

# A “Paralogism” or “Premeditated” Story in an Armenian Source: “Mēhēmēt the Prophet from Iran”

İlhami Tekin Cinemre\*

## Introduction

The acceptance of Christianity by Armenian monarchy and aristocracy, the invention of the Armenian alphabet and influence of regional conflicts between *naxarar* are the main factors of the formation of the Armenian literature. Many of the sources, particularly, created by Christianity are either dedicated to a family or adapted to the idea of heroism<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, there are intentional falsification or unintentional mistakes in religious, historical and geographical works that are the basis of the Armenian literature and in various parts of the biographical and hagiographical works. This situation can be easily followed from Agat‘angetos’s work called *The History of the Armenians*<sup>2</sup>, which describes the integration of Christianity with Armenia, or from the information and chronological errors in the work of Movsēs Xorenac‘i, one of the most important Armenian authors.

The same problem applies to classical Armenian works that expanded after the 7<sup>th</sup> century and placed Muslims on the field of view. Especially, unlike well-known Armenian authors, who give important information about Muslims such as Sebēos, Łewond and Aristakēs Lastiverc‘i, a *Story* put forward a different claim after a few centuries. This anonymous *Story*, also known as the *Pseudo-Šapuh*, an illusory name, made misleading definitions and descriptions about Mēhēmēt the

\* Res. Ass., Karadeniz Technical University, Faculty of Literature, History Department, Trabzon/ TÜRKİYE, ilhamitekincinemre@gmail.com ORCID: 0000-0002-2760-0976

\*\* The classical Armenian transliteration used in the text is based on Heinrich Hübschmann’s *Armenische Grammatik* (1897). In addition, the letter [Օ-ժ] is designated as “ts” instead of “c” to prevent reading errors and make the text more understandable.

\*\*\* *The Story* was followed from the Armenian, Russian and English editions and the pages of the Russian edition were taken into consideration in cases where reference should be given but in special conditions, the chapter or line numbers of the Armenian manuscript were also followed.

1 Movsēs Xorenac‘i, for example, produced his work for the house of Bagratuni and Step‘annos Ōrbelian for the Siwnik‘ family. Therefore, a positive and protective image is drawn about the *naxarar* families in these studies.

2 (= *Patmut‘wn Hayoc‘*, [Պատմութիւն Հայոց]).

prophet apart from chronological errors commonly known in Armenian sources. In this context, the study aims to question the deliberate or deceptive narrative of the first and only Armenian source, describing Mēhēmēt the prophet as an “Iranian”.

The anonymous *Story* was first published in 1921 by the title of *History of Šapuh Bagratuni*<sup>3</sup> by G. Tēr-Mkrtč‘ean and M. Tēr-Movsēsean, based on a manuscript, which was brought to Eĵmiatsin from the Vaspurakan (Mus) region in 1917<sup>4</sup>. The work published by Tēr-Mkrtč‘ean and Tēr-Movsēsean had a misleading title and the beginning section of the first part of the *Story* on Mēhēmēt the prophet was missing<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, the title of the work, which was re-prepared in Russian, in 1971, was edited as *An Anonymous Story Attributed to Šapuh Bagratuni*<sup>6</sup> and the lost part was added to the study.<sup>7</sup> Finally, Robert W. Thomson translated the exact text of the same work into English in 1988/9 under the title of *The Anonymous Story-Teller (also known as “Pseudo-Šapuh”)*<sup>8</sup>.

It is not possible to determine exactly when the *Story* was written but a likely date range can be considered by some expressions and the sources used in the text. It is clear that the anonymous author followed the works of Armenian authors such as T‘ovma Artsruni and Step‘anos Tarōnec‘i Asofik, especially Łewond. Moreover, it is also possible that the *Story* has experienced a non-written process because the events of different centuries are described together although there are chronological errors<sup>9</sup>.

There are some differences between the section of the *Story*, which consists of two parts, and essentially these parts are far from each other. Therefore, in the Russian

3 (= *Patmut‘iwn Šaphoy Bagratunwoy*, [պատմութիւն շապիոյ բագրատունոյ]).

4 *Patmut‘iwn Šaphoy Bagratunwoy*, ed. G. Tēr-Mkrtč‘ean and M. Tēr-Movsēsean, Tparan Gitakan Institutı, Eĵmiacin 1921.

5 The story tells the history of the Artsruni in the Vaspurakan Region, not the Bagratuni. In this context, the *History of Šapuh Bagratuni*, which Asofik showed it among his sources, is probably lost and it is not the same as the *Story*. See, *The Universal History of Step‘anos Tarōnec‘i*, Trans. Tim Greenwood, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2017, p. 100.

6 (= *Patmut‘iwn Ananun Żruc‘agri Karcec‘eal Šapuh Bagratuni*, [Պատմութիւն անանուն զրուցարի. կարծեցեալ Շապուհի Բագրատունի]).

7 *Patmut‘iwn Ananun Żruc‘agri Karcec‘eal Šapuh Bagratuni*, ed. and Trans. M. H. Darbinyan-Melik‘yan, Haykakan SSH Gitut‘yunneru Akademiayi Hratarakč‘ut‘yun, Yerevan 1971.

8 Robert W. Thomson, “The Anonymous Story-Teller (Also Known as ‘Pseudo-Šapuh’)”, *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, Vol. XXI (1988-9), p. 171-231.

9 Thomson, *Anonymus*, p. 172.

edition of the *Story*, Darbinyan-Melik‘yan suggested that the first part was written in the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> centuries and the second part was created in the 12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>10</sup>. Truly, the cross narrative in Hac‘iwn in the *Story* is classified under the number Matenadaran 3777, as early as 1185-1188, and at the beginning of only a few manuscripts there is information under the title of “The Birth and Service of the False Prophet Mahamat and His Reign”<sup>11</sup>.

The first part of the *Story*, which was divided into two parts by G. Tēr-Mkrtč‘ean and M. Tēr-Movsēsean, is illuminated about the prophetic claim of Mēhēmēt and some miracles about Mauricius (582-602) and Heraclius (610-641). The second part is based on the idea of heroism such as Derēn, the Princess of Siwnik‘, and Gagik, the leader of Vaspurakan, against Muslims. Contrary to many other Armenian sources, the *Story* has a more secular structure and it was influenced from the *Daredevils of Sassoun (Sasna ts‘er)*, Armenia’s national epic poem, which emphasizes bravery and “national” heroism in the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century against Muslims.

### **A Brief History of the Mēhēmēt’s Image in the Armenian Literature**

The first encounter of the Armenians with the Muslims probably coincides with the winter of 636/7, when they fought against the Muslim raids in the Sassanid ranks<sup>12</sup>. This vital encounter caused the Muslims to take their place in the work called *History of Sebēos*<sup>13</sup> written in the 650s and led to the arrival of Muslim identity to the Armenian literature<sup>14</sup>. Armenian sources have defined Muslims as *Hagarac‘ik‘* or *Ismaelac‘ik‘ / Ishmaelac‘ik‘* and this tradition passed to modern

10 *Patmut‘ iwn Ananun Zruc‘ agri Karcec‘ eal Šapuh Bagratuni*, p. 6-8. Also for the *Story*’s review see, Selon T. Abdalbekyan, “Predpolagayemyy Shapukh (Neskol’ko Slova k Voprosu ob Opredelenii Avtora Knigi “Istoriya Shapukha Bagratuni)””, *Vestnik Nauchnogo Instituta Armenii*, Vol. I-II (1921-1922).

11 Matenadaran 234, 2506, 3206, 3260, 3447, 6961, 8100, 8387. See, *Patmut‘ iwn Ananun Zruc‘ agri Karcec‘ eal Šapuh Bagratuni*, p. 11; Thomson, *Anonymous*, p. 173.

12 Sebēos refers to the death of *sparapet (commander)* Mušet Mamikonean in Battle of al-Qādisiyyah. See, *The Armenian History Attributed to Sebēos*, Trans. Robert W. Thomson; James Howard-Johnston, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool 1999, p. 98-99. See also, Joseph Laurent, *L’Arménie entre Byzance et l’Islam*, Fontemoing, Paris 1919.

13 (= *Patmut‘ iwn Sebēosi*, [Պատմութիւն Սեբէոսի]).

14 Sebēos, probably faithful to the old tradition and called Muslims as *Ismaēl / Ismaēl [իսմայէլ]*. See for tradition, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, ed. Michael D. Coogan, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2010, p. 33; *Gürcistan Tarihi*, Trans. Hrand D. Andreasyan; Ed. Erdoğan Merçil, TTK, Ankara 2003, p. 198. See also, Robert W. Thomson, “Muhammad and the Origin of Islam in Armenian Literary Tradition”, *Armenian Studies in Memoriam Haiğ Berberian*, ed. Dickran Kouymjian, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation & Livraria Bertrand, Lisbon 1986, p. 830.

Armenian as *Mahmetakanut' iwn* (*Mahmetism*)<sup>15</sup>. Thus Sebēos, who gave the first information about Mēhēmēt the prophet, noted that *a certain man from among those same sons of Ismael whose name was Mahmet, a merchant, as if by God's command appeared to them as a preacher*<sup>16</sup>.

After Sebēos, Lewond, who wrote in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, began his *history* with the death of Mēhēmēt the prophet, but the work focused on Muslims politically threatening the Armenia region, not the life or servant of Mēhēmēt the prophet. Therefore, even if Lewond establishes similarities between Muslims and “flying winged serpent”, he does not give information on the description or theological reflections of Mēhēmēt the prophet<sup>17</sup>. However, the *martyr* tradition in the same centuries and the *vitae* (*life story*) writings provide information on the acceptance of Islam in Armenia. For example, in the year 785/6, Hamazasp, the *martyr*, and Merhujan'in, Isaac's brother, adopted Islam<sup>18</sup>.

The first detailed information about Mēhēmēt the prophet is followed by T'ovma Artsruni's work titled *History of the House of the Artsrunik*<sup>19</sup>. He, especially, gives long passages on Mēhēmēt's prophesy and some of his relatives (like his uncle Abu Talib and his brother-in-law Ali)<sup>20</sup>. Following T'ovma Artsruni, there are several records of the same and later centuries, about Mēhēmēt the prophet's Jewish wife (Maria al-Qibtīyya) and peace with the Armenians<sup>21</sup>. Among these records, it is possible to say that the works of later Armenian authors who repeat each other, such as Movsēs Dasxuranc'i, Samuel Anec'i, Mxit'ar Anec'i and

15 Seta B. Dadoyan, *The Armenians in the Medieval Islamic World*, Vol. III, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick 2014, p. 163.

16 [յայնմ ժամանակ այր ոճն ի նոցունց իսկ յորդոնցն Իսմայելի. Որում անուն էր Մահմէտ, թանգար, որպէս ի հրամանէն Աստուծոյ երևեալ նոցա քարոզ՝ ճշմարտութեանն ճանապարհ:]. *The Armenian History Attributed to Sebēos*, p. 95.

17 *History of Lewond, The Eminent Vardapet of the Armenians*, Trans. Zaven Arzoumanian, St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Church, Wynnewood 1982, p. 51. See also, Sidney H. Griffith, “The Prophet Muhammad, His Scripture and His Message According to The Christian Apologies in Arabic and Syriac from the First Abbasid Century”, *La Vie Du Prophete Mahomet*, ed. Fahd Toufic, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1983, p. 99-146.

18 Thomson, *Muhammad*, p. 832.

19 (= *Patmut' iwn Tann Artsrunec'*, [Պատմութիւն Տանն Արծրունեաց]).

20 Thomas Artsruni, *History of the House of Artsrunik*, Trans. Robert W. Thomson, Wayne State University Press, Detroit 1985, p. 165-166.

21 Samouel d'Ani, *Tables Chronologiques*, in; *Collection Des Historiens Arméniens*, Trans. Marie-Félicité Brosset, Vol. II, Impr. de l'Académie Imperiale des Sciences, S.-Petersbourg 1876, p. 403.

Vardan Vardapet<sup>22</sup>. Nevertheless, none of these authors implied that Mēhēmēt the prophet is “Iranian”, and they basically did not follow consistent chronology and information about the theology of Islam, even among themselves<sup>23</sup>.

**An Anonymous Story: “Mēhēmēt” from the “Iranian Nation”**

The beginning of the *Story*, whose date and author are uncertain, is based on the idea that after Trdat IV, the Armenian kings such as Xosrov III, Tiran, Aršak II and Pap receded from Christianity in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and thus Armenia and Armenians was punished by God<sup>24</sup>. Following this idea, the *Anonymous Story* noted that an antichrist Messenger, Mēhēmēt emerged as the leader of the Tajiks as a result of the god’s anger<sup>25</sup>. The word Tajiks used by the *Story* here generally corresponds to the meaning of “Arab” in the Armenian literary tradition.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, other contemporary writings often used the word Tajiks, and in this respect, it was possible that the *Story* was influenced by other contemporary sources<sup>27</sup>. However, on the other hand, it is also possible that the *Story* used this word as “Iranian” instead of “Arab”, unlike its contemporary sources. For the word Tajik, actually belonged to Iranian civilization and even came to mean “Persian/Iranian” according to sources such as Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk and Kutadgu Bilig<sup>28</sup>.

- 22 Movsēs Dasxuranc’i, *The History of the Albanians* (=Patmut’iwn Aṭuanic’, [Պատմութիւն Աղուանից]; Samuel Anec’i, *Chronology* (=Ջամանակագրութիւն); Mxit’ar Anec’i, *History of the City of Ani* (=Patmut’iwn k’atak’in yAnwoy [Պատմութիւն քաղաքին յԱնույ]), Vardan Vardapet, *Historical Compilation* (=Hawak’umn Patmut’ean, [Հաւաքումն պատմութեան]).
- 23 The Armenian literature first met with the Qur’an under the title of *Luran* in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. See, Dadoyan, *Ibid*, p. 164.
- 24 This idea is parallel to the stories described in early Armenian sources and the main problem is based on conflict between the church and monarchy. See for examples, *The Epic Histories Attributed to P’awstos Buzand*, Trans. Nina G. Garsoïan, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1989, p. 203; Movsēs Xorenac’i, *History of the Armenians*, Trans. Robert W. Thomson, London: Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1978, p. 298-299.
- 25 [Ապա, յայտնի կարապետն նեռին, որ է Մեհեմետն՝ արաջտորդն տաճկաց]. *Patmut’iwn Ananun Ջրուց’i Karcec’ eal Šapuh Bagratuni*, p. 41; Thomson, *Anonymous*, p. 182.
- 26 The word Tajiks derived from *Tai/Tayy* [Տայի/Տայյ] and generally corresponds to meanings such as “Muslim, Arab, Sarazen”. See, *Nor Bağırk’ Haykazean Lezui*, ed. G. Awetik’ean - K. Siwrmēlean and M. Awgerean, Vol. II, Venice 1836-1837, p. 842; Thomson, *Anonymous*, p. 182. A few examples of the use of Tajiks in the Armenian literature; Agat’angelos, *History of the Armenians*, Trans. Robert W. Thomson, State University of New York Press, Albany 1976, p. 209; *The Armenian History Attributed to Sebēos*, p. 95.
- 27 *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, Patriarche Jacobite d’Antioche (1166–1199)*, ed. Jean-Baptiste Chabot, Vol. III, Ernest Leroux, Paris 1905, p. 26; *Kiracos de Gantzac: XIII<sup>e</sup> S., Histoire d’Armenie*, Trans. Marie-Félicité Brosset, Eggers & Comp., H. Schmitzdorff, St. Petersburg 1870, p. 27.
- 28 Kâşgarlı Mahmud, *Dîwānî Lugātî’t-Türk*, ed. Ahmet B. Ercilasun – Ziyat Akkoyunlu, Türk Dil

Nevertheless, there is no evidence that the anonymous writer has reached similar sources or improve a parallel narrative.

The next paragraph of the *Story* uses the phrase “Iranian” with an assertive discourse for Mēhēmēt. According to the narrative; *opposite Isfahan Castle, there was a man from the Persian land named Abd-Rahman, son of Abdala, the son of Belmikīn, from the city of Ruerany near the city of Rēoy. He begat a son and called him Mēhēmēt*<sup>29</sup>. The continuation of the *Story* refers to Mēhēmēt’s claim to prophesy and Sargis (Bahira/Bhira), which is widely known in the sources<sup>30</sup>. At this point, the *Story*, which goes beyond the chronology and geographical mistakes that Armenian sources often make, is described Mēhēmēt as “Iranian” although the distinction between Iran and Arab geographies was known,

It is not possible for the *Story* to unaware the continuing Armenian literary tradition or the works of Armenian authors such as Lewond and T’ovma Artsruni<sup>31</sup>. In this context, the *Story*’s “Iranian” emphasis maybe arise from the cultural background between Armenia and Iran. Because, the *Story* tells that Mēhēmēt was seized by the devil/Iblis from day after day and was dragged into the deserts, mountains, and caves, tied to the chains<sup>32</sup>. However, the same tale is seen in Aži-Dahāka belief widely known in the Iranian world. The traditional *Story* confirms that Aži-Dahāka was born in Reyy (same place with Mēhēmēt), possessed by Satan and brought evil to the world<sup>33</sup>. From this perspective, the *Story* may have established

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Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara 2014, p. 167; *Kutadgu Bilig*, Trans. Reşid Rahmeti Arat, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul 1947, p. 43.

29 [Այր ոճն աշխարհէն Պարսից և անուն նորա Ապտոսահման՝ որդի Աբդալի՛ որդոյ Բելմիկին, ի քաղաքէն Ռուերան՝ մօտ ի քաղաքն Ռէոյ, ընդդէմ Ասպահան բերդոյ. նա ծնաւ որդի մի և կոչեաց զանուն նորա Մէհէմէտ և յաւել ծնաւ դուստր մի և կոչեաց զանուն նորա Ֆաթմայ կին գեղեցիկ յոյժ:]. *Patmut' iwn Ananun Zruc' agri Karceec' eal Šapuh Bagratuni*, p. 41; Thomson, *Anonymous*, p. 182-183.

30 See for about Sargis Image in Armenian Literature, Thomas Artsruni, *Ibid.*, p. 166; Movsēs Daxurançi, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, Trans. Charles J. F. Dowsett, Oxford University Press, London 1961, p. 186; Samouel d'Ani, *Ibid.*, p. 403.

31 See for parallel expressions, *History of Lewond, The Eminent Vardapet of the Armenians*, p. 67-69; Thomas Artsruni, *Ibid.*, p. 193.

32 *Patmut' iwn Ananun Zruc' agri Karceec' eal Šapuh Bagratuni*, p. 41; Thomson, *Anonymous*, p. 183.

33 James R. Russell, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, ed. Richard N. Frye, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Cambridge; MA; London 1987, p. 43. On the other hand, see for Mēhēmēt’s birth, *The History of al-Tabarī*, Trans. Joel L. Kraemer, etc., Vol. V, State University of New York Press, Albany 1999, p. 268-270.

a direct analogy between Mēhēmēt and Aži-Dahāka tradition<sup>34</sup>. For Mēhēmēt or Muslim Arabs, the use of the expression “antichrist or hell” in the Armenian literature is not something unknown<sup>35</sup>. Under such condition, it is possible that the *Story* shows Mēhēmēt as the embodied state of Aži-Dahāka, which brings evil. Moreover, the Armenian literature had already defined Aži-Dahāka (Azhdahak/Azhdhak) as “Iranian” since the earliest period<sup>36</sup>.

Other examples of Arab-Iranian confusion, in general, are also in the *Story*. Despite the fact that the *Khosrow/Chosroes/Xosrov* name was used extensively in the Iranian and Armenian societies, inconsistently, *K asrē* [Քասրէ], an Arabic or Georgian form, was used in the text<sup>37</sup>. However, the anonymous writer goes back to the Iranian tradition in the same paragraph, saying that Mēhēmēt left his own country, Iran, go to Babylon<sup>38</sup>. However, as it is known, the Hijrah was not in the Iranian territory but in the Arab geography. Thus, the *Story*, based on its own fiction, brought the emphasis of “Iranian” to the foreground once more.

The *Story* that contains misleading information from the geographical perspective as well as from the chronological point of view, suggests that after Mēhēmēt captured important centers such as Msr, Tarsus, Antiochia and Melitene, he has established a new belief by removing Nestorianism and states that he declared himself “the prophet of the nation of Iran”<sup>39</sup>. At the same point, the anonymous writer who repeated the Aži-Dahāka tale uses the expression that *the false tutorial Mēhēmēt established his own tradition*<sup>40</sup>. The “false” definition for Mēhēmēt was not an unknown tradition in the sources but the phrase “he converted Iranian riches”

34 The similarities between Mēhēmēt the prophet and Zarathustra are well known, but this is not the issue of this study.

35 *The Armenian History Attributed to Sebēos*, p. 136.

36 Movsēs Xorenac’i, *Ibid.*, p. 110; Yovhannēs Draxanakerc’i, *History of Armenia*, Trans. Krikor H. Maksoudian, Scholars Press, Atlanta 1987, p. 71. Besides, *Shahnama* shows Aži-Dahāka (Zahhak) as an Arab. *The Shahnama of Firdausi*, Trans. Arthur G. Warner - Edmond Warner, Vol. I, Routledge, London 2000, p. 137.

37 *Patmut’ i’an Ananun Žruc’ agri Karcec’ eal Šapuh Bagratuni*, p. 47; Thomson, *Anonymous*, p. 184.

38 [...աշխարհէն իրեանց ի Պարսից և եկեալ բնակեցան աշխարհն Բաբելացոց:]. *Patmut’ i’an Ananun Žruc’ agri Karcec’ eal Šapuh Bagratuni*, p. 47; Thomson, *Anonymous*, p. 184.

39 [...և կոչեաց զինքն մարգարէ ազգին Պարսից...]. *Patmut’ i’an Šaphoy Bagratunwoy*, p. 16; *Patmut’ i’an Ananun Žruc’ agri Karcec’ eal Šapuh Bagratuni*, p. 71; Thomson, *Anonymous*, p. 191.

40 [Եւ եղ իր աւանդութիւն և իրաւունք խաբուով զիւստարն Մահմէտ:]. *Patmut’ i’an Šaphoy Bagratunwoy*, p. 16; *Patmut’ i’an Ananun Žruc’ agri Karcec’ eal Šapuh Bagratuni*, p. 71; Thomson, *Anonymous*, p. 191.

used by *Story* is in the form of “converted Arabian riches” in the Islamic literature<sup>41</sup>. In addition, the anonymous writer recorded that Mēhēmēt went to Samarra, the land of “Iran” upon the death of his father. And this general approach put forward the idea that Mēhēmēt first made “Iranian” merchants Muslims. In fact, the *Story* expresses that Mēhēmēt first converted Apupak’r and Awmar’i from the “Iranian”<sup>42</sup>.

The second part of the *Story* is about the superior heroism of the Armenian leaders against the Muslim warriors and as in the first part, the emphasis on “Iranian” continues in this chapter. Indeed, according to the *Story*, “Iranian” generals, Ahmat and Malim were leaders of the Muslim armies that attack Armenia towards the 650’s. <sup>43</sup> Likewise, the anonymous writer refers to Umar (Amr) as the “Iranian ruler” and to Muslims as the “Iranian nation” following a consistent attitude in itself.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, there was a marriage between Shahrbanu, last Sassanid Emperor of Iran, and Husayn ibn Ali, Mēhēmēt’s grandson, and later, through the descendants of Mēhēmēt, the tradition of Islam has been shaped in Iran. Nevertheless, it is still unknown whether the *Story* considers this connection.

On the other hand, the depictions of the Seljuks as “Iranians”, who ruled over the Iranian geography over the past years, may have caused the anonymous writer to relate Muslims with Iran. As a matter of fact, the 12<sup>th</sup> century writer Matt’eos Urihaec’i, influenced the *Story*, uses an expression *in the city of Baghdad, Iran caliph who occupied Mēhēmēt’s throne, died*<sup>45</sup>. Therefore, it is likely that the anonymous author does not make a distinction between the Muslim “Seljuks” and the “Arabs” and describes both as “Iranians”.

## Conclusion

Among the rich materials that the Armenian literature has, the only work that shows Mēhēmēt the prophet as “Iranian” is a source which author and date are

41 An example of the definition of “false”, *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, Trans. Harry Turtledove, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia 1982, p. 34. Besides, the “riches” suggested by the *Story* are probably Abu Bakr and Uthman, they are trader and a noble family member.

42 *Patmut’iwn Ananun Zruc’agri Karceec’eal Šapuh Bagratuni*, p. 43; Thomson, *Anonymous*, p. 183.

43 [Լ գորավարքն Պարսից Ահմատ ու զՄալիմ]. *Patmut’iwn Šaphoy Bagratunwoy*, p. 19; *Patmut’iwn Ananun Zruc’agri Karceec’eal Šapuh Bagratuni*, p. 77; Thomson, *Anonymous*, p. 193.

44 *Patmut’iwn Šaphoy Bagratunwoy*, p. 30; *Patmut’iwn Ananun Zruc’agri Karceec’eal Šapuh Bagratuni*, p. 95; Thomson, *Anonymous*, p. 198.

45 *Urfah Mateos Vekayi-nâmesi (952-1136) ve Papaz Grigor’un Zeyli (1136-1162)*, Trans. Hrand D. Andreasyan, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 2000, p. 263.



ambiguous. It is difficult to understand why the source needs it but a number of reasons may arise when both the general literature of the period and the political developments are taken into consideration.

First of all, anti-Iranism in the Armenian literature is widely known due to the reasons of religious concerns. Thus, On the basis of the “Iranian” emphasis of the *Story*, there is a religious and political interaction between Iran and Armenia that has taken place throughout history. Actually, the Iranian civilization, which has been partially in harmony with Armenia in terms of culture, politics and religion for centuries, after Christianity began to clash with Armenia, this situation soon turned into a struggle between Christianity and Zoroastrianism. The endless conflict generally continued with the superiority of Iran, but this caused Armenia to establish closer relations with Christianity. Therefore, the image of the Muslim Arabs who took over Iran’s heritage, in the view of the Armenians did not differ from the Iranian civilization. Because the *enemy* against Christianity was no longer Zoroastrianism but Muslim. For this reason, as the *Story* told the struggle with Muslim Arabs in heroism, this idea shows the impact of the intellectual background against Iran. This may indicate the intention to take revenge from Iran through the Arabs so the leader of the Muslims may be emphasized as “Iranian”.

On the other hand, it is understandable that the *Story*’s desire to create an attractive argument. Therefore, Mēhēmēt the prophet is portrayed as a new force symbolizing evil, as the co-value of the Aži-Dahāka, which symbolizes evil in Iranian civilization. Indeed, because the kings of Armenia had moved away from Christianity, the *Story* adapted this situation to the idea that God punished Armenia. This fiction, in general, coincides with the idea of “evil” and “other” in the Armenian sources.

Another reason for the origin of the “Iranian” description is probably the political situation during the period in which the *Story* was written. In other Armenian sources, the demonstration of the Seljuks, as belonging to Iranian civilization, may have led to the inclusion of Muslim Seljuks in Iran. Because the Armenians could have achieved a reflex thanks to Christianity against the Seljuks, who established their control over Armenia. In addition to, the administration of the state institutions of Abbasid and even Seljuks by the Iranians may have raised to the confusion between Arab and Iranian elements.

As a result, the “Iranian” depiction of the *Story* can be regarded as a direct intentional fiction rather than a mistake. Because in the light of the reasons

mentioned, the *Story* is aware of many sources that were written before it, and the distinction between Iran and Arab geographies. Therefore, it is not possible in the historical context to portray Mēhēmēt the prophet as “Iranian”. Furthermore, the source, virtually, is a tale and it is in the effort to attract the attention of the reader by means of Heroism. In this regard, it is natural that the Armenians have responded to the *enemy* in the south with heroism.

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