The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition

A Comparative Perspective

Essays Presented in Honor of
Professor Robert W. Thomson
on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday

Edited by
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Armenian Witnesses of Three Eschatological Motifs

Jean-Marc Rosenstiehl

Eine Menge Material ist hier freilich unerreichbar, die syrischen, koptischen, slavischen Handschriften werden noch eine reiche Ausbeute liefern.

WILHELM BOUSSET

After more than a hundred years, this statement of W. Bousset is still valuable; to the “unattainable material” may be added dozens of Armenian apocalyptic texts that remain unedited until today or edited over a century ago but based on too few manuscripts. The following first motif reveals that unedited Armenian manuscripts may sometimes shed new and precious light on old material. The second and third parts consist of lists of sometimes new quotations of two other well-known motifs.

1 The Origin of the Antichrist and His Name

Some thirty years ago in Erevan I copied from an unedited manuscript the following amazing lines concerning the Antichrist:

1 Bousset 1895, 19. Today the common tendency is to criticize Bousset’s ideas presented in this quite thin book. But none of the modern research on the Antichrist myth gathers such an enormous quantity of written witnesses of that form of the old Jewish myth of the final enemy, i.e., the form that became the most expanded of all in Christian apocalypticism through the entire middle ages up to modern times.

2 See n. 18 below, on Hippolytus. There are over twenty texts about the “Coming of Gog and Magog” mentioned in the Catalogue of the Matenadaran. Interesting material, probably dependant upon Ps.-Methodian or Ephremic traditions, can also be found in the number of sermons (Δωμάτια) that are either anonymous or are attributed to Ephrem or to John Chrysostom; for instance Χριστός ὁ Νεκρός (On the Antichrist), see John Chrysostom 1862, 910–15; also, Κατά τήν Κριστίνην Παρουσίαν (On the second Coming of Christ), 915–21 (this is possibly a translation of the Ps.-Chrysostomian sermon, εἰς τὴν δευτέραν παρουσίαν . . . PG 61:776–8).

3 This was mainly the merit of the Mekhitharist fathers who published such texts in Armenian. Nearly all these editions, however, did not include a translation that would have allowed non-Armenian scholars interested in apocalypticism to use them.

4 M706 18r, l.19–22 (unedited). These lines belong to a little treatise “About the End of Times and the coming of the Antichrist”; a good dozen of such treatises may be found in Erevan (for
...անուննորա Hրոմեղայ

...the name of his father: Hրոմեղա

և մօրնորա Hրասիմ

and of his mother: Meliton; and his name: Hրասիմ,

ըստմարգարեն Եսայի

որ ասէ թէ կամեցա

after the prophet Isaiah who says: they wanted

առնելիւրոց թագավոր

to make to their king Hրասիմ, the son of Hրոմեղա.

These few lines give us precise and interesting details about the identity of
the person of the Antichrist; namely his proper name, the name of his father
and that of his mother. Concerning his name and that of his father, we are
told that they are based upon a verse of the prophet Isaiah, i.e, Isa 8:6–7. This
fact justifies our examining more precisely the context of this prophecy and
providing a short presentation of the historical events which this passage of
Isaiah addresses.

After the reign of Solomon, the former kingdom of David had been divided
in two parts, the northern kingdom, Israel with its center in Samaria; and the
southern kingdom of Judah, with its capital in Jerusalem. This secession was
a cause of rivalry between the two kingdoms. At the end of the eighth cen-
tury BCE, the king of Samaria, a certain Pekah, son of Remaliah, made a trea-
tise with his neighbor Rezin, king of Aram (or Syria) and both together waged
war against Jerusalem and Ahaz, son of Jotham, the king of Judah. After the reign of Solomon, the former kingdom of David had been divided
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tise with his neighbor Rezin, king of Aram (or Syria) and both together waged
war against Jerusalem and Ahaz, son of Jotham, the king of Judah. Ahaz then
appealed to the king of Assyria for assistance.

On the moral, or theological side, this call for help to the king of Assyria was
considered by the prophet Isaiah as a lack of confidence in God; and, as a con-
sequence of this treachery, he prophesied that the punishment of God would
bring the real final disaster, the end of the kingdom and the deportation of
the entire nation to Mesopotamia. Thus, the main significance of Isa 8:6–7 lies
in the announcement of that catastrophic end.

The historical events as described above, however, transfer this announce-
ment from the historical level to the level of eschatology, to the future history
of the End, and into the legend of the Antichrist.

Historical events of the past are used as the model or pattern for eschato-
logical stories. This is neither unique nor exceptional. Old prophecies were not
only considered witnesses of the past, but were re-interpreted as indicative of

instance M6891, 120v–127r: պատմութիւն չար նեռին ծննդեան (History of the birth of the evil Antichrist).

5  2Kgs (LXX 4Kgdms) 16 (see also 2Chr 28; Isa 7:1). It is described as a quite terrific war; 2Chr 28:6 reports 120,000 killed and over 200,000 prisoners.
contemporary events. We find this technique used, for instance, by the composer of the *Apocalypse* attributed to Ps.-Methodius, who takes the story of Gideon related in the Book of Judges as a pattern upon which he models events that will happen at the End of Times.

This is the first result of our study and commentary on this Armenian apocalyptic text; namely, that the most common process of composition of an apocalyptic text consisted in using biblical passages and imbuing them with new significance within a story prophesying the End. In the case of this Armenian apocalyptic text, we see that it employs the historical events that happened from the time of the Syro-Ephraimitic war until the end of the Jewish nation taken in captivity to Mesopotamia as a model for the eschatological events of the End of Times; namely, the legend of the Antichrist.

It will be worthwhile to look at the biblical text quoted, in the Greek and Armenian versions.

Isa 8:6–7:

6 Διὰ τὸ μὴ βούλεσθαι τὸν λαὸν τοῦτον
Because this people chooses not
τὸ ὕδωρ τοῦ Σιλωάμ τὸ πορευόμενον ἡσυχῆ,
the water of Siloam that goes softly,
ἀλλὰ βούλεσθαι ἔχειν τὸν Ραασσὼν
but wills to have Raassôn
καὶ τὸν υἱὸν Ρομελίου βασιλέα ἐϕ’ ὑμῶν,
and the son of Romelias (as) king over you,
7 διὰ τοῦτο ἰδοὺ ἀνάγει κύριος ἐϕ’ ὑμᾶς
therefore, behold, the Lord brings up upon you
τὸ ὕδωρ τοῦ ποταμοῦ τὸ ἰσχυρὸν καὶ τὸ πολύ,
the water of the river, strong and abundant,
τὸν βασιλέα τῶν Ἀσσυρίων ...
the king of the Assyrians ...

6 See the Dead Sea Scrolls, for instance, 1Q *pesher* to Habakkuk.
7 Ps.-Methodius 1993, xxxii–xxxiii. A similar technique was employed by Jewish and Christian exegetical circles to provide the Book of Psalms with a messianic and eschatological interpretation.
8 Such applications were not limited to biblical prophecies. The description of the colonization of the world by the sons of Noah after the flood is inverted and serves as the model for the final storming of the nations into the country of the Just to wage war against the sons of light in the War Scroll (see Rosenstiehl 2006, 253).
9 A period of over one and a half centuries!
Because this people did not appreciate the water of Siloah that goes peacefully; but wills to make their king Hrasim son of Romela,

therefore, behold, the Lord brings up upon you the water of the river strong and abundant, the king of Assyria...

The Armenian text of Isaiah is not exactly the same as the Greek (or the Hebrew); but differs slightly. The Armenian Bible contains a peculiar tradition that may be quite old. We may observe the omission of the conjunction “and” (8.6b), which conveys a completely new meaning to the text. It does not speak of two kings, namely Hrasim, the first; and the son of Romelay, the second; but compresses both figures into one: Hrasim (Rezin), the son of Romelay (Remaliah).

The same identity appears in Ps.-Epiphanius’s Sermo de Antichristo 15:

... bi jwaw pq, ti i ktwkaw waww dkhaw jhpw zwr bi wprdaw jnwp
... and before thirty years will be born the evil and cursed Antichrist from the tribe of Dan in Chorazin, from foul and adulterous parents, from fornicators

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10 Already noted by Frasson (Ps.-Epiphanius 1976, 273), who does not think it a varia lectio, but an omission: “è omessa la congiunzione tra Rasim ed il figlio di Romelia.” The lectio of the Armenian may be the result of its interpretation of the Greek καὶ (in Ραασσων καὶ τὸν υἱὸν Ρομελίου) as “Raassôn who is the son of Romelias.”


12 “Foul” or “polluted,” “abominable,” the noun corresponding to this adjective is used in Dan 9:27, Mt 24:15 (the “abomination” of desolation). This word is commonly attributed to the mother of the Antichrist in the Armenian tradition; see, for instance, the Seventh Vision of Daniel, Yovsēp’eanc’ 1896, 248, l. 29–30: ուր ջավաղ լի ձեհ ի նյութ պղնձ (he will be conceived and born from a foul virgin).
who wrongly say that they are virgins
whose names are these:
of his father, Ḥโรvelle; and of his mother, Militinea;
and of him, Ḥrasim.

Although Ps.-Epiphanius does not explicitly cite Isaiah at all, it is obvious
that the verses of Isaiah rest behind this passage. The author begins with
some well-known features from the legend of the Antichrist: the origin of the
Antichrist from the tribe of Dan, his birth in Chorazin; the lie about
the virginity of his mother. And he ends with the names of the parents and
of the Antichrist himself.

The Armenian apocalyptic tradition seems to be the only one to have
preserved these names. The next text, however, Hippolytus’s De Christo et
Antichristo 57, not originally composed in Armenian, indicates that this
tradition was not unique to Armenian apocalyptic texts, but belonged to com-
mon apocalyptic traditions:

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13 As noted already by Frasson, Ps.-Epiphanius 1976, 272–3.
14 Hippolytus, De Christo et Antichristo 6ff., 14–15; Ps.-Hippolytus, On the End of the world
18–19; Latin Tiburtine Sibyl (Sackur 1898, 185); Latin Ps.-Ephrem 88–89 (Verhelst 1983, 526);
“Vision of St. Nersēs” (VN 1853, 95); Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius 14,6; Greek Apocalypse of
Daniel 8,2 (=10,2 in Zervos 1983) and Venice text v.47 (Berger 1976, 25); on this motif, see
15 “Vision of St. Nersēs” (VN 1853, 95); Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius 14,1; Slavonic Vision of
Daniel 11 (Alexander 1985, 71); and Ps.-Epiphanius 1976, 268–9. Jesus shared this apocalyp-
tic tradition, see Mt 11:21, 23; Lk 10:13, 15.
16 Ps.-Hippolytus 22; Greek Apocalypse of Daniel Venice text v.37 (Berger 1976, 25); Greek
Ephrem 2,226 B[=3, 137 F]; Latin Ps.-Ephrem 89 (Verhelst 1983, 526); Romanos the
Melodist, “Hymn on the Second Coming” (Groshdier de Matons 1981, 242). See also the
qualification as ῥημα, n. 12 above.
17 Achelis 1897, 38.
18 An ancient Armenian translation of either this treaty of Hippolytus or the work attrib-uted to him, On the End of the world, does actually exist in Armenian, see Kalemkian 1892,
110 (and perhaps M7951, 188r–199v), and the fragments published by Pitra 1884, 158 and
236ff.
19 It seems to survive in the Greek Apocalypse of Daniel 12,1–5 (=11,1–5 in Zervos 1983):
1 καὶ συμβούλιον ποιήσουσι τῶν Ιουδαίων εὕνος καὶ ἔρωσις λέγοντες;
If in the former Armenian texts we have seen that two kings, Hṙasim (Rezin) and the son of Ṛomela (Remaliah), were compressed into one (resulting in a figure: Hṙasim [Rezin] the son of Ṛomela [Remaliah]), here we have a continuation of the same process. Hippolytus takes a further step identifying this same Raassôn (very probably already assimilated to the son of Romelias [Remaliah]) with the king of the Assyrians! Thereafter, this Raassôn (Rezin), king of the Assyrians, is projected into the period of the End of Times and becomes the model of the Antichrist whose role he then plays. At this point we may conclude, regarding the identification of literary models for this text, that the names of the father of the Antichrist and of the Antichrist himself have their origin in an interpretation of this verse of Isaiah.

20 The affirmation of Isa 8:6 that the Jews choose the king of the Assyrians (i.e., the Antichrist) is the origin of the constant affirmation that the Jewish people will join the Antichrist as soon as he will appear. See also the words of Jesus, Jn 5:43.

21 This same verse of Isaiah was the model for two other features prominent in apocalyptic literature: the first is the role of the Assyrians (and/or of the “Assyrian king”; and of the “Kittim of Assur”); the second, one of the most famous names of the Antichrist—Armilus—originally derived from the name of the father of the Antichrist—Romelyahu
The question of the name of the Antichrist’s mother, however, has not yet found a solution. It is, in fact, not an easy problem. We may observe that the spelling of this name is not consistent, but shows quite a lot of variations. Earlier attempts tried to locate the origin of the name in Armenia. But after what we have just teased out with respect to the names of the Antichrist and his father, we do not feel obliged to restrain our investigation to Armenia.

If we consider the names given to the Antichrist in apocalyptic texts, we find that most of these names have a biblical origin. Many of these names retain an old Semitic tradition; for example, instead of saying “the Lawless (one),” they often prefer to use the semiticism, “the Son of the Lawlessness,” likewise, “the Son of the Destruction,” rather than “the Destroyer.” The latter represents one of the most common names for the Antichrist, usually translated as “the Son of Perdition,” ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας, παιδίου ἐνδικητικοῦ, παῖς ἄνθρωπος, bar abdânâ, fijilius perditionis.

Sometimes one can detect that the Semitic formulation, “son of something” is no longer used or understood in its original sense. Moreover, it sometimes takes on a new meaning; namely, not “the son of something,” but “the son of

(and from there was, in a later stage, assimilated to Romulus). Note that this old interpretation of Assur=Antichrist survived not only in Hippolytus, but also in ancient commentaries on the Revelation of John; see, e.g., Victorinus of Poetovio (Dulaey 1997, 86).

22 Cf. the remarks of Frasson, Ps.-Epiphanius 1976, 270: “L'identificazione del nome come appellativo della madre dell’Anticristo è però questione disperata.”


24 See again, Ps.-Epiphanius 1976, 270.

25 Apocalypse of Elijah 2.34 (A 29,10; Steindorff 1899, 82; transl. Kuhn 1984, 766; Rosenstiehl 1897, 1810), Παλαιος: 2Thes 2:8: ἄνωνος, ἄνωνος (cf. Ps 17:31).

26 Apocalypse of Elijah: παιδίου ἴντακον in 1.10 (A 21,2), 3.1 (A 31,16), 3.5 (A 32,10), 3.11 (A 33,12; Sa 5,22), 3.15 (A 34.8–9; Sa 6,7–8), 3.19 (A 34.16; Sa 6,7–8), 3.33 (A 35,14), 3.39 (A 35.18; Sa 8,24), 3.53 (A 38,5; Sa 10,11), 3.64 (A 40,5; Sa 12,23), 3.92 (A 42,14). Cf. 2Thes 2:3: ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἁλαντάς, τοῦ ἄνθρωπος ἐνδικητικοῦ.

27 Apocalypse of Elijah 2.33 (A 29,8–9); Greek Tiburtine Sibyl, l. 220 (and cf. ὁ ἄρχων τῆς ἁλαντάς, ll. 208.216, Alexander 1967, 21.22); Latin Tiburtine Sibyl (Sackur 1898, 185); Ps.-Hippolytus 26, 30, 40; Greek Vision of Daniel (Vassiliev 1893, 37, 38, 42); Ephrem, Sermon V,78.361, 364, 448, 477, 482, 498 (Beck 1972, 81, 89, 90, 92, 93); Latin Ps.-Ephrem 145–6 (Verhelst 1983, 528); Romanos the Melodist, “Hymn on the Second Coming” (Grosdidier de Matons 1981, 244); Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius 11, 17, 13, 21, 14, (2), 6, 7, 9, (10), 11; this name is used in the New Testament, 2Thes 2:3; Jn 17:32. The meaning of these words, “Perdition” or “Destruction,” is in fact “the action of” or “the place of Destruction” or “of Perdition,” that is, the Abyss.
somebody”! This is exactly the case in the following text concerning the origin of the Antichrist in the Greek *Apocalypse of Daniel* 11,9–10:28

9 ὄνομα αὐτῆς (i.e. κόρη παρθένος) Ἀδικία,
Her (i.e. a virgin girl’s) name: “Adikia” (“Injustice”)
dióτι ἀδικίας υἱὸς μέλει τεχθῆναι ἐξ αὐτῆς,
because the Son of Injustice (“Adikia”) will be born from her;
10 τὸ δὲ ἐπώνυμον αὐτῆς ἔσται Ἀπώλεια.
and her surname will be “Apôlia.”

We read here two feminine nouns, Adikia and Apôlia, that are said to be the names of the mother of the Antichrist. But these names are highly symbolic in their meaning: Adikia means Injustice, and Apôlia, Perdition. In Greek, these nouns are feminine, so they are well-suited to a woman; in this instance, the mother of the Antichrist. The identity or title “Son of Injustice” and “Son of Perdition” may also be understood as “Son of Miss Adikia” or “Son of Miss Apôlia!” These feminine names were normally easily understood in Greek; but even so, they were sometimes misconstrued, as is evident in the *Dialogue between Christ and the Devil* 7, where Christ answers the Devil’s question about his origin in the following manner:

συνλάβεται σε κόρη παρθένος ὀνόματι Εὐδοκία
you will be conceived by a virgin girl named Eudokia
ότι καὶ ἐξ ἀδικίας ὠφείλες γεννηθῆναι.
because you have to be born from Adikia.29

“Son of the Injustice” is not the most frequently used title to designate the Antichrist; but it is not very surprising.30 ἀδικία (injustice) is equivalent to

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29 Casey and Thomson 1955, 55. Van der Vliet 1994 tried to show, with much erudition, that this was a polemic text against the fifth-century Byzantine empress Eudokia—through a genuine play on the words, Eudokia-Adikia. But it would constitute the only reference to this person in any apocalyptic text; and it seems difficult to imagine the empress Eudokia in the role of the mother of the Antichrist. In the Greek Tiburtine Sibyl 92–93, she seems quite well regarded, even the Metropolitan City is there named after her: Εὐδοκόπολις Κωνσταντίνου πόλις (Alexander 1967, 14). Berger 1976, 106 is right when he sees in “Eudokia” a corruption for “Adikia.”
30 See *Apocalypse of Elijah* 2.2, and 2.6 (A 25,4.16; Sa 3,26; 4,7) where a model of the Antichrist, opposed to the “king of the Peace” (ⲡⲣ̄ⲣⲟ ⲃⲛⲃⲣⲏⲛ) is called ⲡⲣ̄ⲣⲟ ⲉⲧⲕⲟⲩⲣⲓⲟⲥ ⲱⲣⲟ ⲡⲣ̄ⲣⲟ ⲡⲧⲥⲕⲟⲩⲓⲏⲛ “the Assyrian king and the king of Injustice.”
ἀνομία. The words are nearly synonymous, sometimes used interchangeably in the Greek Bible\(^{31}\) as well as in the *Greek Apocalypse of Daniel*.\(^{32}\)

The translation of these words in Armenian is quite consistent: “injustice” (ἀδικία) is translated by υἱὸς ἀδικίας (the adjective “unjust” [ἀδικός], by υἱὸς ἀδικίας); and “lawlessness” (ἀνομία), by υἱὸς ἀδικίας (the adjective “lawless” [ἀνομός], by υἱὸς ἀδικίας). However, it is impossible to render these Greek feminine words with Armenian words that sound feminine and could be understood as a woman’s name.\(^{33}\) Although the same problem arises with the designation “Apôlia,” this last name has a classical equivalent, well known in Greek, “Abaddôn,”\(^{34}\) which is simply the transliteration of the Hebrew original. The Armenian translator had apparently just borrowed this foreign word, without translating it at all. The name was subsequently corrupted to “Մելիտոն” (“Meliton”) and the other variant corruptions.\(^{35}\)

This quick survey of some apocalyptic texts leads to the conclusion that Armenian apocalyptic texts may yield new information. So, for instance, we

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31 For instance in Ps 45 (LXX 44):8. In translations, the same equivalency is found, see 2Sam (LXX 2Kgdms) 7:10, πώς ἀδικίας, where the Armenian has որդի անաւրէնութեան. Note that the New Testament does not know the title “Son of the Injustice.”


33 A construction like որդի անաւրէնութիւն would sound very strange, and seems quite impossible!

34 For its use in apocalyptic language, see, e.g., the *Greek Apocalypse of Daniel* 11,10, quoted above; or Rev 9:11:

35 See above n. 23.
discovered the possibility that the time of wars that ended with the exile of the Jewish people into the very desperate Babylonian captivity, served as a model for the times of trouble and persecution to come at the arrival of the Antichrist. Another example is furnished by the name of the mother of the Antichrist in the Armenian apocalyptic tradition, which probably represents something along the lines of “miss Perdition,” corresponding to the equivalent “miss Injustice” of the Greek.

2 The Period of Abundance at the End of Times

This motif is, like other features of the apocalyptic tradition, quite common and widespread in the universal hope of mankind, and may belong to general folklore. The Latin Tiburtine Sibyl contains a description of eschatological abundance that may be considered generic:

> In illis ergo diebus erunt divitiae multe
> In these days there shall be many riches
> et terra abundanter dabit fructum,
> and the earth shall give fruit in abundance,
> ita ut tritici modium denario uno venundetur;
> so that one measure of wheat shall be sold for one cent,
> modium vini denario uno,
> one measure of wine one cent
> modium olei denario uno . . .
> (and) one measure of oil one cent . . .

Commenting on this passage, Ernst Sackur thought immediately of the classic descriptions of the Golden Age.36 It seems quite reasonable that at least one period of the End of Times could have been understood as such a Golden Age. The time of the Messiah was clearly imagined as such in Jewish eschatological speculations,37 as R.H. Charles established in his translation of and commentary on the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch (2 Baruch 29,4):38

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36 Sackur 1898, 185 (and n. 1) referred to Virgil’s IV. Eclogae, 18–30, and to Ovid’s Metamorphoses 1:101–12. See also de Jonge 1979.


The earth also shall yield its fruit ten thousandfold and on each vine there shall be a thousand branches, and on each branch shall be a thousand clusters, and each cluster shall produce a thousand grapes, and each grape shall produce a car of wine.

He further noted:

_We have here another fragment of an old apocalypse, of which we find a version in Irenaeus V, 33. Papias is there said to ascribe it to our Lord. Irenaeus preserves a longer and fuller form than our text, and all seeds and fruit-trees share in the miraculous fruitfulness in his quotation. I Enoch X, 19 gives a still more fragmentary quotation._

More precisely, the origin of such fabulous abundance is to be found in Jewish messianic speculations.

We present below a collection of some apocalyptic texts mentioning this feature of abundance; it is interesting to notice that some Armenian texts belong to this list, a fact that allows a rather rich comparative perspective. The period of abundance is not always expected at the same time: sometimes it happens just before or during the reign of the Antichrist; other times it belongs to the time of the final millennium; it may also be conceived of in relation to paradise. For the sake of simplicity the following list is organized in accordance with these characteristics and without further commentary.

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39 Charles 1913, 195; 1Enoch 10.18–19: “(18) And then shall be the whole earth tilled in righteousness, and shall all be planted with trees and be full of blessings. (19) And all desirable trees shall be planted on it, and they shall plant vines on it: and the vine which they plant thereon shall yield wine in abundance, and as for all the seed which is sown thereon each measure (of) it shall bear a thousand, and each measure of olives shall yield ten presses of oil.”

40 A remembrance of such speculations is to be found in the Babylonian Talmud, Ketubot 111b. Caquot 1987, 483 (note on 1Enoch 10.18) proposes to see the origin in Ps 72, read and interpreted in a messianic sense. Cf., for instance, Ps 72:16.
2.A The Period of Abundance within the Legend of the Antichrist

2.A.a I Apocryphal Apocalypse of John 5,1–4

5,1 καὶ εἶπον. κύριε, And I said: “Lord,
Πότε μέλουσιν ταῦτα γενέσθαι, καὶ τί διαφέρουσιν οἱ καιροὶ ἐκεῖνοι; when shall these things come to pass, and what do those times bring?”

Previously unedited text; text here based upon the following manuscripts: M2270, 124r ll.10–19; M2576, 131r ll.15–19; M3506, 80r l.29–80v l.7; M4370, 181r2 ll.5–15; M7951, 164r ll.17–21. Greek text in Tischendorf 1866, 73. On this apocryphal Apocalypse, see Geerard 1992 and Rosenstiehl 1984, 600.
καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς λεγούσης μοι. ἄκουσον, δίκαιε Ιωάννη.
And I heard a voice saying to me: “Hear, righteous John!
There shall be in that time
πλησμονὴ σίτου καὶ οἴνου,
abundance of wheat and wine,42 such as there has never been upon the earth,
οὐδ’ οὐ μὴ γένηται ἐως οὗ ἔλθωσιν οἱ καιροὶ ἐκεῖνοι.
nor shall ever be until those times come.
τότε ὁ στάχυς τοῦ σίτου ἐκφυεῖ ἡμιχοίνικον,
Then the ear of wheat shall produce a half choenix,
καὶ ὁ ἀγκών τοῦ κλήματος ἐκφυεῖ χιλίους βότρυας,
and the bend of the branch shall produce a thousand clusters,
καὶ ὁ βότρυς ἐκφυεῖ ἡμίσταμνον οἴνου.
and the cluster shall produce a half jar of wine;
καὶ τοῦ ἐπερχομένου ἔτους οὐ μὴ εὑρεθῇ ἐπὶ προσώπου πάσης τῆς γῆς
and in the following year there shall not be found upon the face of all the earth
ἡμιχοίνικον σίτου οὐδὲ ἡμίσταμνος οἴνου.
a half choenix of wheat or a half jar of wine.”43

2.A.b  Greek Apocalypse of Daniel 11,29–33; 12,6–744

11,29 ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τοῦ ἐκεῖνου γενήσεται εὐφορία σίτου καὶ οἴνου καὶ ἐλαίου
at that time there will be abundance of grain and wine and oil
οἶα οὐ γέγονεν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου.
such as has not been since the foundation of the world.
11,30 ἐν γὰρ τοῖς καιροῖς τοῦ ἐκεῖνος ἐγενότατα εὐφορία σίτου καὶ οἴνου καὶ ἐλαίου
in those times the earth will pour out a half choenix of wheat
οὐδὲ ἡμίσταμνος οἴνου.
a half choenix of wheat or a half jar of wine.

42 Ms B Paris Greek 947 adds καὶ ἐλαίου.
43 Ms B has here: οὔτε σῖτος οὔτε οἶνος οὔτε ἐλαιόν.
καὶ ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ παχέα ποιήσει χιλίους βότρυας καὶ ὁ ἀμήτος μυρίους στάχυς.
and the vine will make one thousand clusters, and the (wheat) harvest ten thousand ears
καὶ εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τὸν ἐρχόμενον οὐ μὴ εὑρηθῇ καὶ οὐ μὴ γίνηται ἐπὶ προσώπου πάσης τῆς γῆς.
and in the next time there will not be found one choenix of wheat in the whole world.
267 three eschatological motifs

καὶ ὁ ἄγκων τοῦ κλήματος ἐκβάλλει βότρυς ἑκατόν.
And the vine branch will put out a hundred clusters.

καὶ ὁ βότρυς γενήσεται μυριαγωγός καὶ ἐκχεῖ ὁ ἱὸν μέτρα.
And the cluster will bear ten thousand (grapes) and will pour out a hundred measures.

καὶ ἐν τῷ τριτῷ ἔτει τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ
And in the third year of his reign (i.e. the Antichrist)

ἐκλείψει πᾶς καρπὸς ἀπὸ προσώπου τῆς γῆς.
all the fruits will fail upon the earth

καὶ οὐ μὴ εὑρεθῇ ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ
And there will not be found in the whole world

εἰ μὴ μία ἡμιχοίνικον σίτου καὶ εἰ μὴ ἥμισον στάμνον οἴνου καὶ ἐλαίου.
(even) a half choenix of wheat or a half jar of wine or oil.

2.A.c Dialogue between Christ and the Devil 7⁴⁵

ὁ διάβολος λέγει, “κύριε, καὶ ἀπ’ ἐκεῖ τί;”
The Devil said: “And after this, what will happen?”

ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει, “τὸν αὐτὸ καιρὸν γενήσεται σῖτος καὶ οἶνος πολὺς . . .
Jesus said: “In that same time, there will be much wheat and wine . . .

καὶ τῶν δύο καιρῶν οὐχ εὑρεθήσεται εἰς τὰ τέσσαρα πέρατα,
but in the (next) two times, there will not be found, so far as the four ends

(OF the world),

ἢ οἶνος ἢ ἔλαιος εἰ μὴ τῆς χήρας γυναικὸς σίτου καὶ ἡμίλιτρον ἐλαίου.”
any wine or oil except the ration of wheat of the widow and half a liter of oil.”

2.A.d Vision of Enoch the Just⁴⁶

These are the two chiefs of tribes white and fine to look on.

⁴⁵ Casey and Thomson 1955, 55. Cf. also the Slavic fragment (R²) of “A Dialogue between Christ and the Devil,” 6 (translation in Casey and Thomson 1955, 60):

And the Devil said: “And what will happen then?”

And Jesus said: “The first year the vines will yield plenteously but the next year there will not be a pud (40 lb.) of grain on the whole earth.”

The mention of the widow in the Greek text is an allusion to the story of Elijah, 1Kgs (LXX 3Kgdms) 17.

And in their days will be peace and abundance,
men will forget all the former evils and tribulations;
there will be fertile fields, and abundance of products for the barn and for
the wine-press.

Then the earth will give forth her produce as before, to the joy of men;
the fields will abound with wheat and wine, and heaven will pour down
fruitfull rains;
and there will be no hail, neither thunder, nor tempests.
One grain of wheat will give one hundred ears, and one shoot of vine one
thousand clusters.

And upon the mountains will be vines, fine-branched and laden with
fruit,
and the olive-trees will produce sevenfold for the joy of men;
and men will rest and forget their former tribulations.

The Motif of the Period of Abundance Also Appears in the End of
Times, Mingled with the Story of the Antichrist, in the Hebrew
Apocalypse of Elijah 6,4

Then one kor of wheat will yield 900 kor
and it will be the same concerning the wine
and the same also concerning the oil.
Every tree will be covered with delicious fruits,
as it is said:48
“And ye, mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches…”
And Israel shall eat and rejoice for forty years.

2.B  The Period of Abundance in the Final Millennium

2.B.a  Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses, V, 33, 349

When the creation, renewed and liberated,
will bring forth an abundance of all kinds of food,
from the dew of heaven and the fertility of the earth;
thus the elders who saw John, the disciple of the Lord, remembered
that they had heard from him, about those times, what the Lord used to teach and say:

“Days will come, when vines will grow
having a single one ten thousand boughs,
and on each single bough ten thousand branches,
and on each branch ten thousand shoots,

and each grain, when pressed, will give twenty five jars of wine…."

48 Ezek 36:8.
49 Edition of the Armenian by Ter Minassiantz (Irenaeus 1910, 235). For the Latin text and a recent bibliography see Körtner 1998; see also the presentation in Dubois 1991, 6–8.
So too a grain of wheat will produce ten thousand ears,
and each ear will have ten thousand grains,
and each grain will give five choenix of fine flour
and all the other fruit-trees and seeds and grass
in corresponding proportion…"

Quando et creatura renovata et liberata multitudinem fructificabit universae escae ex rore caeli et ex fertilitate terrae. Quemadmodum presbyteri meminerunt, qui Ioannem discipulum domini viderunt, (5) audisse se ab eo, quemadmodum de temporibus illis docebat dominus et dicebat:

“Venient dies, in quibus vineae nascentur,
singulae decem millia palmitum habentes,
et in una palmita dena millia brachiorum,
et in una vero palmita dena millia flagellorum,
et in unoquoque flagello dena millia botrum,
et in unoquoque botro dena millia acinorum,
et in unoquoque acinum expressum dabat viginti quinque metretas vini.
…
Similiter et granum tritici decem millia spicarum generaturum,
et unamquamque spicam habituram decem millia granorum,
et unamquamque grainum quinque bilibres similae clarae mundae
et reliqua autem poma et semina et herbam
secundum congruentiam his consequentem…

2.C  The Period of Abundance in Paradise

2.C.a  Apocalypse of the Apostles

Thomas said unto the Saviour: “Lord, behold thou hast shown us all the sweet smelling trees

50 Part of an “Encomium on saint John the Baptist attributed to saint John Chrysostom,” ed. Budge 1913, 142, ll.6–27.
which are in paradise, and the fruit-trees, and the palm-trees. 
Tell us now how many clusters on each palm-tree, 
and how many fruits on each tree and each cluster, 
and how many bunches on each vine."

The Saviour said:

As regardeth the vine concerning which you have asked me, 
on one bunch there are ten thousand grains, 
and each grain will produce six measures (of wine). 
As regardeth the palm-trees of the paradise, each cluster (yieldeth) ten thousand dates, 
their length is the measure of a man.

Likewise with the lemons: ten thousand per tree, which are very high, 
and if three men eat one, they are satiated."
I looked out on that country,
and saw a river flowing with milk and honey,
on this side of the river and on that were growing trees that were laden
with fruit.

And I looked to the east,
I discovered all the creations of God in that place
I saw palm-trees growing there,
and each one was wholly different from the other;
some of them were thirty cubits in height,
some of them twenty, some of them ten;
the ground wheron they were growing was whiter than silver, seven
times.
From the root of each tree up to its heart there were ten thousand
branches
[with tens of thousands of clusters;] there were ten thousand clusters on
each branch,
there were ten thousand dates in each cluster.
And thus was it also with the vines.
On each vine were ten thousand shoots, and on each shoot (ten thou-
sand) grapes,
three eschatological motifs

on each grape were ten thousand grains.
And there were other trees there, tens of thousands of tens of thousands of them,
and their fruit was in the same proportion.

καὶ ἦσαν παρὰ τὸ χείλος τοῦ ποταμοῦ δένδρα πεφυτευμένα
And there were by the bank of the river, trees planted, full of different fruits.

καὶ ἰδον ἐκεῖ δένδρα πανμεγέθη πλήρεις καρπῶν.
and I saw there trees of great size full of fruits;

καὶ ἦν δὲ ἡ γῆ ἐκείνη λαμπρότερα ἀργυρίου καὶ χρυσίου,
and that land was more brilliant than silver and gold;
καὶ ἦν δὲ δέντρα πεφυτευμένα καὶ μυρίοι ἀκρενόνες καὶ μυρίοι βότρυες ἐφ᾽ἑκάστου κλήματος.
and vines growing on those date-palms, and myriads of shoots, and myriads of clusters on each branch.

And I looked towards the rising of the sun,
and I saw there trees of great size full of fruits;

καὶ ἦν δὲ ἡ γῆ ἐκείνη λαμπρότερα ἀργυρίου καὶ χρυσίου,
and that land was more brilliant than silver and gold;
καὶ μυρίοι ἀκρενόνες καὶ μυρίοι βότρυες ἐφ᾽ἑκάστου κλήματος.
and myriads of shoots, and myriads of clusters on each branch.

καὶ ἦσαν παρὰ τὸ χείλος τοῦ ποταμοῦ δένδρα πεφυτευμένα
And there were by the bank of the river, trees planted, full of different fruits.

καὶ ἰδον ἐκεῖ δένδρα πανμεγέθη πλήρεις καρπῶν.
and I saw there trees of great size full of fruits;

καὶ ἦν δὲ ἡ γῆ ἐκείνη λαμπρότερα ἀργυρίου καὶ χρυσίου,
and that land was more brilliant than silver and gold;
καὶ μυρίοι ἀκρενόνες καὶ μυρίοι βότρυες ἐφ᾽ἑκάστου κλήματος.
and myriads of shoots, and myriads of clusters on each branch.

καὶ ἦσαν παρὰ τὸ χείλος τοῦ ποταμοῦ δένδρα πεφυτευμένα
And there were by the bank of the river, trees planted, full of different fruits.

καὶ ἰδον ἐκεῖ δένδρα πανμεγέθη πλήρεις καρπῶν.
and I saw there trees of great size full of fruits;

καὶ ἦν δὲ ἡ γῆ ἐκείνη λαμπρότερα ἀργυρίου καὶ χρυσίου,
and that land was more brilliant than silver and gold;
καὶ μυρίοι ἀκρενόνες καὶ μυρίοι βότρυες ἐφ᾽ἑκάστου κλήματος.
and myriads of shoots, and myriads of clusters on each branch.

καὶ ἦσαν παρὰ τὸ χείλος τοῦ ποταμοῦ δένδρα πεφυτευμένα
And there were by the bank of the river, trees planted, full of different fruits.

καὶ ἰδον ἐκεῖ δένδρα πανμεγέθη πλήρεις καρπῶν.
and I saw there trees of great size full of fruits;

καὶ ἦν δὲ ἡ γῆ ἐκείνη λαμπρότερα ἀργυρίου καὶ χρυσίου,
and that land was more brilliant than silver and gold;
καὶ μυρίοι ἀκρενόνες καὶ μυρίοι βότρυες ἐφ᾽ἑκάστου κλήματος.
and myriads of shoots, and myriads of clusters on each branch.
erant x milia palmrarum super (singulis) ramos
there were ten thousand palms on each branch
et erant singule arbores (lege palmas?) afferentes fructus super (x) milia.
and each palm brought over ten thousand fruits.

Vineae autem uitis habebant x milia arbusta.
And the vine bough had ten thousand shoots
In singulis autem uitis erant x milia butriones
and on each vine (shoot) there were ten thousand clusters
et x milia racemi in singulis butrionibus.
and ten thousand grapes on each cluster.
Singule autem arbores ille adferebant decemilia fructum.
Each of these (grape?)trees brought ten thousand grains.

3 The Portrait of the Antichrist

Descriptions of the identity of the Antichrist have intrigued scholars such as Bousset, Macler, Nau, and James, for over a century. These various descriptions were finally published together in translation in 1967. Since the publication of that volume, the same and similar lists were published in subsequent studies, some of which added new portraits of the Antichrist. From these more recently published portraits, it seems interesting to give here one from the Irish tradition; a second, in Syriac, from the large field of apocryphal visions related to the prophet Daniel; and finally, one from the Armenian apocryphal literature.

3.A Irish Story of the Antichrist

And John the Evangelist said to Jesus:
Lord, what shape shall be on that man, so that we may leave a description of him written,
so that he may be recognised from his deeds, and so that no one may believe in him, he being recognized.

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52 See Rosenstiehl 1967 in general (and concerning these scholars, 45 n. 5).
55 This introductory detail shows that this Irish tradition depends on the I Apocryphal Apocalypse of John (see hereafter the beginning of text 3.C.b.).
The Lord said that it is from a harlot of the tribe of Daniel\textsuperscript{56} of Bethel (he should be)
and he would be reared in the Carbuban
and that he would reside in the city which is called Besasta,\textsuperscript{57}
and the length of his body shall be six hundred fathoms,
and forty fathoms its breadth,
and (he has) one eye protruding from his forehead,
and his face all one flat surface,
and his mouth (reaching) down to his bosom,
and there shall be no upper teeth in his head, and he shall have no knees,
and the soles of his feet shall be round like the wheel of a cart,
and there shall be horrible black hair on him,
and there shall be three fiery fumes out of his nose
and out of his mouth rising in the air, as it were flames of fire.

3.B \textit{Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel} 22\textsuperscript{58}

And these are his signs and the fearsome appearance of his stature:
his head is large, his hair is glistening,
his eyes blue and neck strong.
His sides raised, his chest broad,
his arms long, and his fingers short.
He has two horns in his ears,
and there is excessive flesh in his ear
also deficient flesh.
His figure is furious, amazing and wrathful.
The appearance of his stature is also amazing.
He will be seen like lightning in heaven,

\textsuperscript{56} This Daniel is probably to be identified with Dan, see above n. 14.
\textsuperscript{57} “Bethel,” “Carbuban,” and “Besasta” were originally the three towns Chorazin, Capernaum
and Bethsaida (see n. 15, above).
\textsuperscript{58} Henze 2001: text, 47, trans., 91–2; translation here from Brock 2005–6, 14. The Syriac apoc-
alyptic text, “Of the Young Daniel” (8,11–13), edited in the unpublished dissertation of
Schmoldt 1972, has nearly the same portrait: “And these are his signs; the appearance of
his stature, and his head, is large; his hair (like a) cock’s comb, his eyes glistening, his eye-
brows raised. And he has two horns in his ears and there is excessive flesh inside his ear.
His neck is strong, his chest broad, his arms long, and his fingers short. His appearance is
furious, fearful and wrathful. The appearance of his stature is amazing, and like a torch of
Daniel in general, see now DiTommaso 2005.
and like a torch in a camp
With him are chariots of fire and camps of war.

Within the same pseudepigraphical literature of Daniel, the Armenian apocalyptic tradition also gives an attestation of such a portrait:

3.C.a  *Seventh Vision of Daniel*\(^{59}\)

... ἑν τοι ἀγάλματα ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων ὁμοίων... 
... whose signs are these:
καταργέντα ἀγάλματα ἀνθρώπων
The joints of his knees are stiff, 
ὑρτίνη,  
he is crippled,  
ηρτήματα,  
smooth-browed,  
ὑμνίματα,  
crooked-fingered,  
ὑπογέλη...  
long-headed...

Other portraits may be found in Armenian texts; for instance, in the following Armenian translation of a Greek apocalypse:

3.C.b  *Armenian* *I Apocryphal Apocalypse of John 6–7*\(^{60}\)

6,1  ὅτι ἐπιρράλθω ἡ  ἔπαθὼ ὑπὸ  ἐρυθῶν  ἐγὼ ὁ Σάρπ  
and again I, John, said to the Lord 
Σάρπ ἐπιρράλθω ἡ  ἐπαθώ ὑπὸ ἐρυθῶν ἔσεσθαι.  
Lord, thereafter what wilt Thou do?
2  ὅτι ἔπαιρα  ἱὼν ἐν  ἔπαθι  ἐγὼ  
and I heard a voice saying to me:  
ἔπαιρα  ἐπαθώ ἔπαιρα ἔπαιρα ἐρυθών  
Hear, righteous John  
ἐπαθώ ἔπαιρα ἔπαιρα ἔπαιρα  
after all this

\(^{59}\) Text in Kalemkiar 1892, 133, and Yovsēp'eanc' 1896, 249; for translations see Rosenstiehl 1967, 49 n. 1. See also L. DiTommaso’s contribution to Part I of this volume.

\(^{60}\) Unedited; text based upon M2270 and M3506 (see above, n.42).
shall appear the Man of Lawlessness
the Son of Perdition the Denier
the Impious imprisoned in the darkness
whose name is [Anti]christ.

and again I said [to the Lord]
and I heard a voice saying
hear, righteous John,
the appearance of his face is dusky
and the hairs of his head sharp like darts
and his eyebrows like a wild beast's

his eyes of different colours
[his right eye] like the star which rises in the morning
and the other like an eagle's

his mouth large
and his teeth like a lion's

the fingers of his hands like scythes

61 M2270 is corrupt here, text borrowed from M3506.
62 Lit. “his ears,” but see Greek: ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς αὐτοῦ ὁ δεξιός, “his right eye.”
63 M3506: πληρωτὶ ἴση ἰσασίας ὡς (cf. Greek).
64 M3506: ὁσιότατος ἴση ἰσασίας ὡς (cf. Greek).
and the print of his feet of three spans

He shall be exalted unto heaven but shall be cast down to the hell of the abyss

and written on his forehead: this is the Antichrist.

and he shall cause great terrors.

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65 M3506: ἦν ὡς μυθηνήμενος ἡμηγημ. 

66 The Greek text, Tischendorf 1866, 73–5:

And again I said: Lord, after that, what wilt Thou do?

And I heard a voice saying to me:

Hear, righteous John

then shall appear the Denier (now) rejected in the darkness who is called Antichrist.

And again I said:

Lord, reveal to me what he is like.

And I heard a voice saying to me:

the appearance of his face is dusky,

the hairs of his head are sharp like darts,

his eyebrows like a wild beast’s

his mouth about one cubit,

his teeth a span long,
Finally, two further examples demonstrate that such portraits are not rare in the Armenian apocalyptic tradition. The first occurs in Ps.-Epiphanius’s *Sermo de Antichristo*, 15; the second, in the “Vision of Agathon.”

**Bibliography**


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4 οἱ δάκτυλοι αὐτοῦ ὡς δρέπανα,
his fingers like scythes,
tὸ ἴχνος τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ σπιθαμῶν δύο,
the print of his fet of two spans,
καὶ εἰς τὸ μέτωπον αὐτοῦ γραφὴ ἀντίχριστος·
and on his face an inscription: Antichrist
5 ἕως τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὑψωθήσεται
he shall be exalted even to heaven
καὶ ἕως τοῦ ᾅδου καταβήσεται,
and shall be cast down even to hell,
ποιῶν ψευδοφαντασίας . . . .
he will make false miracles . . .

67 On these two visions, see the contribution of Z. Pogossian in volume 2 of this collection of essays and her “Jews in Armenian Apocalyptic Traditions.”


