



Armenia and Russia

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IN EZEKIEL 38 one of the people associated with Gog when he invades Israel is Togarmah: "Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands; and many people with thee" (v. 6). It is not easy to identify to whom Togarmah refers; however, the evidence points towards the Armenians.

In her book on the Armenians the historian Anne Redgate discusses the various theories that exist to explain the origins of the Armenians. The theory which she most favours is that which locates the first Armenian kingdom in Melid. This was south of the Black Sea in what is today eastern Turkey. In this connection she notes that the historian Diakonoff "associates Ezekiel's sixth-century Togarmah with the dynasty of Mugallu, seventh-century king of Melid".¹

In the days of Ezekiel Togarmah was a prime source of horses. As God said to Tyre: "They of the house of Togarmah traded in thy fairs with horses and horsemen and mules" (27:14). Redgate notes that the ancient writer Strabo commented that "Armenia was 'exceptionally good horse pasturing country'".²

Although initially associated with areas in the east of present-day Turkey, the Armenian kingdom moved northeastwards and became located between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. The peoples who invaded across the Euphrates, which led to the Ottoman Empire, and eventually the country of Turkey, being formed, were not Armenian but were the Seljukians, Moguls, Tartars and Ottomans. This is prophesied in Revelation 9. Moreover, in Revelation 16 the Euphrates has dried up by the time the battle of Armageddon takes place. Yet at Armageddon Togarmah will be one of the peoples who invades Israel. Therefore, historically, Armenia cannot be equated with Turkey, and, prophetically, the Euphrates power and Togarmah have different roles. When Gog invades Israel, Turkey will have dried up, but Armenia will be one of the peoples who are with Gog.

There is ongoing cooperation between Armenia and Russia. This is epitomised by the presence of a Russian military base in Armenia. In September an Armenian newspaper reported an interview with Vaan Ovanesyan, the head of the Armenian Parliamentary Defence, National Security and Internal Affairs Commission. He was responding to criticism that had been made following an increase in the size of the area allocated to the base. He said: "The presence of a Russian base and its enlargement is to some extent necessary for Armenia for one obvious reason: over the last few years the neighbouring countries of Georgia and Azerbaijan have expanded their military cooperation with Turkey to such an extent that Armenia cannot remain indifferent to such a reality".³

He went on to say that Turkey "is a NATO member and a direct enemy of Armenia". The military ties with Russia and the opposition to the Turkish power are what would be expected of the house of Togarmah if it is to be on the side of Gog when the invasion of the Middle East takes place. However, there is concern amongst opponents of the Armenian President, Robert Kocharian, about the exact nature of the ties with Russia.

The concerns centre around the economic deal made by Kocharian with the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, during his recent visit to Armenia. One commentator, Ara Tadevosian, has written: "Critics of the Kocharian administration say the debt-for-equity swap, agreed at a meeting between the president and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Yerevan on September 14-15, could end up scaring away Western investors. Under the deal, key Armenian enterprises

1. A. E. Redgate, *The Armenians*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2000, p. 19.
2. *Op. cit.* p. 10.
3. <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/armenia/hypermail/200109/0041.html>

will be handed over to Russia and joint ventures set up between the two countries, as repayment for some 100 million US dollars worth of loans dating back to 1991".⁴

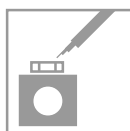
The report goes on to quote the Armenia newspaper *Aykakan Zhamanak* on 31 October 2001, which said: "Despite the Armenian authorities' claims that Russia is our strategic partner, it has become obvious that it is necessary to redefine Armenian-Russian relations in quite different terms. Russia is demanding the wholesale give-away of our assets instead of Armenia's debts. Except for Kocharian and Putin's handshakes and smiles, it is difficult to find evidence of anything 'strategic' in Armenian-Russian relations".

This assessment provides another aspect to the Russian influence in Armenia. We should not be surprised if such an assessment turns out to be right, for this exploitative characteristic of the latter-day Chaldean is spoken of by Habak-

kuk: "Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people: shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his! how long? and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay!" (2:5,6).

The relationship between Russia and countries such as Armenia is complex and changeable. However it is exciting to see that amidst all the ebb and flow of international affairs there are signs that the nations are developing in line with the expectations of Bible prophecy.

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4. http://iwpr.vs4.cerbertnet.co.uk/index.pl?archive/cau/cau_200110_104_1_eng.txt



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Comments on articles appearing in the magazine are always welcome, and should be addressed to the editor in whose section the article appears.

Israel's dwelling safely

The issue of whether or not Israel's 'dwelling safely' in Ezekiel 38 is true safety or misplaced confidence has been discussed in recent articles and correspondence (Jul. 2001, p. 295; Oct. 2001, p. 398). As one correspondent pointed out, the Scriptures give occasions where the Hebrew word *betach* means the true security that comes from relying upon God, whilst at other times it means the self-confidence typical of humanity, which usually precedes disaster.

So how are we to determine which of these is the case for Israel in Ezekiel 38?—because the answer to this seems to be one of the keys to the debate as to whether the chapter is pre- or post-Christ's return. The apparently random use of the word *betach* in Scripture, upon closer examination (though with no more than a concordance) turns out to be anything but random.

The word *betach*, translated in the AV 'safe', 'safely', 'safety', 'security', 'careless', etc., is used twenty-four times of the nation of Israel, three of which are in Ezekiel 38. In every single instance

Uses of *betach*

Of Israel: Leviticus 25:18,19; 26:5; Deuteronomy 12:10; 33:12,28; 1 Samuel 12:11; 1 Kings 4:25; Psalm 78:53; Isaiah 32:17; Jeremiah 23:6; 32:37; 33:16; Ezekiel 28:26 (twice); 34:25,27,28; 38:8,11,14; 39:26; Hosea 2:18; Zechariah 14:11. *All these instances refer to a true security.*

Of Gentile nations: Judges 8:11 (Midianites); 18:7 (Laish); Isaiah 47:8 (Babylon); Jeremiah 49:31 (Hazor); Ezekiel 30:9 (Ethiopians); 39:6 (the isles); Zephaniah 2:15 (Nineveh). *All these are instances of false security.*

Of individuals: Genesis 34:25; Job 11:18; 24:23; Psalm 4:8; 16:9; Proverbs 1:33; 3:23,29; 10:9; Isaiah 14:30; 32:9,11; Micah 2:8. *These are varied; some refer to a true, others to a false, sense of safety.*