

underway in several quarters.³ Roberta Ervine has been working for some time on Girk' Harc'manc' (Book of Questions) of an earlier authority in the medieval Armenian intellectual tradition, Vanakan Vardapet (1181-1251).

What was particularly interesting about Dr. Ervine's investigation, from the present writer's perspective, is the amount of apocryphal material embedded in Vanakan's elenctic writing. Let me give one example: I had prepared a text called Cheirograph of Adam for publication based on two manuscripts of the seventeenth century. This text is also elenctic in character. Dr. Ervine discovered the same text, virtually litteratim, incorporated in Vanakan's Book of Questions.⁴ Vanakan lived 1181-1251⁵ and so his witness is considerably earlier than the two seventeenth-century manuscript copies of this text that we have

³ S. LaPorta of Harvard University is preparing a doctoral thesis on this important document.

⁴ This document is discussed in the author's forthcoming book Adam's Contract with Satan or The Cheirograph of Adam.

⁵ N. Bogharian, Armenian Authors (Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1971), 290-293 (in Armenian)

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published.⁶ It is unclear whether Vanakan was the author of this passage, or whether he, in turn, drew it from an earlier source.

Quite apart from the issue of dating, however, is the fact that Vanakan's Book of Questions illustrates how apocryphal traditions can be borne by an elenchi text. There are substantial didactic and elenchi elements in some Armenian texts that have been characterized as apocrypha. This may be observed, for example, in The Penitence of Solomon as well as in The History of the Forefathers. In these documents we observe the posing of questions and answers being given to them. They quote different authorities with opinions about the tradition under discussion, using such formulae as omank' asen "certain persons say" or aylk' asen "others say"; or even cite "the doctors" (vardapetk') or patristic authors by name, often pseudepigraphically. In view of this new light on elenchi texts we must speak not just of elenchi traditions embedded in

⁶ M.E. Stone, Armenian Apocrypha: Relating to Adam and Eve (Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha, 14; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 144-146.

apocryphal writings, but of apocryphal material incorporated in elenctic writings. This field of investigation is in its infancy.⁷

In the case of the present text, however, there is no obvious reason for it to bear the name Question. The document is not elenctic in form, but is a narrative running from the time of Adam up to the final generations. Its recounting of primordial history ends, for all practical purposes, with traditions about the sons of Noah. These lead to the narrative about the wicked peoples of Gog and Magog, who are imprisoned, we are told, behind the bronze northern gates, an idea directly connected with the tales about Alexander the Great. This imprisonment is also related — anachronistically — to Ezekiel's prophecy (chaps. 38–39), and then with eschatological matters through the wars of Gog and Magog. Datings receive notable emphasis, particularly in the first part.

⁷ See also the discussion in 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.

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Question is preceded by a document dealing with the relationship between the old and new Adam and Jerusalem. Following it on fol. 370v–371r is Concerning the Six Millennia, which is a calendarical text dealing with the six millennia of the world which we have also published recently.⁸

We edited Question with translation and commentary.⁹ Some particularly interesting aspects of this document, to which we wish to draw attention, could not be discussed in that book. The first eleven sections follow the course of history down to Noah. They contain a variety of familiar traditions, but the only known Armenian Adam book to which they show any particular affinity is The Sethites and the Cainites.¹⁰ It seems most likely that Question — particularly §§1–4 — formed a source of that writing. The work may thus be divided into three blocks of material: §§1-4 which relate to Adam and Eve and their

⁸ Stone, *Armenian Apocrypha*, 135, 138-138.

⁹ Stone, *Armenian Apocrypha*, 114-134.

¹⁰ Stone, *Armenian Apocrypha*, 201-206.

children; §§5-§11 which deal with the Sethites and the Cainites down to Noah; and §§12 to the end which will be discussed below. Let us give two examples of Adamic traditions.

In §3 Seth is said to be a giant, in Adam's likeness. There is no other source that puts this in this way. In Gen. 5:3 Seth is said to be ěst kerparanac' iwroc' ew ěst patkeri iwrowm "according to his form and according to his image" and, in many Rabbinic traditions Adam is said to have been of extraordinarily large dimensions. The inference that, consequently, Seth was a giant, is drawn nowhere else. Seth's gigantic stature is not to be related to the giants said to be the offspring of the intercourse of the "sons of God" and "the daughters of man" in Genesis 6:1-2. Those giants are known in a wide range of Jewish, Gnostic and Christian texts, the earliest of which are the Qumran Book of the Giants and Jubilees.¹¹

¹¹ John C. Reeves, Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmology: Studies in the Book of the Giants Traditions (Hebrew Union College Monographs 14; Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1992) gives rich material on numerous aspects of the giants tradition.

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Instead, in *Question*, the interpretation of the "sons of God and the daughters of men" (Gen 6:2) as the Sethites and Cainites is given. This is common in Byzantine and Armenian sources, which have suppressed the traditions of angelic descent. Usually, according to this tradition Sethite men live ascetically on a mountain and the lascivious Cainite women on a plain and the Cainite women lead the Sethites astray. *Question*, however, puts the onus of the sin on Satan who pushed the Cainites to lead the Sethites astray. The sexual element of the sin is less highlighted. This formulation of the tradition is unusual. There are other features of this part of the work that seem to reflect an extensive development of the Sethite-Cainite material. This block of material runs until §10, while §11 forms a bridge to that which ensues.

In §§12-§34, except for §§27-30, *Question* is dependent on the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*. That work is extant in a number of languages and the Syriac text is accorded particularly high estimation. Where appropriate, in our edition we printed P. Alexander's English

translation of the Syriac text of the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius¹² below the Armenian text and English translation of the corresponding sections of Question. The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius does not exist in full in Armenian. An Armenian translation of the last few sections of it, which are predominantly eschatological, has long to be known to exist, though not as an independent work. It is incorporated as Chapter 32 into the History of the Province of Sisakan by Step'annos Orbelian (d. 1305), published in Paris in 1859.¹³ More precisely, Orbelian's History contains a text paralleling §§31–34 of Question, and drawn from an Armenian version of the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius. It should be remarked that in Question this section of Pseudo-Methodius, follows three

¹² Paul J. Alexander, The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1985), 36–51. That work gives much information on Pseudo-Methodius. A brief bibliographical guide to the texts of the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius may be found in G.J. Reinink, "Der Verfassersname 'Modios' der syrischen Schatzhöhle und die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," Oriens Christianus 67 (1983), 46-64.

¹³ Step'annos Orbelian, History of Sisakan. We have consulted the Tiflis printing of 1910, which contains the extracts from the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius on pp. 144–157: see Step'annos Orbelian, History of the Province of Sisakan (Tiflis: Alaneanc', 1910).

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paragraphs that have no parallel in the Syriac.¹⁴ Orbelian's extracts from the Armenian translation of Pseudo-Methodius do not preserve the material about Noah's apocryphal fourth son, Maniton or Ionṭon, which is shared by the Syriac version and Question. Rather substantially more of the Armenian Pseudo-Methodius is preserved in the newly discovered document than in Orbelian's History of Sisakan.

The question immediately arises: is the text of Pseudo-Methodius incorporated into Question dependent on the same Armenian version of the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius as is Orbelian's History? Did there once exist a fuller Armenian version of Pseudo-Methodius, known both to Step'annos Orbelian and to the author of Question, or were two different, perhaps partial, translations involved?

¹⁴ We might wish to speculate that there are three blocks of material involved §§12-26 from Pseudo-Methodius, §§31-34 also from Pseudo-Methodius, but perhaps with a somewhat different literary history since they are also to be found in Orbelian's work, and three bridging paragraphs which might (or might not) be part of the Armenian version of Pseudo-Methodius, which has been reworked in any case.

Two observations may be made which bear on this issue. First, in §§31–34, wherever two texts do occur in Armenian, they are clearly related to one another but not identical. Thus there was only one translation into Armenian, but neither is Question the source of Orbelian nor is the reverse true. Second, Question §§12–24 contains material which also exists in the Syriac version of the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius, but not in the work of Step'annos Orbelian. It is, therefore, a direct witness to a more extensive Armenian version of the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius. Whether Step'annos Orbelian himself excerpted and abbreviated a fuller Armenian version, or whether he faithfully copied a version that was already shortened, cannot be determined at present. It seems likely, nonetheless, that a full version of the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius existed in Armenian and that it served as a source for the two surviving documents. These two observations, taken together, lead us to conclude that Question was composed in Armenian, and that its author used an Armenian text of the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius.

The traditions about Maniton, the fourth son of Noah that occur in Question, but not in Orbelian, are of considerable interest. Besides the material found in the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius, shorter traditions

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about Maniton are known from the two Armenian translations of the Chronicle of Michael the Syrian. The Armenian translations of Michael's Chronicle contain many expansions, often embodying apocryphal traditions.¹⁵ In the Jerusalem edition of 1871, the text relating to Maniton reads as follows:¹⁶

For after the flood they say that Noah had a son Mantinos, (other translation: Maniton) by name, who took his borders on the other side of the sea. And he besought some of the bones(?) of Adam from his father, and he gave him the knee bones as a memorial. And he increased astrology.

¹⁵ F. Haase, "Die armenischen Rezensionen der syrischen Chronik Michael des Grossen," Oriens Christianus 5 (1915), 60-82, 271-284 dealt with the particular character of the expansions in the Armenian version of Michael's Chronicle. The matter deserves renewed examination.

¹⁶ The Armenian text is to be found in Chronicle of Rev. Michael, Patriarch of the Syrians (Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1871) 11–12; cf. the observations of S.P. Brock, in his review of Stone, Signs of the Judgment, in Journal of Theological Studies, 34 (1983), pp. 234–235. The meaning of the word translated 'bones' is uncertain.

We examined another copy of the Chronicle in Erevan, Matenadaran, No. 10200, fol. 302r, which differs quite a lot from the Jerusalem edition just cited. We translate it here:

And Maniton took his lot on the other side of the sea. He requested from his father the bones of Adam, which they had in the ark. And he gave him bones(?) of the knees, and he sent him to the West. He increased astrology and augury and the distinctions of appearance (?physiognomy). And some say that the Midianites come from him.

Maniton is also mentioned in another Armenian document, Peoples of the Sons of Noah.¹⁷ Brock points out that the form $\overline{\text{M}}\overline{\text{o}}\overline{\text{n}}\overline{\text{e}}\overline{\text{t}}\overline{\text{o}}\overline{\text{n}}$ is to be found in the oldest Greek versions of Pseudo-Methodius, while the form $\overline{\text{I}}\overline{\text{o}}\overline{\text{n}}\overline{\text{t}}\overline{\text{o}}\overline{\text{n}}$ is usual in the Syriac text.¹⁸ Thus the form Maniton (with some minor variants) in the texts cited is of some interest. S. Gerö has discussed this fourth son of Noah, who, according to the Syriac Cave of

¹⁷ 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), 221–227.

¹⁸ S.P. Brock (above, note 4), pp. 234–235.

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Treasures, taught oracular wisdom to Nimrod.¹⁹ Gerö argues that the legend of Ionṭon is of a more ancient, Mesopotamian Jewish origin and functions as part of a variety of traditions dealing with the creation and transmission of knowledge.²⁰

It is significant for the study of Pseudo-Callisthenes that immediately after the incident of Maniton, Question goes on to discuss Philip of Macedon and his son Alexander (§21). After various conquests, Alexander encountered the revolting Hamites and imprisoned them behind the northern gates (§§24-27). They are to remain there until the time of the great eschatological attack of evil. Then "the northern gates will be opened suddenly and the race<s> closed up inside will come forth" (§32). Many people will die "and there will be no-one who will bury them, for those who come forth from the north will eat the bodies of man. And

¹⁹ See S. Gerö, "The Legend of the Fourth Son of Noah," Harvard Theological Review 73 (1980), 326. The attribution of both astrology and augury to Maniton in the Armenian texts of the Chronicle runs against the explicit distinction drawn by Cave of Treasures; see ibid., pp. 324–325.

²⁰Ibid., p. 328.

they will drink the blood of animals" (§33). This material is to be found in the Syriac Pseudo-Methodius as well, but not in Orbelian's History of Sisakan.

This is another, minor chapter in the transmission of the Alexander traditions in Armenian. They are thoroughly integrated here into the Christian world-view permeating the Armenian apocryphal writings.

We hope that the brief observations made here illustrate the interest of this document so oddly named Question. It seems not unlikely that, in time, further parts of the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius will turn up in Armenian. It was a document of very great importance in the Christian East, so the existence of an Armenian version is significant. It is certainly gratifying to be able to add a new name to the catalogue of translations into Classical Armenian.