

## ALL ARTS OF MORTALS FROM ONE TEACHER SPRING

*Knowledge is power, powerlessness is ignorance. To watch and see, to listen and hear, to accomplish with thoughts.*

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One single teaching (worldview) dominated before the confusion of languages. The deeds of Prometheus – the teacher of mankind<sup>1</sup> – are described in Greek mythology:

### **Prometheus Bound: Monologue**

Think not it is through pride or stiff self-will  
That I am silent. But my heart is worn,  
Self-contemplating, as I see myself  
Thus outraged. Yet what other hand than mine  
Gave these young gods in fulness all their gifts?  
But these I speak not of; for I should tell  
To you that know them. But those woes of men,  
List ye to them, how they, before as babes,  
By me were roused to reason, taught to think;  
And this I say, not finding fault with men,  
But showing my good-will in all I gave.  
For first, though seeing, all in vain they saw,  
And hearing, heard not rightly. But, like forms  
Of phantom-dreams, throughout their life's whole length  
They muddled all at random; did not know  
Houses of brick that catch the sunlight's warmth,  
Nor yet the work of carpentry. They dwelt  
In hollowed holes, like swarms of tiny ants,  
In sunless depths of caverns; and they had  
No certain signs of winter, nor of spring  
Flower-laden, nor of summer with her fruits;  
But without counsel faired their whole life long,  
Until I showed the risings of the stars,  
And settings hard to recognize. And I  
Found Number for them, chief device of all,  
Groupings of letters, Memory's handmaid that,  
And mother of the Muses. And I first  
Bound in the yoke wild steeds, submissive made,  
Or to the collar of men's limbs, that so  
They might in man's place bear his greatest toils;  
And horses trained to love the rein I yoked  
To chariots, glory of wealth's pride of state;

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<sup>1</sup> Aeschylus, **Prometheus Bound**, <http://www.theatrehistory.com/ancient/bates019.html>

Nor was it any one but I that found  
Sea-crossing, canvas-winged cars of ships:  
Such rare designs inventing (wretched me!)  
For mortal men, I yet have no device  
By which to free myself from this my woe.

Hearing what yet remains thou'lt wonder more,  
What arts and what resources I devised;  
And this the chief; if any one fell ill,  
There was no help for him, no healing food,  
Nor unguent, nor yet potion; but for want  
Of drugs they wasted, till I showed to them  
The blendings of all mild medicaments,  
Where with they ward the attacks of sickness sore.  
I gave them many modes of prophecy;  
And I first taught them what dreams needs must prove  
True visions, and made known the ominous sounds  
Full hard to know; and tokens by the way,  
And flights of taloned birds I clearly marked-  
Those on the right propitious to mankind,  
And those sinister--and what form of life  
They each maintain, and what their enmities  
Each with the other, and their loves and friendships;  
And of the inward parts the plumpness smooth,  
And with what color they the gods would please,  
And the streaked comeliness of gall and liver;  
And with burnt limbs enwrapped in fat, and chine,  
I led men on to art full difficult;  
And I gave eyes to omens drawn from fire  
Till then dim-visioned. So far then for this.  
And 'neath the earth the hidden boons for men,  
Bronze, iron, silver, gold, who else could say  
That he, ere I did, found them? None, I know,  
Unless he fain would babble idle words.  
In one short word, then, learn the truth condensed-  
All arts of mortals from Prometheus spring<sup>2</sup>.

However, these records do not match the idea of the main Indo-European motif – *the dragonslayer fighting a serpent/dragon, the concept of the four forces of nature, classical elements (water, air, fire and earth)*. The supreme Greek god Zeus fought the dragon Typhon from Cilicia (several sources locate Typhon's homeland in the Caucasus). Zeus punishes Prometheus: he is chained to a rock in the Caucasus. Prometheus fashioned men out of clay mixed with water in the Caucasus, and Aphrodite breathed life into them.

According to Sumerian-Akkadian mythology, the king of Ur kills the king of Aratta and abducts Astghik/Astarte/Inanna/Ishtar. According to Greek mythology, Zeus abducted beautiful Europa, the granddaughter of legendary Hayk Nahapet. According to Herodotus, Cadmus invented

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<sup>2</sup> Aeschylus. Prometheus Bound. Online available from: <http://www.bartleby.com/8/4/2.html>

the Phoenician and Greek alphabets; he is the legendary ruler of Greece and the grandson of Hayk. After Noah Hayk builds the **dwelling of the God (temple of knowledge)** and passes it over to Cadmus.

After the flood **Javan**, the ancestor of the Greeks, lived in the mountains of Ararat before his resettlement to **Greece** (Ellada, Hellas). Tiras<sup>3</sup> (before his resettlement to **Phrygia**) and Cadmus (before his resettlement to the inherited lands of **Phoenicia** and **Cilicia**) lived in the Araratian Mountains. The authors believe that the **monologue of Prometheus** as a hero, having the features of Vahagn, is a **Hellenized monologue of Vahagn**, which is not preserved in written form. Only some of the deeds and teachings of Vahagn reached us.

The four classical elements (fire, water, earth and air) are obedient (dependent) to **Vahagn**. Born in the waters of the Sea of Van, Vahagn kills dragons and releases water sources (“The birth of Vahagn”). The **serpent** used the mind of **Eve** and tempted more irrational **Adam** to “**eat the fatal fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil**”. **God punishes Adam and Eve for disobedience**, expels them from Eden and makes them mortal.

Thus, knowledge of “the tree of good and evil” or the transfer of knowledge to uncultivated people is punished in the Biblical and Greek mythological and religious traditions. In ancient Armenian tradition, the knowledge of good and evil is exalted and acquires the form of a heroic deed. **The knowledge of the tree of good and evil is only available to a rational man** (Homo sapiens). His mission is to control the plant and animal worlds, but not the man.

## Conclusion

**The monologue of Prometheus** is a Hellenized and transformed version of **the monologue of Vahagn**. **Old Armenian tradition**, in contrast to Old Greek and Hebrew traditions, is based on the fosterage of the **universal motif of knowledge of “the tree of good and evil”**.

**Knowledge is power, powerlessness is ignorance**. To watch and to see, to listen and to hear, and to accomplish with thoughts. **To save the glory of wealth's pride of state**: horses in chariots and trained to love the rein they are yoked, and not the men – reasonable or unreasonable, obedient or disobedient. To **benefit** from the **hidden boons for men** beneath the earth – **iron** and **silver, gold** and **copper**. To know that **all arts of mortals from one Teacher spring**.

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<sup>3</sup> Father of Askanaz, Torgom, Riphath and Javan.

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