

Emilio Bonfiglio, “Primary History of Armenia”,
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Primary History of Armenia

7th century? Armenia. A brief, heterogeneous, and anonymous prose text in Armenian that deals with the origin of the Armenian nation and the Arsacid dynasty. The first chapter describes the mythological deeds of Hayk[՛], eponymous ancestor of the Armenian people, and of his successors. The second depicts the rise and establishment of the Arsacid dynasty in Armenia, ending with two lists of the Parthians and Armenian kings.

The *Primary History* was the first of two self-contained sections preceding a version of the *History* attributed to → Sebēos which were published by T. MIHRDATEAN in 1851 from a manuscript that is now lost. The second section combines an account of the origin of the Mamikonean clan and a chronological sketch of Byzantine and Persian kings down to the end of Sasanian rule. The *Primary History* appears to be a patchwork, produced by a compiler who gathered uncon-

nected materials from various sources, including archival documents of doubtful authenticity and the now-lost work of the obscure chronicler Mar Abas. This legendary account of the origin of the Armenian nation is also found in the later *History* of → Movsēs Xorenac[՛]i, where the figure of Mar Abas receives more extensive treatment. The dating of the *Primary History* is extremely problematic and cannot be established with certainty given the present knowledge of the Armenian sources.

Bibliography

Texts: G.V. ABGARYAN, *Patmut' iwn Sebēosi*, 1979, 1–16. R.W. THOMSON, *Moses Khorenats' i*, 1978, 357–67 [translation].

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