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F. H. Marshall

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# OLD TESTAMENT LEGENDS

*FROM A GREEK POEM ON  
GENESIS AND EXODUS* By  
GEORGIOS CHUMNOS

*Edited with Introduction, Metrical  
Translation, Notes & Glossary from  
a Manuscript in the British Museum*

By

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## PREFACE

THIS selection from the hitherto unpublished poem of Georgios Chumnos on Genesis and Exodus comprises a little more than a fourth of the whole work. It is printed with a twofold hope. On the one hand it is possible that the legends, which played so important a part in the religious education of the masses in Mediaeval Europe, may be found of interest and instruction even in the present day, and such interest may be enhanced by the small selection from the wealth of coloured illustrations with which the British Museum manuscript is decorated. On the other hand it is hoped that these extracts from a poem which has never before appeared in print may increase the interest taken in the popular language of Mediaeval Greece. It has too long been the habit of classical scholars to dismiss such Greek as 'barbarous,' apparently on the ground that what they cannot understand must be so regarded. It is surely a matter for some surprise that in the case of a language which has an unbroken history for nearly three thousand years and is a living force at the present day such an attitude should still be maintained. Works such as the present, which are written phonetically and preserve the spoken language of their time, have a distinct value for the history of the Greek language.

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PREFACE

The metrical English translation is free, but it is hoped that it does not do violence to the sense of the original in any material point. The Notes and Glossary serve to some extent to supplement it, but until the study of Mediaeval and Modern Greek is more widely pursued in England, it would be idle to treat such a work from a strictly philological standpoint.

I have to express my warm thanks to the Publication Fund of the University of London and to Birkbeck College whose grants have enabled me to publish these selections. Prof. R. M. Dawkins most kindly went through the whole of the Greek text with me and gave me invaluable assistance in interpreting it, but for any errors I am of course solely responsible.

F. H. MARSHALL.

LONDON,

*November, 1924.*

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## INTRODUCTION

THE manuscript of the Greek paraphrase of Genesis and Exodus by Georgios Chumnos, from which the present metrical translation has been made, is numbered Add. ms 40724 in the British Museum Collection, and was acquired by purchase in 1922. It was once in the possession of Sir Thomas Brooke. Two other manuscripts of the poem were previously known, viz. those at Vienna and Venice respectively, and these are mentioned by Krumbacher in his *Gesch. der byzantinischen Litteratur* (2nd ed. 1897), p. 818f. Neither has been edited, though Krumbacher gives the first four lines of the poem as a specimen. From the Vienna ms it appears that Chumnos was a native of the town of Chandax (Candia) in Crete.

The British Museum ms is exceptionally well preserved, written in a large and clear hand on pages of about 25 by 18 cm., with comparatively few abbreviations. The most striking feature, however, is the coloured illustrations inserted in the text in panels. There are no fewer than 375 of these, excellently preserved, and though the drawing is not first-rate, they are full of spirit and never sink into carelessness. They supply a most complete series of illustrations to the parts of Genesis and Exodus dealt with in the poem. The scribe and the artist were evidently the same person, as might be inferred from the manner in which the illustrations are fitted into the body of the text.

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This inference is borne out by four rhymed couplets of rude style appended to the poem in a different hand, which appear to give much too modest an estimate of the scribe-artist's work. The following translation may serve to indicate their spirit:

'With all the care it could command the penman's hand did write

This ancient book, which doth its tale of history indite,  
And yet of all the wondrous deeds that history could relate

The greater part for lack of space the poet doth not state.

Although the book be barbarous in letters and in art,  
And other faults besides you'll spy in this—the penman's—part,

Yet surely many a happy rhyme in the poet's work you'll find,

The product of his artist skill and understanding mind<sup>1</sup>.'

The poem consists of a little over 2800 lines and occupies with the illustrations 137 folios. The authorship is claimed in the following lines at the end:

'Thus these two books that Moses wrote have reached their destined goal,

Nought that I purposed is unsaid, I have embraced the whole.

<sup>1</sup> Με κόπον περισσότατον ὑπάρχει γεγραμμένον  
τὸ παλαιὸν βιβλόπουλον τοῦτο τὸ στοριζμένον.

'Ἀμὲν τὰ περισσώτερα δὲν τὰ διαλαμβάνει  
θαύμαστα καὶ ἱστορικά, καὶ εἶναι λειψὸν πάνυ.

Καλὰ καὶ εἶναι βάρβαρον στὴν τέχνην τῶν γραμμάτων,  
ὁμοίως κείν τὴν ζωγραφίαν καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν πραγμάτων,

'Ἀμ' ἔπρεπε πολύτεραις ῥήμασι νὰ κατορθώσῃ  
ὁ ποιητὴς με σύνθεσιν καὶ σοφοτέραν γνώσιν.

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Georgios Chumnos with due zeal in verses rhymed did write;

Of Genesis and Exodus this tale he did indite<sup>1</sup>.

The British Museum ms comes from the monastery of Mount Sinai, as is shown by the following inscription written at the end of the poem :

*αὕτη ἡ βίβλος ὑπάρχει τοῦ ἁγίου ὄρους Σινᾶι, καὶ εἴ τις τὸ ξενόσει ἐκ τοῦ ἁγίου μοναστηρίου, νὰ ἔχει τὰς ἀρᾶς τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων· ὅπου κόψη τὸ φίλω...*

‘This book belongs to the Holy Mountain of Sinai, and if any one takes it from the holy monastery, he will incur the curses of the holy fathers; if any one cuts a leaf...’ This last penalty is concealed in a kind of rebus which I have not been able to resolve, but it seems likely that ‘let him be excommunicated’ is intended.

In addition to this inscription an interesting cipher is written on the first leaf of the manuscript. The solution of this is due to Messrs Gilson and Bell of the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum, who have generously placed it at my disposal. The following is a transcript and translation :

*αχμς Ἰουνίου κ̄. Ἐκαμαν εἰς τὸ Μησύρι οἰκονόμον  
τὸν στραβὸν Γιακήμεν· καὶ διὰ νὰ μὴν δώση ἓνα ρέτουλο  
τυρὶ καὶ ἓνα ρέτουλο μέλη, ἐξημίωσαν τὸ μοναστήρι*

<sup>1</sup> Τὰ δυὸ βιβλία τοῦ Μωϋσῆ τὸρα ξετελειοθήκα,  
στὸν τόπον αὐτὸν τὸν ἔρχησα τίβοτες δεναφῆκα.  
Γεωργίτζη Χούμνος μὲ σπουδῇ  
ἐβάλλθηκεν νὰ γράψῃ  
Στὴν Γένεσιν καὶ Ἐξοδὸν σὲ ῥῆμαν νὰ τὴν  
Τάξιν.

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γρόσα χιλιάδες η καὶ ριάλια διακόσ(ι)α. ὅπου νὰ ἔχη τὸ ἀνάθεμα, καὶ ὅποιος ἦτον ἀφορμὴ νὰ τὸν κάμουν οἰκονόμον· κὲ ἄς δώ(σ)ουν λόγον τῷ Θεῷ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως.

‘Year 1646, June 20. They made the squint-eyed Yacimi steward at Cairo, and because he did not give a *rotl* of cheese and a *rotl* of honey, they fined the monastery 8000 piastres and 200 reals. May he be accursed, and whoever was the cause of making him steward. And let them give account to God in the Day of Judgment<sup>1</sup>.’

The meaning apparently is that the Turks fined the monastery of Sinai, because the steward of the Sinaitic Μετόχιον at Cairo had refused to give a small offering to a Turkish official.

## CHARACTER OF THE POEM.

The poem, which Krumbacher places at about 1500, was evidently written for the masses rather than for the learned. This is shown at once by the language, which is full of popular words and must approximate to the spoken language of the period at which it was written, and also by the general simplicity of the narrative and the wealth of legendary matter introduced. The choice of episodes and legends seems expressly designed to appeal to the popular imagination, though a didactic

<sup>1</sup> The original form of the cipher will be found in my article on the ms in *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher*, iv. p. 96 ff., and an amended transcript and interpretation is given *ibid.* p. 426 by N. S. Phirippides, who points out that *ῥέτουλο* = Arabic *rotl*, a measure of weight.

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aim may also be detected<sup>1</sup>. It is not necessary to enter into a detailed and critical discussion of the numerous legends incorporated in the poem, but since these are all-important for a proper understanding of the historical development of this class of composition, it will be best first to give a brief summary of them in the order in which they occur, and then to try to ascertain what information is available as to their origin and distribution.

I. *Bond signed for the Devil by Adam and Eve.* (P. 2.)

When Adam and Eve were expelled from Paradise, they had never experienced darkness. In their terror at its approach they were met by the Devil, who offered to restore to them the light of day on condition that they signed a bond surrendering themselves and their descendants to his power. They signed and discovered the fraud when it was too late.

II. *Adam and Eve instructed by an angel to bury Abel's body.* (P. 6.)

Adam and Eve did not understand what death was, and when Abel's body began to decay they had to be instructed by an angel as to his burial.

III. *Cain shot by the blind Lamech.* (P. 10, Fig. 2.)

Lamech, though blind, was famous as an archer and huntsman. One day, accompanied by his young

<sup>1</sup> We have only to compare Chumnos's poem with the anonymous *Story of Genesis and Exodus* in early English—ca. 1250 (edited by R. Morris in the Early English Text Society Series, No. 7)—to see how great is the superiority of Chumnos in point of general interest and poetic style.

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son as guide, he heard a rustling in a thick bed of reeds. It was caused by Cain who had taken refuge there and was shaking with the terror of his sin. Lamech, thinking that a wild beast was lurking in the reeds, let fly his arrow and killed Cain. When he knew the truth he was overcome with despair and in his anger killed his son also. But by the mercy of God he was the first to obtain pardon.

IV. *Seth sent by the dying Adam to Paradise to beg for the Oil of Mercy.* (P. 16, Figs. 3–6.)

Adam, racked with pains in the head which foreboded death, sends his son Seth to Paradise to beg for the Oil of Mercy promised by God at the time of his expulsion. Seth after a long journey arrives outside the gate and in trepidation tells his mission to the Archangel. He is bidden to look at the wonders of Paradise. There he sees the tree of knowledge all stripped of its leaves, but amid the high boughs he marks a babe in swaddling bands weeping incessantly. 'That,' says the Archangel, 'is the Son of God weeping for your parents' sin.' In the end Seth is given three seeds which he puts into the mouth of the dead Adam. From these seeds sprout three great branches of pine, cypress and cedar wood respectively, which are united in a single stem.

V. *Enoch inscribes on marble tablets the story of the Creation.* (P. 34, Fig. 7.)

Enoch, foreseeing that fire or flood would overwhelm the wicked giants, took marble tablets and inscribed on them the story of God's marvellous



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works in order that such record might survive to after time.

VI. *The conversion of Abram.* (P. 36, Figs. 8–10.)

Terah, the father of Abram, was a maker of idols, and his son used to carry the images to market. It fell out that Abram through contemplation of the wondrous works of heaven was seized with a longing to know their Creator and His ways, and God in His mercy sent an angel who revealed the truth. The angel told Abram that he must depart from his home and seek out a new land in which his seed was destined to grow and multiply. Abram returned home and told Terah all that had happened, and Terah embraced with joy the revelation of the true God. He and all his family leave their home and set out for Mesopotamia.

VII. *Abraham, Sarah and the king of Canaan.* (P: 44, Figs. 11–13.)

When Abraham arrived in Canaan he feared that Sarah's beauty might lead to his destruction, so they agreed that she should be called his sister. The king of Canaan ordered that Sarah should be led to his couch, but when he endeavoured to approach her, he was threatened by an angel with drawn sword. In his terror he besought Abraham to tell the whole truth. Abraham told him that Sarah was his wife and that God had promised him the land of Canaan for himself and his descendants. The king yielded up the land, and left Abraham rich presents of flocks and herds.

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[More information](#)VIII. *The story of Melchisedek.* (P. 56, Figs. 14-17.)

God gave Abraham command to set out on a journey and to seek out a cave in the Northern mountain-face. There he would find a strange dweller—a wild man whose nails exceeded a cubit in length, whose hair and beard fell to his feet and whose body was shaggier than a sheep's. This man he must shear and clothe. Abraham duly obeyed, and found out the man who was Melchisedek. He told him God's command, and Melchisedek received him kindly and suffered himself to be shorn and clothed, and then told his strange story. He was the son of Iasedek, a king devoted to idol-worship. One day his father ordered him to fetch sheep in order that he might do sacrifice to his heathen gods, but as Melchisedek went upon his way he was brought through contemplation of the wonders of the heavens to a knowledge of the true God. He straightway returned home and besought his father to give up his idols. His father was seized with passion and declared that he would offer up Melchisedek himself as a sacrifice together with his subjects' children. Again he was sent to fetch sheep for this sacrifice, but meanwhile his mother sent out his brother to warn him to escape. He fled to this mount which he called Olivet and prayed God to send down doom upon the idolaters. His prayer was answered, and he saw all the city and its inhabitants overthrown by earthquake. In terror at the sight he took refuge in the cave where he had remained unvisited by human face for forty

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years. Melchisedek offered sacrifice to God out of the stores which Abraham had brought, and then the two ate and drank. Abraham returned home, and out of gratitude to God promised Him the tithe of all that he possessed.

IX. *Abraham and the three young travellers.* (P. 72, Figs. 18, 19.)

Though the story of Abraham's entertainment of the three young travellers (typifying the Holy Trinity) follows in the main that narrated in the Bible, there are two legends introduced into it, viz. the activity of the Devil, who did his best to keep the wayfarers from Abraham's hospitable door, and the story of the resurrection of the calf slain by Abraham for the entertainment of his guests.

X. *The assault upon Lot's house.* (P. 78, Figs. 20, 21.)

The difference from the Biblical story consists in the driving back of the assailants by a sheet of flame launched from the doorway, instead of the blinding mentioned in the Bible. Moreover the three travellers are not in Chumnos's version reduced to two.

XI. *The purification of Lot.* (P. 84, Figs. 22, 23.)

Lot, after he had been made drunk and had committed incest with his two daughters, told Abraham what had happened. Abraham was sorely grieved at the sin and told Lot that he must go to the Nile and fetch thence three brands of wood, if perchance he might win pardon and purification

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from God. Abraham never thought that Lot would return safe from his adventurous journey, but, under the guidance of God's hand, he brought back the three brands of cedar, pine and cypress. These they planted in the form of a triangle on the side of a barren hill. Next Lot was told to go and fetch water from the Jordan to pour upon the brands which at last burst into blossom. These brands which blossomed signify redemption for man's sins.

XIII. *Pharaoh and the infant Moses.* (P. 100, Figs. 26, 27.)

The princess brought the child Moses at the age of four years to her father who welcomed the boy kindly and took him into his arms. The child stretched out his hands and tore Pharaoh's beard. The king in his rage ordered Moses to be removed and put to death, but the Princess pleaded for him and begged that there might be a test to prove that his deed was simply due to a child's thoughtlessness. Pharaoh ordered that two similar bowls should be brought—one containing fire, the other coins lighted up by the fire—and set before the child. Moses stretched out his hands and seized the fire which he put to his lips. His bitter cry of pain satisfied the king that the child was innocent, and so his life was spared.

XIV. *The death of Moses.* (P. 106, Fig. 28.)

Moses gave command, and they dug a grave for him upon Sinai. He entered the grave as though to make trial of it, but God sent down

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a mist which covered the grave and he was seen no more.

In addition to these main legends there are also numerous small variations from the Biblical text, such as the placing of Adam and Eve's home in a cave called Nevron after their expulsion from Paradise (p. 6, Fig. 1); the throwing of Isaac by Ishmael (instead of the mocking); the naming (Andreas) of the servant sent to fetch a wife for Isaac; the making of Rachel the elder instead of the younger sister; the making of Maria (Miriam) the aunt instead of the sister of Moses (p. 102). Other variations are clearly designed to add picturesqueness to the narrative and nothing more. I give (XII) the episode of the sale of Joseph to the Ishmaelites and his throwing himself on Rachel's tomb on the way to Egypt as an example. (P. 92, Figs. 24, 25.)

The way is now prepared for the consideration of the origin of these legends which Chumnos used so freely. There are two works which I have found specially useful in dealing with this question, viz. A. A. Vassiliev, *Anecdota Graeco-Byzantina*, Moscow, 1893, and V. Jagič, *Slavische Beiträge zu den biblischen Apocryphen in Denkschriften der k. Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Wien, 1893. From a study of these works two main facts seem to emerge, viz. that there are two great cycles of legends upon which Chumnos could draw—those connected with Adam and his death and those dealing with the subsequent Biblical history.

Although the light thrown upon the legends by

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Vassiliev's work chiefly concerns the later cycle, I will consider it first, because his Introduction is valuable for Chumnos's work as a whole and either the manuscript which he publishes was the chief source for a great part of the present poem, or else both drew freely on a common source.

The manuscript in question is at Vienna (Cod. Vind. theo. 210) and is entitled 'Old Testament History from Adam.' The manuscript itself is of the sixteenth century (the probable date of the Chumnos ms), but Vassiliev shows in his Introduction that the work itself probably dates from the ninth century. Vassiliev also shows that the work is largely based on an earlier book—the *Palaea Interpretata* or 'The Old Testament Interpreted,' which, though originally written in Greek, is only preserved in a Slavonic translation<sup>1</sup>. This latter work, which is of a polemic character, went down to the reign of Solomon, and was intended as a refutation of the Jews and Mohammedans.

The *Palaea Interpretata* laid chief stress on interpreting the Old Testament from the Christian standpoint, but the arguments used were too subtle for the popular intelligence. Hence it came about that in course of time works of a simpler character were produced, such as the *Palaea Historica* we are dealing with, which omitted the theological argu-

<sup>1</sup> In an article entitled 'Old Testament Interpretation in Mediaeval Greek and Slavonic Literature' published in the *Church Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1923, pp. 71-85, I have endeavoured to show that large portions of the Greek original are preserved in an unpublished ms in the British Museum.

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ments and confined themselves to Biblical narrative interspersed with legends. The result, when accompanied freely by illustrations, was a work corresponding closely to the 'Poor Men's Bibles' much in vogue in Western Europe in the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. In fact Chumnos's work is such a Bible, though intended for eastern and not for western readers.

The correspondence of the Vienna *Palaea Historica* with Chumnos's poem is remarkably close as regards both choice of legend and order of arrangement. As regards style and interest, however, there can be no doubt that Chumnos is infinitely superior. He is of course unequal, but I think that he shows considerable skill in extracting what is likely to interest the ordinary reader and often displays no mean power of narration and poetic feeling.

I now give a brief summary of the correspondences of the *Palaea Historica* and Chumnos as regards the legends, following the order of the legends as numbered above. V. followed by a number indicates the page of Vassiliev's work referred to.

- (1) Not in Vassiliev.
- (2) V. 195. Practically identical.
- (3) V. 193 ff. Practically identical<sup>1</sup>.
- (4) Not in Vassiliev.

(5) V. 196 f. Practically identical. This story of an engraved record of the Creation seems to go back at least in essence to a very early period.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. James, *The lost Apocrypha of the O.T.*, p. 10 f.

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Josephus (*Ant. Jud.* 1. ii. 3) has the following (Whiston's translation):

'The children of Seth...that their inventions might not be lost before they were sufficiently known, upon Adam's prediction that the world was to be destroyed at one time by force of fire, and at another time by the violence and quantity of water, made two pillars, the one of brick, the other of stone: they inscribed their discoveries on them both, that in case the pillar of brick should be destroyed by the flood, the pillar of stone might remain and exhibit those discoveries to mankind, and also inform them that there was another pillar of brick erected by them.'

(6) V. 201 ff. Practically identical, but some further details are given in Vassiliev. Thus Abram sets fire to the idols, and Atastas, the father of Lot, is burnt in defending them<sup>1</sup>.

(7) V. 204 f. Practically identical. The king of Canaan is called E(m)phron son of Hettaios, or simply 'the Hittite.'

(8) V. 206 ff. Practically identical. There are slight variations, *e.g.* V. gives the god to whom Iasedek sacrificed as Cronos. The victim of the sacrifice was determined by lot<sup>2</sup>.

(9) V. 214 ff. Mainly as in Chumnos with some slight variations<sup>3</sup>.

(10) V. 215 ff. As in Chumnos.

(11) V. 217 f. As in Chumnos. Note corre-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Box, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, pp. viii, 35 ff., 88 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. James, *op. cit.*, p. 17 f.

<sup>3</sup> The resurrection of the calf is mentioned in the *Testament of Abraham*. See James, *Testament of Abraham* (Texts and Studies ed. by J. Armitage Robinson), p. 83, Rec. A, Ch. vi.



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spondence in detail, such as the hill where the brands were planted being 24 miles from Jordan<sup>1</sup>.

(13) V. 227 f. Here V. differs somewhat. There are two versions; the first makes Moses take Pharaoh's crown and trample it under foot, and then be submitted to the ordeal of fire and gold. The second makes him pluck Pharaoh's beard, and then be submitted to the test of choosing between a gold crown and a naked sword, in which he chooses the sword. In both cases the one who pleads for the child is 'a wise man' and not the princess. The test of fire is given in the early English *Story of Genesis and Exodus* (E.E.T.S. No. 7), ll. 2633 ff.

Here again the main legend goes back to Josephus's time. Cf. *Ant. Jud.* II. ix. 7 (Whiston's translation):

'And when she (the Princess) had said this, she put the infant into her father's hands: so he took him and hugged him close to his breast, and on his daughter's account, in a pleasant way, put his diadem upon his head. But Moses threw it down to the ground, and in a puerile mood he wreathed it round and trod upon it with his feet; which seemed to bring with it an evil presage concerning the kingdom of Egypt. But when the sacred scribe saw this (he was the same person who foretold that his nativity would bring the dominion of that kingdom low), he made a violent attempt to kill him....But Thermuthis prevented him and snatched the child away. And the king was not hasty to slay him, God Himself, whose providence protected Moses, inclining the king to spare him.'

<sup>1</sup> Both Chumnos and V. have this story in common with Michael Glycas, *Annales*. See Ed. Bekker, II. p. 135 after the Codex Claromontanus.

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Besides these correspondences in the main legends, V. has a number of minor coincidences with Chumnos. Chumnos's story of the raven feasting on the bodies of the giants drowned in the Flood appears in V. 199; Nimrod (called Nevron in Chumnos, p. 36) appears also in V. 201 as the founder of Babylon and the originator of geometry; the number of languages spoken at Babel is in both 72 (V. 201); Abraham's servant is by both named Andreas.

The legend of the death and burial of Moses (14) is quite different in Chumnos (p. 106) and V. 257 f.<sup>1</sup> In V. Moses and Joshua ascend a mountain, and there Moses dies. Joshua informs the people. A contest takes place between the Archangel Michael and one Samuel over the disposal of the body. 'And the Archangel Michael prepared the tomb of Moses in the place where he was ordered by Christ our God and no one saw it.' The burial on Sinai<sup>2</sup> of the Chumnos version fits in curiously with the origin of the present manuscript which was probably written in the monastery on that mountain. It would be interesting to know whether the legend was part of Chumnos's original poem, or whether it is an addition made by the monastery to enhance its prestige. This can only

<sup>1</sup> Cf. James, *The lost Apocrypha of the O.T.*, p. 47 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Dr Rendel Harris in his pamphlet 'A New Christian Apology' (1923), p. 6, draws attention to the fact that in the legend of St Catherine her body is carried away to Mt Sinai, and suggests that, as in the case of Moses, the body was put there in order that it might *not* be found.

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be determined by an examination of the Vienna and Venice mss.

Up to Exodus the general correspondence between Chumnos and V. is very marked. Afterwards the variation becomes more and more noticeable. V. introduces other legends relating to Moses, e.g. (p. 228) his fight with the Indians in Pharaoh's service, in the course of which campaign the storks devour serpents which threaten him. In the fight against Amalek V. 237 makes no mention of the supports which are used by Chumnos as symbolic of the Cross. In this part Chumnos tends to be much more compressed than V., and he appears to have relied mainly on the received Biblical version, though he does not hesitate to introduce variations, e.g. in the Ten Commandments.

From the above evidence it is difficult to resist the conclusion that Chumnos used the work preserved for us in V.'s ms or at any rate the work from which that ms is derived.

It will have been noticed that two of the principal legends (1 and 4) introduced by Chumnos into the story of Adam and Eve are lacking in V. For these we must turn to the Slavonic mss.

Jagič in the work above referred to notes nine Slavonic mss dealing with the Adam and Eve cycle of legends. They range in date from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, but all apparently go back to a Greek original. Jagič divides them into an earlier group and a later redaction. The earlier redaction bears close relationship to the *Apocalypsis Mosis*, edited in 1866 by C. Tischendorf from four

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Greek mss ranging in date from the eleventh to the fourteenth century. This work is of interest in relation to the Chumnos text chiefly on account of the title: 'Narration and state of Adam and Eve the first-created, revealed by God to his servant Moses, at the time when he received the tables of the law of the Covenant from the Lord's hand, being taught by the Archangel Michael.' Evidently Chumnos is inspired by this idea when in his opening lines he prays to God to enlighten him that he may tell the story of God's words to Moses, the idea being that the whole story of the Creation and subsequent events were revealed by God to Moses. The second redaction of the Slavonic group contains certain additions, notably from the standpoint of the Chumnos ms the legend of the bond signed for the Devil by Adam and Eve (No. 1 above). The Slavonic version, as given by Jagič, p. 9, is as follows:

'Elsewhere in Scripture it is written that Adam was in Paradise praising God together with the archangels and angels, without the light growing dark. At the time he was expelled from Paradise for his sin, he did not know that day and night had previously been ordained by God. He sat with his face towards Paradise, lamenting the loss of the life he had led there, when night came on and it grew dark. And Adam exclaimed, saying: "Woe is me that I neglected Divine law and have been expelled from the splendid life of Paradise, and have lost the light that grew not dark." "O bright light of mine," said he weeping and lamenting, "never shall I see you again nor your splendour which grows not dim nor your fair beauty. Lord, have mercy upon me in my fall!" To him the

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Devil came and said: "Why dost thou lament and groan?" Adam said: "For that splendid light which has hid itself because of me." The Devil said to him: "I will give you light, if you bind yourself, your children and your descendants to me by a bond." For the sake of light Adam gave him a bond and wrote: "O light, to thy possessor I and my posterity belong." And day came and light shone over all the earth. But the Devil took the bond and hid it in Jordan beneath the stone where Christ was baptised<sup>1</sup>.

Another notable addition contained in one of this second group of mss is the lament over Paradise by Adam: 'O Paradise, O Paradise, most splendid Paradise, Beauty ineffable, created for my sake, but shut for Eve's offence,' which is also introduced by Chumnos (p. 2). Jagič notes (p. 52) that this lament corresponds to the lament in the liturgy of the Greek Church.

The story of the visit to Paradise to fetch the Oil of Mercy (Chumnos No. 4 above) is contained in the *Apocalypsis Mosis*, but the version is very different from that of Chumnos. The earlier group of Slavonic mss brings the story nearer to Chumnos, but there are still considerable differences. (Jagič, p. 21 ff.) The story there given is briefly as follows:

'Adam was racked with sore pains, and bade Eve and his son Seth to go to Paradise and pray God to give them of "the tree of oil." On the way they had difficulty in

<sup>1</sup> The germ of this legend occurs in the Ethiopic version of the *Book of Adam and Eve* (ed. S. C. Malan, p. 15), where the terror of Adam and Eve at the first dark night is recorded. This Ethiopic version, which is probably based on an earlier Arabic version, goes back to the fifth or sixth century after Christ.

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escaping from the jaws of a fearsome wild beast. When they came to Paradise they saw the Archangel Michael who told them that Adam must die, and that there was no remedy. However, he gave Seth three branches—of pine, cedar and cypress—which he took to Adam. Adam wove from these a crown and placed it on his head.’

It will be seen that the Slavonic version differs in many respects from that of Chumnos. In the latter Seth alone revisits Paradise, and brings back from thence three *seeds* which he places in the mouth of Adam; from these seeds sprout three trees of pine, cedar and cypress, bound together in a single stem—clearly symbolic of the Trinity in Unity. The same idea appears also in Slavonic apocryphal literature, viz. in the ‘*Sermo de ligno crucis*,’ where Seth brings back a tree from which sprout three branches of pine, cedar and cypress. Tischendorf in his Introduction to the *Apocalypsis Mosis*, p. xi, notes that the legend of Seth sent to the gates of Paradise to fetch the Oil of Mercy probably goes back to an early period in the Christian era, and that it is alluded to by the author of the *Descensus Christi ad inferos*. The legend had a considerable vogue in the literature of the Middle Ages (Tischendorf, p. xi. n. 2)<sup>1</sup>.

It may be added that Chumnos’s poem occasionally contains echoes from the *Palaea Interpretata*, e.g. in a passage where Adam is moulded out of

<sup>1</sup> Dr James points out to me that the vision of the weeping Babe occurs in *Cursor Mundi*, ll. 1340 ff. and also the Babe in the tree of Paradise is mentioned in R. Morris, *Legends of the Holy Rood*, pp. 18, 62 ff. (Cf. also Morris’s Introduction).