia, which covered all of

the Armenian plateau. Consequently, serious geographic and chronological lacunae remain, distorting our understanding of the existing material. This is especially so because the Armenian plateau at times entered into larger cultural units. Most conclusions are therefore rendered tentative and possibly inaccurate.

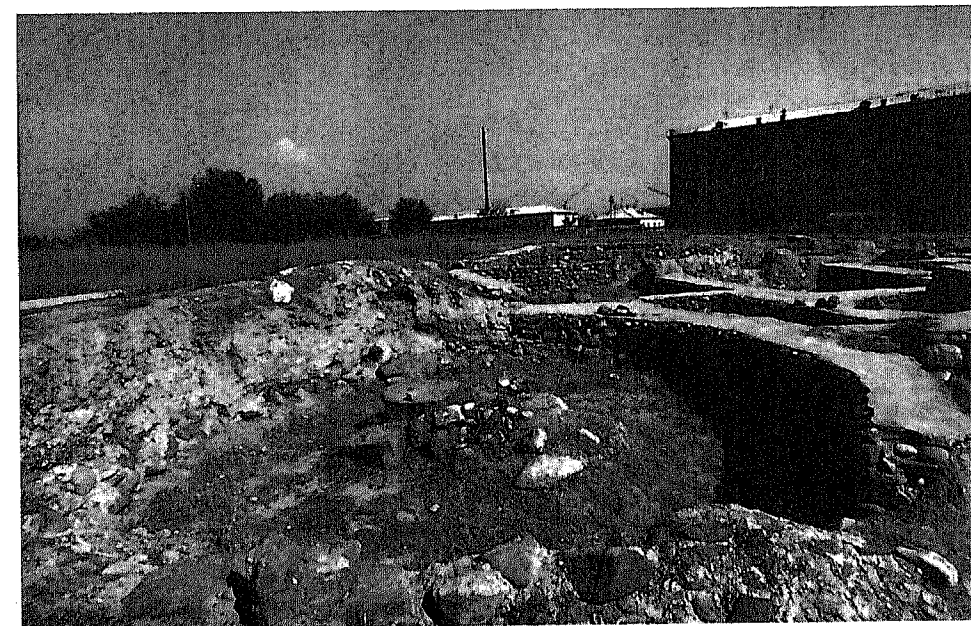
Archaeological evidence on the Armenian plateau begins with the Early Paleolithic period. The earliest finds in Armenia, and indeed in all of the former USSR to date, were made in 1946-1948 by S. A. Sardaryan and M. Z. Panichkina (Mongait, 1961, pp. 56-57; Panichkina, 1950) at Sattani dar on the southwestern slopes of Mt. Aragac, near the Armeno-Turkish border. These consisted of typical Chellean and Early Achulean artifacts, made of obsidian, which is plentiful in this volcanic region. Somewhat later, more developed Middle and Late Paleolithic sites also occur in the gorge of the Hrazdan River, just north of the present Armenian capital of Erevan on the Middle Araxes River. A number of petroglyphs representing long-horned animals and hunting scenes, found on Mt. Aragac and elsewhere in Armenia and neighboring Azerbaijan, may also go back to the Paleolithic period, although their chronology remains uncertain.

The stratigraphy of more permanent settlements—rather than mere encampments—found on the southwestern slopes of Mt. Aragac demonstrates a direct succession from food-gathering to food-producing levels not yet attested elsewhere in Transcaucasia. A local evolution derived from the neighboring hills (and leading to Neolithic settlements in the plain of Erevan as early as 6000 BCE) has consequently

been postulated (Burney and Lang, 1971, p. 34). The agricultural basis of the economy in the earliest level of these new settlements is clearly attested by the presence of querns, mortars, obsidian sickle blades, and storage jars; stock raising is reflected in rock reliefs of domesticated animals. Various forms of round-bottomed vessels and cups made of sand and straw-tempered clay, occasionally decorated with an incised motif, mark the appearance of pottery. These early settlements apparently shared a common tradition with those of mid-sixth-fifth-millennium Georgia: a small, circular house plan occurs both there and at Tehut, west of Erevan.

The transition from stone to metal late in the fourth millennium is still obscure, but the period from about 3250 to about 1750 BCE is of particular note in Armenia. Called Kuro-Araxes by local scholars, but also known under a variety of other names (e.g., Early Transcaucasian), it spanned both the Chalcolithic (Soviet Eneolithic) and Early Bronze Ages. Geographically, its culture reached from the Caucasus to eastern Anatolia, northwestern Iran, and beyond to Syria-Palestine. Its remarkable stability and uniformity, despite a gradual evolution and the development of local particularism in its last phase, led Charles Burney to conclude that "Never again was there a culture in the highland zone both so far-flung and so long-lived" (Burney and Lang, 1971, p. 85).

The hallmark used to identify the Kuro-Araxes culture is a distinctive, high-quality, dark-monochrome (usually black or red) burnished pottery in various shapes that is decorated with grooved, or occasionally raised, hatched triangles, sin-



ARMENIA. Figure 1. Round house at Sengawit displaying the base of a central post. Third millennium BCE. (Courtesy N. G. Garsoïan)

gle or double spirals, zigzags, or incipient floral or bird motifs. The superior technical level and sophistication reached by this style in the Araxes valley during the third millennium has lent credence to the hypothesis that this may well have been its center. Variations of the type can be traced throughout the cultural area—particularly in the slightly later Khirbet Kerak ware of Syro-Palestine, whose style seemingly originated in Transcaucasia. With some tendency toward more elongated forms, the Kuro-Araxes tradition lasted through the Early Bronze Age and even beyond the mid-second millennium BCE in some areas.

Šengawit', a southern suburb of Erevan on the high left bank of the Hrazdan, has often been selected, among many others, as a typical Kuro-Araxes site, although it was probably founded even earlier. It was a permanent settlement, surrounded by a protective wall of large, undressed stones, with an underground passage to the river. Within it were grouped numerous, usually single-room, round houses some 7–8 m in diameter. They are similar to ones found in Georgia, in Karabagh, and near Naxčawan on the lower Araxes. Composed of several stone courses surmounted by thin wattle and clay walls, their inward curvature suggests a beehive shape. According to Aġak'elyan (1976, p. 14), the interiors were usually painted blue. Rectangular annexes often flanked the central room, and the larger houses had a central wooden post (see figure 1). All examples included a storage bin for grain and an elaborate and highly ornamented clay hearth (some ram shaped or with ram heads and movable parts) that may have served religious as well as practical purposes. The growing importance of animal husbandry is reflected by petroglyphs and multiple figurines or amulets of tiny bulls, probably also with a religious significance. Burials from this period are rare, but Šengawit' had a largely intramural cemetery, with early communal burials in rectangular graves containing up to ten bodies. Grave goods included stone and copper weapons, amulets, personal ornaments, bone implements, and fragments of textiles. [See Burial Sites; Grave Goods; Weapons; and Textiles, *article on* Textiles of the Neolithic through Iron Ages.]

Certain regions display signs of stagnation in the last, EB phase of this culture, beginning in about 2300 BCE. However, the activity in northern and central Armenia did not abate. Many new settlements developed in the hill country (Garni, Elar, and Lčšašen in the north, Harič in the west) as the predominance of animal husbandry and population pressure began to require additional space. Of particular importance is the appearance of a major metallurgical center at Mecamör, west of Erevan. Even though the technique used had probably been brought from Mesopotamia, and Mecamör did not reach its apogee before the second half of the second millennium BCE, it may be the earliest such center in Transcaucasia. Bronze slag, together with cassiterite ore and animal-matter briquettes containing the phosphorus required to extract tin from this ore, were found in Mecamör's earliest phase, together with Kuro-Araxes pottery.

Considerable continuity from this culture can be traced in the subsequent Middle Bronze (twentieth–fourteenth centuries BCE) and Late Bronze (thirteenth–tenth centuries BCE) periods, though some sites were temporarily abandoned. Even so, Armenia in the second millennium BCE presents a complex picture, continually supplemented by ongoing excavations and the identification of new western sites through recent air surveys and the work by Philip Kohl and Hermann Gasche under the auspices of the Institutes of Archaeology of the Academies of Sciences of the Armenian and Georgian Republics. Most of the material for this period derives from burials and shows a fairly unified culture, including both Transcaucasia and northwestern Iran by the end of the fourteenth century BCE. Numerous barrows of the northern steppe type, similar to those from Trialeti in southern Georgia, have come to light in the Armenian Republic: at Kirovakan (c. 1500 BCE) and Tazekend in the north, as well as at Karabagh in Azerbaijan. In 1950, at Lčšašen, the lowering of the water level of Lake Sevan revealed a major cemetery in use from the third millennium to about 1200 BCE. Its richest tombs, however, approached by dromi and lined as well as roofed with massive stone slabs, have been attributed to the thirteenth century BCE. [See Tombs.] Near Artik, on the western slopes of Mt. Aragac, a vast complex of some 640 catacomb tombs with vertical shafts and oval burial chambers filled with stones and earth was uncovered beginning in 1959 by T. S. Xačatryan (Khachatrian, 1963). These have been dated to between the fourteenth and the tenth centuries BCE, with the majority of burials belonging to the middle phase (twelfth–eleventh centuries). In both types of cemeteries, single burials (the contracted body lies on its side with no particular orientation) are the norm, although twin and even some communal burials occasionally appear in the last phase.

The great development of metallurgy, evidenced by the presence of some twenty-four smelting furnaces at Mecamör dating to before 1000 BCE, is also reflected in the diversity and wealth of the grave furnishings. The richest and best known are those from Kirovakan: a gold bowl decorated with pairs of repoussé lions, silver cups similar to those found in the Trialeti barrows, a wooden couch with silver-plated ends, bronze bowls and weapons, and a gold and carnelian necklace adorning the corpse. Similar bronze tools, weapons, and ornaments—daggers with openwork pommels, spearheads, axes, swords with decorated blades (some with a copper-snake inlay), bronze and obsidian arrowheads, horse bits and wheeled cheek pieces, decorated belts, bracelets with spirals and granulation, earrings, hairpins with decorated heads, and pendants with openwork bells and birds were found with bronze, glass paste, and carnelian beads at Artik, Lčšašen and elsewhere. All testify to the mastery of Armenian metalwork in this period. [See Metals, *article on* Artifacts of the Neolithic, Bronze, and Iron Ages; Jewelry.]

Foreign influences on Armenia have been argued for the

late second millennium BCE. Parallels are manifest in the northern barrow-type burials, in the ceramics with corded decoration (similar to those of the later steppe kurgans found in the earlier MB burials at Lčšašen), and perhaps in the remarkable group of open and covered wooden vehicles with disk and spoked wheels also recovered from Lčšašen. These correspond to examples in Trialeti, though Mitannian influence from the south has also been postulated. [See Mitanni.] The profusion of polychrome ceramics occurring at numerous sites—Tazekend (with which a red-on-black type has been identified), Garni, Mecamör, and Lčšašen, among others—points southward, to northwestern Iran. The same holds for the Mitanni-type cylinder seals discovered in the earlier Artik tombs. Even so, most artifacts are of local origin, as is the gold. The earlier Lčšašen tombs are characterized by their own monochrome pottery with a punctuated decoration. Similarly, all levels at Artik contain only black-decorated ceramics, at times crude, at times burnished to a nearly mirrorlike luster.

The bulk of the MB and LB evidence is, then, derived from cemeteries. However, cyclopean fortresses, known as *berdšēn*, dating to the millennium preceding the eighth-century BCE appearance of the Urartians in the region, have increasingly been detected throughout the Armenian Republic and in neighboring Karabagh (four in the immediate vicinity of Garni). [See Urartu.] Large groups of LB megalithic monuments have also been recorded near Sisian, in the eastern region of Zangezour. Of special interest are those known as *višaps*, “monsters, or dragons.” Up to 2–3 m long, with large fish mouths and eyes, as well as crude indications of scales and gills, and erected upright in the mountains at the head of springs, *višaps* may well indicate widespread water worship, just as the presence of small amulets point to the probability of fertility cults. [See Cult.] Shrines with curious clay altars with hearths and multiple cups, presumably for libations and sacrifices, found near the metalworks of late second-millennium BCE Mecamör, must have some religious significance. An artificial open-air platform at Mecamör is marked with hieroglyphic signs, for which an astral significance has been suggested.

With the opening of the first millennium BCE, iron objects begin to appear in graves. The new technology may have caused the gradual decline of Mecamör, even though evidence demonstrates the survival of second-millennium BCE Transcaucasian culture to the ninth century BCE at least. Elegant bronze belts with running spiral borders framing lively animal figures, chariots, and hunting scenes have been attributed to the immediately pre-Urartian period (c. 1100–900 BCE). Hence, for millennia, and down to the Urartian conquest in the early eighth century BCE, the Araxes valley and much of north-central Armenia had already experienced a continuous, and at times brilliant, evolution—of which it may even have been the center during the long Kuro-Araxes period.

In sharp contrast to the growing wealth of evidence from

earlier periods, material securely datable to the millennium from the sixth century BCE to the fourth century CE is puzzlingly meager. Its scarcity presents one of the major unsolved problems in Armenian archaeology. Some Urartian survivals occur at Armawir/Argištihinili and at Erebuni, within the limits of modern Erevan; except for a few silver rhyta, a hypostyle hall and a fire altar at Erebuni, and the unfinished inscription of King Xerxes at Van, however, the period of Achaemenid domination of Armenia (sixth–fourth centuries BCE) must still be reconstructed from literary sources, primarily Xenophon.

Alexander the Great himself never visited Armenia, and the Seleucid hold on the plateau ruled by a native dynasty was precarious. [See Seleucids.] By the late third–early second centuries BCE, eponymous cities appeared, presumably modeled on the ubiquitous Alexandrias: Artaxata/Artašat, the northern capital on the middle Araxes founded by Artaxias/Artašēs; Zarišat; Zarehawan; and Arsamosata in southwestern Sophene; eventually the new capital of Tigranakert. Only Artašat and Armawir have been excavated to date, and even the site of Tigranakert remains disputed. Nevertheless, preliminary work shows generally Hellenistic urban plans with an acropolis, a temple at Armawir, hypocaust baths, shops, and dwellings. [See Baths.] Greek inscriptions, or rather graffiti, from Armawir show a familiarity with Greek classical literature. [See Greek.] A small statuette of the Praxitelean Aphrodite type was found in the excavations at Artašat (Aġak'elyan, 1976, pl. xxii–xxiii), but the dating of the material from this city destroyed by the Romans in 59 CE and reconstructed with the permission of the emperor Nero (whose name it briefly took after 66) is not clear.

The apogee of Greek influence came during the reign of Tigran II (95–55 BCE). Literary sources describe the Hellenistic character of his capital, Tigranakert, and of his court. Handsome silver tetradrachms celebrating his taking of Antioch on the Orontes River in 84 BCE follow the Hellenistic model: they represent the profile of the king on the coin's obverse and the city's Tyche as a crowned woman enthroned above the Orontes River on its reverse, and they display Greek legends. [See Antioch on Orontes.] Similar coins of lesser quality continued this type in Sophene until the first years of the Christian period. Under the Romans, a few inscriptions of Trajan and particularly from the reign of Marcus Aurelius at Vaġaršapat/Kainē Polis (“new city”) west of Erevan, attest the presence of Roman troops.

The major classical monument in Armenia is the complex at Garni. Its fortress was begun in the third/second century BCE. It was rebuilt in the eleventh year of King Trdat (c. 77), according to a Greek inscription discovered there in 1945. Within it the ruins of a palace and of a small Ionic peripteros on a high podium were found. They are now reconstructed as a temple, though this identification has been challenged. Despite some attributions to the third century, derived from later literature, this structure is usually dated to the first cen-

tury on the basis of its style and use of a dry-masonry technique with swallowtail clamps, rather than the later mortar binder. A hypocaust bath nearby produced a floor mosaic of classical sea gods and creatures in a somewhat crude opus vermiculatum and sectile (Arak'elyan, 1976, pl. xxiii-xxvii). [See Mosaics.]

Iranian aspects continued to manifest themselves beyond the fourth century BCE in clay plaques representing a Mithraic heroic rider found at Artašat and in the pearl diadem worn by Tigran II on his coinage. The mixed Greco-Iranian type of this coinage similarly characterizes the classical bronze head of the Iranian goddess Anahita now in the British Museum and in small statuettes of birds and stags on a stepped pedestal discovered at Sisian. Most interesting of all are boundary stones of Artašēs I (189-c. 160 BCE), whose Aramaic inscriptions confirm the continuation of the local Orontid dynasty in this period, and the hunting scenes that decorate the hypogeum of the Christian Arsacid kings at Ałck', northwest of Erevan. [See Aramaic Language and Lit-



ARMENIA. Figure 2. Kars stele showing a male figure in Parthian dress. (Courtesy N. G. Garsoïan)

erature; Hunting.] The presence of Iranian fire altars under the main altar of the patriarchal cathedral of Ējmiacin and at Kasax, farther north, mark the Sasanian occupation of Armenia in the late fourth century. [See Sasanians.]

The long hiatus of the Armenian archaeological dark ages came to a close with the appearance of Christian monuments, probably in the fifth century. Numerous single- and three-aisled basilicas, seemingly related to Syrian or Anatolian types, were built throughout Armenia and in Georgia. [See Basilicas.] Some of these were monumental and of remarkable quality, such as the one at Ereruk, on the western border of the Armenian Republic, which has been compared to the one at Qalb Louzeh in northern Syria. By the early seventh century, a multitude of domed basilicas, and especially cruciform churches with a central dome on squinches, appeared in both Armenia and Georgia, together with a few circular and polygonal types, of which the best known is the one at Zuatnoc', near Ējmiacin. [See Churches.] Historiated stelae, often depicting figures in Parthian dress, were erected—alone or within double-arched monuments, such as the one at Ōjun, in the north, and possibly at Ałudi in the east (see figure 2). [See Parthians.] Some of the churches (e.g., at Płni, Mren, Ōjun, and Ał'eni in Georgia) have figured relief decorations, but most rely on the harmony of their proportions and the perfection of their dressed-stone surfaces enclosing a mortar inner core and minimal architectural decoration around windows and cornices for their effect. They range in size from the minute princely chapels at Aštarak, T'alin, and Bjni (belonging to the parafeudal aristocracy of the period) to the vast domed basilicas of St. Gayanē at Ējmiacin, Aruč, T'alin, and Ōjun to the monumental cruciform churches of Gařnahovit, St. Hrip'simē, and Sisian. The endless variety and sophistication of their types and proportions, as well as the subtlety of their decoration, testify to the mastery of the artists and the wealth of their patrons, the ruins of whose palaces are still visible in the countryside. The earlier cities, unsuited to contemporary military and aristocratic society, did not revive, except for the administrative center of Duin near Artašat. Recent excavations there have uncovered a patriarchal residence and cathedral from the seventh century built over earlier structures. Steady architectural activity continued through most of the seventh century, despite the Arab conquest of the Armenian plateau. It was halted for nearly two hundred years, however, along with most cultural activity, when the occupation became more oppressive later in the eighth century.

[See also Armenian.]

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NINA G. GARSOÏAN

**ARMENIAN.** Although sharing many of the linguistic features and characteristics of the contiguous Indo-European dialects that once spread between Greek in the south and Balto-Slavic in the north, the position of Armenian among the Indo-European languages appears to be highly archaic, judging from the phonetic system of stops. The prehistory of Armenian is invariably connected with the spatial linguistic interrelationships of the ancient Indo-European dialects and the geographical origin of the Armenians and their migration. However, there is no scholarly consensus on this subject. Some favor the traditional view that Armenians reached Asia Minor from Europe, a view based on the testimonies of the classical Greek historians and the linguistic affinities with the Pontic branch of Indo-European, that is, Greek and the Paleo-Balkan group (Thraco-Phrygian in

particular). Others hold that the very cradle of Proto-Indo-European is to be found in eastern Anatolia and the southern Caucasus in or near Armenia. Whether or not Proto-Armenian originated in the area where we find it later, the language retains some one thousand words of Indo-European origin, making it an important source for the study of Indo-European roots.

The early development of the language seems to have included considerable borrowings from neighboring languages: from Hittite-Luwian and Hurro-Urartian proper names (theonyms, anthroponyms, and toponyms) to Indo-Iranian words of everyday life. The archaic contacts among the various peoples of the Armenian highlands account for a rich stock of common terms, and this development has given rise to passionate debates over etymologies and loan words from one or another of the languages of the region—from the Kartvelian family and other Caucasian languages farther north to the various Iranian languages. There is also some lexical evidence suggesting possible early contacts with Semitic languages. The complexity of the question of influences and counterinfluences notwithstanding, the early impact of Armenian on neighboring lands, such as Georgia and Albania, has long been recognized. Many Iranian loanwords also made their way into these regions through Armenian. Yet Armenian possesses with Kartvelian and Albanian components such as consonant shifts that go back to one or another of the ancient dialects found in the Balkan languages as substrata.

The subsequent history of the language can be divided into four major periods: (1) preliterate, that is, prior to the formulation of the Armenian alphabet early in the fifth century; (2) Old Armenian, which is known through the classical sources of early Armenian literature in the fifth-tenth centuries; (3) Middle Armenian, as developed primarily in the Cilician kingdom in the eleventh-fifteenth centuries, a period to which most of the current dialectal phonetic splits can be traced; and (4) Modern Armenian, which is divided into Eastern and Western Armenian following two major dialectal groupings. One has flourished in and around Armenia and Iran with substantial literary development in Tbilisi since the beginning of the nineteenth century and in Erevan since the beginning of the twentieth century. The other has flourished simultaneously among Armenian communities in Anatolia, the rest of the Middle East, and the Western world with its literary capital at Istanbul in the last century and Beirut in the twentieth century. The Eastern dialect retains the pronunciation of Old Armenian, and the Western dialect its orthography. The grammars differ throughout.

Before the introduction of the Armenian script by broad modifications of the Greek alphabet and to a lesser extent of the Syriac alphabet, Armenians used Greek and Aramaic for coinage and inscriptions. The coins of the independent Armenian kingdom of Sophene, founded by Aršam (260-228), and those of the Artaxiads, widespread after the con-

quests of Tigran II (95–55), have Greek legends. However, the landmark inscriptions from the reign of Artaxēs I (190–159), the founder of the Artaxiad dynasty, are in an unusual form of Aramaic script. A royal dedicatory inscription at Garni, from the eleventh year of Trdat I (66 BCE–c. 100 CE), the founder of the Arsacid dynasty in Armenia, is in Greek. There are few Latin inscriptions from the Roman occupation of the second century CE. The earliest Christian texts used in Armenia were in Syriac, and the ecclesiastical correspondence in the early decades of the Armenian Church was primarily in Greek. Very little of this correspondence survives in later translation. Unfortunately, in their zeal for Christianity and as the native historians of the fifth century attest, Armenians made a conscious effort to eradicate every relic of their pagan past. This was accomplished under the leadership of Grigor the Illuminator, the saint largely responsible for the conversion of the nation to Christianity in 314. Under his descendants the nascent church took an increasingly pro-Byzantine stance and did away with much of the early Syriac elements in Armenian Christianity. Moreover, natural conditions and constant ravages by hostile invaders also had a devastating effect. Consequently, there are no documentary remains from this period; a few lines of epic songs survived orally and were committed to writing by later generations, the last being in the eleventh century.

From the first four centuries of scribal activity employing the Armenian script there are only fragments that are preserved for the most part as end gatherings used to reinforce the binding of later codices. The oldest surviving Armenian

Uncials	Minuscules	Transliteration	Uncials	Minuscules	Transliteration
Ա	ա	a	Մ	մ	m
Բ	բ	b	Ծ	ծ	y
Գ	գ	g	Կ	կ	n
Դ	դ	d	Շ	շ	š
Ե	ե	e	Ո	օ	o
Զ	զ	z	Չ	չ	č
Է	է	ē	Պ	պ	p
Ը	ը	ē	Ջ	ջ	j
Թ	թ	t	Բ	բ	i
Ճ	ճ	ž	Ս	ս	s
Ի	ի	i	Վ	վ	v
Լ	լ	l	Տ	տ	t
Խ	խ	x	Ր	ր	r
Վ	վ	c	Ծ	ծ	c
Կ	կ	k	Կ	կ	w
Ն	ն	h	Փ	փ	p'
Շ	շ	j	Ք	ք	k'
Չ	չ	l	Օ	օ	ō
Պ	պ	č	Փ	փ	f

ARMENIAN. Figure 1. *The Armenian alphabet*. The last two letters are Middle Armenian additions. The vowel *ն/ու* is transliterated u. The transliteration follows the standard international practice, that of Hübschmann-Meillet-Benveniste.

manuscript is a set of the Gospels from the year 887, now in Erevan (Matenadaran Library, no. 6200). As for the epigraphic evidence, few Armenian inscriptions survive from these early centuries. The oldest is the late fifth-century inscription of the Tekor basilica. The best examples of sixth-century script and iconography come from mosaic floors found in and around Jerusalem. Numerous fine inscriptions from churches and monuments built in Armenia in subsequent centuries and other texts in the form of graffiti, are found throughout the land. Graffiti are found also in distant places like the Sinai, left by pilgrims en route to the monastery of St. Catherine. Numerous graffiti were left in Cilicia and Palestine during the Crusades. Before the eleventh century, writing was only in uncials. Thereafter, a significant paleographical development occurred with the introduction of minuscules. The earliest inscriptions of this period have a mixed script, partly uncial and partly minuscule, but uncials continue to be the common script for inscriptions. Prior to the use of minuscules Armenian paleography may be described as somewhat uniform; its study, however, is not firmly established.

The invention of the native script in 405 CE is credited to Maštoc' (d. 439), a learned cleric who was determined to have the Bible translated into Armenian. Maštoc' experimented briefly with a script that had been developed by a Syrian bishop named Daniel, but rejected it for its insufficiency and also excluded the use of a predominantly Semitic alphabet. Other existing alphabets must have been inadequate for transcribing certain Armenian consonants by a single sign; hence, there is no evidence for writing Armenian in either Greek, Syriac, or Latin script prior to Maštoc'. His alphabet of thirty-six characters, which was refined by a calligrapher named Rufinus at Samosata permitted a phonetically perfect transcription of the language (see figure 1). Pupils were sent to Edessa and Constantinople to study Syriac and Greek, to acquire choice manuscripts, and to translate. Later on, in keeping with his missionary endeavors, Maštoc' devised alphabets for the Georgians and the Caucasian Albanians.

Koriwn, a pupil of Maštoc', details the efforts of his tireless teacher in *The Life of Maštoc'*, the first work composed in Armenian (c. 443). The work conforms to the requirements for encomium in the classical tradition (a later, shorter version omits the essential proem). Another pupil, Eznik of Kołb, later bishop of Bagrewand, wrote *Refutation of the Sects*. This four-part polemic, employing traditional arguments on Divine Providence vis-à-vis evil and free will, was directed against what the author considered to be false religious movements because of their rivalry with Christianity—paganism in general, Zoroastrianism, Greek philosophy, and Marcionism. A collection of twenty-three homilies and a few hymns have been traditionally attributed to Maštoc' himself. Likewise, another collection of liturgical compositions, especially for the Holy Week, together with a

six-part *Constitution* governing the hierarchy of the church, has been ascribed to the patriarch Sahak, who held the hereditary leadership of the Armenian Church for about fifty years (386–428, 435–438), the last of the lineage of Grigor the Illuminator to hold that office. According to Koriwn, Sahak was the foremost patron of the activities pursued by Maštoc' and his pupils and was the translator of numerous patristic works. He was also responsible for the revision of the first translation of the Bible.

The Old Testament was translated from Greek, and the New Testament was translated apparently from the Old Syriac version first and then revised by the same translators, following a Caesarean-type Greek text (traces of a later revision prior to the eighth century are also discernible). The Armenian version, however, offers more than the usual contribution to the understanding of the development of the textual tradition of the Bible. Numerous Armenian manuscripts containing the Old Testament preserve many of Origen's Hexaplaric signs (asterisks, obeli, and metobeli), which are important elements for Septuagintal studies. New Testament manuscripts yield traces of the mostly lost Old Syriac version, attested also in certain patristic quotations. As for the textual tradition of the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha (noncanonical works), the Armenian often preserves readings superior to those extant in Greek, as in the case of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. Certain of the New Testament apocryphal works have peculiar versions in Armenian, such as the amplified *Gospel of the Infancy*.

With the exception of the Latin Vulgate, there are more Armenian biblical manuscripts than of any other early version. Such manuscripts, whether whole or partial Bibles, constitute nearly a tenth of all medieval Armenian manuscripts. There is but one Armenian-Greek bilingual text, containing *Acts*, the Pauline corpus, and the Catholic epistles (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Arm. 9, c. eleventh–twelfth century). Altogether there are more than thirty thousand ancient Armenian manuscripts, two-thirds of which are at the Matenadaran Library in Erevan. Other major collections are at the St. James Monastery in Jerusalem and the Mekhitarist monasteries in Venice and Vienna. Lesser collections are found in several national and university libraries in Europe, the Middle East, and the United States. Scores of biblical commentaries also exist, covering almost every book of the Bible.

The most popular primary source on the conversion of Armenia from Zoroastrianism to Christianity very early in the fourth century is the *History of the Armenians* by Agathangelos. The importance of this work is attested by early translations into several languages—Greek, Georgian, Arabic, Latin, and Ethiopian, with two distinct versions in each of the first three languages. The fifth-century Armenian author purports to be a Roman scribe and an eyewitness of the conversion of King Trdat III (298–c. 330), at whose com-

mand he wrote the *History*. Notwithstanding his use and adaptation of earlier sources, the pseudonymous author seems to have transmitted some reliable information regarding the events surrounding the conversion of the King and the life and teachings of Grigor, the Illuminator of Armenia. Among the earlier sources used by him are Koriwn's *Life of Maštoc'* and the anonymous collection of oral histories of Greater Armenia during the fourth century, compiled in the year 470 and transmitted under the title *Epic Histories (Buzandaran Patmut'iwne)*. It contains earlier and conceivably more trustworthy traditions. A clear evidence for the latter is the observation that Grigor is called neither "saint" nor "illuminator" in the *Buzandaran*, thus reflecting a very early period of the tradition—when such titles were not yet in vogue. The *Buzandaran* in its own way chronicles the history of Armenia during the long reign of Shapur II of Persia (309–379) and concludes with the official partition of the land under his successor, Shapur III, in 387. The compilation attempts to fill the historical gap between the conversion of Armenia at the hand of Grigor and the formulation of the alphabet by Maštoc'. The author makes ample use of the Armenian Bible with which he was thoroughly familiar.

The next century, from 387 to 485, is covered by Łazar P'arpec'i and Ełiše Vardapet. In a letter to a noble friend, and overseer for the Sasanian overlords, the *marzpan* Vahan Mamikonean (485–505), Łazar defends himself against rival clergy because of whom he had sought exile in Amid (modern Diyarbakir). Thereupon, he was called by Vahan to head the monastery at Vałaršapat and was commissioned by him to write the *History*. In it he acknowledges the works of the shadowy Agathangelos and the *Buzandaran* and considers his own contribution as the third historical writing (Koriwn's encomium is deemed sacred biography). Łazar is the first Armenian historian of the fifth century whose identity is known. The central part of his *History* focuses on the revolt of 451 and the ensuing battle against the Sasanian king Yazdgird II (438–457) for pressing the Armenians to return to Zoroastrianism. Łazar gives no details of the battle led by Vardan Mamikonean, the hero of the patron's clan, and is often less elaborate than Ełiše, the other exponent of the event. The *History of Vardan and the Armenian War* by Ełiše amplifies that event, especially the battle. There are numerous other differences between the two accounts, however, beginning with the circumstances leading to the conflict that led to the revolt and to war. These differences notwithstanding, Ełiše's more passionate retelling has endeared his version to the point of allowing little hearing for the other account on which he depends. He wrote at the request of the priest Dawit' Mamikonean likewise to glorify the hero of the patron's clan. There is some doubt about Ełiše's claim to have been an eyewitness to the events recorded by him. He employs well-established martyrological elements, especially when recounting the speeches he attributes to Vardan and the priest Łewond just before the fateful battle.

The most noted historian, however, is the enigmatic Movsēs Xorenac'i, whose *History of the Armenians* is deemed extremely valuable especially for providing a coherent and systematic view of the nation's history from mythical times to the Persian period (Book 1) and an apologetic interpretation of the Armenian dynastic history from the time of Alexander the Great to the early fifth century in favor of the patronizing Bagratids (Books 2–3). Book 1 includes some rare examples of pre-Christian oral poetry. In it the author reflects keen awareness of the Hellenistic historiographical emphasis on antiquity as found in the national histories of Eastern historians writing in Greek: Berossus, Manetho, Josephus, and Philo of Byblos (these he encountered in the works of Eusebius of Caesarea—his major source—and followed their apologetic commonplaces). In Books 2 and 3 he relies on various other literary and historical sources, including the earlier histories of Lazar and the *Buzandaran* collection, which he modifies as necessary for his transparent intentions.

Following the religious awakening brought about by the early translations and the literary-historical development started by Koriwn, there came yet another period of enlightenment, generated by the translation of philosophical works from the classical period and late antiquity. This was achieved by the "Hellenophile School" of the sixth–eighth centuries noted for its retention of Greek syntax. Collectively, these translations are an outgrowth of the classical curriculum consisting of the seven liberal arts that fell into two groups: the *Trivium*, consisting of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic; and the *Quadrivium*, consisting of music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. The first comprised the elements of general liberal education, the best representative of which in the Armenian literary tradition is the late sixth-century Neoplatonist philosopher Dawit', surnamed "Invincible." Because of his contemporaneity with the early activities of the school, he may have been instrumental in its founding. Four of his works were translated from Greek into Armenian, possibly during his lifetime (*Definitions of Philosophy*, *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, *Interpretation of Aristotle's Analytics*, and *Interpretation of Aristotle's Categories*). Indicative of these grammatical, rhetorical, and philosophical/theological interests are the numerous elaborations on the *Ars grammatica* of Dionysius Thrax and the more than three hundred Aristotelian and almost one hundred Philonic manuscripts (thanks to these translations, several philosophical and theological works now survive only in Armenian, including a fifth of the works of Philo of Alexandria). The second curricular division consisted of the technical disciplines or the sciences, the best representative of which is Anania Širakac'i, a prolific author of the seventh century. He wrote some twenty treatises, covering every aspect of the sciences known in the early Middle Ages.

History, however, continued to dominate the literary output for the rest of the millennium. The rise of Islam and the extent to which Arab rule affected Armenia is the subject of

several historical works, the foremost of which is ascribed to a certain Sebēos. In his *History of Herakleios* the seventh-century author accounts for the Byzantine-Persian wars from the reign of Maurice (582–602) to the accession of Mu'awiyah as caliph (661–680). Lewond (c. 730–790), an apologist for the princely Bagratids (soon to become a royal dynasty, 885–1045), covers the years 632–788. T'ovmas Ar-cruni (c. 840–906), an apologist for the princely Ar-crunis, describes life under the caliphate in the ninth century. Throughout, however, he shows dependence on all earlier Armenian historians. His younger contemporary, the patriarch Yovhannes V Draxanakertc'i (897–925), follows Xorenac'i rather closely both in his *apologia* for the Bagratids and in his beginning from mythical times. The ethos of the time, however, is depicted best in the national epic *Sasunci Dawit'*. Later historians limit themselves to chronicles of current events, such as Aristakes Lastiverc'i (c. 1000–1073), who tells of the fall of the Bagratid capital, Ani, and Mat'feos Urhayerc'i (i.e., Edessene, c. 1070–1140), who details the coming of the Turks and of the Crusaders. There are also poetic laments over the fall of Edessa to Nur ad-Din in 1146 (by the patriarch Nerses IV Šnorhali, 1166–1173), Jerusalem to Salah ad-Din in 1187 (by the patriarch Grigor IV Pahlawuni, 1173–1193), and Constantinople to Mehmed II in 1453 (by Aṙak'el Bališec'i, c. 1390–1454).

In spite of the dominance of the historical genre in literature, the Bible continued as the primary source of inspiration, as evidenced by the mystical soliloquies of Grigor Narekac'i (c. 945–1003) and the first literary epic, a recounting of the Bible in verse by Grigor Magistros (c. 990–1059), a work that inspired the more elaborate *Jesus the Son* by the patriarch Nerses IV Šnorhali a century later. Nerses was the most prominent figure of a new era of literary enlightenment that characterized the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia in the eleventh–fifteenth centuries. Thousands of illuminated manuscripts, mostly Bibles, and scores of commentaries on various books of the Bible survive from this period. Most of these biblical commentaries were inspired by the earlier translations of such works from Syriac and Greek. Some of these early commentaries now survive only in Armenian: Ephrem the Syrian's *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* and his *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul*, John Chrysostom's *Commentary on Isaiah*, and Hesychius of Jerusalem's *Commentary on Job*.

Lexicography likewise thrived with increasingly expanded compilations when Middle Armenian was the current stage of the language. By far the most exhaustive of the Armenian lexica is the somewhat later *Nor Bargirk' Haykazean Lezui* (New Dictionary of the Armenian Language), published in two volumes by the Venetian Mekhitarists (1836–1837). The work encompasses all words found in medieval Armenian literature, from the fifth to the fifteenth century. Although the coverage of the earlier literature is thorough, the coverage of works written after the tenth century is rather sketchy, perhaps intentionally, to avoid what was perceived

to be Cilician corruptions. No lexicon of Middle or Cilician Armenian exists. Such a work should necessarily include words found outside published religious texts and should account for unpublished manuscripts with secular contents. [See also Armenia.]

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ABRAHAM TERIAN

'ARO'ER (Ar., Ar'arah), site located on a low ridge overlooking a broad wadi in Israel's Negev desert, some 22 km (13 mi.) southeast of Beersheba (map reference 1479 × 0623). In 1 *Samuel* 30:28, David sends the spoils of war to 'Aro'er's elders. It appears also in *Joshua* 15:22, defining the borders of Judah. It is written *Adada* in the Masoretic text. Guided by the Arabic pronunciation, the site was first identified as 'Aro'er by Edward Robinson in 1838. Excavations were carried out between 1975 and 1982 by Avraham Biran of the Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology of the Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem and Rudolph Cohen of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

Six areas were opened: areas A, B, D, and Y on the mound's summit; area C at the base of its southeastern slope; and area F on a terrace in the Nahal 'Aro'er drainage at the southwest foot of the tell. The tell, or acropolis, occupied an area of approximately 1 ha (2.5 acres), but in the Iron Age the settlement also occupied another hectare or so outside the early acropolis wall (stratum IV). Four main strata were identified:

- Stratum I: Herodian (50 BCE–135 CE)  
 Stratum II: Iron III (late seventh–early sixth centuries BCE)  
 Stratum III: Iron III (mid- to late seventh century BCE)  
 Stratum IV: Iron II–III (late eighth or early seventh–mid-seventh centuries BCE)

The founding layer, stratum IV, featured a solid offset-inset wall as the dominant feature. Its surfaces were plastered, and an earthen, stone-lined glacis was built against it from the outside. Some indications point to a gateway on the southwest. Structures were erected against this wall along its inner face and toward the interior of the settlement. The area outside the walls was also occupied by architectural remains dating to this phase over an area of approximately one hectare. This stratum has been attributed by the excavators to a fortification project ostensibly carried out by Manasseh, king of Judah, which included a number of sites.