



## Two Unpublished Eschatological Texts

MICHAEL E. STONE

Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mt Scopus, Jerusalem, 91905, Israel

### Abstract

This study presents two medieval Armenian texts which illustrate how themes and subjects drawn from Jewish speculation of the Second Temple period. These medieval reworkings not only preserve ancient material on occasion, but also enable us to trace the influence of pseudepigraphical and associated texts on medieval literature.

**Keywords:** Eschatology, hell, Armenian pseudepigrapha, divisions of history

In this study we wander in time, but not in subject, from the fields in which John Collins usually pastures, for it will explore some medieval traditions in Armenian relating to the Underworld and the Day of Judgement. This is a gift of learning to mark John Collins's signal contribution to the study of Second Temple Judaism. The texts presented here form part of the medieval reworking of biblical tradition and narrative, which is the continuation of a process that commenced in the Second Temple period, if not before. They are given so the reader can gain insight into how the term 'rewritten Bible' (debated though it may be for the earlier period) is a fine fit for the way the biblical narrative of redemption was told in the Middle Ages, viewed through its accompanying tradition.

### The Four Divisions of the Underworld

#### Text 1: Erevan, Matenadaran Institute of Ancient Manuscripts no. M4618

This manuscript is a Miscellany made up of parts written at various times between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The parts of it were copied at different places in Armenia.<sup>1</sup> It contains a number of apocryphal texts, of which the Catalogue gives only the titles. These include: *The History of Adam and Eve*, *The History of Christ's Flight to Egypt*, what is apparently a version of *The Cycle of Four Works*, *The History of Noah's Ark*, *The History of King Hezekiah* and *The History of Isaiah*. The text presented below is preceded on fol. 144r by Յաղագս խոստովանութեան աղուհացից պահոցն: ('Concerning the Confession of Lent'), and followed on fol. 146v by Համառոտ պատմութիւն յեսուայ որդւոյ նաւեայ: ('Short History of Joshua son of Nun'). It occurs on fols. 146r-146v, վասն դժոխց տեղեաց: ('Concerning the Places of the Underworld').

I transcribe and publish this text here. It seems to reflect Latin views and is typical of material that made its way from the West into Armenia, from the Crusader period on, particularly through the Dominicans. Such an origin is indicated both by the term and concept of 'Limbo' and by the idea of purgatory, neither of which is at home in the thought of the Armenian Apostolic Church or, indeed, of the Eastern churches in general. These ideas were given a pivotal medieval formulation by Albertus Magnus (1200–1280) and much popularized by Hugh Ripelin (c. 1210–c. 1270).<sup>2</sup> Ripelin's *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis* (dated 1268) was widely influential and in Armenia was known, among others, to the great theologian Gregory of Tat'ew (known in Armenian as Grigor

1. The manuscript has not yet been fully described, and we are dependent on the short catalogue of the Matenadaran; see Ö. Eganyan, A. Zeyt'unyan and P'. Ant'abyan. *Catalogue of Manuscripts of the Maštoc' Matenadaran* (Erevan: Academy of Sciences, 1965), I, cols. 1247-48 (in Armenian). This text is published with the permission of the Director and British Library Harl. 5459 by permission of the Keeper.

2. See, for the overall development, Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory* (trans. A Goldhammer; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 237-88. He deals with the Dominicans, who had such a great influence in Armenia, on pp. 256-65. On Armenian–Latin relations, see G. Dédéyan, *Histoire des Arméniens* (Toulouse: Privat, 1982), pp. 317-21. The role of the Dominicans in the orient was very considerable and there is quite extensive scholarly literature on Dominican–Armenian relations.

Tat'ewac'i, 1344?–1409).<sup>3</sup> The content of our text is in accord with Albertus Magnus and particularly with Ripelin,<sup>4</sup> and the similarities between it and Gregory of Tat'ew mean that Gregory might well have known it. This does not mean that the other texts in this compilation are also of Latin origin. As the reference by Gregory of Tat'ew shows, the text circulated in Armenia and, we may be sure, was held in some esteem. Otherwise, Gregory, a paragon of Armenian orthodoxy, would not have needed to declare it unacceptable on the basis of Armenian tradition ('The doctors say...'). Since Gregory of Tat'ew cites the document or something very like it, apparently it had entered the Armenian tradition before his time, the latter part of the fourteenth century.

**146r Վասն դժոխց տեղեացն:**

Վարդապետք ասեն թե՛ չորս տեղ կայր ի դժոխս:

Մէկ՝ ներքին դժոխքն:

Երկու՝ տեղի տղայոցն:

Երեք՝ քաւարանն:

Չորս՝ լիմպօսն. Ուր սուրբ հարքն էին:

Ի ներքին դժոխքն, բ. ցեղ տանջանք.

մինն այրումն հրոյ յաւիտենական:

Եւ մին այլ՝ զի զԱստուած ամենեւին ոչ տեսանեն:

Եւ ի տեղի տղայոցն՝ ոչ գոյ տանջանք, այլ զրկեալ ի տեսութենէն Աստուծոյ:

Եւ ի քաւարանն՝ տանջանք հրոյ վաղճանական:

Եւ ի լիմպօսն ոչ գոյր տանջանք (in marg. եւ յամենայն մեղաց սրբեալք էին.)

այլ միային անդ՝ զի ոչ էր բացեալ դեռեւս դուռն / 146v / արքայութեան որ բացաւ հեղմամբ արեանն Քրիստոսի: Մեծատունն էր յատակս դժոխց. այլ Աբրահամ ի վերին լիմպօսն՝ եւ Ղազար ընդ նմա, եւ անդ ետես մեծատունն:

Քրիստոս յորժամ գնաց ի դժոխս. եհան ի լիմպօսէն զսուրբ հարսն, եւ տարաւ յերկնից արքայութիւնն: Եւ դատարկ մնաց լիմպօսն: Եւ այժմէ երկնից արքայութիւնն ի տեղին լիմպօսին. եւ այն երեք տեղն այլ կայ:

3. The matter is discussed by S. La Porta in his studies of Gregory: “‘The Theology of the Holy Dionysius’”, Volume III of Grigor Tat'ewac'i's *Book of Questions: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 2001); *idem*, ‘A Fourteenth-century Armenian Polemic against Judaism and its Latin Source’, in *Le Muséon* (2009) (forthcoming) and in connection with Ripelin in ‘The Reception and Influence of the Corpus of Works Attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite in the Medieval Armenian Spiritual Tradition’, *ARC, The Journal of the Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University* 35 (2007), pp. 211-16.

4. Le Goff, *Purgatory*, pp. 264-65.

Վասն այնորիկ յորժամ հոգին ելանէ ի մարմնոյն, թէ մահուչափ մեղօք է իջանէ ի դժոխս: Թէ սկզբնական մեղօքն որ ոչ է մկրտեալ՝ երթայ ի տեղի տղայոցն: Եւ թէ ներելի մեղօք. եւ կամ խոստովանեալ է՝ բայց ոչ կատարեալ ապաշխարեալ է՝ երթայ ի քաւարանն: Իսկ կատարեալ սուրբն՝ թոչի յերկնից արքայութիւնն որ մեզ արժանիս արասցէ Քրիստոս Աստուած ամէն:

#### 146r Concerning the Places of the Underworld

The doctors say that there were four places in the Underworld.

One, the inner (lowermost) Underworld (= Hell).

Two, the place of the children.

Three, purgatory.

Four, limbo.

In the inner (lowermost) Underworld, (there are) two types (of) punishment.

The one, burning with eternal fire,

and the other one, that they do not see God at all.

And in the place of the children, there is no punishment, but they are deprived of the sight of God.

And in the purgatory, punishment of fire that ends.

And in Limbo there is no punishment and they are pure of all sins, but (are) only there because the door of the kingdom had not yet been opened, which was opened by the spilling of Christ's blood. The rich man was in the base of the Underworld<sup>5</sup> but Abraham (was) in the upper Limbo, and Lazarus was with him, and there he saw the rich man.

When Christ came to the Underworld, he brought the holy fathers out of Limbo and brought them to the kingdom of heaven, and Limbo remained empty. And thenceforth the kingdom of heaven (was) in place of Limbo and those other three places existed.

On account of this, when the spirit goes forth from the body, if it is with mortal sins, it descends to the Underworld. If one who is not baptized is with original sin, it goes to the place of the children, and if (one has) a forgivable sin, or has confessed but not completely repented, it goes to purgatory.

But the completely holy one flies to the kingdom of heaven, of which may Christ God make us worthy. Amen.

In the *Book of Questions*, an Armenian theological encyclopedia by the learned Gregory of Tat'ew,<sup>6</sup> we find a formulation very close to this text, which I give below. In his text Gregory also refers to another, different

5. The sentence refers to Lk. 16.19-26. The subject of 'he saw' is then Lazarus who was with Abraham and saw the rich man in the lowest Underworld. This was a central passage in the development of the mediaeval Latin view of the different parts of the Underworld; see Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, pp. 42-43 and Index s.v. 'Lazarus'.

6. Grigor Tat'ewac'i, *Book of Questions* (Jerusalem: St James Press, 1993, repr. of Constantinople edition of 1729), p. 503 (in Armenian).

belief about multiple underworlds, that people are punished in four places: the grave, the atmosphere, the sea and rocks. Just to which doctrine this refers is unclear, but the concepts in the passage that follows it and which Gregory opposes are the same, as in Ms M4618 as is some of their wording:

Հարց: Քանի՞ են դժոխք:

Պատ: Ոմանք դ. ասեն. եւ այլք՝ բազումք: զի ի գերեզմանի ասեն տանջիլ. եւ յօդս. եւ ի ծովս. եւ ի վէմս:

եւ որք դ. ասեն՝ զներքին դժոխքն մահու չափ մեղաւորացն ասեն: եւ զքաւարանն ներելի մեղաւրաց. եւ զլիմպոսն արդարոց. եւ դժոխս ոչ մկրտելոցն.

Այլ զայստսիկ ոչ ընդունին ուղղափառ վարդապետք:

Question: How many Underworlds (Hells) are there?

Answer: Some say four, and others — numerous. For they say that (people) are punished in a grave and in atmospheres and in seas and in rocks.

And (as for those) who say four: the inner Underworld they say is of the mortal sinners, and purgatory for the forgivable sinners, and Limbo for the righteous, and the underworld of the unbaptized.

But the orthodox doctors do not accept these things.

## **Text 2: The Fifteen Signs of the Judgement in British Library Harl. 5459**

In 1981 I published two forms of this text in Armenian preserved in two manuscripts in the Patriarchal Library in Jerusalem. They are analyzed and commented on in that publication, in which I also presented samples of Latin versions and a Hebrew text of this document.<sup>7</sup> Under the title *Fifteen Signs of the Doomsday*, it was quite widespread in the West and in 1952 W. W. Heist published a study of its Western versions.<sup>8</sup> This text is a telling example of the transfer of traditions not just from East to West, but in the reverse direction as well, a phenomenon on which we have remarked in the past.<sup>9</sup> Issues of channels of transmission are

7. M.E. Stone, *Signs of the Judgement, Onomastica Sacra and the Generations from Adam* (University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies, 3; Chico: Scholars Press, 1981), pp. 3-68.

8. W.W. Heist, *The Fifteen Signs before Doomsday* (East Lansing: Michigan State College, 1952).

9. M.E. Stone, 'Jewish Tradition, the Pseudepigrapha and the Christian West', in D.R.G. Beattie and M.J. McNamara (eds.), *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in Their Historical Context* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 431-49, reprinted in Michael E. Stone, *Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Armenian Studies: Collected Papers*

becoming ever more important as research into the history of the reception and use of pseudepigraphical traditions advances. At present, we are still largely at the stage of recognizing that a problem or rather a complex of problems exists.

The idea of the division of the historical process into a numbered series of parts is widespread in apocalyptic historiography. The specific idea of the division of the events presaging the day of judgement into a fixed number is to be found already in Second Temple period texts, such as *2 Baruch* 27.<sup>10</sup>

In the form of the *Heilsgeschichte* that is embodied in British Library Harl. 5459 of the year 1689,<sup>11</sup> the text of *The Fifteen Signs of the Judgement* comes directly after *The Crucifixion of Christ* and some traditions about the wood of the Cross (fols. 100r-v). It is followed without any break by a document dealing with the post-mortem state of the righteous and the wicked (fol. 101r). Here I transcribe and translate the manuscript's setting of the *Signs of the Judgement*, as well as the text of that document, and the beginning of the text about the state of the righteous and wicked. The new text of the *Signs* resembles the recension that I entitled 'II' in my previous edition,<sup>12</sup> though it differs from it in quite a number of places. In the translation I have italicized those parts found in neither previous Armenian recension. I have already published another short text from this British Library manuscript (see n. 11), but that is not directly connected with the present writing.

(*Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, 144-145; Leuven: Peeters, 2006), I, pp. 41-59 and particularly 42-45.

10. This matter is discussed in detail in Stone, *Signs of the Judgement*, pp. 15-19.

11. F.C. Conybeare, *A Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1913), pp. 215-18.

12. M.E. Stone, 'Two Armenian Manuscripts and the *Historia Sacra*', in V. Calzolari Bouvier, J.-D. Kaestli and B. Outtier (eds.), *Apocryphes arméniens: Transmission—Traduction—Création—Iconographie* (Prahins: Zèbre, 1999), pp. 21-31.

This is a study of the structure and dynamic of this manuscript, which is a single work composed of apocryphal traditions and biblical texts, transmitting an overall interpretation of the *historia sacra*. Another text from it, 'The Story of the Prophet Isaiah', was published by M.E. Stone and R.R. Ervine. *The Armenian Texts of Epiphanius of Salamis De Mensuris et Ponderibus* (CSCO, 583; CSCO Subsidia, 105; Leuven: Peeters, 2000), pp. 74 and 97-98. This text connects the translator Simeon of the LXX according to the apocryphal lists with the old man Simeon mentioned in Lk. 2:25, again highlighting a theme in the history of salvation. Clearly, the whole manuscript is worth editing in detail, for it is an overall history from creation to redemption, related in terms of the retold medieval Bible.

1. / fol. 100r / Յովհաննու վարդայալետի. ասացեայլ վասն արեման աշխարհիս եւ վասն դատաստանին աւորն եւ վասն գալըստեայնն Քրիստոսի Աստուծոյ մերոյ.
2. Մենք ակն ունենք գալըստեայնն Քրիստոսի Աստուծոյ մերոյ վկայայբանութեամբ սուրբ գրոց եւ բանէ առաքելոց: եւ մարգարէից եւ վկայահբայնութեամբ աւետարայնին Քրիստոսի որ այսպէս լինելոց է աւերումն աշխարհի ի վերջին ժամայնակն.
- I 3. ԺԵ նշայն լինի յառաջ քայն զգալուստն Քրիստոսի Առաջին՝ բարձրայնայ ծովք քայն զլեառն Մասիս Ծ կանգնայչափոյ մեծ ջրհեղեղին. կանգնի որպէս պարիսպ ոչ թափէ ի վերայ աշխարհիս զի ամենեքեայն տեսցեն եւ զարմայցին եւ զիտասցեն որ կարող է Տէրն ջրով անցուցանել. գաշխարհս
- II 4. Երկոյ օրն իջանէ ծովն եւ խոնարհս ցամայքի այլ ոչ երեւի ջուր.
- III 5. Գ օ ր ն ձկունք եւ կէթք մեծայմեծք տապալին ի վերայ աւազին մեծայձայն գոջեն եւ մեռայնին եւ նեխեալ հոտացնեն՝ գաշխարհս
- IV Դ օրն ծառք եւ տունկք եւ բուսք ամեն՝ արին կաթեցնեն եւ չորայնայն
- V Ե օրն ամենայն շինուածք կործայնին.
- VI Զ օրն լերինք եւ վեմք փրլին
- VII Է օրն ծովք երկինք. եւ երկիր վառեսցի որպէս հուր.
- VIII Ը օրն եղեցի հաւասար գետնայշարժութիւն
- IX 7. Թ օրն իսկ. սակաւ մարդիք որ մնացելոցն շրջին որպէս գանաստյն այլ ոչ կարեն խօսել ընդ միմեանքս եւ ամենեքեան մեռայնին
- X 8. Ժ օրն ուժգին հողմով եւ քամով հաւասարին ամենայն աշխարհս ամենայն լերինք փլին եւ խոնարհին եւ ամենայն ձորք լցցին
- XI 9. ԺԱ օրն ն ս կ ե ր ք եւ հող մեռելոցն ամէն երես անկանին
- XII ԺԲ օրն ցոլանան գետք հրեղէնք
- XIII 10. ԺԳ օ ր ն աստեղք թօթափին
- XIV ԺԴ օրն վ ա ն ե ս գ ի ն եւ հալեսցեն ամենայն արարածք
- XV ԺԵ օրն եղիցի երկինք նոր եւ երկիր նոր.
11. Ապայ շնորքն աստուածային ծագէ եւ ամենայն արարածք իբրեւ զծաղիկ զարդարին եւ միայվորին ի կերպարանութեամբ եւ բնութեամբ որպէս դրախտ աստուածատունկ այնպէս աշխարհս դրախտայնայ եւ նորոզի եւ պատրաստի եւ մնայ գալստեայն որդոյն Աստուծոյ.
12. Իսկ յորժամ հուրն այրէ եւ մաքրէ գաշխարհս. նորոզի. եւ դրախտանայ Գ օր այնպէս մնայ եւ յետ Գ աւուրն հրամայն ելայնէ աթոռ աստուածութեայն եւ առաքէ զԳափրիէլ հրեշտակայալետն եւ կոչէ ահաւոր եւ սոսկալի ձայնիւ
13. եւ յորժամ սոսկալի ձայնիւ գայս կոչէ ամենայն երկիր դողայ եւ պատառի եւ հոզիք Ադամայ մինչեւ այն օրն հալածական առաքին իւրեանց մարմինըն որպէս հանդերձ զգենուն:
14. Եւ յորժամ կոչէ զափրիէլ թէ յարեսցուք մեռեայլք որք Ադամայ ահայ գայ Քրիստոս արիք ելէք ընդ յառաջ նորայ եւ մարմինք մարդկայն որ խեղդեայլ են ի ծով եւ կերեայլ ի ձկայնց եւ այլք որք

գազանաց եւ սողնոց որ կերեայլ են եւ այլք որ ի հող մաշեայլք եւ որդանց կերեայլք եւ հողացեայլք՝

15. եւ ամենայն հոգիք եւ մարմինն միայնայն եւ կենդայնանայն եւ լինին նոր մարդ բայց ամեն մարդու հանդերձ իւր գործքն է մարմինն արդարոց լուսով է ծածկեայլ. որպէս զարեգակն ինքն իւրն ճառագայթէ

16. մեղաւորքն իւրեանց գործովքն է ծածկած որպէս սեւացեայլ ամպ եւ մթացեայլ խավար մեօվ եւ ծխօվ է ծածկեայլ ինչպէս որ սեւ ամբոյն մառայխովն չէ թուղուլ. որ մարդ զարեգակայն լուսն տեսանէ նմայն այսպէս մեղաւորաց չար գործքն չեն թուղուլ թէ լուս աստուածութեայն տեսնուն զի չեն արժանի. տեսանել զփառս Աստուծոյ.

1. / fol. 100r / *That which Yovhannēs vardapet (doctor) pronounced concerning the destruction of this world and concerning the Day of the Judgement and concerning the coming of Christ our God.*

We have no way of knowing who Yovhannēs (John) *vardapet* was. This is a different attribution to that of recension I.

2. We hope for the coming of Christ our God by the witness of the Sacred Scriptures (*or*: holy books) and by the word of the Apostles and prophets, and by the witness of the Gospel of Christ, that in this fashion will be the destruction of the world for the last time.

I 3. There are 15 signs before the coming of Christ.

The first: the seas will rise 50 cubits above *Mt Masis (more than)* in the great flood. It stands like a wall; *it does not drip upon* this world, so that *all* will see and wonder and know that the Lord is able to make this world pass away through *water*.

Note that all the versions I published previously had 40 cubits and the biblical text has 15 cubits. The mention of *Mt Masis* is an Armenization of the other versions. Of course, it is based on the identification of *Masis* as *Mt Ararat*, which, though difficult to date, is not attested in Armenian sources before the late first millennium CE.

II 4. The second day: the sea descends that the depths dry up and water is no longer visible.

In Armenian the number is written as cardinal here and on all other days, but it must be taken as an ordinal. My translation here is somewhat emended from that of 1981, but the text agrees on the whole with II.

III 5. The third day: fish and very great whales perish upon the sand. They cry loudly *and roll over* and having rotted they make this world stink.

IV The fourth day: trees and plants and all shoots will drip blood and dry up.

V 6. The fifth day: all buildings are destroyed.

VI The sixth day: the mountains and rocks *crumble*.

This is shorter than II and worded differently than I.



VII The seventh day: seas, *heaven* and earth will burn *like* fire.

VIII The eighth day: there will be a general earthquake.

This differs from I and II only in the word translated 'general'.

IX 7. The ninth day: *the few men who will remain wander around like animals. They can no longer speak with one another and all of them die.*

This day is tenth in the other recensions, while their tenth is ninth here. It is simplified in comparison with recensions I and II. The reference to the caves and caverns is absent.

X 8. The tenth day: all *lands* are leveled, *all* mountains *crumble and are made low and all valleys will be filled up.*

This text is more complex than that of I and II.

XI 9. The eleventh day: *the bones and dust of the dead fall in every place.*

The phrase I have translated 'in every place' is literally 'in every face, countenance'. It is obscure here, but probably means 'everywhere'. The death of all illogically introduced into this day by recension II, in fact belongs earlier, and it appears here in day IX.

XII 10. The twelfth day: *fiery rivers glitter.*

This is quite different from I and II, which read, with slight differences: 'On the twelfth day stars shall appear to fall from heaven' (II).

XIII 10. The thirteenth day: *the stars are shaken.*

I and II read 'On the thirteenth day, all men shall die'. Compare Day XII, however.

XIV The fourteenth day: *all creatures / creations will burn and melt.*

Recension II day XIV prophesies that 'heaven and earth shall be burnt like atmosphere'. Recension I day XV is much the same as this.

XV The fifteenth day: there will be new heavens and new earth.

Here both I and II add extensions of eschatological prophecy.

11. Then divine grace shines and all creatures / creations are adorned like flower(s) and will be united in form and nature. Like the divinely planted Garden, thus this earth will be paradisiacal and renewed and prepared and awaits the coming of the Son of God.

12. But when the fire burns and cleans this earth it is renewed and becomes paradisiacal. For three days it awaits thus and after the third day a command goes forth (from) the throne of Divinity and He sends the archangel Gabriel and he summons with a fearsome and dreadful sound.

13. And when he calls out this with a dreadful sound, all the earth trembles and is split and the souls from Adam up to that day are sent chased away. They put on their bodies like a garment.

14. And when Gabriel calls out, 'Arise, O dead since Adam. Behold, Christ is coming, rise up, ascend before him. And human bodies which were drowned in the sea and eaten by fish, and others who have been eaten by wild beasts and reptiles, and others who have decomposed in the earth and been consumed by worms and turned to dust.

15. And all souls and bodies are united and live and become a new man. But each person's garment is their deeds: the body of the righteous is covered in light, it sends out rays like the sun.

16. The sinners are covered by their own deeds like a blackened cloud and gloomy darkness covered with mist and smoke. Thus they are not abandoned by the fogginess of a black cloud, which a person sees like (i.e. as if it were) the light of the sun. Thus the evil deeds of sinners do not abandon (them) so that they might see the light of the Divinity, for they are not worthy of seeing the glory of God.