
Introduction

1 The Problem of *Pirge de-Rabbi Eliezer*

1.1 Two Modes of Transmission

In the first quarter of the ninth century, Timothy I (d. 823), patriarch of the East Syrian (“Nestorian”) Church, reported a remarkable discovery. In a letter to Mar Sergius, bishop of Elam, the patriarch wrote, “We have learned from Jewish men worthy of belief—now newly converted to Christianity—that ten years ago writings were discovered in the region of Jericho in a mountain dwelling.”¹ He goes on to recount how an Arab hunter’s dog found its way into a hidden chamber where the manuscripts were deposited; among the documents were books of the Hebrew Bible as well as other works in Hebrew, including apocryphal psalms of David. Timothy was chiefly concerned with finding a textual basis for the loose citations of the Hebrew Bible in the New Testament, such as Paul’s unattributed dictum “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1Cor 2:9 RSV; cf. Isa 64:4). A Jewish catechumen told the patriarch that such variant readings are indeed found in the Hebrew manuscripts, leading Timothy to conclude that these ancient manuscripts, stamped by apostolic authority, are superior to the ones currently held by both Jews and Christians.

The passage is extraordinary, first of all, for its resemblance to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls over a millennium later, but another aspect of this story is equally worthy of attention. Timothy reacts to the discovery by writing not only to his fellow bishops but also to the Jews themselves: “If these phrases are found in those writings that were mentioned, it is certain that they are more authentic than even those which belong to the Hebrews and to us. Even though I wrote, I have yet to receive any response from them on this matter.”² Despite this negative response, Timothy first learns about the discovery from Jews who have converted to Christianity, an indication of the mutual interest between the two faiths even in the heart of the ‘Abbāsid Caliphate.

The Spanish Jew Joseph ben Judah ibn ‘Aqnīn (d. 1220), in his commentary on the Song of Songs, recorded a similar exchange between Jews and Christians

1 Translated from Oskar Braun, “Ein Brief des Katholikos Timotheos I über biblische Studien des 9 Jahrhunderts,” *Oriens Christianus* 1 (1901): 299–313 (304). For an English translation of the entire letter, see Sebastian P. Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*, (Kottayam: St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 1997), 245–50. The relevant passage is also reproduced in John C. Reeves, “Exploring the Afterlife of Jewish Pseudepigrapha in Medieval Near Eastern Religious Traditions: Some Initial Soundings,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 30 (1999): 148–77 (174–77).

2 Braun, “Ein Brief des Katholikos Timotheos I,” 308.

in the time of Hai Gaon (d. 1038), head of the rabbinic academy of Pumbedita. In this instance, the Jews consult the Christians. Following a dispute about the proper meaning of Psalm 141:5, “Let the oil of the wicked never anoint my head” (RSV), Hai Gaon sends an envoy to the East Syrian patriarch (one of Timothy’s successors) to ascertain the Syriac reading of the verse. The designated envoy, R. Matzliah, objects to the mission, but the Gaon rebukes him: “Our holy ancestors and forefathers used to search among the various peoples for variant readings and for interpretations. As it is well known and told, they used to ask even shepherds and cowherds!”³ The narrative ends with a citation of the verse in Syriac.

Again, the story is revealing. The Jew, in this case, is not a convert to Christianity but the leader of the rabbinic academy. He has also decided to contact the patriarch in Baghdad over a relatively minor issue—the interpretation of a psalm—rather than the far more dramatic circumstances of the hidden scrolls from Jericho. The Gaon’s actions suggest an open communication between Jews and Christians, although not one that was devoid of tension, as the objection of R. Matzliah indicates. Finally, the narrative reveals Jewish familiarity with the Syriac language. While Syriac is a dialect of Aramaic, which was still used by Babylonian Jews even after the Arab conquests, documentation of Jewish knowledge of Syriac is limited.⁴ The story about the Gaon is a rare attestation of direct Jewish engagement with a Syriac text.

Not long before the hunter’s dog sniffed out the manuscripts in Jericho, a Jew in ‘Abbāsid Palestine composed a series of homilies on biblical history covering much of the Torah as well as several episodes from the Prophets and Writings. On the surface, this work resembles a traditional Midrash, where rabbinic authorities

3 Quoted from Sarah Stroumsa, “The Impact of Syriac Tradition on Early Judaeo-Arabic Bible Exegesis,” *Aram* 3 (1991): 83–96 (94). For the historical context of this anecdote, see Yosaif Dubovick, “‘Oil, which shall not quit my head’: Jewish-Christian Interaction in Eleventh-Century Baghdad,” *Entangled Religions* 6 (2018): 95–123.

4 Christian Stadel, “Judaeo-Syriac: Syriac Texts in Jewish Square Script (with an Appendix on Syriac as a Religio-Linguistic Marker in a Judaeo-Arabic Treatise),” in *Jews and Syriac Christians: Intersections across the First Millennium*, ed. Aaron Michael Butts and Simcha Gross, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 281–90, lists all known Judeo-Syriac texts. Jewish knowledge of Syriac may also be reflected in Judeo-Arabic literature. The most direct example is Dāwūd ibn Marwān al-Muqammiṣ (d. 937), an alleged convert to Christianity who, according to the Karaite scholar Ya’qūb al-Qirqisānī, wrote commentaries on Genesis and Ecclesiastes based on Syriac sources. On him, see *Dāwūd ibn Marwān al-Muqammiṣ’s Twenty Chapters (Ishrūn Maqāla)*, ed. Sarah Stroumsa (Leiden: Brill, 1989). See also Yonatan Moss, “Fish Eats Lion Eats Man: Saadia Gaon, Syriac Christianity, and the Resurrection of the Dead,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 106 (2016): 494–520, and Arye Zoref, “The Influence of Syriac Bible Commentaries on Judeo Arabic Exegesis as Demonstrated by Several Stories from the Book of Genesis,” *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 11 (2016): 1–18.

expound on different verses of Scripture. Unlike classical Midrash, it is not a lemmatic commentary. It does not follow the order of any single biblical book or even the lectionary cycle of the synagogue but rather the sacred history as recounted in the narrative books of the Bible. Even though it shares many thematic elements with stories found in classical rabbinic literature, its most important rabbinic source is the extracanonical tractate *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan*. From one version of this work (ARN-B 13), it derives the opening narration about R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanus (first century CE). The apparent attribution of the entire composition to this rabbi explains its traditional title: *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* (PRE).

Despite the attribution to a major rabbinic figure, many of PRE's sources fall outside the rabbinic canon. Intertextual allusions, where they can be found, do not come from the classical literature of Talmud and Midrash but from liturgical poetry (*piyyut*), Targum, Hebrew apocalypses, and even the mystical *hekhalot* literature. Of further interest is the work's parallels with non-Jewish sources, most famously an episode from PRE 30, where Abraham visits his son Ishmael in the Ḥijāz, a tale known principally from Arabic literature.⁵ Another recurring issue in PRE scholarship is its alleged engagement with sources from Second Temple Judaism, which are, in a sense, both Jewish and non-Jewish. They are Jewish because they were written by Jews (though not by rabbis), but they are non-Jewish in that, apart from the Dead Sea Scrolls, all major sources of Second Temple Judaism were preserved by Christians. This includes Hellenistic Jewish authors such as Philo and Josephus, the Septuagint (including the deuterocanonical books), and even the New Testament. How could this material have become known to the author of *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*?

The two accounts at the beginning of this chapter provide two models for understanding the transmission of non-rabbinic material in PRE. The letter of Timothy I confirms that Jewish works from the distant past can fortuitously resurface. In fact, the Cairo Genizah, which may or may not be linked to this specific discovery, provides corroborating evidence that medieval Jews could have had

5 For the Arabic sources, see Reuven Firestone, *Journeys in Holy Lands: The Evolution of the Abraham-Ishmael Legends in Islamic Exegesis* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990), 76–79. The literature on this episode is extensive: Bernhard Heller, “Muhammedanisches und Antimuhammedanisches in den Pirke Rabbi Eliezer,” *Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 69 (1925): 47–54; Moïse Ohana, “La polémique judéo islamique et l’image d’Ismaël dans Targum Pseudo-Jonathan et dans Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer,” *Augustinianum* 15 (1975): 367–87; Aviva Schussman, “Abraham’s Visits to Ishmael: The Jewish Origin and Orientation,” *Tarbiz* 49 (1979): 325–45 [Hebrew]; Carol Bakhos, *Ishmael on the Border: Rabbinic Portrayals of the First Arab* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), 85–128; Carol Bakhos, “Abraham Visits Ishmael: A Revisit,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38 (2007): 553–80; Marcel Poorthuis, “Hagar’s Wanderings: Between Judaism and Islam,” *Der Islam* 90 (2013): 220–44.

direct access to Second Temple texts without Christian mediation. The Genizah yielded copies of the *Damascus Document* and the *Aramaic Levi Document* half a century before they were also discovered at Qumran.⁶ Furthermore, the first work recovered from the Genizah was, famously, a Hebrew copy of the book of Ben Sira.⁷ Christians preserved the Greek version(s) of this book, but the rabbis also knew and cited the work in Hebrew.⁸ Hence, the dramatic recovery of lost works is not the only example of diachronic transmission. The rabbis themselves could be vectors of non-rabbinic tradition.

The story of Hai Gaon presents a different kind of transmission, not across time but across religious boundaries. If the Jews did, as Hai Gaon asserts, “search among the various peoples for variant readings and for interpretations,” then interaction with Christians would have been inevitable. Christians and Jews shared, against Muslims, common Scriptures. Indeed, both accounts deal with issues of biblical textual criticism. The story of Hai Gaon exhibits positive relations between Christians and Jews, although this need not be the case. Among the other examples of Judeo-Syriac are glosses in an Arabic manuscript of the *Polemic of Nestor the Priest*, a virulently anti-Christian work attacking Jesus, the Gospels, and Christian practices such as the veneration of relics.⁹ Even in the Muslim world, Christianity could be a source of both Jewish fascination and revulsion.

The particularity of PRE, and the two modes of transmission that can explain it, were formulated by Israel Lévi in his 1889 article “*Éléments chrétiens dans le Pirké Rabbi Eliézer*,” one of the first critical studies of this text (emphasis original).

What can lead one into error about the date of *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* is that it appears to have conserved vestiges of ancient traditions which are only preserved, on the one hand, in the Jewish apocrypha lost to the Jews and, on the other hand, in the Qur’ān and the Arab traditionists. But when one recognizes the late date of this Midrash, which speaks of the mosque of ‘Umar, and when one sees, as we have tried to show, that it appropriates the legends and parables which were current among Christians or Muslims, everything can be explained without difficulty: It is from the Christian and Muslim literature that he has collected his data.

6 Reeves, “The Afterlife of Jewish Pseudepigrapha,” 148.

7 The account of how Solomon Schechter rediscovered the Hebrew Ben Sira is given in the opening chapters of Adina Hoffman and Peter Cole, *Sacred Trash: The Lost and Found World of the Cairo Geniza*, (New York: Schocken, 2011).

8 All the citations have been collected in Jenny R. Labendz, “The Book of Ben Sira in Rabbinic Literature,” *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 30 (2006): 347–92.

9 Daniel J. Lasker and Sarah Stroumsa, eds. and trans., *The Polemic of Nestor the Priest: Qiṣṣat Muḥādalat al-Usqūf and Sefer Nestor ha-Komer*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1996), 1:32. Similarly, Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, “An Ancient List of Christian Festivals in *Toledot Yeshu*: Polemics as Indication for Interaction,” *Harvard Theological Review* 102 (2009): 481–96, found evidence of Jewish knowledge of Syriac in a manuscript of *Toledot Yeshu*.

If certain ancient ideas of the Jews reappear there, it is because he has *reappropriated* them from Christian sects who received them from the Jews. I emphasize that all the legends from *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* which are not taken from the Talmud and earlier collections arrived through the intermediary of Christians and Muslims.¹⁰

While Lévi's basic point still stands, he wrote before the discoveries at Qumran and even before the rediscovery of the Cairo Genizah. He may have underestimated the degree to which non-rabbinic traditions may have remained "native" among Jews.

Much more recently, Rachel Adelman made a similar point in the last paragraph of her 2009 monograph *Return of the Repressed: Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer and the Pseudepigrapha*. She mentions three modes of transmission, but they are in fact the two mentioned above, the diachronic (trans-temporal, from older Jewish groups) and synchronic (trans-cultural, from contemporary Christians and Muslims). She simply treats Christianity and Islam separately.

Several questions were raised but left unresolved over the course of the book. The author expands the residual myths found in the Bible, drawing extensively from sources in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, which were repressed in classic rabbinic literature and resurface in this late midrash—a phenomenon I dubbed "the return of the repressed" (borrowing from Boyarin, who adapted it from Freud). Did the author have direct access to these apocryphal works, such as *L.A.B.* [i.e., the *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* of Pseudo-Philo], 1 Enoch, and the Book of Jubilees? If so, was he aware of the taboo surrounding the works, or had their status changed, somehow? Three possibilities must be entertained. Either there were scrolls to which the author had direct access, as testified by manuscripts of the *Damascus Document* and the *Aramaic Levi* (of the Qumran sect) found in the Cairo Genizah; or perhaps the author had access, through translations into Greek, Latin, or Syriac, of works such as the *Vitae* [i.e., the *Life of Adam and Eve*] or *Jubilees*, which were preserved by different branches of the Christian Church. Alternatively, many of these sources may have been filtered through the Islamic oral tradition, the *Hadith*.¹¹

10 Israël Lévi, "Éléments chrétiens dans le Pirké Rabbi Eliézer," *Revue des Études Juives* 18 (1889): 83–89. The French original reads: "Ce qui peut induire en erreur sur la date de composition du Pirké R. Eliézer, c'est qu'il paraît avoir conservé des vestiges d'anciennes traditions qui ne se retrouvent plus que, d'une part, dans les apocryphes juifs perdus chez les Juifs, et, d'autre part, dans le Koran et les traditionnistes arabes. Mais quand on reconnaît l'époque tardive de ce Midrasch — qui va jusqu'à parler de la mosquée d'Omar, — quand on le voit, ainsi que nous avons essayé de le montrer, s'approprier des légendes ou des paraboles qui avaient cours chez les chrétiens ou les musulmans, tout s'explique sans difficulté: c'est dans la littérature chrétienne et musulmane qu'il a puisé ces données; et si certaines idées anciennes des Juifs reparaissent chez lui, c'est parce qu'il les *reprend* aux sectes chrétiennes, qui les avaient reçues des Juifs. Je mets en fait que toutes les aggadot du Pirké R. Eliézer qui ne sont pas tirées des Talmud et des recueils qui lui sont antérieurs lui sont venues par l'intermédiaire des sectes chrétiennes et des musulmans."

11 Rachel Adelman, *The Return of the Repressed: Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer and the Pseudepigrapha* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 264.

The primary difference between Lévi and Adelman, besides knowledge of Qumran and the Cairo Genizah, is the word “Pseudepigrapha,” that is, the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, an open-ended miscellany of texts on biblical themes preserved by Christians. Through an accident of history, the category has become associated with Second Temple Jewish literature. When scholars speak of Second Temple influence on PRE they mean, specifically, the influence of the Pseudepigrapha. I have avoided using “Pseudepigrapha” outside of this chapter because it is not a clearly delineated corpus (if it can be considered a corpus at all), and not all the Pseudepigrapha pertinent for the study of PRE are Second Temple Jewish texts. However, the term is so deeply rooted in the secondary literature that an explanation for its dismissal is in order.¹²

1.2 *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* and the Pseudepigrapha

The modern invention of the Pseudepigrapha¹³ can be traced to Johannes Fabricius’ *Codex pseudepigraphus Veteris Testamenti* (1713),¹⁴ a companion volume to his earlier *Codex apocryphus Novi Testamenti* (1703).¹⁵ Fabricius’ work follows in the footsteps of medieval canon lists, which divided received books into three categories: canonical books, disputed books (*antilegomena*, a broad category that encompassed elements of what would become the deuterocanonical books and the Apostolic Fathers but also some books—Revelation, for example—that were later

¹² See also: Gavin McDowell, “What are the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha?,” in *Regards croisés sur la Pseudépiographie dans l’Antiquité/ Perspectives on Pseudepigraphy in Antiquity*, ed. Anne-France Morand, Éric Crégheur, and Gaëlle Rioual, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023), 65–88.

¹³ The phrase comes from Annette Yoshiko Reed, “The Modern Invention of the ‘Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,’” *Journal of Theological Studies* 60 (2009): 403–36. For other modern histories of the Pseudepigrapha, see Eva Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 129–39; Lorenzo DiTommaso, “The ‘Old Testament Pseudepigrapha’ as Category and Corpus,” in *A Guide to Early Jewish Texts and Traditions in Christian Transmission*, ed. Alexander Kulik et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 253–80; and Patricia D. Ahearne-Kroll, “The History of the Study of the Pseudepigrapha,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Fifty Years of the Pseudepigrapha Section at the SBL*, ed. Matthias Henze and Liv Ingeborg Lied (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019), 103–31.

¹⁴ Johann Albert Fabricius, *Codex pseudepigraphus Veteris Testamenti* (Hamburg and Leipzig: Chistian Liebezeit, 1713). It was followed by a supplementary volume, Johann Albert Fabricius, *Codicis pseudepigraphi Veteris Testamenti, Volumen alterum* (Hamburg: Theodor Christoph Felginer 1723).

¹⁵ Johann Albert Fabricius, *Codex apocryphus Novi Testamenti* (Hamburg, 1703; 2nd rev. ed. 1719).

universally recognized),¹⁶ and spurious or apocryphal works. The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament Apocrypha fall into this third category.¹⁷ Early modern authors such as Fabricius preferred the term “Pseudepigrapha” to “Apocrypha,” since, following the Reformation, “Apocrypha” had come to acquire a specific meaning—the Old Testament Apocrypha, that is, the deuterocanonical books. Catholic authors, however, maintained the title “Apocrypha” for the third category. Abbé J.-P. Migne’s *Dictionnaire des Apocryphes*, for example, contains both “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha” and “New Testament Apocrypha.”¹⁸

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the meaning of Pseudepigrapha had shifted. Whereas Fabricius and Migne paired the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha with the New Testament Apocrypha, both Emil Friedrich Kautzsch (*Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments*, 1900)¹⁹ and R. H. Charles (*Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 1913)²⁰ paired the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha with the deuterocanonical Old Testament Apocrypha. The deuterocanonical books are Jewish works of the Second Temple period. Associating the Pseudepigrapha with the deuterocanonical books implicitly suggests that they too are Second Temple Jewish works. Fabricius and Migne imposed no limitations on date or provenance for their collections, with idiosyncratic results,²¹ but Kautzsch and Charles selected only those works they believed came from the formative period of Christianity and Judaism (c. 200 BCE–200 CE). In other words, their criterion is

¹⁶ For the breadth of *antilegomena*, see Edmon L. Gallagher and John D. Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists from Early Christianity: Texts and Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 261–84.

¹⁷ The first canon list to enumerate the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha (as “apocrypha”) and separate them from the *antilegomena* is the sixth-century *Synopsis Scripturae Sacrae* attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria, for which see Theodor Zahn, *Geschichte des Neutestamentlichen Kanons. Zweiter Band: Erste Hälfte* (Erlangen and Leipzig: A. Deichert’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1890), 317. It was followed by the *Stichometry of Nicephoras* (nearly identical, except for the addition of *stichoi*) and the *List of Sixty Books*. For these last two, see Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha*, trans. R. McL Wilson, Rev. ed., 2 vols. (Cambridge: J. Clarke & Co., 1991), 1:41–43. All three are Greek lists. A Latin list, the *Gelasian Decree* (Schneemelcher 1:38–40), has a lengthy list of apocrypha but includes the deuterocanonical books as part of the primary canon and omits the intermediary category of *antilegomena* entirely.

¹⁸ Jacques-Paul Migne, ed., *Dictionnaire des Apocryphes, ou Collection de tous les livres apocryphes relatifs à l’Ancien Testament et au Nouveau Testament*, 2 vols. (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1856–1858).

¹⁹ Emil Friedrich Kautzsch, ed., *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1900).

²⁰ R. H. Charles, ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913).

²¹ The “Book of Adam,” the very first entry in Migne’s *Dictionnaire des Apocryphes*, is none other than the *Ginza Rabba*, the Mandaean holy book. This is tantamount to including the Qur’ān in a collection of Pseudepigrapha.

antiquity rather than (lack of) *authenticity*. After Kautzsch and Charles, “Pseudepigrapha” became synonymous with “Second Temple Jewish literature.”²² Charles’ collection, in particular, impacted the study of PRE and the Pseudepigrapha.

A history of research on the question of *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* and the Pseudepigrapha shows that PRE is not connected to all the Pseudepigrapha (a category, in any case, with no upper limit) but with two only—*1 Enoch* and the *Life of Adam and Eve*—and their literary descendants, including *Jubilees* and the *Cave of Treasures*. Other works, such as the *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* (LAB) mentioned by Adelman, have not commanded the same interest as the Adam and Enoch books.

Leopold Zunz, one of the founding fathers of modern Jewish studies, dedicated a chapter to PRE in his seminal study *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden* (1832, second edition 1892), but he did not discuss the relationship between the work and any of the works of the Pseudepigrapha.²³ This vacuum was filled by Haim Meir Horowitz, who had planned a major study of PRE and gave a detailed outline of its contents in an open letter to Adolf Jellinek published as a supplement to the first volume of the short-lived journal *Beth Talmud* (1880).²⁴ He had already published part of this work, “Mishnat Eliezer, or: A Critical Introduction to *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*,” in the weekly Hebrew-language newspaper *Hamagid* in twenty-two installments between February 19 and July 30, 1879.²⁵ His “Critical Introduction” is a goldmine of raw data, including copious notes on the rabbinic parallels to PRE, a list of the earliest citations, the Tannaim and Amoraim mentioned in the work, and a list of Palestinian customs. His sketch for Jellinek outlined two

²² See, for example, Paul Riessler, ed., *Altjüdische Schriftum ausserhalb der Bibel* (Augsburg: Benno Filser, 1928). The French collection of André Dupont-Sommer and Marc Philonenko has the curious title *La Bible: Écrits intertestamentaires* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987) and includes selections from the Dead Sea Scrolls. An ongoing German series published by De Gruyter is called *Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit*. An important French overview by Albert-Marie Denis initially had the title *Introduction aux pseudépigraphes grecs d'Ancien Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1970) but became, in its second edition, *Introduction à la littérature religieuse judéo-hellénistique*, 2 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000). This trend is also evident in the titles of recently published introductions such as Susan Docherty, *The Jewish Pseudepigrapha: An Introduction to the Literature of the Second Temple Period* (London: SPCK, 2014), and Daniel M. Gurtner, *Introducing the Pseudepigrapha of Second Temple Judaism: Message, Context, and Significance* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020).

²³ Leopold Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden, historisch entwickelt* 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kauffmann, 1892), 283–90.

²⁴ Haim Meir Horowitz, “Open Letter,” *Beilage zum Beth Talmud* 1 (1880): 1–24 [Hebrew].

²⁵ Haim Meir Horowitz, “Mishnat Rabbi Eliezer, or: A Critical Introduction to *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*,” *Hamagid* 24 (1879): 62, 70, 78, 86, 94, 102, 110, 118, 126, 134, 142, 150, 158, 166, 174, 182, 190, 206, 214, 222, 230, 238–39 [Hebrew].

additional chapters (38 and 39) on the “ancient legends” to be found in the work.²⁶ Horowitz does not speak of PRE’s relationship to the Pseudepigrapha as such but rather four key examples of Second Temple Jewish literature: the works of Philo and Josephus, *1Enoch*, and *Jubilees*.

Horowitz’s discussion is guided by a unique perspective on PRE’s date. While he does not believe the work was written by R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanus, he does believe it achieved its current state before the Islamic period. *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* is therefore a bridge between Second Temple and rabbinic literature. According to Horowitz, the Tannaitic and Amoraic works with parallels to PRE used it as a source. Horowitz does not believe, however, that PRE used *1Enoch* and *Jubilees* directly. Rather, they drew upon a store of common traditions. He nevertheless enumerates several parallels between PRE and the four Second Temple sources. He barely addresses Philo (mentioning only vague resemblances between PRE 40–48 and Philo’s *De vita Mosis*) and *1Enoch* (only the fall of the Watchers and the calendar are touched upon), but he describes at greater length the parallels between PRE and the structurally similar *Jubilees* and Josephus (specifically, the *Antiquities*), outlining at least a dozen for *Jubilees*.²⁷ Horowitz ends this list by reiterating the significant differences between the two works and stating that one does not depend on the other. In this manner, he anticipates the current study.

Horowitz had also planned a chapter on the *Life of Adam and Eve*, which was to go in an earlier section, a series of chapters on “popular legends” and PRE. The first of these (chapter 35) covered the Qur’ān and its commentaries, which Horowitz believed drew from PRE. The second division (chapter 36) was to be dedicated to the legends of the Samaritans and the Karaites. The third division (chapter 37) treated Christianity—the New Testament, the Church Fathers, and the *Life of Adam and Eve*. Sadly, Horowitz did not complete his proposed work. We do not know his thoughts about the *Life of Adam and Eve* and PRE—only that he intended to discuss it.

Israël Lévi picked up the baton from Horowitz. His brief study, “Éléments chrétiens dans le Pirké Rabbi Eliézer,” cited above, used the *Life of Adam and Eve* (focusing especially on the penitence of Adam, also found in PRE 20) as a test case to indicate that wherever PRE diverged from rabbinic tradition, it was drawing instead on Christianity and Islam. He opposed the position of Horowitz, who presumed that PRE consisted of ancient material. The two views are not mutually exclusive. *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* could have drawn from both ancient Jewish tradition and from

²⁶ Horowitz, “Open Letter,” 12–16.

²⁷ Most of these will be discussed in chapter seven.

contemporary Christian and Muslim sources. These are the two modes of transmission discussed in the opening. The main problem with Horowitz's perspective is his dating. His resolution to the problem of how PRE knew ancient material is that PRE is, itself, the ancient material. This requires an untenable redating of the work to before the Islamic period. One should rather re-evaluate the Tannaitic and Amoraic sources behind PRE as sharing traditions with *Jubilees*.

The first scholar to couple *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* with "the Pseudepigrapha" specifically was Gerald Friedlander, who described PRE as "Rabbinic Pseudepigrapha" in the introduction to his 1916 English translation.²⁸ His conception of Pseudepigrapha was greatly influenced by the work of Charles, whose collection had just appeared three years earlier. The introduction to his translation includes a lengthy section where he systematically compares PRE to the Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha published by Charles. It can be divided into three sections. The first section is a detailed comparison of PRE with *Jubilees*. The second section is an itemized list of parallel traditions and phrases found in the Ethiopic Book of Enoch (*1Enoch*), the Slavonic Book of Enoch (*2Enoch*), the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Syriac Baruch (*2Baruch*), Greek Baruch (*3Baruch*), the Wisdom of Solomon and, finally, the *Book of Adam and Eve* (the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*)—not the *Life of Adam and Eve* but an overtly Christian work that does not appear in the collection of Charles. The third section consists of scattered notes on other Pseudepigrapha. Friedlander concludes:

We have by no means exhausted the material in the foregoing paragraphs. Such books as *Schatzhöhle* [the *Cave of Treasures*], *Kebra Nagast*, and the Book of the Bee, not to mention the Koran and its famous commentaries, contain much material in common with our "Chapters." Philo and Ecclesiasticus also offer several interesting parallels.²⁹

Apart from Philo and Ecclesiasticus (Ben Sira), none of these are ancient Jewish works, and at least three of them—the *Cave of Treasures*, the *Book of the Bee*, and the Qur'an—are heavily indebted to the cycle of Adam literature.

Despite the impression given by his list, Friedlander does not claim that PRE depends directly on the Pseudepigrapha. He instead posits a missing link in the form of intermediary compositions that use the Pseudepigrapha as sources. In a final, cautionary note, Friedlander draws attention to the importance of the Enoch and Adam traditions in particular:

²⁸ Gerald Friedlander, trans., *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer (The Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer the Great) According to the Text of the Manuscript Belonging to Abraham Epstein of Vienna* (1916; repr. New York: Hermon Press, 1970), xiii.

²⁹ Friedlander, *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, lii.

It must not be forgotten that many of the ideas common to the Midrashim and the Pseudepigrapha were, so to say, common property, floating traditions which were recorded not only in Enoch or Jubilees, but also in the Books of Adam and Eve, and later in our book, and later still in such compositions such as the Book of the Bee.³⁰

Therefore, despite canvassing a wide range of material, Friedlander singles out the books of Enoch and Adam as the Pseudepigrapha of greatest interest. He is also aware that these traditions were not restricted to the Second Temple period but were transmitted in several intermediary works.

Hanoch Albeck touched upon the issue of PRE and the Pseudepigrapha twice. His first contribution, “Agadot im Lichte der Pseudepigraphen” (1939), consists of three parts.³¹ The first two, about the confusion between Behemoth and Leviathan in the Jewish apocalypses (*b. Bava Batra* 74b; *1Enoch* 60:7–9; *4Ezra* 6:49–52; *2Baruch* 29:4) and the fate of the soul of Abel (citing *Gen. Rab.* 22:9, the *Apocalypse of Moses*, and *Jub.* 4:29) are not directly relevant to our subject, but the third part is entitled “Pirke R. Eliezer und Pseudepigraphen.” He focuses only on PRE 5. In this chapter, on the third day of creation, the waters rise up against the newly created land and must be suppressed by God. Albeck compares this to *4Ezra* 4:13–18, a parable about a war between the forest and the sea. Albeck also believes the idea that the world’s plants come from the Garden of Eden—which, according to PRE 3, was created before the first day—is also attested in *4Ezra* 3:6 and 6:42–44. Finally, PRE 5 explains that rainwater comes both from the sea and from special treasures of dew stored in heaven. Albeck compares this to a discussion of rainwater in *3Baruch* 10. A counterpart to this article is found in Jeffrey Rubenstein’s “From Mythic Motifs to Sustained Myth: The Revision of Rabbinic Traditions in Medieval Midrashim,” which also examines PRE 5 but comes to a different conclusion: The chapter contains few themes not expressed elsewhere in rabbinic literature, but they are expressed as a form of mythic discourse.³²

30 Friedlander, *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, lii. Ironically, this same point is made by Friedlander’s critics. See the review of Ben Zion Halper, “Recent Hebraica and Judaica,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 8 (1917–1918), 477–503 (481): “It is quite conceivable that a man imbued with the midrashic spirit could have written these Chapters without having seen any part of the apocryphal and pseudepigraphic literature [. . .] Even the more striking resemblances do not warrant the conclusions drawn by Mr. Friedlander, as the doctrines of the Book of Jubilees and similar works may have been known by the author of the Chapters from other sources.” See also the comments of Anna Urowitz-Freudenstein below.

31 Hanoch Albeck, “Agadot im Lichte der Pseudepigraphen,” *Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums* 83 (1939): 162–69.

32 Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, “From Mythic Motifs to Sustained Myth: The Revision of Rabbinic Traditions in Medieval Midrashim,” *Harvard Theological Review* 89 (1996): 131–59.

In his Hebrew translation and revision of Zunz' classic *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, Albeck made a more conventional selection of parallels between PRE and the Pseudepigrapha.³³ Zunz' chapter on *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* is the first scientific study of the work, but he did not mention the Pseudepigrapha. Albeck's expansion fills this gap. He refers to the patriarchal celebration of Mosaic holidays—such as Passover and the Sabbath—in both PRE and *Jubilees*. He also draws attention to Enoch's role in the transmission of the calendar in both works, as well as the story of the Watchers, the fallen angels who couple with human women and beget giants. These last two traditions are also found in *Jubilees*. Finally, Albeck draws attention to the story of the fall of Satan from the Adam books, which appears in PRE 13.

After Albeck, the study of *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* lay fallow for several decades, corresponding to a similar gap in the study of the Pseudepigrapha between the publications of R. H. Charles and James H. Charlesworth, whose two-volume *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (1983–1985) remains the standard collection in English.³⁴ The silence was broken in 1974 by Joseph Heinemann's "Ancient Legends and their Reworking in Pirque Rabbi Eliezer."³⁵ Despite the promising title, the "ancient legends" are older rabbinic traditions that have been adjusted to fit new social realities under Islam. The only writing of the Pseudepigrapha to come up is the *Life of Adam and Eve*, and Heinemann does not even mention it by name. He cites story of Satan's refusal to worship Adam (which later reappears in the Qur'an) as an example of a legend known to PRE that was refuted within the text: Adam himself refuses the adoration of all creation in PRE 11. Nevertheless, later chapters such as PRE 13, where Satan appears in the Garden of Eden, more directly attests PRE's knowledge of the Adam literature. This section of the study has a proposition similar to Lévi's conclusion: "If one finds in Pirque Rabbi Eliezer legends about biblical stories that are not examples taken from the literature of Talmud and Midrash, but they are known in Arabo-Muslim legend, then it is clear that the author took these motifs from his surroundings."³⁶

33 Leopold Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden, historisch entwickelt*, trans. Hanoch Albeck (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1947), 134–40; 417–23 [Hebrew].

34 James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1983–1985).

35 Joseph Heinemann, "Ancient Legends and their Reworking in Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer," in *Aggadah and Its Development* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1974), 181–99 [Hebrew]. A marginally different version of this article appeared under the title "Adaptations of Ancient Legends for the Zeitgeist in Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer," in *Simon Halkin Jubilee Volume*, ed. Boaz Shakhevitch and Menahem Peri (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1975), 321–43 [Hebrew].

36 Heinemann, "Ancient Legends," 184.

In his 1994 dissertation, “The Enigma of Lost Second Temple Literature: Routes of Recovery,” Steven Ballaban catalogued rabbinic knowledge of Second Temple sources, including PRE, but also texts recovered from the Cairo Genizah, *Sefer Yosippon*, and the works of R. Moshe ha-Darshan of Narbonne (11th c.).³⁷ The few pages on PRE (90–104), amounting to half a chapter, summarize the scholarship of Lévi, Friedlander, and Albeck. Although Ballaban briefly discusses works such as *4Ezra* and LAB, he also knows where the real center of gravity lies:

[W]e find many interesting parallels between the *Pirque d’Rabbi Eliezer* and the later work of Moshe haDarshan. Both show extensive evidence of early sources. Many of these sources are in fact common to both: *1 Enoch*, *Jubilees*, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and the *Life of Adam and Eve*.³⁸

The primary contribution of Ballaban to the study of PRE is his recognition that R. Moshe ha-Darshan apparently knew some of the same Pseudepigrapha as PRE. The question of the transmission of their sources is linked. Ballaban posited that the Darshan was not a native of France but came from the East, bringing with him knowledge of specifically Syriac books. The particulars of Ballaban’s argument are open to question (the Pseudepigrapha he cites are all poorly attested in Syriac), yet the Syriac milieu was evidently a point of contact between Christians and Jews.

In the same year, Anna Urowitz-Freudenstein revisited Friedlander’s work—not to praise but to bury him. In her article “Pseudepigraphic Support of Pseudepigraphical Sources: The Case of *Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer*,”³⁹ Urowitz-Freudenstein accused Friedlander of “parallelomania,”⁴⁰ claiming that his list of parallels, though long, offers little. Focusing on Friedlander’s parallels with *Jubilees* and *1 Enoch*, she shows that most of these traditions come from biblical and rabbinic literature, and some are not parallels at all. It is hard to dispute her general conclusion that Friedlander’s list is wanting in methodological rigor. However, there are some curious gaps in her analysis, particularly with regard to the fall of the angels as depicted in the *Enoch* and *Adam* traditions. To explain this gap, she defers to intermediary sources: “Certainly, there are a small number of examples that do not fit as neatly into this scheme. However, even these ideas were available to the redactor of PRE

37 Steven A. Ballaban, “The Enigma of the Lost Second Temple Literature: Routes of Recovery” (PhD Dissertation, Hebrew Union College, 1994).

38 Ballaban, “Lost Second Temple Literature,” 103–4.

39 Anna Urowitz-Freudenstein, “Pseudepigraphic Support of Pseudepigraphical Sources: The Case of *Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer*,” in *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, ed. John C. Reeves (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 35–53.

40 The term comes from Samuel Sandmel, “Parallelomania,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81 (1962): 1–13.

in forms other than the actual books of *Jubilees* and *1 Enoch*.”⁴¹ It might be recalled that this is, in fact, Friedlander’s own position.

In the second section of her 2009 monograph, *The Return of the Repressed: Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer and the Pseudepigrapha*, Rachel Adelman addressed the gaps left by Urowitz-Freudenstein, namely, the story of the Watchers found in the Enoch tradition (cf. PRE 22) and the fall of Satan from the *Life of Adam and Eve* and cognate literature (cf. PRE 13).⁴² In the third section of her study, she also refers to the curious idea that Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron and the high priest at the time of the crossing of the Jordan, is the prophet Elijah (PRE 29, 47).⁴³ This idea is also found in LAB (48:1) but contradicted by classical rabbinic literature (*Gen. Rab.* 71:9). Unfortunately, Adelman abandons her study at the exact point one would expect an explanation for these parallels, but she indicates the different possible modes of transmission.

In the same year that Adelman’s book appeared, Steven Daniel Sacks published *Midrash and Multiplicity* (2009), a short book that primarily looks at PRE as an example of rabbinic literature.⁴⁴ The central chapter of the book, entitled “PRE and Pseudepigraphy,” does not engage with the Hebrew work’s relationship to the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha but rather with the concept of false ascription, which is not a universal or even a particularly common trait in the literature called Pseudepigrapha. He is keen to defend PRE’s use of authorial ascription as continuous within rabbinic tradition and not part of an attempt to convince readers of the work’s supposed antiquity. In this he is largely successful, but his slim volume is adjacent to the concerns of the present study. It is notable as only one of a few monographs that is not openly concerned with the relationship between PRE and the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.

In 2012, Menahem Kister published “Ancient Material in *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eli’ezzer*: Basilides, Qumran, the *Book of Jubilees*,” the first major investigation of PRE’s relationship to the literature from Qumran (to which *Jubilees* also belongs).⁴⁵ The majority of his six examples focus on *Jubilees* exclusively. The six traditions are:

⁴¹ Anna Urowitz-Freudenstein, “Pseudepigraphic Support of Pseudepigraphical Sources,” 50.

⁴² Adelman, *The Return of the Repressed*, 48–137.

⁴³ Adelman, *The Return of the Repressed*, 185–208.

⁴⁴ Steven Daniel Sacks, *Midrash and Multiplicity: Pirqe de-Rabbi Eli’ezzer and the Renewal of Rabbinic Interpretive Culture* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009).

⁴⁵ Menahem Kister, “Ancient Material in *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eli’ezzer*: Basilides, Qumran, the *Book of Jubilees*,” in “Go Out and Study the Land” (*Judges 18:2*): *Archaeological, Historical and Textual Studies in Honor of Hanan Eshel*, ed. Aren M. Maeir, Jodi Magness, and Lawrence H. Schiffman (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 69–93.

- 1) God and his angels casting lots for possession of the different nations in PRE 24, an idea attested in Qumran literature but also implicit in the Bible (Deut 32:8–9) and used by the *paytan* Eleazar Qallir⁴⁶ (6th–7th century);
- 2) An apparent reference to Emzara, the wife of Noah (*Jub.* 4:33) in PRE 23;
- 3) The election of Levi in PRE 37, the *Testament of Levi*, and *Jub.* 32:3;
- 4) A “covert exegesis” of Lev 5:1 in PRE 14 and *Jub.* 4:5–6;
- 5) An allusion to the Hebrew name of Moses, “Malachiah” (מלאכיה), in both PRE 48 and the *Visions of Amram* from Qumran—but also later sources such as *Midrash Hadash al ha-Torah* (8th–10th c.);⁴⁷
- 6) The prophecy of Moses’ birth, from PRE 48 (but also Josephus, *Ant.* II.205, and *b. Sotah* 13a), implicit in *Jub.* 47:1–3.

Kister makes no special claims as to how PRE obtained this material. Many of them, including the two that do not concern *Jubilees* (1 and 5) are also present in Hebrew sources closer in date to PRE. Kister’s article implicitly suggests that not all Qumran material, but *Jubilees* specifically, is of special interest for the study of PRE.

Ryan Dulkan, in “The Devil Within: A Rabbinic Traditions-History of the Samael Story in *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer*” (2014), attempts to explain the stories about Sammael (i.e., Satan, the devil) in PRE from the perspective of rabbinic tradition.⁴⁸ While conceding that Sammael’s role in the Adam and Eve story probably comes from “either pseudepigraphic, Christian and/or Islamic traditions (whether oral or textual or both),”⁴⁹ he wants to highlight the role of rabbinic tradition in PRE’s portrayal of the character. The most prominent motif is the hostility between the (as yet unfallen) angels and the newly created human race. The motif of an angelic fall and the eventual assimilation of the serpent to Satan only enters rabbinic literature through PRE.

Katharina Keim’s chapter on “Intertextuality” in her monograph *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer: Structure, Coherence, Intertextuality* (2017) includes a section on the Pseudepigrapha but also the Hebrew Bible, rabbinic literature, Targum, *piyyut*, and

⁴⁶ This poet’s name is spelled in a bewildering number of ways (Kister uses the form Qilir, for example). For the sake of consistency, I always spell it “Qallir.”

⁴⁷ For an edition, see Gila Vachman, ed., *Midrash Hadash al Hatorah, Also Known as Tanhuma Mann: Based on JTS Rab. 1671 with an Introduction, References and Notes* (Jerusalem: The Midrash Project of the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies, 2013) [Hebrew].

⁴⁸ Ryan S. Dulkan, “The Devil Within: A Rabbinic Traditions-History of the Samael Story in *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer*,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 25 (2014): 153–75.

⁴⁹ Dulkan, “The Devil Within,” 157.

the Christian and Islamic traditions.⁵⁰ She focuses exclusively on material related to the fallen angels (PRE 13 and 22), identifying, once again, the Enoch and Adam books as probable sources.⁵¹ Following a hypothesis of Philip Alexander,⁵² she suggests an esoteric Jewish priestly tradition may have influenced the material in PRE, although she does not deny the influence of contemporary sources.

Following a different line of research, Helen Spurling and Emmanouela Grypeou opened up a new and important avenue in PRE research with their 2007 article “Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer and Eastern Christian Exegesis,” which examines four traditions from PRE that were also common in earlier Greek and Syriac Christian writing.⁵³ These include:

- 1) Satan’s use of the serpent as an intermediary in the Garden of Eden;
- 2) The euhemeristic interpretation of the “Sons of God” and “daughters of men” as the sons of Seth and the daughters of Cain;
- 3) The burial of Adam on (or near) the Temple Mount;
- 4) The tripartite division of Noah’s Ark into three levels for animals, birds, and humans.

For each of these traditions they cite named authors, but the one constant is the *Cave of Treasures*. They reference this work in all four sections, although they do not draw attention to this fact. The article therefore belongs to the discussion of PRE’s relation to the Adam books and points to an overlap in material far beyond the story of the fall of Satan. *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* also appears throughout their later work, *The Book of Genesis in Late Antiquity* (2013), although its connection to the *Cave of Treasures* is less apparent there.⁵⁴

The most recent study on PRE and the Pseudepigrapha is Joshua Blachorsky’s doctoral dissertation “Beyond Late Midrash: 8–9th Century Jewish Palestinian Literature in its Early Medieval Context” (2022).⁵⁵ It is also the first study to engage

50 Katharina E. Keim, *Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer: Structure, Coherence, Intertextuality* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 141–96.

51 Keim, *Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer*, 171–76.

52 Philip S. Alexander, “What Happened to the Jewish Priesthood after 70?” in *A Wandering Galilean: Essays in Honour of Seán Freyne*, ed. Zuleika Rodgers, Margaret Daly-Denton, and Anne Fitzpatrick-McKinley (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 5–33.

53 Helen Spurling and Emmanouela Grypeou, “Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer and Eastern Christian Exegesis,” *Collectanea Christiana Orientalia* 4 (2007): 217–43.

54 Helen Spurling and Emmanouela Grypeou, *The Book of Genesis in Late Antiquity: Encounters between Jewish and Christian Exegesis* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 47–54; 100–11; 148–52; 246–49; 291–95; 332–36.

55 Joshua Blachorsky, “Beyond Late Midrash: 8–9th Century Jewish Palestinian Literature in Its Early Medieval Context” (PhD Dissertation, New York University, 2022).

with my own work (the thesis on which the current study is based),⁵⁶ about which he has nothing positive to say.⁵⁷ Blachorsky accuses the present writer of “silencing off” the texts and traditions of different religious groups by considering “Jewish” evidence for knowledge of Second Temple motifs before “Christian” and “Muslim” evidence.⁵⁸ He later states, after attacking my methodology, that he “agree[s] with much of McDowell’s methodological framing”⁵⁹ but objects to a too strict division between the Islamicate and Byzantine worlds as one of several “spurious binaries.”⁶⁰ Against my claim that *Jubilees* was poorly known in the Islamicate world, he cites Jacob of Edessa as an author who knew (but rewrote) traditions from *Jubilees*. One of his main conclusions is that West Syriac authors (such as Jacob of Edessa) could shed light on Palestinian Judaism (such as PRE and its author).⁶¹

In my defense, the stark division between the Christian and Muslim worlds is not a presupposition of this study but one of its conclusions. *Jubilees* was still known on both sides of the Christian/Muslim divide well into the Middle Ages (as demonstrated by the Syriac *Chronicle of 1234*), but this knowledge is not reflected in PRE. My theory was that the *Cave of Treasures* had superseded *Jubilees* as the dominant sacred history throughout the Muslim world and across all religious divisions.

Furthermore, Blachorsky’s decision to foreground Jacob of Edessa over the *Chronicle of 1234* is curious since the chronicle contains extended translations of *Jubilees* while Jacob’s “Jewish histories” are substantially different from the parallel stories in the Second Temple book. He also leaves aside a fundamental question: Does PRE actually have anything in common with *Jubilees*? Another question he ignores is whether other West Syriac texts might better explain the unique material in PRE, such as (for example) the *Cave of Treasures*.

Finally, Blachorsky takes issue with my use of Rewritten Bible/sacred history.⁶² The aim of this heuristic—and it is a heuristic—is to avoid the methodological pitfall that Blachorsky attributes to me, of walling off the various Near Eastern religions as discrete entities. *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* is a rabbinic document and in continuity with rabbinic tradition, but framing the work as a “Midrash” has its own limitations. Since PRE is universally recognized as an outlier in rabbinic literature, the

56 Gavin McDowell, “L’Histoire sainte dans l’Antiquité tardive: Les *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* et leur relation avec le *Livre des Jubilés* et la *Caverne des Trésors*” (PhD Dissertation, École pratique des hautes études, 2017).

57 Blachorsky, “Beyond Late Midrash,” 27–29, 198–206.

58 Blachorsky, “Beyond Late Midrash,” 28.

59 Blachorsky, “Beyond Late Midrash,” 198.

60 Blachorsky, “Beyond Late Midrash,” 28.

61 Blachorsky, “Beyond Late Midrash,” 216–17.

62 Blachorsky, “Beyond Late Midrash,” 28–29.

label “Midrash” requires qualification (hence Blachorsky’s use of “Late Midrash”). Furthermore, since “Midrash” is a literary genre exclusive to rabbinic Judaism, categorizing the work as such has its own insular effect. While PRE is unusual compared to the classical rabbinic canon, it is not unusual against the background of the late antique Middle East. As this is also Blachorsky’s perspective, I do not see the serious disagreements between our methods that he claims.

The recurring theme in the secondary literature is the identification of the Adam and Enoch books as the major touchstones for PRE. At the time, scholars are reticent to explain how the rabbinic redactor knew these traditions. Many studies presume that the Pseudepigrapha are ancient Jewish works that were preserved by Christians and then “borrowed back” by Jews. There is evidence for such a model. For example, *Sefer Yosippon*, a Jewish revision of a Christian revision of Josephus’ *Jewish War*, reintroduced much Second Temple material back into the fold of Hebrew literature.⁶³ Similarly, the Hebrew and Aramaic versions of Tobit,⁶⁴ Judith,⁶⁵ and even the Gospel of Matthew,⁶⁶ which emerged in the later Middle Ages, were translated from the Vulgate and other Christian versions of Scripture.

However, this model, when applied to the Pseudepigrapha, makes two problematic assumptions. The first assumption is that the rabbis actively suppressed non-canonical literature, identified with the “outside books” (ספרים חיצונים) proscribed in the Mishnah (*m. Sanhedrin* 10:1). Yet the only “outside book” named by the rabbis that can be positively identified is the book of Ben Sira—which the rabbis frequently cite!⁶⁷ Without naming specific sources, the rabbis knew quite a bit of authentic Second Temple tradition.⁶⁸ For example, there are many parallels

⁶³ For this work, see David Flusser, ed., *The Josippon (Josephus Gorionides): Edited with an Introduction, Commentary, and Notes*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1978) [Hebrew], and Saskia Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption des “Sefer Yosippon”: Eine Studie zur Historiographie und zum Geschichtsbewusstsein des Judentums im Mittelalter* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013). The work has recently been translated: Steven B. Bowman, trans., *Sefer Yosippon: A Tenth-Century History of Ancient Israel* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2023).

⁶⁴ Stuart Weeks, Simon J. Gathercole, and Loren T. Stuckenbruck, eds., *The Book of Tobit: Texts from the Principal Ancient and Medieval Traditions* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004).

⁶⁵ André-Marie Dubarle, *Judith: Formes et sens des diverses traditions*, 2 vols. (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1966). More briefly: Deborah Levine Gera, “Shorter Medieval Hebrew Tales of Judith,” in *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies across the Disciplines*, ed. Kevin R. Brine, Elena Ciletti, and Henrike Lähnemann (Cambridge: OpenBook Publishers, 2010), 81–95.

⁶⁶ George Howard, ed. and trans., *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2002).

⁶⁷ Labendz, “The Book of Ben Sira.”

⁶⁸ See now Noah Bickart and Christine Hayes, “The Apocrypha in Rabbinic Literature,” in *The Jewish Annotated Apocrypha*, ed. Jonathan Klawans and Lawrence Mitchell Wills (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 593–97.

between rabbinic literature and the works of Josephus.⁶⁹ In addition to this, the rabbis knew the story of the mother and her seven sons (2Macc 7), though it was reconfigured to describe the persecution under Hadrian (*Lam. Rab.* 1:16). The rabbis also knew the story of Bel and the Dragon (*Gen. Rab.* 68:13).⁷⁰ The rabbis knew of the demon Asmodeus from the book of Tobit (*b. Gittin* 68a–68b). The rabbis knew the names of Jannes and Jambres—the magicians who opposed Moses (*b. Menahot* 85a; cf. 2Tim 3:8). The rabbis knew a version of the story of Jesus (*b. Sanhedrin* 43a;). The rabbis even knew the names of the leaders of the Watchers from the Enochic tradition—Azazel and Shemhazai—as well as the names of their giant offspring (*b. Yoma* 67b; *b. Niddah* 61a). These examples, which do not take into account other late antique Jewish works such as *Megillat Antiochus* and *Toledot Yesu*, render the hypotheses of a sudden, dramatic rediscovery of Second Temple works or an esoteric priestly tradition unnecessary.

The other assumption is that the Pseudepigrapha are all Second Temple Jewish works. Some of them are, but many—owing to a lack of evidence—are of debatable origin.⁷¹ The Pseudepigrapha is a miscellany, not a neatly delimited corpus. The microcosm of Adam and Enoch literature illustrates the precise problem with “Pseudepigrapha” as a category. Apart from a general connection to biblical figures and themes, there is hardly a single trait that defines the Pseudepigrapha. It is certainly not pseudepigraphy. The book of Enoch is pseudonymously attributed to that patriarch, but the *Life of Adam and Eve* is attributed to no one in particular.⁷² It is also not canonical status. The *Life of Adam and Eve* only ever appears on canon lists as one of the apocrypha, while *1Enoch* is a canonical work of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Nor is it date and provenance. Four of the five booklets that constitute *1Enoch* were found at Qumran, and Enoch is famously cited in the New Testament

⁶⁹ Tal Ilan and Vered Noam, *Josephus and the Rabbis*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2017) [Hebrew]. See also the English distillation: Vered Noam, *Shifting Images of the Hasmoneans: Second Temple Legends and Their Reception in Josephus and Rabbinic Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

⁷⁰ This section, however, is missing from the critical edition of Julius Theodor and Hanoch Albeck, eds., *Midrash Bereschit Rabba mit kritischem Apparat und Kommentar*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Itzkowski, 1912–1936).

⁷¹ On this problem, see especially the seminal studies of Robert A. Kraft, *Exploring the Scriptural: Jewish Texts and Their Christian Contexts* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); James R. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or Other?* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); and the first four chapters of Marinus de Jonge, *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament as Part of Christian Literature: The Case of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Greek Life of Adam and Eve* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

⁷² The Greek version is called *The Apocalypse of Moses*, but the text itself makes no claims of authorship.

Epistle of Jude (14–15), but the first attestation of the *Life of Adam and Eve* only appears centuries later.⁷³

The incoherence of the corpus of Pseudepigrapha, as it is currently constituted, means that one must unite the Adam and Enoch books under a different banner in order to compare them with *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*.⁷⁴ They cannot be presented as Second Temple literature. The Aramaic Enoch booklets are demonstrably Second Temple compositions, while the Adam books are disputable. Conversely, the Adam and Enoch traditions cannot be construed as merely Christian or otherwise “non-Jewish.” Both have survived primarily in Christian transmission, but this does not erase the incontestably Jewish origins of the Enoch material. The two traditions could be classed as non-rabbinic, but that is too broad. In this study, “non-rabbinic” is used to contrast Second Temple Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions with competing traditions in the Talmud and Midrash, but it is insufficiently precise as a literary category. Second Temple, Christian, and Islamic literature are all non-rabbinic, but so are the Avestan and Pali canons.

The Enoch and Adam books represent distinct collections of exegetical traditions at different points in the development of Christianity and Judaism. To this end, Second Temple Jews and Christians each produced extended retellings of the biblical history—*Jubilees* and the *Cave of Treasures*—similar in form and content to *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*, an account of biblical history from a rabbinic perspective. Both *Jubilees* and the *Cave of Treasures* have appeared in collections of Pseudepigrapha, but they also belong to another category of literature, the “Rewritten Bible.” This term, like Pseudepigrapha, has a complicated history. It too has gradually changed in meaning over time and remains hotly contested, although its original meaning can be salvaged as a coherent concept. Still, its use requires justification.

⁷³ The first manuscripts are Coptic fragments of the sixth or seventh century. See Simon J. Gathercole, “The Life of Adam and Eve (Coptic Fragments),” in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, ed. Richard Bauckham, James R. Davila, and Alexander Panayotov (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 22–27. The first secure reference is debatable. Michael E. Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 75–83, does not list any *testimonia* prior to the *Apostolic Constitutions* (VI.16.3) in the fourth century, and the reference there is very uncertain.

⁷⁴ Within collections of Pseudepigrapha, there is a tension between collecting works based on their age and provenance (e.g., Second Temple Jewish texts) and collecting works based on their theme (e.g., biblical characters). H. F. D. Sparks, ed., *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) is a good example of a coherent collection: Every entry is a work preserved by Christians about a character from the Hebrew Bible. Compare Charlesworth, where some of the works were not transmitted by Christians (e.g., *3Enoch*) or focus on biblical characters and themes only tangentially (the *Letter of Aristeas*, the *Sibylline Oracles*).

1.3 *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* and the Rewritten Bible

Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer, *Jubilees*, and the *Cave of Treasures* have all been described as “Rewritten Bibles” in secondary literature. Geza Vermes, who coined the term, listed *Jubilees* as one of his original examples, alongside Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities*, Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, the *Genesis Apocryphon*, and the medieval *Sefer ha-Yashar*.⁷⁵ Alexander Toepel, in the most recent English translation of the *Cave of Treasures*, called this Syriac work a “Rewritten Bible” and directly compared it to LAB, Josephus, and *Jubilees*.⁷⁶ Heinemann classified PRE as a “Rewritten Bible” (המקרא המשוכח) and compared it to Vermes’ examples, including *Jubilees*, the *Genesis Apocryphon*, and *Sefer ha-Yashar*.⁷⁷ Rachel Adelman objected to this classification, preferring the term “Narrative Midrash” for PRE,⁷⁸ but John Bowker, who earlier described PRE as a “Narrative Midrash,” placed *Jubilees*, LAB, and *Sefer ha-Yashar*—Vermes’ Rewritten Bibles—in this category.⁷⁹ The change in label does not imply a change in substance.

The term “Rewritten Bible” and the cognate “Parabiblical Literature” both have their origin in the rediscovery of the work now known as the *Genesis Apocryphon* (1Q20). This work, one of the first Dead Sea Scrolls recovered from Qumran, contains first person accounts of Lamech, the father of Noah, Noah himself, and Abraham, intermixed with some third person material closely related to the biblical text. The work was written in Aramaic, like a Targum, but it expands and comments on the biblical text, like a Midrash. The origin of both “Rewritten Bible” and “Parabiblical Literature” was borne out of the inability to apply existing categories of rabbinic literature to this early Jewish work. Geza Vermes, in his seminal collection *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies* (1961), wrote a two-part study on the aggadic developments of the life of Abraham. Vermes’ ultimate interest is the portrait of Abraham in the *Genesis Apocryphon*. As a prelude, he elucidates a theory of “Rewritten Bible” based on a much later text, *Sefer ha-Yashar*.

⁷⁵ The relevant passage is cited below.

⁷⁶ Alexander Toepel, “The Cave of Treasures: A New Translation and Introduction,” in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, ed. Richard Bauckham, James R. Davila, and Alexander Panayotov (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 531–84 (534).

⁷⁷ Heinemann, “Ancient Legends,” 181. See also Joseph Dan, *The Hebrew Story in the Middle Ages* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1974), 133–41 [Hebrew], who describes the concept without using the term (he calls it “a retelling of the biblical story”).

⁷⁸ Adelman, *Return of the Repressed*, 3–21. I will return to her objections in chapter two.

⁷⁹ John Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature: An Introduction to Jewish Interpretations of Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 85.

In order to anticipate questions, and to solve problems in advance, the midrashist inserts haggadic development into the biblical narrative—an exegetical process which is probably as ancient as scriptural interpretation itself. The Palestinian Targum and *Jewish Antiquities*, Pseudo-Philo and *Jubilees*, and the recently discovered “Genesis Apocryphon” (the subject of the following chapter) each in their own way show how the Bible was rewritten about a millennium before the redaction of *Sefer ha-Yashar*.⁸⁰

This paragraph provided the first working definition of “Rewritten Bible” as well as a sketch of the corpus, which included, in addition to the texts already cited, the “Palestinian Targum,” by which Vermes probably intended *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, *Targum Neofiti*, or both. At the time Vermes wrote, all these texts were regarded as either Second Temple Jewish texts or, in the case of the Targumim, as having Second Temple roots. Consequently, like the Pseudepigrapha, “Rewritten Bible” has been treated as a branch of Second Temple Jewish literature. It is noteworthy, however, that the inaugural study of the Rewritten Bible focuses on a medieval text.

In 1967, H. L. Ginsberg proposed a similar term, “Parabiblical Literature,” in his review of Joseph Fitzmyer’s commentary on the *Genesis Apocryphon*. After concluding that Targum and Midrash were inadequate for characterizing the Qumran scroll, Ginsberg writes:

To the question of literary genre, I should like to contribute a proposal for a term to cover works, like *GA* [the *Genesis Apocryphon*], Pseudo-Philo, and the *Book of Jubilees*, which paraphrase and/or supplement the canonical Scriptures: parabiblical literature. The motivation of such literature—like that of midrash—may be more doctrinal, as in the case of the *Book of Jubilees*, or more artistic, as in at least the preserved parts of *GA*, but it differs from midrashic literature by not directly quoting and (with more or less arbitrariness) interpreting canonical Scripture.⁸¹

It is remarkable that Vermes and Ginsberg, apparently independently, identified the same problem of categorization, proposed two broadly synonymous terms to resolve this problem, outlined a similar corpus, and contrasted the new category with rabbinic Midrash.

In the half century since the initial publications of Vermes and Ginsberg, the *Genesis Apocryphon* has remained one of the few constants in scholarship on “Rewritten Bible” and cognate terms. In 1988, Philip Alexander defined the Rewritten Bible as a genre based on a limited corpus of four works named by Vermes:

⁸⁰ Geza Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 95.

⁸¹ H. L. Ginsberg, “Book Review: *The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave I: A Commentary*,” *Theological Studies* 28 (1967): 574–77 (574).

Jubilees, Josephus' *Antiquities*, LAB, and the *Genesis Apocryphon*.⁸² By this point, however, the spike of interest in the "Old Testament Pseudepigrapha" had enlarged the potential corpus beyond these four, precipitating the collapse of "Rewritten Bible" as a generic category. Two surveys of Second Temple literature from the 1980s are indicative of this change. First, George W. E. Nickelsburg, in "The Bible Rewritten and Expanded," from the volume *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (1984), states at the outset that the category of "Rewritten Bible" incorporates several different genres. He includes, in addition to the usual suspects, *1Enoch*, the *Book of Giants*, the *Life of Adam and Eve*, some Hellenistic Jewish poets (Philo, Theodotus), Ezekiel the Tragedian, and Greek additions to certain books of the Bible. He conspicuously leaves out Josephus.⁸³ The second survey is Daniel J. Harrington's "The Bible Rewritten (Narratives)," part of a chapter entitled "Palestinian Adaptations of Biblical Narratives and Prophecies" in *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters* (1986). Despite the title's explicit reference to narrative, his chief additions to Vermes' examples are the *Assumption of Moses* and the *Temple Scroll* (11QTemple) from Qumran, the second of which is based on legal passages from Deuteronomy and is not a narrative text at all.⁸⁴

From the 1990s onward, both "Rewritten Bible" and "Parabiblical Literature" became closely associated with the Qumran writings in particular. This has reinforced the notion that Rewritten Bibles are Second Temple texts. Four volumes of *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* (13, 19, 22, and 30), the official publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls, are dedicated to "Parabiblical Texts" and cover a wide range of material, including manuscripts of *Jubilees* and "Pseudo-*Jubilees*," Tobit, the *Aramaic Levi Document*, and the "Reworked Pentateuch," a series of biblical manuscripts with minor extrabiblical additions.⁸⁵ In 2002, after an analysis of

⁸² Philip S. Alexander, "Retelling the Old Testament," in *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honour of Barnabas Linders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 99–121.

⁸³ George W. E. Nickelsburg, "The Bible Rewritten and Expanded," in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, ed. Michael Stone (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 89–156.

⁸⁴ Daniel J. Harrington, "Palestinian Adaptations of Biblical Narratives and Prophecies. I. The Bible Rewritten (Narratives)," in *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, ed. Robert A. Kraft and George W. E. Nickelsburg (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 239–47. He also adds, "by way of postscript," notices on the *Books of Adam and Eve*, the *Paralipomena of Jeremiah* (4Baruch), and the *Ascension of Isaiah*. In a further comment he suggests that *1Enoch*, *2Baruch*, and *4Ezra* could be Rewritten Bible, as well as certain writings of Philo of Alexandria.

⁸⁵ Harold W. Attridge et al., eds., *Qumran Cave 4.VIII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 1* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); Magen Broshi et al., eds., *Qumran Cave 4.XIV: Parabiblical Texts, Part 2* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); George Brooke et al., eds., *Qumran Cave 4.XVII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 3* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Devorah Dimant, ed., *Qumran Cave 4.XXI: Parabiblical Texts, Part 4: Pseudo-Prophetic Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001).

biblical citations in texts such as the *Temple Scroll* and the *Reworked Pentateuch* manuscripts (but also *Jubilees*, LAB, and the *Genesis Apocryphon*), James VanderKam proposed “Rewritten Scripture” as a more apt designation than “Rewritten Bible,” arguing that a fixed list of authoritative books did not yet exist in the Second Temple period.⁸⁶ This argument presumes, *a priori*, that Rewritten Bibles are Second Temple texts. Several recent books, such as Daniel Falk’s *The Parabiblical Texts* (2007),⁸⁷ Sidney White Crawford’s *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times* (2008),⁸⁸ and Molly Zahn’s two monographs, *Rethinking Rewritten Scripture* (2011)⁸⁹ and *Genres of Rewriting in Second Temple Judaism* (2020),⁹⁰ focus primarily on Qumran material.

The broad and inconsistent application of both terms led to inevitable backlash and criticism, which has done little to ameliorate the problem. In 2005, Moshe Bernstein defended the retention of “Rewritten Bible,” pleading for a stricter definition that would nevertheless retain non-narrative works such as the *Temple Scroll*.⁹¹ In the same year, Jonathan G. Campbell issued a searing indictment of both “Rewritten Bible” and “Parabiblical Texts” as categories, focusing in particular on the canonical assumptions that lie behind such designations.⁹² His argument assumes that such literature belongs to the Second Temple period. Daniel Machiela, in a survey of literature on the debate, steers a middle course, agreeing that Rewritten Bible/Scripture is a modern category imposed on ancient texts—and not a true genre—

⁸⁶ James C. VanderKam, “The Wording of Biblical Citations in Some Rewritten Scriptural Works,” in *The Bible as Book: The Hebrew Bible and the Judaean Desert Discoveries*, ed. Edward D. Herbert and Emanuel Tov (London: British Library, 2002), 41–56 (52–53). See also Anders Klostergaard Petersen, “Rewritten Bible as a Borderline Phenomenon—Genre, Textual Strategy, or Canonical Anachronism?” in *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour Florentino García Martínez*, ed. Anthony Hilhorst, Émile Puech, and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 285–306 (287).

⁸⁷ Daniel K. Falk, *The Parabiblical Texts: Strategies for Extending the Scriptures in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: T&T Clark, 2007).

⁸⁸ Sidnie White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

⁸⁹ Molly M. Zahn, *Rethinking Rewritten Scripture: Composition and Exegesis in the 4QReworked Pentateuch Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

⁹⁰ Molly M. Zahn, *Genres of Rewriting in Second Temple Judaism: Scribal Composition and Transmission* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

⁹¹ Moshe J. Bernstein, “‘Rewritten Bible’: A Generic Category Which Has Outlived Its Usefulness?” *Textus* 22 (2005): 169–96.

⁹² Jonathan G. Campbell, “‘Rewritten Bible’ and ‘Parabiblical Texts’: A Terminological and Ideological Critique,” in *New Directions in Qumran Studies: Proceedings of the Bristol Colloquium on the Dead Sea Scrolls, 8–10 September 2003*, ed. Jonathan G. Campbell, William John Lyons, and Lloyd K. Pietersen (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 43–68.

but that it nevertheless remains useful if it can be properly delineated. He also reminds readers that Rewritten Bibles still existed in the Middle Ages.⁹³

Vermes, in his last communication on the subject, was astonished by the way that the term had evolved and complained that later researchers had “moved the goalposts.”⁹⁴ He approved of the inclusion of Qumran (including non-narrative material) but was alarmed by the tendency to focus on it to the exclusion of other pertinent works. He placed particular emphasis on the neglect of the Targumim to the Pentateuch (“the bee in my bonnet”), which, although mentioned in his initial study, were ignored in most subsequent research on the Rewritten Bible, even in the contributions of Philip Alexander and Moshe Bernstein, whom he singled out as the good and faithful servants true to his original vision.

Vermes’ original description of the Rewritten Bible and its further elucidation by Alexander correspond to a pre-existing category of literature which is, indeed, a coherent literary genre—and one that has endured over several centuries. More than seventy years before Vermes coined the term “Rewritten Bible,” Moses Gaster, in his *Ilchester Lectures on Greeko-Slavic Literature* (1887), included a lengthy appendix dedicated to the *Bible historiale*, a blanket term he uses to refer to works such as the *Palaea historica* (10th c.) and the *Historia scholastica* of Peter Comestor (d. 1178). This is how Gaster characterizes the work of the Comestor:

The author excluded from his work the dogmatical and prophetic portions of the Bible, and the rest is not rendered in a literal translation, but in a mere paraphrase of the text. Sometimes this is shortened, very often explanatory glosses of an exegetic or polemical character are added. Not seldom the author inserts legendary traits or entire legends drawn from non-canonical sources.⁹⁵

This description reads like a highly condensed summary of Philip Alexander’s definition of the Rewritten Bible, particularly the following points:

- Rewritten Bible texts are narratives, which follow a sequential, chronological order.
- They are, on the face of it, free-standing compositions which replicate the form of the biblical books on which they are based.
- Rewritten Bible texts cover a substantial portion of the Bible.
- Rewritten Bible texts follow the Bible serially, in proper order, but they are highly selective in what they represent.

⁹³ Daniel A. Machiela, “Once More, with Feeling: Rewritten Scripture in Ancient Judaism—A Review of Recent Developments,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 61 (2010): 308–20.

⁹⁴ Geza Vermes, “The Genesis of the Concept of ‘Rewritten Bible,’” in *Rewritten Bible after Fifty Years: Texts, Terms, or Techniques?*, ed. József Zsengellér (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 3–9 (4).

⁹⁵ Moses Gaster, *Ilchester Lectures on Greeko-Slavonic Literature* (London: Trübner, 1887), 148.

- The intention of the texts is to produce an interpretative reading of Scripture.
- Rewritten Bible texts make use of non-biblical tradition and draw on non-biblical sources, whether oral or written.⁹⁶

In addition to this prescient definition, Gaster also recognized that the *Palaea historica* and *Historia scholastica* had precedents in ancient Jewish literature:

The works of Josephus, the most widely spread book in ancient times as well as in the Middle Ages, contain many legends which passed later on into the ecclesiastical literature, as nearly all the writers of the Occident made large use of its contents. Not in these incidental references nor in these scattered legends do we see, however, the immediate original of the *Bible Historiale*, but in the entirely similar books existent in the Jewish literature. The connection between these later and the *Bible Historiale* has been totally overlooked, because the link was missing which united them with the Western literature. I see the most ancient of an enlarged history of the principal events of the Bible in the book called the *Book of the Jubilees* [. . .] which dates from at least as early a period as one century before Christ.⁹⁷

Gaster then proceeds to elaborate a history of the *Bible historiale* that fills in the millennial gap between *Jubilees* and the *Palaea historica*, which, without doubt, knows traditions from that book.⁹⁸ Along the way, he proposes that two medieval Jewish works kept the memory of *Jubilees* alive. One of these is *Sefer ha-Yashar*, the subject of Vermes' inaugural study of the Rewritten Bible. The other is *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* (emphasis original).

To the seventh century, again, is ascribed another work, this time again a *book*, which has never been considered in this connection—I mean the *Pirke de R. Eliezer*, or the book called the *Chapters of R. Eliezer*, which bears this title because it is divided into fifty-four chapters, and the authorship is falsely ascribed to R. Eliezer, who lived in the first century.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Alexander, "Retelling the Old Testament," 116–18. The three points that are not implicit in Gaster's description are the third ("Despite the superficial independence of form, these texts are not intended to replace, or to supersede the Bible."), the seventh ("The narrative form of the texts means, in effect, that they can impose only a single interpretation on the original."), and the eighth ("The limitations of the narrative form also preclude making clear the exegetical reasoning.")

⁹⁷ Gaster, *Ilchester Lectures*, 159–60.

⁹⁸ See William Adler, "Parabiblical Traditions and Their Use in the *Palaea Historica*," in *Tradition, Transmission, and Transformation from Second Temple Literature through Judaism and Christianity in Late Antiquity*, ed. Menahem Kister et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1–39. He has also translated this text: William Adler, trans., "Palaea Historica," in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, ed. Richard Bauckham, James Davila, and Alex Panayotov (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 585–672.

⁹⁹ Gaster, *Ilchester Lectures*, 162.

Moses Gaster therefore both described the Rewritten Bible *avant la lettre* and identified PRE as an example of this type of literature.

Gaster treats the different examples of the *Bible historiale* as if they are all permutations of the same *Urtext*: He traces a straight line from *Jubilees* to the *Palaea historica* to the *Historia scholastica* and its many descendants. He is overstating the case. His examples are quite different from each other and are better characterized as constituting a literary genre rather than one malleable text. In fact, there is already a recognized genre of such texts. The terms “History Bible” or “Medieval Popular Bible” are applied to long narratives recounting, with extrabiblical glosses and additions, the historical matter of the Christian Bible, to the exclusion of precepts, poetry, prophecy, and Paul.¹⁰⁰ In terms of format, History Bibles are like *Jubilees*, LAB, or Josephus. They are frequently dependent on one or more of these three works. The *Bible historiale*, used by Gaster as a generic noun, is also the name of a specific work, a French translation of the Vulgate by Guyart des Moulins (c. 1295) supplemented by the *Historia scholastica* and other sources.¹⁰¹

The model of the History Bible clarifies a point of ambiguity in scholarship on the Rewritten Bible: The “Bible” that is being rewritten is not the biblical *text* but the biblical *history*. Establishing history as a criterion for this type of text would immediately exclude non-narrative works such as the *Temple Scroll*. Another characteristic of the History Bible is its broad scope. They typically begin with creation and cover a significant portion of the history of ancient Israel, often reaching to the end of the Second Temple period but sometimes concluding at another liminal moment in biblical history, such as the accession of Solomon or the death of Moses. This characteristic excludes many of the “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,” which typically focus on a single character, like hagiography.

The identification of the medieval “History Bible” with the Second Temple “Rewritten Bible” gives us a new frame of reference for understanding *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, *Jubilees*, and the *Cave of Treasures*. They are all part of the historical evolution of the Rewritten Bible. The Second Temple and medieval examples are well-known (at least, in their respective fields). This study aims to fill the gap in-between, that is, the period of Late Antiquity (ca. 250–750 CE). This is the epoch when *Jubilees* reached its peak popularity—not as a Jewish work, but as a Chris-

¹⁰⁰ See Brian Murdoch, *The Medieval Popular Bible: Expansions of Genesis in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), and James H. Morey, “Peter Comestor, Biblical Paraphrase, and the Medieval Popular Bible,” *Speculum* 68 (1993): 6–35.

¹⁰¹ Guy Lobrichon, “The Story of a Success: The *Bible historiale* in French (1295–ca. 1500),” in *Form and Function in the Late Medieval Bible*, ed. Eyal Poleg and Laura Light (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 307–31. See also Jeanette Patterson, *Making the Bible French: The Bible Historiale and the Medieval Lay Reader* (University of Toronto Press, 2022).

tian one. Despite its apocryphal status, Christians persisted in using it, including canon-sensitive Church Fathers such as Jerome and Epiphanius of Salamis and, more prominently, Christian chronographers. Around the sixth century, the *Cave of Treasures* emerged as a purely Christian alternative to the originally Jewish *Jubilees*. Whereas *Jubilees* reflects the Enoch traditions of the Second Temple period, the *Cave of Treasures* is indebted to the Adam books, which were also a major influence on early Islam. *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* was written shortly after 750 CE. Although it emerged right after the end of Late Antiquity, its sources, which potentially includes both *Jubilees* and the *Cave of Treasures*, reflect the Rewritten Bible as it existed at the end of this period.

This brings us back to the two modes of transmission discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Although *Jubilees* survived in Christian contexts, its traditions were not completely forgotten in Jewish circles, even among the rabbis. A handful of medieval Jewish writings may even reflect sources older than *Jubilees*. The *Cave of Treasures*, on the other hand, was never Jewish. It is a Christian text with a marked anti-Jewish animus that, nevertheless, was omnipresent in the Muslim world where PRE was written. Ultimately, *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* reflects both modes of transmission. It does indeed contain ancient traditions—not very many, but some—reaching all the way back to the Second Temple period and found, in slightly different forms, in *Jubilees*. More concrete parallels can be found between PRE and the *Cave of Treasures*, a result of the influence of the surrounding culture.

1.4 Method

The basic methodological assumption is that majority cultures influence minority cultures. Israel Yuval, in his book *Two Nations in Your Womb*, formulated this principle as follows when discussing the relationship between Judaism and Christianity in medieval Europe.

Whenever we find a similarity between Judaism and Christianity, and we do not have grounds to suggest a shared heritage, we may assume that it is indicative of the influence of the Christian milieu on the Jews, and not vice versa, unless it may be proved that the Jewish sources are more ancient.¹⁰²

This method has been profitably applied in other recent research, such as Annette Reed's study of the transmission of the *Book of the Watchers* (1Enoch 1–36) from

¹⁰² Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, trans. Barbara Harshav and Jonathan Chipman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 21–22.

Judaism to Christianity and back to Judaism,¹⁰³ Shari Lowin's study of Islamic influence on medieval Jewish legends about Abraham (including PRE),¹⁰⁴ Allegra Iafra's study of Byzantine art on the Jewish conception of the throne of Solomon,¹⁰⁵ and more than one monograph by Peter Schäfer.¹⁰⁶

In the context of this study, the *Cave of Treasures* clearly represents a work that stands outside of Judaism and belongs to the "majority" culture. Although it is related to the Adam books, whose origins are disputed, the *Cave of Treasures* is a separate work from the *Life of Adam and Eve* or the *Apocalypse of Moses*. It is also, from its opening invocation of the Trinity to its closing execration of the Jews for killing the Messiah, unambiguously Christian. This did not prevent Muslim writers from adopting the work as a source book for their own compositions about the prophets prior to Muhammad. They did not retain the Christian elements, of course. Not only did Muslim scholars prefer material about Adam and the earliest patriarchs to the detriment of material about Jesus, but it was "Islamicized," making the biblical history predicative of Muslim devotions instead of Christian ones. To give a few examples: *Cav. Tr.* 19:5 states that Noah's Ark made the sign of the cross over the Flood waters. In Islamic sources, the Ark instead circumambulates the Ka'ba. Similarly, Adam (whose body is carried aboard the Ark in *Cav. Tr.*) is reburied at Golgotha outside of Jerusalem, the future site of the crucifixion and a clear example of Adam-Christ typology. Muslim sources sometimes claim Adam was buried in Jerusalem but are just as likely to state that he was buried outside Mecca—in a place called the cave of treasures! If Muslims—who, in the early centuries of Islam, were greatly outnumbered by Christians—could adopt and adapt traditions from this work, so could Jews.

Jubilees introduces an entirely different problem. Unlike the *Cave of Treasures*, it is an indisputably Jewish work (confirmed by the findings at Qumran) that has been mainly transmitted by Christians. This situation points to an important caveat Yuval introduced into his method, that is, his remark about a "shared heritage." The claim of outside influence is invalid if older Jewish sources, including *Jubilees*, can explain a tradition. Even though *Jubilees* did not survive in Hebrew, many tra-

103 Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

104 Shari L. Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather: Abraham in Islamic and Jewish Exegetical Narratives* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

105 Allegra Iafra, *The Wandering Throne of Solomon: Objects and Tales of Kingship in the Medieval Mediterranean*, (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

106 E.g., Peter Schäfer, *Mirror of His Beauty: Feminine Images of God from the Bible to the Early Kabbalah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), and Peter Schäfer, *The Jewish Jesus: How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

ditions from it evidently did. One example is the notion that Abraham underwent ten trials. *Jubilees* is the oldest attestation of this idea, which is also found in tractate *Avot*, a late addition to the Mishnah, the foundational document of rabbinic Judaism (*m. Avot* 5:3). The enumeration and elaboration of the trials is quite common in rabbinic literature, including a major section of PRE (chapters 26–31). The tradition was not static but changed over time. Shalom Spiegel wrote a short book (in fact, a long article) entitled *The Last Trial*.¹⁰⁷ The title refers to the Aqedah, the binding of Isaac. However, in *Jubilees*, the Aqedah is not the last trial! The tenth trial, explicitly stated, is the death of Sarah (*Jub.* 19:8). No other Jewish source followed *Jubilees'* lead; Abraham's call to sacrifice his son is otherwise always the ultimate test. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* does not deviate from rabbinic sources here, so the influence of *Jubilees* is highly doubtful.¹⁰⁸ This example ties into Urowitz-Freudenstein's claim that many of the proposed parallels between PRE and non-rabbinic literature (of which she focuses on *Jubilees* and *1Enoch* exclusively) are already part of rabbinic tradition.

Since *Jubilees* is part of the shared heritage of both Christians and Jews, the work cannot avoid the problem endemic to all the Pseudepigrapha. Granted, *Jubilees* is Jewish and was composed in Hebrew, but by the eighth century it existed in a multitude of versions, including Greek, Ethiopic, and probably Syriac. If PRE is patterned after *Jubilees*, how do we know whether the author was acquainted with the Second Temple work from a Jewish or a Christian tradent? The response requires a hierarchy of possible sources. Hebrew and Aramaic literature—that is, works that were almost certainly produced by Jews—are first in rank. Since PRE is unquestionably a rabbinic document (as indicated by its title), rabbinic literature receives special consideration. This includes all the works that would fit into the classical rabbinic “canon”: the Mishnah, Tosefta, and both Talmuds, but also the halakhic Midrashim (*Mekhilta*, *Sifra*, *Sifre*) and the earliest aggadic Midrashim, especially *Genesis Rabbah*.¹⁰⁹ It is taken for granted that these works, written before the rise of Islam, predate PRE and were known to the author.

¹⁰⁷ Shalom Spiegel, *The Last Trial: On the Legends and Lore of the Command to Abraham to Offer Isaac as a Sacrifice*, trans. Judah Goldin (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1967).

¹⁰⁸ See James C. VanderKam, “Pirque Rabbi Eliezer and the Book of Jubilees,” in *Above, Below, Before, and After: Studies in Judaism and Christianity in Dialogue with Martha Himmelfarb*, ed. Ra’anan Boustani, David Frankfurter, and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2023), 419–32. In the same volume, Sarit Kattan Gribetz, “The Abraham Discords: Eschatology and Ancestry in Pirque Rabbi Eliezer’s Binding of Isaac,” 433–58, shows ways in which PRE’s Aqedah differs from rabbinic concerns and reflects the early Islamic milieu. The two articles make an instructive pair.

¹⁰⁹ In other words, all the works surveyed in Günter Stemberger, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch*, 9th ed. (Munich: Beck, 2011).

Talmud and Midrash do not constitute the full extent of Jewish literary production in Late Antiquity. Other Jewish works, which fall outside of the rabbinic canon but were nevertheless employed by rabbis, also merit consideration. Among these are *piyyut*, liturgical poetry chanted in the synagogue; the Targumim, Aramaic translations of Scripture that were also recited in the synagogue but studied outside of it; *hekhalot* tractates, the primary form of Jewish mystical literature prior to Kabbalah; and the “Minor Midrashim,” especially Hebrew apocalyptic works, which saw a resurgence in the early Muslim period.¹¹⁰ *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* is conversant with each of these genres. There are also other types of Hebrew and Aramaic writings that might have informed PRE, such as magic.¹¹¹ All these sources must be taken into consideration before one can speak of outside influence.

Influence, in fact, might be the wrong word. The presence of “Pseudepigrapha” in PRE is not the result of the author reading “outside books” and taking inspiration from them but the result of his cultural environment. Any knowledge of *Jubilees*, however limited, was because the author was Jewish, and the work had left its imprint on Jewish literature. Knowledge of the *Cave of Treasures* or its traditions is the result of that work’s deep inculturation in the surrounding literary environment, that is, the literary environment of the ‘Abbāsid Caliphate. Miaphysite, East Syrian, and Melkite Christians all referred to it in both their Syriac and Arabic compositions (mainly historical writing). Muslims of both Sunni and Shī‘ī persuasion, though less obviously directly dependent on the work, still accept its presentation of the biblical past.

The *Cave of Treasures*, however, was never translated into Greek or Latin—at least, not before the modern age.¹¹² This accident of history had serious repercussions. Byzantine Christians, who shared the same creed as their Melkite counterparts, had an entirely different perception of the biblical past, one molded by the works of Josephus (mostly absent in Syriac) and, ironically enough, *Jubilees*. If the author of PRE had lived in Salonica or even Italy, he might have had greater acquaintance with *Jubilees* and its traditions. There are a few medieval Hebrew

110 These additional sources are included with the classical rabbinic canon in Eyal Ben-Eliyahu, Yehudah B. Cohn, and Fergus Millar, *Handbook of Jewish Literature from Late Antiquity, 135–700 CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2012). Though not all-encompassing, this work might serve as a shorthand list of all the Jewish sources one should consider before positing “outside influence” on PRE.

111 E.g., Gideon Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 252, n. 61.

112 It is available in Greek now: Emmanouela Grypeou, trans., *Hē Spēlia tōn Thēsaurōn* (Thēra: Thesbitēs, 2010).

works that reflect precisely this knowledge of *Jubilees* (such as *Midrash Tadshe*), and their differences with PRE are instructive.

This is not to say that contact between the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate and the Byzantine Empire was impossible. The *Cave of Treasures* could have penetrated Europe and overwritten the inherited traditions of Josephus and *Jubilees*, but it simply did not. There is a counter-example which nevertheless proves the point. The *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, written in Syriac around the year 691, is also the first work to clearly attest dependence on *Cav. Tr.* Its influence is limited to the first few chapters on Adam and Eve until the time of the Flood, after which it rapidly departs from biblical history to recount Roman history, the rise of Islam, and the eventual coming of the Antichrist. This work, unlike *Cav. Tr.*, enjoyed immediate international success and was swiftly translated from Syriac to Greek and from Greek to Latin.¹¹³ It was the means by which a few *Cav. Tr.* traditions entered Western Europe, such as the names of Cain and Abel's wives and the mysterious Jonitus, the fourth son of Noah who was born after the Flood and became the teacher of Nimrod. These isolated traditions were incorporated into Peter Comestor's massively influential *Historica scholastica*, after which then found their way into a Hebrew work, the *Chronicles of Jerahmeel*.¹¹⁴ This example validates Yuval's observation, which is fundamentally the same as Lévi's remarks about PRE from his 1889 study (cited above): "I emphasize that all the legends from *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* which are not taken from the Talmud and earlier collections arrived through the intermediary of Christians and Muslims."¹¹⁵

1.5 The Plan of This Study

The three parts of this study correspond to the three parts of the subtitle: 1) *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*; 2) *Jubilees*; and 3) the *Cave of Treasures*.

Part One is an introduction to *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*, focusing especially on its place within rabbinic tradition. Chapter two, "*Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* in its Time,"

¹¹³ Garstad, Benjamin, ed. and trans. *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius & An Alexandrian World Chronicle*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012, vii–xviii.

¹¹⁴ For the wives of the Cain and Abel, see Peter Comestor, *Scholastica Historia: Liber Genesis*, ed. Agneta Sylwan (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 48 (Calmana and Delbora, a tradition attributed explicitly to "Methodius the Martyr") and Jerahmeel b. Solomon, *The Book of Memory, that is, The Chronicles of Jerahmeel: A Critical Edition*, ed. Eli Yassif (Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University Press, 2001), 117 (Qalmana and Deborah). For Jonitus, see Peter Comestor, *Scholastica Historia*, 74–75 (Jonithus, once again attributed to Methoios), and Jerahmeel b. Solomon, *The Book of Memory*, 129 (Yonithes).

¹¹⁵ Lévi, "Éléments chrétiens," 89.

is a general introduction to the work: its manuscripts, contents, structure, date, provenance, and genre. Chapter three, “*Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* and Rabbinic Tradition,” discusses the work’s relationship with both the rabbinic canon (Talmud and Midrash) as well as works that might be classed as “para-rabbinic,” such as liturgical poetry (*piyyut*), mystical treatises (the *hekhalot* literature), Jewish apocalypses, and the Targumim, all of which fall outside the rabbinic canon but are attributed to rabbinic authors and survived in rabbinic transmission. This chapter serves as a reminder that, whatever its eccentricities, PRE remains a profoundly rabbinic work. Chapter four, “*Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*,” goes beyond the general examination of PRE and the Targumim in the previous chapter to focus on one Targum in particular, *Pseudo-Jonathan* to the Torah. This Targum has been considered one of the primary sources of PRE. I argue that the relationship between the two is exactly the opposite—that the Targum depends on PRE. The parallels between the two highlight those traditions that are distinctive to PRE compared to earlier rabbinic literature. In that sense, it is the inverse of chapter three and a preparatory step for the chapters that follow.

Part Two turns to *Jubilees*. Chapter five, “Vestiges of Hebrew *Jubilees*,” attempts to establish whether knowledge of the Hebrew book of *Jubilees* survived into Late Antiquity and beyond. It looks at ten different Hebrew sources, both Rabbanite and Karaite, that either mention the book by name or otherwise attest traditions from it. Chapter six, “*Jubilees* in Christian Tradition,” repeats this process for Christian works in Latin, Greek, Syriac, and other languages. The purpose of the chapter is to establish which traditions from *Jubilees* were current at the time of PRE’s redaction (and, therefore, could be transmitted without direct knowledge of the work). Chapter seven, “*Jubilees* and *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*,” is a direct comparison of the two works. It takes as its point of departure ten parallel traditions frequently cited in secondary literature and assesses the supposed dependence on *Jubilees* in light of the readily available traditions in rabbinic literature. In most cases, contact with rabbinic literature is sufficient to explain the tradition in PRE.

Part Three follows the same general pattern as Part Two but takes the *Cave of Treasures* as its subject. Chapter eight, “The *Cave of Treasures* Cycle,” addresses the many versions of this work that existed by the time PRE was written. I have divided these into primary and secondary versions depending on whether the text is independent or part of a larger work. Chapter nine, “The *Cave of Treasures* in Christian and Muslim Tradition,” follows the references to this work in Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic. Chapter ten, “The *Cave of Treasures* and *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*,” considers ten parallel traditions between PRE and the *Cave of Treasures*. The method is the same as chapter seven. Following the suggestion of Israël Lévi, one must first exhaust the rabbinic canon and other works of Hebrew and Aramaic literature (the presumed sources) before considering whether PRE was influenced by an outside

source—in this case, the *Cave of Treasures*. Whereas most parallels with *Jubilees* derive from rabbinic channels, PRE's resemblance to the *Cave of Treasures* depends on Christian and Muslim influence, not only the *Cave of Treasures* itself but the many works that disseminated its traditions.

The conclusion will emphasize two points. First, despite the absence of a meaningful connection between PRE and *Jubilees*, there is still some evidence for the knowledge of *Jubilees* in medieval rabbinic literature that defies easy explanation. In a handful of cases—PRE contains one example—rabbinic literature combines traditions separately attested in *Jubilees* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. Theoretically, rabbinic authors could have consulted these two works separately (in Greek?), but it is also possible that *Jubilees* and the *Testaments* are independent witnesses to a common source that no longer exists. The second conclusion is that region—more than religion—affected how one understood “biblical history.” While *Jubilees* continued to (indirectly) influence residents of Byzantium and Slavia Orthodoxa, in the Islamicate world the *Cave of Treasures* effectively replaced *Jubilees* and shaped the worldview of Muslims, Christians, and Jews alike. Thus, there is more at stake than the question of whether an individual rabbinic author did or did not use two non-rabbinic works. The parallels with the *Cave of Treasures* are indicative of the author's broader contact with the surrounding culture instead of just one work.