

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

PARABIBLICAL LITERATURE IN ARMENIA AND ITS SOCIAL LOCATIONS

Studying Parabiblical Literature: Past Scholarship and Future Potential

The Armenian parabiblical heritage is impressive. From the fifth century until early modern times various parabiblical texts translated and written directly in Armenian comprised an important portion of Christian literature. When examining overwhelmingly Armenian manuscript transmission, we find no distinction drawn between apocryphal works related to Old Testament traditions and those related to the New. The Armenians manifested keen interest in patriarchs, kings, prophets from the Hebrew Bible, and in Jesus, his family, and Apostles from the NT: thus, the unitary concept of history was understood from Creation to Parousia and Eschaton; from Adam's sin and fall, through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and coming to an end in the Parousia.

As the manuscript evidence shows, the border between canon and beyond canon is quite unclear in Armenian tradition. We may identify a category of parabiblical works that are often associated in manuscripts with the Bible frequently considered as semi-canonical in Armenian. The second category of Armenian parabiblical compositions are found sometimes in biblical manuscripts but they are more often copied in other types of manuscripts, including hagiographic and homiletic works. Interestingly, however, there are also numerous parabiblical texts that never occur in the codicological unity with biblical canonical texts, but their frequency in other types of manuscripts is remarkable.

Based on biblical and other related texts excluded from the canon, parabiblical tradition in Armenia expanded significantly reusing the biblical motives anew. The medieval Armenian society and culture viewed in the bible-related knowledge and tradition as a story reflecting their own history. As a result, in parabiblical traditions emerging in Armenian, the genealogy, history, and geography of the Armenian people was rooted in, connected with, or identified with biblical history and geography.

The abundance of witnesses shows explicitly the vitality of the parabiblical traditions in medieval Armenian culture. Through centuries, these traditions incorporated in scholastic texts, biblical epitomes, poetic retellings dealing with biblical figures and events. Another facet of the parabiblical tradition is Armenian folklore, biblical persons and incidents became subjects of folk tales which were alive in Armenian culture over the centuries. And of course, much of Armenian art was devoted to biblical subjects where often parabiblical elements penetrate standard/canonical Gospel scenes.

MONDAY, 23 October

Opening: Studying Parabiblical Literature: Past Scholarship and Future Potential

14:00-14:15 WELCOME SPEECH:
Tobias Nicklas
Michael E. Stone

Session A: Crossing the Boundaries: From OT and NT to Parabiblical Traditions and Embroidered Bible

Chair: Harald Buchinger

14:15-15:15 Theo Maarten van Lint: *Ezekiel's Visions: Aspects of their Reception in Armenia*

15:15-15:30 COFFEE BREAK

15:30-16:30 Emanuela Timotin: *Lists of Sins for Catechetical Purposes: The Romanian Seventeenth-Century Tradition of the Letter of Christ on the Observance of Sunday*

16:30-17:30 Shlomi Efrati: *Let us go out to the Field: Evolving Traditions Concerning the Quarrel between Cain and Abel*

19:00 DINNER

TUESDAY, 24 October

Session A: Foundations: The Relevant Corpora/Disciplines for the Study of Armenian Parabiblical Traditions

Chair: Andreas Merkt

09:00-10:00 Abraham Terian: *The Extent of Weaving the Bible into Early Armenian Historiography*

10:00-11:00 Sara Scarpellini: *The Cult of Peter and Paul Between Armenia and the Diaspora*

11:00-11:20 COFFEE BREAK

11:20-12:20 Bernard Outtier: *The Gospel of Nicodemus (Armenian Version)*

12:30-14:00 LUNCH

Session B: Parabiblical Texts and Channels of Transmission: Works, Genres, and Media

Chair: Joseph Verheyden

14:10-15:10 Igor Dorfmann-Lazarev: *Community Boundaries and Ritual Purity in Armenia between Canonical Literature and Apocrypha*

15:10-16:10 Fr. Garegin Hambardzumyan: *Theological Reflections on the Book of Sirach according to the Armenian Tradition*

16:10-16:30 COFFEE BREAK

16:30-17:30 Lusine Sargsyan: *Reflection of Apocrypha in the Art of Armenian Miniaturist Avag (14th century)*

19:00 DINNER

WEDNESDAY, 25 October

Session A: Through the Ages: Armenian Society and the (Para)Biblical World

Chair: Abraham Terian

09:00-10:00 Tobias Nicklas: *Between Embroidered Bible and Mental Bible: Changes of Paradigm in the Study of Parabiblical Traditions*

10:00-11:00 Michael E. Stone: *What is now on the Table in the Study of the Armenian Parabiblical Tradition?*

11:00-11:20 COFFEE BREAK

11:20-12:20 Erna Shirinyan: *Armenian Parabiblical Tradition: Status Quaestionis and Information for Consideration*

12:30-14:00 LUNCH

Session B: OT and NT Apocrypha and Associated Parabiblical Traditions: Case Studies

Chair: Bernard Outtier

14:10-15:10 Mari Mamyán: *The Apostle Thomas in the Armenian AcTh and Parabiblical Traditions*

15:10-16:10 Andy Hilken: *The Armenian Version of Jacob of Serugh's Homily on Palm Sunday (the Sunday of Hosannas) as a Parabiblical Text*

16:10-16:30 COFFEE BREAK

16:30-17:30 Seda Manukyan: *An Analysis of the Scene of "Bitter Water Trial" of the Churches in Cappadocia*

FREE EVENING

THURSDAY, 26 October

Session A: Beyond Texts: Armenian Parabiblical Traditions Between Text, Image, Material Culture, and Performance

Chair: Michael E. Stone

09:00-10:00 Anna Leyloyan-Yekmalyan: *Les versions arméniennes du récit du miracle de l'oiseau d'argile et ses représentations dans l'art arménien médiévale*

10:00-10:30 COFFEE BREAK

10:30-11:30 Gregory Sterling: *The Christian Reception of Philo in Armenian*

12:00-14:00 LUNCH

Session B: The Apocrypha Illuminated: (Non)Relationship between Text and Illustration in the Armenian Manuscripts

Chair: Mari Mamyán

14:10-15:10 Arsen Harutyunyan: *The Donations of Holy Books and Biblical Citations in Armenian Medieval Epigraphic Inscriptions*

15:10-16:10 Hayarpi Hakobyan: *Considerations on two Armenian Gospel Illustrations from the Abraham story dating back to 1316*

16:10-16:30: COFFEE BREAK

16:30-16:45: CONCLUSION:
Tobias Nicklas

19:00 DINNER