

hoped for a comparison of the Roman system of hostages and hostage-taking with others that existed in the ancient world. A more thorough contextualizing would have added to the value of this interesting study.

Allen earns credit for focusing on hostages, an issue often neglected in the study of Roman history. Allen's approach by relational category is an illuminating one. He succeeds in throwing interesting light on the mindset of the Roman elite culture and its ways of negotiating and producing its power. The proofreading and copyediting of the book is of consistently high quality.

Joonas Sipilä

ARAM TOPCHYAN: *The Problem of the Greek Sources of Movsēs Xorenac'i's History of Armenia*. Hebrew University Armenian Studies 7. Peeters, Leuven 2006. ISBN 978-90-429-1662-3. X, 145 pp. EUR 42.

The penetration and continuation of Classical Greek literature among other ancient cultures, and especially among the eastern ones, is an interesting topic. Aram Topchyan's fascinating book examines the level of this cultural phenomenon in early medieval Armenian society as it can be discovered between the lines in one of the earliest Armenian historiographical works. The subject under investigation is a complicated compilation of local legends and proper sources written by one Movsēs Xorenac'i, who himself claimed to have been a member of the Armenian clergy in the mid-fifth century, but this, like so much of his writing, remains doubtful.

Until now Movsēs has been usually disregarded as a possible source for serious research due to the almost incomprehensible nature of his work, where fictional legends are intertwined with historical events. For the same reason all the claims by Movsēs of using genuine Greek sources has been categorically refuted as an intentional falsification and the names of the sources are usually seen as just copied from the Armenian version of Eusebius' *Chronicle*. It is this categorical denial of even the possibility that some of Movsēs' named sources could actually have been used that Topchyan puts under the microscope.

Proceeding from the introduction (pp. 1–15) to the subject at hand, Topchyan examines in the first chapter (pp. 17–64) some references to the Greek sources related to the earliest history of the Armenians. Four alleged sources – Berossus, Alexander Polyhistor, Abydenus, and Cephalion – are examined in equal fashion. First, a short description is provided of all the four authors accompanied with an introduction to the dominant view which sees all the references to the named sources as just interpolations from Eusebius' *Chronicle*. This is followed by a systematic textual comparison of Xorenac'i's references to the named sources and the Armenian version of Eusebius' *Chronicle*. In many cases Topchyan is able to demonstrate that Movsēs' text differs from the version given by Eusebius and is in fact closer to other sources like Syncellus, who actually made use of the said authors. The discoveries are noteworthy and the argumentation in favor of Movsēs having access to the authors themselves is compelling. As a possible solution and compromise, Topchyan suggests at the end of the chapter that the information may have reached Armenia in a collection of excerpts, which in my opinion could very well explain the fragmentary nature of the references and the textual correspondence with

the similar Byzantine excerpts.

The second chapter (pp. 65–100) examines Movsēs' claim to have used the *Universal Chronicle* of Iulius Africanus extensively in his section dealing with the Artaxiad dynasty of Armenia. As in the previous chapter, Topchyan begins his examination with a short introduction to Africanus and with a more detailed presentation of the argumentation used by earlier scholars in favor of the view that all of Movsēs' references to Africanus actually originated from either Josephus' *Jewish War* or Eusebius' *Chronicle*. To demonstrate that this dominant view is based on erroneous interpretations, Topchyan examines in detail the information given by Xorenac'i and the precise nature of the terminology used and sentence construction. In many cases, Topchyan is able to show that Movsēs' version contains information not found in either Josephus or in Eusebius, but strong similarities can be discovered in other sources which are known to have used Africanus as a source. It would thus seem quite certain, as Topchyan himself says, that Movsēs was able to use Africanus to a certain degree either directly or indirectly, and that the previous opinion, that all such references are just interpolations from Eusebius, cannot be upheld any longer.

The third chapter (pp. 100–16) deals with Movsēs' claim to have used an otherwise unknown historiographical narrative by Firmilian. Again, Topchyan gives a short presentation of Firmilian, the reference to his work(s) in Xorenac'i and the currently held explanations for the references. Much of the chapter deals with the possibility that Firmilian could in fact have written a work that might have included some historiographical information. The main issue in the polemic has been the discussion about Peter, the sixteenth bishop of Alexandria, by Movsēs as originating from the Firmilian "narrative", which Topchyan attempts to explain to have originated from a confusion of sources used by Xorenac'i. In the end, Topchyan concedes that this issue must remain uncertain, although the opinion now current is clearly not without problems. The book also contains a short observation of the implications (pp. 117–20) these results will have on further studies, an appendix (pp. 121–6) dealing with the quotations from Abydenus, an extensive bibliography (pp. 127–40) and an index (pp. 141–5).

In a time when the Greek and Latin literary sources are more or less completely known it is refreshing to discover that there still are some unexplored areas which may provide new perspectives for further studies. In addition, for a scholar not acquainted with the previous research published in modern Armenian or Russian, the book provides a thorough insight into the polemic at hand. The book is also a delightful reminder that although some sources seem rather confused and erratic they may still contain some precise and useful information. Indeed, it is quite possible that Movsēs' narrative may yet provide more information than first meets the eye.

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*A Companion to Greek and Roman Political Thought*. Edited by RYAN K. BALOT. Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester – Malden 2008. ISBN 978-1-4051-5143-6. 688 pp. GBP 95, EUR 114.

Just five years ago, in this periodical (*Arctos* 39 [2005] 242–243), I published a review of a volume edited by C. Rowe and M. Schofield, *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* (Cambridge 2000), which I hailed as "the very first general and comprehensive