

Gohar Muradyan, *David the Invincible Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge: Old Armenian Text with the Greek Original, an English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, Philosophia Antiqua, 137 (Leiden: Brill, 2015). ISBN 978-9-004280847, e-ISBN 978-9-004280885, 205€.

The mysterious David Anhatt, the Invincible Philosopher whose work is one of the only works of literature from the sixth century that could arguably be called ‘Armenian’. About David himself we know almost nothing at all—only that he was probably a pupil of Olympiodorus in Alexandria, and that he gave lectures on philosophy, versions of four of which have come down to us. These include a prolegomena known as the ‘Definitions and Divisions of Philosophy’, a commentary on the *Isagogē* of Porphyry, and commentaries on two works of Aristotle, the *Categories* and the *Prior Analytics*. These works appear to have circulated originally in Greek, but Armenian versions appeared soon afterward amid a wave of late sixth-century translations of Greek philosophical works.

David’s connection to Armenia can only be established on the basis of the attention that his works received and on the strong tradition that arose in medieval times claiming him as one of his own. According to this tradition he was from the village of Nergin in Tarōn, a fact either giving rise to or derived from the toponymic ‘Nerginac’i’ by which he is occasionally known. He is usually named as a pupil of Maštoc’, the creator of the Armenian alphabet in the early fifth century, but has also been called a pupil of Movsēs Xorenac’i, the historian known as the ‘father of Armenian history’ and whose own biography and era remains a matter of dispute. The tradition generally agreed that, after a distinguished career in Alexandria, David returned to Armenia and engaged personally in the translation work that was a major component of the landscape of Armenian literature from the fifth century to the seventh.¹

Although several Armenian editions, both of David’s collected works and of individual commentaries, have been published since the nineteenth century—most recently, the edition of 1980 published by Arevšatyan²—attention to the philosopher and his surviving works has not percolated very far into Western-language scholarship. This is in part because of a lack of translations: of the four commentaries that come down to us, only one, the *Definitions and Divisions of Philosophy*, had until very recently been translated into English.³ It was, in part, to address this deficiency that a joint project was set

1 For a fuller introduction to the life and works of David, see Barnes 2009; Calzolari 2009. These articles comprise the introduction to a landmark collection of studies of different aspects of David’s work and its reception.

2 Arevšatyan 1980.

3 Kendall and Thomson 1983.

up, financed by the Swiss National Science Foundation, with partners at the Universities of Geneva and Fribourg as well as the Matenadaran in Yerevan. Thus far the collaboration has resulted, not only in the collection edited by Calzolari and Barnes already cited, but also in the edition and translation of two of David's four known works, of which this volume is the second. The remaining works are expected to be published in due course.

Gohar Muradyan has made a meticulous new edition of the work. The focus of this edition is very much on the technicalities of the text and its transmission; it does not contain a substantial commentary on the contents. Using the prior Armenian edition of Arevšatyan as well as the sole Greek edition⁴ as a starting point, she has re-examined more than fifty Armenian manuscripts as well as nine Greek ones, using these to draw or support conclusions about the likely stemmatic origin of the Armenian version, to say something about the relationships of manuscripts within the Armenian tradition, and to make a close observation of the discrepancies between the Greek and the Armenian. No stemma of the Armenian manuscripts is attempted. Muradyan declares the task impossible and we will not dispute that, but some form of visually comprehensible schematic of the manuscripts and their relations might have been gratefully received by readers. What is provided is a list of the number of agreements and disagreements between pairs of manuscripts, although there is no indication given of the editorial criteria used for distinguishing readings.

The text that is presented is a critical one, in that it is constructed from the evidence of the witnesses; on the other hand, rather than beginning anew with the construction of the text, Muradyan has chosen to use the edition of Arevšatyan as a base text, and to indicate in the apparatus when it has been departed from. While this is a reasonable approach from the perspective of minimizing the labour involved in what is already a monumental task, and thus delivering the edition within a reasonable timeframe, the lack of a full critical apparatus of the manuscripts that were consulted is to be regretted, particularly given the lack of any such apparatus in the prior edition.

These small criticisms aside, the edition is a veritable treasury of information about the text. Muradyan first presents her reconstruction of the Armenian, itself based in part on comparison with the Greek, along with its English translation which includes an endnote-referenced appendix of translations of passages that appear in the Greek but are absent from the Armenian. This is followed by the Greek version of the text, based on Busse's edition but emended where Muradyan considered one of Busse's variants to be better-supported by the Armenian, and including a proposed restoration of six lectures missing from the Greek manuscripts, based on their extant Armenian

4 Busse 1904.

versions and on the secondary evidence provided by the *Dialectica* of John of Damascus. The edition is given its finishing touches as a reference work in the form of a list of the scholia that appear in the Armenian manuscripts, and a glossary of equivalences between Greek, Armenian, and English technical terms. Taken as a whole this is a truly impressive and invaluable work of scholarship—a reference edition that is certain to stand the test of time.

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Tara L. Andrews
University of Vienna