

Armenian Philology in the Modern Era

From Manuscript to Digital Text

Edited by

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With the Collaboration of

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The Armenian Apocryphal Literature of the Old Testament in the Twentieth Century

Michael E. Stone

The present chapter will discuss the study of the Armenian apocryphal literature of the Old Testament during the last century. Prior to the last decade of the nineteenth century the Armenian Old Testament apocrypha were not studied at all, indeed scarcely even published.¹ As in so many fields of Armenian studies, however, it was the Mekhitarist fathers who laid the systematic foundations and, in 1896, Fr. S. Yovsēp'eanc' published the first collection of such works in his *Ankanon Girk' Hin Ktakaranac'* [Non-canonical Books of the Old Testament]. This collection was followed in the subsequent decades by two complementary publications, Fr. B. Sarghissian's (Sargsean) *Usumnasirut'iwnc' Hin Ktakarani Anvawer Groc' vray* [Studies on the Uncanonical Books of the Old Testament] in 1898 and in 1901 by Fr. J. Issaverdens' *The Uncanonical Writings of the Old Testament found in the Armenian Manuscripts of the Library of St. Lazarus* which was reprinted in 1934. Sarghissian's *Studies* and Issaverdens' *Uncanonical Writings* were both based on Yovsēp'eanc's collection.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century interest in the apocryphal literature in various languages grew, basically stimulated by New Testament studies, and in particular by the attempt to understand Jesus' life and preaching in its historical context. This movement of scholarship culminated in the publication of major collections of Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in German translation by E. Kautzsch (1900) and in English by R.H. Charles (1913). It is in this context that Yovsēp'eanc's collection of texts, Sarghissian's *Studies* and Issaverdens's English translation should be viewed.²

This same movement led to other studies of the Armenian apocryphal literature, particularly by British and French *Arménisants*, such as Conybeare and Macler. The work of the Mekhitarist fathers during the nineteenth century bore

1 One of the oldest publications was the *Testaments of Reuben, Simeon and Levi* printed from a Calcutta manuscript in the first Armenian journal, *Azgasēr Araratean* (Calcutta) 3 (1850), 446–448, 454–456, 469–472 and 478–480. Of course, there is a question as to what is an apocryphon. The *Epistle of Jeremiah* was published, with Sirach (which is certainly canonical in Armenian Apostolic usage) in 1878. I do not list the undisputed books of the Armenian Old Testament that do not occur in Hebrew.

2 The collection was endowed by M. Emin of Moscow; cf. James 1897, 158.

fruit as non-Armenian scholars worked on these Armenian texts. Armenian scholars wrote little on apocryphal texts at that time, though some works will be noted below.

A further factor that stimulated and enriched the study of the Armenian apocrypha was the publication of catalogues of Armenian manuscript collections. This had started much earlier, but the magistral work of J. Dashian, the first volume of the catalogue of the library of the Vienna Mekhitarists published in 1895, spurred a movement that is still underway.³ Since Dashian gave *incipits* as well as references to published works, students of the Armenian apocrypha had many sources available. The catalogues prepared by Macler (1908) of the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris, by Conybeare (1913) of the British Museum, by Baronian and Conybeare (1918) of the Bodleian Library in Oxford, by Finck and Gjanscherzian (1907) of the Tübingen University Library, by Sarghissian (1914, 1924) of the Venice Mekhitarists and others contributed to this movement.

1 Categories and Issues

The very terminology used for the literature was also problematic. Protestants readily called all books that were in the Vulgate and not in the Hebrew Bible by the name “Apocrypha” and all broadly similar books dealing with Old Testament themes or heroes “Pseudepigrapha”. The apocrypha were called “deutero-canonical” by the Latin Church and were mostly included in the biblical canon, though the Council of Trent (1545–63) excluded one or two works.⁴ The scriptural canon of the Armenian Apostolic Church is much less firmly defined but includes most of the so-called deutero-canonical works. This matter was studied by Ter Movsessean (1902) in his Russian *History of the Armenian Bible* where he published a number of Armenian lists of canonical works, and by Th. Zahn in his great *Studies of History of the New Testament Canon* (1893). The Mekhitarist treatment of the canon was governed by the principles of the

3 This was not the earliest of Armenian manuscript catalogues, but its strict method, size and detail made it a yardstick for all subsequent works. Armenian manuscript catalogues are listed most recently by Coulie 1992. A number of earlier lists exist, such as those in Anasyan 1959 and Stone 1968, 456–460. Since 1992, Coulie has published some supplements to his list in *Le Muséon*. In addition, further volumes of the Venice and Matenadaran catalogues have been published since 1992.

4 Notably 2 Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh.

Church of Rome, and so Zōhrapean's Bible of 1805 was structured according to the decisions enunciated at Trent.⁵

The present study does not treat the deutero-canonical works that are part of the Armenian Bible. Thus I do not discuss the studies of Durean (1927) or Bogharian on Sirach (1936), or Bévenot (1934), Kogean (1923), Thomson (1975), and Amalyan (1996) on Maccabees⁶ and a few others.⁷ The discussion of these belongs properly in the ambit of the study of the Armenian Bible. Yet, the borders of the Armenian canon remain somewhat unclear, and to this day there is no modern printing of the Ancient Armenian Bible, officially sanctioned by the Armenian Apostolic Church.⁸

Thus the matter of Canon remained rather confused for most of the twentieth century. Between 1973 and 2001, six articles presenting Armenian Canon lists with English translations were published and a seventh is currently in press.⁹ These provided the beginning of a sounder basis for studying the issue. In the context of a consultation on the New Testament canon, I attempted to formulate some principles characterizing chief categories of apocryphal literature as they were reflected in the canon lists.¹⁰ The catalogue of Armenian biblical manuscripts published by the late Archbishop S. Ajamian (Adjémian 1992) greatly contributed to achieving a clearer and more detailed view of the relationship between the works listed in Armenian canon lists and the actual contents of the manuscript Bibles. Ajamian's catalogue lists in full all the contents of Armenian biblical manuscripts and so gives a detailed picture of the books that they include. The Armenian Church has rarely turned its official attention to the issue of Canon and Apocrypha. The issue was of interest to medieval scholars and is reflected at some points in the liturgy, but only once was the subject of an Armenian conciliar decision, at the Council of Partaw in 768, and the list approved there was, in any case, translated from Greek (Stone 1973b).

5 Zōhrapean 1984 (1805).

6 Thomson 1975, 329–341 is one of the few works that trace the influence of such writings on Armenian literature. See Thomson 1995, 233–238, for some further references.

7 See the bibliography listed in Thomson 1995. He includes studies of a number of deutero-canonical works in his section entitled "Apocrypha".

8 On the editions of the Armenian Bible, see Ter-Petrosyan 1985, 69–78. On the contents of the Armenian biblical canon, see Stone 2005a, 283–95.

9 Stone 1973b, 479–486; 1975a, 253–260; 1976, 289–300; 1979a, 237–244; 1990a; 2001, 477–491. The author has copies a number of further texts he intends to publish in the future. Moreover, certain printed canon lists, such as the poetic list composed by Afak'el of Siwnik' in the fifteenth century, have never been translated.

10 Stone 2005a, 281–296, which gives a more synthetic view of the issue.

At the present juncture the most useful categories are heuristic:

1. Works closely associated with the biblical corpus. These works occur mainly or exclusively in biblical manuscripts, but are almost never included in Armenian canon lists or canonical usage. Such books are *Joseph and Asenath*, *Fourth (Third) Ezra*, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *Lives (Deaths) of the Prophets*, *Psalm 151*.¹¹ Other works occur occasionally in Bible manuscripts, but their status is more or less tenuous. Thus *History of Joseph* is not infrequently associated with *Joseph and Asenath*.¹²
2. Apocrypha translated from other languages into Armenian but not included in the above category. An example of such a work is *Questions of the Queen and Answers of King Solomon*, of which the Syriac original was discovered some years ago.¹³
3. Apocryphal works composed in Armenian on Old Testament themes, which take their structure, form and character from the tradition of apocryphal narratives.¹⁴
4. Associated works that are related to the scholarly study of the Bible, as it was cultivated among the Armenians. Such works are predominantly lists related to the biblical text and also elenctic works in which apocryphal traditions are embedded.¹⁵

2 Yovsēp'eanc'

Yovsēp'eanc's collection included works that occurred in Armenian biblical manuscripts, such as *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and *4 Ezra*; translated works such as *The Questions of the Queen and the Answers of King Solomon* and

11 Murad 1905–1911 studied the interesting question of which works are read in the Armenian lectionary. Šamlean's article 1966, 83–87 contains nothing new.

12 Serjuni 1973, 26–37, 137–144; Burchard 1969, 16; 2010, 9; Geerard 1974, 2: 389–390.

13 This writing occurs in Yovsēp'eanc' 1896, 229–232. The Syriac was published by Brock 1979, 331–345.

14 The author has published a number of such works in various forums, including several books. See, for example, Stone 1982; Stone 1996a.

15 The various types of writings are discussed in further detail in Stone 1996b, 611–646. R. Ervine (2000, 417–428) has discussed parts of one elenctic work. See further Stone 1999, 295–300, which also relates to elenctic traditions. Stone 1982 and 1996 also contain a number of such lists, and many more exist. Another study of such a list is Hultgård 1992, 51–55.

Paralipomena Ieremiou; and works that were in all likelihood composed in Armenian, such as *Short History of Elijah*. The collection was far from exhaustive, but it was most significant and had considerable impact. In 1899, the English scholar, M.R. James, for example, discussed it at some length in his collection called *Apocrypha Anecdota*, vol. 2, 158–165, while the German scholar Preuschen studied the corpus of Adamic apocrypha, translated them into German, and characterized them (mistakenly) as Gnostic (Preuschen 1900, 163–252; and *separatim*).

F.C. Conybeare, a formidable scholar, also turned his attention to the apocryphal literature. He wrote articles on the Armenian versions of such apocrypha as *Apocalypse of Moses* (1894–95, 216–235) and *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (1895, 375–398). R.H. Charles included data from Armenian manuscripts in the apparatus of his *editio maior* of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (1908). The early work of the French armenologist F. Macler (1895) included a number of writings devoted to the apocryphal Daniel literature. This list of early scholars of the Armenian Old Testament apocrypha could be expanded, but not very extensively, as a consultation of R. Thomson's *Bibliography* (1995, 233–238) shows.¹⁶ The only work devoted to an edition and translation of and notes on an apocryphal apocalypse is Kalemkiar's see below edition and German translation of the *Seventh Vision of Daniel*.¹⁷

3 Summary

After the work of the end of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century little was done in the study of the Armenian apocrypha until after the middle of the century. The first half of the century had taken up only

16 Some works were published in Russian in the late nineteenth century on Armenian apocrypha, see DiTommaso 2001 under the sections for different works. Notable is the work of A. Chachanov in the 1890's. As for other early studies of Armenian apocrypha, the following list contains the main works. The *Wisdom of Ahiqar* in Armenian was published by Conybeare, Harris and Smith 1913 (second edn of a work of 1898); the Armenian version of *Paralipomena Ieremiou* was published by Tēr Mkrtč'ean 1895, 81–82 and Appendix 1–8, and *The Short History of Elijah the Prophet* is also discussed in Schermann 1907, 6–7, 53. On 4 Ezra, see Ewald 1865, 504–516; Petermann 1869, 378–443; and the Appendix in Zöhrapen 1984 (1805). Carrière 1886, 471–511, 490–498, published a study of the Armenian of *Joseph and Asenath*. Russian works on *Joseph and Asenath* include Emin 1897; and Marr 1891, 1894; Palean 1896 on which see Burchard, 2010, 22.

17 Kalemkiar 1892, 109–136, 227–240; and *separatim*. See also Macler 1896, 37–53, 163–176, 288–319, 288–309; 1895, 56–88.

part of the challenge extended by the work of the three Venice Mekhitarists, Yovsēp'eanc', Sarghissian, and Issaverdens.

Certain of those apocrypha close to the biblical corpus were objects of some attention. This was particularly true of *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, the short Armenian recension of which Charles had claimed to be more original than the surviving Greek.¹⁸ Similarly, the Adam books had been studied, in particular the text of the *Book of Adam (Apocalypse of Moses)* by Conybeare (1894–95). Of the works composed in Armenian, only two were studied, *The Apocryphal Adam Books* by Preuschen and Lütke, and the *Seventh Vision of Daniel* by Kalemkiar.

4 The Second Half-Century

There has been a notable change in the study of the Armenian apocrypha of the Old Testament during the past half century. This change reflects a very considerable advance on the first fifty years' work, but the advance that has been made is still far from responding to all the questions raised about the field. Scholars of apocryphal literature in general very often come from biblical studies and that is frequently the case as regards the Armenian apocrypha as well. This benefitted in particular the standards and methods of textual editions. In addition, some interest has arisen in the growth and development of apocryphal traditions within the Armenian literary and religious tradition, and biblical scholars were not always the best equipped to pursue this line of enquiry.

5 Editions and Techniques

Very striking is the work that has been done on the editions of texts and the high level of that work. Scholars have undertaken sophisticated critical and carefully planned editions of a number of the apocrypha that are closely related to the biblical corpus. These editions are either already completed or presently underway, and have been prepared by Burchard and Stone. They are of three works: *Joseph and Asenath*, *4 Ezra* and *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. Burchard published a number of articles and has now he has published a critical *editio minor* of the Armenian version of *Joseph and Asenath*.¹⁹

18 See the discussion in de Jonge 1953, 28–31; Stone 1969, 3–4.

19 Burchard 2010. See also 1979, 1–10; 1983, 207–240; 1990–1991, 65–80; 1996, 139–159; 1999, 1–26; 2005, 83–96. His edition is Christoph Burchard (2010), *A Minor Edition of the Armenian Version of Joseph and Asenath*, (HUAS, 10, Leuven: Peeters).

He bases it on a careful study of all the manuscripts available and on the collation and preparation of an apparatus criticus. Burchard carried out this work alongside his study of the Greek text of *Joseph and Asenath*, and was thus able to place the Armenian within the context of the overall textual tradition of that work. These characteristics of Burchard's work also typify the study of other apocrypha (see below) and of some of the editions of biblical texts published at the same time. Here is a meeting between the tradition of biblical textual scholarship and that of the Armenian apocrypha, which has made the study of the Armenian apocrypha part of modern textual studies.²⁰ In the late 1960's Stone had begun work on the text of two apocrypha, *4 Ezra* and *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. His work on Armenian *4 Ezra*, undertaken in connection with a major commentary he was preparing on that work, resulted in three books. The first was a computer-generated concordance, which has the distinction of being the first computer-assisted study of any Armenian text (Stone 1971b). His critical edition of *4 Ezra*, based on all but one of the known manuscripts, appeared in 1979 (Stone 1979b). This was the first fully critical text of an Armenian apocryphon and paved the way for further critical studies. In 1990 he published his *Textual Commentary on the Armenian Version of IV Ezra* in which work, assembled in the course of the preparation of the edition, he set forth the basis of the textual decisions made in the latter.

As far as the Armenian edition of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* is concerned, the work progressed in fits and starts. After the work of Conybeare and Charles at the turn of the century (1894–95 and 1908), in the late 1960's Burchard wrote an overview of the textual situation of *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* that actually grew out of his work on *Joseph and Asenath* (Burchard 1969, 1–29).²¹ This article related the textual tradition of *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* to that of *Joseph and Asenath*. A little earlier, the work of M. de Jonge of Leiden on the Armenian text showed that the preceding view of the primacy of the short Armenian recension, espoused by R.H. Charles and

20 In Old Testament studies, the works of Cox (1990–1991, 53ff) and Cowe (1992, 1993) should be mentioned especially. The labours of A. Zeyt'unyan (1993, 306–312; 1985) and H. Amalyan (1996) in particular have been less attentive to the place of Armenian in the textual tradition of the book they studied, though they have made a major contribution by the collation and presentation of the textual evidence. Earlier studies, such as those of Murad on Revelation 1905–1911, Oskean on the Song of Songs (1895–1968, 1924), and even earlier works such as Xalat'eanc' (1899) on Chronicles (compare Cowe's 1990–1991 paper) have contributed to an understanding of the complexity of the textual situation of the Armenian Bible. In particular, Murad's book on Revelation assembled a rich and, for its time, a most sophisticated body of textual and related material.

21 Burchard also noted, but did not study in depth, another associated work, the *History of Joseph*, of which a Syriac form was discovered. See note 11 above.

others, was not valid (1953, 31–34).²² Based on his conclusions, I have worked on and off for many years on the preparation of an edition, publishing preliminary texts of *Testament of Levi* in 1969 and *Testament of Joseph* in 1975. A number of articles over the decades set forth the methodology used for selection of manuscripts to serve as the basis of an *editio minor* of the whole work, as well as a continued updating of the list of manuscript copies.²³ The *editio minor* of the Armenian text, with critical apparatus, translation and commentary was published in 2012. It was prepared with the collaboration of V. Hillel.²⁴ The discovery of an epitome of *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* in a manuscript of the year 981 took the direct witness to the Armenian translation back to a rather early date.²⁵

In addition, some further witnesses to and collations of the works already published by Yovsēp'ēanc' were assembled. L. Lipscomb in his doctoral thesis re-edited the Adamic literature that Yovsēp'ēanc' had included, adding new manuscripts and a translation (Issaverdens' translations should be treated gingerly). In his introduction he dealt with a number of substantial issues of this corpus to texts, which Stone had previously studied as well.²⁶ In the earlier part of the century Lüdtke (1919) had shown that this group of Armenian apocrypha (which, in my opinion, were probably composed in Armenian) was also translated into Georgian. In 2004, Stone and Kazazian published one of the homiletic pieces that are found in some manuscripts of these writings. In a paper published in 1978, Lipscomb discussed an Armenian text that may ultimately have derived from *Jubilees*. In the study of Yovsēp'ēanc's Adam books, which had much earlier caught Preuschen's interest, we see a beginning of the study of Armenian apocrypha which were not associated with the transmission of the Bible.

Were we to catalogue all the texts that have been discussed in the past thirty or forty years, and to list those whose existence is known but which have not yet been studied, the rest of the space allotted to this paper would be filled to

22 See Stone 1969, 3–4. Further works are listed in DiTommaso 2001, 921–923. Hultgård 1981 dealt at many points with the Armenian text, based, however, on “pre-de Jonge” views of textual development.

23 Stone 1970, 24–35; 1975c, 207–214; 1971a, 211–217; 1977, 94–107; 1994, 75–82; 1998–2000, 93–97.

24 Stone and Hillel 2012s.

25 Stone 1986–1987, 69–107; 1988–89, 497–499; 1995, 265–277. After this lecture was delivered, yet another 14th century manuscript was discovered in the Matenadaran. It turns out to have no text-critical significance and a report on it was published in Stone 2011.

26 Lipscomb 1990. See also Lipscomb 1982, 102–112. Compare earlier, Stone 1981, 2: 460–471, and more recently, Stone 1982, 1992.

overflowing. Some of this labour has now been done and other aspects of it remain for the future. Instead, I wish to make a number of points that have arisen from the admittedly still inadequate study of the apocrypha composed in Armenian, or from the reworkings of apocrypha translated into Armenian.

The editorial work done on *Joseph and Asenath*, on the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and on *4 Ezra* has really addressed issues in the general study of the Old Testament apocrypha, and particularly of their Greek texts. These issues are significant and, moreover, these works form part of the basis of Armenian literature, since they are closely associated with the biblical corpus. It is most desirable that the labour of textual edition continue and be refined. I myself found P. Robinson's program "Collate!" to be most helpful in this work, which is, by nature, painstaking and time-consuming.²⁷ The standards of edition set by the editors of Old Testament texts in particular, should continue to be extended to the apocrypha. By the way, it may be remarked that more methodological self-consciousness in editorial techniques would be most desirable.²⁸

There are, without any doubt, further translated apocrypha that should be studied and edited. As *desiderata* I must include definitive editions of *Lives of the Prophets*²⁹ and of *Questions of the Queen and Answers of King Solomon*. In the course of the study of Armenian manuscripts even more such writings may be discovered. These works, known and still unknown, will make a considerable contribution to the overall study of the apocrypha of the Old Testament and a very worthwhile one.

6 The Apocrypha in the Armenian Tradition

A project undertaken in recent years relating to the Adam literature has, however, been the realization of another aspect of Armenian apocryphal studies.

27 Dr T. Andrews (University of Leuven) is at present developing a new set of tools for automatic collation of transcribed texts and for presentation of the text variants for editorial review. These are designed to fulfill a function similar to Collate! which, unfortunately, runs on an obsolete operating system. See her paper in the present volume.

28 Heightening such consciousness was the purpose of a workshop of the Association Internationale des Études Arméniennes held in Sandbjerg, Denmark, in 1989, the results of which were published in Lehmann and Weitenberg 1993.

29 The Armenian texts of this work are published on various textual bases in Yovsēp'eanc' 1896, 207–227 and Stone 1982b, 129–173. An English translation of Yovsēp'eanc's text is to be found in Issaverdens 1901. See also Stone 1973a for a *Vita of Moses* and 1982 for the *Vitae* of Nathan, Elijah, Elishah, Zechariah (1), Eli, Joad, Moses, The Three Children, and Zechariah (2).

I made a sustained attempt to assemble all works in Armenian devoted to Adam and Eve. The reasons for this undertaking were: (i) part of this literature had already received attention from Yovsēp'eanc', Preuschen and Lipscomb; (ii) other works were known by name or *incipit* and I desired to get a fuller picture of the Armenian creativity in this respect; (iii) the number of Armenian documents relating to Adam and Eve ran to over 50, which is in itself, a substantial literature; (iv) these apocryphal interpretations of the Adam and Eve stories had had a major influence on theological thought and on literary productivity. I was convinced that the stories of Adam and Eve were normally read by Armenians not as tales of the first human couple or simply through the perspective of the *historia sacra* leading from the first Adam to the Last Adam, but also typologically, presaging the life of Christ, His Passion, and salvation through him.

Here we touch on an important point, and one that should be stressed. Once the apocrypha became part of Christian literature, and this happened very early, from the perspective of their functioning in the context of Christianity, distinctions between Jewish apocrypha and Christian, between Old Testament apocrypha and New Testament apocrypha, had no real relevance. The whole is understood as part of the history of salvation through Christ and of redemption. Even works that were originally Jewish were understood in this way.³⁰

The tracing of the influence of the Adam apocrypha in Armenian led to study of a series of aspects of Armenian culture. On the one hand, mediaeval authors like Yovhannēs T'lkuranc'i and Yovhannēs Erzncac'i retold Adam tales using elements drawn from the apocryphal traditions.³¹ A major work of Armenian medieval literature, the *Adamgirk'* by the fifteenth century Armenian poet Arak'el Siwnec'i, incorporates many elements from the Adam apocrypha.³² Retellings of biblical history and popular traditions, such as those recorded about certain holy places in Jerusalem by M. Aławnuni (1936) and others, all incorporate ideas, images and even specific details drawn from the Adam apocrypha.

It is possible to explicate even more the ways in which this apocryphal literary tradition has penetrated Armenian culture. The apocrypha composed

30 A most significant meeting on this topic was held under the aegis of the Association Internationale des Études Arméniennes (AIEA) and the Association pour l'Étude de la Littérature Apocryphe Chrétienne (AELAC) in Geneva in 1997, its results being published in Calzolari Bouvier, Kaestli & Outtier 1999.

31 Compare Stone 2000, 167–214; 2005b. See further Madoyan 1970, 198–207, although his article is uncritical in its use of the apocryphal books.

32 Recently translated into English in Stone 2007.

in Armenian, taking their start from the biblical text, developed under the influence of more ancient apocryphal works that were domesticated in the Armenian tradition. The perception of this rich heritage makes the task of uncovering it, learning it and tracing of the highest priority.³³

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