



'... and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years':
the fourth day of Creation from Ms Yerevan 7634.
Courtesy of the National Institute of Ancient Manuscripts of Armenia
(*Matenadaran*), Yerevan

The Role of Esoteric and Apocryphal Sources in the Development of Christian and Jewish Traditions

International Conference
convened under the auspices of the Leibniz Programme, DFG
Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main, Department of Ancient History
Forschungskolleg Humanwissenschaften, Bad Homburg, 26–29 March 2018

Over recent decades our acquaintance with apocryphal and gnostic literature has deepened considerably; this has allowed us to see some of the exegetical, liturgical and artistic sources of early Christianity in a new light. We are now better able to discern, in numerous elements of Christian traditions in both East and West, an indebtedness to texts of Jewish or Gnostic origins. Scholars have demonstrated how texts of Jewish derivation were elaborated by Christians, and how the literature of the Second Temple provided inspiration for Christian authors and artists of different national traditions, even when the 'explicit meaning' of such documents seemed to contradict the New Testament. A remarkable number of the documents that we now call 'Apocryphal' (originally meaning 'hidden' or 'concealed') continued to condition the mental world of late antique and early mediæval Christendom. Not verified by formal authorities, numerous apocryphal texts underwent important transformations, often to become a medium of literary elaboration and mythological creativity. The phenomenon of rewriting and of local adaptations of Biblical stories in text and in the arts indicates that copyists, authors and artists conceived of themselves living not in a post-Biblical era, but in direct continuity with the personages of the Bible.

Certain themes deriving from Second Temple Judaism, which are not present in the Canonical Scriptures, were inherited by both Christianity and the Jewish tradition of the Rabbinic period. Each tradition, however, developed these themes in its own way, so that the place occupied by them in Christianity is not symmetrical with their place in Judaism. Nevertheless, the investigation of these two religious worlds may be undertaken as a shared enterprise. One of the central themes that this conference will seek to explore is the origin of the human race as presented in exegetical, liturgical and artistic sources of the first millennium. Apocryphal sources narrate the story of the first human beings, telling also about the eschatological expectations which they would transmit to their posterity. Some sources speak of a secret knowledge passed on by Adam to his progeny. Transmission of divine revelation via Adam and other patriarchs would thus make real the covenant between creatures and the Creator, while ideas about the origins of humankind conditioned the understanding of time and chronology. This conception of the human past also played a crucial role in the formation of historiographical representations. The Christianisation of time, as well as the understanding of time in the Rabbinic tradition (and, more widely, in the late antique and early mediæval Jewish world, as well as in the Samaritan tradition), have seldom been addressed within the scholarly contexts of either early Christianity or Judaism.

Texts regarding primæval human beings also trace a direct line between Adam and the Messiah; the advent of the Saviour is often accompanied by numerous references to the vicissitudes of the first human beings. Christ's Nativity is depicted as the accomplishment of the promises received by Adam, Eve and other antediluvian patriarchs; the new-born child is visited by Eve who recognises in him her Saviour; the Magi coming from the east to Bethlehem are revealed as inheritors of a secret writing transmitted to them from the beginnings of the world, while the infant Jesus is presented as an actor from the days of Creation. The recognition of the Messiah by his contemporaries had to rely on ancient revelations and prophecies; that recognition is the precondition of the Messiah's earthly ministry.

Programme of the conference

26 March, morning session:

Introduction

Hartmut LEPPIN, Frankfurt University
'Geography of Jews and Christians after 70 CE'

Igor DORFMANN-LAZAREV, Frankfurt University
'Historian's Craft and the Temporal Bridges in Apocrypha and in Early Christian Art'

Symbols and figures of Messianic expectation

Abraham TERIAN, St Nersess Seminary, New York
'Whether Lamb or Lion: Overlapping Symbols in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism'

Coffee pause

Albert BAUMGARTEN, Bar Ilan University
'Rescuing John the Baptist'

Andrei ORLOV, Marquette University
'Face as the Image of God in the Jewish Pseudepigrapha'

Lunch

26 March, afternoon session:

Symbols and figures of Messianic expectation (continued)

Yishai KIEL, Hebrew University
'Gnostic Elements in the Book of Zerubbabel'

Pagan mysteries and the esoteric legacy of the Magi

Jan BREMMER, University of Groningen
'Early Christianity and the Pagan Mysteries'

Coffee pause

Antonio PANAINO, University of Bologna
'The Esoteric Legacy of the Magi of Bethlehem'

The Magi and Nativity accounts

Felicity HARLEY, Yale University
'The Magi and the Manger: Gospel and Nativity Traditions in Early Christian Art and Ritual'

Dinner

27 March, morning session:

The Magi and Nativity accounts (continued)

Andrew LOUTH, University of Durham
'Esotericism and Mystery in the *Protevangelium Jacobi*'

Creation and the first-created human beings

Daniele TRIPALDI, University of Bologna
'Apostles, Long Dead "Heretics" and Monks: Non-Canonical Traditions on Angels and Protoplasts in Two Late Antique Coptic Apocalypses (7th–8th Century CE)'

Coffee pause

Abraham TAL, Tel Aviv University
'Bridging the Gaps in Samaritan Traditions'

Yuri STOYANOV, SOAS, London University
'The Transmission of Late Antique Apocryphal Esoteric, Christological and Cosmogonic Traditions in Early Medieval Christian Heterodox Milieux'

Lunch

27 March, afternoon session:

Creation and the first-created human beings (continued)

Mari MAMYAN, National Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (*Matenadaran*), Yerevan
'Eve in Armenian Apocryphal and Patristic Exegetical Literature'

Zaruhi HAKOBYAN, Yerevan State University
'The Gardens of Eden: Compositional and Iconographic Similarities Between the Mosaics from the Armenian Chapel of St. Poyeuctos in Jerusalem and from the Synagogue of Nirim'

Coffee pause

From Adam to Noah and beyond

Sergey MINOV, Oxford University / Hebrew University
'*Translatio corporis Adae*: Development of an Apocryphal Tradition'

Nazenie GARIBIAN, National Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (*Matenadaran*)
'"On the Mountains of Ararat": Noah's Ark and the Sacred Topography of Armenia'

Dinner

28 March, morning session:

Enoch

David HAMIDOVIC, University of Lausanne
'1 Enoch 17 in the Papyrus *Geneva* 187'

Yakir PAZ, Hebrew University, Jerusalem
'Metatron is not Enoch: Re-evaluating the Evolution of an Archangel'

Coffee pause

Jacques VAN RUITEN, University of Groningen

'The Sons of God (*Gen 6*) through the Lenses of *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees* in the Formation of Christian and Jewish Tradition'

Florentina BADALANOVA GELLER, Freie Universität Berlin

'Enochic traditions of *Slavia Orthodoxa*'

Lunch

28 March, afternoon session:

From Abraham to Moses

Basil LOURIÉ, National Research University, Higher School of Economics, and Maria KOROGODINA, Russian Academy of Sciences Library, Petersburg

'"On the Perdition of the Higher Intellect and on the Image of Light": a Slavonic Esoteric Text and its Jewish-Christian Exegetical Background'

Sabine and Dieter FAHL, Greifswald University

'Die Quellen der nichtbiblischen Mose-Überlieferungen in der *Kratkaja Chronografičeskaja Paleja*'

Coffee pause

Jan DOCHHORN, Durham University

'*Lex cordialis – lex naturalis?* Rm 2. 12–16 and its Biblical and Parabiblical Background'

James RUSSELL, Harvard University

'Mosheh Rabbenu, Pious Aeneas, and Problems of Tannaitic Time Travel and Theodicy'

Dinner

29 March, morning session:

Apocalypses and visions

Joseph VERHEYDEN, Catholic University of Leuven

'All Mysteries Revealed? On the Interplay between Hiding and Revealing in the *Ascension of Isaiah*'

Emmanouela GRYPEOU, Stockholm University

'Afterlife Visions in Byzantine Hagiography in its Relation to Esoteric and Apocryphal Sources'

Coffee pause

Tobias NICKLAS, Regensburg University

'Guardians' vision in the Gospel of Peter'

Conclusion

Charles LOCK, University of Copenhagen

'The Crypt and the Archive: Reflections on the Hiddenness of Things'

Lunch

Departure