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THE SONG OF CHRIST’S ASCENSION
(TAE HAMBARJMAN)
OF ST. GREGORY OF NAREK

James R. Russell

Narekac’i’s song of the Ascension of Christ is a tiny, precious pearl of East Christian literature, both linguistically rich and theologically intricate. An important image of this crowning event of Christ’s earthly sojourn, reflected in iconography, is the duality of heaven and earth—an archaic concern etymologically encoded in Armenian into the names of these cosmic halves, and strongly marked in poetic usage from the beginning. Heavenly God, incarnate down on earth as Christ; and Christ, as the new earthly Adam, son of Man, ascending upwards bodily into Heaven, describe the reconciliation of the two sundered parts of the cosmos and the restoration to the world of that order and harmony which reign forever before the Divine Throne. The colors red and purple tend to predominate in Armenian Gospel iconography of the Ascension; and Narekac’i’s hymn explains the particular significance of crimson. The color is symbolic of Christ’s living flesh with the blood of life coursing through it, His blood sacrifice that grants life to us, His martial harrowing of Hell, and, ultimately, of the triumph of the Armenians’ own Christian faith—for purple is the color of kings. Narekac’i draws upon both Biblical and Iranian strains in Armenian culture, and his vivid word-picture of the Ascension might have had a special resonance for the Armenians of the Van region, where the saint lived; for their mythology of the Ascension embraced aspects of the ancient cult of the god Mithra.

Christian Armenia had created a sense of identity, from the time of the Baptism of the Arsacids in the fourth century, in the durable paradigm of self-sacrificing struggle against unequal odds. Sasanian Iran and its Zoroastrian priesthood, the Magi, sought at various times to force the Armenians to return to the Mazdean fold. By no means all of the Armenians had abandoned their pre-Christian beliefs and practices; so the Christians in the nation regarded themselves as latter-day Maccabees, doing double battle against alien pagan and native unbeliever. In the age of the Maccabees, Hellenized Jews were the latter category; and this may be one reason why Armenian writers tend
to emphasize that Armenian traitors got their Zoroastrianism from outside—as the Jews had acquired Hellenism—and only rarely do hints slip through that some, at least, of these “traitors” were really perpetuating beliefs of long standing that, far from being importations, predated the advent of the teachings of the Nazarene and thus shared some of the glamour of legitimacy that epithets like bnik, “native”, used by P’awstos in the fifth century so often of the Arsacids, would confer in a society where tradition and status counted above almost all else. Historians are inventive in endowing their patrons with tradition and status in a new context: for Xorenac’i’s Bagratids, in the ninth century, descent from the semi-divine hero Tork’ Angel and the very eponymous ancestor of the Armenians, Hayk nahapat, was to be considered inadequate. They enter a new, Christian context and become Davิดic, heirs and descendants of both hero king and divine Messiah.

When in the seventh century Islam overran Zoroastrian and Christian alike, the Armenians encountered a new adversary who professed belief in the prophetic mission of Jesus whilst denying the Incarnation and Trinity; so assertion of these aspects of dogma now served to mark the Armenians as a nation apart. By the tenth century, two Armenian dynasties had wrested substantial independence from both the Arab Caliphate and the Byzantine Empire: the Bagratids ruled in the north from Ani; and the Arcunis held sway over Vaspurakan in the southwest, from their own capital, the ancient city of Van. Though the Arab—and, increasingly, also Kurdish—presence was strongly felt in the Emirates that remained in the country, notably at Xlar (a regular source of villains in the Epic of Sasun), Christianity seemed at last to have achieved security and predominance. Seljuks, Mongols, and Ottomans belonged to an unimaginable future that, when it arrived, was to be conceived in the terms of the epoch of the Antichrist. Christ’s Ascension in His blood-red and purple garments would have appeared to vindicate Armenia’s warrior-martyrs, from Vardan Mamikonean to the present. It is interesting to imagine how a tenth-century reader might have viewed the scene of the Adoration of the Magi in the Eujmiacin Gospel, completed in 989. The miniature itself predates the Muslim period and was bound into the book: it depicts the Magi with precision as Sasanian priests whom the artist had undoubtedly seen in the flesh. They approach the infant Christ, who is not so much cradled as enthroned in the arms of the Virgin, surrounded by the sky-blue mandorla of His otherworldly, cosmic power. If the picture had been meant once to humble the Magi, it might now possess, perhaps, an antiquarian fascination and even a kind of nostalgia. For re-affirmation of the past animates the literature of the Bagratid age. Xorenac’i’s History is an inexhaustible treasury of priceless antiquities, many of
them local traditions culled from the same oral stock of living lore that would have disgusted more fastidious and pious chroniclers of earlier centuries—when Mazdaism was not one’s roots, but a menace.

So, the Father of Histories has preserved for us the hymn of the birth of the yazata Vahagn (i.e., Vərhəhrayna/Bahram, the Artagnes of Commagene and Vasayn of Sogd), which begins with the strophe Erkner erkin, erknër erkir, erknër ew covn cirani. “Heaven was in labor, earth was in labor; in labor was, too, the purple sea.” One has noted the etymological relationship of the words for heaven and earth: their common origin in “two”, and the belief, encoded into their essence, that they are halves of a whole. This is not esoterica but Gemeingedanken, at least in the Indo-European poetic sphere: in the Veda, the world can be called ubhav ardhaus, “the pair of halves”, being heaven and earth. This ancient schema is consonant with Christian understanding, of course, with its Jewish roots (“In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth”). So it, together with the alliterative cluster of cirani cov, “purple sea”, was appropriated by theologians, to give a local, Armenian tinge to the poetic expression of pan-Christian ideas.

T’ovma Arcruni, historian of the dynasty of Vaspurakan, read Xorenac’i and appropriated some of the splendid heroes of pre-Christian antiquity in the latter’s History to the southern kingdom, probably with the help of local traditions. Xorenac’i tells us, for instance, of the way king Artaxias I (Artašės) snared the Alan princess Sat’enik with his regally red leather lasso from the far side of the river Kura. This is not merely a legendary event, but one tinged with mythology: for in the Nart epic of the Ossetes, remote descendants of the Alans of the Caucasus, there are various versions of an episode in which a shepherd or supernatural being ejaculates at the semi-divine Satana from the other side of a river and impregnates either her or a nearby rock. After this, the hero Batradz is born. In the Armenian epic of Sasun it is Covinar, whose name means, probably, something like “Sea-girl”, who drinks of a milky fountain coming up out of a rock in Lake Van: in this way, she conceives the twin heroes Sanasar and Baldasar. At the other end of the Armenian epic, the hero P’ok’r Mher is presented as a Promethean, apocalyptic hero imprisoned in a cave: the Alan hero Amiran is similarly treated in epic; and Artašės and Sat’enik have a son, Artawazd, who is apocalyptic in stature (as Eznik is the earliest to inform us) and is imprisoned in Mt. Ararat (Azat Masis) by the k’aajk’, supernatural giants whose name can mean also “brave”, as an epithet of the ancient kings of the Sasun heroes. The inclusion within a single generation, or story, in Xorenac’i’s retelling of the Artašės epic of the two events that inaugurate and close the four
long branches of the Sasun epic—Mithraic-style petrogenesis at the start, and Mithraic-style confinement in a spelaeum around which cosmic hopes cluster, at the end—argue not only for the antiquity of the material from Sasun, but for its historical unity. It would take special pleading, on the weight of the evidence from Xorenac'i, to argue that the central armature of the Sasun epic, which begins and ends at Van in a great ring, was a collection of unrelated village songs that Sruanjteanc' put together (as a Dutch scholar has proposed) or a narrative from the Muš area to which the myth of P'ok'r Mher was added when the epic reached the Van area (as Manuk Abelyan thought¹). Furthermore, the myths of Ullikummi in Hittite, and of Agdistis in Hellenic Anatolian material, and the testimony of Ps.-Plutarch, De Fluviiis, on Mithras ejaculating on a rock on the bank of the Araxes (the river that meant Armenia, as much as the Tiber meant Rome), place the source of the motif of petrogenesis in Anatolia. The Alans got it from Armenia, and not the other way around.

So Sat'ënik and Artašēs belong to a very ancient line of epic tradition with later connection to the Van area. T'ovma tells us that Artašēs built his Alan queen an autumn palace named Zard, that is, "Adornment". We shall see shortly that giving a place such a name will help us to solve the puzzle of the meaning of an obscure word in the hymn of the Ascension of Narekac'i. It is important also to note, preliminarily, that the base of Arm. zard is ard, cognate to OPers. arī-, OInd. rta-, Gk. āretē, etc., meaning "right, articulate, orderly". What is beautiful is harmonious; and what is harmonious accords with the right order of the whole world: cf. the semantic identity of Greek kosmos as both "adornment" and "universe". T'ovma’s describes the view from the palace of Zard: ənddće n ćicaleləv kovun i hiwsiş

¹It ought to be mentioned, inter alia, that Abelyan was as wrong about Narekac‘i’s poems as about the evolution of the Sasun epic. He dismisses many of the tat-s as crude juvenilia! Aćarean was more judicious. He characterized the poems as written in a language that is now incomprehensible to us because it owed much to local dialects. N.K. T'ahmizean, Grigor Narekac'i ev hay erağšut’yunə V-XV dd., (Erevan: Arm. Acad. Sci., 1985), esp. pp. 88, 90, is more cautious. He finds the poems and the Book of Lamentation united by common mystical attitudes and interests, though the latter would focus more upon the predicament of the individual soul in a monastic context. The mysticism of the songs, though, is turned outward, suffused with the imagery of the Song of Songs (Narek’s first work had been a commentary upon these), and necessarily joyous, given their purpose—as part of the celebration of Christian feasts.
nayec’uacov... aŋaŋ̣̄ tesanelov zkaputak ciranap’ayl daŋstajew cown, “looking to the north over the laughing sea... having before it in view the blue sea, as it were a plain aglow in purple,” over which the eyes might “dart in joy” (i tesin xltman aŋaŋ̣̄). The sea is Lake Van—the place where, Xorenac’i relates, the god Vahagn mentioned above drew sea monsters (vişap) out of the water before they could swallow the world, and cast them into the Sun. T’ovma draws, in his alliterative passage, from the same oral, mythological source as Xorenac’i. The fortress Zard of Van would probably have stood on the long rock that towers over the city, where everyone else who has ever ruled the place has had a fortress. It is gone, but there still stands the tenth-century Church of the Holy Cross where the Arcruni palace was, vastuacabnak kizwoñi Alt’amar, or vayelčac’eal unin zgel vayelčut eann amrac’eal aleawk’ e.wx parspeal xroxtac’eal kohakaw’. “on the island of Alt’amar, the dwelling of God, its seemly beauty further dignified, fortified by waves and walled round by haughtily roaring breakers,” as T’ovma describes it.² The bas-reliefs on one wall show Jonah, swallowed by a s-murf-like monster. This one looks markedly Sasanian, perhaps more so in the details than similar Jonah-swallowing creatures “very like a whale” do, in the late Antique portrayals of the scene from Byzantium studied by Boardman.³ Jewish and Byzantine tradition hold that Jonah was depilated during his three-day submarine sojourn by the gastric juices of God’s great fish; so when he appears at Nineveh on the Alt’amar relief, he is quite bald. The Biblical story was interpreted as an allegory of the later election of the Gentiles: Jonah is the reluctant Hebrew prophet, but the alert pagan sailors wake him to pray and are loath to throw him overboard; the Ninevites repent instantly, without hesitation; and only Jonah grumbles, unenlightened, beside his withered gourd the morning after. The Gentiles at Alt’amar are Armenians—the big fish is their own heraldic vişap, with its local mythology.

The Arcrunis built a monastery, Narek, on the southern shore of Lake Van, a short distance from Van city, overlooking Alt’amar with its church and palace. A generation after T’ovma Arcruni, Grigor


Narekac‘i wrote a hymn on the Nativity in which the eyes of the Holy Mother of God are described as cov i cov cicalaxit cawalanayr yațawawtun, “two laughing seas dilating in the dawn”.4 Neither T’ovma nor Xorenac‘i need be a direct source for this alliterative pattern, or for the image of the laughing sea. The latter comes naturally to anyone but an academic too preoccupied with his search for clever sources to enjoy God’s creation, mediated through his feelings; and the former predates Christian Armenian literature. The oinôps Aegean itself becomes, in Narek’s Panegyric on the Holy Cross of Aparan, a cirani cov. Were cov not, as we have seen, Urartean, this would be an inner-Indo-European reference. But then wine itself, oinos, Arm. gini, has Semitic relatives and may be too old in the Mediterranean cosmos to etymology! In another hymn attributed to Narekac‘i, the floor of Solomon’s Temple is described as ciranagoyn orpês covu nman. The reference is to the cunning artifice, whereby Solomon paved his court with glass, beneath which there was water: the Queen of Sheba feared it was indeed water, hesitated to cross it, and her foolishness at the test brought her shame. There are larger resonances of this story: the floor of heaven is paved with marble that looks like water, and the unprepared mystic of the Jewish Hekhalot literature, as we are informed by the Talmudic tractate Hagigah, may exclaim “Water, water!” and fail the text. In the thirty-third chapter of his Book of Lamentation, a section which functions, as it seems from its significant number in the three groups that comprise ninety-five in all, and its liturgical correlation to the Synaxis, as an initiatory or transitional, transcending point, Narek refers, in an alliterative figure (it is alliterative even on the Proto-Indo-European level) alluding to the floor of heaven, the curtain of the Mystery, and Judgement Day, to the veil (varagoyr) that is loycn macuac, “liquid congealed”. The text seems to appropriate and then disarm the earlier, mystical imagery; for the veil will be parted and all the faithful, not just a select group of sages, will partake of the Mystery made plain.5 Plainly, combination of native poetics with Biblical imagery of great nuance and depth is a central strategy of Narek’s visionary imagination, in the case of sea and water imagery as elsewhere. The complex and archaic homology of light-bearing eye to Sun to two suns (as in the Theban cycle of Sophocles)


may be reflected here also: men, and most early creatures are dual and forked and bicorned and contrary, whilst things divine, like the Sun or the horn of a unicorn, come as Ones. But it is plain Accruni and Narekac’i belong to the same poetic tradition: witness, besides alliterative patterns in c—encoding the sea and birth, T’ovma’s stlumnačac’, cited, and Narek’s stli xlli, in the same hymn on Nativity.\(^6\) In another hymn, attributed to Narek but displaying vulgar grammatical irregularities that betray early modern corruption of the text, Mary is Earth; and Christ, Heaven: Erkink’ i yerkirs erw erkirs i yerkink’n (!)./ Vayreįk’ i xonarh erw verek’ i barjuns,/ Erkink’ nor, erkin loys arp’iazardeal “Heaven to earth and this earth into heaven./ Descent to the humble and ascent to the heights,/ Heaven new, heaven of light, the radiant sky adorned.” These taut lines describe the Annunciation and the redemption of earth, Christ’s kenosis and Nativity, His Ascension, and the conclusion: heaven is light, the sky adorned—harmonious, orderly—lit by the Sun, who is Christ on high.

Outside historiography, where Xorenac’i reigns supreme, Narekac’i is arguably the most important Armenian author. Until recent times, if an Armenian home had no other books, there were the Gospels, Psalter, and the Book of Lamentation. The number of commentaries on the latter in manuscripts is exceeded only by commentaries on the Gospel. Narekac’i composed also, as we have already seen, a number of hymns for various feasts of the Church, including the Ascension. The visible, bodily ascent of the resurrected Son of God into heaven, to the Throne, crowns His earthly career: it affirms the Logos made flesh, the victory over death, and the reconciliation of God with His creation.\(^7\) Cyril of Alexandria, in his commentary on Luke, goes further: the event prefigures the time when Christ will return, and take the believers up to Heaven with Him. It is an important theme in early Christian art, and is well attested in Armenia. The late-sixth-century writer Vrt’anēs K’ert’of in his treatise Indėm patkeramartic’, “Against the Iconoclasts”\(^8\) mentions the Ascension at the conclusion, appropriately, of the program of images that adorned the inner walls of Armenian churches. The central medallion of a stone cross (xačk’ar) from Gogaren, seventh century,

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\(^8\) Pub. in Sion 1 (1927), pp. 23-5 and 61-3.
A translation might render the poet’s vision this way:

He who is, of the One who is, without origin,
Becomes being, come from the uncreate, the timeless ones.
Eternally unreachable, yet known to fruition in a spaceless instant,
He dawns, at the breast born, ever-dilating expanse yet unchanging.

5 One of the Existents Ones, of splendid ranks adorned,
He is the Scion, same in essence, the path by feet untrodden.
I, the likeness of being without semblance; I, made by Myself,
Proceeding from the ethereal realm above heaven,
Image conceived of its original, in the same visage adorned,

10 I stand, swift-coursing Scion, ascending to Him, the Existent.
There was a tabernacle to the Virgin, her will surrendered to the Sender,
Accepting, at the hour; and now, the hour has arrived of Perfection.
By His rising on the Cross, His Ascension to the Father is descried,
Ascent among the splendid hosts in a marvel of up-sweeping.

15 Wing beating wind in a roar, the mass and flux and splendor of the orders
Commanded one another, “Hasten, to the course!
Who is this, powerful of spirit, adorned in crimson color?
“This is that King, brave and mighty, returned from war!”
“Lift up, O ye princes, the gates!” relating good tidings to the Father.

20 “Here is the beloved of Your heart’s espousals, of Whom You bore witness: ‘This is my beloved Son.’”
“Seated in the Father’s embrace for the kiss of holiness,
With me the Holy Spirit honored in the cohort:
‘My duty to give you plenitude of gifts, to render the debt of promise without falsehood.’ I am with you always.”

The song begins with a statement of the mystery of the Incarnation in a manner standard for Armenian theology since the Vardapetut’iwn of St.
Gregory; but Narek here plays upon the alliterative possibilities of various Armenian terms for being and existence: ân, â-ak, elani, etc. The next alliterative pattern introduces c-: coc‘, “breast”, brings to mind the Virgin, dawn, birth, the sea, and all the rest of the Armenian imaginistic complex ancient poetics erected upon the sound. The final assurance of Christ, “I am with you always”, is spoken here in the presence of the Holy Spirit, who is the presence at Pentecost; and has obvious allusion to the Second Coming—the symmetrical prefiguring of these later events had become, as we have seen, a recognized doctrine in Patristic exegesis of Ascension. Order and its etymological and semantic relative, adornment or beauty, figure throughout: zardareal, “adorned”, and bosora-erp‘na-zardeal, “adorned in crimson color”. Bosor is a literary ghost-word for “red”: it is really Bozrah, a place in the Bible. Mi-ze bâ mē-Edôm, hâmûts bagîdim mi-Bâtsră, “Who is this coming from Edom, coming from Bozrah, his garments stained red?” asks Isaiah (63.1). Arm. follows LXX, rendering Bozrah as Bosor, but the latter was understood as a synonym of Edom, which was already understood from the story of Esau in Genesis to mean “red”. The Catechetical Lectures of Cyril of Jerusalem, of which there is a fifth-century Armenian translation, explain bosor as mut‘, “dark”. Narek first uses the word extensively, and it is clear “red” is meant and was so understood by subsequent hymnologists: in the Šaraknoč (Jerusalem 1936 ed., p. 473), Christ at the time of His Ascension is described as ariwna-nazgesteal, “clothed in blood”, i.e., in red, or blood-colored, garments. The Arm. version of the extremely popular Onomastica Sacra explains Adam as erkir koys kam erkir marmmac‘eal, mard erkrayin kam karmir “virgin soil or earth incarnate, earthly man, or red”; Edom is “red or earthly”; and Bosor is karmrut‘iwn marmnoc‘, “redness of bodies” (cf. Heb. bâšar, Ar. bašar, “flesh, man”). In Ch. 63 of the Book of Lamentation, Narek refers to the reddening of the Nile before the Exodus as a prefiguring of the mystery of the Incarnation: “Making of that river the circumscription of your unbounded command: your color without quality a new, crimson (bosor-ayin) hue—blood you commingled with the dry earth” (or zarēaln i getoyyn: i geagrut‘iwn ansahmand k‘o hramani—anorakid gunakut‘eán i nor erang bosorayin, macēr ariwn i c‘amaki). The


passage can be understood to refer also to the blood of Christ spilt at
the Crucifixion, which seeped into the dry ground below the Cross and
revived Adam, buried below, whose skull is therefore depicted often in
Armenian paintings of the scene, as in Christian art generally.

The clothes of the Virgin, too, are described as splendid, and
 crimson. In Narek’s Tal cmndean, Ode on the Nativity, for instance, we
read: Gelec’ik patmuçanal’aw zardareal ēr, i kaputoy, i cirano, i
behezo, i yordanê, oskeşolêr goyyn./ Gawtîn arcap’ap’ayl oskettun,
kamarakap yakanc’ yakanc’ 8ap’iwlay, manramasîn yawrinuacov,
pâeal “She was adorned in a beautiful garment of blue, of purple, of
muslin, of deep red color glittering with gold./ Her girdle glittered
silver with golden tassels, circled with diverse jewels of sapphire,
resplendent with delicately contrived filigree.” Catholicos Mkrtîç
Xrimean Hayrik informs us in his Hrawirak Araratean, “Ararat” (p.
102, note 49 in his Amboîjakan erker, New York, 1929) that the church
at Šušanc’, a village near Van, was founded where the Virgin had
appeared, clothed in red. Arm.  şušan can mean both “rose” and “lily”.
In these respects, the Virgin is made iconographically parallel to
Christ.13

The passage in Isaiah has a martial sense; and to Narekac’i, Christ
is the heroic king returning from battle: t’agawor ë k’aįj... i paterazmê
êkeal. The war here is the harrowing of Hell: in another hymn of
Ascension (Şarakanoc’, p. 465), the heads of gates and everlasting doors
of the Psalmist to be lifted up14 belong to the princes of the Inferno
(dţoxoc’n). Crimson is then the blood of Christ, of His defeated
enemies, and of Adam and man born of the red earth (Heb. adâma); and
it is the purple of the King. Red is also the color of the rose: St. John
the Baptist in Armenian tradition, prophesying the Kingdom, is likened
to the nightingale (Pers. bolbol) that sings to the rose (Pers. gol) in love
and longing. Within their own history, the Armenian would recall the
red blood of the fifth-century martyr Vardan Mamikonean, whose
name, meaning “growing”, contains the base that when encountered
alone means “rose”, vard.

Narekac’i employs a vivid compound of his own devising,
t’ewatrohat’ew, “wing beating wing”, to describe the flight of the four
angels. This poetic description has precedent in the paean to the

13 For the reference to Šušanc’ I am indebted to my friend, Dr.
Herand Markarian, whose family hail proudly from the town.

14 See Sirarpie Der Nersessian, “An Armenian Version of the
Homilies on the Harrowing of Hell,” Dumbarton Oaks Papers 8
(1954), repr. in her Byzantine and Armenian Studies, I (Louvain: Impr.
Annunciation of T'êodoros K'rt'enawor, early seventh century: he speaks of birds who are sawamat'ewarjak, "hovering with pinions spread". In the Armenian liturgy of Ascension Day, Christ goes up to Heaven, veray t'ewoc' holmoc' eleal, "ascending on the wings of the winds"; and in another poem, Narekac'i himself writes of the tetramorphs, ew holmk' i č'orie' ver i yawdn hambaiman, "and the winds from the four rise up in air." Christ's locomotion is miraculous, described in an allusive manner: he goes by the apophatic ank'ayl otic' antac', "path by feet untrodden". In Ch. 93 of the Book of Lamentation, on the sacred chrim, Narek writes of the process of comprehension of the mystery, "And since this great power, as a thing unattainable and unencompassable, is characterized by swift ascent on the light wings of the mind, there beyond the thought of perception of meaning, pathless to follow and trackless in flight, it is utterly separated by a broad intervening space, closed from me" (Ew k'anzi ibri anhas oč' əmbmakänd ayse mec zawrut'īwān araq slæc'mæb i t'ews t'et'ews mtač' paymani, andr k'an zkarc's ušoy imastic' anhun hetewman anhet p'axtēn: layn inm mijoc'aw i spar orošεel, p'akec'aw yinēn). One may compare to this the galtni ʃawil, "hidden way", of Narek's ode on Epiphany; or, in the Muslim mystical tradition, the comment of Rûmi in his Divāne Šams-e Tabriz on the Sufi way: Āxer qadam az qadam boridan, "The last step is to cut off taking steps". In addition to this image that compels us to see what in its essence cannot be seen—a path that goes where no path can go—the poet attempts to visualize the actual motion of the coming and going and flying of angels, of Christ. Narekac'i strives in his odes to evoke the miraculous, swift, uncanny types of divine locomotion through various imaginative compounds with the element -cem. This is not at all unusual in Christian mystical writing: in his work The incorruptible flesh: Bodily mutation and mortification in religion and folklore, the Bolognese historian Piero Camporesi has studied extravagant descriptions of divine locomotion in post-Renaissance Italian devotional works. He argues that these word-pictures are intended as a contrast to two kinds of life: the sluggish bodily existence of the wealthy parishioner, enfeebled by a hypercaloric diet and abominable hygiene; and the enfeebled ascetic. In both cases, the angelic world and flight are the object of erotic longing. This seems true, also, for the Armenian poet.

As we have seen, adornment, order, and beauty are important concepts in Narekac'i's poem; and this theme will help us to explain a word, meaning most probably "adorned" or "splendid" or "ordered", which occurs twice in this one poem and nowhere else in Armenian. Y-erazgay-ic' is the ablative plural of an adjective *erazgay, itself formed
from the genitive singular of a noun *erazg. Such formulation of adjectives is possible in tenth-century Armenian: Narekac’i employs a form aţakay-ic’n, “of the proverbial ones”, in the Book of Lamentations, 14.3, from the genitive singular of the noun aţak, “parable”. The Nor Bağirk’ (NBHL, supplement, p. 1051 col. 1) explains yerazgayic’ as “thrice holy”; but such a compound would require a trilled r. Several MSS. cite the word in the form yerazgayic’, with s instead of z; but this seems to be a secondary spelling resulting from the devoicing of the letter g (gim) in spoken Western Armenian. A satisfactory solution, following a suggestion offered by Prof. David MacKenzie, can be found in comparing the word *erazg to an Iranian word for cloth, a lattice, or anything woven, attested in Sogdian as rayzi, and in Yaghnobi (neo-Sogdian) as rayza “woollen trousers”, and Yidgha royz, “women’s clothes”. One may note further that the Armenian toponym, Širakawan-Erazgawork’, gen. (pl.) Erazgaworic’, must derive from *ragza-bara-, which is in fact attested in Khotanese as laysgurya-, “adorned”, used of a horse caparisoned, or a person ornamented with virtue. The semantic connection of weaving with order or adornment has ancient parallels: in his cosmology, Pherecydes describes how Zas wove a robe as a wedding gift for Chthoniē. Variegated in design, it represented the ordered world. The Armenian adjective is likely to have the same meaning; and one may compare to it the name of the fortress in Vaspurakan, Zard, which was already discussed. Erazgawork’ lay a short distance from the Bagratid capital, Ani, on the Axurean river (Tk. Arpa çay), and was a Bagratid royal residence until 928. The first duty of the historian Yovhannēs Drasxanakerteci’i as Catholicos was to consecrate a church there. Narekac’i’s own family probably came from Arşarunik’, a nearby district; so he might have known the word *erazg with its various adjectival formations and derivatives, from the speech of the area. *Erazgawor ought then to be seen as a synonym of zardareal. The word yerazgayic’ ought then to be explained as the ablative plural of *erazgay, itself a genitive, “of a lattice, of cloth”. I understand this to mean something splendid and ordered, like the fine silk brocade worn by Armenian nobles, with its patterns of roundels and symmetrical,

15There is in the heavenly host one Ragziel, but he presumably represents “God’s choler”, from a Heb. base RGZ, “to be angry”.
16See G. Morgenstierne’s treatment of these words in Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap 12 (1942), p. 265.
confronted figures that painters lovingly reproduce in manuscripts down through the ages.

The divine world is also meant to be dazzlingly orderly and beautiful beyond conception. One understands the word erazgay, "of a lattice", to embrace these ideas, and thereby to mean "arrayed, adorned, splendid", even "cosmic". There is no mess in Heaven: at the Last Judgement, the flock of the righteous are always in perfect ranks; but Hell and its new and permanent guests are all a jumble. Christ descends at birth from the splendid and orderly ranks of angels to earth. The first lines of Narekac’i’s Ode on the Nativity are Erg zarmanali, erg šaržvarženi, teli eler barekertin, xorhurd xorhurd hameram, zard eramic’ zard. ‘Wonderful song, song of miraculous motion, you were the place of the well-formed one, mystery, mystery of the same flock, adornment of the flocks, adornment.’ We shall consider presently who these flocks are. After the resurrection, Christ ascends from the midst of the astonished band of disciples he has ordained to evangelize the world—and the portrayal of the Ascension, in all periods of Armenian art, involves a splendidly-dressed and orderly assemblage of Apostles below, who—except for their expressions of astonishment and awe—are virtually a mirror-image of the angelic orders above; and these, again, are resplendent in all the finery one might expect of an imperial court. The beings thus "splendid", gen. pl. eic’, are here a zarm, “family, lineage”. Further down, eramk’ receive the epithet erazgay. The word eram is used by Narekac’i to refer to various kinds of beings—humans, animals, even plants. What they all have in common is a relationship to Christ, their Shepherd. In this ode, as one might indeed expect, the eramk’ of earth are linked by the epithet erazgay to the zarmk’ of Heaven—in whose image we are created. Two splendid orders behold each other, not in a glass darkly, but in reality: mankind redeemed and heaven open at the instant of Christ’s Ascent. Later in the ode, as we have seen above, reference is made to the harrowing of Hell that preceded the resurrection and liberated those of Christ’s flock who had been held captive. The scriptural readings in the Lectionary can have served as a basis for some of these themes: Song of Songs 3.6, for example, likens the tresses of the beloved to flocks of goats (varsk’ k’o ibrew zeramks ayic’). Isaiah 63.1, we have seen, evokes the crimson-bedaubed warrior returning victorious from Edom and Bozrah; the latter text and Ps. 24.7, also cited, are taken to prophesy the harrowing of hell. The text from Acts has the Apostles properly pšic’edl—amazed.

Prof. Anahit Perikhanian, Materialy k etimologicheskому slovaryu drevnearmyanskogo yazyka, Part I, Erevan, 1993, provides on pp. 39-41 an etymology of *erazg- substantially identical the one I had earlier
elaborated, with the citation of another form I had not seen, one with intrusive -a- and without metathesis of the cluster, eragaz, that seems to mean “hunter’s net” in the text of P’awstos Buzand.\textsuperscript{18} This intrusive -a- seems more characteristic of loans of the Sasanian period than of Arsacid times; and it is possible the word entered Armenian later than *erazg, with a meaning specialized to the chase. It is noteworthy that it does not mean “hunter’s net” in the Iranian languages where it survives. The semantics of a lattice means only cloth there. Perikhanian then discusses the Ode on the Ascension in a discussion of yerazgayic’. She cites only the 1840 edition—which does not have the significant word ank’ayl—and, more seriously, she alters another word found there, ètc’, “existent beings”, to erèc’, “stags”. Were it intentional, it would be a very major emendation, but as it goes unmarked and indeed is unsupported by any manuscript—nor is the word erè used by Narekac’i in any ode, whilst è and ètc’ are extremely common—we must suppose it to be an inadvertent lapsus calami. In general, where Christ is involved, it is He who is the hunter—and His disciples, fishermen! Perikhanian has him escaping from hunters and their nets, but in fact it is He who has ravaged Hell and taken its denizens to Him. In Ch. 93.6 of the Book of Lamentation, Narek tells us that the miraculous myron “hunted down certain emperors, as if with a trap” (kaysers oman... ibr kart’iw or sac’aw). This is quite the opposite of Perikhanian’s idea.

This reading changes the sense of the text appreciably, enabling Perikhanian to translate Narekac’i’s vision of Christ’s Ascension this way: “So in amazement they behold one of the herd of stags escaping the net at a run, homousios, on the path...” etc. Stags, not celestial entities. In support of her understanding of erazgay—which is not necessarily a word with the same meaning as eragaz, though both come from the same Iranian base—as “belonging to a hunter’s net”, Perikhanian cites the toponym that contains the mysterious word. Erazgawors, she argues, means “hunting with nets”; but she seems to be unaware that the form she is citing is an accusative plural of Erazgawork’, like Masis of Masik’/Maseac’ or Istanbul of “Into The

\textsuperscript{18}The slender book—first of a promised series—supplements Ačarean in etymological essays of mainly Iranian interest. Perikhanian repeats here an old suggestion that a word on an Artaxiad boundary marker may be read as heterographic Aramaic, QTRbr, *tāgabara-, i.e., Arm. t’agawor, “king”, or, perhaps “coronateur”. Even were Heb. keter to be accepted as common Aramaic for “crown”, which it is not (one would expect the word to be kli lá), a spelling with qoph is still impossible.
City" for that matter, not a nominative containing Arm. ors, "hunt". As explained above, the name of the place was Erazgawork', gen. Erazgaworic' (this gen. is attested in Yovhannes Catholicos, Patmut'īwn Hayoc', Tiflis, 1912, p. 144; and no nom. ending in -ors could produce it)—presumably identical in meaning to Zard, since "adorned" is exactly what the Middle Iranian descendant of *ragzabar'a, from which the Armenian derives, means in Khotanese.

Perikhanian's brilliant etymology is correct, and the word-picture she evokes might have been a beautiful description of the hunt of Xusrō II for wild boar, portrayed in relief at Taq-e Bostān, a kind of scene close to the heart of any Iranist; and, closer to this poem, Narek'aci himself in his Matean olbergut'ean speaks often of his wish to escape the snares that Satan lays for us poor earthly animals. Perikhanian's understanding of the text might have been appropriate, too, to the release of captive souls from the maw of the dragon, from Hell; and this is an important theme in the poem and in the theology of the Ascension. But only one leaves the snare, in her conception of the scene, when of course Christ's purpose in the harrowing of Hell was not to settle individual scores and leave, but to free many of the denizens of the underworld and take them with him. So the amazement on the faces of his eram, his flock, would in such a case be a theological bewilderment, more than astonishment at the majestic spectacle of a visible Heaven. 1 Timothy 3.16 declares that Christ ascended in glory—he did not abscond in haste. The Ascension closes the career of Jesus on earth—at least for the time being—so it is very much about final things. Narek'aci's imagination is steeped in the Song of Songs, in the final line of which the young girl tells her lover, bəraḥ ɗōdī ɗe-mēh laxā ɗi-tsvī, "Run away, my beloved, and be like a gazelle." In his commentary on the text, Narek'aci explains that the bride's request resembles those of the prophets for God's aid, and refers also to the suddenness of the second coming. The final line of Narek'aci's ode, "I will be with you always," is the last line, of course, of Matthew, and can be understood to have been spoken at the Ascension and to promise the second coming. The lover's going, unambiguous in Hebrew and correctly translated in Armenian, is no problem if Romeo does not want Juliet's family to find him at dawn in her bed. But as divine allegory this going has to be transformed by all the exegetes—Narek'aci is no exception—into coming, or coming back. The close escape of the stag would anticipate Christ's comforting assurance some lines later on. Many are the vagaries of poetic license. But I think it would be somewhat unorthodox to portray Christ's willing sacrifice, or his Ascension for that matter, as the lucky escape of a hunted beast from the entrapped herd—whose panicked stampede,
besides, could scarcely be described as progress along “untrodden” ways. It would stretch the image at the end of the Song of Songs somewhat beyond even exegetical elasticity. Above all else, though, the text needs no emendation. Christ’s flock, amazed, behold Him rise in glory, in splendor, and in victory.

And thus does Armenian folk religion, too, remember Ascension. It is the summer holiday when heaven and earth kiss, when water from seven springs is left in the care of a virgin girl beneath the stars, and fortunes of love (Arm. vičakaxat) are told on the morn. For just as the heavens open, so are the mysteries of the future made plain. It is on the eve of Ascension that Mithra’s cave above Lake Van opens, too—foreshadowing, as does the Christian holiday, an apocalyptic hope.

Sergio La Porta

"There was a man in the land of Uş whose name was Job."\(^1\) Questions about the location, the man, and, of course, the content of the book of Job have engaged commentators, from the translators of the Septuagint to Milton, from Origen to Blake. One such person was the 14th-century Armenian monk and scholar, Grigor of Tat‘ew. Grigor, the son of Sarkis of Arčeš, was born in 1346 in the eastern Armenian province of Vayoc‘ Jor.\(^2\) He was dedicated to the church while still a youth and became the most distinguished pupil of the theologian Yovhannēs Orotnek‘i of Aprakunik‘. In 1388, after the death of Orotnek‘i, he became the abbot of Aprakunik‘ monastery. But the chaos resulting from Tamerlane’s invasion forced him soon afterwards to move to Tat‘ew in Siwnik‘ where he remained, under the patronage of Prince Smbat Orbēlean, until his death in 1409. He was a prolific author who produced over 20 works, including various biblical and philosophical commentaries.

In 1387 Tat‘ewac‘i completed his encyclopedic Girk‘ Harc‘manc‘ ("Book of Questions") which presents Tat‘ewac‘i’s investigations into a multitude of topics on religion and science. It includes polemics against the Arians, Nestorians, Manichaeans, followers of Macedonius, and Jews; as well as examinations into the nature of angels and demons; the work and creation of God; the luminaries, days, and seasons; the elements, plants and living things; paradise; the structure of man; and the soul of man, amongst many other things. The *Girk‘ Harc‘manc‘* also comments upon the Old Testament. Its author devotes entire chapters to the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, and Kings (I-IV), while other books are mentioned throughout. Chapter 22 of the sixth volume, which discusses the five books of Moses, is entitled "*Yalags Yobay Harc‘umni*" ("A Question Concerning Job"). Its placement between Genesis and Exodus is most likely due to Tat‘ewac‘i’s belief

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\(^1\)Job 1:1.

\(^2\)On Tat‘ewac‘i’s life see POŁAREAN, 1971, pp. 396-399; BOYAJIAN, 1962, pp. 229-238. Also see, ASHIJAN, 1994, pp. 19-22.
that Job lived approximately during the time of Moses. Although brief—the section occupies only seven and one-half double-columned pages in the printed 1729 edition of Constantinople—it preserves intriguing traditions about the figure of Job.

The chapter on Job in the Girk' Hare'manc' primarily provides historical background to the biblical book. Tat'ewac'i concentrates on the first two chapters, the epilogue, and the LXX addition, while saying little about the problem of theodicy. The chapter consists of nineteen questions and answers, starting with simple questions and gradually progressing to more abstract ones, while simultaneously attempting to observe the order of events in the Biblical text. Questions 1 and 2 try to determine who Job was and who wrote the book. The second half of question two operates as a lemma for questions three through seven which explore in greater detail the facts raised in the former. Thus they generally ask “who,” “what,” and “when” questions. Subsequently, Tat'ewac'i focuses on “why” (vasn ĝr) something happened in the intervening chapters of the biblical text. This method gradually introduces the reader into the mysteries (xorhurdk) of the book of Job, which culminate in Tat'ewac'i's explanation that Job is an example of the old and new Adam. Following the Biblical text of the LXX, he concludes the chapter with the question of the location of Ausid (Uš).

Tat'ewac'i rarely cites his sources. Instead, his answers often indicate references to other works by the laconic statements: “some say that:” (omank' asen te), and “others say that” (aylk' asen te). One definite source of Tat'ewac'i's information about Job is Yovhannēs Vanakan Vardapet Tawušec'i's (1181-1251) Catena on Job.5

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3See Question One of the translation below.
4Isk xorhurd norn ad[a]may bazums tpaworēr (“Yet in many ways, he typified the mystery of the new Adam”), TAT'EWAC'I, 1993, p.327.
5As I have not been able to examine this text, which exists only in manuscript, I have had to rely on those commentaries from which Vanakan compiled his material. According to Renoux, in addition to Hesychius of Jerusalem, he assembled information from Ephrem of Nisibis, David the Philosopher, Step'anos Siwnec'i, Šapuh Bagratuni, and his own work for chapters 1-20. For the second half of the book of Job, he mentions Origen, Evagrius, Epiphanius, Philo, and David K'obayrec'i. See RENOUX, 1983, p. 19, n. 6, and RENOUX, 1986, pp. 663-664. See RENOUX, 1986, for a discussion of the fragments of David K'obayrec'i. For the fragments of Ephrem, see VARDANEAN, 1912, reprinted in VARDANEAN, 1913, pp. 63-94. For the fragments
especially the fragments attributed to the fifth century author, Hesychius of Jerusalem.\(^6\) His *Homilies on Job* were translated into Armenian and preserved in abridged form in Vanakan’s *Catena*\(^7\) It has already been demonstrated that Vanakan’s work provided material for Tat’ewac’i’s longer commentary on Job called *Lucmunk’ Dzuarimac’ Banic’n Yovbay* (Explanations of the obscure passages of Job), completed in 1408.\(^8\) Vanakan’s influence is not only evident there, however, but throughout the *Girk’ Harmac’manc’* itself. Tat’ewac’i asks elsewhere, “What is the fiery dragon”\(^9\) He answers, “The devil is the dragon as Job says: ‘you put a bridle (šrušak) on his palate, and made him a vehicle for angels.’”\(^10\) As J. Russell elucidated in a study of the

of Ephrem’s commentary and their influence on Eznik of Koš, see TER-PETROSYAN, 1994.

\(^6\) Two other very likely sources within the Armenian tradition for Tat’ewac’i’s information about Job are Yovhannēs Orotnc’i and Grigor Narekac’i, both of whom I will examine in the course of my research. Orotnc’i was Tat’ewac’i’s spiritual and academic mentor. It stands to reason that Orotnc’i’s *Explanation of the Book of Job* should have been a principle source for this section. The exposition on Job by the 10th-c. Armenian mystic, Grigor Narekac’i, also unpublished, with which Tat’ewac’i is likely to have been familiar. It appears in Venice mss. 339 within Hesychius of Jerusalem’s commentary on Job, see SARGISEAN, 1897, p. 28. There is another work on Job, the *Ov ē da*, “Who is this?”, the opening words of Job ch. 38, which was falsely attributed to Narekac’i. See RENOUX, 1983, p. 18.

\(^7\) That Tat’ewac’i accessed Hesychius’ work through Vanakan’s *Catena* is further supported by Tat’ewac’i’s opinion that Job lived approximately one hundred years before Moses (see Question One). This tradition is attested by šapuh Bagratuni, who is one of the exegetes included in Vanakan’s *Catena* (see n. 5). On this fragment of šapuh Bagratuni’s commentary, see RENOUX, 1986, p. 664, n. 7.

\(^8\) RENOUX, 1983, p.19: “Grigor Tat’ewac’i compose des *Lucmunk’ Yovbay* (explications des passages difficiles de *Job*) qui font appel aux textes d’Hésychius, mais à travers les résumés de la *Chaine sur Job* de Jean Vanakan; and ČRAK-EAN, 1913, p. 148: “*Utkak Vanakani azdec’ut’e’an tak kazmac’ e Grigor Tat’ewac’i ir Yobay lucmunk’*’o’.”


\(^10\) Bansarkan višap orpēs ašē yob (eder šrušak i k’ins nora ew ararar xalalik hreštakac’). RUSSELL, 1996, translates *xalalik hreštakac’* as “the angels’ toy,” p. 1.
etymology of Armenian Šrušak, this is a paraphrase of Vanakan, who writes concerning Leviathan: "Can you know his nostrils, or pass the bridle (Šrušak) round his nose?... The bridle (Šrušak) demonstrates the Cross." 11 The use of the rather rare word Šrušak (bridle) allows us to suggest this attribution with some certainty. Russell has also observed that Tat'ewac'i incorporated an enigmatic passage from Vanakan's Yalags Tarentin in his discussion of Armenian month names. He reports that "the month Nawasardul of the Alans, which is that which belongs to Nawasard, namely, it is from 'descendants,' from 'sons' or from 'daughters.'" 12

Two examples suffice to show Tat'ewac'i's dependence on Hesychius' work. 13 Grigor's third question asks whether demons are able to cause the fire to descend and to change the elements. 14 His answer is that "demons are not able to change the elements, nor fire, nor lightning, nor other things as some think. But they themselves may become fire and wind for 'they take the form of angels of light' as the apostle says, in order to hurt man. 15 Just as they did upon the house of Job." 16 We may compare this answer to Hesychius' comment on the "fire" in Job 1:16 that "he [Satan] was not able to cast fiery thunderbolts, nor brandish lightning bolts, nor make use of any of the elements, as some think. But he himself fell according to the likeness of 'fire' on the flock of sheep, and by this he desired to persuade Job to blaspheme against God." 17 Tat'ewac'i includes this question as well in

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12 Isk ahanic' amis Nawasardul or è Nawasardac'i aysink'n i t'oranc'è yusterac' kam i dterac'. TAT'EWAC'I, p. 201. See XAČIKEAN, 1995, p. 183, lines 16-18, for the equivalent passage in Vanakan. See also AČARYAN, 1973, pp. 435-436.
13 Other passages that contain parallels to Hesychius as well as to other exegetes are indicated in the notes to the translation.
15 II Cor. 11:14, "ew ēn inč zarmank'. k'anzi ew ink'n satanay kerparani i hrešak lusoy," ("and no wonder, because Satan himself also takes the form of an angel of light").
17 Ôè ūnt's hrelēns ønkenul ew oč p'aylakunks šolk'uc'anel, ew
his longer commentary on Job\textsuperscript{18} and we may speculate that this chapter was a preparatory work for that later composition.

In his first three responses to why Job purified his children with ten sacrifices and offered one ox for the sake of their souls (question 5 on Job 1:5), Tat’ewac’i again refers to Hesychius, but, in his second answer, somewhat incorrectly. According to the scholastic, Job sacrificed in this manner “first, because they were ten in number. Seven were sons and three were daughters. [Thus], he sacrificed according their number. Second, [he sacrificed] ten for the purification of their senses. Third, he offered ten sacrifices as a symbol of the ten commandments and one ox according to the likeness Christ who died for our sins.”\textsuperscript{19} Hesychius, too, begins by explaining that “he offered sacrifices according to the number of [his] sons and daughters.”\textsuperscript{20} This is not surprising as the Biblical verse already mentions that he sacrificed “according to their number.”\textsuperscript{21} However, what is of interest is that the Armenian Bible reads “matuc’anër... zohs” “for “he offered sacrifices,” while both Hesychius and Tat’ewac’i have “patarags... matuc’anër,” even though the scholastic earlier used the standard biblical reading.\textsuperscript{22} The Jerusalem commentator then explains that besides the “sensible sacrifices, he comprehended the intelligible ones.”\textsuperscript{23} Tat’ewac’i, or Vanakan, either misunderstood Hesychius or

\begin{itemize}
\item oč inč i tarerac’s kar ėr i gorc arkanel, orpēs karci omanc’: Baye’ ink’n ėst nmanut’ean «hroy» ankaw i veray hawtic’n, ew asyu kamec’eal zYovb hawanec’uc’anel ar ēi hayehoyel AStauc, RENOUX, 1983, p. 106 (200). The page number first given is that of Renoux’s volume, while the number given in parentheses is that of the text.
\item Nax zi tasn ēin t’uov; eōn usterk’ ew erēk’ dsterk’ ėst t’uoy noc’a matuc’anër: E[r] k[ror] d i srbu[t]i[wn] tasn zgayu[t’]el[an]c’ n[o]c’[a]: E[r][or] d i xorhurd tasn banean őrinac’n tasn p[a][t][a][r][a]g matuc’anër: Ew ėst nmanu[t’]el[an] k[ristos]i mi zuarak or v[as]n melac’ meroc’ meraw, TAT’EWAC’I, 1993, p. 322.
\item Patarags ėst t’uoy usterac’ ew dsterac’n matuc’anër, RENOUX, 1983, p. 74 (152).
\item Job 1:5: yaruc’eal and ariawōts matuc’anër v[as]n n[o]c’ [a] zohs ėst t’uoy n[o]c’[a].
\item In Question Two: Ey yam[enayn] awur ėst t’uoy n[o]c’ [a] tasn zoh matuc’anér (“And everyday he offered ten sacrifice[s] according to their number”), TAT’EWAC’I, 1993, p. 321.
\item Ênd zgali patarags, zimanalis in mit ar, RENOUX, 1983, p. 74 (152).
\end{itemize}
misread “sensible sacrifices” (zgali patarags) as “senses” (zgayut‘iwnk’). The Jerusalemite wanted elucidate that in addition to sacrificing according to the number of his children, Job was also completing a more symbolic act; while, as the Girk' Harc'manc preserves the tradition, Job was sacrificing in order to purify the “senses” of his children, that is, the indulgence of their senses through gluttony and drunkenness. Hesychius further explains that Job “understood the attention of a spiritual combatant to piety according to the law of the ten commandments. Because the true sacrifice is the keeping of the law and the practice of virtue.”

24 He then quotes verse 13:16 of Paul’s Epistle to the Hebrews and adds that Job “also offered an ox according to the behavior of Christ, who was sacrificed for our sins according to the likeness of an ox.”

25 The Last part of the tradition is thus preserved intact in Tat'ewac’i’s text.

When I originally presented this paper, I questioned whether Tat'ewac’i may have been familiar with certain Talmudic traditions. Three factors led me in this direction. First in commenting upon the length of Job’s life, he declared that it reached “until the exodus from Egypt.” In Baba Bathra, 15a, the same statement appears: “And the span of Job’s life was from the time that Israel entered Egypt till they left it.” Second, Tat'ewac’i recounts a tradition which ascribes the authorship of Job to Moses. Although some Christian exegetes also preserved this tradition, it also occurs in Baba Bathra 14b, and, as M. Stone has shown, this Baraitha was translated into Armenian and appears in manuscript No. 69 of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem which is dated to the fourteenth century.

26 Finally, Tat'ewac’i refers to Talmudic tractates by name in the polemical chapter of the Girk' Hrac'manc', Inddem Hreic' (Against the Jews). 27

As the result of subsequent research, I have come to the conclusion that the monastic was not drawing upon the Talmud for his short exposition on Job. My assertion is based upon having found the principal source of Tat'ewac’i’s knowledge of the Talmud, the Pugio Fidei of the thirteenth-century Spanish Dominican, Raymond

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25 Ew zuarak mi matuc’anér əst K’ristosi k’alak’avarut’eann, or əst nmanut’ean zuarakí vasn melac’ meroc’ zenaw, RENOUX, 1983, p. 74 (153).


27 TAT’EWAC’I, 1993, pp. 27-29.
Martini. This work, hitherto unknown to have been translated into Armenian, is significant as it cites Jewish sources such as the Talmud, providing both the Hebrew or Aramaic and a Latin translation. Again, two examples should suffice to demonstrate Tat‘ewac‘i’s dependence on Martini. The first is a citation of Sanhedrin 97a: “it is written in the book Sanhedrin that Elijah and his disciples said that, ‘this world lasts for six thousand years. Of which it will have Tohu,’ which is voidness, ‘for two thousand years, and the Law for two thousand, and the Messiah for two thousand.’” We may compare Martini: “Traditum est à domo Eliae; id est à discipulis Eliae: Per sex millia annorum erit mundus, quorum duo millia Tohu, id est, inanitas,

On Martini’s life, see BERTHIER, 1936.

It is highly improbable that the entirety of the Pugio Fidei was translated into Armenian. This is supported by the inclusion in the Ḥiddēm Ḥreic‘ of a passage from Martini’s other major polemic against the Jews, the Capistrum Iudaearum. Tat‘ewac‘i informs his readers that the Talmud “says that Judah is translated ‘confessor,’ because they who are confessors of the Messiah will be saved” (Asemk‘ t‘ē t‘almut patassanē aysm: K‘anzi asē t‘ē j‘hutn t‘armani x[o]sr[ō]vanōl k‘anzi xostovanōl‘n mesiyān p‘rkesc‘in ), TAT‘EWAC‘I, 1993, p. 28. Cf Martini: “Yehuda est nomen summum a ‘ōdeh, quod est laudabo, vel confitebor, ut dicit R. Qimhi in libro šorašim. Unde Lea uxor Iacob, nato Yehuda, ait: ‘Hac vice ‘ōdeh, id est laudabo vel confitebor Domino, ob hoc vocavit nomen eius Yehuda,” SIERRA, 1993, p. 26. The quote is not from the Talmud but the Sefer ha-šorašim (Book of Roots, a Hebrew dictionary) of R. David Árimji (1160 ca.-1235), but there was no way for Tat‘ewac‘i to know that. The most likely theory of transmission for these works is that the 14th-century Dominican missionary, Bartholomew of Podio, bishop of Marāgha, included these passages in his sermons. Bartholomew was instrumental in the founding of the Unitor movement and his works, translated into Armenian, were known and read by Tat‘ewac‘i. On the Unitor movement, see especially, VAN DEN OUDENRIJN, 1960. On Tat‘ewac‘i’s use of folk material present in Bartholomew’s sermons, see MANUKYAN, 1997.

I hope to publish a full comparison of Tat‘ewac‘i’s Ḥiddēm Ḥreic‘ and Martini’s works in the near future.

vel vanitas: duo millia lex: & duo millia Messia dies erunt."  
32 Tat'ewac'i even preserves the translation of the Hebrew word tohu, as well as the gloss that Elijah was speaking to his disciples.

The second citation is a tradition attribute to Genesis Rabbah: “in the commentary to Genesis One, Beresititas says that ‘ten kings will reign from the beginning until the completion of the world.’ First, God. Second, Nimrod. Third, Joseph. Fourth, Solomon. Fifth, Nebuchadnezzar. Sixth, Darius. Seventh, Cyrus. Eighth, Alexander. Ninth, Augustus Caesar, who, like iron, will crush everything. Tenth, the Messiah, who is the first and the last.” 33 This is an abridged translation of Martini:

In Bereschit ciiam Rabba majori scriptum est super illud Genes. 42. ver. 6. [Hebrew] 34 Tradiderunt quod decem reges dominati sunt à fine mundi ad finem ejus: horum vero primus est Deus.... Porro rex iste secundus est Nimrod impius, &c. Rex vero tertius fuit Joseph.... Rex vero quartus hic fuit Salomoh Rex Israel, &c. Rex quintus fuit Nabuchodonosor Rex Babylonis, &c. Rex sextius fuit Darius.... Rex septimus fuit Cyrus.... Octavus Rex est Alexander Macedo.... Rex nonus est Caesar Augustus Rex Romanorum qui dominatus est in ioto mundo, sicut dictum est Dan. 2. vers. 40. Et regnum quartum erit forte sicut ferrum, quemadmodum ferrum erit commingens, & domans omnia; & velut ferrum quod est contenens universa hoc comminuet, ac conteret. Rex vero decimus est Rex Messias...: atque ita qui fuit primus Rex, erit ultimus Rex, sicut scriptum est Esa. 44. vers. 6. 35

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32MARTINI, 1967, p. 394. Italicized words indicate words translated from the Hebrew while those which are not italicized are glosses added by Martini.


34Here Martini provides the Hebrew of the text he is about to translate.

35MARTINI, 1967, pp. 397-98. I have not been able to find this list in Genesis Rabbah. Pirke Rabbi Eleazar 11, however, includes Ahab but does not mention Darius or Augustus. Esther Rabbah 1:1, has Ahab and Darius, but again, does not mention Augustus. Targum
Although Tat’ewac’i’s excerpt is much shorter than Martini’s passage, the enumeration of the kings is alike and it includes the Dominican’s gloss that Augustus Caesar will crush everything as iron does, a reference to the description of the fourth king in Daniel. The Pugio Fidei, however, makes no mention of Job traditions except for the one ascribing the book’s authorship to Moses. As this tradition is attested in other Christian commentators on Job, it seems more likely that Tat’ewac’i garnered his information from them.

Two passages in the chapter preserve interesting traditions for which I have not been able to find any source. The first is a folk tradition contained within the answer to Question Four: “What is that which the sons of Job honored when they gathered together on the day of their own birth?” Tat’ewac’i explains that Job’s children were acting “as the common peasants at the birth of their children honor the day t’karuk’, while kings make the same feast every year to eat, drink, and delight in the flesh like Pharaoh and Herod.” The latter half of the response is an allusion to Gen. 40:20 and Mat. 14:6 and implies that the rulers of Armenia celebrated their birthday every year.

Yerushalmi 1:1 mentions Pharaoh, Israel, Ahasuerus, Greece, and Rome, and may be compared to similar statements in tractates Yoma, EPSTEIN, 1974, 10a, and Sanhedrin, EPSTEIN, 1987, 98a.

The Capistrum Iudaorum likewise does not contain any Job traditions similar to the ones found in the Girk’ Harc’manc’.

See notes to translation of Question Two.


Gen. 40:20: ew elew yawrn errordi, ēr cnndoc’ p’arawon, ew amēr uraxut’[wn] am[enayn] carayic’ iwroc’ (“On the third day, the day of Pharaoh’s birth, he made a feast for all his servants”). And Mat. 14:6: ew ibrew elen cnundk’ herovdi, kak’awac’ dustrn herovdiy i mej’bazmakanin ew hačay t’uec’aw herovdi (“But when it was Herod’s birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced before the guests, and seemed pleasing to Herod”).

In addition to the biblical allusion made by Tat’ewac’i, we may compare the birthday festivities of the Perisan elite, as reported, by Herodotus, who were more likely models for Armenian rulers than
former, however, indicates that the peasants only celebrate the one time at the birth of a child. The word *tkaruk* (formed from the word *tkay*, "child") is not very common. S. Malxaseanc* and A. Suk’iayyan both label it as an ecclesiastical term to describe the feast or meal on the occasion of a child’s baptism. H. A’ca’ean notes that it was still used in the dialect of the region of Ewdokia with the same meaning. The second tradition concerns the authorship of Job. Tat’ewac’i records that some “[say] that Solomon [wrote it] for the words, having been divided into feet, are metered like those of Solomon. For they say that Job’s chamberlain fled to Persia and there delivered a narrative which they wrote in their own writing. And Solomon had it brought and corrected it.” Job’s connection with Solomon is not very strange as it is a poetic work which has affinities with Wisdom literature. Because of the proverbial nature of many of the speeches and the presence of the wisdom poem in ch. 28, Job has customarily been cast with Proverbs, Qoheleth, Ben Sira, and the Wisdom of Solomon as part of Wisdom literature. For example, Theodore of Mopsuestia comments that the book of Job “is numbered with the books of Solomon, that is, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.” However, a tradition that Job had a chamberlain who fled to Persia is unknown to me. The word used for chamberlain, *hēčup*, is a loan from Arabic *ḥājib*. But preliminary searches through

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Pharaoh or Herod: “Of all days in the year a Persian most distinguishes his birthday, and celebrates it with a dinner of special magnificence. A rich Persian on his birthday will have an ox or a horse or a camel or a donkey baked whole in the oven and served up at table,” HERODOTUS, 1987, pp. 96-7.

42 MALXASEANC*, 1944-5, v. 4, p. 422; SUK’IASYAN, 1967, p. 627

43 Ewdokia is the region around Amasia, former capital of Pontus, near the Black Sea in north central Anatolia.

44 A’CA’EAN, 1913, p. 1033.

45 Ew aylk’ t’e solomon zičap’aworē bank’n tnaeal hangoyn banic’n solomoni: Zisen t’e yobay hēčupn i parsiks p’axeaw, ew and zroyc’ et or grec’iin iwreanc’ grovn: ew solomon berel et ew srbagreac’, TAT’EWAC’I, 1993, p. 320.


47 For a comparison of like passages in Job and Qoheleth and other wisdom literature see DRIVER and GRAY, 1921, p. lxviii.

48 THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA, 1864, p. 697.

al-Tabari and al-Kisa’i have not yielded supporting evidence for a Muslim tradition as the source.

Following is a translation of the *Yalkuts Yobay* with relevant sources and parallels indicated in the notes:

**A QUESTION CONCERNING JOB**

**(CHAPTER 22)**

**Question 1: When did the patient Job live, and from which race was he?**

Answer: The blessed Job lived in the time of Moses. 100 years before more or less.\(^{50}\) And his life was long, reaching until the exodus from

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\(^{50}\)This opinion is attributed to ṣapuh Bagratuni, see n. 7 to the introduction. Other commentators have thought likewise. In his *Homiliae in Ezechielem*, Origen posits that Job “*temporibus patriarcharum et Moysi vixisse,*” ORIGEN, 1989, Hom. IV, 4.9. John Chrysostom records that some people believe that Job lived before Moses and was the fifth from Abraham. Others, he continues, believe that he lived under the Law. However, Chrysostom himself thinks that Job lived before the Law, CHRYSTOM, 1988, Prologue 1-2. Eusebius, in his *De Demonstratione Evangelica*, claims that Job lived before Moses, EUSEBIUS, 1857a, p. 46. Gregory the Great also mentions that some believe that he lived before the Law and a long time before Moses. However, he disagrees, stating that Job did live under the Law in the time of the Judges, GREGORY, 1950. Gregory was known in Armenia and appears in the *Synaxarion* attributed to Թ`եր Israyel (13th c.). He was celebrated on 5 Areg and the *Synaxarion* makes special mention of his having composed 40 homilies on Job: *greac` ew i Yob չարս k`arasun*, BAYAN, 1930, pp. 159-162. Išo’dad of Merv, the 9th-century East Syriac exegete, writes in his commentary that Job lived before the Law of Moses and was already known by the time Jacob was sixty, İSO’DAD, 1963, p. 277. In the Babylonian Talmud tractate *Baba Bathra* various opinions are given: that Job was contemporary with Moses, that he was contemporary with Isaac and Jacob, that he lived in the time of the spies, that he lived in the time of the judging of the judges, and that Job was one of those who returned from the Babylonian exile and had a house of study in Tiberias, EPSTEIN, 1976, pp. 14b-15b.
Egypt.\textsuperscript{51} And he was from the race of Esau\textsuperscript{52} from the woman Basemat, the daughter of Ishmael. And he was the fifth generation from Abraham. In this way: Abraham, Isaac, Esau, Raguel, Zareh, Job.\textsuperscript{53} And his mother was Bosor.\textsuperscript{54} And first he was called Jobab, which is

\textsuperscript{51}Baba Bathra. “And the span of Job’s life was from the time that Israel entered Egypt till they left it,” EPSTEIN, 1976, p. 15a. Išo’dad of Merv also reports the tradition that Job descended into Egypt. In the Testament of Job, he is referred to as the king of Egypt, SPITTLER, 1983, v. 28:7.

\textsuperscript{52}The importance of Job’s relation to Esau is that it makes him a gentile. While some Jewish commentators tried to maintain an Israelite ancestry for Job, Christian interpreters quickly adopted this information and used it to their advantage. John Chrysostom notes that Job is not from the race of Jacob because “God sent masters to all men,” CHRYSTOSTOM, 1988, Prologue, 2. And Gregory the Great expounded: “It is not without reason that the life of a gentile is proposed to us as a model between the lives of the Hebrews. Our Saviour who came for the redemption of both Jews and Gentiles wanted to be prophesied by the voice of Jews and Gentiles,” GREGORY, 1950, Preface, 5.

\textsuperscript{53} The LXX addition to the book of Job mentions that Job was from the race of Esau and was the fifth from Abraham. Cf. RENOUX, 1983, p. 155 (275). The prologue to an Arian commentary on Job, falsely attributed to Julianus of Halicarnasus, also provides his genealogy. The text was translated from Greek into Armenian in the 6th century: “The sons of Abraham: Isaac, Jacob, Levi, Cahath, Moses, and again: Isaac, Esau, Raguel, Zareh, Job” (Ordik ‘Abraamu’ Isaahak, Yakovb, Lewi, Kahat’, Movëeri. ew darjeal Isaahak, Esaw, Raguel, Zareh, Yob ). The passage appears in Venice codices 55 (14th c.) and 71 (14th-15th c.) as well as in ten other mss. of the Armenian Bible in the Mekhitistar library. The passage is quoted from FERHAT, 1911, p. 30. Ferhat attempts to substantiate Usener’s claim that this passage, attributed to pseudo-Origen, should be associated with Julianus of Halicarnasus by identifying the Armenian as an independent tradition. However DRAGUET, 1924, refutes this argument by showing that the Armenian is a translation of the Greek. In the mss., this passage is preceded by the preface which appears in the Zohrab edition of the Girk ‘Yobay, see DRAGUET, 1924, p. 52. Zohrapean also notes that a preface by Julianus of Halicarnasus follows that preface, ZOHRAPEAN, 1984, p. 475.

\textsuperscript{54}Gr. Bosorrha. Bosor is actually the main city, Botzra, of Edom( Gen. 36:33; Is. 34:6, 63:1). Išo’dad of Merv states that Bosra is
beloved of God. And [then] he was called Job, which is father, for he was the father of patience.55

Question 2: Who wrote the book of Job?
Answer: Some say that his friends, EliphaZ, Sophar, and Baldat, who were from the race of Esau56 and who came to console him from his grieves, wrote it.57 Just as he himself said: “who would grant to write my words for me as a memorial forever.”58 And others say that Moses wrote [it] as a reprimand of the sons of Jacob who received the laws but did not keep [them]; and forgot all the favors of God.59 And others say

the metropolis of Job, ISO'DAD, 1963, p. 277. In the LXX, it seems to have become confused with Job’s mother. Eusebius records Polyhistor’s account of Aristeas in which Bassara is the wife of Esau, EUSEBIUS, 1857b, IX, 25. Armenian tradition understood Bosor in context as meaning “scarlet” from its connection with Edom and incorporated it into the language. See RUSSELL, “A Tenth-Century Hymn,” (forthcoming).

55 The notion that Job was previously called Jobab derives from the LXX. Jobab was the son of Zerah of Botzrah who was the second king of Edom after Bela (Gen 36:33; I Ch. 1:44). The incorrect etymologies given by Tat’ewac’i exist in Armenian Onomastica Sacra. Jobab, “howling,” is understood as ‘beloved of God,’ (Hebrew yehu ahuv ); and Job, “hated,” is understood as ‘father,’ (Hebrew av ); see WUTZ, 1915, pp. 630, 918, and 920. STONE, 1981, pp. 61-217, includes a discussion of Wutz’s texts, and a list of manuscripts containing onomastic lists. It should be added that some lists do give the correct etymologies for these names.

56 EliphaZ was the first-born of Esau (Gen. 34:11,15,42; I Ch. 1:36, 53). The name Sophar (Heb. Zophar) occurs only in Job, but the LXX lists him as the son of EliphaZ instead of Zepho (Gen. 36:11, I Ch. 1:36). The name Baldat (Heb. Bildad) is of uncertain origin; however, his being a Shuhite connects him with Edom. Shuah was the son of Abraham and Qeturah, the brother of Midian, and the uncle of Dedan and Sheba (Gen. 25:2, I Ch. 1:32); see POPE, 1973, p. 24.

57 An anonymous commentary on Job attributed to Origen, citing the same verse, also asks whether the friends of Job wrote the book, but the author does not think so, ANONYMOUS, 1857, pp. 373.

58 O tayr inj grel zbans im yišatak yawitenic’, cf. Job 19:23: O tayr inj grel zbans im, ew hanel znosa i matean yawitean (“who would grant to write my words for me, and to publish them in a book forever”).

59 The same anonymous commentary ascribed to Origen forwards
it was Ezra and half [of them] again say Jeremiah. And others say that Solomon wrote it, for the words, having been divided into feet, are in meter, like those of Solomon. For they say that Job’s chamberlain fled to Persia and there delivered a narrative which they wrote in their own writing. And Solomon had it brought and corrected it. But they who are correct are those who say that Moses wrote it as a history and Solomon versified it in a manner similar to his own words. And after that, Ezra wrote it down by the spirit of God when the scriptures were transferred from the Jews. But the wondrous Job lived before the Law and the book was written after the Law [had been given]. And he brought by himself the truth of the gospel. For God testified concerning him: “he was,” it says, “a true, righteous, unblemished, God-worshipping man, detached from all evils,” who emerged victorious from his trial of Satan. And he had seven sons and three daughters that Moses wrote the book as a consolation for Israel’s pains, ANONYMOUS, 1857, pp. 374-5. John Chrysostom, although he does not mention Moses as the author of the book, did hold that the Israelites whilst in Egypt had the example of Job, CHRYSTOSOM, 1988, Prologue, 4. Methodius asserts that “the Book of Job is by Moses,” METHODIUS, 1994, p. 381. Furthermore, Iš̄dād of Merv comments that Chrysostom thought “it is the divine Moses who wrote the book of the blessed Job, during the forty years that the children of Israel sojourned in the desert” IŠŌDAD, 1963, p. 278.

Theodore of Mopsuestia believed that it was composed by some talented Hebrew upon the return from the Babylonian exile, ZAHAROPOULOS, 1989, p. 47. The reference to Jeremiah might have arisen from his expressing similar sentiments to Job, especially saying in 20:14, “Cursed be the day wherein I was born.” Or possibly because he wrote a book of lamentations. Gregory the Great notes that some people think one of the prophets wrote it, GREGORY, 1950, Preface, 1.

See introduction, p. 9.

This fact is important also for Chrysostom as it shows that there was righteousness before the Law of Moses, CHRYSTOSOM, 1988, Prologue 2, 4.


The theme of Job appearing victorious or engaged in battle with Satan and subsequently defeating him is common throughout early
[who were] of similar piety as himself.\(^{65}\) And everyday he offered ten sacrifice[s] according to their number, and a bullock for the purity of their thoughts.\(^{66}\) And his material greatness was a flock of seven thousand sheep; three thousand camels; five hundred draft oxen; and likewise were also his servants and wealth and his renown.\(^{67}\) And on the day of his trials, a fire descended from heaven and burned his flocks and mountain marauders pillaged and took his camels and his donkeys and his oxen.\(^{68}\) And a wind destroyed his house and killed his sons at the dinner table.\(^{69}\) And he gave thanks to the Lord and said: “The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away as is pleasing to him. Naked came I from my mother and naked go I into the grave to my mother.”\(^{70}\)

**Question 3: Are demons able to cause the fire to descend and to change the elements?**

Answer: Demons are not able to change the elements nor fire nor lightning nor other things as some think. But they themselves may become fire and wind for “they take the form of angels of light” as the apostle says, in order to hurt man.\(^{71}\) Just as they did upon the house of Job.\(^{72}\)

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interpreters. John Chrysostom compares Job to an athlete. He is an athlete of valor and is constantly fighting against his adversary, Satan, CHRYSOSTOM, 1988, 1,11. For Hesychius of Jerusalem as well, Job is a fighter; and his tribulations, battles. Job is described as a soldier and an athlete (Hom. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 16). He carries the equipment of a fighter and receives the awards of a winner (Hom. 2,3,7, 15, 23); see RENOUX, 1983, p. 57.

\(^{65}\)Job 1:2.

\(^{66}\)Job 1:5.

\(^{67}\)Job 1:3.

\(^{68}\)Job 1:16-17.

\(^{69}\)Job 1:19.

\(^{70}\)T[ë]r et ew T[ë]r ēař orp[ës] haçoy ē nma: merk eki i móře, ew merk ert'am i gerezman ař mayr. The order of the verses here is inverted: T[ë]r et ew T[ë]r ař orpës T[ear]n haçoy t'uec'aw (“The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away as seems pleasing to the Lord”) is Job 1:22a, while 1:21 is: merk isk eki es yorovayně mor imoy, ew merkandam darjaye' andrēn (“Naked, indeed, came I from my mother’s womb and naked will I return”).

\(^{71}\)hresľakk' lusoy kerparanin, cf. II Cor. 11:14:ew čen inč zarmank'. k'anzi ew ink'n satanay kerparani i hresťak lusoy (“and no
Question 4: What is that which the sons of Job honoured when they gathered together on the day of their own birth?

Answer: It has many hidden meanings. First, as the common peasants at the birth of their children honour the day ταρυκ’, while kings make the same feast every year to eat, drink, and delight in the flesh like Pharaoh and Herod.\(^{73}\) Second, the righteous ones do the opposite of this to shame the evil one who contrived through sins to destroy mankind with death. But by the command of the creator, man perpetuates through birth and prolongs existence. Thus they come together and praise God on the day of [their] birth and feast physically as the book says, the sons and daughters of Job having gathered went and feasted.\(^{74}\) Third, they gathered and thanked God who created man ex nihilo, and brought [us] from the womb of darkness into the light and gave us material things. On account of which they thanked God by nourishing the poor and offering a sacrifice from their possessions.\(^{75}\) Fourth, [it has meaning as regards] the mystery of our resurrection which grants life once again from the darkness of the sepulchre and draws [us] to light and adorns [us] with joy and exalts [us]. On account of this we, having gathered, give glory and honour to our God who gives glory to those who are His gloryfiers.

Question 5: After the feast, Why did Job after the feast purify his children with ten sacrifices and offer one ox for the sake of the sins of [their] thoughts?

Answer: First, because they were ten in number. Seven were sons and three were daughters. [Thus], he sacrificed according their number. Second, [he sacrificed] ten for the purification of their senses. Third, he offered ten sacrifices as a symbol of the ten commandments and one ox in order to signify Christ who died for our sins.\(^{76}\) Fourth, [he sacrificed for] the ten sins that were committed at the feast of wine: 1) gluttony; 2) drunkenness; 3) indulgence of the senses; 4) pleasure of the flesh; 5) displacing their thoughts; 6) alienating the Word; 7) and other deeds; 8) wonder, because Satan himself also takes the form of an angel of light”\(^{77}\).

\(^{72}\)See introduction, p. 4.
\(^{73}\)See introduction, p. 8-9.
\(^{74}\)Job 1:4,13.
\(^{75}\)See Testament of Job: “I [Job] issued a standing order for all that remained after the rites to be furnished to the poor,” SPITTLER, 1983, 15:5.
\(^{76}\)See introduction, pp. 4-5.
turning their wisdom into folly; 9) disrupting the peace; and 10) being negligent in regards to the commandments of God. On account of this the apostle said: "Do not be drunk with wine in which there is excess."77 On account of this Job purified with ten sacrifices the ten particular sins which are found in drunkenness and the one ox is for their purification due to their lack of resolve and their thoughts of sins.78 Thus prayed the prophet: "Make me pure, Lord, of my secrets."79

**Question 6: Were the children of Job who died righteous or not?**

Answer: It appears not for they died for while eating and drinking, which is a sin.80 But I say that they are in the lineage of righteous ones on account of three reasons.81 First, because their father brought them up with piety and he was vouched for by God.82 Second, because every day he purified them with sacrifices. Third because they were martyred at the hand of the Enemy as all other martyrs.83 And thus all his

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77 mi arbenayk' ginwov yorum zexut'iwn ē, cf. Eph. 5:18: Mi arbenayk' ginwov yorum zexut'iwn ē.

78 John Chrysostom remarks that Job sacrificed for his children out of paternal care. Although they would not possess any external sins due to their education, they might be harboring secret sinful thoughts which, since he could not see them, Job could not correct, CHRYSTOSOTOM, 1988, 1,7. İso'dad of Merv, following Chrysostom, also says that because “his children were exempt from visible sins, in reason of their education and instruction which he had given them, he offered sacrifices for their secret sins and thoughts,” İSO'DAD, 1963, p. 280.


80 Cf. Hesychius' tirade against drinking, RENOUX, 1985, pp. 73-75 (149-150). The 6th-century preacher, Yovhanēs Mayragomec'i, whose homilies are often attributed to Yovhanēs Mandakuni (5th-c.), devoted an entire sermon to opposing excessive drinking, MAYRAGOMEC'I, 1860, pp. 125-30.

81 This is in complete contrast to Hesychius’ position, RENOUX, 1983, p. 104 (195-6).

82 See above, n. 78.

83 Chrysostom laments the death of Job’s children: “Let me reflect, here again, upon the profoundly pitiable nature of this death; not only in itself, but because these children were exceptional, and just in the
servants and slaves who were killed by sword and fire. But to that which they say that they died from intoxication, we answer that the blood of sacrifices purified their sins every day, but on that day their own blood [purified them].

**Question 7: How many tests of Job were there?**

Answer: We answer that there were seven. First was the sad news of the yoked oxen and the death of his servants. And the sad news of the flower of their youth" CHRYSTOSTOM, 1988, 1,20.

Hesychius is in relative accordance with most of these lists. He lists the trials of Job in two formations. The first follows the biblical text and indicates the trials as they arise. For example, after commenting upon the death of Job's oxen and servants, Hesychius declares: "Baye'ek isk ew zerrod e arut'ivn tšamwoyn k'nesc'uk" ("but come, indeed, and let us examine the second evil of the Enemy"), RENOUX, 1983, p. 106 (199). He maintains this format through the first four trials; see, RENOUX, 1983, pp. 108 (202) and 110 (204). The second summarizes the trials at one point. For example: "Yet mecute'ann apakanelo, yet bazum ordwoc' korstean, yet marmnak'anc' hariaacoc' marmnoyn, zverijh naragikut'ivn, ew orpès karcern et'è k'än zamenay bma'goyn èac i veray nor' «zkinn» ("after the destruction of his greatness, after the loss of many children, after the physically destructive scouring of his body, as a final artifice, and, as he [Satan] thought, the most forceful of all, he led his ‘wife’ against him")", RENOUX, 1983, pp. 138, 140 (249-50); or: "zikynn o čarac'èw zisoc'èn, zezanc'èn yapšakut'ivn, ew zgerut'ivn ultuc'èn ew zkotoruc manu mankaov, zueterac'èn ew zdsterac'èn satakum, ew zapakanut'ivn or takawin aracèr zmarminh nor" ("the burning of his flocks and donkeys, the ravaging of his oxen, the capture of his camels, the massacre of his servants, the slaughtering of his sons and daughters, his degeneration, which little by little consumed his body"). RENOUX, 1983, p. 152 (271); and again: "ayl zamjinn hasin k'èz višk' kizunn očarac', erkord yapšakut'ivn ezanc', errord korst išoc'èn, čorrod gerut'ivn ultuc'èn. hingerord mah xašnarac carayic'èn, vec'erord anžam korst usterac'èn ew dsterac'èn. ehas k'èz aysuhetew čarn ewt'nerord c'awk' marmnoyd ew věrk' andamoc'd ("but [of] the misfortunes that reached you, [Job,] the first [was] the burning of [your] flocks; second, the ravaging of [your] oxen; third, the loss of [your] donkeys; fourth, the capture of [your] camels; fifth, the death of [your] shepherds, sixth, the untimely loss of [your] sons and daughters. Following which a seventh evil reached you, the pains of your body and the sores of your limbs"), RENOUX, 1983, p. 226 (394). As is
demon who assumed the form of the slaves of Job. Second was the fire which consumed his herd of donkeys. Third was the destruction of his herd of camels. Fourth was the death of his children. Fifth were the wounds [inflicted upon] his body. Sixth was the evil advice of and argument with his wife. Seventh was the enmities of his friends through their great opposition. And in this way were the seven of his tribulations. And in this way there are seven: 1) oxen, 2) donkeys, 3) camels, 4) the death of [his] animals, 5) his servants, 6) the death of his children, 7) the scourges of his body. And some people say there are five: 1) exterior things, 2) the death of his children, 3) the scourges of his body, 4) the argument with his wife, 5) the opposition of his friends.

Question 8: Why did Job sit in filth?

Answer: That is, his body was so covered with sores and dissolved into pus and corrupted matter that he was not able to stand on his foot nor crawl anywhere nor was he seized by another, on account of which he sat in the filth of the street with his inconceivable misfortunes. But according to reason it has six meanings. First, the filth is this body and swiftly it goes to filth. Accordingly, "dust were you, and to dust will you return." Second, in such a manner was he humbled who fell from his throne into humility and filth. Third, that he may remind us that the body has that same essence and not a wit more. Fourth, because it was suitable indeed for him, [for] just as a piece of corn buried in the

evident, these lists are rather close to the ones given by Tat'ewac'i.

85 Cf. Hesychius, who similarly accuses the surviving slave as being preserved by Satan to attack Job, RENOUX, 1983, p. 104 (197).

86 Chrysostom also remarks upon the perishable nature of the body, advising those who are enraptured by the beauty of the body to reflect upon its nature: "it is pus," CHRYSTOSOM, 1988, 2, 8.

87 hol är ew i hol darjč'is, cf. Gen. 3:19b:hol eir ew i hol darjč'is.

88 It the Testament of Job the throne of Job is also mentioned: "Then he came to me while I was sitting on my throne mourning the loss of my children. And he became like a great whirlwind and overturned my throne. For three hours I was beneath my throne unable to escape," SPITTTLER, 1983, 20:4,5. Chrysostom contrasts the throne of kings to that of the dunghill declaring that it is "more to be venerated than any kingly throne," Homily IV as cited in GLATZER, 1969, p. 26.

89 Hesychius comments that Job sat on filth "since the body is truly 'filth', and to remind [us that] the body [is] that same nature" (zi marmnn «albewk'» isk čin, ew yišec'uc'anelov marmnoyn znøy bnut'iwn), RENOUX, 1983, p. 138 (245-46).
filth that is the earth and fattened will grow into a harvest of fertility, [so too will Job]. 90 Fifth, contrary to the haughty one who thought to put his throne in clouds and fell to the earth; 91 he [Job] was humbled on the earth and rose to heaven. Sixth, like Adam who fell to the thorn producing earth. 92 Job fell to the earth and [sat] in filth. In the following way he purified his pus with a potsherd. First, because he scraped the clay, which was the substance of his body, with clay. Second, he purified the vessel made of baked clay with the potsherd, for it was baked by the power of God. Third, he soothed something of one nature by means of something of its like and he did not ask for a doctor so that no help might have come to him from men. Moreover, they did not come for their art was weakened by the diseases. 93 Fourth,

90Cf. John 12:24-5: Amēn amēn asem jēt etē oē hath c'orenøy ankeal yerkir meranic'i, ink'n miayn kay apa tē meranic'i, bazum ardiws amē ("Verily, verily, I say unto you, unless a piece of corn having fallen into the earth will die, it is only itself, but if it should die, it yields many fruits.")

91Cf. Rev. 12:9: Ew ankaw višapn mec Ījn arajn, or anuaneal koā beezkebul ew satanay, or molorec'uyc' zam[enay] tiezers erkri ew hreštak' nora and nma ankan ("And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called Beelzebub and Satan, who deceives the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him").

92Cf. Gen. 3:18: p'uš ew tutask bususc'ēk'ez ("thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you").

93Nax zi kawovn k'erē r zkawn or er niwt' marmnoy: Er[rrk][rror]d xec'e[al]wn srbēr zamann xec'elēn, zi t'rec[a]l ēr zōr[u(e)al]mbn a(stiucal): Er[ror]d zi zazgawn zazgakin'm mxitarēr ew oē xndrēr bzišk zi mi i mardkānē lic'i ògmut'iwn nma: Naew oē ews gayin zi tkarac'eal ēr yaxtic'n aruest noc'a, TAT'EWAC'I, 1993, p. 323. These explanations are clearly taken from Hesychius, although in a different order: oē kočac' bzišks. bayc' t'ewes ew kočec'ealk' oē gayin, tesanelov yah'ahareal zaruests yaxtic'n. bayc' sakayn ew Yovb isk oē koē ēr ew oē zař i mardkānē aruestic'n xndrēr zawgnut'iwn. ayl kawovn «k'erē» zkawn, ew «xceawn» srbēr zamann xec'elēn, azgakc'ut'eambn zazgakin'm mxitarēr ("he did not call doctors, but perhaps also they who were called would not have come, having seen their art conquered by the diseases. However, Job did not call [them] indeed and he did not seek the help of the human art, but he 'scraped' the clay with clay, and he purified the vessel made of baked clay with the potsherd, [and] he soothed something of one nature with something
because through a potsherd he purified the body; and through prayers, the mind and the spirit.

**Question 9: What does the saying “having repeated, again” mean?**

Answer: First, it indicates the answer, for the answer is a repetition on account of the question. Second, it signifies the opposing and reiterating [of Job’s friends]. Third, it shows that which is taken away from words and the repeating of the same thing through circumlocution. Fourth, it joins [it] to the previous oration. The first and last are suitable to Job and God, while the middle two to Job’s friends and the evil Slanderer. Again it is known that Job by reiterating his words straightened his friends and rejected Satan, for in this way all are able to vanquish Satan; [for] when he straightens a friend in words or in deeds or in faith or in other things, then Satan turns and leaves. But when we turn a friend [to] evil through vices, then Satan vanquishes and is happy. Job conquered Satan by means of two things: words of thanks and acts of patience. Both of these are necessary to all men in battle with an enemy. Again he conquered Satan of its like”), RENOUX, 1983, p. 136 (244-45).

94Krkle[a]l andrēn: this is the standard phrase used to introduce a response in the biblical text and appears as the first verse of many chapters meaning “he answered and said.”

95Cf. Hesychius, who argues that this phrase is used of Eliphaz because he wanted “to provoke a contest of words” (matuc’anel ēguns baniwk’n) with Job, RENOUX, 1983, p. 202 (353-5).

96Circumlocution”: šrjel pataxsevanov.

97Corrord yaweluln ē yaṛajn ēam, TAT’EWAC’I, 1993, p. 323. This appears to be a corruption of David K’obayrec’i’s assertion: krkelov zmi ew znoyn yaweluac bani nšanakē zi t Españ ew nkaratip banic’n aylap’oxic’en, sakayn zawrut’iwn mtac’n hamajaynakic’ē (By ‘repeating’ it means the one and the same introduction to the word [of Job]; even if the text of the words changes, the meaning of the thoughts, however, is in harmony”), RENOUX, 1986, p. 672. The word yawelu (to join, increase) might be a misreading for yaweluac’ (introduction).

98That is Job and God answered questions and added to previous discussions, while Job’s friends and the devil only repeated what they had said before and twisted words around. Cf. Hesychius’ declaration that this kind of response formula is fitting for Satan, RENOUX, 1983, p. 130 (232-3).
with that [which follows]: he understood Satan’s evil ways and answered against them just as he had against his wife and friends and they who bore bad news for he knew it to be slander. And it is necessary for us to understand the evil thoughts of the cunning one to discern his ways, and to answer from the holy scriptures, just as is clear in the scriptures and the secular writings.\footnote{Cf. Evagrius, who instructs that a monk must learn the ways of demons in order to be able to resist them, EVAGRIUS, 1971, chps. 43 and 50.} Again, through fasting and prayers is the way to conquer temptation. As the Lord says: “this evil does not depart through anything if not through fasting and prayers.”\footnote{Ays čar oč iwik' elanė, et'ē oč pahōk' ew alō'iwk. cf. Mk. 9:28: ayd azg očiwik' elanė, et'ē oč pahōk' ew alō'iwk (“but this kind does not depart through anything if not through prayers and fasts,” see also Mat. 17:20.} And if one will say: “If Job did this why did he [Satan] draw near to him?” We say that through fasting and prayer he [Satan] departs from a man’s body and does not oppress [him]. Indeed, in the spirit of the body, two things avoid demons, namely, humility and truth. Because Satan does not have these two things, he flees from them entirely and hates humility and truth. Thus there appeared five weapons altogether with which we may defeat the enemy. First, the rectification of friends. Second, thanks and patience.\footnote{Elsewhere, Tat‘ewac‘i remarks that we can trample and defeat the dragon’s seven heads with patience, TAT‘EWAC‘I, 1993, p. 152. Origen also remarks that Job conquered Satan with patience: “Qui tamen per eius patientiam vincitur,” ORIGEN, 1980, III,2,1.} Third, understanding the evil devices of Satan. Fourth, prayer and fasting. Fifth, humility and truth which are the best of all weapons and destroy entirely evil which is the mother of shadow and of pride. So much on this.

**Question 10: Why were Job’s friends so opposed to him?**

Answer: Because of four reasons. First, because they were provoked by the adversary just as [he did] sometimes through his [Job’s] wife and when he [Satan] fought with Job through [Job’s] friends.\footnote{See above, n. 47.} Second, because they wanted to falsify God’s testimony on behalf of Job that he was a righteous and unsold man. Third, recompenses of good and evil deeds were reckoned hence to be in the body. Fourth, they wanted to show themselves righteous [and] to show Job guilty. And on account of this they quarreled with Job. And indeed the blessed Job accordingly
opposed those four and gave his answer. On account of the
domain—of he knew them to be provoked by the one who
loves evil—by defeating them he defeated the adversary Satan. And
thus he might give us an example in this way to conquer Satan with
courage. On account of the second, he opposed them lest the testimony
of God concerning him be false and that we might learn on account of
God’s testimony to receive such scorns upon oneself as the ranks of
martyrs who were martyred [did] and not deny them. On account of the
third Job said that recompenses for good and evil deeds are [dispersed]
altogether later on in the world to come, for in this world there are
sinners and those whose greatness has waned. And God pardons them
for both these reasons: First, so that they might turn back and might
repent. Second, if they did not profit they might become silent in
patience. Indeed, here the righteous ones are in grief on account of both
these reasons. First, for there they will rest in peace. Second, so that
they will hope for another life and will be recompensed for their deeds.
Because of these four things he says: “until death I will not call you
righteous, for I will not sin.” 103 That is, they [Job’s friends] wanted that
Job called them righteous and he himself guilty but he did not say it.
And if he called righteous they who were unjust then who would have
sinned according to the truth and if he said that he himself was a sinner
he would have sinned according to God’s testimony. And hence it is
known, since four notices [tell us] it is wrong that they call the
righteous one a sinner and the sinning one righteous. First, as the
prophet says: “woe to him who calls the good one evil and the evil one
good.” 104 And another: he places punishment equally where it is
fitting. Second, he twists the truth when he calls the evil one good and
the good evil. Third, it is sycophantic to call the sinner righteous and
“The Lord will scatter the bones of the sycophants.” 105 Fourth, it is
hypocritical and fraudulent to extol the evil one and the unjust one. On
account of this he [Job] did not say of his friends that they were good
for they were evil. And if someone says: in the same way as they are

103 Minčew i mah oč asem zjez ardars, zi me melic‘em. This is
based on Job 27:5: mi lic‘i inj asel zjez ardars minčew meńanic‘im zi oč
p‘oxec‘ic‘ zanmehut‘i[wn] im (“It is not for me to call you righteous
until I die since I will not change my sinlessness”).

104 Vay or asė zbarin čar ew zčarn b[a]ri, cf. Is. 5:20: Vay aynoc‘ik
oyk‘ asic‘en zčarn bari, ew zbarin čar (“Woe to those who would
call the evil one good and the good one evil”).

c‘ruesc‘ ē zoskers mardahačoyic‘ (“God will scatter the bones of the
sycophants”).
evil so are their words, why did the Holy Spirit write them? The question is why did the Holy Spirit write them? We say that great is the profit and advantage in their words to the world of the righteous and of the sinners. First, although in one form their speech was false concerning Job, in another manner everything of the sinners is true. And again, as through the ass of Balaam He said useful things, and as He moved the tongue of the false prophet from curses to praises, in this way the friends of Job, although they were provoked by the adversary, were foiled by the spirit of God. On account of this their words were written in the sacred scripture.

**Question 11: Why did the adversary [i.e. Satan] raise up such opponents against Job as his wife and his friends and his servants and others?**

**Answer:** First so that, in placing impiety before him, he [Satan] might weaken his [Job's] patience. Second so that the righteous, having come later, might be despised. Third, so that the testimony of God might come out as false concerning him [Job]. Fourth, so that the rebukers will bear punishments for having scorned him. And in this way everywhere Satan schemes to bring about the perdition of both the rebukers and the rebuked.

**Question 12: Why did [God] permit Satan to fight against Job?**

**Answer:** For six reasons? First so that he might increase his rewards. Second, so that his hidden patience might become revealed. Third, so that he might be taught humility. Fourth, so that he might be an opponent of and conquer the proud Satan. Fifth, so that he might bear in himself the form of the old Adam through the impurity of the fall. Sixth, so that he might also become an image of Christ who was condemned in sinlessness and returned the first created one and his progeny to primeval glory.

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106 Gregory the Great declares it is wrong to ask who the human author of the book was for the “Holy Spirit was the author,” GREGORY, 1950, Preface, 2.

107 Nu. 23-24.


109 Cf. Chrysostom, who also believes that “the tests of Job were prolonged in order to show his patience,” CHRYSTOM, 1988, Prologue 3.
**Question 13: Why did God speak to Job?**

Answer: First, because he had every virtue and had patience with those who insulted him, on account of which God spoke and comforted him. Second, he dissolved the doubt—which is the criticism of God—that he is unknown to man. Third, so that he would not become proud after his defeat of Satan, God spoke to him and subdued him through his word so that might see his own weakness and be humble. Fourth, since at the creation of man, God did not vouch that it was good as he had for all the other creatures. And this is for two reasons. First, for it was sufficient to say: “God made the man in His image” since God is good. Second, since he knew that man was to refuse his glory. Now, that which he did not vouch for Adam, he spoke with Job and vouched that he was righteous and unblemished. Fifth, as mentioned before, Job’s friends, having returned according to their previous order, said you are agreeable to God, God will hear you and He will speak to you. On account of this he spoke to them first and he testified. Sixth, God spoke and taught him unspeakable knowledge about the creation which men did not know, [such as], the nature of heaven and earth and of the sea and of animals.

**Question 14: Why did he speak from a cloud and from a whirlwind?**

Answer: For four reasons. First, it is customary for God to appear in clouds as at Sinai and Tabor for it says “He placed his path in a cloud.” Second, as a sign of the sweetness of Job whence the rains descend. Third, cloud covering signifies the ineffable nature of God and his glory. Fourth, thunder and the whirlwind from a cloud signify the insults of his friends.

**Question 15: Why did he vouch for Job a second time?**

Answer: For three reasons. First, since the angels understood the previous testimony for Job, He testified again so that men might hear it. Second, the previous testimony was for the righteousness of his deeds whilst the second was for his patience. Third, it shows that the praise and recompense for the righteous is doubled here and in the world to come.

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110Job 38:1.

111* ar ar a[stu]c zmardn i patker iwr*, cf. Gen. 1:27: *Ew ar ar a[stu]c zmardn i patker iwr* ("And God made the man in His image").

112* ed yamps zgnac’s iwr*, cf. Ps. 103:3: *dnē yamps zgnac’s iwr* ("he puts his path in the clouds").
Question 16: Whence increased the possessions of Job?

Answer: The Holy Scripture says "the Lord increased and blessed Job"\(^{113}\) and it is improper to ask "whence" for He is omnipotent. As the ram from the tree of the thicker\(^{114}\) and the quail from the sea and money from the mouth of the fish,\(^{115}\) he worked a miracle. But some say that they were collected by the angels on one day as by demons they were dispersed. And this is true for all his friends who were gathered after and comforted him, they each brought one lamb and they promised\(^{116}\) four drams of gold to him to help as a comfort\(^{117}\) and from these the Lord increased his things and his animals as in the desert he increased a few loaves of bread and he fed many.\(^{118}\) And here it is known that, after his trials, his possessions appeared doubled; his flock of sheep became fourteen thousand; his camels, six thousand; his yoked oxen, one thousand; and his pasturing donkeys one thousand. In that way, seven sons and three daughters. And that which became doubled [as concerns his children]: first, they are spirit and body. Second, they will arise at the resurrection.\(^{119}\) Third, his previous children are alive with God in soul [and the new are alive in body] and in this way the children were doubled. In that way his life is doubled.

Question 17: How many years was he in trial?

Answer: Some say seven years. According to which He will deliver [him] from six sorrows and, in the seventh, evil will not try him.\(^{120}\) [This] is the meaning of the seven ages of the sorrows of the present life and in the eighth is the liberation of this nature.\(^{121}\) And some say

\(^{113}\) [er] ačec'oyc' ew őrhnea'c' yjob; this is a conflation of Job 42:10, ew [er] ačec'oyc yjob ("and the Lord increased Job"), and 42:12, ew [er] orhnea'c' zverjinn yobay k'an zairjinn ("and the Lord blessed the latter [days] of Job more than the former").

\(^{114}\) Gen. 22:13.

\(^{115}\) Mat. 17:27.

\(^{116}\) Lit: "offered orally" (angir ñcayec'in ).

\(^{117}\) Job 42:11.

\(^{118}\) Mat. 14:19ff.; Mark 6:41ff.; Luk 9:16ff; Jn. 6:11ff.

\(^{119}\) Cf. IŠO'O'DAD, 1963, p. 320.

\(^{120}\) Job 5:19.

\(^{121}\) xorhurd eñã daru vštac kenc'altos ew yutñer[or]diñ azatuñ[wn] bnuñe[an]s. The text should possibly be emended to "This is the meaning of the six (vec') ages of sorrows of the present life and in the seventh (yeñã'tner[or]diñ ) is the liberation of this nature." There is
thirty-eight [years] in accordance with the paralytic whom Christ cured. They who say his trials were seven years, they count [them] in this way. The book says that after his trials [he lived] one hundred seventy years and before his trials [he had lived] seventy years. And eight years again for his trials which makes the entire life of Job two hundred forty-eight years. And they who say his trials were thirty-eight years they count in this way. After his various tribulations Job lived twice seventy years, that is, one hundred forty years. And together that makes two hundred forty-eight years. It was revealed that before his tribulations he lived for seventy years and he lived thirty-eight years in sickness. And in this way was his life increased by twofold as were all his possessions. And some others say that he lived two hundred forty-eight years after his trials.

support for this from several sources. First, it would stand in better agreement with the verse cited. Second, Thomson notes that Irenaeus established the tradition that the end of the temporal world will occur at the completion of six thousand years, and the seventh will be the messianic age, THOMSON, 1970, p. 166, n.2. For example, the Teaching attributed to Agat'angelos explains that "in the seventh age He will give rest to the weary who have worked in the six ages of their time," THOMSON, 1970, par. 670; cf. pars. 366 and 668. See also RUSSELL, 1989, who cites Yovhannès T‘ilkuranc‘i (14th c.): "Love removed Adam from Paradise, / Cast him to the earth and made him mad, / And betrayed him to Satan, / Who tortured him for six thousand years," p. 226. Russell further notes that Christians equated the millenium of the year six thousand with the birth of Christ.

122John 5:5, "One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years." There may be a similar reasoning to this comparison as there was for Chrysostom's likening the length of Job's tribulaitions to the four days that Lazarus was dead. According to him, the purpose was to make a "spectacle" (théatron, cf. I Cor. 4:9) out of Job's tribulations so that no one would be able to doubt God's power, CHRYSTOM, 1988, Prologue 3. Išo’dad of Merv also mentions Chrysostom's analogy, ISO’DAD, 1963, p. 283.

123Chrysostom, according to Išo’dad of Merv, reckoned the years in this manner as well, ISO’DAD, 1963, p. 319.
Question 18: How was Job an exemplar of the old Adam and the new?124

Answer: First, he had through his royalty,125 the image of the glory of Adam. Second, as it was permitted for the tempter to fight against Adam similarly he was permitted to fight against Job. Third he was attacked through his wife.126 Fourth he fell into sin as Adam from the garden to the earth.127 Yet in many ways, he typifies the mystery of the new Adam. First, as Job defeated the Tempter so does our Lord. Second, Job appeared as an observer of patience and our Lord of perfection. Accordingly: “Hear the patience of Job and behold the perfection of the Lord.”128 Third, Job was lowered from honour and our Lord descended to earth and became poor on account of us. Fourth, Job was twice vouched for by God as righteous and unblemished129 and our Lord was vouched for twice by the Father: “This is my son, the chosen one.”130 Fifth, Job said, “Unlawfulness was not in my hand,”131

124 For Christian interpreters Job was an obvious prefiguring of Christ. The earliest reference to this is a passage on Job by Zenon of Verona (4th c.). This passage resembles Tat’tewac’i’s both in form and content, cf. ZENON, 1845, pp. 441-3. Hesychius of Jerusalem also compares Job to the suffering Christ, cf. RENOUX, 1983, Hom. 23 and 24.


126 See above, n. 35.

127 See above, n. 38.


129 Job 1:1, 1:8, 2:3.

130 da è ordi im ântreal. This appears to be a conflation of Mat. 3:17, da è Ordì im sireli (this is my son, the Beloved) and 12:18, aha manuk im, zor ântrec’i ("behold my servant, whom I have chosen").

131 anõrēnu[t’][i][wn] očër i jeën im. This phrase does not appear in the biblical text, although Eliphaz does command Job: apa t’è ic’ë i jeën k’um anõrēnu[t’][i][wn], hehì ara zayn i k‘ën ("then if there may be unlawfulness in your hand, distance it from you"), 11:14. Job does not, of course, agree that he has any unlawfulness in his hand and Tat’tewac’i may have remembered Eliphaz’s verse and assumed Job’s answer. Or he may have confused it with another declaration of Job’s: Anirawu[t’][i][wn] inê očër i jeën imum ("There was not any injustice in my hand"), 17:14.
and the Lord: “Who will reproach me on account of sins,” since it says he did not commit sins; although, he received our sins to himself as Job, too, against the opinions of his friends, said: “I have erred.”

Sixth, Job bore pains in his entire body. And our Lord in his hands and feet and sides, was crowned with thorns, slapped and beaten.

Seventh, Job was reproached by his friends and our Lord was harassed and was slandered by his own people. Eighth, Job did not curse but saved his friends with prayers and our Lord prayed on behalf of his crucifiers. Ninth, the body of Job was restored afterwards. And our Lord restored through the cross the image of Adam and his children through his resurrection. Tenth, Job’s life and honour were redoubled and our Lord arose in his original glory and sat bodily at the right hand of the father. And so on, all the other words and deeds of Job were in the manner of a types of the new Adam as to his suffering, his burial, and his resurrection as it is revealed in the book of his history.

Question 19: Where is the realm of Ausid?

Answer: Some say Sihon and others Edom, and others Arabia, was where he was from and others his tomb to be. But the land of Ausid is the province of Esau for Ausid was one of the sons of Esau by whom the land Ausid was called. And it is in between Arabia and Edom

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132 *yandimanescē zis* v[a]s[n] *melac*‘, cf. Jn. 8:46: ork‘ *i jēn* *yandimanescē zis vasn melac*‘ (“who amongst you will reproach me on account of sins”).


134 Job 2:7.

135 Mat. 27:29 ff.; Mark 17:15 ff.; 19:2 ff.

136 Job 42:8.

137 Luk. 23:34.

1382:10. Išo‘dad of Merv posits that Job was cured “at the moment of his prayer” (Job 42:6) just as the leper was cured when Christ willed it (Mat. 8:3) and Naaman was cured of leprosy (II Kings 5:14), IŠO‘DAD, 1963, p.319.

139 This appears to have been taken from Eusebius’ *Onomastica Sacra*, I30, 33 (Idoumaia): “The place of Esau. According to the view of a certain one, this place is Ausitis, the place of Job, and others say that Arabia is the place of Job, and yet others say that the place of Sihon is the place of Job,” EUSEBIUS, 1870, p. 264. The LXX places Ausis on the borders of Idumea and Arabia. Aristeas, as cited by Polyhistor by Eusebius, also locates it between Idumea and Arabia,
which is now called T‘ilguran where his tomb is.\textsuperscript{140} This is a summary of Job.

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\textsuperscript{140} Cf. Armenian MS 5 folio, 117a of Columbia University’s Smith Collection, which contains a list of classical Armenian toponyms and their 16th-c. equivalents: “Awsit or ē t’ilkurwın” (“Ausid, which is T’ilkuran”); see RUSSELL, 1987, p. 10. T’ilkuran is located between modern Diyarbakir and Mardin.
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ADAM, EVE AND THE INCARNATION

Michael E. Stone

Attention has been drawn in recent years to the wealth of apocryphal literature extant in Armenian. Some of these works were translated into Armenian from other languages, chiefly Greek, Syriac and, at later periods, Latin. Others were created in Armenian.\(^1\) The present paper addresses one example of this latter group of works and its significance.

The wealth of Armenian creativity in the area of apocryphal literature has been little appreciated over the years. During the last two centuries major discoveries have been made in Oriental Christian languages, such as *The Book of Enoch* and *Jubilees* in Ethiopic, or *The Apocalypse of Abraham* in Old Church Slavonic. This might naturally have led scholars to search for ancient Jewish apocryphal literature in Armenian as well. Such literature was, of course, of great interest to Jews and Christians alike, casting light, as it did, on ancient Judaism and the origins of Christianity.

The search for lost apocrypha in Armenian, moreover, seemed the more promising because of the rich sources in other types of literature that were transmitted only in that language. Perhaps the most famous are those treatises of Philo of Alexandria that did not survive in the Greek Philonic corpus, and the *Chronicle* of Eusebius.\(^2\) Yet the search

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\(^2\) The translation literature in Armenian was presented in the classical work of scholarship by G. Zarbhanalian, *Ծանոցեալաքարի Արմենիական գրականություն* (Venice: Mechitarist Press, 1889). Considerable information may also be found in V. Inglisian, “Die armenische Literatur,” *Handbuch der Orientalistik 1.7*, (Leiden: Brill, 1963) 157ff. An excellent recent survey of translations from Greek into Armenian is to be found in C. Zuckerman, *A Repertory of Published Armenian Translations of Classical Texts with an Appendix by*
for lost Jewish apocrypha in Armenian has not been particularly rewarding. Instead, what has emerged as a truly noteworthy phenomenon, is the number and range of apocryphal works which were created in the Armenian language. These works evidence not merely the “reception” of biblical traditions by the Armenians, but their reformation by the Armenians and their restructuring in line with particular Armenian perceptions of the world.

Of course, the term “apocrypha” has a precise denotation only in contrast to the term “canon”. Since “apocrypha” are books which are excluded from the canon, strictly, if there is no canon there can be no apocrypha. Yet it has been shown repeatedly that the view of canon in the Armenian Church is ambiguous and is certainly not as rigorous as in the West. Moreover, even Armenian Biblical manuscripts contain many works that have no realistic claim to be part of the biblical canon. 3

The Armenians preserved and transmitted apocryphal writings which they created, not only in biblical manuscripts, but in other types of manuscripts as well. When collecting data on the Armenian apocryphal literature, we must consider the numerous Miscellanies (伊朗), Collections of Sermons (伊朗) and hagiographical compositions. The material assembled so far clearly exemplifies the rich creativity of the Armenians in the field of apocrypha. Furthermore, it illustrates the way apocryphal traditions and interpretations have penetrated many aspects of Armenian literature, religion and art.

No better example of this can be found than the very numerous Armenian works dedicated to Adam and Eve. Along with works known to have been translated from foreign languages, dozens of writings exist which were composed in Armenian and deal with the protoplasts. 4 We have included a long, previously unpublished work in this category in a forthcoming collection of Armenian apocrypha dedicated to Adam and Eve, and we wish to present some aspects of this work here. It is entitled, Adam, Eve and the Incarnation and is preserved in seventeenth century manuscripts, which provide a date ante quem.

We have edited and translated the document from three manuscripts. Since the differences between them are quite


4 The most recent list is Stone, “Translation and Creation.”
considerable, we decided to present them in a synoptic fashion, in three columns. The manuscripts are Matenadaran no. 5913 of the 17th century (M5913),5 Matenadaran no. 5571, copied in 1657-1659 in Smyrna (M5571) and Paris, arm 309, seventeenth century (P309). All three manuscripts are collections of apocryphal and homiletic works.6

The work contains two main blocks of material, one deals with Adam and Eve (§§1-43) and the second with the life of Christ (§47-69). The material dealing with the life of Christ is drawn primarily from the Gospels, though some apocryphal sources are used as well. Thus, for example, in the story of the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt we read the following incident, in the recension in P309:

§48 On the fortieth day he came to the temple. The old man Simeon was released. On a swift cloud he went to Egypt. He destroyed all the images of idols from the wall and turned them into dust. He <crushed> a temple of idols. He killed and revived the son of the ruler. From one vessel he dyed forty colors of cloth. And thence he returned to Nazareth.

This section refers to a number of apocryphal traditions. The “old man Simeon” is mentioned in various forms of the Story of the 72 Translators.7 The Flight into Egypt is related in Matt. 2:13-21, but the “swift cloud”, the destruction of the idolatrous temples and the other miracles are drawn from the Armenian version of the Infancy Gospels.8

It is, nonetheless, in the Adamic narratives that apocryphal material is particularly prominent. The treatment of Adam and his sin and its consequences is central, for it sets in motion the dynamic of salvation which is worked out in the second part of the work. This

5 Matenadaran Catalogue, vol. 2, 210 (M5913) and ibid., vol. 2, 136 (M5571).

6 Our microfilm of P306 was incomplete, only reaching §51 of the work. The synoptic text and translation will be published in our forthcoming book Armenian Apocrypha Relating to Adam and Eve (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 8-79.


8 See E. Tayec'i, Աղբական Արձանի, Արձանի Գրաքանություն (Uncanonical Books of the New Testament; Venice: Mechitarist Press, 1898), 60-70. The miracle with the cloth is to be found in the second recension of that work, ibid, 214.
explains why the extensive narrative about the proplasts in the first part of the work is complemented by the story of the life of Christ from His birth to his Crucifixion. The rest of history from Adam to Christ is covered in a couple of paragraphs (§§44-48). These are actually a mere list of God’s redemptive acts concluding (§48): “The patriarchs and prophets spoke and witnessed all this concerning Christ’s becoming man.” For, after Adam and Eve had sinned, God prophesied to them the incarnation, life and death of Christ and said (§42); “He will descend into Hell and will set you free. And he will again give you your former glory.” Christ will thus restore Adam to his primal glory.

In the form of this paragraph in M5913 we read: “And he will tear up your deed of obligation and free you and all your seed from servitude to Hell.” This recension here evokes the verse in Colossians 2:13-14 which talks of Christ on the cross erasing Adam’s deed of obligation and nailing it to the Cross. The Descent into Hades, the breaking down of its doors and the freeing of Adam and Eve is not to be found in the New Testament. However, it belongs to one of the oldest levels of Christian tradition. The erasing of the bill of obligation is from Colossians 2:14 which reads ἐξαλείψας, “erasing”. Below, we will see the source of the Armenian verb հազարելու “tear up” used by Adam, Eve and the Incarnation.

The idea that Adam incurred a bill of obligation or indebtedness through his sin is a very old Christian tradition. Thus we can read in Irenaeus (born between 140-160 and died in 202) Haer. 5.17.3: quemadmodum per lignum debitores facti sumus Deo, per lignum accipiamus nostrì debiti remissionem, that is, “Just as we became debtors of God through a tree, through a tree we receive remission of our sins.” Admittedly, in this text it is God who holds the bill of indebtedness that Adam incurred. By 200, if not before, it is Satan who holds the bill of indebtedness and this is the situation in the vast number of patristic texts. This idea, that sin incurs an indebtedness and that Christ on the Cross annihilates this indebtedness has entered Armenian elenchic literature. In a text entitled “The Cheirograph of Adam” which is known so far in three Armenian sources, the idea is set out in elenchic form. The oldest form of the text is in the Book of Questions of Vanakan vardapet (1203-1272) and two later versions of


it are preserved in 17th century manuscripts.11 This text talks of three bills of indebtedness: one incurred by Adam through breaking the divine commandment, one incurred by the Jews through transgressing their undertaking at Sinai, and one by Christians who, though they have renounced Satan at baptism, in fact sin subsequently. The text continues (J840): “There are three cheiropograms (i.e., bills of indebtedness), two the Lord rent upon the cross, that of Adam and that of the Jews. And confession rends ours and penitence, through the mercy and blood of Christ.”

This notion is very like that expressed in Homily 6 on this passage by John Chrysostom:

Seest thou how great His earnestness that the bond should be done away? To wit, we all were under sin and punishment. He Himself, through suffering punishment, did away with12 both the sin and the punishment, and He was punished on the Cross. To the Cross then He affixed it; as having power, He tore it asunder. What bond? He means either that which they said to Moses, namely, “All that God hath said will we do, and be obedient” (Ex 24:3), or if not that, this, that we owe to God obedience: or if not this, he means that the devil held possession of it, the bond which God made for Adam, saying, “In the day thou eatest of the tree, thou shalt die.” (Gen 2:17) This bond then the devil held in his possession. And Christ did not give it to us, but Himself tore it in two,13 the action of one who remits joyfully.14

It is striking that the very verses which Chrysostom adduced to characterize the bills of Adam and of the Jews were those used in the medieval Armenian texts.

Now, in certain of the texts mentioned, the word used for bill of indebtedness is the Greek χειρόγραφον which occurs only in

11 The seventeenth-century texts are published in the writer’s forthcoming book, Armenian Apocrypha Relating to Adam and Eve, 144-146 from J840 and M10200. I am indebted to Dr. Roberta Ervine who informed me about Vanakan vardapet’s use of this text.

12 The translator here has rendered two different verbs by English “do away”. The first occurrence is τοῦ ἀφαινόθηναι and the second is ἔλυσε.

13 Greek ἐσχισεν which is not in the New Testament passage.

Colossians in the whole of the Bible. There it has usually been taken in the sense of bill of indebtedness, though a number of other interpretations of it are possible.\textsuperscript{15} This Greek word is calqued into Armenian as ձեռնկար in a number of the texts. The ideas engendered by the word in Colossians, then, have numerous ramifications in patristic and other later Christian exegesis.

In \textit{Adam, Eve and the Incarnation}, however, we find another meaning of this word and a set of associations related not to the Crucifixion and Descent into Limbo, but to the Baptism of Christ. There is a story which is widespread in Greek and Oriental Christian traditions, in narratives, poetry and in artistic representation. This is the story which runs as follows:

Satan tempted and deceived Adam and Eve a second time. After they left the Garden, they experienced darkness: they lost the Paradisical light.\textsuperscript{16} Outside the Garden, the sun set and when it grew dark, they became afraid. Satan came and promised them that, if they signed a contract (χειρόγραφον or δεσμωτήρ) with him, he would bring the light. The contract that Adam and Eve signed states, with variations, that "until the unbegotten is born and the undying dies, we and our children will be subject to you". Adam and Eve having agreed to this and Satan brought a flat rock. Adam pronounced the terms of the agreement and put his hand on the rock to sign the contract so made. Satan then placed the rock in the river Jordan.\textsuperscript{17}

In most forms of the story there is an element of deception in the cheirograph itself. Satan tricks Adam and Eve\textsuperscript{18} into signing and, moreover, thinks he is deceiving and completely subjecting Adam by setting impossible conditions. Actually, however, Satan is deceived


\textsuperscript{16} Two problems are frequently mentioned as immediately besetting Adam and Eve on their expulsion. One is food and the other is darkness. In the various forms of the Legend of the Cheiograph of Adam, Satan intervenes during their attempts to solve these problems.

\textsuperscript{17} Does Adam sign by his hand-print because writing had not yet been invented? I am indebted to Beatriz Moncó for a number of acute remarks which are incorporated in this paper including this query.

\textsuperscript{18} Although Adam alone is mentioned by name in the crucial section, the verbs are all plural. Eve has a role, but Adam's is more prominent.
himself for he establishes precisely those conditions that Christ will fulfill in his incarnation and baptism. These will mark the end of the contract and of Satan's dominion.\textsuperscript{19} Of course, Adam and Eve quickly discovered that Satan had deceived them. They mourned and wept and God sent an angel to reveal to them that in fact it was Satan who had been deceived. Satan placed the cheirograph in the Jordan river which brings to mind the final stage of the drama.\textsuperscript{20} At the time of the Baptism, the waters of the Jordan turned back and revealed the stone cheirograph, sometimes

\textsuperscript{19} In some forms of the story, moreover, in making the contract Satan does not just ask for subjection, but also pronounces his "Gospel". The theme of the deception is partly analyzed by Emile Turdeau, \textit{Apocryphes slaves et roumains de l'Ancien Testament} (SVTP, 5; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 119.

\textsuperscript{20} In the \textit{Life of Adam and Eve} (Latin 6:1 (and parallels) Eve is said to stand on a stone in the Jordan river as an act of penitence. The Devil deceived her and she abandoned her penance without completing it. Intriguingly, in the \textit{Slavonic Life of Adam and Eve} 28-29, Eve is not deceived by Satan and does not abandon her penance. In the Latin, Armenian and Georgian versions, the story of the penitence is at the beginning of the book. In the Slavonic, however, the penitence narrative follows Eve's story of the fall and in this version alone, Satan's deception fails. Yet, the Slavonic also uniquely has the cheirograph story. This clearly shows that in all the versions, a second deception is needed. Slavonic has the cheirograph story with its deception and that suffices. It sets the penance deception in the middle of the book and claims that it failed. Two Greek manuscripts also have introduced the penance story where Slavonic did, but in them, Satan succeeds, and they have no cheirograph story. Clearly, therefore, in them it is secondary; regardless, the Greek has no deception at the beginning. In this context, note that \textit{Adam, Eve and the Incarnation} does not have the penitence narrative either, even though it was readily available in Armenian both in the \textit{Penitence of Adam} and in \textit{Book of Adam}. 
guarded by demonic serpents or dragons. Christ smashed the cheiograph and trampled the dragons that guarded it (Ps 74[73]:14).

This Legend, then, occurs in a number of Armenian sources. One of them is the *Expulsion of Adam from the Garden* §§17-19. This passage, which follows the search for light and fear of darkness, is a fairly straightforward presentation of the Legend. The word **αhtunwqpp** is translated “promissory note” by Lipscomb, but we would prefer to translate it “contract.”

A second, literal meaning of **αhtunwqpp**, “the

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21 The placing of the stone in the river Jordan is surely related to Jos 4:9-10. Jos 3:16 and 4:7 say that the waters of the Jordan stopped flowing when the priests carrying the Ark entered the water. In Ps 114:3 the crossings of the Red Sea and of the Jordan are drawn together as one salvific event. The crossing of the Jordan becomes a central image for Christian baptism as well.

22 The numerous serpents’ or dragons’ heads may derive from the plurals **θάραξις** and **λύειν** Ps 74 (73):13-14. In scenes of the Baptism, Christ is often depicted trampling a dragon. R. Stichel has kindly drawn my attention to an illustration of Ps. 143 in a Russian painting of the year 1584 (Moscow, Historical Museum. Uvarov cod. 2° 592, a. 1548). This composition shows both the Baptism and the Descensus ad Infernos. In the water of the Baptism under Christ’s feet are dragons and Christ on the Cross is also piercing dragons with a lance. See R. Stichel, *Die Geburt Christi in der russischen Ikonenmalerei* (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 1990) 115 and plate 69. This theme is explicit in a number of versions of the Legend, see *Adam, Eve and the Incarnation* §49. It is quite old, as was remarked by Porfir’iev (apat Turdeanu, *Apocryphes slaves*, 120) and certainly older than the eighth century date implied by its utilization by Cosmas of Maiumsk. Cosmas in a hymn for the Baptism (6 January), Ode 11, Troparion 1: Ἄδαμ τῶν φαρέντα ἀναπλάττει ἐς θεός Ἰορδάνου καὶ δρακόντων ἐκφωλεύοντων found in W. Christ et M. Paranikas, *Anthologia Graeca Carminum Christianorum* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1871) 169. An intriguing, but later, formulation of this occurs in the poem “On the Creation of the World,” by Yovhannès T’lkuranc’i. Stanza 35, relating the creation of the fifth day, states:

First of all there came into existence the marine dragon (*višap*) Leviathan,

A type of Satan, he is killed on the day of the Coming.

writing or imprint of a hand", is also present in this text. Adam put his hand on the rock, and presumably left a hand-print there. The absence of the Baptism, the logical conclusion of this myth, is explained by the limited chronological range of the narrative.

The Legend is to be found in a much fuller form in *Adam, Eve and the Incarnation*. We present the text of one version in two parts. First, the deception: After they left the garden, night fell. They were afraid and wept. We quote the Paris manuscript:

23 <They> wept and lamented until cock-crow. Then foul Satan <came to> them in the form of an angel and said, "Why were you crying; what happened to you? 24 They said, "In the midst <of the Garden> and in the midst of the light we were comforted, but by the deception of the serpent we ate of the fruit. We were put outside and we fell into darkness."

_An angel, they relate, brought them to a place of light, but it grew dark again. Satan asks them what they gave to that angel._ 27a Adam said, "What did we have, that we might give to God?" Satan tells them to give their offspring. He said, 28 "Give me your offspring and I (shall) give you the tidings of light." 29. Adam said, "If we see the light again, all my offspring will be yours." _Day comes again and Satan takes the credit saying, 31 "Now did you believe me, and were my tidings true?"_. 32 And they said, "My lord, we have believed in you. I serve you and your tidings. Through you we saw the light."

_Then the making and deposit of the contract take place._ 34 But Satan set a flat stone also before them, and said, "If you do not put your hand upon this stone and say, 'Until the unbegotten is born, until the undying dies, all my offspring will be yours,' I shall bring darkness upon you." 35 But Adam put his hand upon the flat rock and said, "Until the unbegotten is born, the undying die<<>, my seed will be your servants." And the imprint of his hands remained upon the rock.

36 That became Adam's cheirograph [here meaning 'contract'] at Satan's hand and he took and buried it in the Jordan river.

_The sun soon set, they realized that they had been deceived, and eventually God sent an angel who announced the coming of Christ to them. Parts of the angel's speech in §42, were cited above. Adam hears the promise of release from his bondage and rejoiced._
What is the function served by this story as we find it? It states part of its function explicitly, to explain the subjection of Adam and his descendants to Satan. Subjection to Satan and its converse, release from the Satanic bonds, is one of the languages in which the Armenian (and other Christian) cultures talked about salvation. According to this text, then, what Adam lost at the expulsion was immortality, "Instead of this immortal plant, thistles shall grow for you," (based on Gen 3:18, in section 18) and the paradisical food. The search for food is a major theme in the primary Adam books, most notably the Armenian Penitence of Adam. It is expressed in Adam, Eve and the Incarnation as well, where it is resolved immediately after the expulsion by the angel instructing them in agriculture.

However, in Adam, Eve and the Incarnation, the fall from Eden did not serve to explain the subjection to Satan from which Christ redeemed the Christian believers. It was the story of the ḫwamqpp that performed that role. Just as the revelation of Christ’s power and redemption was evident both in the Baptism and in the Crucifixion, almost in a two-stage process, so in the reverse order there were two deceptions. The redemption from the first deception came in the Descensus ad Infernos, thus bracketing the period from Adam’s fall to Adam’s release from Hell. Within that overall structure, however, was an inner pair composed of deception and Baptism. This is, after all the birth of the unbegotten and the death of the undying.

In §49, after the Flight into Egypt and the return to Nazareth, we find the second half of the Legend of the Cheirograph.

49 ... At thirty years of age, he came to the river Jordan and entered the river. The waters turned backwards. The cheirograph, the flat stone, was uncovered and the Dragon serpent appeared.

The Dragon is the viškp, the term used for the “great fish” in Gen 1:21, but also designating the mythical dragons of old Armenia. The terms come together in Ps. 74 (73):14 which talks about the smashing of the heads of the dragons in the water, and uses the Armenian words հակեան.

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24 The most recent survey of the Adam books is by M.E. Stone, A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve (Early Judaism and Its Literature, 3; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992). M.E. Stone and G.A. Anderson published synoptic texts of the “Primary” Adam books in A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve (Early Judaism and Its Literature, 5; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994). The “Primary Adam Books” are the Apocalypse of Moses (Greek) and the parallel Latin, Armenian, Georgian, Slavonic and fragmentary Coptic works.
The "Dragon serpent" is Satan or Satan's representative. In a form of the Legend of the Cheiropgrah current in Old Church Slavonic, the stone of the cheiropgrah has serpents or serpents' heads which guard it. A credulous Russian pilgrim Arseni from Mt. Athos reports seeing a stone in the Jordan river on which were Christ's footstep and serpents' heads. The text continues as follows:

And our Lord Christ, with his foot having trampled the dragon, and he trampled the cheiropgrah, the flat rock, and destroyed (it). <From> the heavens light shone. Where <in> it was torn,25 in the form of a dove the Holy Spirit descended. A paternal voice testified, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." He commanded the waters in their course, and by the Baptist he <was> baptized and he went forth.

The order of events is intriguing. In line with the verse in Psalm 74 (73), Christ trampled the dragon. He then trampled the cheiropgrah and, subsequently the Spirit descended as a dove and the divine voice pronounced his Sonship. The narrative then tells Christ's miracles, his death, resurrection, and ascension. At the very end, in section 64, the constitutive nature of the Legend of the Cheiropgrah for this story is made explicit:

For this is how the pronouncement was fulfilled, that the unborn was born and the undying died and was revived and released us from the captivity of Satan.

In the Paris manuscript this is followed by one further statement: "65 Those who do not confess Christ God become captives of Satan and <are punished> in Hell."

Clearly then, it is precisely the Legend of the Cheiropgrah that provides the structure around which the whole of this document is organized. It is the Second Fall of the Protoplasts rather than the First Fall that drives the economy of salvation.

As was mentioned above, Adam, Eve and the Incarnation is only one of a number of Armenian texts in which the Legend of the Cheiropgrah plays a considerable role. Moreover, the Legend turns up, during the second millennium C.E., in a number of other Christian cultures of the Orient and it is still alive in popular cultures at the end of the twentieth century. We shall mention a selection of the attestations of it.

The Cretan writer Georgios Chumnos (ca. 1500) wrote a long Poem on Genesis and Exodus. F.H. Marshall published an English

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25 Compare the word χειρογραφον in note 13 above.
translation of the poem and in it we find a full-blown form of the first part of the Legend of the Cheirograph.26 This is not the only form of the Legend known in Greek. In 1928 George Megas recorded an oral form of it as told by a peasant in Thrace, and provided a German translation.27 It is completely night and Satan promises to bring the day and night if Adam permits him to put his seal on him.28 He tells Adam to hold out his hand and Satan makes a pen from his nail and uses the blood from the hollow of his palm for ink. This story clearly preserves the contractual meaning of the word χειρόγραφον and also offers another aetiological interpretation. Satan literally writes the contract with Adam’s hand, with its nail and its blood. Others have recorded similar stories from elsewhere in the Greek peninsula.29

The Legend is also known in Old Church Slavonic expansions in the Slavonic version on the Life of Adam and Eve.30 Moreover, it appears in manuscripts and frescos from Moldavia and Romania in a very prominent form, particularly from the sixteenth century on. An


28 Is this parallel to the idea of the cross as a seal? This is commonplace, and newly baptized Christians were regularly sealed with a cross made with the myron. So Satan seals Adam just as the new Christian is sealed with the Cross. The Armenian Adam, Eve and the Incarnation also refers to a “Gospel” or “tidings” of Satan, again extending this parallelism.

29 Leopold Kreutzenbacher, Teufelsbünde, 45-46 also gives a different modern Greek version from that known to Megas. He recorded it in the Peloponnesus ca. 1930, and it is closer in form to the Armenian texts mentioned above.

30 This material has been collected and re-edited by A. Kulik and will be incorporated into a more exhaustive study of the Legend of the Cheirograph that the writer is preparing. On the Slavonic Life of Adam and Eve in general see Stone, History of the Literature, 30-36.
example of a fresco of Adam signing the cheirograph is given below, taken from a drawing from a church at Vorone (1547). It shows Adam seated, writing the cheirograph on a scroll on his knees, while Satan looks on.\textsuperscript{31} Other examples could be adduced. Turdeau in particular has pointed to popular stories and songs current in Moldavia and Romania in which the Legend of the Cheirograph is present.\textsuperscript{32} We cannot yet explain the particular fascination with this theme in sixteenth-century Moldavia and Romania.\textsuperscript{33}

The Bible and traditions associated with it played a major role in the Armenian tradition. Apocryphal developments of biblical themes pervaded Armenian literature and culture. Adam and Eve took a very prominent place in this process, as the large number of apocryphal works relating to them witnesses. The legend of the contract signed by Adam became very important in Armenian literature. This Legend, which bears many of the marks of popular literature, circulated in other oriental Christian cultures, in Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and Crete, to mention the most prominent. It occurs in Armenian as well, and in some sources it provides a key to the understanding of the process of Fall and Redemption which is the history of salvation. This is well exemplified by the way it functions in the Adamic apocryphon, *Adam, Eve and the Incarnation*.

\textsuperscript{31} P. Henry, *Les Eglises de la Moldavie du Nord des origines à la fin du XVIe siècle* (Paris: Leroux, 1930), 246, from Vorone. Henry gives a drawing of the scene. The Legend is discussed by Henry there, with some confusion of the different senses of cheirograph. A further discussion and description of the Vorone frescos may be seen in Kreutzenbacher, *Teufelsbünde*, 42ff. He refers also to P. Cormanescu, *Rumänische Kunstschatze. Vorone. Fresken aus dem 15. und 16. Jahrhundert* (Bukarest: 1959) [non vidi]. This scene is preceded by one of Adam plowing, see Kreutzenbacher, *Teufelsbünde*, 43. See also note 7 above.

\textsuperscript{32} See note 27 above.

\textsuperscript{33} Nor have we yet examined Armenian monuments, literary, manuscript or architectural, from this area to ascertain whether the story, which was current in their environment, actually influenced them, Stone, *Adam, Eve and the Incarnation*, page 12.

David Bundy

Grigor Narekac‘i is a regular feature of any Armenian literature. His works are preserved in large numbers of manuscripts; they have influenced generations of Armenian scholars. His mystical theology has nurtured the piety of generations of Armenian believers. Nersēs Lambronac‘i described him as “an angel clothed with a human body,”¹ a designation also found in the Armenian Synaxary.² His Book of Prayers early on was referred to simply by the geographical designation, “Narek,”³ a designation which continues to today. Despite his popularity as an author, Grigor has not elicited an extensive bibliography of secondary literature which reflects his oeuvre. Part of that reticence is no doubt due to the number of unresolved critical problems regarding the author and individual works.⁴

Grigor is of interest as an interpreter of the Bible. His works radiate an intimate and synthetic knowledge of the biblical text. He is one of the authors of the period whose scholarly base is well known. He had read extensively in the school traditions of late antiquity, having digested the work of both Greek and Syriac writers as well as the Armenian intellectual tradition. He was aware of the work of Irenaeus, Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, the Cappadocians, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, Cyril of Alexandria, Ephrem, Aphraates, Philoxenos and others. Grigor knew of the “scholarly” tradition of reflecting on Christian faith and the Bible. He was recognized as an intellectual as well as a mystic by his contemporaries.

He wrote in a variety of genres. As such Grigor becomes an interesting candidate for a case study when one compares the

² Le Synaxaire Arménien de Ter Israël, 21, p. 101.
³ Ibid., p. 101.
⁴ For extensive bibliography and a list of works attributed to Grigor Narekac‘i, see Thomson 1995, pp. 128-133.
interpretative approaches used by an author who writes in a genre other than those of commentaries and homilies. The question is this: Does the scholarly awareness of the author influence or limit the presentation of biblical ideas in a popular form? The Book of Prayers has been chosen as a case study. The prayers were obviously intended to be used at public occasions as well as in the private reflection of the readers. Genesis has been chosen as a focus for this essay because of the importance of the volume in the Book of Prayers. In some ways it might have been better to select Grigor’s use of the Song of Songs as a case study, but the critical questions raised by K’iparian about the authenticity of the Commentary on the Song of Songs attributed to Grigor Narekac’i have not been sufficiently answered and to do so will require a study beyond the scope of an essay.5

The influence of genre on the articulation of ideas and selection of words, phrases and idiomatic expressions used has not been given adequate attention in the analysis of the Christian histories of ideas. In most analyses, the words, once written, are treated in a flat fashion with all articulations being given equal weight and all equally revelatory of the thought and character of the author. For example, discussions of Ephrem of Syria’s theological perspective has not generally been nuanced in light of the differences of speaking/writing in apologetic treatises/genres, poetry, homilies, hymns, or theological essays. The same is true for the study of Armenian authors. The choice of the Book of Prayers for this study does not indicate a preference for these texts as more or less important than the others for the study of Grigor. Indeed, every item of available knowledge of Grigor Narekac’i must be brought into play for a definitive analysis of the “total” Grigor. This essay makes no pretense of a global analysis or claims with regard to

5 K’iparian 1961, pp. 1-10, argued, based on internal criteria and the inconsistency of the colophons, that the Commentary was written by a different Grigor. However, no one has yet undertaken a thorough comparison with the other works of Grigor. If the Commentary was indeed written in 977 C.E., then it could well demonstrate significant differences with later works and any comparative study could be inconclusive. The analysis of sources used by the author of the Commentary by Thomson, 1983, pp. 453-496, has demonstrated the erudition of the author. However, the question of authenticity is beyond the scope of this essay. My tentative conclusion, based on an initial analysis of content, literary style, vocabulary and grammatical construction, is that the Commentary on the Song of Songs is authentic. See also Mistrih 1967.
Grigor, but focuses on one limited multi-unit collected text in a single genre.

This essay will therefore explore the appropriation of Genesis by Grigor in the *Book of Prayers*. The method will be to discuss briefly Grigor of Narek and his work, examine selected passages of Genesis as appropriated as sources for the *Book of Prayers* indicating possible relationships to the larger exegetical traditions, and then proffer conclusions and caveats about the enterprise undertaken in this essay.

**Grigor Narekac'ì: His Life and Work**

While the corpus of Grigor Narekac'ì's works is not precisely defined and defended according to scholarly criteria, there are other critical problems. Even the dates of Grigor's life are problematic. The hagiographical tradition would establish his dates as 951-1003. Based on a reading of the manuscript colophons, Kechichian has argued that the dates should be placed about 944-1010. 6 This conclusion has been accepted by some other scholars although many still prefer the traditional dates. 7 Grigor was the youngest son of Khosrov the Great (died c. 965 C.E.). After the early death of their mother, Grigor and his next oldest sibling Hovhannès were conferred to the Monastery of Narek where their maternal uncle was the abbot. It was in this monastery that Grigor received his classical and theological formation. Mecerian has argued that Narek was especially closely related intellectually to the Byzantine tradition, a stance which had significant theological and political ramifications. 8 It was also at Narek that Grigor took vows and was ordained a priest. In that community he would function for all or most of his life as a teacher, scholar and priest.

It would appear that his intense mysticism and the theological emphases which evolved from that perspective caused him significant political problems. He was accused of being heterodox, a charge which he attempted to disprove in his hymns. The accusation was that he was involved in the heresy of a sect which resembled and/or drew upon

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7 See however Ananian 1966, who appears to prefer the traditional dating.
8 Mecerian 1954.
Manichaeism. Hints of this conflict pervade the Book of Prayers. Even the author of the entry in the Armenian Synaxary felt it important to respond to the charges. The chief issues were: 1. the radical opposition of flesh and spirit ("good" and "evil"); and, 2. the implications of that anthropological/psychological analysis for the divinity of Christ and the nature of the humanity of Christ. In many of the items included in the Book of Prayers, Grigor attempted to hold to both the radical differentiation of flesh and spirit and a traditional Christian view of the incarnation. The severity of Grigor's notion of sin, its pervasiveness and the inability of humans to address the problem would appear to lay a base (among others) for the intense and personal apocalypticism of the periods of Cilician Armenia and the Mongol invasions. It is no accident that, as evidenced by the manuscript tradition, Grigor Narekac'ı was much used and appreciated in Cilician Armenia.

By the time of his death, Grigor had already achieved a national reputation for erudition and personal holiness. He is celebrated in the Armenian Synaxary on 27 February:

On this day is the commemoration of Saint Grigor Narekac'ı ... He was raised and instructed in holiness and in wisdom by the Vardapet Anania, abbot of the convent of Narek, a village in Sıteni ... He wrote panegyrics, sermons and hymns full of rhetoric and profound thoughts ... He composed the admirable Book of Prayers which bears the name of the village of Narek ... [H]e worked with all his zeal to reform the institutions of the church ... After leading an austere life agreeable to God, as an angel in a body, he rejoined his beloved Christ.

Reading Genesis in the Book of Prayers

The Book of Prayers was completed in 1002. It would appear that the prayers were composed in a relatively short time because of the

10 Le Synaxaire Arménien de Ter Israël, pp. 100-102.
12 Le Synaxaire Arménien de Ter Israël, pp. 100-102.
homogeneity of style, vocabulary, and thought. However, we have little information about the actual process of composition. The prayers were published in a number of editions but the most accessible edition is that published in Buenos Aires and reprinted in Delmar, New York.¹⁴ The only major translation into a modern western European language is that of Kechichian.¹⁵ Only a few modern scholarly essays have been published about the Book of Prayers; Fredrich Heyer has examined the creedral prayers in the prayers¹⁶ and written about the understanding of the Bible in the collection.¹⁷ James Russell presented carefully defined studies on Prayer 19 and the roles of heroic figures.¹⁸ The selected readings of Genesis discussed below were identified with assistance of the indexes of several editions and translations, as well as many readings of the text of the Book of Prayers with the Armenian Bible as edited by Zohrapian close at hand. However, the use of biblical images in Grigor Narekac‘i is extremely subtle and complex and there is no pretension to completeness of identification and/or discussion of citations in this examination of selected readings of Genesis in the Book of Prayers.


Grigor was preoccupied with the creation of light as reported in the Genesis narrative as a prefiguration (although the type is never made explicit) of the restoration or salvation of humans by the “light” of Christ.¹⁹ The image of light being taken away from humans as a consequence of sin and the subsequent darkness being illumined by Christ reflect a radically dualistic tradition, an expression of the problem of “good and evil” which would perhaps have caused some of his thoughtful contemporaries to think of Manichaeism. It was perhaps this kind of dualism which, at least in part, led to the charges of heresy mentioned above.

¹⁹ Prayers 18, 78, 93 and 94. Note that all references to the Book of Prayers in the notes or text are to Grigor Narekac‘i, 1948.
However, in other contexts, Grigor Narekac'ì was willing to draw upon other traditions of exegesis in order to effectively use the biblical narrative in his texts. In Prayer 49, the narrative of creation and the resultant world, as Grigor saw them, were interpreted as evidence for the power of God over all things. In other prayers (Prayers 33 and 75) the waters of creation (Genesis 1:3) and the Spirit of God over those waters are used as metaphors for baptism. These appropriations of the biblical text were common currency in the homiletic traditions on Genesis. There was no concern in the Book of Prayers for any of the traditional technical concerns of the creation. Most of the traditional theological questions focusing on the Genesis text proper were ignored. The concern of Grigor was the availability of metaphors to discuss the fundamental problem of humanity as he perceived it: the problem of sin and restoration of humans to the image of God.


The phrase “image of God” with direct reference to Genesis 1:26-27 is used at least twelve times in the Book of Prayers. The excursus in Prayer 5 demonstrated that Grigor was aware of the traditions of interpretation shared by the Alexandrian theologians Clement and Origen, as well as the Cappadocians and Ephrem, inter alia. In this Prayer he summarized and appropriated the wider early Christian tradition:

You have decorated me with reason, you have made me resplendent by your breadth, in Spirit you have enriched me, in Wisdom you have caused me to believe, in Prudence you have confirmed me. You have distinguished me from the animal creatures; you have given me both an intelligent mind and freedom of the will.

In the remainder of the citations of Genesis 1:26-27, Grigor eschewed the precise interpretations of the earlier writers. There was no effort to identify particular characteristics which make up that “image” such as rationality, language or similar limiting concepts. Instead, it is clear that the concept of the “image” of God was expanded by Grigor Narekac'ì to include a wide variety of nuances. Indeed, one could argue that “image” came to refer to the totality of God and “good.” The concern was not historical.

The central theological question for Grigor related to “image” was the process of salvation; that is the removal of the tarnish from the “image of God” in human kind and the assimilation back to the divine, or theosis. Humans were first ennobled and exalted, although created
from the filthy earth, by the gift of the image of God (Prayer 35), but that gift was corrupted through sin in every person. In Prayer 19, he spoke of the "image of God" touched by sin which awaits the restoration by the grace of God. Grigor prayed, "with an exact reform, correct the image which reflects yours... inundate it with the divine, living, incorruptible, celestial light (Prayer 40)." He noted (Prayer 46) that because of the "image of God" in humans, these beings became "worthy of eternal blame." It was the "Arrogant One" (Satan) who led humans into a life of sin (Hymn 49). Therefore, his prayer turned to the isolation of that image from sin: "Let not iniquity at present continue to reign over me, who am the august image of celestial royalty," O God of all light (Prayer 49). Interestingly, the "image of God" may be broken and/or removed (as the "light of creation") from humans because of their sin (Prayers 78 and 88). However, through the grace of God, the "image of God," or as Grigor expressed it, "my own face," can be restored to the divine lustre if that grace is appropriated by the penitent believer as the mirror is made to shine through the anointing with oil (Prayer 93). It was the "image of God" in humans which causes God to seek and assist humans in their struggle against sin (Prayer 5).

The interpretation of Genesis 1:26-27 in these passages, even Prayer 5, made common cause with the mystics rather than with the "scholarly" interpreters. There was no reflection of any knowledge, which he demonstrably had, of the debates about the nature of God and the conflicts about theosis within the Greek and Syriac churches known as the Origenist controversy, inter alia.20 Without doubt, this understanding of theosis contributed to the accusations of heresy mentioned above.


The interpretation and appropriation of Genesis 2:7 by Grigor in the Book of Prayers demonstrate again his awareness of, and conformity to the earlier interpretative traditions. Once again, the link is to the early Alexandrian and Cappadocian tradition with parallels in Ephrem of Syria, although all of these would have hesitated to use the concept of sinful humans being deprived of the elemental divine Spirit within the individuals, as does Grigor in Prayers 78 and 88.

It was by the breath of God that the image of God was established in humans (Prayer 49); it was this breathing into humans that places the humans between the angels and the animals (Prayer 86). It was the

20 For a good introduction to the literature, personalities and issues, but with minimal attention to the trends in Armenia, see Clark 1992.
“breath of your Spirit” which can be taken away from the one habitually conformed to a life of sin (Prayer 78). In Prayers 5, 82, and 93 the breath of God was linked with a phrase from Genesis 2:7. Here the exegesis of the story of the fig tree provided by Grigor had to do with the sin of the individual and the lack of spiritual productivity. He noted that as the gardener the “Lord” planted and cared for the tree; similarly in the Genesis narrative humans were formed and cared for by the hand of the Lord. These humans had become unproductive and the prayer was that, unlike the case of the fruit trees, God would take a pedagogical approach to human sin and that humans would respond promptly with good fruit (Prayer 81).


The account in Genesis 3:1-16 was a favorite of Christians from the earliest records. The woman was always blamed for the sinful nature of the human race and the common consensus was that the serpent got what it deserved.\(^{21}\) The approach of Grigor Narekac’i in the Book of Prayers was quite different. Remarkably, as far as I can tell, the only time Eve was mentioned by name in the Prayers (how I wish I had the text on disk so that I could search the text) was in Prayer 80 where the author prayed that his own life might be turned “to joy from anxiety,” and that “the pain of Eve might be healed.” Otherwise, the emphasis was on the sin of a generic human as paradigmatic of, or exemplary of, the decisions which all individuals, including the author, have made in their abandonment of God.\(^{22}\) Grigor was not interested in blaming any particular ‘historical’ (as he would have understood it) figure. He was insistent that each individual person recognize that all are sinful, from the beginning, and that each individual must find a remedy to the original sin of the individual. The focus was personal, mystical and pietistic.

In two prayers Grigor appropriated traditional Christian interpretations. In Prayer 66, the “tree” is seen as parallel to the cross of Christ. Using an interpretation at least as old as the Shepherd of Hermas, the fruit of the “tree of Life” is used as a metaphor of the “Church” in Prayer 75:

\(^{21}\) Gregory mentioned the biblical punishment of the serpent in Prayer 36 but as a metaphor to contrast the lot of the serpent over against humans, who can, through Christ, participate in the resurrection.

\(^{22}\) Prayers 35, 46, 71, 75, 90, 92 and 93.
This venerable Queen, the inanimate Church, gives life and reigns over death; following the model of the fruit destined for Adam, she may indeed be tasted. And although inanimate, she gives perfection and reestablishes again the glorious and luminous image.

5. Genesis 3:19. From the Dust to Dust.

This biblical text was often combined with Genesis 2:7 to reflect on the human origins (Prayers 40), the present human conditions (Prayer 73) and destiny (Prayer 93). Grigor asserted that the earth from which humans were formed was unworkable material as well as heavy and dirty, and that the elemental material of human constitution dragged humans toward the opposite of doing God’s will (Prayer 86). Here the emphasis was on the negative qualities of the matter from which humans were created. It was clear to Grigor Narekae’i that matter and the undesirable aspects of that substance had an influence on human inability to resist the “Arrogant One” and remain associated with God.


Once again, the interest of Grigor was not historical. He recalled the biblical narrative of the exclusion from the Garden of Paradise and the prohibition for humans against the “Tree of Life.” He affirmed (Prayer 18):

Oh you (Christ) alone are able to save. Please establish again in me the reasonable faculty of exemplary conduct which lightens the weight of the structure of my body and leads me toward the tree of the fruit which gives life.

Humans were chased from this eternal life because of sin (Prayer 24). Only a life led in accordance with the biblical injunctions can, through the grace and mediation of Christ, lead sinners toward an embrace of the original human possibilities (Prayer 93). He insisted that it is the restoration of this access to the “tree of life,” for which all the creation longs (Prayer 93).

While the appropriation of this passage was traditional within Christianity, there was remarkably little preoccupation with the technical aspects of the story as one would find in the commentary tradition and frequently in the homiletic traditions. Instead, the focus remained fixed on the implications for the piety of the Christian believer and for that person’s approach to living.
In Prayer 80, Grigor appropriated the elements of the narrative to describe the illustrious nature of Mary, "Holy Mother of God," at the beginning of a long litany of attributes:

An angel born of humans; a cherub clothed in visible flesh; Queen of Heaven. Limpid as the air; pure as the light; immaculate as the faithful image of the morning star at the highest point of its course.

O (Mary), you who are more sacred than the inaccessible Holy of Holies; (You are) the place of blessed promise, living Eden, Tree of eternal Life, guarded on all sides by the flaming sword...

The traditions about Mary reflected in this litany correspond to the Byzantine traditions, as would perhaps be expected of a scholar/teacher from Narek. Grigor’s understanding of Mary has been studied extensively with attention to this text.23 Suffice it to say that his presentation of the phenomenon of Mary is an amalgamation of traditional Armenian and Chalcedonian/Byzantine images. Again, the central concern of Grigor is the process of salvation.


The biblical account of the universal flood was popular with early Christian theologians and commentators.24 The report by the author of Genesis of the ruminations of God, after the devastation of the deluge, about the naturally sinful nature of humanity and the decision of the Divine not to punish every living thing because of human sin was a favorite text of Grigor. He used it at least eight times in the Book of Prayers. This narrative is the only passage from the Pentateuch from which Grigor made significant quotations (two quotes) of the biblical text.

The first quotation was in Prayer 15:

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23 See especially Mecerian 1954. For nuances to Mecerian's approach, see Tallon, 1956.
24 See, for example, the citations and allusions to Gen 8 gathered in Biblia Patristica.
There is, according to the Law-giver, that which appears in
the field of our nature, which causes all manner of sins to
grow, and which generates thorns, according to the
infallible testimony: "The Spirit of the human is pre-
occupied with the pursuit of evil from their youth (Genesis
8:21)."

This text was reinforced (also in Prayer 15) in a metaphor-
enhancing move by linking this text to I John 1:10. This enabled Grigor
Narekac'ì to strengthen the argument and forestall protests to his and/or
the Genesis assertions:

John, Evangelist of the Word of Life ... has confirmed that
your truth ... was completely justified: "If we say that we
do not have sin in us, then we make Him a liar (I John
1:10). For your blessed Word is confirmed ... by my
straying and by my terrible injustices.

The importance of these texts for Grigor was their unambiguous
affirmations of universal sinful nature. The same was indicated in
Prayers 17, 55, 85 and 86. In Prayer 79, he commented on the
"unreflective propensity" of humans "toward evil," while alluding to
this portion of Genesis 8:21. Significantly, there was no interest in the
way in which evil was or is transferred within the human race. He was
concerned only with the present reality of "original sin" and its
universality, not in the theory itself.

The second citation (Prayer 60) had to do with the portion of the
biblical narrative in which God promised not to destroy all humanity.
The prayer began with numerous citations from the Psalms of passages
predicting terrible consequences for those who sin (including broken
teeth! [Ps 3:8]). Grigor then wondered aloud (so to speak) how he could
pray these Psalms in worship or devotion given his understanding of
the human condition in general, and of his own catastrophic sinfulness
in particular. He averred as to how these consequences are merited
albeit undesirable. The only hopeful indications he could find were in
the Genesis 8:21 passage and in the biblical story of the reprieve of
Nineveh as recounted in the Jonah narrative. Finally, he considered
how he could pray for Christ to withhold judgment and to remember
when, "thinking with your heart you said, 'I will never curse the earth
again because of the acts of humans (Genesis 8:21)." This was echoed
in Prayer 85, where the Noah/Ark narrative was recounted and
concluded with the prayer that Grigor and "pure spirits," like the riders
in the Ark, might be spared despite the punishment meted out on sinful
humanity. He promised to bring with him the "spiritual presents" made
possible by the grace of Christ and to request that he (Grigor/Reader) might be inseparably united to Christ forever.


The text of Gen 18:14, cited with similar intent in Lk 1:37, was cited frequently. Interestingly, despite his fascination with Mary, Grigor made nothing of that juxtaposition of references. In Prayers 40, 41, 49, 53, 70, 74, 82, 86 and 89, Gen 18:14 and/or Lk 1:37 was/were recited as an affirmation. Thus, for example, in Prayer 40 Grigor wrote:

You are, after all, capable of everything; and you can do all things, thanks to your infinite greatness and unlimited wisdom.

The larger context was the issue of the forgiveness of sin. In each of the Prayers where this verse was cited, the subject evolved into the need for forgiveness or "healing of souls." The affirmation of the omnipotence of God was a warrant for the possibility of forgiveness of sinful humanity.


The biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah was used in a variety of ways by Grigor. In Prayer 53, the reference was used as part of a soliloquy about the power of God: "You are able ... to render the intelligent one dumb and to transform one into a statue." In Prayer 68, it was an element of a lament about the author's lack of ability to focus, due to fear and guilt, on prayer to God above when it was from above that the fire fell upon the cities and the judgment came upon Lot's wife with devastating results. This was as close as Grigor came to questioning the Christian understanding of the processes of prayer and confession due to the wrathful responses of God to human sin as recorded in the Hebrew Bible. How can one pray, he fretted, when one expects the punishment to rain down? How can one expect forgiveness when one is so conscious of one's own sinfulness? Prayer 36 included reference to the narrative of Genesis 19 in a list of punishments not meted out on the author and his sinful compatriots. However, as Grigor affirmed in Prayer 10, he considered himself and all other humans worthy of the punishment accorded Sodom because of their guilty souls.

Perhaps the most interesting use of the passage is found in Prayer 63. Here, Grigor suggested that the grace of God has in many instances
moderated God’s anger at human sinfulness: “the fire has been turned into rain.” The comfort and/or ontological nuances to be drawn from the allusion to Lot’s wife in this context, however, remain obscure. The figure of Lot’s wife was posited as being firmly in an intermediate state of punishment because of her sin:

The woman who turned away from the company of the just you hold in a double element; two substances in the same statute: she was truly with the innocent; she was not truly with the guilty ones.

Genesis 19 provided Grigor with a multidimensional metaphor for sin and the results of sin. In the genre of the prayers it did not need an exegesis or an explanation. In each instance, the historical narrative of Genesis 19 is understood at a simple narrative level and every allusion to that text is made in light of the theological concerns in discussion.


The ladder in the vision of Jacob reported in Gen 28 provided Grigor with a metaphor for ascent to God and/or heaven. It constituted for him a link between the material Bethel (Prayer 92) and the door to the eternal home (Prayer 75). In Prayer 32, he exulted of Christ: “door of glory, path of truth, the ladder which leads up to heaven.” Finally, in Prayer 92, Grigor alluded to Jacob’s ladder, suggesting that “it leads to the sky and cannot be used but by the saints.” It was clearly an image which gives support to the developmental spirituality of the author. It was not developed as it might well have been if there were more of an attraction to some of the radical developmental spiritualities, such as those of Evagrius or Pseudo-Dionysius. It was a cautious use of the metaphor of which the Cappadocians and Ephrem might have approved. Christ arranged the forgiveness of the sinner and provided a path to theosis.

Conclusion

As a reader of Genesis Grigor Narekaci was more concerned with the immediate personal theological and pastoral issues than with the earlier Greek, Armenian and Syriac interpretative traditions which he demonstrably knew so well. These influenced but did not limit his presentation and analysis. When the explanation from one or more of those sources was useful in his argument about human sinfulness and restoration to the “image of God,” it was used, but inconspicuously so.
There was no effort to prove his erudition by naming his predecessors as authorities. Instead, the biblical narrative was used and organized to present and defend his anthropology, hamartiology and understanding of sanctification or theosis.

The implications of his analysis of human nature for the issues related to the divinity of Christ (the negative value of human flesh and matter) were not explicitly addressed, although an occasional aside suggests an awareness that there were sensitivities about his position. The interpretative focus of Grigor on the universality, completeness and demonstrability of human sinfulness, and the possibility of the "image of God" being restored and/or refurbished (here he was inconsistent) with the possibility of complete reunification with Christ (theosis) dominated the presentation of the Prayers. It also dominated the selection of scriptures. It is important to note that he did not use, as far as I am able to ascertain, the more nuanced narratives of Genesis 38-50. Significant for contemporary concerns, he does not blame Eve or women in general for the sinfulness of the human race; the issues are also dealt with without resorting to any anti-Jewish rhetoric.

Therefore, the use of the biblical material was personal. As an author Grigor personalized the sinfulness and ambiguities of restoration to himself. Other writers he knew, such as Ephrem, Chrysostom, and Cyril, usually spoke of the sinfulness of the audience; some, like the Cappadocians, often spoke of sin, restoration and theosis in the abstract as in the Homily "On Perfection" of Gregory of Nyssa. Grigor Narekaci'i, perhaps because of the personalization, was able to use the biblical texts as authoritative and paradigmatic without recourse to clear footnotes to the "scholarly" and homiletic traditions. Also, this personalization allowed him to avoid the historical and ethnic concerns which had generally dominated the interpretation of those traditions.

A brief comment about Grigor's intellectual tradition as reflected in the Book of Prayers (and I would make no claims beyond that text in this context) is in order. As I have read and reread the prayers, I have come to see Grigor Narekaci'i in the developmental spiritual tradition of Clement of Alexandria (cf. the Commentary on the Song of Songs), Ephrem (the Hymns, with caveats), and the Cappadocians Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa and Basil. His restrained dualism and his asceticism can be better interpreted, it could be argued, within this context than within the more radical Evagrian and Pseudo-Dionysian traditions. This location of Grigor, at least as he was writing this text and the apologetic treatises, would be congruent, I believe, with the way he was read in the later Armenian "scholarly" traditions. There is also no reflection in the Book of Prayers of the theological tradition of Athanasius and the other "creedalists."
The use of the genre of "prayers" to present his ideas allowed Grigor Narekac'i remarkable freedom of theological reflection and biblical exegesis. This freedom to appropriate images and metaphors, and to interpret narratives as paradigms of personal oddsey without acknowledging limitations imposed by historical context or the tradition of using this material allowed him to radically personalize the biblical text and to use that personlization as paradigmatic for the development of spirituality. The resultant interpretations were strong independent articulations, congruent with, but not subservient to the earlier "mainstream" traditions of developmental spirituality. The scholar who (probably) composed the scholarly Commentary on the Song of Songs had found another genre and his own theological voice. The role of genre in the development and transmission of theological thought deserves further study.

Finally, as this essay suggests, Grigor Narekac'i was a sophisticated theologian, writer, and artisan. It is to be hoped that eventually a more extensive study of his exegesis and of his place in the Armenian/Byzantine intellectual traditions might be more closely established. An important step in this direction will be the translations and analyses of J.-P. Mahe and James Russell.

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THE ARMENIAN COMMENTARY ON GENESIS
ATTRIBUTED TO EPHREM THE SYRIAN:
GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND
CONSIDERATIONS

Edward G. Mathews

Ephrem, the fourth-century deacon of Edessa and Nisibis, was unquestionably the greatest and most influential writer in the history of the Syriac-speaking church. He was a prolific ecclesiastical hymnographer and biblical commentator.\(^2\) Even before his death, Ephrem the Syrian enjoyed great renown far beyond the borders of his native Mesopotamia. Called the “Harp of the Holy Spirit” by Theodoret of Cyr\(^3\) he was lauded by other such diverse authors of the fifth century as Palladius,\(^4\) Sozomen,\(^5\) Epiphanius,\(^6\) and Jerome.\(^7\)

That Ephrem is of paramount importance for the literature and the theology of the early Christian Near East is widely recognized. Large numbers of works are attributed to him in nearly every early Christian

\(^1\) This paper comprises a brief resumé of the research done for my dissertation, MATHEWS, 1996, directed by Prof. Nina G. Garsoian; the interested reader will find here much fuller arguments and demonstrations of the material found in this paper. Documentation of an earlier stage of my research is to appear as MATHEWS, Armenian Version.


\(^3\) THEODORET, 1979, p. 190.

\(^4\) PALLADIUS, 1974, pp. 206-208.


\(^6\) Epiphanius speaks of “Ephrem the wise man of the Syrians;” see EPIPHANIUS, 1985, p. 285.

\(^7\) JEROME, 1896, p. 87.
language: his native Syriac as well as Greek, Armenian, Latin, Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopic, Slavonic, Georgian, and Syro-Palestinian. In addition to the simple fact of this great volume of translation activity, Ephrem has also the perhaps unique distinction of having three large and nearly distinct corpora attributed to him: the Syriac, the Greek, and the Armenian. As an example of the size of these corpora the Greek works attributed to Ephrem, according to the catalogue of M. Geerard, are so numerous that even in the native Greek patristic tradition only the works of John Chrysostom exceed them. The corpus of Armenian works that survive under the name of Ephrem the Syrian, Arm., Ep'rem Asori, is nearly as substantial as the Greek corpus: to date, there are at least eight printed volumes of works

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8 For a general resumé of these translations, see BECK / HEMMERDINGER-ILIADOU/KIRCHMEYER, 1960, and also GEERARD, 1974.
11 These works have not been edited or studied; see BLANCHARD, 1993.
12 See, for example, CAQUOT, 1988.
13 See VAILLANT, 1958. Many of these works have been edited in BOJKOVSKY, 1984-1987. For a study of this corpus, see OGREN, 1989. THOMSON, 1984, has shown the inauthenticity of two works from this collection.
14 See OUTTIER, Recueils arméniens, Recueils géorgiens.
15 See especially BECK / HEMMERDINGER-ILIADOU/KIRCHMEYER, 1960.
16 For the entire corpus of Ephrem, one must consult BECK / HEMMERDINGER-ILIADOU/KIRCHMEYER, 1960. For the Syriac works, see MELKI, 1983, and BROCK, 1990.
17 In addition to BECK / HEMMERDINGER-ILIADOU/KIRCHMEYER, 1960, see, especially, DE HALLEUX, 1983. These works have been catalogued in GEERARD, 1974.
18 For the Armenian corpus of Ephrem, we have only the outdated works of ZARP'ANALEAN, 1889, and TOROSSIAN, 1925. BECK/HEMMERDINGER-ILIADOU/KIRCHMEYER, 1960, pp. 819-822, is the most recent, but brief. See now MATHEWS, Literary Corpus; this constitutes an earlier version of chapter I of my dissertation, cited above.
in addition to a number of short works scattered in various journals. And there remains a large number of works still to be edited and many more that still await cataloguing. \(^{19}\) The importance of these works for the history of Armenian literature is universally recognized. \(^{20}\) Ter Petrosian, in his recent work on ancient Armenian translations, refers to the translations of Ephrem’s works, with only some measure of hyperbole, as “the greatest contributions to the field of patristics.” \(^{21}\)

It is, in fact, only in Armenian that a large cycle of commentaries has survived under the name of Ephrem; there are none in the Greek corpus and only one complete and two incomplete commentaries have survived in Syriac. Those already edited include commentaries on the Pentateuch and the historical books of the Old Testament, as well as commentaries on the Epistles of Paul and on the Diatessaron from the New Testament. \(^{22}\) In other words, with the exception of the short book of Ruth, there exist commentaries attributed to Ephrem on the present first fourteen books of the Armenian Bible. \(^{23}\) A very incomplete perusal of manuscript catalogues reveals that there exist at least fragments from commentaries attributed to Ephrem on Job, \(^ {24}\) the Psalms, \(^ {25}\) Isaiah, \(^ {26}\) Ezekiel, \(^ {27}\) the Twelve Prophets, \(^ {28}\) and Danie'?

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\(^ {19}\) The present writer is presently engaged in a project to catalog all the works, edited and unedited, that survive in Armenian under the name of Ephrem the Syrian.

\(^ {20}\) See, for example, ZARP‘ANALEAN, 1889, and TOROSSIAN, 1925.


\(^ {22}\) These works have been printed in the first two volumes of EPHREM, 1836.

\(^ {23}\) EPHREM, 1836, vol. I. It is interesting to note the absence here of any commentary on the book of Job, which generally followed immediately the Pentateuch in the old canons. On the remains of such a commentary, see the following note.

\(^ {24}\) This work survives in many manuscripts. See VARDANEAN, 1912; RENOUX, 1975/1976 [he lists more than fifty manuscripts]. See now TER-PETROSYAN, 1994. He has argued that Eznik knew of this work and therefore the Commentary on Job must have been translated in the first decades of the fifth century.

\(^ {25}\) Br. Lib. Add. 19279, is a catena on the Psalms culled from the works of Ephrem, Athanasius, Basil, Daniel, Dionysius, Epiphanius and John Chrysostom. See CONYBEARE, 1913, pp. 188-189.
There has been so very little study of any of these works that, despite the acclaimed importance of Ephrem, this corpus is for all intents and purposes uncharted territory.\textsuperscript{30} Comments in various other secondary works amount to little beyond reiterating the "fact" that these Armenian versions are translations or epitomes of the Syriac.\textsuperscript{31}

In beginning a study in this Armenian corpus of commentaries attributed to Ephrem, I have started with the \textit{Commentary on Genesis} as it is the first commentary of the collection but also, and more importantly, because it is the only work in the entire Armenian corpus with a complete counterpart in the original Syriac.

\textbf{Manuscripts}

The text of the Armenian \textit{Commentary on Genesis} was published by the Venice Mekhitarist Fathers in 1836. For its time, this edition by the Mekhitarists was indeed exemplary.\textsuperscript{32} This edition, found in Vol. I of

\begin{itemize}
  \item Ms. Matenadaran 4825, is a 208 page manuscript that contains only a commentary by Géorg Skewrac‘i on Isaiah which contains many fragments from a commentary on Isaiah attributed to Ephrem. See also BUNDY, 1984, pp. 401-402.
  \item Ms. Matenadaran 5906, is a manuscript of the fourteenth century that contains commentary on Ezekiel culled from the commentaries of Ephrem, E\'sayi Nčec‘i, and Cyril of Alexandria.
  \item Ms. Matenadaran 4042, is a small manuscript of 48 pages that contains only a commentary on the Twelve Prophets attributed to Ephrem.
  \item Vat. Arm. 14, contains a \textit{catena} on Daniel taken from the works of Ephrem and Hippolytus. See TISSERANT, 1927, p. 245. Ms. Matenadaran 3606, is a commentary by Vardan Arewelec‘i on Daniel which contains many fragments from works attributed to Ephrem, Hippolytus and Step‘annos (Siwnec‘i?).
  \item See, for example, the few works cited in THOMSON, 1995, pp. 46-48, and our discussion in c. I of the above cited dissertation.
  \item See, for example, ZARP’ANALEAN, 1889, p. 444; OUTFIER, 1984, pp. 589-590; and BUNDY, 1990, pp. 235-236.
  \item OUTFIER, 1984, p. 589: "On ne peut s'empêcher de penser que la remarquable édition des Pères Méchitaristes de Venise était trop en avance sur son temps." See also DJANACHIAN, 1969, pp. 403-409.
\end{itemize}
The Collected Works of St. Ephrem, was done on the basis of a single manuscript found in the Venice Mekhitarian Library.\textsuperscript{33}

Ms. Venice 873—dated Armenian era ԶԵԹ, = 1299 AD, written in a very clear bolorgir script by the scribe Step'annos, and contains the Armenian commentaries of Genesis through Chronicles attributed to Ephrem the Syrian, Eusebius of Emesa Commentary on the Octateuch, and a catena on Leviticus.\textsuperscript{34} It was long thought that this manuscript was the sole surviving manuscript that contains these important works of Ephrem.\textsuperscript{35} This claim has been repeated in the little subsequent discussion of this text.\textsuperscript{36}

With the recent appearance of several complete catalogues of Armenian manuscripts, a little help from my friends, and a little digging on my own, I have been able to locate three other manuscripts which contain not only the Commentary on Genesis, but all the commentaries on Genesis through Chronicles attributed to Ephrem.

Ms. Vienna 231—This manuscript is an exact replication of Venice 873, copied by the Venice Mekhitarian Fathers for the Mekhitarian library in Vienna.

Ms. Bzommar 437—dated Armenian era ԲԵԹ, = 1602/3 AD, written in a very clear notorgir script. The text of the Commentary on Genesis found in this text is clearly derivided from an exemplar similar to Ms. Venice 873. While it does preserve some more correct spellings, it differs from Ms. Venice 873, primarily in lacunae and abbreviations. The longer lacunae can all be easily attributable to parablepsis due to homoioteleuton.

Ms. Venice 873—dated second half of the twelfth century and written, according to the colophon at the end of the manuscript, in Halbat by the scribe Grigor, during the tenure of Basil.\textsuperscript{37} This


\textsuperscript{34} For a fuller description of this manuscript, see ZANOLLI, 1938; EUSEBIUS, 1980, pp. հե-եր; LEHMANN, 1984, p. 142. See also the description found on p. 198-199, of our dissertation, cited above.

\textsuperscript{35} EPHREM, 1836, vol. I., introduction, p. 6: ՏՅԵԹ ԵԹԵԹ ԶԵԹԹԵԹ ՔՈՒԹԵԹ ԵԶԵԹ ԵԶԵԹ, ԵԶԵԹ:\textsuperscript{ș} ԶԵԹԵԹ ԶԵԹԵԹԵԹ:\textsuperscript{ș} ԶԵԹԵԹ ԶԵԹԵԹԵԹ.

\textsuperscript{36} OUTTIER, 1984, p. 590: "un unique manuscript, bolorgir".

\textsuperscript{37} In a marginal gloss, one of the Mekhitarian fathers has written "therefore, this manuscript was written in the second half of the twelfth century for Basil, the abbot of the monastery of Halbat, was a contemporary of Nersès Shnorhali." See HIPPOLYTUS, 1935, pp. 17-18.

**Internal Characteristics**

Scholars to date have generally maintained two traditional positions *vis à vis* the Armenian commentaries attributed to Ephrem the Syrian: first, that these commentaries are indeed translations from his genuine Syriac commentaries, or at least epitomes thereof; and secondly, that these commentaries and a number of other works were translated in the initial period of intensive Armenian translation carried out in the period 430-450, by the disciples of Mesrop/Maštoc'.

With regard to the respective commentaries on Genesis, one need not compare them in any great depth before being compelled to state that the traditional assertion that the Armenian Commentary on Genesis is a translation of the Syriac Commentary on Genesis is not entirely accurate. Even a cursory reading of these two commentaries makes it manifest that they diverge greatly in structure, style, language, content, themes and treatment of subject. There are also noticeable differences in the biblical text. While there indeed similarities between the two commentaries, even the occasional verbal correspondence, these suggest transmission within a tradition of interpretation rather than direct dependency. In fact, one finds more direct dependency on Ephrem's Syriac Commentary on Genesis in such a work as the Commentary on Genesis of Išo'dad of Merw than one finds between these two commentaries.

The structure of the Syriac Commentary on Genesis is certainly that of a commentary. Ephrem, like most Genesis commentators, spends a great deal of time on the early chapters; nearly one half of the Commentary is devoted to the accounts of creation, the fall of Adam and Eve, and the account of Noah and the ark. The prefixed table of contents, which was probably original, and the constant refrain, "After

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38 Išo'dad of Merw, 1950.
Moses spoke of . . . , he then said,” both make it quite evident that Ephrem intentionally wrote the work to be a running commentary on the book of Genesis.

Despite the clear commentary structure, however, the style of the Syriac Commentary on Genesis often verges on kunstprosa as Ephrem unfolds the theological drama of the pericope under treatment. The reader is often led to forget that he is actually reading a commentary.39 The style of the Armenian Commentary on Genesis appears to be much more the style of a commentary—set out in a lemma and comment format. For example, “On the fourth day, the luminaries of heaven”; “On the fifth day, the beasts and the birds”; and “On the sixth day, Adam”. While there are certainly lengthy comments and exegeses, one is much more aware of reading a biblical commentary.

It has already been demonstrated that the Syriac Commentary on Genesis has a sustained polemic against Bardaisan, as well as against Mani and Marcion, unquestionably a genuine Ephremic concern.40 The Armenian Commentary on Genesis, on the other hand, shows no trace of any such polemic against Bardaisan, or against Mani or Marcion, Ephrem’s other theological enemies.41 The Syriac Commentary also contains numerous readings, themes and ideas that can also be found in Ephrem’s genuine Syriac works. While these are not necessarily unique to Ephrem, they are representative of his exegesis.

A striking feature of the Armenian Commentary on Genesis is the extensive textual comparisons. The Syriac Commentary on Genesis makes no reference to another biblical version beside the text being commented on, which in the main follows very closely, though not always exactly, that of the Peshitta; the small number of variants generally follow Targumic readings or interpretations. Only in one single instance, and then only if one accepts an emendation, is there even one single reference to another text, here a Hebrew text.42

The Armenian Commentary on Genesis, on the other hand, refers to a Hebrew text explicitly 53 times, as well as another six probable

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39 For a somewhat fuller treatment, see the introduction to our translation in MATHEWS/AMAR, 1994, pp. 59-66.
41 For the extent of Ephrem’s polemic against these figures see, among others, EPHREM, 1912, 1921; BECK, 1957; DRIJVERS, 1966, pp. 127-165; BECK, 1974, 1976, Die Hyle, Bardaisan, Ephræms Polemik.
42 JANSM, 1972, p. 60, and discussion in MATHEWS, Armenian Version.
times. It also makes two references to a Greek version, which is most probably meant to be the LXX, though only one of these two citations actually represents the text as found in the LXX; the other does not match any text that I can discover. There are also two references each to the version of Theodotion and to that of Symmachus, while to the version of Aquila there is only a single reference.

This extensive reference to other biblical versions cannot be easily used for dating the Armenian Commentary on Genesis. Such interest in other biblical versions is clearly manifest in the Nestorian commentaries that have survived from the ninth and tenth centuries, but is already a feature in the Commentary on the Octateuch of Eusebius of Emesa (c.300 - c. 359). What is of great interest here is that many of these citations match neither the text indicated nor any other known biblical version. Even in those few places where Eusebius of Emesa and the Armenian Commentary on Genesis claim to be citing the same verse of the same text, the texts do not match. For example, at Genesis 4:4, both Eusebius and the Armenian Commentary on Genesis cite different versions of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion:

Eusebius

Armenian Commentary on Genesis

43 EUSEBIUS, 1980.

44 The precise nature of these citations is not clear; as these citations do not match any surviving text, it seems most probable that there was a version of the Hexapla available to the author/translator that has not survived.


Theodotion says, [God] distinguished and separated the choicest [offerings] from the unworthy one.

and Symmachus [says], The Lord God rejoiced over Abel. If you become pleasing, I will grant pardon, but if not, sin is at the door.

Aquila says, The Lord God again inclined Himself to Abel and to his offerings.47

As an example of the difference in treatment of subject, we might compare the Armenian Commentary on Genesis to the Syriac Commentary on Genesis concerning the identification of the “wind/spirit of God” in Gen 1:2. As is no doubt well known, the Syriac Commentary on Genesis identifies the ܐܬܘܢ as the natural wind. This interpretation, which was also held by Theodore of Mopsuestia, was known explicitly as that held by Mar Ephrem in nearly all subsequent Syriac commentators. Those who explicitly name Ephrem as the holder of this opinion include Mošē Bar Kēphā,48 Išō’dad of Merw,49 Išō’ bar Nun50 and Bar Hebraeus.51 Not only are these the greatest of the Syriac commentators, they span both parties of the Syriac church, Nestorian and Monophysite. In fact, three of these four just named commentators even chided Severus of Antioch for having claimed that Ephrem identified the “wind of God” with the Holy Spirit.52

Ephrem, in the Syriac Commentary on Genesis, bases his argument on the simple observation that when the wind hovered over the waters on the second day of creation there was nothing created, whereas on the fifth day when the waters brought forth all sorts of creatures in the sea and in the sky, there is no mention of any spirit. He goes on to point out that the word ܐܬܘܢ is an ambiguous word; it is also used in a bad sense,

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47 At Genesis 24:63, the Armenian Commentary on Genesis and Eusebius of Emesa cite two different versions of the Hebrew text.


49 IŠŌ’DAD OF MERW, 1950, p. 17.

50 IŠO BAR NUN, 1962, p. 23.

51 BARHEBRAEUS, 1931, pp. 6-7.

as in describing the evil spirit that consumed Saul in the Peshitta version of I Sam 16.14. 53

The Armenian Commentary on Genesis on the other hand states, just as explicitly, "[Moses] is indicating by those things the mystery of the font of baptism, which will bestow sanctification by the compassion of the brooding of the Holy Spirit. Since he is speaking of the creative activity of God, by this [Moses] is making clear that he is not at all [speaking] about a creature with him which is brooding upon the waters, but rather about the Holy Spirit." 54

Thus, the traditional presumption that this Commentary on Genesis is indeed an Armenian translation or paraphrase of the Syriac Commentary on Genesis composed by Ephrem the Syrian can no

53 See Ephrem, Syriac Commentary on Genesis, I.7, in EPHREM, 1950, 11.

54 This is exactly contrary to Ephrem, Syriac Commentary on Genesis, I.7, which makes it equally clear that Moses is speaking of the natural wind and not the Holy Spirit. The Syriac word ₡ܡكور, as does the Hebrew cognate רוח, can mean either "wind" or "spirit". For a discussion of this wind/spirit in Ephrem's genuine hymns, see KRONHOLM, 1978, pp. 43-44. Targum Onkelos also interprets this as the natural wind; see ABERBACH/GROSSFELD, 1982, p. 21, n.4. See also Ephrem, Hymns Against Heresies L.8, where "the wind hovers over the water ₡ܡكور — "naturally". In the Hymns on Epiphany VIII.15, Ephrem seems to maintain the opposite position, but see E. Beck's remarks on the authenticity of these hymns in BECK, 1959, pp. viii-xi. Nestorian tradition also, following Theodore of Mopsuestia, almost unanimously rejects that this wind could be the Holy Spirit. See JANSMA, 1958, pp. 104-106. Diodore of Tarsus seems to leave the question open; see DECONINCK, 1912, pp. 92-93, fr. 4, while Theodoret of Cyrthus opts also for this spirit being the natural wind; see THEODORET, 1979, pp. 12-13. Didymus the Blind held that in the literal sense this wind was indeed the natural wind, but that in the spiritual sense the Holy Spirit is indicated; see DIDYMUS, 1976, p. 40. For general overview, see ALEXANDRE, 1988, pp. 83-85.

In any case, it is certain that the Ephrem who wrote the Syriac Commentary on Genesis cannot be that "certain Syrian" from whom Basil got his information on the meaning behind the Greek word ἐπεφέρετο, pace BASIL, 1968, p. 169, n. 3. This long-debated question of Basil's source has finally been resolved in favor of Eusebius of Emesa, through the intermediary of Diodore of Tarsus. See POUCHET, 1986, and VAN ROMPAY, 1992.
longer be maintained. There is, however, little doubt that, at least in core, this work is a translation from a Syriac exemplar. The texts cited from Genesis accord for the most part with the Peshitta. For example, Genesis 1:1 reads: «[b] αὐρωπώς ζωομναίσκω Τπνριωδ
gsομονβεβην βεβην κρημον βεβην κ τι ζωομναίσκω βεβην κρημον».[55] This use of ζωομναίσκω βεβην, not found in this verse in any other Armenian version or commentary that I can discover,[56] clearly reflects the Syriac particle  객체, used to designate the direct objects, “heaven” and “earth”, in the Peshitta, and then in nearly every later Syriac, version. The particle 객체 does mark the direct object in Syriac,[57] but Ephrem treats it not as the direct object marker, but as the construct of the noun ¿¿, ‘substance.’ This is clear from Ephrem’s glossing this particle as ¿¿¿¿, ‘substance’. [58] Ephrem was followed in this interpretation by a number of later commentators.[59] The use of the Armenian phrase ำ/१

[56] Cf. GENESIS, 1985, p. 145. Not even Eusebius of Emesa, who was well acquainted with the Syriac version of the Bible, makes any mention of or even allusion to, this Syriac reading.
[57] This is particularly true of the Palestinian dialect of Syriac; the normal particular for Syriac is ¿. This 객체 is the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew ¿¿, simply a particle to designate the direct object.
[58] See EPHREM, 1950, p. 8: In the beginning God created [갏] the heavens and [갏] the earth, that is, the substance [¿¿¿¿] of the heavens and the substance [¿¿¿¿] of the earth. So let no one think that there is anything allegorical in the works of the six days. No one can rightly say that the things that pertain to these days were symbolic, nor can one say that they were meaningless names or that other things were symbolized for us by their names. Rather, let us know in just what manner heaven and earth were created in the beginning. They were truly heaven and earth. There was no other thing signified by the names ‘heaven’ and ‘earth’. The rest of the works and things made that followed were not meaningless significations either, for the substances of their natures correspond to what their names signify.” English translation from MATTHEWS/AMAR, 1994, p. 74.
[59] See EPHREM, 1950, p. 8. For those later commentators, see note ad loc., in our translation of this text in our dissertation, cited above.
reflects the common Syriac interpretation of the ambiguous expression $\textit{\text{בָּהָר}}$. This Syriac phrase, like its Hebrew cognate, can be translated either in a geographical sense “to the east” or in a temporal sense “previously”. It is very common in Syriac exegesis to interpret this phrase in the latter, temporal sense.\footnote{60}

The explanations of names found in the Armenian Commentary on Genesis are generally based on the Syriac forms of the name. For instance, in referring to Satan the text says, “Even his very name bears witness concerning his going astray in his transgressions”,\footnote{62} taking it from the Syriac root $\textit{\text{מָלַע}}$ ‘to go astray’.\footnote{63} Similarly, the name of the patriarch Reuben is interpreted as “God is great”, which can only come from the Syriac form of his name, $\textit{\text{מָלַע}}$, interpreting it as a compound of $\textit{\text{מָלַע}},$ ‘great,’ and $\textit{\text{גָּד}},$ ‘God’.\footnote{64} In addition to these explanations of names, one finds a number of further grammatical peculiarities easily explained by an underlying Syriac text, as well as such common Syriac expressions as $\textit{\text{מָלַע}}$ $\textit{\text{מָלַע}}$, which more than likely reflect an underlying Syriac text.\footnote{65} The lemma text generally accords with the Peshitta, though there is occasionally a reading that does not match precisely. There are also many quotations from other parts of the Bible that are only found in the Peshitta.

There is then almost no doubt that the Armenian Commentary on Genesis was translated from a Syriac version. Even if one wants to argue that the explanations of the names were either traditional or borrowed via oral means, the other factors enumerated weigh far too heavily in favor of a Syriac original. But, in addition to these factors there are also two curious phrases that can only be explained by an underlying Syriac text. The first occurs in the context of Adam and Eve’s eating from the tree of life. The text reads “[Adam and Eve] loved [the tree] as Amnon [did Tamar] before they transgressed the commandment, and then they turned and hated it as Amnon [hated

\footnote{60} EPHREM, 1836, vol. I, p. 9.
\footnote{61} For example, see EPHREM, 1950, p. 28. English translation in MATHEWS/AMAR; 1994, p. 99, and n. 120, for discussion.
\footnote{62} EPHREM, 1836, vol. I, p. 13
\footnote{63} A similar explanation is found already in Eznik; see EZNIK, 1959, p. 436 [28]. See discussion in CUENDET, 1929, p. 16.
\footnote{64} EPHREM, 1836, vol. I, p. 95. The English form of the name, Reuben, stems from the Hebrew spelling, $\textit{\text{רֵעָן}}$; LXX also reads $\textit{\text{πούβην}}$.
\footnote{65} EPHREM, 1836, vol. I, p. 23.
Tamar] after they committed their sin." 66 This last expression “committed their sin” is my rendering of the almost impossible phrase ὁνήματι έν πᾶσιν which means literally “the worship/service of sins.” The expression makes sense if one sees the underlying Syriac as ἱκανοποιέσθαι. This Syriac verb carries the double meaning of “to do, commit” as well as “to serve, worship.”

The other occurs in the citation of Genesis 8:21. In the place of the normal “for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth,” the Armenian Commentary on Genesis has the incomprehensible phrase “the knot of every man is fixed for evil from his youth.” 67 This otherwise inexplicable phrase is easily explained when one notices that the Armenian translator has apparently read the Syriac word ܐܫܡܝ as ܐܫܡ, missing the initial yod which is easy to do in manuscripts, and construed the word as a participial form coming from the Syriac root ܐܫܡ, “to tie, to bind.” The translator thus had to translate using the Armenian word համար.

Thus, it seems ineluctable that this Armenian Commentary on Genesis was indeed translated from a Syriac exemplar. Nevertheless, one finds in the Armenian Commentary on Genesis an occasional biblical citation that is taken verbatim from the Armenian Bible as edited by Zohrabian. 68 There is also an interesting passage found in this Armenian Commentary on Genesis that it was the wife of Tubal, and not Tubal Cain, who was the first to fashion pipes. A little further on we also find the following interesting bit of exegesis: “The wife of Tubal herself said to the son of Lamech that she killed Cain, for the ‘wife of Tubal’ is translated from the Hebrew language as ‘the slayer of Cain’.” This particular explanation must have arisen in an Armenian context, caused by a confusion between the name Cain, Arm. Համար, and the Armenian word for wife, Համար. Thus, there seems to be sufficient evidence to postulate that in its final redaction, the Armenian Commentary on Genesis is an Armenian, not a Syrian, work.

68 These citations are clearly designated as such in the notes to the translation in our dissertation.
External Considerations

B. Outtier and D. Bundy have both noted the existence of certain parallels between the Armenian Commentary on Genesis and certain passages in the Catena on Genesis compiled c. 861, by Severus of Edessa. It is thus necessary to turn our attention to this collection of material. This Catena material is badly in need of a critical text, and no serious study of its text, contents or transmission has yet been done. While the following comments will not serve as such a study, some preliminary investigation must be done in order to evaluate its importance for the Armenian Commentary on Genesis. This particular collection was compiled shortly before AD 861, by Severus, bishop of Edessa. The only edited text of this work is found in the old, unreliable edition of Assemani, on the basis of a single manuscript, Ms. Syr. Vat. 103, which is the only complete witness to this work that has survived. On the surface, this collection contains running commentary on each book of the Bible taken from the writings of Ephrem and of Jacob of Edessa.

While both Outtier and Bundy have noted the importance of this Genesis Catena material for a study of the Armenian Commentary on Genesis, Outtier makes reference only to the edition of Assemani. Bundy, however, notes that there is another copy in Br. Lib. Add. 12144, and maintains that one ought also to compare "the Syriac of Mingana 147." This manuscript contains, in fact, a different recension of the Severan Catena material just described. Since there exist even further witnesses to this Catena material, it will be worth a quick review of the present state of affairs in regard to this material.

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69 A study of some of this material is presently being undertaken by Mr. Dirk Kruksheer as a Ph.D. Dissertation at the University of Leiden.
71 EPHREM, 1732-1743, vols I-II. The Genesis material is in vol. I. 116-193.
72 MINGANA, 1933, vol. I. pp. 335-340. This manuscript contains the Jacob of Edessa's Scholia on the Octateuch (see further below), the Severian Catena material on Genesis, fragments from Ephrem's Commentary on Exodus, and a Commentary on the Psalms attributed to Daniel of Salah, but which Mingana assigns to Daniel of Tellé.
A look at the manuscripts that contain this work reveals that, while there are no two texts that agree exactly, there appear to be two primary recensions of this Catena material. The first recension is that of Vat. Ms. 103, in which one finds material only attributed to Ephrem and to Jacob of Edessa. In Ms. Harv. Syr. 116, which represents the same recension, the Genesis Catena material is found between the Syriac Commentaries on Genesis and Exodus of Ephrem.73

Ms. Ming. Syr. 147 contains the Scholia of Jacob of Edessa on the Octateuch, followed by the Catena material on Genesis only.74 This manuscript, however, contains a later recension of the Catena material. While there are passages of the earlier recension that are absent from this recension and other noticeable variants, this later recension is distinctly characterized by the addition of substantial sections of material attributed to such authors as Athanasius, Basil, Cyril of Alexandria, and Severus of Antioch. This same material is also found, in the same order, in Ms. Harv. Syr. 123,75 although here one finds even additional material from such writers as Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus.76

Ms. Br. Lib. Add. 12144, already noted by Bundy, was originally a complete witness to the Severan Catena but in fact now contains mere fragments of the Genesis material.77 This manuscript, dated by the colophon to 1081, originally consisted of 35 quires, but the first twelve are lost and many others torn or otherwise damaged. Thus, only three folios of this manuscript from the Genesis material now survive; the remaining leaves of the manuscript then recommence in the middle of the book of Kings. In the Genesis material, only two citations can be found, to Ephrem and to John Chrysostom, both on f. 3r, and damage renders microfilm copy of these folios extremely difficult to read. It is

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73 GOSHEN-GOTTSTEIN, 1979, p. 85.
74 MINGANA, 1933, vol. I. pp. 335-340. The Genesis Catena material is found on ff. 41r-75r.
75 GOSHEN-GOTTSTEIN, 1979, p. 87-88. The Genesis Catena material is found on ff. 64r-115v.
76 I have not made a critical edition of this material so further divergences and unattributed material might also surface.
77 WRIGHT, 1870-1872, pp. 908-914. This manuscript was, according to the colophon, written in Egypt, AD 1081. Unfortunately, the first twelve quires have been lost. Judging from Wright’s description this recension is a later one as it cites many more fathers than do the other recensions. The remaining fragments of the Genesis material are found on ff. 1-4.
thus difficult to determine whether this manuscript contains this earlier recension or the later recension, though the citation of John Chrysostom suggests that we are very possibly dealing with still another recension of this work. Thus, the manuscript evidence suggests that we are dealing with a very fluid composition with which one ought to exercise great care when utilizing.

From the meager comments made by previous scholars, it appears that the presumption is that the Catena of Severus, at least in its early recension as witnessed by Assemani's edition, is a simple cut and paste job of pieces of Ephrem's Syriac Commentary on Genesis and pieces from the exegetical works of Jacob of Edessa. A careful reading of the text, however, suggests that this compilation is rather a tradition of interpretation in and of itself which occasionally quotes small portions of these works.

As witnessed already by the articles of Outtier and Bundy, comparison of these two texts only leads to an impasse in determining which Commentary on Genesis is the genuine Ephrem. However, unknown to both these scholars, there does exist, albeit in unedited form, an intermediary text that allows us out of this impasse: the Scholia of Jacob of Edessa. Of this Scholia of Jacob of Edessa, only a few small fragments have previously been known. These fragments were published in 1864, with English translation, by G. Phillips, from two incomplete and damaged ninth-century manuscripts, Mss. Br. Lib. Add. 14483 and 17193. Versions of Jacob of Edessa's Scholia, that appear to be complete for the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Job, Joshua, and Judges, have survived in Ms. Ming. Syr. 147, and Ms. Harv. Syr. 123.

Thus, now that we have this work at our disposal, it can be clearly demonstrated that the Catena of Severus is heavily dependent on the Scholia of Jacob of Edessa. There is a heavy unmistakable verbal correspondence between these two texts, throughout those sections designated "of Jacob" as well as those designated "of Ephrem". Thus, it can be seen that these marginal designations, "of Jacob" and "of Ephrem", are meaningless in terms of textual attribution. It is largely these same passages that serve as the sources of those found in the Armenian Commentary on Genesis attributed to Ephrem the Syrian.

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80 GOSHEN-GOTTSTEIN, 1979, p. 87-88. The Genesis Scholia material is found on ff. 5r-26r.
For reasons of space the following two examples will have to suffice as demonstration:

1. Armenian Commentary on Genesis

*In the beginning God established the substance of the heavens and the substance of the earth.* For this reason Moses undertook, through the revelation of the Spirit, to set down the writing of truth against the error of idolatry [of those] who consider creatures to be the creator, and he began to teach that there is a Creator and He exists and is the establisher of this world, and [that] God, who is essence, is one and is capable of making everything from nothing. In this manner Moses said, in order to cause belief that is fitting, that all things are creatures and, in order to make clear that the false gods, which were considered in the minds of their worshippers to exist in their own subsistence, are creatures.  

Scholia:

*In the beginning God created the substance of the heavens and the substance of the earth.* Because the error of idolatry had taken hold of mankind such that they were considering as gods weak created things that had no mind to understand, the blessed Moses undertook through a revelation of the spirit to set down at the beginning of his composition that there is a creator of creatures who was able by a word to bring [His] work to perfection.  

81 EPHREM, 1836, vol. I. p. 1:  

82 Harvard Syr. Ms. 123, f. 5r:
Catena:

In the beginning God created the substance of the heavens and the substance of the earth... Because men were held by the error of idolatry such that they were considering created things and idols to be gods... Moses undertook through a revelation of the spirit to set down at the beginning of his composition that there is a creator of creatures and that He who is God is one and not many according to the foolishness of the pagans.83

2. Armenian Commentary on Genesis

On the second day the waters that were above the firmament were separated from the waters that were below the firmament. [Moses] fell silent and ceased to speak concerning the beginning of the establishment of the waters, since [God] had prepared [them] so that from [the waters] He might stretch out the firmament between them,—He made them the firmament. On the second day [God] stretched out and unfurled [the firmament] like a tent, like a pavilion, in order to show that [the Spirit] had not brooded unnecessarily, but that by its brooding it solidified the liquid nature of [the waters]. For just as this vessel, which was made like a tent, holds up on its diaphragm those waters whose nature is incapable of standing without an arched vault, for a side that is ruined by its collapse, to there the [waters] quickly and abundantly flow. Now because Moses wrote, [God] separated the waters that were above the firmament, he made clear that it was not by their natures that they remain firm, but [rather] that by [God's] authority they remained suspended, and by His wonderous command the [waters] hold themselves up, according to that which says, [God] established the earth upon the waters, for He separated the waters that were above the firmament and the waters that were below the firmament. And the waters of the seas bear witness to this, for they go up to the heavens, as it is written, and they reach out as far as the sand,

83 EPHREM, 1732, p. 116:
as is manifest, and they were made tranquil by means of [His] command, as what was said testifies.  

Scholia:

Then, on the second day, [God] divided the waters above the firmament from the waters below. Even here the Holy Spirit binds up the fluidity of the water and from them stretches out the firmament like a tent or like a vault. And behold how at the command and at the will of the creator [the waters] were suspended and stood. And as for these waters that were said to have gathered into one place and appeared as dry land on the third day, two things are to be understood about it: either those seas were expanded to receive the waters as in the days of the flood they were swelled by the waters or for this reason the waters of the sea were created salty, so that they might swallow up the

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84 EPHREM, 1836, vol. I. p. 3-4:
sweetness of the other waters which were not stagnant as we have seen that they receive from the beginning until now.  

*Catena:*

On the second day, God said, “Let there be a firmament and let it divide the waters above the heavens and the waters below.” He called this air above our head ‘the firmament’. This is visible because of its length and its breadth, and it is in the form of a veil and is enclosed between the earth and that upper and fiery place and is therefore named ‘the firmament.’ Here, it renders its service. Also, because it has a dense nature.

It is to be noted that the second of these examples, the *Catena* passage cited is marked in all the recensions as being “of Jacob,” and not “of Ephrem”.

Thus, the “Ephrem” known to the translator/compiler of the Armenian *Commentary on Genesis* is not the Ephrem who wrote the *Syriac Commentary on Genesis*, which we possess, and which was known to later Syriac commentators, and which nearly all scholars recognize as genuine. The Armenian *Commentary on Genesis* reflects, therefore, an “Ephrem” that is hardly any more recognizable in terms of the original text; it rather represents an exegetical tradition based on the *Scholia* and other exegetical traditions connected with Jacob of Edessa.

85 Harvard Syr. Ms. 123, f. 5v:

86 EPHREME, 1732, p. 118:
Further indications show that the Armenian Commentary on Genesis was familiar with and made use of the later recension of the Catena material. It is unclear whether the writer/compiler of the Armenian Commentary on Genesis had a written version of this later redaction of the Catena at hand or simply was working in a common exegetical tradition.

Thus, the Armenian Commentary on Genesis, while in the main a translation from Syriac, is not the work of Ephrem, and clearly cannot date from the fifth century. It has almost nothing in common with the genuine Syriac Commentary on Genesis of Ephrem, differing in structure, language and themes. It also shares nearly nothing with the poetical works of St. Ephrem and the Syriac tradition when it can be adduced as witness verifies that it is the Syriac Commentary on Genesis that is known in that tradition. A comparison with the Scholia of Jacob of Edessa and the Catena material compiled by Severus of Edessa, shows that the Armenian Commentary on Genesis is heavily and, in many places, verbally dependent on these texts.

Historical Circumstances

When we turn to look for historical sources to aid us in determing a more precise date for the Armenian Commentary on Genesis, these sources are not really forthcoming. The simple attestation that Ephrem wrote any commentaries at all is found in only two late, tendentious sources. The manifest dependency of the Armenian Commentary on Genesis on the works of Jacob of Edessa strongly suggests a Monophysite milieu. Armenia was long connected with the Monophysite way of thinking and certain factions at least preferred its extreme manifestation of Julianism, known as Aphthartodocetism. Several letters in the Girkē T'hōcē,87 attest to the enduring and systematic condemnation of Severus of Antioch and the so-called 'moderate' form of Monophysitism. The writings of Yovhannes Ojneci,88 T'ēodoros K'rt'enawor,89 Xosrovik T'argmanič,90 and others attest to a lively dispute between various Monophysite parties on Armenian soil. It is fairly well known that a council of Manazkert,

88 YOVHANNES OJNEC'I, 1953, pp. 61-97.
89 YOVHANNES OJNEC'I, 1953, pp. 171-183.
90 XOSROVIK T'ARGMANIČ, 1899.
referred to by a number of historians, was convened in 726, by the great Armenian Kat’olikos Yovhannēs Oj nec‘i, also known as the Philosopher (Arm., թագավոր), in order to quiet this dispute and come to some sort of union with the Syrian Church. This council was attended by a number of Armenian bishops and six Syrian bishops to try to effect a union between the two churches, and particularly, to find some common ground whereby each might suppress the more radical branch of Monophysitism as practiced by followers of Julian of Halicarnassus, who maintained the incorruptibility of the body of Christ. The Armenian historians, Step‘annos Asolik⁹¹, Samuēl Anec‘i,⁹² Step‘annos Orbelian,⁹³ and Kirakos Ganjakec‘i,⁹⁴ do little more than mention that it took place. Yovhannēs Kat’olikos does not mention the council at all and, but seems far more interested in the personal appearance of Oj nec‘i, being enthralled with his elaborate garments and even more with his gold-speckled beard.⁹⁵ What little is known of this council, together with an evaluation of these sources, can be found in the old monograph of Ter-Minassiantz, but this work is outdated and interested primarily in the Christological debate, thus offering nothing of help for our concerns.⁹⁶

On the Syrian side it is Michael the Syrian who provides the most complete account of this council, but nothing even in his account allows any information concerning any joint theological efforts or subsequent translation activity.⁹⁷ A parallel account in Bar Hebraeus is, like much of his history, derivative of Michael the Syrian.⁹⁸ The two Armenian translations of the Chronicle of Michael the Syrian, provide very different versions of this council but again provide no information on any subsequent translation activity.⁹⁹

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⁹¹ STEP‘ANOS ASOLIK, 1885, pp. 102-103; translation in DULAUERI, 1883, p. 131.
⁹² BROSSET, 1876, vol. II. p. 411-412.
⁹³ STEP‘ANNOS ORBELEAN, 1911, p. 455. Translation in BROSSET, 1864, p. 252.
⁹⁴ KIRAKOS GANJAKEC‘I, 1961, p. 68.
⁹⁶ TER-MINASSIANTZ, 1904, pp. 59-91.
⁹⁹ MICHAEL THE SYRIAN, 1870, 1871.
Another account is found in the little known work of Dionysius bar Salibi Against the Armenians. This account does offer some information that has not been heretofore drawn into the conversation. In a separate chapter specifically on the Council of Manazkert, Dionysius states (I cite the entire passage):

It is now four hundred and forty years since the Armenians came into the region of Syria and took possession of our countries, monasteries and villages. We had the Patriarch Mar Athanasius, who in the year one thousand and thirty-seven of the Greeks [=726 AD] effected his union with Yovhannes, their Kat'olikos, in Manazkert of the interior. At that time, since the Kingdom of the Armenians was conquered by the Persians who were holding sway in it, they began to come down little by little to Syria. When the Patriarch Athanasius noticed that all those who came followed either the Chalcedonians or the Julianists because they had neither a priest nor a bishop in Syria, he apprised of this fact the Kat'olikos Yovhannes, who sent three bishops to Syria, and these received every Armenian who came down from Armenia.

And our Patriarch set apart for Yovhannes a monastery situated on the frontiers (of Syria and Armenia), and he placed therein Syrian and Armenian boys, who learnt both the Syriac and Armenian languages and translated the words of the Fathers from Syriac into Armenian. After the death of our Patriarch and of their Kat'olikos Yovhannes, they broke their engagements and committed injustices against our people. Even the language they use in Armenia does not resemble the one they speak here, because the latter resembles Syriac. After this, little by little they seized our churches and the monasteries situated in the Black Mountain, and after the help that we extended to them they became our adversaries.\textsuperscript{100}

This extraordinary text from Dionysius Bar Salibi (d. 1171) is, to my knowledge, the only source that speaks of either this ‘co-national’ monastery or the translation activity that was carried out at that time. Ter-Minassiantz, in his important study on Armeno-Syrian relations,\textsuperscript{101}

\textsuperscript{100} MINGANA, 1931, text p. 100, translation, p. 55, with minor changes.

\textsuperscript{101} TER-MINASSIANTZ, 1904. Both the edition and the Catalogue of Mingana manuscripts, wherein the work was first
was completely unaware of the existence of this work and the recent monograph of Tēr-Petrosyan mentions the work of Dionysius only once but does not make any significant use of it. That there is no corroboration for this source makes it rather difficult to use with any complete confidence. Also, if the chronology of Dionysius is correct, it would suggest that it was soon after the Council of Manazkert that the translations were done, since the monastery had been handed over to the Armenians before the death of Yovhannēs Ojnecʿi.

Unfortunately, as tempting as it is to make appeal to this text of Dionysius, it is only if we presume that Dionysius has telescoped his account, that we can reasonably postulate that it was in the aftermath of Manazkert, during a long period of translation activity that the Armenian Commentary on Genesis, once attributed to Ephrem the Syrian, was effected. But Dionysius' own admission that this monastic co-venture was shortlived precludes this presumption. Therefore, we cannot postulate that it was during this period that the Armenian Commentary on Genesis was translated. A work that uses a document written in 861 cannot, self-evidently have been written in the eighth century.

In fact, we have noted several occasions in which the Armenian Commentary on Genesis made use of Catena material that is found only in later recensions. This would then place the translation of the Armenian Commentary on Genesis into at least the tenth century and very possibly later. Considering too that its final redaction was made by an Armenian, it is perhaps not unlikely that what we have here is another work either translated by or commissioned by the Katʿolikos Grigor V Kayasēr (1065-1105). We do have colophons that state he commissioned the translation of the Syriac Life of Ephrem, and another that he translated a work attributed to Ephrem entitled On the Beheading of John, the Baptist of Christ. In the light of no other evidence, this position, based primarily on our literary study of the Armenian Commentary on Genesis, is perhaps the most logical conclusion.

advertised, were both published more than a quarter of a century after the monograph of Ter-Minassiantz.

102 TER-PETROSYAN, 1989, p. 17. Of course, Tēr-Petrosyan was interested in details of Syrian influence and particularly in the translation of specific works, concerning which Bar-Salibi offers little help.

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BOOK REVIEW


Reviewed by George Bournoutian

The history of the Armenian community of New Julfa, its founding, its subsequent role in the economy of Safavid Iran, its trading activities with Europe, India, and Russia, as well as its arts (book-binding and manuscript illumination) and architecture have been subjects of numerous monographs, scholarly articles, and doctoral dissertations which have appeared in Armenian, Russian, Persian, and English during the last four decades.

Ghougassian's doctoral thesis, now published, examines a different aspect of that community, the establishment of the Armenian diocese of New Julfa and its history throughout the seventeenth century. The author uses an array of Armenian primary sources, as well as some seventy-five Armenian and Persian documents from the archives of the All Savior's Monastery at New Julfa (22 of which are reproduced in the appendix) to draw a clear picture of the formation of the diocese, its relations with Ejmiatsin, and its long-lasting conflicts with the Catholic missionaries in Iran and their activities among the Armenians. The absence of Persian contemporary histories is understandable, since they do not contribute to our knowledge of the New Julfa diocese.

Although a few minor errors and inconsistencies such as the name of Hakob P'ap'azyan cited as Y. P'ap'azyan on pp. 211, 311, and V. H. P'ap'azyan on p. 66 (n. 68) may confuse the reader, my major concern relates to Ghougassian's error in the use of my lengthy (35-page) 30-year old article The Armenian Community of Isfahan published in The Armenian Review (no. 4, 1971 and no. 1, 1972).

On p. 57 Ghougassian states the following: Many scholars, including Laurence Lockhart, Roger Savory, John Carswell, George Bournoutian, and Vartan Gregorian over emphasize the "religious freedom" and the "special privileges" granted to the Armenians by Shah 'Abbas I and his successors. They all reach that conclusion assuming that the merchants of New Julfa... As noted in the previous chapter, the Armenian community of New Julfa was only a small segment of the total Armenian population of Iran. Therefore, the conditions of other
Armenian communities especially those in rural areas, also should be considered, before reaching a general conclusion on the treatment of Armenians by the Safavid state.\textsuperscript{1}

I am truly flattered that my first published work written as an undergraduate (the article was a revised version of my B.A. thesis at UCLA) is included with the work of such luminaries as Lockhart, Savory, Carswell, and Gregorian.\textsuperscript{2}

Had Ghougassian read my work more carefully, however, he would have realized that on p. 32 (pt. 1) I have mentioned the Armenians who settled in the villages of Azerbaijan where they lived a miserable life. Other Armenians settled in Kashan, Qazvin, and Hamadan, while a large number were sent to Mazandaran to cultivate silk, where many died from Malaria. Moreover, he would have also encountered the following statement in part 2, pp. 34-35: It must be noted that not all Armenians were rich or engaged in trade. Whereas the rich merchants of Julfa had special privileges, sat on the Shah's council and ate with him, the rest of the Armenians were either farmers, poor peasants or middle and lower class artisans and workers. Outside the community of Isfahan the Armenians were even less fortunate. In Tabriz, for example, there was only one Armenian church; a smaller one in Shiraz was built only later in the century. The Armenians in Tabriz, Shiraz and other areas, were mainly engaged in farming while the few who were engaged in trade had been in Persia before the forced deportations had occurred. These communities were some distance from Isfahan and its royal protection... Such a lack of information on the low and middle-classes can be attributed to the defects of all the European and Persian sources of the time. Few were interested in the general masses and in the case of the European travellers since they always stayed in Julfa, as guests of the wealthy khodjas they simple recounted the splendors they saw and ignored the misery.

Since only some seventy pages are specifically devoted to the Armenian Diocese of New Julfa (chapters 5-7, pages 83-156), Ghougassian may have felt the need to include other data to justify a book-length monograph. If so, he is mistaken. Ghougassian, who spent three years in New Julfa, had a unique opportunity to visit the surviving Armenian churches, old houses, the Armenian cemetery and several

\textsuperscript{1} Unfortunately Ghougassian devotes only 12 pages (Chapter 3) to them.

\textsuperscript{2} Another recent Columbia dissertation on the Armenians in Isfahan uses material from my article, but does not cite it in the bibliography.
Armenian villages. The knowledge gained from that experience, as well as the examination of contemporary Armenian sources (including colophons) and travel literature, has enabled Ghougassian to present some fresh insights to a much-researched subject—that of the rise and decline of the Armenian community of New Julfa and its socioeconomic condition in the seventeenth century and the early part of the eighteenth century (chapters 1-2, 4, 8, and appendices 2-3). It is the material on the New Julfa diocese that is unique and valuable, however. The New Julfa diocese emerges as one of the largest, most prosperous, and influential sees of the Armenian Church during the seventeenth century, with its hierarchy serving the largest non-Muslim minority in Iran. The author presents geographic, demographic, and social surveys and discusses the legacy of the diocese on the cultural heritage of the Armenians in Isfahan and its environs. Four maps, twenty-eight illustrations, an impressive bibliography and a useful index make this monograph useful for all Armenian and Iranian scholars interested in Safavid Persia during its heyday and for those conducting research on the history of the Armenian Church in the seventeenth century.

In Chapter three (a mere dozen pages), although Ghougassian presents some new information on the Armenians in other parts of Persia, he does not give detailed information.

Another recent Columbia dissertation on the Armenians in Isfahan makes use of my article, but does not cite it in the bibliography.
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