

EIGHT NEW MANUSCRIPTS OF THE ARMENIAN VERSION OF
THE TESTAMENTS OF THE TWELVE PATRIARCHS

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The New Manuscripts

Last year Archbishop Shahe Ajamian published his invaluable *Grand Catalogue des Manuscrits Arméniens de la Bible*.¹ This work is provided with extensive indexes and I immediately took the opportunity of searching in the for manuscripts of *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, a work on which, as I will explain below, I had been working on and off for two decades. In spite of extensive searches I had made in previous years, in the indexes of Ajamian's work I discovered that the following twelve or thirteen manuscript copies of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* exist, in addition to those I had noted in the list published in 1977.² The new manuscripts are not presented here in full, since detailed descriptions of them are to be found in Ajamian's work.

Those of which we have managed to obtain copies have been assigned sigla, continuing and extending the system used in the 1977 article. The libraries in which the manuscripts are located are designated

¹ Lisbon: Gulbenkian Foundation, 1992.

² "New Evidence for the Armenian Version of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," *Revue Biblique* 84 (1977), 94-107, reprinted in M.E. Stone, *Selected Studies in the Pseudepigrapha with Special Reference to the Armenian Tradition*, *Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha*, 9, ed. M. de Jonge and A.-M. Denis;(Leiden: Brill, 1991), 131-144. Henceforth we will refer to this publication.

Stone, Testaments, page 2

in this article by the system of sigla being developed for the Census of Armenian Manuscripts, carried out under the auspices of the Association Internationale des Etudes Arméniennes. M, therefore, signifies the Matenadaran in Yerevan; J signifies the Library of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem; V signifies the Library of the Mechitarist Fathers in Venice; W signifies the Library of the Mechitarist Fathers in Vienna; WNB signifies the National Library in Vienna; NJ signifies New Julfa; and BL signifies the British Library in London.

Siglum	Ajamian No.	Library No.	Date	Folios
Ac	116	M7623	1655	598v-610v
Ad	123	M191	1663	94r-107r
Ae	209	J3043	1606-22	337v-352r
Af	215	J3438	1636-39	23v-35r
Ag	217	J1932	1640	261r-273v
Ah	225	J1928	17th century	274v-287r
Ai	226	J1929	17th century	240v-251r
Aj	294	Getty Mus. 84-63	1636	37r-49v
No siglum assigned	234	NJ (St. Saviour) 336	1361	379r-309r
No siglum assigned	270	V (Kurdian) 37	1638	245v-257v
No siglum assigned	286	Plovtiv	1661	90r-102r
No siglum assigned	287	BLuncatalog	1661	90r-103v

In addition to the above manuscripts, it eventuates that in NJ St. Saviour 3 (Catalogue No. 1) designated by the siglum U in the previously

published list, there are two copies of *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. One occurs on fols. 27r-39r and the other on fols. 280r-294r.³ With these additions, the number of Armenian manuscripts of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* currently known reaches sixty-four. That total does not include the *Epitome*, found in Matenadaran manuscript no. 2679, of the year 981 CE which was published separately.⁴ It seems fairly likely that this substantially exhausts the copies to be found in biblical manuscripts. It is more than possible, however, that further copies are to be found in non-biblical manuscripts the existence of which will only become known as the work of cataloguing of Armenian manuscripts proceeds.

The New Manuscripts and the Editio Minor

In a series of articles and studies over the past two decades, the author has presented all of the *opera praeparativa* for an *editio minor* of the full Armenian text of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.⁵

³ Ajamian, no. 240. The text of three Testaments from this manuscript was republished in 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* (Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1969), 166-188. It was apparently the text of the first copy of the work in this manuscript, for it follows the Book of Genesis.

⁴ M.E. Stone, "The Epitome of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," *REArm* 20 (1986-1987), 70-107.

⁵ In addition to the works cited in the preceding notes see: "The Jerusalem Manuscripts of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: Samples of Text," *Sion* 44 (1970), 29-35; "Methodological Issues in the Study of the Text of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha," *Proceedings of the Fifth World Congress of* May 18, 2012

Carefully selected samples of text of the numerous manuscripts of the book known before the publication of Ajamian's catalogue were collated and the variants were analyzed. The text was found to be transmitted in four families: Z, the best single manuscript; MV; family *alpha* comprising A S H K W B Ff Hh; and family *beta*, comprising all the remaining manuscripts. After analysis of the sample collations of all the manuscripts, it was decided to include the following manuscripts in the edition. In them, it eventuated, would appear all readings likely to reflect original Greek readings, and at the same time, they present the chief lines of inner-Armenian textual development.

Z M1500

MV J1925 and M353

L X Bb WNB11, M346 and V280 (family *beta*)

K S W B W128, J939, W705 and V697 (family *alpha*)

The Epitome will be included where it is extant.

Work on the edition itself, laid aside for the best part of two decades, has been resumed and, upon completion, the edition will be published in the series *Armenian Apocrypha* under the auspices of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities. The procedures undertaken

Jewish Studies (Jerusalem, 1971) 211-17, reprinted in *Studies*, 124-130; "The Armenian Version of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: Selection of Manuscripts," *Sion* 49 (1975), 207-211; *The Armenian Version of the Testament of Joseph* (Texts and Translations Pseudepigrapha Series, 6; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975); and "Two Further Notes on the Epitome of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," *REArm* 21 (1988-89), 497-99.

in the selection of manuscripts have been reviewed and no reason to deviate from them has become apparent.

It became essential, however, with the publication of the existence of new manuscripts, to determine whether they should be included in the edition or not. I succeeded in receiving copies of eight of the manuscripts, those to which sigla have been assigned in the above table. I have good hopes of receiving at least one more.⁶ The Plovdiv manuscript is apparently lost, though further research in Bulgaria may uncover it.

The eight new manuscripts to which I had access were collated against that text of the long recension on which the previous sample collations were based, i.e. the text of manuscript M (J1925). The samples collated were TL 1, TZ 9, TJos 19, and TB 11-12. The new collations were then integrated into the collations which had been prepared previously of all the other manuscripts. All the unique readings of the new manuscripts were compared with the Greek, in order to determine whether any of them preserved Greek readings not to be found in the other manuscripts. Such readings, of course, would require that the new witnesses be included in the edition. No such readings appeared and,

⁶ Appreciation is expressed here to Archbishop David Sahagian, Librarian of Manuscripts of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem and to Dr. Georg Ter Vardanian, Keeper of Manuscripts of the Matenadaran in Yerevan. I was able to consult the Getty manuscript in a microfilm in the collection of the Mount of Olives Armenian Bible Centre. The Armenian Bible Centre has also undertaken to enable me to study NJ St. Saviour 336 of 1361, which would clearly be desirable, because of its date. This possibility is dependent on the solution of certain technical problems and our appreciation is expressed to the Director, Archbishop S. Ajamian.

indeed, scarcely any textually significant unique readings were found. However, the collations did turn up some results which are of interest for the history of the development of the Armenian manuscript tradition, and we shall remark upon them here.

First, all the manuscripts except for Aj belong to the *beta* recension. Of these seven new *beta* manuscripts, Ac has a rather distinctive character. It is particularly close to Zz with which it shares a substantial omission in TJos 19:3-4 and it has some readings in minority groups with MVZ, i.e. TB 12:3, TJos 19:4, TJos 19:5. Ms Ae exhibits no readings in minority groups, which means that its text is close to that of the samples, i.e. Ms M (J1925) and at the same time, it might hold an intermediate place on the stemma. Ms Ag shows some relationship with Mss NO, cf. TZ 9:4, 7, 8.

The most interesting textual type found in the new manuscripts is that of Ms Aj. In three of the samples, TL 1, TJos 19 and TB 11-12, its text is of the *alpha* type, while in the fourth sample, TZ 9, its text is predominantly of the *beta* type. In 1976, in the study of Ff and Hh it was observed that in TL 19 — one of the samples collated at that time — “they seem to have a mixed text, agreeing in some respects with WB and in others with *beta*.”⁷ It is notable that these two manuscripts are Bibles, like Aj, and these three manuscripts are the only Bibles containing a text of the *alpha* type. Moreover, the closest textual affinities of Ms Aj are with

⁷ Stone, *Studies*, 135.

manuscripts Ff and Hh. It is not as close to them as they are to one another,⁸ but it is very close to them, nonetheless.

In a total of 39 instances in which Aj read in a minority group with the *alpha* or individual manuscripts of *alpha*, there were only six in which it read against Ff Hh. In those samples in which it preserves an “*alpha*” type of text, it never presented a reading in a minority group against all the *alpha* manuscripts. Consequently, its affinity with this textual type is quite unmistakable.⁹

In TZ 9, as has been remarked, the text of this manuscript is of the *beta* type. It is most closely allied with the majority group of *beta*. It reads against the typical *alpha* readings in TZ 9:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 and, in TZ it never reads together with *alpha* against the majority *beta* group. It does share a two minor readings with Ff and Hh (Ff Hh in TZ 9:4; Hh alone in 9:2).

It has a number of unique readings, but these are all spelling variants or corruptions. The only unique reading of the manuscript that might be considered substantial is TJos 19:1:

t;si] ;s \a\nvam t;sanhi

This reading has no support in any surviving Greek manuscript.

The conclusions that may be drawn, therefore, from our study of the eight new manuscripts seem clear. They are, first, that none of these manuscripts seems likely to preserve original Greek readings which are

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ The one instance in which it occurs in a minority group without any *alpha* manuscript is TZ 9:5 where it reads together with Ms M. But TZ 9, in this manuscript, is not of the *alpha* type.

not represented in the witnesses already selected for inclusion in the *editio minor*. Second, that the addition of the evidence of Aj to that which emerged from the analysis of Ff and Hh leads to the conclusion that there existed a mixed textual type or types which followed *alpha* readings in some sections of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and a text with *beta* readings in other sections. It is intriguing to note that Ff and Hh do not exhibit the *beta* readings in TZ 9, where they are so prominent in Aj. Moreover, the fact that these three manuscripts are Bibles is probably a factor in this situation. Although the discovery of this new textual sub-type is of considerable interest in the attempt to unravel the internal history of the Armenian version of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, it is of no weight in the quest after the best form of the Armenian version of the work.

The Techniques to be Used in the Edition

In 1975 I spent six weeks as a guest of the Theological Faculty at Leiden University, under a grant provided by the Netherlands Organization for Pure Research (ZWO). At that time I was able to work with Professor M. de Jonge and his colleagues, T. Korteweg and H.J. de Jonge, who were in the semi-final stages of the preparation of the edition of the Greek *editio maior*, published a few years later.¹⁰ At that time and in the preceding years I had prepared collations of the selected manuscripts of the *Testaments* in Armenian and these had been verified

¹⁰ M. de Jonge in cooperation with H.W. Hollander, H.J. de Jonge and Th. Korteweg, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text* (Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece, 1.2; Leiden: Brill, 1978).

by Mr. H. Samuelian in Jerusalem. In Leiden, I prepared draft editions of TI and TZ; these were never printed. I also prepared a draft edition of TJos which was published; it too was based upon the principles enunciated in the *opera praeparativa*.¹¹

Recently I have gained considerable experience using the program called *Collate*, which runs on the Macintosh personal computer. The program was developed at Oxford University Computing Service, in the context of its Computers and Manuscripts project, by Dr. Peter Robinson. This powerful tool bids fair to revolutionize the preparation of critical editions of texts, and I have decided to lay aside the collations prepared and checked manually fifteen or more years ago, and to produce the new edition using the *Collate* program. In the following paragraphs I shall outline the features and aspects of the program which led me to this radical conclusion and set forth the results which I hope will issue from this decision.

Two dominant advantages are gained by the use of a computer for the comparison of manuscripts and the preparation of an *apparatus criticus*. The first advantage is that the computer does not make mistakes in comparing the manuscripts, recording the variants, or preparing the fair copy for printing. The use of a computer minimizes the amount of intervention by human beings in these processes. At the same time, the use of a computer facilitates the handling of large amounts of data. This means that it is possible to record, organize and retrieve information

¹¹ Stone, *Testament of Joseph*.

about the manuscripts and their texts in far greater detail than in manually prepared editions.

Ideally, of course, one would like to be able to put a photograph of a page of a manuscript onto a piece of machinery, for it to be copied and turned into digitized text and then to manipulate it on a computer. Although it is now possible to turn a page of manuscript into a computer picture, the software does not yet exist which can examine this picture of the manuscript page and recognize, i.e. “read” the characters written on it and put them into a text file, just as if they had been typed.¹²

The minimal conditions for a program designed to collate manuscripts are the following, if it is to be truly useful for scholars.

1. The program must be able to differentiate between textually significant variants and those whose interest is primarily codicological, orthographic or scribal. It must be able to include the textually significant variants in a critical apparatus, while preserving the other information in forms in which it will be useful.

2. Second, the program must be able to handle major omissions, displacements of text and the like.

3. Third, the program must handle a large number of manuscripts at once.

¹² Today, the software exists to do this for printed English, but it does not work satisfactorily for printed Armenian, *a fortiori* for manuscript text. However beautiful and regular Armenian manuscript writing may be, the software now available cannot take account of the extent of the inevitable variations to be found in manuscript writing. This is a development that will, I am sure, take place in the future.

4. Fourth, the program should produce output material in a form basically suitable for printing, which does not have to be typed again or changed extensively.

Collate goes a long way towards fulfilling these *desiderata*.

It minimizes human intervention by limiting it to the entry of the running text of the manuscripts into the computer. This is the only stage of the work at which a human being is involved intensively in manipulating the data. The dangers of error inherent in human text entry can be effectively minimized by careful proofreading and by paying attention to anomalies which appear in the subsequent stages of collation.

In the course of entry of manuscripts, all conceivable details about the text and the manuscript containing it can be entered and marked in such a way as to enable their later retrieval. Abbreviations, numeric notations, coloured letters, ornamental capitals, physical features of the manuscript, and many other details can thus be recorded. There is no limit to the number of such features that can be noted. Information relating to the manuscript such as erasures and overwritings *prima manu*, lacunae, *vacats*, and the like can be marked and eventually output as a separate apparatus.

Collate also provides capabilities for handling corrections *secunda manu*, glosses, marginal notes on the text, and so forth.

Thus the stage of inputting the data is an extremely important one, and the amount of detail which is recorded determines the wealth of organized information one can give in the final edition. Nothing can

substitute for the scholar's experience and care at this stage of the work and, I seriously doubt whether OCR will ever fully substitute for the scholar's eye.

A way is needed to tell the computer which details to ignore. Here the important concept of Regularization has been introduced. If the word *mecut'iwn* has been abbreviated to *mecui*, as often happens, and that has been tagged as an abbreviation, the transcription file will show something like *mecu[r]t[/r]i[r]wn[/r]*. This word, in a second manuscript, may have been abbreviated differently, say to *mecut'i*, and that tagged would give us *mecut'i[r]iwn[/r]*. The problem is two-fold. On the one hand we want to preserve the information about the different abbreviations, on the other, we want the program to know that there is no textually significant variant at play here, and we want the output to produce neither of the tagged forms, but the resolved reading *mecut'iwn*, and not to show a variant in the apparatus.

Regularization enables you to tell the program to regard *mecu[r]t[/r]i[r]wn[/r]* and *mecut'i[r]iwn[/r]* as equivalent to *mecut'iwn*, and yet to keep a careful list of all instances in which such substitutions are made. This list can be written into a file formatted so it can be read into a database, and can thus form the basis of a list of abbreviations. This is an extraordinarily powerful tool for our work.

Preparing the Data for Collation

1. It is possible to define lists of letters or groups of letters which the program will consider as equivalent for purposes of comparison,

while it keeps them separate for purposes of reproduction. This *Collate* calls Fuzzy Matching.

2. Fuzzy Matching handles the issue of when differences are not differences. There are cases where differences in spelling are so great that *Collate* cannot recognize that what occurs in the base manuscript and that being compared with it are variants of the same word. A good example is the use of 'aw' or 'ō'. If the word for day is spelt in both ways, *Collate* sees a two and a three-letter word, aur and ør and these are, to it, so different (having only one letter in common) that it regards them as different words. It will then treat them as additions / omissions and not as substitutions. However, if the correspondence of aw and o is included in the Fuzzy Match table, *Collate* will show ør as a substitution for aur. This is an extraordinarily powerful concept and tool which allows the fine-tuning of the apparatus output.

3. If you do not wish to record this difference at all, *Collate* provides the option of entering au÷ø into a Replacement table, after which the program regards them as identical.

Running the Program

The program will produce, in a typical run as I use it, the following files:

- a. A Master Text, i.e. the running text of the base of collation.
- b. An Apparatus embodying all the information in the input files, in the form of an apparatus criticus, after Regularization, Replacement, and Fuzzy-Matching.

c. Separate apparatuses for words, phrases, punctuation, and comments.

d. A list of all Regularizations that have been carried out.

The program offers extremely flexible formatting capabilities, allowing the user to determine the exact format of each of the elements of the text and the apparatus. In addition it allows, if desired, the automatic embedding of the commands of the Tex typesetting language, and comes with an implementation of that language.

My own practice, so far, has been to output the material into a form that is basically formatted as I wish, take the files into Page Maker where I paginate and massage them.