

ADAM AND EVE IN THE ARMENIAN TRADITION

FIFTH THROUGH SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES



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THE ARMENIAN TRADITION

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Michael E. Stone



Society of Biblical Literature
Atlanta

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This work is dedicated to my teachers:

Frank Moore Cross Jr.

(13 July 1921–16 October 2012)

Avedis Krikor Sanjian

(24 February 1921–22 July 1995)



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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

At the basis of this book stands a corpus of all the published pre–eighteenth-century narrative texts in Armenian relating to Adam, Eve, and the Eden story. These texts were excerpted and translated as part of a project on “Adam and Eve in the Armenian Tradition,” funded by the Israel Research Foundation, grant no. 770/99.

The project and its progress will be described in the introduction below. Here I wish to acknowledge all those who contributed to it over the years, while stressing my own responsibility for the contents of this book. In the task of preparation of part 2 of this book, I was greatly assisted by Aram Topchyan and, later, by Gohar Muradyan. Without their help and expertise, I could not have finished this project. In making the initial probe of the fifth-century material, I had the assistance of Theo van Lint and the support of Fr. Mesrob Aramian, of the Ganjasar Theological Centre in Yerevan. Roberta Ervine suggested many felicitous translations. Bernard Outtier read the whole volume, and his great learning and acumen improved it at many points. To all these, I am most grateful.

At various stages of this work, which has been under way since the late 1990s, Narineh Yacoubian and Vered Hillel assisted in technical matters. The final editing of the manuscript of part 1 has benefitted from the careful attention of Yael Moise. My thanks are expressed to all three devoted helpers.

Rod Werline of SBLEJL and the publication experts of the Society of Biblical Literature have carried out their work expertly.

The poem by Kostandin Erznac'i is reproduced by permission of Th. M. van Lint from his unpublished thesis of 1996, “Konstandin of Erznka: An Armenian Religious Poet of the XIIIth-XIVth Century” (Leiden University). He kindly revised it for this publication. The translation of the fifteenth-century amulet by Yoav Loeff from his master's thesis of 2002 (“Four Texts from the Oldest Known Armenian Amulet Scroll: Matenadaran 116 (1428)” [Hebrew University of Jerusalem]) is published by permission. The permission of the following publishers is acknowledged for excerpts reproduced here. Exact page spans are specified *in situ*. Peeters Publishers of Leuven, Belgium, granted permission for the excerpts from Robert W. Thomson 2005, *Hamam: Commentary on the Book of Proverbs* (Hebrew University Armenian Studies 5); and G. A. Egan 1968, *Saint Ephrem: An Exposition of the Gospel* (CSCO 291–92, *Scriptores Armeniaci* 5–6); Scholars Press of Atlanta, Georgia, for excerpts

from James R. Russell 1987, *Yovhannēs T'lkuranc'i and the Medieval Armenian Lyric Tradition* (University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies 5); St. Nersess Seminary of New Rochelle, New York, for excerpts from Robert W. Thomson 2001, *Teaching of St. Gregory: Revised Edition* (Avant: Treasures of the Armenian Christian Tradition 1);



ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ANB</i>	Ačařyan, H. Հայոց Անձանունների Բառարան <i>Dictionary of Armenian Proper Names</i> . Beirut: Sevan Press, 1972.
CSCO	Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium
dub.	of dubious authenticity or date
GT՝	Girk՝ T՛It՝oc՝
<i>L.A.E.</i>	<i>Life of Adam and Eve</i>
MES	MES in translations marks alternate translations proposed by the author.
<i>MH</i>	Մատենագիրք Հայոց <i>Ancient Armenian Literature</i> (Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 2003–)
<i>NBHL</i>	G. Awetik՛ean, X. Siwrmēlean, and M. Awk՛erean Նոր բառգիրք հայկազգեան լեզուի <i>New Dictionary of the Armenian Language</i> . 2 vols. Venice: St. Lazzaro, 1836–37.
<i>Pen. Adam</i>	<i>Penitence of Adam</i>
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i> [= <i>Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca</i>]. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 162 vols. Paris, 1857–86.
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> [= <i>Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina</i>]. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 217 vols. Paris, 1844–64.
s.v.	sub vocem
v.l., v.ll.	varia lectio, variae lectiones, i.e., variant readings

In footnotes, A.T. means Aram Topchyan. G.M. means Gohar Muradyan.

All ancient writings, including rabbinic texts, are abbreviated in accordance with the SBL Handbook of Style.

Armenian manuscripts are cited according to the system of the Association Internationale des Etudes Arméniennes, as published on their Web site: http://aiea.fltr.ucl.ac.be/AIEAengl/Tools_files/Sigles.pdf

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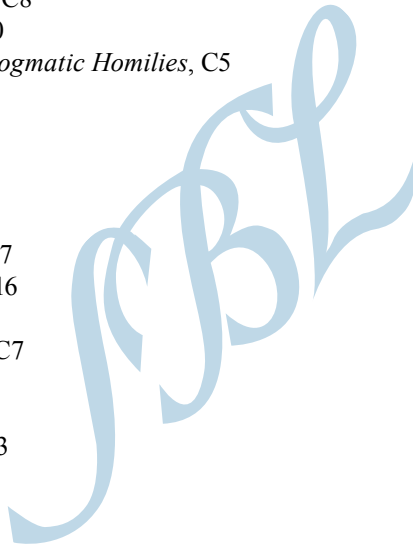
ALPHABETICAL LIST OF AUTHORS CITED

Abusayid, C12
Agat'angelos C5
Anania Mokac'i Kat'olikos C10
Anania Narekac'i C10
Anania Sanahnac'i C11
Anania Širakac'i C7
Anania *vardapet* C 5
Anonymous Author 8 C17
Anonymous Chronicler of Livorno C17
Anonymous of Sebastia C15
Arak'el Davirzec'i C17
Arak'el Siwnec'i C15
Artawazd Mazazuni C10
At'anas Taronac'i C6
Awetik' Mahtesi C16-17
Azaria Ĵulayec'i C16
Barsel Maškeronc'i C14
Dawit' Bališec'i C17
Dawit' Ganjakec'i C12
Dawit' Hark'ac'i C7
Dawit' Salajorec'i C17
Dawit' the Invincible C7
Elišē, C5
Ep'rem Ľap'anc'i C17
Ephrem, Exposition of the Gospel, C5
Esayi Nč'ec'i C14
Eznik, C5
Frik C13
Gēorg Lořec'i C11
Girk' T'ltoc', Letter attributed to Movsēs Xorenac'i, C6
Girk' Tĥ'oc', C5
Grigor Aknerc'i C13
Grigor Daranałc'i C17
Grigor Magistros C10
Grigor Narekac'i C10

Grigor Pahlavuni C12
 Grigor Tat'ewac'i C14 (also titled Grigor, Pupil of Yōhannēs Orotneac'i C14)
 Grigor Tlay C12
 Grigor Vkayasēr C11-12
 Grigor Jerenc' C14
 Grigoris Alt'amarac'i C16
 Grigoris Aršaruni C7
 Hamam Arewelc'i C9
 Ignatius *vardapet* C12
 K'erovbē *vardapet* C 9
 Karapet Bališec'i C16
 Kirakos Erznkac'i C14
 Kirakos Ganjakec'i C13
 Komitas Kat'olikos C6
 Kostandin Erznkac'i C14
 Lazar P'arpec'i, C5
 Łazar Sebastac'i C16
 Lewond C8
 Liturgy
 Mambrē, C5
 Matt'ēos *vardapet* C15
 Minas T'oxat'ec'i C16
 Mkrtič' Našaš C15
 Movsēs K'ert'olāhayr C6
 Movsēs Kałankatuac'i C10
 Movsēs Xorenac'i C9¹
 Mxit'ar Anec'i C12
 Mxit'ar Ayrivanec'i C14
 Mxit'ar Goš C 12
 Nahapet K'uč'ak Vanec'i C16
 Nazaret' A C17
 Nersēs Anjnapatc'i A C17
 Nersēs Lambronac'i C12
 Nersēs Šnorhali C12
 P'awstos Buzand, C5
 Pawłos Taronac'i C12
 P'ilon Tirakac'i C7
 Pseudo-Basil C6
 Pseudo-Šapuh or The Anonymous Story-Teller C9
 Sahak Jorap'orec'i C7
 Sahak M'rut C9

1. See note in the fifth-century analysis on the dating of this author.

Samuēl Anec'i C12
 Samuēl Kamrājorec'i C 10
 Sargis Šnorhali C12
 Sarkawag Berdakac'i C16
 Simēon Aļjniec'i C10
 Simēon Aparanc'i C16
 Simēon Kafac'i C17
 Step'anos Kelec'i C17
 Step'anos Ōrbelean C13
 Step'anos Siwnec'i C8
 Step'anos Tarōnec'i (Asolik), C10
 Tačat *vardapet*, C10
 T'adēos T'oxat'ec'i C16
 T'ēodoros K'it'enawor C7
 T'ēop'ilos, C 9
 Timot'ēos *vardapet*, C10
 Tiranun *vardapet*, C10
 T'ovma Arcruni C9
 Uxtanēs C10
 Vahram Rabuni C13
 Vanakan *vardapet* C13
 Vardan Arawelc'i C13
 Vardan Aygekc'i C13
 Vrt'anēs K'ert'oł C7
 Xač'atur Ĵulayec'i C18
 Xač'atur Keč'ařec'i C14
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 Xosrovik T'argmanič' C8
 Xosrow Anjewac'i C10
Yačaxapatum Čark' Dogmatic Homilies, C5
 Yakob Cpatec'i C10
 Yakob Kesarac'i C17
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 Yakob T'oxat'ec'i C17
 Yohan K'ahana C13
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 Yovhan Arčiřec'i C14
 Yovhan Mamikonean C7
 Yovhan Ōjniec'i C8
 Yovhan Orotnec'i C14
 Yovhanēs Gařnec'i C13
 Yovhannēs A C16



Yovhannēs Drasxanakertē'i C10
Yovhannēs Erznkac'i Corcorec'i C14
Yovhannēs Erznkac'i Pluz C13
Yovhannēs Gaīnec'i C13
Yovhannēs Imastasēr (Sarkawag) C12
Yovhannēs Jūlayec'i C17
Yovhannēs K'orepiskopos C8
Yovhannēs Mandakuni, C5
Yovhannēs T'lkuranc'i C14
Zak'aria Kat'olikos C9
Zak'aria Gnuneac' C16



INTRODUCTION

In 1992, at the invitation of Professor Marinus de Jonge, I lectured at the Milan meeting of the Society for New Testament Studies (SNTS) on the *status quaestionis* of the study of the literature of Adam and Eve. I had worked on aspects of the Adam material previously, including the discovery and publication of the Armenian primary Adam book, the *Penitence of Adam*.¹ Indeed, the first article I published after completing my doctoral thesis was on an Armenian Adam book, *Death of Adam*.² The survey required by the SNTS presentation led me systematically to study the Adam literature and, soon after, to write a book presenting the known works.³ Subsequently, I decided to work on Armenian Adam writings in a more systematic way, publishing a volume of texts, two volumes of concordances, and a number of articles.⁴ Several Armenian Adam texts that I have since discovered still remain unpublished, and one volume of the planned concordances lies half done in a drawer. I plan to publish these if possible.

The apocryphal literature attests to just one of the ways in which the Adam and Eve stories were rewritten within and influenced Armenian culture. To complete the picture, I decided not to look only at Adam apocrypha, of which there is an abundance in Armenian,⁵ but also at how the stories of Genesis 1–3 were reflected in Armenian literature. I was not interested in purely theological issues, nor in the simple use of such typology as the Old and New Adam in itself, although on occasion the typological passages bear narrative elements within them. This undertaking had two main goals. First, to see how the Armenians handled the biblical narrative and to try to isolate and specific retellings or interpretations that reflected particular theological or, indeed, historical circumstances. The other was to try to find out when the Armenian apocryphal Adam literature started to be reflected in dated authors and thus to get some idea of the dating of the Armenian Adam literature, which cannot have originated much before its attestation in the known authors. The present book is the outcome of this project.

1. Stone 1981a.

2. Stone 1973a.

3. This led to the publication, shortly thereafter, of Stone 1992.

4. These are all listed in the bibliography below.

5. Stone 1992; 1996a.

In further detail, we may say that the Adamic narrative was very influential because the stories of Adam and Eve played a constitutive and structural role in the Christian worldview. The economy of salvation—the *historia sacra*—commenced with Adam and Eve and concluded with the redemptive acts of Christ’s life and death. Christ, the new Adam, undid and reversed the situation that the first Adam’s actions had created. Adam and Eve’s deeds were the first act of a cosmic drama with a happy ending.⁶ The protological events directly caused the dire situation of the world, but they were also pregnant with the promise of ultimate redemption.

The way the stories were told, therefore, often reflected the nature of the quandary in which the teller or the teller’s generation perceived themselves to be living. The enrichment, nuancing, interpretation, and indeed the changing of the biblical story may teach us how its later narrators perceived the human condition. Naturally, not every expansion or change of the biblical narrative was a response to a specific aporia. A playful or inquisitive spirit could be responsible for one detail; a nontendentious embellishment of the stark biblical narrative could engender another. Nonetheless, the retelling of the story frequently reveals the narrator’s and the intended reader’s contexts and concerns.

At certain times, it seems, apocryphal elements flooded the Armenian Adam tradition. When did this happen? Into which genres of literature did such elements penetrate? Why? When traditions or features of Armenian texts parallel or are drawn from known patristic sources, we must assess the significance of such dependency.⁷ Whole patristic commentaries and homilies were translated into Armenian, such as works of Ephrem the Syrian, John Chrysostom, and Eusebius of Emesa. Others were excerpted in *catenae*.⁸ When a particular element occurs in such translated works, it cannot be assigned special significance. However, when such an element is taken up from a non-Armenian source and incorporated into a work composed in Armenian, its significance is enhanced. Such questions have guided us in the presentation of the evidence.

The book has two parts. Part 1 is composed of five chapters, divided chronologically. They cover the period from the inception of Armenian writing in the early fifth century to the end of the seventeenth century. Following a section of “General Considerations,” the chapters deal with four main subjects: (1) The

6. This may be seen clearly, for example, in the work *Adam, Eve and the Incarnation* published by Stone (1996, 8–79; 1999, 21–36). A variant on the drama of Satan’s deceit of Adam is the form of the story of the contract between Adam and Satan traced out in Stone 2002; and *The Cheirograph of Adam*, in Stone 2000c, 149–66.

7. Instances of such dependency have been repeatedly highlighted by Robert W. Thomson, among others, in his comments on a large number of Armenian texts.

8. Bibliography of such translations may be found in Zerbhanalean (1889) and Thomson (1995) and Petrosyan and Ter Step’anyan (2002). Few collections of Armenian *catenae* have been published, but note, most recently, Vardan Aygekc’i 1988.

Creation of Human Beings; (2) The Garden of Eden; (3) Satan; and (4) Sin and Its Results. Each of these main subjects is divided into sections and subsections, and these are numbered and titled identically throughout the five chapters of the book. Because the sections and subsections are identical throughout, they represent a maximal range of material. A section or subsection is introduced when its subject is first encountered in the texts studied but subsequently is left without content if its subject does not occur in the centuries being discussed in a particular chapter. In these sections and subsections the views forwarded on the subject to which they are devoted are presented, analyzed, and discussed, based on the excerpts to be found in part 2. Generally, in part 1, when texts are quoted, the quotations are only of the English translation, unless the Armenian itself is germane to the point being made. I have also added some remarks on the exegesis lying behind the statements made and, in the first chapter, some comparative Greek and Syriac material. My primary purpose throughout is to present the Armenian tradition, elucidating those views of the narrative that lay behind subsequent Armenian interpretations—theological, exegetical, literary, and sometimes artistic.

Thus, the five chapters present a synchronic treatment of what Armenian literature says about the main subjects arising from the narrative in Genesis 1–3. At the end of part 1, in an appendix, a diachronic treatment of one single subject, Satan and the Serpent, is given. This is a probe, an example of the type of analysis possible when drawing on the synchronic presentation in the five chapters. In part 1, I indicate the cited authors' century by the notation C6, C7, C8, and so on, on the first occurrence of each name in a paragraph. The indexes and bibliography at the end of the book relate only to part 1.

Part 2 is a corpus of excerpts from all the literature in Armenian that has been published, apart from the books of the Apocrypha. The authors excerpted are arranged alphabetically within each century from the fifth to the seventeenth.⁹ Each work cited in this second part of the book is provided with a bibliography, both of the text used, such translations as exist, and other significant editions. A List of Authors Excerpted, arranged alphabetically indicating centuries, provides a key to part 2 of the present work. Most of the translations are original, but for certain works existing translations have been used. I have indicated when this is the case. The capitalization and punctuation of the Armenian texts follow the sources quoted.

All Armenian authors are cited by name and toponym or other title if appropriate. "C13," and the like, indicates the century of the author's floruit. A brief biographical note on each author is to be found at the end of the book. Further

9. One eighteenth-century author is added at the end, whose writings are very close to the preceding tradition.

bibliographical indications may readily be found in Thomson 1995 and, about later authors, in Bardakjian 2000. Much information is also given in Bogharian 1971.

Within the section devoted to an author, each separate excerpt is given a sequential number. This excerpt is then referred to as, for example, “Grigor Narekac‘i 1, and this practice is followed throughout the book.

