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ADAM, EVE AND THE INCARNATION

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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

¹ See M.E. Stone, "The Armenian Apocryphal Literature: Translation and Creation," *Il Caucaso: Cerniera fra Culture dal Mediterraneo alla Persia (Secoli I-XI)* (Settimane di Studio dal Centro Italiano de Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, XLIII; Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 1996), 612-646.

² The translation literature in Armenian was presented in the classical work of scholarship by G. Zarbhanalian, *Մատենադարանի Հայկական Թարգմանութեանց* (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 reformulation 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* (*ժողովածու*), *Collections of Sermons* (*ճամբարներ*) 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

Abraham Terian (rev. M.E. Stone; Jerusalem: Institute of African and Asian Studies, 1995).

³ On the disjunction between conciliar and other lists of canonical books and the actual usage of the Armenian Church, see M.E. Stone, "Armenian Canon Lists III The Lists of Mechitar of Ayrvank," *Harvard Theological Review* 69 (1978) 299-300.

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.

⁷ M.E. Stone, "Concerning the seventy-two Translators: Armenian Fragments of Epiphanius *On Weights and Measures*," *Harvard Theological Review* 73 (1980), 334-335.

⁸ See E. Tayec'i, *Անկանոն Գիրք Նոր Կառկարանայ* (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 protoplasts 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.⁹ 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 *uwwurkewy* "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 nostri 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.¹⁰ This idea, that sin incurs an indebtedness and that Christ on the Cross annuls 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

⁹ J.-D. Kaestli, "Annexe: Témoins anciens sur la croyance en la descente du Christ aux enfers," *L'évangile de Barthélemy* tr. J.-D. Kaestli & P. Cherix (Turnhout: Brepols, 1993) 135-142.

¹⁰ Tertullian, *de pudicitia* 19.19-20. The patristic evidence related to this verse is surveyed by Eugene C. Best, *An Historical Study of the Exegesis of Colossians 2,14* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1956).

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 cheirographs (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 ἀφανισθῆναι and the second is ἔλυσε.

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

¹⁴ John Chrysostom, *Homily 6 on Coloss 2* (PG 62:337-344). English translation from *LPNF* 13, 286, reprinted here from J. Ashwort, *LFC* 14, 1983.

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.¹⁵ This Greek word is calqued into Armenian as *ձեռագիր* 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 *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.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 *ձեռագիր*) 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.¹⁷

In most forms of the story there is an element of deception in the cheirograph itself. Satan tricks Adam and Eve¹⁸ into signing and, moreover, thinks he is deceiving and completely subjecting Adam by setting impossible conditions. Actually, however, Satan is deceived

¹⁵ The issues are well summarized in G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, tr. G.W. Bromiley (1974) s.v. *χειρόγραφον*.

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 Cheirograph of Adam, Satan intervenes during their attempts to solve these problems.

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.

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.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.²⁰ At the time of the Baptism, the waters of the Jordan turned back and revealed the stone cheirograph, sometimes

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 Turdeanu, *Apocryphes slaves et roumains de l'Ancien Testament* (SVTP, 5; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 119.

²⁰ In the *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 *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 *Adam, Eve and the Incarnation* does not have the penitence narrative either, even though it was readily available in Armenian both in the *Penitence of Adam* and in *Book of Adam*.

guarded by demonic serpents or dragons.²¹ Christ smashed the cheirograph and trampled the dragons that guarded it (Ps 74 [73]:14).²² 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 *ձեռագիր* is translated "promissory note" by Lipscomb, but we would prefer to translate it "contract."²³ A second, literal meaning of *ձեռագիր*, "the

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 *ראשי תנינים* and *ראשי לוייתן* 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 (*apud* 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: Ἀδάμ τὸν φθαρέντα ἀναπλάττει ἢ ρείθροισ Ἰορδάνου καὶ δρακόντων ἢ κεφαλὰς ἐμφωλευόντων found in W. Christ et M. Paraniakas, *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 Yovhannēs 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.

²³ W.L. Lipscomb, *The Armenian Apocryphal Adam Literature* (University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies, 8; Atlanta: Scholars, 1990) 139.

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<s>, 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 paradisaical food. The search for food is a major theme in the primary Adam books, most notably the Armenian *Penitence of Adam*.²⁴ 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 *ձեռնադիր* 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 *višap*, 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 *դրուխ*

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.

վիշապին. The "Dragon serpent" is Satan or Satan's representative. In a form of the Legend of the Cheirograph current in Old Church Slavonic, the stone of the cheirograph 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 footsteps and serpents' heads. The text continues as follows:

And our Lord Christ, with his foot having trampled the dragon, and he trampled the cheirograph, the flat rock, and destroyed (it). <From> the heavens light shone. Whe<n> 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 cheirograph 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 Cheirograph 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 Cheirograph 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 Cheirograph 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

²⁵ Compare the word ἔσχισεν 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

²⁶ F.H. Marshall, *Old Testament Legends from a Greek Poem on Genesis and Exodus by Georgios Chumnos* (Cambridge: CUP, 1925). See also G. Megas, "Das χειρόγραφον Adams," 311-312 who discusses this text and points out the existence of two further manuscripts of it. Even more manuscripts exist.

²⁷ G. Megas, "Das χειρόγραφον Adams. Ein Beitrag zu Col 2:13-15," *ZNW* 27 (1928), 305-320; Leopold Kreutzenbacher, *Teufelsbänder und Faustgestalten im Abendland* (Klagenfurt: Habelt, 1968) 45-46 quotes a popular Romanian telling of the story and see in further detail, Leopold Kreutzenbacher, *Bilder und Legenden* (Klagenfurt: Habelt, 1971) 64.

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, *Teufelsbänder*, 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.³¹ Other examples could be adduced. Turdeanu in particular has pointed to popular stories and songs current in Moldavia and Romania in which the Legend of the Cheirograph is present.³² We cannot yet explain the particular fascination with this theme in sixteenth-century Moldavia and Romania.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*.

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, *Teufelsbänder*, 42ff. He refers also to P. Cormanesco, *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, *Teufelsbänder*, 43. See also note 7 above.

³² See note 27 above.

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.