

## Biblical and Apocryphal Themes in Armenian Culture

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To address myself to an intersection of two themes that have always interested me is most exciting. Having started my academic work with the intention of studying Jewish apocryphal literature, I was instructed by my teachers to study Armenian, which I did. When I commenced research studies, initially I started with Armenian texts of apocrypha of the Old Testament. I was working then on *4 Ezra* and decided to do an edition of that book<sup>1</sup>. Then, under the influence of Marinus de Jonge I turned my attention to *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and my first published book was on the Armenian of *The Testament of Levi*<sup>2</sup>. Such is the nature of the scholarly enterprise, that I have been reading just now (January 2010) the proof of a critical *editio minor* of the Armenian text of this apocryphon of which I published the first sample section in 1969.

### Categories – What are Apocrypha?

In this paper, we do not use the word ‘Apocrypha’ in the Protestant sense of those books which were in the medieval Latin Bible but not in the Hebrew Bible. That usage produces a clearly delimited and distinct collection of books, sometimes called ‘intertestamental’ in English, not because of chronology, but because of the position of the Apocrypha in old printed English Bibles, when they were printed between the Old and New Testaments.

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<sup>1</sup> The edition appeared eventually as M. E. STONE, *The Armenian Version of IV Ezra* (*University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies* 1), Missoula, Scholars Press, 1979 and the commentary on it as M. E. STONE, *Textual Commentary on the Armenian Version of IV Ezra* (*Septuagint and Cognate Studies Series* 34), Atlanta, Ga., Scholars Press, 1990.

<sup>2</sup> M. E. STONE, *The Testament of Levi: A First Study of the Armenian Manuscripts of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs in the Convent of St. James*, Jerusalem, St. James Press, 1969.

In the Catholic tradition, which is always careful about definition and categorization, there is a three-fold division of 'Old Testament' works:

(a) Proto-canonical — i.e., works that occur in the Hebrew Bible as well as in the Vulgate.

(b) Deutero-canonical works that are considered to have scriptural authority.

(c) Trito-canonical — i.e., works that were included in the medieval Latin Bible, but were excluded from the Latin Bible after the Council of Trent (1546).

The deutero-canonical books are much the same as the Protestant Apocrypha except for the exclusion of *2 Esdras* (*4 Ezra*) and *The Prayer of Manasses*. Both these are ancient works, but *2 Esdras* does not exist in Greek, though it does in Latin<sup>3</sup>. They are in the trito-canonical category.

Of course, the varieties of Christianity are not exhausted by the European tradition from which both modern Catholic and Protestant churches spring. Other Churches include different apocrypha in their Bibles, such as the Orthodox Churches, the Syriac Churches, as well as the Ethiopian, Armenian, Georgian and other Oriental Orthodox Churches. In all of these Bibles, the contents of the Old Testament vary and, in many traditions there is no clear, official statement that accords with the actual usage of the Church. The *Third Letter to the Corinthians* and the *Dormition of John* are included in many manuscripts of Armenian New Testament and in Canon lists. The Armenian biblical tradition, to judge from the manuscripts, did not have a very strict sense of canon, and *4 Ezra*, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *Joseph and Asenath* and *The Lives of the Prophets* are certainly on the borders of the Canon. We know that *4 Ezra* was translated before the mid-fifth century, most likely at the same time as the rest of the Bible. In my view, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and *Joseph and Asenath*, are likely to be of comparable age<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> In contrast with the versions in oriental languages, there are two additional chapters in Latin *4 Ezra* at the beginning and two at the end, conventionally called *5 Ezra* and *6 Ezra*. The work itself is often called *2 Esdras* in English.

<sup>4</sup> I have published a series of articles over the years in *Harvard Theological Review* giving Armenian Canon lists, primarily of the Old Testament. For a summary of material on the Armenian Canon, see M. E. STONE, 'L'Étude du Canon arménien', in G. ARAGIONE – É. JUNOD – E. NORELLI (eds.), *Le Canon du Nouveau Testament (Le Monde de la Bible 54)*, Genève, Labor et Fides, 2005, p. 283-295.

### The Biblical Self-Consciousness of the Armenians

In order to understand how the apocrypha function in the Armenian Church and in Armenian culture, we must consider the biblical self-consciousness of the Armenian people. The Armenians claim to be the first Christian nation and the conversion of King Tiridates is traditionally set in 301. This was clearly preceded by earlier evangelization.

The Christian tradition came to Armenia from two directions: Greek Christianity came from the West and Syriac from the south. So, the Armenian Church from its inception saw itself in terms of these two dominant Christian traditions

Tradition concretizes the actual evangelization of Armenia through the story of its evangelization by two Apostles, Thaddeus from the South and, as Michel van Esbroeck demonstrated, somewhat later the tradition of St. Bartholemew developed and made evangelization from the West the more concrete<sup>5</sup>. Both the Greek and Syriac languages were used for liturgical purposes until the creation of the alphabet in the beginning of the fifth century.

### Further Biblical Factors Affecting earliest Armenian Christianity

From the earliest point that can be traced, the Armenians had a particularly close relationship with the Holy Land, which is expressed in various ways:

(a) The early travel between the Holy Land and Armenia, not just of the first known pilgrim (ca. 360)<sup>6</sup> but also earlier ecclesiastical correspondence in Պիքթ թղթոց *The Book of Letters*, a collection of ecclesiastical correspondence, part of which is very ancient. The Epistle of Macarius in *The Book of Letters* apparently dates from 333-334 CE. It was supposedly written by Marcarius, Bishop of Jerusalem (312-334) to Vrtanēs, Catholicos of the Armenians (333-341)<sup>7</sup>. Marcarius is answering an enquiry sent by Vrtanēs

<sup>5</sup> Michel VAN ES BROECK, 'The Rise of Saint Bartholomew's Cult from the Seventh to the Thirteenth Centuries', in T. J. SAMUELIAN – M. E. STONE (eds.), *Medieval Armenian Culture (University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies 6)*, Chico, California, Scholar's Press, 1984, p. 161-178.

<sup>6</sup> M. E. STONE, 'An Armenian Pilgrim to the Holy Land in the Early Byzantine Period', *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 18 (1984), p. 173-179.

<sup>7</sup> M. ORMANIAN, *National History (Միազգային պատմություն)*, Constantinople and Jerusalem, 1913, vol. 1, § 87-100 (in Armenian); M. E. STONE, 'Holy Land Pilgrimage of Armenians before the Arab Conquest', *Revue Biblique* 93 (1986), p. 93-110, especially p. 94.

on issues relating to church order<sup>8</sup>. The synchronism shows that, if the epistle is genuine and, to date, no-one has argued otherwise, this must have taken place in 333-334<sup>9</sup>. The epistle clearly refers to the despatch of letters from Armenia to Jerusalem and back by the hand of ‘God-fearing priests’<sup>10</sup> who carried them. These priests might have been pilgrims or might have been special emissaries.

(b) Armenian monuments are found in the Holy Land from the moment we can recognize Armenians, being mosaics and inscriptions bearing Armenian script, Armenian names in Greek inscriptions and references to Armenians in Greek inscriptions. The list of 70 Armenian Churches and monasteries, attributed to Anastas *vardapet* has turned out partly to be based on actual institutions<sup>11</sup>.

(c) There is evidence for an Armenian school of translators in Jerusalem in the fifth century. This is evident from the Armenian translation of the Lectionary of Jerusalem and also from other evidence<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Գիրք թղթոց *Book of Letters*, Tiflis, 1901, p. 407-412; N. BOGHARIAN, Գիրք թղթոց, Երկրորդ հրատարակու թիւ ն *Book of Letters. Second edition (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Armenian Library)*, Jerusalem, St. James Press, 1994, p. 1-9. It should be remarked that, though this text is preserved in Ancient Armenian, it could not have been composed in that language, which was only written from early in the fifth century C.E. Moreover, it is not likely that the Bishop of Jerusalem wrote to Armenia in any language but Greek. Thus, if the document is genuine, it is a translation from Greek into Armenian.

<sup>9</sup> See M. ORMANIAN, *op. cit.* (note 7), § 93, who discusses this matter in detail. These canons are included in the Epistle of Macarius in *Girk' T'lt'oc'*.

<sup>10</sup> N. BOGHARIAN, *op. cit.* (note 8), p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> The literature is quite extensive. Much is mentioned in M. E. STONE, ‘The New Armenian Inscriptions from Jerusalem’, in N. AWDE (ed.), *Armenian Perspectives. 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference of the Association Internationale des Études Arméniennes*, Richmond, Surrey, Curzon Press, 1997, p. 263-268; M. E. STONE, ‘The Oldest Armenian Pilgrim Inscription From Jerusalem’, *Sion: Bogharian Memorial Volume* 71 (1997), p. 340-350; M. E. STONE – D. AMIT, ‘A Reassessment of the Bird and Eustathius Mosaics’, in M. E. STONE – R. R. ERVINE – N. STONE (eds.), *The Armenians in Jerusalem and the Holy Land (HUAS 4)*, Leuven, Peeters, 2002, p. 203-219. On the list of Anastas *vardapet* see A. K. SANJIAN, ‘Anastas Vardapet’s List of Armenian Monasteries in Seventh-Century Jerusalem’, *Le Muséon* 82 (1969), p. 265-292.

<sup>12</sup> On literary activity and the date of the Armenian Typicon, see Ch. RENOUX, ‘Les *Čašoc'* Typicon-Lectionnaire: origines et évolutions’, *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 20 (1986), especially p. 125-126 and see also M. E. STONE, ‘Armenian Inscriptions of the Fifth Century from Nazareth’, in M. E. STONE, *Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Armenian Studies: Collected Papers (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 145)*, Leuven, Peeters, 2006, p. 777-778. Some further striking evidence will be adduced by Bernard Coulie in a forthcoming paper on the text of Gregory Nazianzus.

(d) Together with other sources, particularly Cyril of Scythopolis mentions role of Armenians in the monastic movement in the Holy Land<sup>13</sup>.

It may be concluded, therefore, that the Armenians always subscribed to the view that the Holy Land and the biblically sanctioned holy places were to be seen materially as well as spiritually. Therefore, the Armenians 'voted with their feet' for pilgrimage to the Holy Places and settled in monasteries in them.

### The Holy Land in Armenia

There is evidence that the physical disposition of structures of earliest Armenian ecclesiastical architecture is based on or intends to re-create the disposition of the chief churches in Jerusalem<sup>14</sup>. The acceptance of the Jerusalem Lectionary by the Armenians in the 430's may have been part of this process of recreation of the Holy Land in Armenia. We do not know whether the Armenians celebrated the feasts in Armenia in accordance with the transferred sacred geography but it is possible.

Our interest here, however, is less in the history of ecclesiastical architecture or pilgrimage, fascinating as they may be, than in the way the Armenians handled biblical literary and traditional elements, re-creating in some sense, Armenia and the Armenians as the Holy Land and the Israelites.

Earliest Christianity in the Caucasus seems to be related to ancient Jewish communities that were there. Connections are shown by linguistic borrowings, such as Armenian *galtut* 'exile, diasporic community' from Hebrew *gālūt* and Armenian *geri* 'captive' (with a final *-i*, cf. Georgian) probably ultimately from the Hebrew *gēr* 'temporary resident, sojourner'. It is intriguing that Armenian *hrea* 'Jew' (etymology obscure) is the same as Georgian *hurea*, with a reduction of the vowel in the first syllable, typical of Armenian. The foundation story of Georgian Christianity traces it back to

<sup>13</sup> See M. E. STONE, 'Holy Land Pilgrimage of Armenians before the Arab Conquest', in M. E. STONE, *Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Armenian Studies. Collected Papers (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 145)*, Leuven, Peeters, 2006, p. 675 and bibliography there.

<sup>14</sup> See Nazénie GARIBIAN DE VARTAVAN, *La Jerusalem nouvelle et les premiers sanctuaires chrétiens de l'Arménie. Méthode pour l'étude de l'église comme Temple de Dieu*, Fribourg (CH), Isis Pharia, 2009, especially p. 242-255 and p. 272-280. Constantine B. Lerner has shown that the same general movement determined the Georgian understanding of their central churches and their relationship to one another. See his forthcoming paper: 'Marking the Christian Space in Ancient Kartli', in A. LIDOV (ed.), *Orthodox Georgia. Image of the Holy Land*, Moscow (in Russian).

Jewish and Armenian roots<sup>15</sup>. Consequently traditions and interpretations developed which supported these self-consciousness patterns of Armenia = Holy Land and Armenians = biblical Israel.

The Armenians share several rather obvious points of connection biblical associated traditions. The first of these is the insertion of the Armenians into the genealogy of the biblical Patriarchs, specifically into the descendants of Japheth — the biblical series Noah – Japheth – Tiras – Togarma is taken over. According to the *History of the Armenians* 1.5 attributed to Moses of Xorēn, Torgarma (Torgom) is father of Haik, the eponymous ancestor of the Armenians. To insert oneself into biblical genealogies is to claim a place in the *Historia Sacra*. In an analogous way, the Ethiopians stress a special connection with the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon<sup>16</sup>.

The second obvious connection with the Bible is the identification of Armenia as the place where Noah's Ark landed. This general identification was known in the Hellenistic-Roman sources — Jewish, Christian and pagan — though there were other places that claimed the same honour<sup>17</sup>.

Early in the Christian era, the Aramaic biblical translation attributed to Onqelos reads *‘al turē Qardō* ‘on the mountains of Qardo’ in *Gen.* 8:4, i.e. Gordyene (modern Kurdistan)<sup>18</sup>. The same is found in Targum Neofiti, which has the spelling *Qardon*. This name also occurs in certain Hexaplaric witnesses, which attribute the reading *kardi* to ‘to hebraikon’ and ‘hē syrē’. Thus these witnesses identify the biblical mountains of Ararat with Qardo, i.e., with Kordyuk’ or Gordyene and, therefore, with southern mountains of

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<sup>15</sup> See on *gēr*, Constantine B. LERNER, ‘The Biblical Institution of Newcomers in Ancient Georgia’, *The Annual of the SSC* 4-5 (1993), p. 55-62. On the foundation story of Georgian Christianity, see Constantine B. LERNER, *The Wellspring of Georgian Historiography: The Early Medieval Historical Chronicle The Conversion of Kart’li and The Life of St. Nino*, London, Bennett and Bloom, 2004 and Michel VAN ESBROECK, ‘La place de Jérusalem dans la “Conversion de la Géorgie”’, in T. MGALOBILISHVILI (ed.), *Ancient Christianity in the Caucasus (Iberica Caucasia 1)*, Surrey, Curzon Press, 1998, p. 59-74. See further B. LERNER, *op. cit.* (note 14).

<sup>16</sup> There is another story, non-biblical, also preserved in Moses of Xorēn 1,10, where Haik, a giant, rebelled against Bel, king of Babylon and led his family to the northern lands, i.e., towards Armenia, to the area of Ararat. Moses (1,5) identifies Bel with Nimrod.

<sup>17</sup> Such as Apamea. See the studies included in M. E. STONE – A. AMIHAI – V. HILLEL (eds.), *Books and Traditions of Noah (Society of Biblical Literature, Early Judaism and its Literature)*, Atlanta, Ga., (forthcoming). In her paper in that volume, Ruth Clements discusses Apamea in detail.

<sup>18</sup> There is good reason to think that in such matters, Targum Onqelos reflects a Babylonian tradition.

present-day Kurdistan. This identification was old in Armenian tradition as well. In the fifth century, it occurs already in P'awstos, *Buzandaran* (3.10) (fifth century)<sup>19</sup>.

Philo, *Quaestiones in Genesis* 31 and 32 does not mention the name of the mountain. Josephus, *Antiquities*, 1,90 speaks of 'a certain mountain in Armenia'. In an interesting tradition, in section 92, Josephus says, 'However, the Armenians call this place Apobaterion, The Place of Descent; for the ark being saved in that place, its remains are shown there by the inhabitants to this day.'

Robert Hewsen has remarked to me on the striking resemblance of this information to the similar Armenian tradition that identifies Naxiĵevan as the place of descent. This, so he says, 'sounds like a folk etymology for Naxiĵevan, whose modern name is derived from an earlier "Naxĵawan" apparently attributed to the same folk etymology<sup>20</sup>. This identification [i.e., of Masis as Ararat, MES] may actually be very old and may have been made by Jews in the old Armenian capitals (Armavir, Artashat) from which Mt. Ararat is clearly visible<sup>21</sup>'. If Hewsen's view is accepted, and it is only hypothetical, then the connection of the 'mountains of Ararat' with Masis might be rather old.

It is hard to know precisely to what another tradition preserved by Josephus in the name of Nicolaus of Damascus witnesses. He says, 'There is a great mountain in Armenia, over Minyas, called Baris, upon which it is reported that many who fled at the time of the Deluge were saved; and that one who was carried in an ark came on shore upon the top of it; and that

<sup>19</sup> These texts are analysed in detail in M. E. STONE – A. AMIHAI – V. HILLEL (eds.), *Books and Traditions of Noah, art. cit.* (note 17). See Nina G. GARSOĪAN, *The Epic Histories Attributed to P'awstos Buzand (Buzandaran Patmut'iwuk')* (*Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies* 8), Cambridge MA, Harvard, 1989, p. 252-253. Her discussion is most valuable.

<sup>20</sup> Naxĵawan was an older name of Naxiĵevan and is connected with Noah's descent from the ark, see T. X. HAKOBYAN – S. T. MELIK'-BAXŠYAN – H. X. BARSELYAN, *Dictionary of Toponymy of Armenian and Adjacent Territories*, vol. 3, Erevan, Erevan State University, 1991, p. 951. For the most ancient reference from Armenian literature see L. KHACHIKIAN (ed.), *The Interpretation of Genesis attributed to Elišē*, Yerevan, Zvartnots, 1992, p. 245 but the attribution of this work to the fifth-century author is not assured. There is another village called Naxĵawan, and according to Armenian tradition, the tomb of Noah's wife Noemzara is to be found in that village: *ibid.*, p. 956. On this tradition, see M. E. STONE, *Armenian Apocrypha. Relating to Adam and Eve (Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha* 14), Leiden, Brill, 1996, p. 122. On the name of Noah's wife, see *ibid.*, p. 91 and 96.

<sup>21</sup> Personal communication, 25 April, 2005. Direct evidence in Armenian for the identification of Masis with the mountains of Ararat is not preserved early. *The Commentary on Genesis* attributed to Elišē is cited as the earliest source: see note 20, above.

the remains of the timber were a great while preserved. This might be the man about whom Moses, the legislator of the Jews wrote' (*Antiquities* 1,95 citing Nicolaus of Damascus, Book 96)<sup>22</sup>. That the mountain of the flood is in Armenia is clear in the writing of this pre-Christian, pagan author from Syria, but exactly where in Armenia is not explicit. We can make no suggestion as to the origins of the name Baris.

Josephus cites yet another tradition, this time from Berossus who reports that, 'It is said there is still some part of this ship in Armenia, at the mountain of the Cordyaeans; and that some people carry off pieces of the bitumen, which they take away, and use chiefly as amulets for the averting of mischiefs' (*Antiquities* 1,93). This tradition, which identifies the 'mountains of Ararat' with Gordyene, resembles that observed in Targum Onqelos and the Hexaplaric *reliqui*, and its attribution to Berossus might confirm its Babylonian origin. Gordyene is easily available from Mesopotamia. It was considered part of Armenia in antiquity<sup>23</sup>.

In the Palestian (Jerusalem) Targum, which stems from the early Christian period and from the Land of Israel, we read the following translation of *Genesis* 8,4:

ונחת תיבותא בירחא שביעאה הוא ירחא דניסן בשבטרי יומין לירחה על טוורי  
דקרדון שום טוורא חד קרדניה ושום טוורא חד ארמיניא ותמן מתבני קרתא  
דארמניה בארעא מדינחה

And the ark rested in the seventh month, that is the month of Nisan, on the seventeenth day, on the mountains of Qardon. The name of one mountain was Qardiniya and the name of another mountain was Arminiya. And there the city of Armenia was built, in the eastern land.

The mention of two mountains in connection with the ark, which explains the plural in the biblical text, is conflated here with the tradition of Qardo-Gordyene. The text knows a further tradition relating a mountain — a second one, to account for the plural of the biblical text — to Armenia, which is distinguished from Gordyene<sup>24</sup>. The identification of Mount Arminiya is not clear, and it could be a second, unidentified mountain of Gordyene or, conceivably, a mountain further north, i.e., Masis.

<sup>22</sup> On Nicolaus of Damascus, see B. Z. WACHOLDER, *Nicolaus of Damascus* (*University of California Publications in History* 75), Berkeley, University of California Press, 1962.

<sup>23</sup> See R. H. HEWSEN, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2001, maps 21, 56, 78, 110. In fact, the designation 'Armenia' indicated various extents of territory at different times. See R. HEWSEN, *op. cit.*, maps 17, 19, 62 and 110.

<sup>24</sup> Yet, as we noted above, there is unclarity about which territory the name 'Armenia' designates. The Palestinian Targum may well reflect a post-Hellenistic geographical tradition,



The Bible does not mention the building of a city after the descent from the Ark, but an analogous tradition is known in the Armenian sources, especially Xorenac<sup>25</sup>. In the Targum, it is called Arminiya. Although, as we noted, earlier Josephus knows the name of the place of the descent to be Apobaterion — compare the later tradition about Ijevan — he does not mention it as a city name. This may indicate that in Palestine, in the mid-first millennium approximately, Armenia was understood to be further north than Gordyene, and that some geographical realities of Armenia, i.e., the two-peaked Masis mountain, were known, as well as the Armenian tradition that Noah built a city when he came forth from the ark. This would bespeak a direct familiarity with the Armenian Christian tradition and might also be one of the very first pieces of evidence hinting at an identification of Masis as ‘the mountains of Ararat’ of the Hebrew Bible<sup>26</sup>.

A final point in connection with Armenian self-identification in biblical terms is that the Armenians, as Robert Thomson pointed out over 30 years ago, used the Maccabees as a pattern for their self-image. This was particularly prominent in connection with the rhetoric they used in describing their great battle against Zoroastrian oppression at Avarayr in 451<sup>27</sup>.

### Armenian Apocrypha

The Apocrypha of the Old Testament in Armenian and associated material may be divided into four different groups.

(a) First, there are Armenian translations of apocrypha known to us from other sources, some of which are close to or even, apparently included in, the Armenian Bible. *4 Ezra*, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and

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cf. *Encyclopedia Judaica* I, col. 474. The Bible attributes to Cain the building of a city called Enoch after the expulsion from Eden: see *Gen* 4,17.

<sup>25</sup> W. L. LIPSCOMB, ‘Concerning the Good Tidings of Seth, to Which We Ought to Give Ear’ in W. L. LIPSCOMB *The Armenian Apocryphal Adam Literature (University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies 8)*, Philadelphia, Scholars Press, 1990, p. 205. In it is remarked that the Palestinian Targum is presenting a later geographical situation than that of the Jewish Hellenistic sources. In our opinion, it is overlaying the Jewish Hellenistic sources with a later geographical reality.

<sup>26</sup> Garsoïan would interpret the variant הוררט ‘Hūrarat’ of Qumran 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> to *Isa* 37,38 as showing, quite indubitably, that the biblical reference is to Urartu, presumably because of the long *ū* or *ō* in the first syllable. See G. GARSOÏAN, *op. cit.* (note 19), 252. The *hē* remains unexplained and the variant נ/ה is not less difficult than that of *ā/ū*.

<sup>27</sup> R. W. THOMSON, ‘The Maccabees in Early Armenian Historiography’, *JTS* 26 (1975), p. 329-41.

*Joseph and Asenath* are one sort of example and all three now exist in modern critical editions<sup>28</sup>. In fact, their status of edition is preferable to that of most of the biblical books<sup>29</sup>. In addition, works such as the *Vitae Prophetarum* occur both in Bibles and in *Homilaries* (*Čarentir*) and works such as *The Question of the Queen and Answers of King Solomon*, little known, but translated from Syriac<sup>30</sup> continue a tradition of wisdom questioning going back to Josephus and the book of Kings. Its origin, Jewish or Christian, is unclear<sup>31</sup>. There are Armenian versions of writings such as *The Life of Adam and Eve* and the *Paralipomena Ieremiou*. Many such works have barely been studied<sup>32</sup>.

(b) The second category of works is Armenian translations that preserve works apparently lost from the Hebrew, Greek and Syriac traditions. Here the interpretation is difficult for, particularly as far as Old Testament apocrypha are concerned, it is sometimes difficult to know whether works are Jewish or Christian in authorship on the one hand or composed in Greek, Syriac or Armenian on the other. There are texts, however, that seem to know Jewish material, some of which, like certain of the Solomon and Adam material, should be examined more seriously for Jewish origin<sup>33</sup>. Certain treatises of Philo of Alexandria and the pseudo-Philonic homilies *de Iona* and *de Sampson* are examples of Jewish Hellenistic works surviving

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<sup>28</sup> See STONE, M. E. STONE, *The Armenian Version of IV Ezra* (University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies 1), Missoula, Scholars Press, 1979; M. E. STONE – V. HILLEL, *Armenian Version of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. Edition, Apparatus, Translation and Commentary* (Hebrew University Armenian Series 11), Leuven, Peeters, (in press); Ch. BURCHARD, *Minor Edition of the Armenian Version of Joseph and Asenath* (Hebrew University Armenian Series 10), Leuven, Peeters (in press).

<sup>29</sup> See studies by Claude COX, most recently, 'A Critical Edition of the Armenian Bible: A Progress Report', in K. BARDAKJIAN (ed.), *Proceedings of the Conference 'Where the Only-Begotten Descended. The Church of Armenia Through the Ages'*, Convened at Ann Arbor, Apr. 1-4, 2004 (in press).

<sup>30</sup> See for the recently discovered Syriac, S. P. BROCK, 'The Queen of Sheba's Questions to Solomon. A Syriac Version', *Le Muséon* 92.3-4 (1979), p. 331-345. The earlier Armenian printings and translations must be revised.

<sup>31</sup> See M. E. STONE, *Selected Studies in Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha* (Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha 9), Leiden – New York – Köln, E. J. Brill, 1991, p. 12, note 35.

<sup>32</sup> See M. E. STONE, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve* (Early Judaism and its Literature 3), Atlanta, Ga., Scholars Press, 1992, p. 101-110 and M. E. STONE, 'Some Observations on the Armenian Version of the Paralipomena of Jeremiah', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 35 (1973), p. 47-49. This bibliography could be expanded considerably.

<sup>33</sup> Observe that a number of documents claim explicitly to be of Jewish origin. Discussed in M. E. STONE, *Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Armenian Studies. Collected Papers* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 145), Leuven, Peeters, 2006, p. 1.88 and references there.

only in Armenian<sup>34</sup>. Some *Vitae* exist in Armenian resembling those in the *Vitae Prophetarum*, but not found in Greek or Syriac. These, however, are probably not Jewish (nor, in all likelihood are the Greek *Vitae Prophetarum*)<sup>35</sup>. The additional Armenian *Vitae* have not been examined for possible Greek or Syriac origins.

(c) There are a considerable number of apocrypha that were composed in Armenian, following often the genres and types of works known to us in Greek and Syriac. Except for a couple of collections and some articles, this material has not been translated or made available in Occidental languages. Works are associated with Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Enoch and others. Some of them exhibit clear knowledge of material familiar to us from earlier Greek and Syriac sources. One collection of such texts in a not very reliable English translation was published by Jacques Issaverdens early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, based on a collection of texts assembled by the Mekhitarist scholar Sargis Yovsēp‘ianc‘ and published in 1896<sup>36</sup>. (See further below.)

(d) A fourth category is constituted of associated school traditions. The Armenians developed, from their earliest surviving literary manuscript, Erevan, Matenadaran M2679 (anno 981) on, a variety of scholarly materials associated in one way or another with the Bible. This activity flourished in the Middle Ages, and the development of the learned institutions in Armenia in the High Middle Ages is most likely connected to this. Further ancient, early Christian and even Jewish materials were taken over and reworked and additional texts compiled<sup>37</sup>. One very prominent type of text

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<sup>34</sup> The bibliography and introduction to these works are to be found in C. ZUCKERMAN, ‘A Repertory of Published Armenian Translations of Classical Texts: Revised by Michael E. Stone with an Appendix by Abraham Terian’, in G. FIACCADORI (ed.), *Autori Classici in Lingue del Vicino e Medio Oriente. Atti del VI, VII e VIII Seminari*, Rome, Libreria dello Stato, 2001, p. 425-448.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, M. E. STONE, ‘An Armenian Tradition Relating to the Death of the Three Companions of Daniel’, *Le Muséon* 86 (1973), p. 111-123; M. E. STONE, ‘Three Armenian Accounts of the Death of Moses’, in G. W. E. NICKELSBURG, (ed.), *Studies on the Testament of Moses (Septuagint and Cognate Studies Series 4)*, Cambridge, Mass., SBL, 1973.

<sup>36</sup> J. ISSAVERDENS, *The Uncanonical Writings of the Old Testament found in the Armenian Manuscripts of the Library of St. Lazarus*, Venice, Mekhitarist Press, 1901 translating S. YOVSEP‘IANC‘, *Uncanonical Books of the Old Testament*, Venice, Mekhitarist Press, 1896 in Armenian.

<sup>37</sup> Compare the many Armenian reworkings of Epiphanius’ *De gemmis* dealing with the stones on the High Priest’s breastplate and also the incorporation into Armenian texts of materials from *Epistle of Aristeas* on the one hand and Epiphanius’ *De mensuris et ponderibus* on the other, and examples could be multiplied. Information may be found in M. E. STONE,

is the onomastic material, belonging to the large, rather diffuse corpus of Greek (and Latin, Syriac, Ethiopic, etc.) texts, which give translations of Hebrew names and often incorporate apocryphal traditions in the course of this. A papyrus fragment of an onomasticon exists and Philo also apparently knew such lists<sup>38</sup>. This material must originate, we assume, in Jewish contexts (presumably Greek speaking, but where people knew Hebrew)<sup>39</sup>. There is onomastic material in Armenian that has no parallel known so far in any other language but which contains genuine Hebrew-based etymologies<sup>40</sup>.

Some years ago, Lipscomb published a list of the names of the matriarchs, a text which reflected traditions known to the *Book of Jubilees* and to some other Second Temple period texts, such as Genesis Apocryphon from Qumran<sup>41</sup>. And there is much more. Some of this scholarly material resembles the *Hypomenesticon of Josephos* in character, being lists of kings, priests, punishments of Cain, plagues, etc.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, elenchic literature which solves potential issues in the exegesis of biblical texts often contains apocryphal traditions<sup>43</sup>.

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‘An Armenian Epitome of Epiphanius’ De Gemmis’, *Harvard Theological Review* 82 (1989), p. 467-476 and M. E. STONE – R. R. ERVINE, *The Armenian Texts of Epiphanius of Salamis De Mensuris et Ponderibus (CSCO Subsidia 105)*, Leuven, Peeters, 2000.

<sup>38</sup> D. ROKEAH, ‘A New Onomasticon Fragment From Oxyrhynchus and Philo’s Etymologies’, *JTS NS* 19 (1968), p. 70-82.

<sup>39</sup> The fullest collection of such material is still F. X. WUTZ, *Onomastica Sacra. Untersuchungen zum Liber Interpretationis Nominum Hebraeorum des Hl. Hieronymus (Texte und Untersuchungen 41,2)*, Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1915 written nearly a century ago.

<sup>40</sup> A good deal of material is gathered in M. E. STONE, *Signs of the Judgment, Onomastica Sacra and The Generations from Adam (University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies, 3)*, Chico, Scholars Press, 1981. See also H. AMALYAN, *Ba(girk’ Hayoc’ Armenian Dictionaries, Erevan, Academy of Sciences, 1975 (in Armenian)*. The bibliography in Modern Armenian could be expanded.

<sup>41</sup> W. L. LIPSCOMB, ‘A Tradition from the Book of Jubilees in Armenian’, *Journal of Jewish Studies* 29 (1978), p. 149-163. An analogous text, I have been told, also survives unpublished in medieval Hebrew manuscripts. *Jubilees* does not survive in Armenian, but other ‘Jubilees’ traditions are known.

<sup>42</sup> See for the *Hypomenesticon* of Josephus, R. M. GRANT – G. W. MENZIES, *Joseph’s Bible notes (Hypomnestikon) (Texts and Translations 41; Early Christian Series 9)*, Atlanta, Ga., Scholars Press, 1996. Much similar information is also to be found in Isidore of Seville and other sources.

<sup>43</sup> Compare R. R. ERVINE, ‘Antecedents and Parallels to Some Questions and Answers on Genesis in Vanakan Vardapet’s Book of Questions’, *Le Muséon* 113 (2000), p. 417-428. See also the elenchic character of certain texts published by Stone in his two collections: *Armenian Apocrypha to Patriarchs and Prophets*, Jerusalem, Israel Academy of Sciences, 1982 and *Armenian Apocrypha Relating to Adam and Eve (Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha 14)*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1996 as well as in a number of articles.

To return to the Apocrypha composed in Armenian, I have found over the years much to interest me in this literature. There is a very large literature of visions, of narratives or predictions, of dream books associated with Daniel and similar texts that seems to have been composed in Armenian. They use genres that are taken over from some apocryphal literature. Thus, the inventory of Armenian Adam literature contains at least 55 works, most of which were composed in Armenian<sup>44</sup>. Tales of biblical patriarchs abound, and these are noteworthy. In some cases they have been shown to have access to ancient traditions and materials<sup>45</sup>. Some texts are exegetical in motivation, like *Penitence of Solomon*, which deals with the issue of the wise king Solomon having pagan wives, as well as the contrast between the types of books that he wrote. This was also a problem of concern to the Rabbis<sup>46</sup>.

A different phenomenon is the deliberate composition of whole manuscripts that combine biblical, apocrypha and school materials to form a plot a plot drawn from biblical history. Such manuscripts highlight features of the sacred history that stress the *heilsgeschichtliche* dimension of the two testaments. Starting from Adam and creation, they frequently end not only with Christ's Passion and Resurrection, but with texts dealing with Heaven and Hell and the eschatological fate of humans. They employ the apocrypha in their own right and subordinate various genres of apocrypha to a greater framework, which tells the *historia sacra* from creation to eschaton.

These Armenian apocryphal 'macroforms' sometimes include Jewish traditions that we cannot locate elsewhere, except in ancient Jewish sources. In any case they subsume apocryphal traditions (Armenian or non-Armenian) under their overall conceptual framework. Moreover, they usually, as does all Armenian literature, view the sacred history as an indivisible whole, from Creation to Christ's resurrection and Parousia. The division

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<sup>44</sup> The list of Adam works published in 1992 in M. E. STONE, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve* (*Society of Biblical Literature, Early Judaism and its Literature* 3), Atlanta, Ga., Scholars Press, 1992, p. 101-110 can now be expanded considerably.

<sup>45</sup> See, e. g., M. E. STONE, 'The History of the Forefathers, Adam and his Sons and Grandsons', *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 1 (1984), p. 79-91, re-edited in M. E. STONE, *Armenian Apocrypha Relating to Adam and Eve*, *op. cit.* (note 43), p. 180-200. Also observe *The Death of Adam* in M. E. STONE, *Armenian Apocrypha Relating to Patriarchs and Prophets*, Jerusalem, Israel Academy of Sciences, 1982, p. 15-31.

<sup>46</sup> See M. E. STONE, 'The Penitence of Solomon', *Journal of Theological Studies* NS 29 (1978), p. 1-19. An edition of a cognate Greek text is currently being prepared by Emmanouela Grypeou and M. E. Stone. Rabbinic literature does not notably discuss the penitential dimension of the Solomon traditions.

present in our modern scholarly minds of vetero- and neo-testamentary material is non-existent<sup>47</sup>.

### Interrelations in Armenian Culture

As is evident from the case we have just discussed, in Armenian culture the Bible is read through the lens of the apocrypha, not exclusively through the apocrypha, but also through the apocrypha. This is not unique to the Armenians, but I am commissioned to talk about the Armenians. The biblical story is often refracted through an apocryphal prism, and the Old and New Testaments are viewed as one, unitary narrative. Not only is Adam the type of Christ and Christ reverses Adam's errors, but the world was created in such a way as to lead inexorably from Adam to Christ, from Adam's Fall to Christ's redemption.

The basic motivations governing the Armenians' incorporation of biblical traditions that we have mentioned are:

(a) The aspiration and conviction that the Armenians form part of the sacred history related in the Bible. This is evident in the traditions about Noah and the Ark, Naxiĵevan, and in the genealogy. The Armenians desired biblical belonging for their history (so Noah, the Ark, Mt. Ararat, Naxiĵevan, city in Armenia, etc.), and genealogies.

(b) The significance of the genealogical tie to Noah was likely enhanced in a society in which the role of dynastic families was very notable<sup>48</sup>.

(c) On another level Armenians envisaged themselves as the faithful people of Israel. As Robert Thomson showed, it is important for the Armenians to understand that they acted like Maccabees in fulfilling their Christian destiny at Avarayr<sup>49</sup>.

(d) They viewed the dynamic of redemption inherent in the whole purposive movement of history in which the Armenian people had its part<sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> Two such instances are discussed by M. E. STONE, 'Two Armenian Manuscripts and the Historia Sacra', in C. CALZOLARI BOUVIER – J.-D. KAESTLI – B. OUTTIER (eds.), *Apocryphes Arméniens. Transmission — Traduction — Création — Iconographie (Publications de l'Institut romand des sciences bibliques 1)*, Lausanne, Éditions du Zèbre, 1999, p. 21-31.

<sup>48</sup> This feature of Armenian society in antiquity is analysed by C. TOUMANOFF, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, Washington, Georgetown University Press, 1963.

<sup>49</sup> See note 22 above.

<sup>50</sup> Note that some chronological texts, commencing from Adam, continue after Christ's crucifixion to the Christianization of Armenia and the major saints of the Armenian Church. STONE, *Armenian Apocrypha Relating to Adam and Eve*, *op. cit.* (note 43), p. 98-99, § 23-24.

The apocryphal reading of the Bible, therefore penetrated the various levels of Armenian culture, and we find apocryphal traditions in varied types of creativity.

(a) In parabiblical narratives, such as the series of *Patmut'iwnk* 'Histories' of every biblical worthy from Adam down to John the Baptist and the Virgin. In genre many of the parabiblical texts imitate or are written in the patterns of older Jewish apocrypha or even biblical patterns. Most striking are the Armenian apocalypses, works such as the *Vision of Enoch the Just* and *Seventh Vision of Daniel*<sup>51</sup>. We have already discussed manuscripts that incorporate apocryphal works into a great historical cycle, often commencing from Adam with the *Cycle of Four Works*<sup>52</sup> and sometimes ending with the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, sometimes with eschatological texts and sometimes with histories of major Armenian saints. This again emphasizes both the 'apocryphization' of Armenian views of biblical culture and also the 'Armenization' of the whole of the *historia sacra*.

(b) Apocryphal elements penetrated into the school traditions of which process we have already spoken.

(c) The use of apocryphal traditions in literature. It is not just in the services of the church, its hymns and prayers, but also in belle-lettristic works of, for example the major Armenian poets<sup>53</sup>.

(d) The use, which we will not discuss here, of apocryphal material and developments of apocryphal material in the contemplative and mystical traditions, in magic, in medicine, etc. It is hard to know the provenance and contexts of origin and of the conservation and transmission of the magical / medical material, but suffice it to mention the role of King Solomon<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> See S. YOVSEPIANC', *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 378-386 and J. ISSAVERDENS, *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 235-247. Two conference volumes on Armenian apocalyptic are soon expected, edited by K. Bardakjian and S. La Porta.

<sup>52</sup> See W. L. LIPSCOMB, *op. cit.* (note 25).

<sup>53</sup> It is not possible to document this here fully. Ample examples with English translation can be found in J. R. RUSSELL, *Yovhannēs T'lkuranc'i and The Mediaeval Armenian Lyric Traditions* (*University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies* 7), Atlanta, Ga., Scholars Press, 1987; M. E. STONE, *Adamgirk': The Adam Book of Ar.ak'el of Siwnik'*, Oxford, OUP, 2007; M. E. STONE, 'Some Remarks on Վաւն ստեղծման պիտրիի (on the Creation of the World) by Yovhannēs T'lkuranc'i', in J. J. S. WEITENBERG – Th. VAN LINT (eds.), *New Approaches to Medieval Armenian Language and Literature* (*Dutch Studies in Armenian Language and Literature* 3), Amsterdam & Atlanta, Rodopi, 1995, p. 63-78 and M. E. STONE, 'John of T'lkuran on the Creation of the World', *St. Nersēs Theological Review* 10 (2005), p. 51-75. The as yet unpublished doctoral thesis of Th. M. VAN LINT, *Konstandin of Erznka: An Armenian Religious Poet of the XIIIth-XIVth Century*, PhD thesis, Leiden, Leiden University, 1996 is another major contribution to this issue.

<sup>54</sup> Many references may be found in F. FEYDIT, *Amulettes de l'Arménie chrétienne* (*Bibliothèque arménienne de la Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian*), Venice, St. Lazare, 1986 and in

(e) The entry into biblical illustration and particularly into the canonical cycle of Gospel illustration, of apocryphal elements. This is less striking for the Old Testament scenes, which are, in any case, less prominent in Armenian art, but it is extremely interesting for the New Testament ones, especially the Gospel scenes<sup>55</sup>.

The long and short of all this is that throughout most of their history the Armenians did not read apocrypha as a separate corpus of material at some distance from or in tension with the Canonical texts. What is striking is the almost unconscious incorporation of apocryphal texts and elements into Armenian Bible retellings, both verbal and iconographic, and, at the same time the stress on the biblical roots and basis of Armenian culture and national being. The Armenians played Israel's role, Vataršapat played Jerusalem's or the Temple's, the Bible and biblical history as told through the filter of the apocrypha became the first stage of the history of the Armenian people.

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S. HARUTYUNYAN, *Armenian Incantations and Folk Prayers*, Yerevan, Yerevan University Press, 2006 (in Armenian).

<sup>55</sup> See Nira STONE, 'Apocryphal Elements in Christian Bible Illumination,' in V. CALZOLARI-BOUVIER – J.-D. KAESTLI – B. OUTTIER (eds.), *op. cit.* (note 47), p. 161-169 and the examples and bibliography cited there.



