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# ܩܘܪܘܢܐ ܕܐܕܡ • THE TESTAMENT OF ADAM

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## INTRODUCTION

The *Testament of Adam* is a short Christian, pseudepigraphal work from late antiquity; it was likely composed in Syriac, though it now survives in numerous languages and recensions.

The document is comprised of two main parts, usually called the *Horarium* and the *Prophecy* by modern scholars. It is conventionally divided into four chapters, with the *Horarium* comprising the first two chapters and the *Prophecy* as chapter three. What we often call the fourth chapter is an additional section, the *Hierarchy*, which only appears in one manuscript (*Vatican Syriac 164*, dated at 1072 CE) and was almost certainly not part of any original document.

The Syriac (*BM Add. 14,624*, early 9<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Chs 1–3 only) and Greek (*Paris Codex Greek 2419*, 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> Century) texts here presented are from the [Online Critical Pseudepigrapha](#) (OCP). Note that the order of Chs 1 & 2 in the Greek text here cited is inverted in respect of that of the Syriac text. The Syriac text for Ch. 4 is a version of M. Kmosko's 1907 transcription of 'Fragment 3' and will likely contain errors; not, also, that this chapter is presented in the (East Syriac) 'Serto Jerusalem' font.

## AUTHORSHIP AND DATES

There is no consensus about the dating of the *Testament of Adam*. The earliest known manuscript is from the 9<sup>th</sup> Century CE (Syriac, as presented here) and the combining of the *Horarium* and the *Prophecy* must have happened sometime before that. If the text of *Transitus Mariae* that Lewis edited is from the 5<sup>th</sup> Century, as she was led to believe, this might be the earliest witness, or at least to the *Prophecy*. In the Coptic *Apocalypse of Elijah* (3:1–8), a list of the antichrist's miracles is found that resembles the list of Jesus' miracles in 3:1. On this basis, some tentatively suggest that the *Prophecy* was composed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century CE and dates the *Horarium* no later than that, though possibly earlier. James Charlesworth believes that the work evidences many features that suggest a date of composition in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> Century CE but he only points specifically to the motif of Cain's jealousy over his sister (3:5) as a possible expression of early Syrian asceticism.

וְהָיָה כִּשְׁעֵי הַלַּיְלָה

TESTAMENT OF ADAM 1

1 The first hour of the night is the praise of the demons; at that hour, they do not injure or harm any man. 2 The second hour is the praise of the doves. 3 The third hour is the praise of the fish and of fire and of all the lower depths. 4 The fourth hour is the "holy, holy, holy" praise of the seraphim. And so, I used to hear, before I sinned, the sound of their wings in Paradise, when the seraphim would beat them to the sound of their triple praise. But, after I transgressed against the law, I no longer heard that sound. 5 The fifth hour is the praise of the waters above heaven. And so, I, together with the angels, used to hear the sound of mighty waves, a sign that would prompt them to lift a hymn of praise to the Creator. 6 The sixth hour is the construction of clouds and of the great fear the comes in the middle of the night. 7 The seventh hour is the viewing of their powers

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TESTAMENT OF ADAM 1

- 1 For this verse, the Paris Codex (wherein it is Chapter 2, v. 1) reads, "The first hour ... in which the demons praise God, neither doing wrong nor tormented." (ὥρα α' ... ἐν ἣ ὁ δαίμονες αἰνοῦντες τὸν θεὸν οὔτε ἀδικοῦσιν οὔτε κολάζουσιν.)
2 Here, the Paris Codex seems to have a version of v. 3, "The second hour ... in which is the fish praise God, and fire in the depths, and dragons and ... and fire." (ὥρα β' ... ἐν ἣ ὑμνοῦσιν οἱ ἰχθύες τὸν θεόν, καὶ τὸ τοῦ πυρὸς βάθος· ἐν ἣ ὀφείλει στοιχειοῦσθαι ἀποτελέσματα εἰς δράκοντας καὶ ... καὶ πῦρ.)
3 The text of the Paris Codex is different, "The third hour ... in praise of snakes and dogs ... and fire." (ὥρα γ' ... ἐν ἣ αἰνοῦσιν ὄφεις καὶ κύνεις καὶ πῦρ.)
4 The Paris Codex has, "The fourth hour ... in the morning, the demons pass through tombs and he who goes there will be harmed, afraid, and terrified by the minds of demons; in the morning, one will be haunted by these things ... and by every magical thing." (ὥρα δ' ... ἐν ἣ διέρχονται δαίμονες ἐν τοῖς μνήμασιν, καὶ ἐρχόμενος ἐκεῖσε βλαβήσεται καὶ φόβον καὶ φρίκην ἐκ τῆς τῶν δαιμόνων λήψεται φαντασίας· ἐν ἣ ὀφείλει στοιχειοῦσθαι ἀποτελέσματα ... καὶ παντὸς γοητικῆς πράγματος.)
5 Here, the Paris Codex vaguely concurs with the Syriac MSS, reading, "The fifth hour ... when the waters praise the God of heaven." (ὥρα ε' ... ἐν ἣ αἰνοῦσιν τὰ ὕδατα τὸν θεὸν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.)
6 The Paris Codex reads, "The sixth hour ... one should be quiet and rest because one is afraid." (ὥρα ζ' ... ὅτε δέον ἡσυχάζειν καὶ ἀναπαῦσαι, διότι ἔχει φόβον.)
7 The Paris Codex vaguely concurs with the Syriac MSS, reading, "In the seventh hour ... all animals rest. If a clean person takes NARON (water) and a priest throws it, mixed with oil and sanctified, and anoints a nearby sick man with it, he will be free of the disease." (ὥρα ζ' ... ἐν ἣ ἀναπαύει πάντα {τὰ} ζῶα



וַיְהִי כִּשְׁמֹנֶת הַיּוֹם

TESTAMENT OF ADAM 2

1 The first hour of the day is the petition of the heavenly ones. 2 The second hour is the prayer of the angels. 3 The third hour is the praise of the birds. 4 The fourth hour is the praise of the beasts. 5 The fifth hour is the praise that is above heaven. 6 The sixth hour is the praise of the cherubim who plead against the sin of our human nature. 7 The seventh hour is the entry and exit from the presence of God, when the prayers of all living things enter and they worship and depart. 8 The eighth hour is the praise of fire and of the waters. 9 The ninth hour is the entreaty of those angels who stand before the throne of majesty. 10 The tenth hour is the visitation of the waters when the spirit descends and broods on the waters and on the fountains. And, if the spirit of the Lord did not descend and brood on the waters and on the fountains, human beings would be injured and everyone the demons saw they would injure. And at that hour the waters (are)

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TESTAMENT OF ADAM 2

- 1 The Greek text for this verse, as quoted by Cedrenus, reads, "At the first hour of the day, the first prayer is said in heaven." (ὥρα πρώτη ἡμερινῆ πρώτη εὐχή ἐπιτελεῖται ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ.)
- 2 Cedrenus has just, "The second is for the angels." (δευτέρῃ εὐχῇ ἀγγέλων.)
- 3 Here, Cedrenus concurs with the Syriac MSS, reading, "The third is for the prayer of birds." (τρίτῃ εὐχῇ πτηνῶν.)
- 4 Cedrenus has, "The fourth is for the prayer of animals." (τετάρτῃ εὐχῇ κτηνῶν.)
- 5 Cedrenus appears to repeat v. 4 here, reading, "The fifth is for the prayer of beasts." (πενμπτῆ εὐχῇ θηρίων.) Cf. #4.
- 6 Cedrenus reads, "The sixth, the angels defend and judge all creation." (ἕκτῃ ἀγγέλων παράστασις καὶ διάκρισις πάσης κτίσεως.)
- 7 Cedrenus here reads, "The seventh, is the angels entry and exit from God." (ἑβδόμῃ ἀγγέλων εἴσοδος πρὸς θεὸν καὶ ἔξοδος ἀγγέλων.)
- 8 Cedrenus has, "The eighth is [for the] praise and sacrifice of the angels." (ὀγδόῃ αἴνεσις καὶ θυσίαι ἀγγέλων.)
- 9 Cedrenus has, "The ninth [is when] the worship of men is born." (ἐννάτῃ δέησις καὶ λατρεία ἀνθρώπου.)
- 10 For this verse, Cedrenus reads, "The tenth, bishops of the waters and prayers of heavenly and earthly beings." (δεκάτῃ ἐπισκοπαὶ ὑδάτων καὶ δεήσεις οὐρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων.)

הַמִּלֵּךְ הַמִּשְׁפָּט הַמִּשְׁפָּט הַמִּשְׁפָּט הַמִּשְׁפָּט  
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12 הַמִּשְׁפָּט הַמִּשְׁפָּט הַמִּשְׁפָּט הַמִּשְׁפָּט  
לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ

taken up and the priest of God mixes them with consecrated oil and  
anoints those who are afflicted and they are restored and healed.  
11 The eleventh hour is the exultation and joy of the righteous. 12 The  
twelfth hour, the hour of the evening, is the entreaty of human  
beings, for the gracious will of God, the Lord of all.

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11 Cedrenus reads, "The eleventh, confession and joy of all." (ένδεκάτη άνθομολόγησις και άγαλλίασις πάντων.)  
12 Cedrenus ends his quotation here, with, "The twelfth, resistance[?] of people to good fortune." (δωδεκάτη έντευξις άνθρώπων εις εύδοκίας.)









