

4 *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*

One outstanding critical problem in the study of *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* is its relationship to *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* (TPJ) to the Pentateuch. This Targum shares a great deal of material with PRE—material which is not found in earlier rabbinic literature. It has long been a point of contention whether the Targum is a source for PRE, whether PRE is a source for the Targum, or whether the two depend on some common source. This statement presupposes that the two works were written at approximately the same time. The internal evidence, particularly the references to ‘Ā’isha and Fāṭima (PRE 30; TPJ to Gen 21:21), place the final forms of both works no earlier than the early Islamic period. As the previous chapters have demonstrated, this is precisely when PRE was written. The Targum, however, could have been written much later. Recent research, including my own, has suggested that it could have been composed as late as the twelfth century.¹ This would, of course, make TPJ dependent on PRE.

Nevertheless, it is still vitally important to record the parallels between PRE and TPJ. As Miguel Pérez Fernández wrote: “This data is more important for the scholar than any explanation of it.”² The two share numerous “special traditions” that are not found in any other Hebrew or Aramaic source prior to the Islamic period. A catalogue of these traditions would, in effect, also be a catalogue of the unique material within PRE, the type of material not found in earlier rabbinic tradition. Some of this material is shared with *Jubilees* and the *Cave of Treasures*. In other words, this chapter is the reverse of the preceding. The previous chapter showed what features of PRE were typical within rabbinic literature. The current chapter focuses on the atypical. Where possible, it will also indicate evidence that PRE, and not TPJ, is the originator of these novel traditions.

The special relationship between PRE and TPJ was already recognized in the nineteenth century. Leopold Zunz,³ David Luria,⁴ and Haim Meir

1 Gavin McDowell, “The Date and Provenance of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: The Evidence of *Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer* and the Chronicles of Moses,” *Aramaic Studies* 19 (2021): 121–54. See also Leeor Gottlieb, “Towards a More Precise Understanding of Pseudo-Jonathan’s Origins,” *Aramaic Studies* 19 (2021): 104–20.

2 Miguel Pérez Fernández, trans., *Los Capítulos de Rabbí Eliezer: Versión crítica, introducción, y notas* (Valencia: Institución S. Jerónimo para la Investigación Bíblica, 1984), 36: “Este dato es para el estudioso más importante que cualquier explicación del mismo.”

3 Leopold Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden, historisch entwickelt*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kauffmann, 1892), 287: “In vielen einzelnen Betrachtungen und Sagen herrscht die auffallendste Aehnlichkeit mit dem jerusalemschen Targum” (“In many reflections and sayings a striking resemblance to the Jerusalem Targum predominates”).

4 David Luria, ed., *Sefer Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer from the Tanna Rabbi Eliezer b. Hyrcanos with the Commentary of Radal* (Warsaw: Zvi Jacob Bamberg, 1852), Introduction, 12b [Hebrew]: “We see that

Horowitz⁵ all remarked on the close resemblance between the Targum and PRE. They all assumed that the Targum drew from PRE. This view predominated, often without argument, for most of the next century. Other proponents of this view include Gerald Friedlander, the first English translator of PRE,⁶ Hanoch Albeck, the Hebrew translator of Zunz,⁷ Pierre Grelot,⁸ Etan Levine,⁹ Andrew Chester,¹⁰ and Michael Maher, who translated TPJ to Genesis into English for the Aramaic Bible series.¹¹

Other researchers gave a rationale for placing the Targum later. Moïse Ohana, in “La polémique judéo islamique et l’image d’Ismaël dans Targum Pseudo-Jonathan et dans Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer,” argued that the reference to the two wives of

Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer was already directly before him [the Targumist], and he copied many things from all the book of Genesis and parts of Exodus.” See also 27b, n. 29: “*Targum Yerushalmi* to the book of Genesis has collected much from *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*” (my translation).

5 Haim Meir Horowitz, “Mishnat Rabbi Eliezer, or: A Critical Introduction to *Pirke 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 (94) [Hebrew]: “The later Targumim, which contain in their interpretations also words of aggadah, such as *Targum Jonathan* and *Targum Yerushalmi* [i.e., the *Fragment Targum*] on the Torah, the *Targum of the Five Scrolls*, and others, drew their remarks from *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* and copied many words from it” (my translation).

6 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), xix: “Again, there is a very close connection between the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch, usually known as the Pseudo-Jonathan ben Uzziel, and our author. The present writer inclines to the view that our book was one of the sources used by this Targumist.”

7 Leopold Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden, historisch entwickelt*, trans. Hanoch Albeck (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1947), 419, n. 20 [Hebrew]: “In all likelihood, our *Targum Yerushalmi* used *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*” (my translation).

8 Pierre Grelot, “Les Targoums du Pentateuque: Étude comparative d’après Genèse IV,3-16,” *Semitica* 9 (1959): 59–88 (88): “Dans Gen. IV,3–16, j’ai noté après Ginsburger des parallélismes frappants entre Ps-J et les *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, oeuvre que Strack attribue au IXe siècle ; Ps-J semble donc plus tardif encore et nous conduit au seuil du moyen âge” (“In Gen 4:3–16, I noted, after Ginsburger, striking parallelisms between TPJ and PRE, a work that Strack attributes to the ninth century; TPJ therefore seems even later and leads us to the beginning of the Middle Ages”).

9 Etan Levine, “Some Characteristics of Pseudo-Jonathan Targum to Genesis,” *Augustinianum* 11 (1971): 89–103 (91): “The Pseudo-Jonathan targum is basically a compilation work, i.e. an artificial structure of culled material. Drawing most heavily from Palestinian sources (*P.R.E.*, *Tanhuma*, *Rabbah*, *Yelammedenu*, etc.), the text betrays wide eclecticism.”

10 Andrew Chester, *Divine Revelation and Divine Titles in the Pentateuchal Targumim* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986), 252–55.

11 Michael Maher, trans., *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis. Translated, with Introduction and Notes* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 8: “PRE, the work on which Ps.-J. often depended, is basically a midrash, but it shares many of the characteristics of the ‘rewritten Bible.’ Similarly, Ps.-J. is basically a Targum, but it is moving in the direction of the genre ‘rewritten Bible’ (in Aramaic).”

Ishmael—‘Ā’isha and Fāṭima—in TPJ to Gen 21:21 is derived from PRE 30.¹² Ohana reasoned that TPJ must depend on PRE in this instance, since the Targum only alludes to a story that PRE reports in full. Similarly, Donald Splansky found that TPJ to Gen 1:16 has a more sophisticated understanding of the rabbinic calendar than the astronomical chapters of PRE.¹³ Edward Cook identified two Hebraisms in the Targum that he believed were taken directly from PRE.¹⁴ Finally, Avigdor Shinan indicated that the phraseology of certain traditions is far too close for the two works to depend on a common source. Furthermore, like Ohana, he found several places in the Targum where a tradition is explicable only in light of PRE. He advocated the Targum’s unilateral dependence on PRE.¹⁵

At the same time, Shinan noted three dissenting voices who opposed the prevailing view that the Targum used PRE as a source.¹⁶ Joseph Heinemann posited that the relationship between the two works was the reverse of the prevailing view: that is, PRE depends on the Targum.¹⁷ He believed that it was unlikely that the diverse translators of the Palestinian Targum would have had recourse to this one work. He also noted that there was a great deal of material in PRE that is not found in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*. Heinemann does not distinguish between material common to all the Palestinian Targumim to the Torah (hardly any of which, as pointed out in the last chapter, is found in PRE) and traditions unique to *Pseudo-Jonathan*. The question is not whether the Palestinian Targum tradition is dependent on PRE but *Pseudo-Jonathan* alone, whose unique material is the locus of the discussion. The second point is irrelevant, since the redactor of *Pseudo-Jonathan*, like any medieval compiler, selectively used his sources.

Miguel Pérez Fernández had another perspective on their relationship.¹⁸ The introduction to his Spanish translation of PRE has thirty-nine examples where

12 Moise 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.

13 Donald M. Splansky, “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Its Relationship to Other Targumim, Use of Midrashim, and Date” (PhD Dissertation, Hebrew Union College 1981), 100–5.

14 Edward Morgan Cook, “Rewriting the Bible: The Text and Language of the Pseudo-Jonathan Targum” (PhD Dissertation, University of California Los Angeles, 1986), 242: *msh* (TPJ to Gen 4:8; see PRE 21) and *mtg* (TPJ to Gen 26:31; see PRE 36).

15 Avigdor Shinan, “The Relationship between Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Midrash Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer,” *Teudah* 11 (1996): 231–43 [Hebrew]. See also Avigdor Shinan, *The Embroidered Targum: The Aggadah in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1992), 176–85 [Hebrew].

16 Shinan, “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Midrash Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer,” 234–39.

17 Joseph Heinemann, “Ancient Legends and their Reworking in Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer,” in *Aggadah and Its Development* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1974), 181–99 (197–199) [Hebrew].

18 Pérez Fernández, *Los Capítulos de Rabbi Eliezer*, 31–36.

he believed that TPJ used PRE and four “counter-examples” where PRE seems to depend on the Targum. The relationship between the two is mutual, the product of a shared cultural environment. It is not clear, however, why the four counter-examples necessitate the Hebrew work’s dependence on the Targum. In three cases, the tradition is already attested in earlier rabbinic literature. For example, both works state that Abraham’s participation in the war of the kings coincided with the future date of Passover (PRE 27; TPJ to Gen 14:15), but this idea is already found in *Gen. Rab.* 43:3. Similarly, both PRE 39 and TPJ to Gen 49:24 allude to the notion that, when the wife of Potiphar tried to seduce him, Joseph was relieved of his erection in a rather graphic manner, but the tradition is also found in *Genesis Rabbah* (87:7; 98:20) and in both Talmudim (*b. Sotah* 36b; *y. Horayot* II:5, 46d). His third example, the twelve miracles that occurred when Phinehas pierced Zimri and Cozbi (TPJ to Num 25:8)—which is not even in PRE—appears in a different form in *Sifre Numbers* §131. His final example is a supposed pun between Shechem the “Hivite” (חויי) and the Aramaic word for snake (חויא) in TPJ to Gen 34:2, which, again, is not actually found in PRE. Hence, he provides no solid basis for presuming that PRE used the Targum.

Robert Hayward, in “*Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*,” arrived at an even more extreme conclusion.¹⁹ He did not believe that PRE and TPJ were related at all. For each of Pérez Fernández’s thirty-nine examples where the Targum seems to draw from PRE, Hayward argues that there is no reliable evidence of a connection between them. Even in the case of apparent similarities, the Targum can be explained without recourse to PRE. The underlying issue is not so much the strength of Hayward’s argument but the quality of Pérez Fernández’s examples. Pérez Fernández’s major methodological weakness is that he does not distinguish between those traditions that are commonly found in rabbinic literature and those which are unique to PRE and TPJ. This problem plagued his “counter-examples.” It is also present in his thirty-nine examples of the Targum’s dependence on PRE.

Hayward’s article has had an outsize influence on later approaches to the question. Paul Flesher and Bruce Chilton cite it with approval in their *The Targums: A Critical Introduction*, concluding, “So clearly one must be careful about the treatment of ‘parallel’ passages between the Targums and other texts, investigating analogies thoroughly rather than treating them superficially.”²⁰ Similarly, Katharina Keim, in her monograph on PRE, states “There can be no question that Hayward

¹⁹ Robert Hayward, “*Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 42 (1991): 215–46.

²⁰ Paul V. M. Flesher and Bruce Chilton, *The Targums: A Critical Introduction* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011), 164.

has proved his point; there is no clear evidence that PRE was a source for Tg. Ps.-J or vice versa.”²¹

There is, however, a surfeit of evidence that the Targum has used PRE as a source. At the end of his article, Hayward listed five criteria for showing dependence of one work upon another. I have taken the liberty of numbering them.

Before ever we may assert that one text depends in some way upon another, there must be clear and unequivocal evidence that this is truly the case. There must at least be [1] substantial borrowings of material; [2] regular use of identical phraseology and vocabulary over wide portions of text; [3] the use of the same material for the same general purpose; [4] firm grounds for holding that the texts in question are not themselves dependent upon sources prior in date to them which they might have drawn upon independently; and [5] good reason to believe that minor similarities between the documents are not, in fact, the result of coincidence or the work of later copyists.²²

The goal of the present chapter is to collect the parallel passages between PRE and TPJ and place them under one of these five headings. “Substantial Borrowing of Material” treats two important themes that recur throughout both works: the celebration of Passover prior to the giving of the Torah and the sanctification of Mount Moriah as a cult site prior to the construction of the Temple. “Identical Phraseology and Vocabulary” includes parallels where the primary interest is the similarity in language. “The Same Material for the Same General Purpose” lists parallels that depend on the same biblical proof-text in instances where the use of that proof-text is unusual. The fourth, “Not Dependent on Prior Sources,” includes material for which PRE is the earliest datable rabbinic text. The fifth, “Unlikely Coincidences and Errors,” features peculiarities in the two texts where it appears one is copying—or correcting—the other. This chapter is not concerned with dating TPJ in an absolute sense. It is rather concerned with dating TPJ relative to PRE. When the parallels show evidence of dependence—and that is not always the case—it consistently favors the anteriority of PRE.

4.1 Substantial Borrowing of Material

In a sense, the totality of the examples demonstrates the “substantial borrowings” between the Targum and PRE. The parallels discussed in this section stand out because they are two of the recurring thematic elements in PRE and are indicative

²¹ Katharina E. Keim, *Pirquei DeRabbi Eliezer: Structure, Coherence, Intertextuality* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 166.

²² Hayward, “Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan,” 245.

of that work's unity: repeated references to the patriarchs' celebration of Passover and their worship on Mount Moriah.²³

Mount Moriah—the future Temple Mount—appears at every stage of sacred history in both PRE and TPJ. In PRE 11, Adam is said to have been created at the place of the Temple, but not before God had gathered his constituent elements from the four corners of the earth.

PRE 11 and 12 (JTS 3847, ff. 92b; 94a)

[PRE 11] He began gathering the dust of the First Adam from the four corners of the world: red, black, white, and yellow (התחיל מקבץ עפרו) שלאדם הראשון מארבע פנות עולם אדום שחור לבן (ירקרק): red for the blood, black for the innards, white for the sinews and bones, and yellow for the body.

[PRE 12] He created him in the holy place, in the place of the Temple (בראו במקום קדוש) (במקום בית המקדש).

TPJ to Gen 2:7 (BL Add. 27031, f. 5a)

He took dust from the place of the Temple (מאתר בית מקדשא) and from the four corners of the world (ומארבעת רוחי עלמא) and from a mixture of all the waters of the world, and he created him red, black, and white (ובריה סומק ושחים וחיור).

Both works share the somewhat paradoxical formulation that Adam is created from every part of the world yet also from one specific place. *Genesis Rabbah* states that Adam was created at the Temple Mount (*Gen. Rab.* 14:8); the Babylonian Talmud, however, claims that he was created from different parts of the world (*b. Sanhedrin* 38a–38b). The Targum and PRE seem to be harmonizing the two traditions.²⁴

Mount Moriah next appears when Adam is expelled from the Garden of Eden. In this case the two works also use similar language, such as coupling the verbs “to depart” and “to dwell.”²⁵

²³ See Jacob Elbaum, “Rhetoric, Motif, and Subject-Matter—Toward an Analysis of Narrative Technique in Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer,” *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore* 13–14 (1991): 99–126 (120–21, n. 47) [Hebrew].

²⁴ This issue is addressed Miguel Pérez Fernández, “Targum y Midrás sobre Gn 1:26–27, 2:7, 3:7, 21: La Creación de Adán en el Targum de Pseudo-Jonatán y en Pirqé de Rabbi Eliezer,” in *Salvación En La Palabra: Targum—Derash—Berith: En Memoria Del Profesor Alejandro Díez Macho*, ed. Domingo Muñoz León (Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad, 1986), 471–88. He believes that the Targum is trying to correct PRE, although I do not necessarily believe that to be the case. They are independently coherent (in PRE, God takes the dust from four different places and assembles them in one place; in TPJ, God takes dust from five different places).

²⁵ Hayward, “Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan,” 225, claims that this citation of PRE is only found in the printed edition. This is simply incorrect. The reference to Mount Moriah occurs in nearly every manuscript from all three families.

PRE 20 (JTS 3847, f. 104b)

Adam departed and dwelt outside the Garden of Eden on Mount Moriah (ויצא אדם וישב). The gate of the Garden of Eden is adjacent to Mount Moriah. From there, he [God] took him, and he returned him to the place from where he was taken, as it is written, “To work the land from where he was taken” (Gen 3:23).

TPJ to Gen. 3:23 (BL Add. 27031, f. 6b)

He left and dwelt on Mount Moriah (ואזל ויתב) to work the land from where he was created.

Both are building on the previous tradition, that Adam was created from the earth of the Temple Mount. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* has attached the tradition to Gen 3:23, which is where the Targumist has decided to insert it.

Both works also refer to Mount Moriah in the time the Flood. After leaving the Ark, Noah offers a sacrifice to God at the site of the Temple Mount. The site is not identified through an explicit reference to Mount Moriah but rather through the first altar, the one Cain and Abel used during the first Passover (discussed below).

PRE 23 (JTS 3847, f. 109a)

He [Noah] built an altar and sacrificed four burnt offerings (עולות ארבע).

TPJ to Gen 8:20 (BL Add. 27031, ff. 10b–11a)

Noah built an altar before the LORD, the very altar that Adam built in the time when he was driven from the Garden of Eden, and he offered upon it a sacrifice, and Cain and Abel offered their sacrifices, and when the waters of the Flood descended it was destroyed. Noah rebuilt it, and he took from every clean animal and from every clean bird, and he offered four burnt offerings on that altar (ארבע עליון).

The parallel, in this instance, seems rather thin, restricted to the four burnt offerings that Noah offers in both works. When one turns from a Yemenite manuscript like JTS 3847 to a European manuscript such as JTS 10484 (Friedlander’s manuscript; Eleazar Treitl’s 5א), the parallel becomes stronger. That manuscript (f. 28a) reads: “He [Noah] rebuilt the first altar, upon which Cain and Abel sacrificed, and he himself offered up four burnt offerings” (ובנה את המזבח הראשון שהקריבו עליו קין והבל והקריב עולות ארבע).

This reading is found in every single exemplar of the א (European) family as well as in the *editio princeps* and Treitl’s manuscript ס (Cincinnati, HUC 75). All other things being equal, this observation says more about the Targum’s provenance than its date. For example, European copyists of PRE could have adopted the tradition from TPJ. Alternatively, the Targumist could have had a “European” copy of PRE before him and adapted the tradition from that work. This second hypothesis will be corroborated by other examples.

Whatever the case, PRE 31 declares that Noah's altar was indeed the altar that had been in use since time immemorial. It is also the altar upon which Abraham binds Isaac.

PRE 31 (JTS 3847, f. 118b)

"And Abraham built the altar there" (Gen 22:9). This is the altar where the First Adam sacrificed. This is the altar on which Cain and Abel sacrificed. This is the altar on which Noah sacrificed.

TPJ to Gen. 22:9 (BL Add. 27031, f. 23a)

Abraham rebuilt there the altar which Adam had built and which was destroyed in the waters of the Flood. Noah returned and rebuilt it, but it was destroyed again in the generation of the division.

Again, the PRE passage shows some variation in the manuscripts. None of Treitl's family א has the tradition exactly as attested in JTS 3847. Most often, א manuscripts mention that the altar was previously used by Noah's sons and unnamed "ancients" (ראשונים). Sometimes Cain and Abel are added, which is what is found in Friedlander's manuscript (JTS 10484, f. 38b): "This was the altar on which Cain and Abel sacrificed, it is the altar on which Noah and his sons sacrificed. . . it is the altar on which the ancients sacrificed" (והוא היה המזבח שהקריבו בו קין והבל הוא המזבח שהקריבו בו נח) (ובניו [. . .]). None of the א manuscripts mention Adam by name, which is found in the majority of Yemenite witnesses and both members of Treitl's family יד (otherwise closely related to א).

The original reading of PRE probably referred only to Noah, his sons, and the "ancients" (הראשונים). Later scribes added the names of Cain and Abel and, eventually, "the First Adam" (אדם הראשון) for clarification. The reverse process, editing the text to make it more obscure, seems less likely. The situation is the same as the above example. Either PRE copyists rewrote the passage in line with TPJ, or the Targumist took inspiration from a reworked copy of PRE. In that case, if the Targumist used a "European" copy of PRE, it may have come from family יד rather than א.

The final shared tradition between PRE and the Targum regarding Mount Moriah involves Isaac's return to the mountain where he was once bound in order to pray on behalf of his barren wife.

PRE 32 (JTS 3847, f. 120a)

R. Judah said: Rebekah was barren for twenty years. After twenty years he [Isaac] took Rebekah and went to Mount Moriah, where he had been bound (להר המוריה שנעקד), and he prayed over her. God hearkened to him, as it is written, "And Isaac entreated the LORD concerning his wife" (Gen 25:21).

TPJ to Gen 25:21 (BL Add. 27031, f. 27a)

Isaac went to the mountain of worship, the place where his father had bound him (לטוור) (פולחנה אתר דכפתיה אבוי), and Isaac, by his prayer, reversed the intention of the Holy One, Blessed be He, from what he had decreed regarding his wife, that she was barren for twenty-two years.

The most striking discrepancy between the two accounts is PRE's claim that Rebekah was barren for twenty years versus twenty-two in TPJ. The figure in PRE would seem to be supported by Scripture, since Isaac was forty when he married Rebekah and sixty when their children were born (Gen 25:20.26). In this case the figure in the Targum would be erroneous. Iosif Zhakevitch has argued that this figure is not an error but a reference to a tradition that Rebekah was three when she married Isaac and was considered barren from birth until she conceived at age twenty-two.²⁶ I find this solution more ingenious than correct, but it makes little difference for the purpose of discerning the relationship between the two works. Either the Targum, intentionally or by accident, has altered the figure in PRE, or else PRE has corrected the Targum.

Moriah appears one final time in PRE, but this tradition is not reflected in the Targum. In PRE 35, the stone Jacob uses as a pillow before his famous vision ("Jacob's Ladder") turns out to be the altar from the binding of Isaac, the same altar that had been in use since the time of Adam. After Jacob consecrates the stone, God pushes it into the earth, creating the Foundation Stone, the Holy of Holies in the future Temple. This act, which Steven Daniels Sacks calls a form of co-creation, brings the saga of the first altar to a close.²⁷ Every major patriarch (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) sacrifices on the altar at some point, often in conjunction with the sealing of a covenant. The sanctification of this holy site is one of the overarching plotlines of PRE.

The tradition, as depicted in PRE 35, is almost entirely absent from the Targum. The idea that Bethel—the "house of God"—is not the city of that name but the Temple Mount is found in all the Palestinian Targumim to the Torah, TPJ included. It is, in fact, the only one of these traditions pertaining to the Temple Mount that appears in other Targumim. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* to Gen 28:22 reads, "This stone that I place as a pillar will be established in the Temple (בבִּי מוֹקְדֵשׁ) of the LORD, and generations will give offerings upon it to the name of the LORD." The explicit reference to the Temple is found in *Neofiti* and Genizah Manuscript E, while *Targum Onqelos* refers to the area as a place of worship (פִּלֹּחַ).

²⁶ Iosif J. Zhakevich, "An Apparent Contradiction in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Genesis 25: 20–26: Was Rebekah Barren for Twenty or Twenty-Two Years?," *Aramaic Studies* 16 (2018): 42–63. See also Iosif J. Zhakevich, *A Targumist Interprets the Torah: Contradictions and Coherence in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 97–112.

²⁷ Steven Daniel Sacks, "The Foundation Stone: Reflections on the Adoption and Transformation of 'Primordial Myth' in Rabbinic Literature," in *Interpretation, Religion and Culture in Midrash and Beyond: Proceedings of the 2006 and 2007 SBL Midrash Sections*, ed. Rivka Ulmer and Lieve M. Teugels (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2008), 25–37. See also Rachel Adelman, "Midrash, Myth, and Bakhtin's Chronotope: The Itinerant Well and the Foundation Stone in *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*" *Journal of Jewish Thought & Philosophy* 17 (2009): 143–76.

Although the Targum acknowledges the final stage of the tradition, that Jacob reestablished the altar on the Temple Mount, it is strangely muted compared to the climactic moment in PRE, where it is not merely an altar but the very pillar of creation. The story of the first altar is a primary literary feature in PRE but secondary in the Targum. This feature, more than any one individual tradition, suggests the Targum's dependence on PRE.

The other major thematic element that runs through both PRE and TPJ is the patriarchal celebration of Passover. Earlier rabbinic sources imply, at the very least, that Abraham observed the feast of unleavened bread (*Gen. Rab.* 42:8; 48:12). In addition to this, PRE and TPJ claim that Antediluvians (Adam and his sons Cain and Abel) and the later patriarchs (Isaac and his sons Jacob and Esau) celebrated Passover long before the prescription of the Mosaic Law. In PRE, these two incidents form two panels in a triptych on the role of Passover in sacred history. The feast is celebrated at the beginning (PRE 21), middle (PRE 32) and end (PRE 48) of the work, the last being the Passover in Egypt. The Targum includes the Passover in Egypt, but its recital of earlier Passovers—the “Poem of the Four Nights,” part of the Palestinian Targum tradition (Exod 12:42)²⁸—does not include any mention of the Passovers celebrated by Cain and Abel or Jacob and Esau. The subject of the Poem is not the celebration of Passover but important events that occurred on the date of Passover—an important distinction. By referring to observance of the holiday by earlier patriarchs, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* is adding to the targumic tradition.

In PRE 21, Adam instructs Cain and Abel to sacrifice to God on the night of Passover, which the Targum instead identifies by its date, 14 Nisan.

PRE 21 (JTS 3847, f. 106a)

The eve of Passover arrived (הגיע לילי יום). Adam called his sons and said to them: (הפסח). Adam called his sons and said to them: “My sons, on this day in the future the children of Israel will offer the Passover sacrifice to their creator. You too shall offer sacrifice before your creator.” Cain brought the remainder of his meal, roasted grain and seeds of flax. Abel brought the firstborn of his flock and the fat of his sheep who had not yet been sheared of their wool. The offering of Cain was abhorred, but the offering of Abel was accepted, as it is written, “And the LORD looked favorably upon Abel and his sacrifice” (Gen 4:4).

TPJ to Gen 4:3–4 (BL Add. 27031, f. 7a)

At the end of the days, on the fourteenth of Nisan (בארבסר בניסן), Cain brought the fruit of the earth, seeds of flax, as a first fruits offering before the LORD. Abel brought the firstborn of his flock and their fatty portions, and it was pleasing before the LORD. He looked favorably upon Abel and his sacrifice.

²⁸ The classic study of this passage is Roger Le Déaut, *La Nuit Pascale: Essai sur la signification de la Pâque juive à partir du Targum d'Exode, XII, 42* (Rome: Biblical Pontifical Institute, 1963).

Another aspect of the sacrifice shows that this parallel is not a coincidence. *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* specifies that Cain's offering consisted of a few paltry "seeds of flax" (זרע פשתן), a stark contrast with Abel's offering of wool. The contrast between the two sacrifices becomes the basis of the law of *sha'atnez*, the prohibition of mixing flax and wool (Lev 19:19; Deut 22:11). The Targum mentions the seeds of flax (מדרע כיתנא) but not the rationale behind this addition to the biblical text.

A similar issue occurs with reference to the twin sisters of Cain and Abel. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* to Gen 4:2 only mentions Cain's twin sister (חיומחיה). The twin sisters appear in earlier rabbinic literature (*Gen. Rab.* 22:2.7), but the story in PRE 21 differs in a significant way: Instead of Cain and Abel fighting over an additional, unclaimed twin, Cain envies Abel's wife and murders him over her. The Targum references one of these stories but does not expand upon the reference.

The other pre-Mosaic Passover occurs against the backdrop of Isaac's blessing of his two sons (Gen 27).²⁹ As in the previous example, PRE 32 refers to Passover directly, while TPJ to Gen 27:1 mentions only the date, 14 Nisan.

The whole chapter is dense with linguistic parallels to PRE. For example, both works feature the same explanation for Isaac's blindness: He beheld God's glory at the hour of his binding.

PRE 32 (JTS 3847, f. 120a)

R. Simeon said: At the hour of the binding of Isaac, he saw the Shekhinah of the Holy One, Blessed be He. It is written, "No one may see me and live" (Exod 33:20), but instead of death, his eyes grew dim in his old age (כרו עיניו בוקנורו), as it is written, "And when Isaac grew old," etc. (Gen 27:1).

TPJ to Gen 27:1 (BL Add. 27031, f. 29a)

When his father bound him [Isaac], he looked at the Throne of Glory, and from then on his eyes began to grow dim (עיינוי למכהי).

Similarly, Isaac, in his instructions to Esau, explains why the night is holy in suspiciously similar language in both works. Not long after, Rebekah repeats the same information to Jacob.

²⁹ Robert Hayward, "The Date of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Some Comments," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 40 (1989): 7–30, made TPJ to Gen 27 the center of his analysis. See, however, the rejoinder of Avigdor Shinan, "Dating Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Some More Comments," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 41 (1990): 57–61.

PRE 32 (JTS 3847, f. 120a and 120b)

[120a] The night of Passover arrived (הגיע לילי) (יום הפסח). Isaac called Esau, his elder son, and said to him, “My son, today is the day of blessings and dew. The ones on high (העליונים) recite the *hallel*. This is the day on which the treasures of dew are opened (אוצרות טללים) (נפתחין).”

[120b] Rebekah said to Jacob her son, “My son, this is the day on which the treasures of the blessings of dew are opened (אוצרות ברכות) (טללים נפתחין).”

Rebekah’s statement in JTS 3847 is truncated. Most other manuscripts of PRE will add that the “ones on high” (עליונים) also sing a song on this night, making her remarks parallel to Isaac’s and reflecting the tradition in the Targum. All the other manuscripts missing the second half of Rebekah’s statement are Yemenite—yet another difference between Yemenite and European manuscripts of PRE.

Both works add Jacob’s scruples about deceiving his father as well as Rebekah’s reassurance that blessings will accrue to him and his descendants.

PRE 32 (JTS 3847, f. 120a–120b)

Jacob, who was skilled in Torah, feared in his heart the curses of his father, as it is written, “Perhaps my father will feel me” (Gen 27:12). His mother said to him, “My son, if they are blessings, they shall be on you and your descendants. If they are curses, they shall be on me.” As it is written, “His mother said to him, ‘Let your curse fall upon me, my son,’” (Gen 27:13).

Finally, of the two goats that Jacob offers his father, one is designated the Passover sacrifice.

PRE 32 (JTS 3847, f. 120b)

He went and brought two goats. Were the two goats the food of Isaac? No, he sacrificed one as the Passover offering, while with the other he made a meal and brought it to his father (אלא אחד הקריבו קרבן פסחים ואחד עשה מטעמים (והביאו לאביו).

TPJ to Gen 27:1.6 (BL Add. 27031, f. 29a)

[Gen 27:1] He [Isaac] called Esau, his elder son, on the fourteenth of Nisan (בארביסר בניסן). He said to him, “My son, behold, this night the ones on high (עילאי) praise the Lord of the World, and the treasures of dew are opened (ואוצרי טלין מתפתחין ביה).”

[Gen 27:6] Rebekah said to Jacob, her son, “Behold, this night the ones on high (עילאי) praise the Lord of the World, and the treasures of dew are opened (ואוצרי טלין מתפתחין ביה).

TPJ to Gen 27:11.13 (BL Add. 27031, f. 29a–29b)

[Gen 27:11] And because Jacob feared sin, he feared that his father might curse him. . .

[Gen 27:13] His mother said to him, “If he blesses you, may the blessings be on you and your children, but if he curses you, may the curses be on me and my soul.”

TPJ to Gen 27:9 (BL Add. 27031, f. 29a)

[Rebekah said:] “Go now to the sheep barn and bring me from there two fattened goats, one for the Passover sacrifice and the other for the festival offering (חד לשום פיסחא וחד לשום חגא (קרבן חגא), and I will make them cooked food for your father, as he likes.”

The tradition here is formulated slightly differently in the two works. The Targum places it in the mouth of Rebekah, while PRE describes what Jacob did after speaking with Rebekah. In both cases, the two goats are set aside for different purposes, one of which is for the Passover offering, both using the formulation “The one. . . the other. . .” The idea that one of the goats was a Passover offering—or that the background of this story is Passover—is only found in these two works.

As with Mount Moriah and the story of the first altar, the celebration of Passover is one of the *leitmotifs* in PRE. The work’s climax is not only the Egyptian Passover but the story of Esther that immediately follows, which, as Mordechai points out in PRE’s retelling, takes place over Passover (PRE 50). It is a structural element, tying together not only all sacred history but also decisive moments of rivalries between two relatives: Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, and (on a national scale) Amalek and Israel. This is not present in TPJ where, again, Passover does not serve a specifically literary function.

4.2 Identical Phraseology and Vocabulary

Many of the parallels between PRE and TPJ are phrased in the same way, often using the same vocabulary, meaning that one is probably dependent on the other rather than both having recourse to a common source. Given that the Targumist evidently knew Hebrew, but the author PRE only debatably knew Aramaic, this evidence tends to favor the Targum’s use of PRE.³⁰

The calendrical chapters of PRE (PRE 6–8) deal with several topics on the celestial bodies and timekeeping, all of which are subordinate to the description of the fourth day of creation. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* inserts into the biblical account of the fourth day increasingly technical vocabulary, all of which are found in PRE.

³⁰ See the end of the previous chapter and Steven Daniel Sacks, *Midrash and Multiplicity: Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer and the Renewal of Rabbinic Interpretive Culture* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 87: “Any indication that Aramaic is the natural language of PRE cannot be maintained, since the incoherence of this example [that Solomon’s name is derived from the Aramaic, rather than the Hebrew, word for “peace”] introduces the possibility that use, or even understanding, of Aramaic cannot be central to the identity of the work.” I do not agree with this assessment. Nevertheless, the issue is debatable.

PRE 8 (JTS 3847, f. 88a)

The sun and the moon were created on the twenty-eighth of Elul. The number of years, months, days, nights, hours, seasons (קצים), cycles (מחזורים), and intercalations (עבורות) were first before the Holy One, Blessed be He.

TPJ to Gen 1:14 (BL Add. 27031, f. 4a)

God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven, to divide between the day and between the night, and let there be signs and appointed times, and to count through them the calculation of days, and to sanctify the new moons and new years, the intercalations of months (עיבורי ירחין) and the intercalations of years (עיבורי שנין), the seasons of the sun (מולד סיהרא), the new moon (מולד שמשא), and the cycles (מחזורין).

If the verbal parallels here do not seem impressive, that is because the base manuscript (JTS 3847) is Yemenite. The European manuscripts (family א) and the *editio princeps* insert the redundant תקופות (“seasons”) after קצים (which also means “seasons”). These manuscripts also use the plural form עיבורים rather than the Yemenite manuscript’s עבורות. The term for “new moon” (מולד), though not used in the cited portion of PRE 8, is used throughout the preceding chapter (PRE 7). In other words, it appears the Targumist drew this vocabulary from a European manuscript of PRE.

An early chapter of PRE describes the intercalation of the year as part of the extended description of the fourth day of creation. The secret of intercalation is given by God to Adam. It passes from Adam to Enoch and then from Enoch to Noah. The proof-text indicating that Noah received the secret is Gen 8:22, where God ordains the four seasons following the Flood. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* explicitly names the “seasons” (more precisely, the months in which each season begins), while *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* does the same in an expansion of the same verse from Genesis.

PRE 8 (JTS 3847, f. 88a)

Enoch transmitted it to Noah, and he was initiated into the secret of intercalation. He intercalated the year, as it is written, “During all the days of the earth—sowing and harvest and cold and heat” (Gen 8:22). “Sowing” refers to the season of Tishri; “harvest” to the season of Nisan; “cold” to the season of Tevet; “heat” to the season of Tammuz (זרע זו תקופת תשרי) וקציר זו תקופת ניסן וקור זו תקופת טבת וחום זו (תקופת תמוז).

TPJ to Gen 8:22 (BL Add. 27031, f. 11a)

For all the days of the earth, sowing in the season of Tishri, harvest in the season of Nisan, cold in the season of Tevet, and heat in the season of Tammuz (דרועא בתקופת תשרי) וחצא בתקופת ניסן וקורא בתקופת טבת וחומא (בתקופת תמוז), summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.

The similarity here might seem banal, especially in comparison with earlier rabbinic sources that present similar divisions of the year, such as *Gen. Rab.* 34:11 or *b. Bava Metzia* 106b, both citing a tradition of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel. What sets apart PRE and TPJ is that they do not present the months in their chronological

order. Taking Tishri as the first month, the two works name in order Tishri (the first month), Nisan (the seventh month), Tevet (the fourth month), and Tammuz (the tenth month). The two works are also bound by the key word “season” (תקופה), missing in the tradition of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel.

Another seemingly banal tradition is the systematic labeling of every type of animal which God created as consisting of both pure and impure types. In both works, this appears in the description of the fifth day of the Hexameron.

PRE 9 (JTS 3847, f. 89b)

On the fifth day, he spawned from the waters every kind of winged bird, male and female, clean and unclean (טהורים וטמאים) . . .

On the fifth day, he spawned from the waters every kind of fish, great and small, male and female, clean and unclean (טהורים וטמאים) . . .

On the fifth day, he spawned from the water every kind of grasshopper, male and female, clean and unclean (טהורים וטמאים).

The same occurs on the sixth day.

PRE 11 (JTS 3847, f. 92a–92b)

On the sixth day, he brought forth from the earth every kind of beast, male and female, great and small, clean [and unclean] טהורים (ונוטמאים) . . .³¹

On the sixth day, he brought forth from the earth seven animals, all of which are clean (כולן טהורות) [...] but the rest of all the animals of the field are unclean (ושאר כל חיות) (שבשדה שהן טמאות)

On the sixth day he brought forth from the earth every kind of swarming and creeping thing, all of which are unclean (כולן [טמאים]).³²

TPJ to Gen 1:21 (BL Add. 27031, f. 4b)

[God created] every animal that crawls, which the clear waters spawned, according to their kinds, clean kinds and unclean kinds (וני דכייין (זוני דלא דכייין).

And [God created] every bird that flies with wings according to its kind, clean kinds and unclean kinds (וני דכייין (זוני דלא דכייין).

TPJ to Gen 1:24–25 (BL Add. 27031, f. 4b)

[Gen 1:24] God said, “Let the red clay of the earth bring forth living creatures, each according to its kind, clean kinds and unclean kinds (וני דכייין (זוני דלא דכייין).”

[Gen 1:25] God made beasts of the earth, each according to its kind, clean kinds and unclean kinds (וני דכייין (זוני דלא דכייין), and he made cattle according to its kind.

And [he made] every creeping thing of the earth according to its kind, clean kinds and unclean kinds (וני דכייין (זוני דלא דכייין).

³¹ The missing word is supplied from the other manuscripts, all of which have “clean and unclean” (or, occasionally, “unclean and clean”).

³² Once again, a missing word must be supplied from the other manuscripts.

The two accounts are largely parallel, with one major discrepancy. *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* lists six kinds of animals, while TPJ lists only five. The grasshopper, created on the fifth day in PRE, consists of both clean and unclean varieties. In the Targum, it seems to have been subsumed under the category of “creeping things,” which is otherwise an entirely unclean group. The only other major difference is that PRE places birds before sea creatures, while TPJ does the opposite.

The idea that God created both clean and unclean animals seems so basic that any exegete could have devised it, yet this did not happen. The division of the animals into clean and unclean types is not part of the description of the Hexameron in any earlier targumic or rabbinic source. It is, however, found in a *piyyut* of Yose b. Yose and noted by the editor, Aharon Mirsky. That Mirsky finds the parallel notable indicates its scarcity.³³

Some parallels are common traditions that are phrased in a particular way in the two works. It was believed, for example, that the serpent in the Garden of Eden initially had limbs because it was condemned to crawl on its belly (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 20:5; cf. *Gen* 3:14). *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* include this tradition but add two others.

PRE 14 (JTS 3847, f. 98a)

He [God] cut off the legs of the serpent (קצץ (שלנחש)). . .

And he ordered that it would shed its skin with great suffering and regenerate it once every seven years (ופקד עליו שיהא פושט את עורו בעיצבון גדול ושיהא מוליד אחת לשבע שנים). . .

And the bitterness of vipers and death is in his mouth (ומרורת פתנים ומות בפיו).

TPJ to Gen 3:14 (BL Add. 27031, f. 6a)

[God said] “Your feet shall be cut off (ורגלך יתקצצון).

“And you shall cast off your skin once every seven years (ומשכך תהי משלח חדא לשב שנין).

“And the poison of death shall be in your mouth (ואיריסא דמותא בפמך).”

The very skin of the serpent is later used for the “garments of glory” that God bestows upon Adam and Eve as they leave Eden. The garment is common (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 20:12), but the material is unusual.

33 Yose ben Yose, *Poems*, ed. Aharon Mirsky, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1991), 38–39 [Hebrew].

PRE 20 (JTS 3847, f. 105a)

R. Eliezer said: The Holy One, Blessed be He, took from the skin which the serpent had shed (מן העור שפשט הנחש) and made garments of glory (כתנת כבוד) for Adam and his spouse, as it is written, “The LORD God make coats of skin for Adam and his wife, and he clothed them” (Gen 3:21).

TPJ to Gen. 3:21 (BL Add. 27031, f. 6b)

The LORD God made for Adam and his wife garments of glory (לבושין דיקר) from the skin of the serpent that he had shed (מן משך חוויא) (דאשלה מיניה).

In both examples the use of parallel constructions and parallel vocabulary should be evident.

In another instance where God punishes an evildoer, he inscribes a letter on Cain’s body.

PRE 21 (JTS 3847, f. 106b)

Again, Cain said before the Holy One, Blessed be He, “Lord of the Worlds! Now a righteous one will arise and invoke against me your Great Name (שמך גדול) and kill me.” What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, do? He took a letter, one of the twenty-two letters in the Torah, and he wrote on his arm (לוי על) (וכתב לו על) (זרועו) that he should not be killed, as it is written, “The LORD placed a mark on Cain” (Gen 4:15).

TPJ to Gen 4:15 (BL Add. 27031, f. 7b)

The LORD inscribed upon the face of Cain a letter from his Great and Glorious Name (ורשם) (יין על אפי דקין אתא מן שמא רבא ויקירא) so that anyone who found him, upon looking on it, would not kill him.

Although there are substantial differences between the two passages, both accounts agree that the sign of Cain was a letter. By contrast, *Gen. Rab.* 22:12 offers several explanations of the sign—sunshine, leprosy, a dog, a horn, an example to others, suspended judgment until the Flood—but not a letter. The reference to the “Great Name” in the Targum might be inspired by Cain’s evocation of the powers of the Name in his complaint to God in PRE.

One of the more remarkable aspects of PRE is its knowledge of the story of the fallen angels akin to the one found in Enochic literature. The Targum also knows this story, and the two recount the fall of the angels in similar language. In the first place, both derive the term “Nephilim” (נפילים) from the angels who fell (נפלוי)

PRE 22 (JTS 3847, f. 107a)

The angels who fell from their holy place in heaven (המלאכים שנפלו ממקום קדושתן מן) (השמים) saw. They saw the daughters of the earth.

TPJ to Gen 6:4 (BL Add. 27031, f. 9a)

Shemhazai and Azazel fell from heaven (נפלן) (מן שמיא). They were in the land in those days.

While this etymology seems self-evident, it is in fact unusual. In ancient sources, “Nephilim” invariably refers to the giant offspring of the angels, not the angels themselves, who are called Watchers. The major difference between the passages is also an instructive one. Shemhazai and Azael, the leaders of the Watchers in ancient literature, are never named in PRE, though they are found elsewhere in Hebrew literature (*Midrash Shemhazai*, for example).³⁴ This issue will come up again in the discussion of PRE’s relationship to *Jubilees* (chapter seven).

Another parallel involves the behavior of the human women who become entangled with these “Sons of God.”

PRE 22 (JTS 3847, f. 107a)

They saw the daughters of the generation of Cain, who were walking around naked and painting their eyes like prostitutes (הן מהלכות עיניהן כזונות גלויות בשר ערוה והיו מכחלות עיניהן כזונות). They strayed after them and took them as wives, as it is written, “The sons of God saw the daughters of the land” (Gen 6:2).

TPJ to Gen 6:2 (BL Add. 27031, f. 8b)

The sons of the nobles saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful and put kohl on their eyes and rouge on their face, and they walked about naked and thought of fornication (ויבחרין] ופקסן ומהלכן בגילוי בישרא) (והרהירו לזינו).³⁵

The Targum is expanding upon a euhemeristic reading of Gen 6:1–4, found in all the Targumim as well as *Gen. Rab.* 26:5, where the “Sons of God” are human nobles. In *Genesis Rabbah*, these lords exercise a *droit du seigneur* over the wives of their subjects, who are innocent of any overt wrongdoing. This is not the case in TPJ. The Targum has added a whole clause with a close verbal resemblance to PRE explaining that the women’s lovers—whether men or angels—were drawn by their lascivious behavior.

A quite ancient tradition, preserved in the Septuagint but not the Masoretic Text, states that God divided the nations of the world among the other divine beings (Deut 32:8–9).³⁶ Both PRE and TPJ tie this tradition to the division of the nations at the Tower of Babel, a logical but not inevitable association. It appears in a few other

³⁴ On which, see Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 233–277.

³⁵ The correction in brackets is supplied by the printed edition: Brian Walton, ed., “Triplex Targum, Sive Versio Pentateuchi; 1, Chaldaica Jonathani Ben-Uziel Ascripta; 2, Chaldaica Hierosolymitani; 3, Persica Jacobi Tawusi, Cum Versionibus Singularum Latinis,” in *Biblia Sacra Polyglotta*, vol. 4 (London: Thomas Roycroft, 1657), 11.

³⁶ Menahem Kister, “Ancient Material in *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer*: 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 (71–78).

sources, such as the Hebrew *Testament of Naphtali*, of uncertain date,³⁷ but PRE and TPJ share additional verbal parallels. The whole story is found in PRE 24, but the Targum divides the material between Gen 11:7–8 and Deut 32:8–9 (with a further allusion in its translation of Deut 4:34). The story logic requires that one begin with the verses from Deuteronomy, quoted in PRE as prooftexts. First, God and his angels cast lots among the nations.³⁸

PRE 24 (JTS 3847, f. 109b)

R. Simeon said: The Holy One, Blessed Be He, said to the seventy angels (לשבעים מלאכים) who surround His Throne of Glory: “Come, let us go and confuse their language into seventy languages and seventy nations. . .”

They cast lots among themselves (והפילו) (גורלות עליהן)—each one in his script and in his language (איש בכתבו ובלשונו). From where do we find that they cast lots among themselves? It is written, “When the Most High bestowed upon the nations an inheritance” (Deut 32:8). . .

And the lot of the Holy One, Blessed be He, fell on Abraham and his descendants (ונפל גורלו) (בזרעו).³⁸ As it is written, “For the portion of the LORD is his people,” etc. (Deut 32:9).

TPJ to Deut 32:8–9 (BL Add. 27031, f. 226a–226b)

[Deut 32:8] When the Most High apportioned the world as an inheritance to the nations who were descended from the children of Noah, when he apportioned the scripts and languages to humanity (מכתבין ולישנין לבני-נשא) in the generation of the division, at that time he cast lots with the seventy angels (עם) (שובעין מלאכיא), princes of the nations. . .

[32:9] When the holy nation fell to the lot of the Lord of the World (עמא קדישא) (בפיצתיה דמרי עלמא), Michael opened his mouth and said, “For the good portion of the Name of the Memra of the LORD is his people.”

Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer then describes the chaos that ensues from their actions. The Targum attaches these events to Gen 11:8, which, again, is the prooftext adduced by PRE.

PRE 24 (JTS 3847, ff. 109b–110a)

The Holy One, Blessed be He, and seventy angels (שבעים מלאכים) descended, and he confused their language into seventy nations and seventy languages (ולבל את לשונם) (לשבעים גוים ולשבעים לשונות). . .

TPJ to Gen 11:8 (BL Add. 27031, ff. 12b–13a)

The Word of the LORD appeared above the city, and with him seventy angels (שובעין מלאכיא), each corresponding to the seventy nations and each one having the language of his people and script of his writing in his hand (וכל חד)

37 Moses Gaster, “The Hebrew Text of One of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” in *Studies and Texts in Folklore, Magic, Mediaeval Romance, Hebrew Apocrypha, and Samaritan Archaeology*, 3 vols. (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1971), 1:69–85 (84) 3: 22–30 (26). Volume 1 is the introduction and translation; volume 3 has the Hebrew text. See also Kister, “Ancient Material in *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eli’ezer*,” 76, referring to a piyyut of Qallir.

38 The manuscript reads “his spouse.” All other manuscripts read “his descendants.”

And they were wanting to speak, each man with his neighbor, but no one recognized the language of his neighbor. והיו רוצים לדבר. (איש אל רעהו ולא היו מכירין איש לשון רעהו). What did they do? Each man took his sword and they fought with each other to the death (לקחו איש חרבו ונלחמו אלו עם אלו למשחית). Half the world fell there by the sword. From there, the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth. As it is written, “The LORD scattered them from there” (Gen 11:8).

(וחד לישן עממיה ורושם כתביה בידיה, and he scattered them from there over the face of the earth into seventy languages (לשיבעין לישנן). No one knew what his neighbor was saying, and they began killing one another (ולא הוה ידע חד מה דיימר חבריה והו קטלין דין לדין), and so they stopped building the city.

The Targum appears to have broken up the tradition in PRE and assigned the different portions of the tradition to the appropriate prooftexts. There is also a clue that the Targum has depended on a specific PRE manuscript family. The targumic phrase “each one having the language of his people and script of his writing in his hand” (וכל חד וחד לישן עממיה ורושם כתביה בידיה) has no parallel in the Yemenite or European manuscripts of PRE, but the *editio princeps* (Constantinople, 1514, f. 16b) has the equivalent Hebrew phrase, “each one a nation according to its script and its language” (כל אחד ואחד גוי ככתבו ולשונו). The same phrase appears in the only other witness of the δ family (St. Petersburg, EVR I 249) as well as the liminal manuscript ψ (Moscow, Ginzberg 1455), a separate textual tradition related to both families α and δ . The Targumist therefore adapted his text from an ancestor of PRE’s printed edition.

The best-known parallel between PRE and TPJ is probably the account of Ishmael’s two wives, an expansion of Gen 21:21 (discussed below), but the same chapter of the Targum also features a few additional linguistic parallels with PRE. In PRE 30, as in the Targum, Abraham formally divorces Hagar, giving her a *get* (גט).

PRE 30 (JTS 3847, f. 117a)

Abraham arose in the morning, and he wrote a bill of divorce and gave it to the maidservant and her son as it is written, “Abraham arose early in the morning and took bread and a water skin” (Gen 21:14). And he sent her away with a bill of divorce (בגט גירושין).

TPJ to Gen 21:14 (BL Add. 27031, f. 22a)

Abraham arose in the morning and took bread and a skin of water. He placed them on Hagar’s shoulders [. . .] And he dismissed her with a bill of divorce (בגט).

In both works this tradition is linked with another one stating that Abraham attached some kind of shawl (רדיד) to indicate Hagar’s lowly status.

PRE 30 (JTS 3847, f. 117a)

He took a shawl and attached it to her waist, so that it would drag behind her to indicate that she was a slave (לקח רדיד אחד וקשר לה) (במתנה שיהא שוחק אחריה לידע שהיא שפחה).

TPJ to Gen 21:14 (BL Add. 27031, f. 22a)

He attached it to the waist to indicate that she was a slave (וקשר לה במותנהא לאודועי) (דאמתא היא) as well as the boy.

In PRE, the veil has the additional task of indicating which way they departed, so that Abraham could track down Ishmael later. In the Targum, it is unclear exactly what Abraham attaches to her waist. Its additional function is not mentioned.

Finally, both works explain that Hagar's "wandering" in the desert was in actuality a reversion to her life of idolatry in Egypt.

PRE 30 (JTS 3847, f. 117a)

When she reached the entrance of the desert, she began to go astray after the idolatry (עבודתה) of her father, as it is written, "She went and wandered in the desert of Beer Sheba" (Gen 21:14).

TPJ to Gen 21:15 (BL Add. 27031, f. 22a)

When they had reached the entrance of the desert, they reverted to idolatry (פולחנא) (נוכרא). Ishmael was struck with a burning fever and drank all the water until he finished the entire water-skin.

Most manuscripts of PRE (across all families) add something to the effect that once Hagar turned to idolatry, "the water immediately failed" (מיד חסרו המים). This appears to be an omission in JTS 3847 since Ishmael begins to die of thirst immediately after the reader is informed that the water did not fail because of Abraham's merits (ובזכות) (אברהם לא חסרו המים). Other manuscripts explain that Abraham's merits protected Ishmael and Hagar until they turned to idolatry, whereupon the water immediately vanished. In any case, the Targum elaborates on this point, explaining exactly how the water failed: Ishmael drank it all to relieve a fever sent as punishment for idolatry.

Two passages from TPJ's rendition of Genesis 26 contain specific details about Isaac found in two separate places in PRE. First, both works understand Gen 26:12 to mean that Isaac did not sow seed but rather charity.

PRE 33 (JTS 3847, f. 120b)

"And Isaac sowed in that land" (Gen 26:12). R. Eliezer said: Did he sow wheat? Heaven forbid! He took a tenth of everything he had, and he sowed charity to the poor and the needy (זרעו) (צדקה לעניים ולאביונים).

TPJ to Gen 26:12 (Bl Add. 27031, f. 28a)

Isaac sowed charity (זרעו יצחק לצדקתא).

This simple statement is of interest because it only appears in PRE and the Targum.

Second, when Isaac makes a pact with the Philistines, he gives them part of his bridle as a sign of the covenant.

PRE 36 (JTS 3847, f. 127b)

What did Isaac do? He cut off a cubit from the bridle of the donkey he was riding and gave it to them so that a sign of the promised covenant would be in their possession (כרת אמה אחת) ממתג החמור שהיה רוכב עליו ונתן להן שיהא (בידן אות ברית שבועה).

TPJ to Gen 26:31 (BL Add. 27031, f. 28b)

He cut the bridle of his donkey and gave a piece to them as a testimony (ופסג מתגא ופסג ויהב פסגא חדא להום לשהדו).

As Eliezer Treitl has noted, this tradition also appears in a *piyyut* of R. Pinhas ha-Cohen, a contemporary of the author of PRE.³⁹ This does not negate the possibility that the Targum may have taken this tradition from PRE rather than the *paytan*, especially in light of the number of parallels between PRE and TPJ that are not found in *piyyut*. Furthermore, the tradition in PRE 36 is part of a longer section where each of the patriarchs makes a covenant with the “people of the land” that is later annulled during the conquests of king David. The Targum and *piyyut* only retain part of this tradition, demonstrating their dependence on the fuller tradition.

The story of Jacob and Laban, the subject of PRE 36, is filled with peculiar details that are found only in the two works. The first of these is that God sent a plague to afflict Laban’s sheep.

PRE 36 (JTS 3847, f. 126a)

[God] sent a plague among the sheep of Laban, and only a few remained from the many (שלח) (מגפה בצאן לבן ונשארו מעט מהרבה). How do we know that Rachel was a shepherd? It is written, “And Rachel came with the sheep” (Gen 29:9).

TPJ to Gen 29:9 (BL Add. 27031, f. 32a)

For there had been a plague of the LORD on the sheep of Laban, and there did not remain but a few among them (ארום הוה מחתא דיי) (בענא דלבן אשתיירו מינהון אלהין קלילין). He dismissed his shepherds and entrusted what remained to Rachel his daughter.

A second strange detail appears when Laban pursues Jacob after the patriarch has absconded with his daughters, and an angel threatens Laban in a dream with a drawn sword.

³⁹ Eliezer Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer: Text, Redaction and a Sample Synopsis* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, 2012), 261 [Hebrew]. See also Pinhas ha-Cohen, *The Liturgical Poems of Rabbi Pinhas ha-Cohen: Critical Edition, Introduction and Commentaries*, ed. Shulamit Elizur (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2004), 201, n. 29 [Hebrew].

PRE 36 (JTS 3847, ff. 126b–127a)

That very night, Michael came and unsheathed his sword against him in order to kill him באותה הלילה בא מיכאל ושלף את חרבו עליו (להרגו), and he said to him, “You shall not say anything evil to Jacob,” as it is written, “And God came to Laban the Aramaean” (Gen 31:24).

TPJ to Gen 31:24 (BL Add. 27031, f. 35b)

An angel came by the Word of the LORD and unsheathed his sword against Laban the cheat in a dream of the night במימרה מלאכא בא בשלף את חרבו על לבן רמאה בחילמא (דליילא).

The most extensive block of parallel text is a long description of Laban’s idols, the Teraphim.

PRE 36 (JTS 3847, f. 127a)

What are the Teraphim? They would slaughter a firstborn man and remove his head. Then they would preserve it in salt and burn incense before it and perfume it. They would write the name of an impure spirit on a golden plate and place it under his tongue. They would put it in a wall and light lamps before it, bowing down to it and speaking to it (היו שוחטין אדם בכור) ומולקין את ראשו ומולחין אותו במלח ומקטירין לפניו ומבשמים לפניו וכותבין על ציץ זהב שם רוח טמאה ומניחין תחת לשונו ונותנין אותו בקיר (ומדליקין לפניו ומשתחוין לו ומדברים עמו).

TPJ to Gen 31:19 (BL Add. 27031, f. 35a)

Laban went out to shear the sheep, and Rachel stole the idols. For they would slaughter a firstborn man and cut off his head. They would then preserve it in salt and perfume it and write incantations on a golden plate, which they would place under his tongue. They would put it in a wall and speak with it (דהוון נכסין גברא בוכרא וחזמין רישיה ומלחין) ליה במילחא ובוסמנן וכתבין קוסמין בציצא דדהבא ויהבין תחות לישניה ומקימין ליה בכותלא (וממלל עמהון).

The Targum is practically a translation of PRE. Hayward comments that TPJ has details missing in PRE, specifically the divinations placed beneath the tongue and the salted head of the first-born.⁴⁰ These details are present in the manuscript cited as well as most of the other manuscripts containing the passage (the tongue, however, is sometimes missing). It is even in the *editio princeps*, so it is hard to understand Hayward’s claim that the passage was censored. Hayward correctly claims that the same passage is found in other midrashim (*Midrash Tanhuma*, *Vayetzei* 12, *Yalqut Shim’oni*, Genesis §130 and Zechariah §578, *Sefer ha-Yashar*), but they are also dependent on PRE.

The last shared detail for the stories of Jacob is the curse the patriarch inadvertently places upon Rachel when he swears that anyone who stole Laban’s idols would die.

PRE 36 (JTS 3847, f. 127a)

[Jacob said:] “Anyone who has stolen your Teraphim shall die before his time” כל מי (שגנב את התרפים שלך ימות בלא עתו).

TPJ to Gen 31:32 (BL Add. 27031, f. 35b)

[Jacob said:] “Anyone with whom you find your idols will die before his time” (עם כל מאן (דחשכח ית צילמי טעותך ימות בלא זימניה).

⁴⁰ Hayward, “Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan,” 243.

The cumulative weight of these traditions—both the specificity of the details and the frequent occurrences of shared vocabulary—suggests that the two accounts are closely linked, and one depends on the other.

The story of Joseph opens with his brothers casting him into a well and finally selling him into slavery. Both PRE and TPJ state that Reuben was not party to this plot and had in fact intended to intervene to save Joseph.

PRE 38 (JTS 3847, f. 130a)

What did Reuben do? He left and dwelt in one of the mountains until nightfall to bring him up (הלך וישב לו באחד ההרים לילה לעלות אותו).

TPJ to Gen 37:29 (BL Add. 27031, f. 42b)

Reuben returned to the pit because he was not with them for the meal when they sold him because he was fasting on account of confusing the bed of his father. He went and dwelt in the mountains in order to return to the pit and restore him to his father (ואזל ויחב וביני טווריא למהדור לגובא לאסקותיה לאבוי).

In PRE, Reuben's absence is the prelude to a tradition that the brothers who sold Joseph wanted to form a pact of silence but lacked a quorum since they were only nine. They then include God within their quorum, which is why God did not reveal Joseph's survival to Jacob. The Targum, which lacks this tradition, explains Reuben's behavior differently: He was doing penance for an earlier transgression (Gen 35:22). In any case, the linguistic parallels are clear, including the double verb of movement, the reference to the mountains, and a verb for lifting or raising up.

Moving on to Exodus, both works state that the devil inhabited the Golden Calf in brief parallel statements that are almost perfect calques.

PRE 45 (JTS 3847, f. 140b)

Sammael entered into its heart (סמאל נכנס), and it was lowing to lead astray Israel. (בתוך לבו)

TPJ to Exod 32:24 (BL Add. 27031, f. 94b)

Satan entered into it (ועאל סטנא בגויה), and the form of this calf came out from it.

The main difference is the name of the devil. "Sammael" is the preferred name for the devil in PRE. The Hebrew work never calls the adversary "Satan," while the Targum only uses "Sammael" twice (Gen 3:6, 4:1), both times in passages parallel to PRE. "Satan" is the preferred name in the Targum. While the Targum does not mention that the calf lowed, it does imply that Satan caused the calf to move about and dance to instigate idolatrous worship (TPJ to Exod 32:19).

Another example of a linguistic parallel is the introduction of Pharaoh's daughter, whose discovery of Moses is prompted by skin lesions that induce her to bathe in the Nile. Her affliction clears up when she touches the infant Moses.

PRE 48 (JTS 3847, f. 145a)

Bityah, the daughter of Pharaoh, was suffering from skin disease (מנוגעת בנגעים קשים) and was not able to wash in warm water. She went down to wash in the Nile (וירדה לרחוץ ביאר) and saw the child crying. She stretched forth her hand and took hold of him, whereupon she was healed (ושלחה ידה והחזיקה בו ונתרפית).

TPJ to Exod 2:5 (BL Add. 27031, ff. 59b–60a)

The Word of the LORD unleashed boils and blisters of the flesh (דשחינא וטריב) in the land of Egypt. Bityah, the daughter of Pharaoh, went down to cool off in the river (ונחתת ביתיה ברתיה דפרעה) (לאיתקרא על נהרא). Her servants went to the bank of the river, where she saw the basket among the reeds. She stretched forth [her hand] a cubit and took it, whereupon she was cured from the boils and blisters (ואושיטת ית) גרמיא ונסיבתא מן יד איתסיית מן שיחנא ומן (טריבא).

The miraculous cure of Bityah is missing from the stories of Moses in the Talmud (*b. Sotah* 12b).

Finally, both PRE and TPJ attribute Korah's great wealth to the fortuitous discovery of Joseph's wealth.

PRE 50 (JTS 3847, f. 148a)

R. Phinehas said: Two wealthy men arose in the world, one from Israel and one from the nations of the world. Korah is the one from Israel, who found the treasures of gold and silver of Joseph (שמצא אוצרות שלזהב ושלכסף) (שליוסף). Haman is the one from among the nations of the world, who took all the treasures of the kings of Judah and all the treasures of the Temple.

TPJ to Num 16:19 (BL Add. 27031, f. 160a)

Korah assembled against them the entire congregation at the entrance of the tent of meeting. He carried himself high because of his wealth, for he had found two treasures of the treasures of Joseph, full of silver and gold (דאשכח תרין אוצרין מן אוצרי דיוסף מליין כסף) (ודהב). With that wealth, he sought to drive Moses and Aaron out from the world, except the Glory of the LORD was revealed to the whole congregation.

Korah's wealth was proverbial and already appears in the Talmud (*b. Pesahim* 119a; *b. Sanhedrin* 110a). The tradition, as it is formulated in both passages, reads: "R. Hama b. R. Hanina said: Joseph buried three treasures in Egypt (ג' מטמוניות) (המטין יוסף במצרים). One was revealed to Korah, one was revealed to Antoninus b. Severus, and one is reserved for the righteous in the future to come."⁴¹ While the tradition is well-known, PRE and TPJ phrase it in a manner that is wholly distinct from the talmudic tradition. Of further note is the reference to both gold and silver treasures, which is found in only a few PRE manuscripts (9ת, 6ת, 1ת, 1א).

⁴¹ Translated from the Vilna Shas: *Talmud Bavli*, 37 vols. (Vilna: Widow and Brothers Romm, 1880–1886).

Esther Rabbah 7:4 gives the tradition in full (including the reference to Haman), but, according to Arnon Atzmon, this part of the midrash (*Esther Rabbah II*) postdates PRE and is dependent on it.⁴²

4.3 The Same Material for the Same General Purpose

In most cases, PRE provides prooftexts to justify its extrabiblical traditions. These prooftexts are frequently (but not universally) the very verses where one will find the parallel tradition in TPJ. Often the choice of prooftext is unremarkable, but sometimes PRE and TPJ attach a tradition to the same biblical verse in defiance of an established precedent. The three examples here all resemble some earlier tradition, but PRE and TPJ have jointly attached the tradition to a different prooftext.

First, in his article “Ancient Material in *Pirke de-Rabbi Eli’ezer*,” Menahem Kister proposed a link between the curse of the earth in PRE 14 and the curse of Cain in *Jub.* 4:5–6, which adds the proviso: “And let the man who has seen but has not told be cursed like him” (*Jub.* 4:6).⁴³ If this decree, inscribed in the heavenly tablets, is derived from the specific case of Cain, then the silent witness is the earth, which received the blood of Abel (Gen 4:11). Kister considers this passage a “covert exegesis” of Lev 5:1. It is “covert” because the verse is not cited in either *Jubilees* or PRE. There, is however, a significant difference between the two accounts: In PRE, the curse of the earth is not tied to Cain and Abel but to Adam and Eve. The Targum agrees with PRE.

PRE 14 (JTS 3847, f. 98a)

If Adam sinned, what was the sin of earth that it should be cursed? Because it did not recount the deed, therefore it was cursed. When the children of Adam commit grave offenses, he [God] will send a plague among the children of Adam. And when the children of Adam commit light transgressions, he strikes the produce of the earth on account of Adam, as it is written, “Cursed be the ground because of you” (Gen 3:17).

TPJ to Gen 3:17 (BL Add. 27031, f. 6b)

[God] said to Adam, “Because you accepted the word of your wife and ate from the fruit of the tree that I commanded you, saying, ‘Do not eat from it,’ cursed be the earth because it did not tell you your sin.”

What makes this parallel interesting is its discontinuity with an earlier Jewish tradition. It is further distinguished by its total absence from other rabbinic and targumic works.

⁴² Arnon Atzmon, “*Ma’aseh Esther* in *Pirke deRabbi Eliezer* and in *Esther Rabbah II*: Towards Establishing Parallels in Midrashic Literature,” *Tarbiz* 75 (2006): 329–43 [Hebrew]. See, however, the opposing opinion of Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 230.

⁴³ Kister, “Ancient Material in *Pirke de-Rabbi Eli’ezer*,” 82–83.

Second, both rabbinic (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 63:13) and targumic (e.g., *Targum Neofiti* to Gen 48:22) sources state that, at different points in time, Nimrod and Esau each possessed a special garment belonging to Adam (i.e., the one from Gen 3:21) which gave them prowess in the hunt. According to *Neofiti*, Abraham took the garment from Nimrod, and it was passed down to Esau via Isaac; *Genesis Rabbah* adds that Nimrod sought to kill Esau and reclaim the garment, but it does not give the end of the story. According to PRE, Esau obtains Adam's garment directly by killing Nimrod and stealing it, meaning that, in this version of the story, Abraham never possessed the garment, and Nimrod did not live long enough to seek his revenge.

PRE 32 (JTS 3847, f. 120a)

R. Tanhum said: "The boys grew up" (Gen 25:27), this one on the path of life, the other one on the path of death. Jacob was on the path of life. He was sitting in tents and busying himself with Torah all his days. Esau was on the path of death. He killed Nimrod and his son Hur and even sought to kill Jacob, as it is written, "I will kill Jacob my brother" (Gen 27:41).

TPJ to Gen 25:27 (BL Add. 27031, f. 27b)

The boys grew, and Esau became a powerful hunter, hunting birds and beasts, a man who went out into the field and killed the living, just as he killed Nimrod and his son Enoch.

The most striking resemblance between the two passages is the addition of Nimrod's son, called Hur in PRE and Enoch in TPJ. All the PRE manuscripts of families א and ת give Hur (חור) or a close variant, such as חור, חורר, חורר, all of which could easily be misread as the more familiar "Enoch" (חנוך).

These passages only mention the death of Nimrod. The garment of Adam appears elsewhere in both works. Only PRE makes it clear that Esau took the garment from Nimrod. The Targum, again, only implies the fuller tradition.

PRE 24 (JTS 3847, f. 110a)

R. Meir said: Esau, the brother of Jacob, saw the garment that was on Nimrod. He desired it in his heart, so he killed him and took it from him.

How do we know that it [the garment] was desirable (חמודה) in his eyes? It is written, "Rebekah took the fine (החמודות) clothes of Esau her elder son" (Gen 27:15).

TPJ to Gen 27:15 (BL Add. 27031, f. 29b)

Rebekah took the precious garments of Esau her elder son, which belonged to the first Adam.

The Targumist has relocated the story from its traditional targumic place in Gen 48:22 to Gen 25:27 and Gen 27:15. These are the exact same prooftexts PRE invokes when it refers to Esau's murder of Nimrod and the theft of the garment.

Finally, in Exodus, Moses destroys the Golden Calf, casts its ashes upon the water, and compels the Israelites to drink the water. According to PRE 45, drinking the water was a trial by ordeal, a means of ascertaining who was guilty of worshipping the calf. Those who had worshiped the calf received a mark on their face, indicating which guilty parties the Levites should kill. To support this tradition, PRE cites two prooftexts, Exod 32:20 and 32:28. These are the precise verses where the tradition appears in TPJ.

PRE 45 (JTS 3847, f. 141a)

Moses saw the tribe of Levi with him and was emboldened. He took the calf and burned it with fire, pulverized it like the dust of the earth, and scattered it on the surface of the water, as it is written, “He took the calf which they had made,” etc. (Exod 32:20).

TPJ to Exod 32:20 (BL Add. 27031, f. 94b)

He took the calf which the people had made and burned it with fire, ground it until it was dust, and scattered it on the surface of the waters of the river, and made the children of Israel drink it. Anyone who had contributed a vessel of gold there, a sign broke out on his face.

Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer continues the story immediately, while the Targum inserts a callback a few verses later:

PRE 45 (JTS 3847, f. 141a)

Everyone who had kissed the calf with all his heart, his lips were turned to gold. The tribe of Levi kept killing them there until three thousand Israelites fell, as it is written, “About three thousand men of the nation fell on that day” (Exod 32:28).

TPJ to Exod 32:28 (BL Add. 27031, ff. 94b–95a)

The sons of Levi acted according to the command of Moses. About three thousand men, who had the sign on their face, fell from the people that day, killed by the sword.

Earlier sources, both rabbinic and non-rabbinic, compare the drinking of water to a trial by ordeal. The Babylonian Talmud (*b. Avodah Zarah* 44a) directly compares it to the *sotah* ritual (Num 5:11–31), where a suspected adulteress must drink a bitter concoction to test her claim of fidelity. Nothing more is said. Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* (12:7) likewise views drinking the water as a trial by ordeal: Those who had worshiped the calf lose their tongue when they drink the water, but the faces of the innocent shine. Neither source explicitly connects Exod 32:20 to the subsequent slaughter of the unfaithful in Exod 32:28, as PRE and TPJ do.

4.4 Not Dependent on Earlier Rabbinic or Targumic Sources

Several parallel traditions in PRE and TPJ appear neither in earlier rabbinic literature nor in the other Targumim. In rare cases, these traditions appear in non-rabbinic literature (e.g., the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*) or in late midrashic

collections postdating PRE. In other cases, the tradition is a variant of a concept found in rabbinic literature, and PRE and TPJ have altered the older tradition in the same manner.

First, rabbinic literature and all the Targumim (including *Onqelos*) speak of wondrous garments worn by Adam and Eve.⁴⁴ *Genesis Rabbah* 20:12 reports that R. Meir's Torah read "garments of light" (כֹּתֶנֶת אֹרֶךְ) instead of "garments of skin" (כְּתָנִית עוֹר) in Gen 3:21. Isaac the Elder adds that these translucent garments were "like fingernail" (כְּצִיפּוֹרֶן).⁴⁵ *Onqelos*, *Neofiti*, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, and the *Fragment Targum* (P) all translate "garments of skin" with "garments of glory" (לְבוּשֵׁי דִיקָר). Only *Pseudo-Jonathan* speaks of garments of fingernail, and the Targumist distinguishes these from the garments Adam and Eve receive in Gen 3:21. In this respect, the Targum resembles PRE 14.

PRE 14 (JTS 3847, f. 102b)

What was the clothing of the first man? From the beginning, a skin of nail (עוֹר צִפּוֹרֶן) was his clothing, and a cloud of glory (עֲנַן כְּבוֹד) covered him. When he saw and ate the fruit of the tree, the cloud of glory flew from him, he cast off the skin of fingernail, and he saw himself naked (נִסְתַּלַּק עֵנַן כְּבוֹד מֵעֲלָיו וְהִפְשִׁיט) (עוֹר צִפּוֹרֶן מֵעֲלָיו וְרָאָה עֲצוּמוֹ עֵרוֹם).

TPJ to Gen 3:7 (BL Add. 27031, f. 6a)

The eyes of both of them were illuminated. They knew that they were naked because they had been divested of the garment of fingernail in which they had been created, and they saw their shame (דְּאִיתְעֲרִטְלוּ מִן לְבוּשׁ טוֹפְרָא) (דְּאִיתְבְּרִיאוּ בִּיה וְהוּן חֲמִיין בְּהִתְתַּהוּן).

In its translation of Gen 3:21, the Targum further clarifies that the garments of glory Adam and Eve received on this occasion are different from the earlier garments. *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* makes the same distinction between the two sets of garments.

PRE 20 (JTS 3847, f. 105a)

R. Eliezer said: The Holy One, Blessed be He, took from the skin that the serpent had shed (מִן הָעוֹר שֶׁשֶׁפֶט הַנָּחָשׁ לָקַח הַקַּי"ב'ה') and made garments of glory (כְּתָנִית כְּבוֹד) for Adam and his spouse, as it is written, "The LORD God made for Adam and his wife garments of skin and clothed them" (Gen 3:21).

TPJ to Gen 3:21 (BL Add. 27031, f. 6b)

The LORD God made for the man and his wife garments of glory (לְבוּשֵׁי דִיקָר) from the skin of the serpent which he had cast off (מִן מַשְׂךְ) (חֲוִיָּא דְּאִשְׁלַח מִינִיה) in place of their garments of fingernail of which they had been stripped (חֲלָף טוֹפְרִיהוֹן) (דְּאִישְׁתַּלְחוּ), and he clothed them.

In other words, both works state that Adam and Eve were clothed in a skin of fingernail before their transgression, lost this clothing upon sinning, and received

⁴⁴ On this topic, see also Pérez Fernández, "Targum y Midrás," 484–86.

⁴⁵ Julius Theodor and Hanoch Albeck, eds., *Midrash Bereschit Rabba mit kritischem Apparat und Kommentar*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Itzkowski, 1912–1936), 1:196 [Hebrew].

new clothing in the form of the serpent's skin. Both PRE and TPJ identify this second set with the "garments of glory."

The idea that Adam and Eve were clothed before the fall is novel in rabbinic literature but not wholly unprecedented. Chapter 42 of *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan*, recension B—one of PRE's sources—states that, prior to his sin, Adam was "clothed with precious vessels" (לבוש כלי חמדה).⁴⁶ *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* and *Pseudo-Jonathan* go one step farther by identifying these prelapsarian garments with the garments of fingernail, contradicting the tradition found in *Genesis Rabbah*. The pre-lapsarian garments of glory are well-attested outside of Jewish tradition, such as in Syriac Christianity.⁴⁷

Another theme found far afield from rabbinic literature is the recurring notion that Cain was not the natural son of Adam. This theme is most pronounced in "gnostic" literature where Cain's father is none other than the wicked Demiurge, the God of Genesis (e.g., the *Secret Book of John*, the *Nature of the Rulers*, *On the Origin of the World*, all found at Nag Hammadi). The orthodox restatement of this idea is that Cain is the son of the devil.⁴⁸ Although this tradition appears in kabbalistic literature such as the *Zohar* (e.g., I:54a),⁴⁹ it is unknown in Jewish literature prior to PRE.⁵⁰ Both PRE and TPJ have attached the tradition to Gen 4:1, a verse that, on its surface, would appear to claim that God is the father of Cain. They have rephrased it to defend God's honor.

PRE 21 (JTS 3847, f. 105b)

The rider of the serpent approached her [Eve] sexually, and she conceived Cain. After this, Adam came to her, and she conceived Abel,

TPJ to Gen 4:1

BL Add. 27031, f. 7a: Adam knew that his wife Eve had conceived from Sammael, the angel of the LORD.

⁴⁶ Hans-Jürgen Becker, ed., *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan: Synoptische Edition beider Versionen* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 385 (Ms. Parma, De Rossi 327, f. 78a). See also Yose ben Yose, *Poems*, 39.

⁴⁷ See, e.g., Gary A. Anderson, *The Genesis of Perfection: Adam and Eve in Jewish and Christian Imagination* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 117–34; Sebastian P. Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1992), 85–97.

⁴⁸ Among the studies on this subject: Nils Alstrup Dahl, "Der Erstgeborene Satans und der Vater des Teufels," in *Apophoreta: Festschrift für Ernst Haenchen* (Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1964), 70–84; Arnold Goldberg, "Kain: Sohn des Menschen oder Sohn der Schlange?," *Judaica* 25 (1969): 203–21; Jan Dochhorn, "Kain, der Sohn des Teufels: Eine traditionsgegeschichtliche Untersuchung zu 1. Joh 3,12," in *Das Böse, der Teufel und Dämonen (Evil, the Devil, and Demons)*, ed. Jan Dochhorn, Susanne Rudnig-Zelt, and Benjamin G. Wold (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 169–87.

⁴⁹ See further: Oded Yisraeli, "Cain as the Scion of Satan: The Evolution of a Gnostic Myth in the *Zohar*," *Harvard Theological Review* 109 (2016): 56–74.

⁵⁰ Guy G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 35–70, does not cite any Jewish source earlier than PRE and TPJ.

as it is written, “The man knew Eve his wife” (Gen 4:1). What did he know? That she was pregnant. She saw that his [Cain’s] form was not like those from below but rather like those from above. She observed this and said, “I have acquired a man from the LORD” (Gen 4:1).

Printed edition: Adam knew that his wife Eve desired the angel, and she conceived and bore Cain. She said, “I have acquired a man through the angel of the LORD.”

In both cases, it is an angel of the LORD, not the LORD himself, who fathered Cain. The “rider of the serpent” (רֹכֵב נָחֵשׁ) is an allusion to Sammael, who in PRE 13 mounts the serpent and rides upon it (וְעָלָה וְרָכַב עָלָיו). The epithet “rider of the serpent” recalls a talmudic tradition (*b. Shabbat* 145b–146a; *b. Yevamot* 103b; *b. Avodah Zarah* 22b) where the serpent couples with Eve and injects its venom into her, which spreads to all her descendants. All the Talmud says, however, is that the serpent violated Eve. The Talmud neither claims that the serpent fathered Cain nor does it identify the serpent with the devil. Rabbinic literature typically views the serpent as an animal (*Gen. Rab.* 18:6, 20:5; ARN-A 1; ARN-B 1; *t. Sotah* 4:17–18; *b. Sotah* 9b), and even PRE, the first rabbinic work to introduce the devil into the Garden of Eden, does not break with this tradition. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* does, however, harmonize the rabbinic tradition with something resembling the gnostic myth of Cain’s parentage, which still circulated in the medieval period among Audians, Manichaeans, and Christian “Dualists” such as the Bogomils.⁵¹ The Targum simply restates what is found in PRE without reference to the talmudic tradition.

In another vein entirely, sometimes PRE and TPJ present odd details that have no rabbinic precedent but are also absent from Christian and Muslim literature. Such is the case of the claim that Noah had divine aid assembling all the world’s animals.

PRE 23 (JTS 3847, f. 108a)

The angels (הַמַּלְאָכִים) appointed over every kind [of animal] descended and gathered them to him, to the Ark, along with their food sources.

TPJ to Gen. 6:20 (BL Add. 27031, f. 9b)

[God said:] “Two of every [kind] will come before you by means of an angel (מַלְאָכָא), who will gather and bring them to you for keeping.”

The obvious difference is that PRE speaks of multiple angels whereas TPJ only mentions one. The tradition is otherwise unattested in rabbinic and targumic sources.

A more substantive unique tradition involves Og, king of Bashan, who was imagined to be an Antediluvian giant based on the report of his enormous bed in Deut 3:11. The biblical verses raise the question of how such a giant survived the

⁵¹ See further Gavin McDowell, “Rabbinization of Non-Rabbinic Material in *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*,” in *Diversity and Rabbinization: Jewish Texts and Societies between 400 and 1000 CE*, ed. Gavin McDowell, Ron Naiweld, and Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra (Cambridge: OpenBook Publishers, 2021), 381–412 (391–403).

Flood. While the Talmud mentions the bare fact of Og's survival (*b. Niddah* 61a; *b. Zevahim* 113b), PRE and TPJ explain how he survived.

PRE 23 (JTS 3847, f. 108a)

He [God] prevailed in destroying the world [...] except Og, who sat on one beam under the water jets of the Ark. He swore to Noah and his sons that he would be a servant to them forever. What did Noah do? He drilled a hole in the Ark and gave him food every day. Therefore, he remained, as it is written, "For only Og, king of Bashan, remained" (Deut 3:11).

TPJ to Gen 14:13 (BL Add. 27031, f. 15b)

Then Og came, the survivor of the giants who died in the Flood. He rode in the Ark, and there was a covering over his head, and he was sustained by the food stores of Noah. It was not by his merit that he survived but rather that the inhabitants of the world might see the might of the LORD. Then they will say, "Were there not giants of old who rebelled against the Lord of the World, but he annihilated them from the land?"

The similarities are apparent, but the Targum has placed the tradition in an entirely different context. Og is identified as the "one who escaped" (הפליט) in Gen 14:13, whereas PRE identifies this figure as Michael, who escaped an altercation with Sammael. However, the Targum alludes once more to this tradition in its rendering of Deut 3:11, the prooftext offered by PRE.

Og survived, but Lot's daughter was not so lucky. According to PRE, she was burned by the people of Sodom for disobeying a law against giving charity to the poor. A similar situation is described in earlier rabbinic literature (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 49:6 and *b. Sanhedrin* 109b), though without mentioning the decree or even naming the girl. For those details, one would need to turn to PRE and TPJ.

PRE 25 (JTS 3847, ff. 110b–111a)

R. Judah said: They announced a decree in Sodom that anyone who offered a morsel of bread to a beggar or a traveler would be burnt with fire. Paltiyah (פלטיה), the daughter of Lot, was married to one of the great men of Sodom. She saw a destitute man in the street of the city, and her soul was in anguish over him, as it is written, "Was not my soul grieved for the needy?" (Job 30:25). What did she do? Every day, when she went out to draw water, she put in her pitcher all sorts of food and thus supported the poor man. The people of Sodom said, "How is this poor man still alive?" until they found out about the matter and brought her out to be burned with fire. As she was going out, she said,

TPJ to Gen 18:21 (BL Add. 27031, f. 19a)

[God said:] "It will be revealed now, and I will see whether they have done according to the outcry of the young woman Peletith (פליטית) that has gone up before me. If so, they are deserving of destruction, but if they repent, will they not be righteous before me, as if I did not know it? Then they will not be punished."

“God of the world, LORD, maintain my right and my cause (cf. Ps 9:5) before the people of Sodom.” Her cry went up before the Throne of Glory at that hour. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said, “I will go down, and I will see. . .” (Gen 18:21).

Several clues suggest that TPJ is dependent on PRE here. First, the Targum only alludes to a tradition told in full in PRE. The two texts are anchored by the name of the young woman as well as PRE’s proof-text, which is exactly where the Targumist has elected to insert the tradition. Another clue is the spelling of the name. The form פלטיה in JTS 3847 is typical of the Yemenite family (ת), while the European family (א) most often has פליטה, and the printed edition (ד) has פלויטה, from which the Targum could have easily adopted the idiosyncratic spelling פליטיה.

This is not the only occasion where PRE and TPJ assign the same names to anonymous biblical women. *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* famously reports that Ishmael had two successive wives named ‘Ā’isha and Fāṭima. It is part of a larger story about Abraham’s visits to Ishmael and the coded advice to his son about how to choose a proper wife. The story is attested in Islamic sources, but only Jewish sources give the names ‘Ā’isha and Fāṭima to the wives.

PRE 30 (JTS 3847, f. 117a–117b)

“And Ishmael dwelt in the wilderness of Paran” (Gen 21:21). Ishmael sent for and took for himself a wife from the Moabites, and ‘Ā’isha (עִישָׁה) was her name. After three years, Abraham wanted to see Ishmael his son, but he promised Sarah that he would not descend from his camel in the place where Ishmael was living. He arrived there at midday and found his wife. He said to her, “Where is Ishmael?” She said to him, “He went out with his mother to pasture camels in the wilderness.” He said to her, “Please give me a little bread and water, for I am tired from the desert road.” She said to him, “I do not have any bread and water.” He said to her, “When Ishmael comes back from the wilderness, tell him that a certain old man came from the land of Canaan to see you, and say: Change the threshold of your house, for it is not good.” Then he left. When Ishmael came home, she told him about it. The son of a wise man is like half a wise man. He understood

TPJ to Gen 21:21 (BL Add. 27031, f. 22a)

He [Ishmael] dwelt in the wilderness of Paran. He took a wife, Adisha (עִדִּישָׁה), but turned her out. Then his mother took for him Fāṭima (פַּטִּימָה), a woman from the land of Egypt.

and sent her away. Then his mother sent for and took for him a woman from her father's people. Her name was Fāṭima (פִּאטִימָה).

The story continues with Abraham visiting Ishmael once more, finding his wife home alone, and then receiving the proper hospitality. He leaves her with a word of approbation for his son. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* reports little more than the names of the wives. The story, as such, is not found in the Targum. As Ohana has pointed out, PRE could not have drawn it from the Targum, so the Targum must have drawn it from PRE or some other source.⁵² Other sources do tell the story, but they do not have the same names for the wives. The two manuscripts of a sermon for the second day of Rosh ha-Shanah, for example, have the corrupt forms ערושה and ערוסה for the first wife.⁵³ *Sefer ha-Yashar* also tells the story at length, but it gives only the name of the first wife: Merisah (מְרִיסָה).⁵⁴ The targumic form “Adisha” (עֲדִישָׁא) is explicable as a misreading or miscopying of עִישָׁה, the form of the name in a few PRE manuscripts (צ, ת, א, 2א, 1א).

Moving on, a few homiletic midrashim of the Amoraic period specify that Sarah died of grief after learning of the events of the Aqedah (*Lev. Rab.* 20:2; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 26:3; cf. *Gen. Rab.* 58:5). So too in PRE and TPJ, though with one important difference.

PRE 32 (JTS 3847, f. 119b)

When Abraham returned from Mount Moriah in peace, Sammael was furious that he did not succeed in annulling the sacrifice of Abraham our father. What did he do? He went and said to Sarah, “Have you not heard what was done in the land?” She said to him, “No.” He said to her, “Abraham took Isaac and slaughtered him upon the altar and sacrificed him as a burnt offering.” She began crying and wailing, three cries according to the three longer blasts [of the shofar] and three wails according to the three shorter blasts. Her soul flew away and departed, and she died.

TPJ to Gen 22:20 (BL Add. 27031, f. 23b)

And after these things, after Abraham bound Isaac, Satan went and told to Sarah that Abraham had slaughtered Isaac. Sarah stood up and cried out. She became choked up and died from distress.

⁵² Ohana, “La polémique judéo islamique,” 370, n. 11.

⁵³ Lewis M. Barth, “Lecture for the Second Day of Rosh Hashanah: A Homily Containing the Legend of the Ten Trials of Abraham,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 58 (1987): 1–48 (29) [Hebrew].

⁵⁴ Dan, *Sefer Hayashar*, 111.

In the older sources, Isaac himself informs Sarah what has happened. The Targum and PRE add a new twist: It is the devil (Sammael in PRE; Satan in TPJ), who informs Sarah and falsely implies that Abraham has killed Isaac.

One of the more prominent parallels between PRE and TPJ is how Levi, uniquely among Jacob's twelve sons, obtained the priesthood for himself and his descendants. This tradition is first attested in the book of *Jubilees* (Jub 32:1–3). *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* 37 tells a somewhat different version of this story. Allusions are already found in earlier rabbinic literature, such as *Gen. Rab.* 70:7 and *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 10:6.⁵⁵ In both cases, Jacob removes the four sons who are the first-born of their respective mothers before selecting Levi as the “tenth” son. Only PRE and TPJ give a full account—in suspiciously similar language.

PRE 37 (JTS 3847, f. 128b)

Jacob wanted to cross the wadi Jabbok, but he was hindered there, for the angel said to him, “Did you not say thus: ‘Of everything which you give to me, I will set aside a tenth of it for you’ (Gen 28:22)? And yet you have sons, but you did not tithe!” What did Jacob do? He took the four firstborn from the four mothers, and eight remained. He began with Simeon and ended with Benjamin, who was still in his mother's womb. He began again with Simeon and arrived at Levi as the tithe [. . .] The angel Michael descended, took Levi, brought him up before the Throne of Glory, and said before him, “Master of the Worlds! This one is your lot and the portion of your tithe.”

TPJ to Gen 32:25 (BL Add. 27031, f. 37a–37b)

Jacob remained alone on the other side of the Jabbok. An angel in the form of a man contended with him and said, “Did you not pledge to tithe everything you owned? Behold, you have twelve sons and one daughter, but you did not tithe them!” Immediately he set aside the four firstborn of the four mothers and eight [sons] remained. He counted from Simeon and arrived at Levi for the tithe. Michael answered and said, “Lord of the World! This one is your share.”

As Kister has pointed out, the passage in PRE not only resembles *Jubilees* but also the *Testament of Levi* and related literature (including the *Aramaic Levi Document*).⁵⁶ Between *Jubilees* and the *Testament*, he singles out the following motifs: 1) Levi was “tithed” by Jacob; 2) he was then brought to heaven where 3) God blessed him and 4) gave him permission to eat from the altar. While retaining the form of PRE, the Targum has managed to avoid any mention of Levi's ascent, leading Kister to conclude the Targum's dependence on PRE in this instance.

⁵⁵ See also Yannai, *The Liturgical Poems of Rabbi Yannai According to the Triennial Cycle of the Pentateuch and the Holy Days*, ed. Zvi Meir Rabinowitz, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1985–1987), 2:76 [Hebrew].

⁵⁶ Kister, “Ancient Material in *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eli'ezer*,” 81–82.

From Levi we move to Dinah, the sole daughter of Jacob, who was violated by Shechem but avenged by Simeon and Levi (Gen 34). According to PRE, Aseneth, the Egyptian wife of Joseph, was not the natural daughter of Potiphera, the priest of On (Gen 41:45), but the daughter of Dinah. The story—that Aseneth was exposed, then miraculously transferred to the house of Potiphera in Egypt—resolves the issue of Joseph's marriage to a foreign wife. It is notably different from other texts that address this biblical difficulty, such as the Greek romance *Joseph and Aseneth*, which turns Aseneth into a convert to Israelite monotheism. It is also different from *Gen. Rab.* 89:2, which focuses on a separate biblical problem by making Aseneth the natural daughter of Potiphar, Joseph's former master (Gen 39), thereby identifying Potiphar with Potiphera.

The story of Aseneth's birth is told twice in PRE (36 and 38), but TPJ mentions Aseneth's genealogy everywhere her name appears in the Hebrew text (Gen 41:45.50; 46:20; 48:9). The closest parallel is PRE 38, which tells the story in full, and TPJ to Gen 41:45.

PRE 38 (JTS 3847, f. 129a)

Because the daughter of Jacob was dwelling in tents and never came outside, what did Shechem, the son of Hamor, do? He brought out young girls playing music and banging drums outside of her place. Dinah went out to see the daughters of the land who were playing. He then took her by force and slept with her. She became pregnant and bore Aseneth. The sons of Jacob wanted to kill her. They said, "Now they will say throughout the land that lewdness resides in the tents of Jacob." What did Jacob do? He wrote the Holy Name on a golden plate and hung it around her neck and sent her away. Everything is known to the Holy One, Blessed be He. Michael descended and took her and brought her down to Egypt, to the house of Potiphar, whose wife was barren. She raised her like a daughter. When Joseph went down to Egypt, he took her for himself as a wife, as it is written, "He gave him Aseneth, the daughter of Potiphera" (Gen 41:45).

TPJ to Gen 41:45 (BL Add. 27031, f. 47a)

He [Pharaoh] gave him [Joseph] Aseneth for a wife, whom Dinah bore to Shechem and whom the wife of Potiphera, ruler of Tanis, raised.

Victor Aptowitzer has written a lengthy study of this legend, noting many different Hebrew sources since PRE (e.g., *Midrash Aggadah*, *Yalqut Shim'oni*) that contain the legend.⁵⁷ He strains to locate the legend earlier than PRE.

⁵⁷ Victor Aptowitzer, "Asenath, the Wife of Joseph: A Haggadic Literary-Historical Study," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 1 (1924): 239–306.

Earlier in the story of Joseph, Joseph encounters a man who directs him to the location where his brothers are waiting for him (Gen 37:15). This superfluous detail became, in the reading of the rabbis, an indicator of divine intervention. In *Gen. Rab.* 75:4 and 84:14, for example, one man has become multiple angels. In PRE and TPJ, there is only one angel, Gabriel.

PRE 38 (JTS 3847, f. 129b)

He [Joseph] was lost on the road, but Gabriel the angel found him, as it is written, "A man found him. Behold, he was lost" (Gen 37:15). It is not a man but Gabriel, as it is written, "The man Gabriel" (Dan 9:21).

TPJ to Gen 37:15 (BL Add. 27031, f. 42a)

Gabriel, in the form of a man, found him. Behold, he [Joseph] was wandering in the field, and the man asked him, saying, "What are you looking for?"

This tradition, however minor or inconsequential, is once more a witness to PRE and TPJ's agreement against an earlier rabbinic tradition.

A seemingly innocuous statement in PRE 38 mentions that Joseph's brothers used the money from their sale to each buy a pair of shoes, citing Amos 2:6 ("They have sold the righteous for silver, the needy for a pair of shoes."). The Targum states the same but without the prooftext.

PRE 38 (JTS 3847, f. 130a)

They sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. Each one [took] two pieces of silver to buy shoes for their feet, as it is written, "Thus says the LORD, for three sins of Israel [and even four, I will not relent. They sell the righteous for silver, the needy for a pair of shoes]" (Amos 2:6).

TPJ to Gen. 37:28 (BL Add. 27031, f. 42b)

They [Joseph's brothers] sold Joseph to the Arabs for twenty pieces of silver, and they bought sandals with it.

The tradition is older than PRE. It is found in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (*T. Gad* 2:3; *T. Naphtali* 3:2). Some recensions of *the Story of the Ten Martyrs* (all rabbinic Sages) allude to the tradition. A Roman emperor reads the Torah and, upon reaching the story of Joseph, becomes infuriated and demands the blood of ten Sages to expiate the sins of the ten brothers. When the ten arrive at the palace, they find the entrance hall filled with shoes.⁵⁸ The date of this story is uncertain, and the allusion—which remains an allusion—is not universally attested. Therefore, the appearance of the detail in both PRE and TPJ remains significant.

⁵⁸ Gottfried Reeg, *Die Geschichte von den Zehn Märtyrern: Synoptische Edition mit Übersetzung und Einleitung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985), *10–*11 and *13 (recensions I, IV, V, VII, and IX), and 93.

The story of Joseph ends with the death and funeral of Jacob. For PRE and TPJ, this is also the occasion of Esau's death. It is not, however, the only tradition about Esau's end. The older tradition, found in *Jub.* 37–38, *T. Judah* 9, and, much later, in *Midrash Vayissa'u* 3, states that Jacob killed Esau at Judah's instigation when an army of Edomites attacked Jacob's family without provocation during Leah's funeral. Even though Judah did not strike the fatal blow, this episode might lie behind the passing references to Judah killing Esau in early Palestinian sources (*Sifre Deuteronomy* § 348; *y. Ketubbot* I:5, 25c; *y. Gittin* V:6, 47a). In the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Sotah* 13a), Esau is killed during a dispute over the cave of Machpelah. This is the version found in PRE and TPJ.

PRE 39 (JTS 3847, f. 133a)

When they came to the Cave of Machpelah, Esau came to them from Mount Seir to stir up trouble. He said, "The Cave of Machpelah is mine." What did Joseph do? He sent Naphtali to conquer fate and descend to Egypt to bring up the permanent deed that was between them, as it is written, "Naphtali is a swift deer giving good news" (Gen 49:21). Hushim, the son of Dan, was disabled in both his ear and his tongue. He said to them, "Why are you sitting around?" They pointed and said, "Because of this man. He will not let us show charity to our father Jacob." What did he do? He drew his sword and cut off Esau's head. It entered the Cave of Machpelah. They sent his body back to the land of his estate, to Mount Seir.

TPJ to Gen 50:13 (BL Add. 27031, f. 58a)

His sons carried him [Jacob] to the land of Canaan. The matter became known to Esau the wicked. He traveled from the mountain of Gebela with many legions and came to Hebron. He did not permit Joseph to bury his father in the Cave of Kaphelta [i.e., Machpelah]. Immediately Naphtali departed and ran down to Egypt. He came back that very day and brought the deed that Esau had written for Jacob, his brother, about the division of the Cave of Kaphelta. Immediately Joseph signaled to Hushim, the son of Dan. He took his sword and cut off the head of Esau the wicked. The head of Esau kept rolling until it entered the cave and rested within the bosom of Isaac, his father. The children of Esau buried his body in the field of Kaphelta.

Although not quoted in the above passage, Isaac appears in PRE as well. The patriarch cradles his son's head and intercedes on his behalf. God, however, dismisses Isaac's prayer. The presence of Isaac is a major difference between PRE and TPJ, on the one hand, and the talmudic version on the other. The other major difference is that the talmudic version of the story springs from exegesis of Gen 49:21, which is about the swiftness of Naphtali and has no obvious connection to Esau. In *Gen. Rab.* 98:17, for example, the antagonist is not Esau but the Hittites (who initially sold Machpelah to Abraham, cf. Gen 23). All the Palestinian Targumim, TPJ included, also insert a note at Gen 49:21 that Naphtali's epithet comes from the time he retrieved the deed to the Cave of Machpelah from Egypt (only TPJ, however, mentions Esau in this verse). Therefore, TPJ is not simply reporting a generally known tradition.

The Targumist is recording a specific version that includes Isaac and is detached from the exegesis of Gen 49:21.

Following the sin of the Golden Calf, God sends five angels of destruction to annihilate the Israelites. Moses immediately calls on the merits of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to halt three of the angels. Then, according to PRE and TPJ, Moses invokes the name of God to bury either one (PRE 45) or both (TPJ to Deut 9:19; cf. TPJ to Num 17:11) of the remaining angels in the earth.

PRE 45 (JTS 3847, f. 141a)

The Holy One, Blessed be He, sent five angels to uproot Israel, and they are Wrath (קצף), Destruction (מחשית), Anger (אף), Rage (חימה), and Ire (חרון). Moses heard and went out before them. He said, "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, if you are children of the World to Come, stand before me in this hour, for your children are given like sheep to the slaughter (cf. Jer 12:3). And there stood before him Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses spoke before the Holy One, Blessed be He, "Lord of the Worlds! Did you not promise to these to make their descendants as numerous as the stars of the heavens? Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants." By the merits of the three patriarchs, three of the angels were halted. These were Wrath, Anger, and Rage. Moses spoke before the Holy One, Blessed be He, "Lord of the Worlds! For the sake of the promise which you promised them, prevent Ire (חרון) from [destroying] Israel," as it is written, "Turn yourself from Ire (חרון)" (Exod 32:12). What did Moses do? He dug in the earth something like a large dwelling in the territory of Gad, and he buried Ire in the earth, like a man who is placed in prison.

TPJ to Deut 9:19 (BL Add. 27031, f. 200b)

At that time, five destroying angels were sent from before the LORD to destroy Israel: Anger (אף), Rage (חימה), Wrath (קצף), Destruction (משחית), and Ire (חרון). When Moses, the leader of Israel, heard, he went and invoked the Great and Glorious Name and raised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob from their graves. They stood in prayer before the LORD, and immediately three of them were restrained, but two remained: Anger (אף) and Rage (חימה). Moses sought mercy, and those two were also restrained. He dug a pit in the land of Moab and buried them by an oath of the Great and Fearful Name.

Despite some differences in detail, the overall story is the same in the two works. The major difference is that the buried angels are sealed with different prooftexts: Exod 32:12 in PRE and Deut 9:19 in TPJ. The story of the avenging angels appears in many later midrashic sources (*Qoh. Rab.* 4:1.3; *Mid. Psalms* 7:6; *Tanhuma Buber*, *Ki Tissa* 13; *Exod. Rab.* 44:8). Only PRE and TPJ, however, mention that Moses buried one or more angels *in the earth*. In the other cases, Moses dispels the remaining

angels with prooftexts alone (this is also the fate of the fifth angel in PRE 45, accidentally omitted from the quoted manuscript).⁵⁹

The next example also involves the appeasement of God's wrath. An ancient tradition equates Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron who killed an idolatrous couple and stymied a plague (Num 25), with the mysterious prophet Elijah. Origen already reports it in his commentary on John (VI.83–84).⁶⁰ It is also reported, though obliquely, in Pseudo-Philo's *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* 48:1.⁶¹ Only PRE and TPJ have preserved this tradition in Jewish transmission. They both mention this identification overtly, though not in passages that are otherwise parallel to each other.

PRE 47 (JTS 3847, f. 143b)

R. Eliezer said: The Holy One, blessed be He, changed the name of Phinehas into the name of Elijah—Elijah of blessed memory.

TPJ to Exod 6:18 (BL Add. 27031, f. 64a)

The sons of Kohath: Amran, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. The years of the life of Kohath the pious were a hundred and thirty-three years. He lived until he saw Phinehas, who is Elijah, the high priest who in the future will be sent to captive Israel at the end of days.

Both PRE and TPJ oppose a rabbinic tradition that places Elijah in the tribe of Benjamin (*Gen. Rab.* 71:9) and, hence, precludes any identification with the Levite Phinehas.

One of the few narrative portions of Leviticus involves the son of an Israelite mother and an Egyptian father blasphemes the God of Israel, for which he is executed (Lev 24:10–11). Midrashic literature concluded that the child was a bad seed from the beginning due to the illicit nature of his conception. *Leviticus Rabbah* 32:4 claims that the woman committed adultery with the Egyptian, but PRE 48 and TPJ to Lev 24:10 propose that the woman was raped instead.

⁵⁹ Peter Schäfer, *Rivalität zwischen Engeln und Menschen: Untersuchungen zur rabbinischen Engelvorsstellung* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1975), 145–49.

⁶⁰ Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel according to John, Books 1–10*, trans. Ronald Heine (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 191–92.

⁶¹ Howard Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum: With Latin Text and English Translation*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 1: 172–73: “At that time Phinehas was verging toward death, and the Lord said to him, ‘Behold, you have passed the 120 years that have been established for every man. Now rise up and go from here and dwell in the desert on the mountain and dwell there many years. I will command my eagle, and he will nourish you there, and you will not come down again to mankind until the appointed time arrives, and you will be tested at the appropriate time; and then you will shut up the heaven, and by your mouth it will be opened up. Afterwards, you will be raised to the place where those who were before you were raised up, and you will be there until I remember the world. Then I will bring you, and you will get a taste of death.’”

PRE 48 (JTS 3847, f. 145b)

R. Jose said: The Egyptians were defiling the Israelites. The grandson of Dan married a woman of his tribe, Shelomith bat Dibri. On the same night, the taskmasters of Pharaoh came upon him and killed him. They entered his wife, and she became pregnant. Everyone follows after the father. If one is sweet, the other is sweet. If bitter, bitter. When the Israelites departed Egypt, he began to abuse and blaspheme the name of the God of Israel, as it is written, “And the son of the Israelite woman cursed” (Lev 24:11).

TPJ to Lev 24:10–11 (BL Add. 27031, f. 132a)

[Lev 24:10] A sinful man, a rebel against the God of heaven, went out from Egypt. He was the son of an Egyptian who killed a son of Israel in Egypt and entered his wife. She conceived and bore a son among the children of Israel. When Israel was dwelling in the wilderness, he sought to pitch his tent with the tribe of the children of Dan, but they did not allow him...

[Lev 24:11] When he left the court, having been found at fault, the son of the Israelite woman distinctly and blasphemously pronounced the Great and Glorious Name that he had heard at Sinai, which was forbidden. He sinned intentionally and with provocation. The name of his mother was Shelomith bat Dibri of the tribe of Dan.

In *Leviticus Rabbah*, the woman is fully complicit in the deed. In later midrashic accounts, such as *Tanhuma*, *Shemot* 9 and *Exod. Rab.* 1:28, the woman is tricked, but her husband survives. All three Midrashim link the son of the Egyptian with the Egyptian Moses kills in *Exod* 2:12: The Egyptian is the boy’s father; the man he is beating is the cuckolded husband. *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* has severed the connection between Lev 24:10–11 and *Exod* 2:11–12; the Targum follows suit.

The final example of this section also involves a mother losing her child. An Israelite woman, in the latest stage of pregnancy, is nevertheless forced to work under the yoke of Egyptian slavery. When she gives birth, she is forced to keep working, and the baby becomes mixed with the mortar. Her cry goes up to heaven, and the brick becomes a symbol of Egyptian oppression.

PRE 48 (JTS 3847, f. 146a)

R. Akiva said: The taskmasters of Pharaoh were striking the Israelites so they would make a double quantity of bricks, as it is written, “And the quota of bricks,” etc. (*Exod* 5:8). The Egyptians were not giving straw to the Israelites, as it is written, “Straw is not given to your servants” (*Exod* 5:16). The Israelites were gathering straw in the wilderness and trampling it in the mortar—they and their wives and their daughters and their sons. The straw in the wilderness was piercing their heels, and the blood was coming

TPJ to *Exod* 24:10 (BL Add. 27031, f. 85a)

Nadab and Abihu lifted their eyes and saw the Glory of the God of Israel. Under the footstool of his feet that was spread out under his throne there was something like a work of sapphire stone, recalling the slavery with which the Egyptians subjected the children of Israel by clay and by bricks. While the women were treading the clay with their husbands, there was a delicate girl there who was pregnant. She miscarried the fetus, and it was trampled with the clay. Gabriel descended, made a brick from it, and brought it to the high

out and pooling in the mortar. Rachel, the granddaughter of Shuthelah, was pregnant, on the point of childbirth. She was trampling in the mortar with her husband, and the fetus came out from within her bowels and became mixed in with the brick. Her cry went up before the Throne of Glory. That very night the Holy One, Blessed be He, was revealed and struck all the firstborn of the Egyptians as it is written, “And it happened, in the middle of the night,” etc. (Exod 12:29).

heavens. He affixed it as a stool in the place of the footstool of the Lord of the World. Its splendor is like the work of a precious stone and like the striking beauty of the skies when they are clear of clouds.

The best-known parallel to the story here is found in *3Baruch*, an apocalyptic work of indeterminate date and provenance.⁶² The context, however, is completely different: *3Baruch* 3:5 tells of a pregnant woman who was making bricks for the Tower of Babel. She gave birth to her child, set it aside, and then continued making bricks. The child survives.

A closer parallel, where the context is the Israelites in Egypt, occurs in some Christian sources. Adam Silverstein mentions a fifth-century Syriac manuscript (without, however, naming the manuscript or even giving the work’s title) where one of the enslaved Israelites is replaced with his pregnant wife, who then gives birth to stillborn twins.⁶³ The outrage causes the Israelites to cry out to God, who then slays the Egyptian firstborn in retribution. The same motif is found in an Ethiopic manuscript of the fifteenth century (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Eth. 117), containing the *Book of the Mysteries of the Heavens and the Earth* by one Bakhayla Mikael. In this version (f. 19a), a woman working in the fields miscarries twins and cries out to heaven, inciting God to act.⁶⁴ It shares one curious detail with PRE: The name of the woman is Rachel.

None of these, of course, are rabbinic sources. Treitl claims that, in this instance, PRE must depend on the Targum because the proof-text (Exod 24:10) is already connected to the Israelites’ slavery in Egypt in Tannaitic sources (*Sifre Numbers* §84;

⁶² For different accounts of the problem, see Daniel C. Harlow, “The Christianization of Early Jewish Pseudepigrapha: The Case of *3 Baruch*,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 32 (2001): 416–44. and Martha Himmelfarb, “*3 Baruch* Revisited: Jewish or Christian Composition, and Why It Matters,” *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 20 (2016): 41–62.

⁶³ Adam J. Silverstein, *Veiling Esther, Unveiling Her Story: The Reception of a Biblical Book in Islamic Lands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 22.

⁶⁴ Jules Perruchon, ed. and trans., *Le Livre des Mystères du Ciel et de la Terre* (Paris: Librairie de Paris, 1903), 31. This work has been translated into English: E. A. Wallis Budge, trans., *The Book of the Mysteries of the Heavens and the Earth and Other Works of Bakhayla Mikâ’el (Zôsîmâs)* (1935; repr., Ibis Press: Berwick, 2004), 38.

Mekhilta de-R. Ishmael, Pisha 14) as well as in the Palestinian Talmud (*y. Sukkah* IV:5, 54c).⁶⁵ None of these examples, however, mention the story of the woman who loses her child during the process of brickmaking. It is rather the Targum that is attempting to anchor a free-floating tradition to a biblical verse.

Once more, a difference in the manuscript tradition indicates the Targum's source. The Targum mentions that Gabriel descended and retrieved the brick. Several manuscripts of PRE—all family α —and the *editio princeps* mention that Michael descended and did the same. Why the Targumist preferred Gabriel over Michael is not clear. However, this part of the tradition—placing the encased baby under God's footstool—is the precise reason the Targumist has attached the whole story to Exod 24:10 rather than to the account of the death of the first-born, with which it is associated in PRE (and, interestingly, in the Christian sources).⁶⁶

4.5 Unlikely Coincidences and Errors

The final section includes several different kinds of traditions. First, there are cases where the Targum updates PRE. Second, there are occasions where the Targum has copied an error from PRE. Third, in at least one instance the Targum has miscopied a tradition that appears in PRE. The final example is a phrase from PRE that the Targumist has embedded in an addition from the Palestinian Targum tradition, which, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, was entirely unknown to PRE.

First, the calendrical chapters of PRE provide a medley of figures and calculations that were nevertheless behind the times. The fixed rabbinic calendar, developed within a century of PRE's writing, depends on two key values: 1) a lunar month of 29 days, 12 hours, and 793 (out of 1080) "parts" of an hour; and 2) an epoch (reference point) where the first new moon (*molad*) of the first year *anno mundi* begins on 1 Tishri, Monday, 5 hours, and 204 parts of an hour (*BaHaRaD*).⁶⁷ Many PRE manuscripts mention the first value in the form of 29 days, 12 hours, two-thirds of an hour (i.e., 720 "parts"), and 73 parts (720 + 73 = 793 parts). However, the reference to "parts" is a gloss. It is missing in about half the manuscripts (including JTS 3847) and is not presumed when R. Abraham bar Hiyya discusses PRE in his

⁶⁵ Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 234–35.

⁶⁶ Rachel Adelman, *Rhapsody in Blue: The Origin of God's Footstool in the Aramaic Targumim and Midrashic Tradition* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2010), 12–20 recognizes the specificity of PRE and TPJ's treatment of the footstool tradition compared to earlier sources but does not seem cognizant that there is no footstool in a whole family of PRE manuscripts.

⁶⁷ Sacha Stern, *Calendar and Community: A History of the Jewish Calendar, Second Century BCE–Tenth Century CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 191–92.

calendrical work *Sefer ha-Ibbur*.⁶⁸ *Pirqa de-Rabbi Eliezer* therefore has a deficient lunar month of 29 days, 12 hours, and only 720/1080 “parts” of an hour (two-thirds of an hour or forty minutes). This is the same lunation period given in *Baraita de-Samuel* 5, which calculated that the first new moon occurred at the beginning of Wednesday, the fourth day of creation—the day when the sun and the moon were created.⁶⁹

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan corrects PRE’s deficient calendar.⁷⁰ Not only does it know the parts of the hour, but it reflects the concept of *BaHaRaD*. Only, in this case, the Targum dates creation to a year before *BaHaRaD*, resulting in the first new moon occurring on a Wednesday, the day of the moon’s creation.⁷¹

PRE 7 (JTS 3847, f. 86a–86b)

All their hosts, all the stars, all the constellations, and the two lights were created at the beginning of the night of the fourth [day] [. . .] The duration of a lunar month is twenty-nine days, a half day, and two-thirds of an hour.

TPJ to Gen 1:16 (BL Add. 27031, f. 4a–4b)

God made the two great lights. They were in their glory 21 hours, less 672 parts of an hour. Immediately after this, the moon spoke slanderously against the sun, and he was diminished. God appointed the sun, the great light, to rule the day, and the moon, the little light, to rule the night and the stars.

Given the divergences between the two works, one might wonder whether the two passages are connected at all. The telltale sign is the reference to the rivalry between the sun and the moon, which is recounted at the beginning of the calendrical chapters (PRE 6). In other rabbinic parallels (*Gen. Rab.* 6:4; *b. Hullin* 60b), the moon voluntarily accepts to be the lesser light and is rewarded for it. In PRE 6 and TPJ, the moon is punished for backbiting. The Targum implies that the first *molad* occurred when this quarrel is resolved, and the two celestial bodies were of equal size until this moment. It accounts for a discrepancy between the *molad* in PRE (the beginning of the fourth day) and the Targum (more than twenty hours into the fourth day).

The next such error occurs in the story of the first sin. According to PRE and TPJ, Eve sees the Angel of Death (further glossed in the Targum as Sammael, the devil) prior to her decision to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

⁶⁸ Stern, *Calendar and Community*, 204.

⁶⁹ Stern, *Calendar and Community*, 203.

⁷⁰ Splansky, “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan,” 100–5.

⁷¹ Stern, *Calendar and Community*, 205.

PRE 13 (JTS 3847, f. 102b)

She saw the Angel of Death coming against her (וּרְאִתָּה מִלֵּאךְ הַמּוֹת בֹּא כְנֻדָּה) and said, “Woe is me! Now I shall die and the Holy One, Blessed be He, shall make another woman and give her to the First Adam unless I convince him to eat with me. If we die, we shall die together! And if we live, we will live together.” She took and ate from the fruit of the tree, and she gave it to him, and he ate, as it is written, “And she also gave it to her husband with her; and he ate it” (Gen 3:6).

The tradition is not wholly original. A version close to the passage in PRE 13 is found in the first chapter of *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan*, recension B, which was quoted at length in chapter two. Here is the relevant portion again.

PRE 13 (JTS 3847, f. 102b)

She saw the Angel of Death coming against her (וּרְאִתָּה מִלֵּאךְ הַמּוֹת בֹּא כְנֻדָּה), and she said, “Woe is me! Now I shall die and the Holy One, Blessed be He, shall make another woman and give her to the First Adam unless I convince him to eat with me” (אֲנִי גֹרֶמֶת לוֹ שִׂיאָכֵל עִמִּי).

TPJ to Gen 3:6 (BL Add. 27031, f. 6a)

The woman saw Sammael, the Angel of Death, and she was afraid (וְחִמַּת אִיתָתָא יֵת סַמְאֵל) and she said (מִלֵּאךְ מוֹתָא וְדַחִילָהּ). She knew that the tree was good for eating and healing for the light of the eyes, and the tree was desirable to look upon, so she took from its fruit, and she ate. She also gave some to her husband with her, and he ate.

ARN-B 1 (Parma, De Rossi 327, f. 58a)⁷³

Some say that when Eve ate the fruit of the tree, she saw the Angel of Death, who came against her (רְאִיתָה מִלֵּאךְ הַמּוֹת שְׂבֵא נֻדָּה). She said, “I seem to be departing from the world. In the end, another will be created for the First Adam in my place. What shall I do? I shall make him eat with me” (גֹּרֶמֶת אֲנִי לוֹ שִׂיאָכֵל עִמִּי).

As discussed in chapter two, ARN-B 1 is the probable source for PRE 13. There is, however, a profound difference between the two versions. In ARN-B, the Angel of Death manifests itself *after* Eve eats the forbidden fruit. This is a more logical plot development—why should Eve see the Angel of Death before she has even touched the fruit? Why should she then decide to eat from the tree after such a stark reminder of the consequences of disobedience?

Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer seems to understand the tradition differently. Sammael, who has possessed the serpent, appears in the guise of the Angel of Death to intimidate Eve into eating from the tree. If that is not the case, this is at least how the Targumist appears to understand the tradition. The “Angel of Death” is glossed as Sammael—a common name for the devil in PRE but one that only appears in TPJ in this verse and in Gen 4:1. The Targumist follows PRE in placing the appearance of the angel before Eve’s decision to eat the fruit.

In a more difficult example, TPJ and certain manuscripts of PRE state that Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, was also the son of the tyrant Nimrod.

⁷² Becker, *Avot de-Rabbi Natan*, 320.

PRE 16 (JTS 3847, f. 100b)

The steward of the house of Abraham was his servant Eliezer. How do we know he was his servant? When he left Ur of the Chaldeans, all the magnates of the city appeared and offered him gifts. Nimrod appeared and offered him Eliezer his servant (עבדו) as a perpetual slave.

TPJ to Gen 14:14 (BL Add. 27031, f. 15b)

When Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his servants whom he had trained for war, the young men of his house, but they did not want to go with him. He chose from them Eliezer the son of Nimrod (אליעזר בר נמרוד), who was comparable in strength to all of them, 318 men.

The reading of JTS 3847 is the one found in most manuscripts. However, a handful of Yemenite manuscripts (2ת, 7ת, 8ת) state that Nimrod offered Abraham “his son” (בנו) Eliezer. This reading is surprising because, only a few lines later, Eliezer is identified as Og of Bashan, the giant who, according to this very work, survived the Flood (PRE 23, discussed above). This creates a contradiction. Og cannot be, at the same time, an Antediluvian giant and the son of Nimrod, a descendant of Ham who was born after the Flood.

The manuscript used by Gerald Friedlander (5א) provides a solution to the riddle. It has a unique reading where Eliezer is Nimrod’s firstborn (בכורו). If this reading is original, it explains the two other readings. In one instance, בכורו was “corrected” to the similar looking עבדו to avoid a contradiction. In another instance, it was changed to the synonymous בנו. The Targumist must have seen a manuscript with a reading like Friedlander’s. Og, incidentally, is mentioned in the preceding verse of the Targum, but the Targumist does not identify him with Eliezer, avoiding a contradiction.⁷³

On a more technical level, both PRE and TPJ give a detailed plan for Noah’s Ark.

PRE 23 (JTS 3847, f. 107b)

R. Shemaiah said: The Holy One, Blessed be He, showed Noah with [his] finger and said to him, “Like this and like this you will make the Ark. One hundred and fifty compartments along the right side of the Ark, and one hundred and fifty compartments on the [left] side of the Ark. And thirty-three chambers in front and thirty-three chambers behind. And ten houses within. These are for the storage of food. And a balcony within. And five cisterns (אפוניות) on the right side of the Ark and five cisterns on the left side of the Ark.”

TPJ to Gen 6:14 (BL Add. 27031, f. 9a)

[God said]: “Make for yourself an Ark of cedar wood. You will make one hundred and fifty compartments for the Ark on the left side, thirty-six on its broad side, ten houses in the middle for the storage of food, and five cisterns (אפוניות) on the right and five on the left.”

⁷³ In this respect, I agree with Robert Hayward, “Inconsistencies and Contradictions in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: The Case of Eliezer and Nimrod,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 37 (1992): 31–55. The Targum (but not PRE) is coherent regarding the respective identities of Eliezer and Og.

Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer describes a perfectly symmetrical Ark. By comparison, the Ark in the Targum is lopsided. The Targumist's text was the victim of *homeoteleuton*. The text of PRE uses similar vocabulary to describe the two sides of the Ark, resulting in the strong possibility that a scribe would skip a line and describe only one side. This is already apparent in the different manuscripts of PRE (1א, 2א, 8א), which have similarly cleaved the Ark in half. Furthermore, the Targumist has increased the number of chambers on the broad side from thirty-three to thirty-six by misreading "three" (שלושה) as "six" (ששה) and translating accordingly. An important lexical parallel between the two is the exceedingly rare word for "cistern" (אפטיני) used in both works.

Finally, both PRE and TPJ state that Cain killed his brother by smashing his forehead with a stone. In PRE, the tradition appears in isolation. In the Targum, it is the last sentence of a lengthy addition.

PRE 21 (JTS 3847, f. 106a)

He took the stone, and it sank into his forehead, and it killed him (ולקח את האבן וטבעה במצחו) (והרגו), as it is written, "Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him" (Gen 4:8).

TPJ to Gen 4:8 (BL Add. 27031, f. 7a–7b)

Cain said to his brother Abel: "Come, let us both go to the field." When the two of them had gone to the field, Cain spoke up and said to Abel: "I perceive that the world was created with mercy, but it is not guided by the fruit of good deeds, and there is partiality in judgment, since your sacrifice was received with favor, but my sacrifice, for my part, was not received with favor." Abel replied and said to Cain: "The world was created with mercy, and it is guided according to the fruit of good deeds, and there is no partiality in judgment, and since the fruit of my deeds was better than yours and prior to yours, my sacrifice was received with favor." Cain replied and said to Abel: "There is no justice and no judge and no hereafter, and there is neither giving a good reward to the righteous nor meting out punishment to the wicked." Abel responded and said to Cain: "There is justice and a judge and a hereafter, and there is both giving a good reward to the righteous and meting out punishment to the wicked." While they were quarrelling about these matters in the open field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel. The stone sank into his forehead and killed him (וטבע אבנא). (במצחיה וקטליה).

The addition to Gen 4:8 is an entrenched part of the Palestinian Targum tradition. Variations of the debate between Cain and Abel are found in all the Palestinian Targumim, including the major exemplars of the *Fragment Targum* (manuscripts P and V) and several Genizah manuscripts (B, I, FF, X). Its absence in PRE is surprising, unless one considers that none of the widely attested extrabiblical additions in the Palestinian Targum tradition is present in PRE. It is an argument from silence, but it is a loud silence. The absence of the Palestinian Targum tradition from PRE is one of the strongest indicators that the author has not used a Targum, including *Pseudo-Jonathan*.⁷⁴

The one point in which TPJ resembles PRE is the short phrase, “And the stone sank into his forehead.” The murder weapon is not the point of interest here. The tradition that Cain killed Abel with a rock is as old as *Jubilees* (4:31) and found in *Gen. Rab.* 22:8 and *Midrash Tanhuma, Bereshit* 9. The parallel is the phrase itself. The word מִצְחָא in the Targum is a Hebraism and a *hapax legomenon*.⁷⁵ The phrase is adapted from 1Sam 17:49 (the duel between David in Goliath). In principle, this could have been the Hebrew source for the Targum. In practice, this requires that PRE and TPJ independently adapted the verse for a new and unusual context, which seems unlikely. However, this tactic—the use of scriptural language in new contexts—is characteristic of the style of PRE.⁷⁶ This fact, in addition to all the other evidence cited in the chapter, is a strong argument in favor of the position that the Targum simply borrowed from PRE.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter had three goals. The first was to show that PRE and TPJ are interrelated. One of them is dependent on the other; their similarities are not the product of coincidence or a common source. The sheer number of lexical parallels or uncommon traditions attests to this. The second goal was to show that the Targum must depend on PRE. Not every parallel demonstrates dependence, but when it does, it always favors PRE as the source. Most frequently, the Targum cannot be fully understood without reference to the tradition in PRE. Finally, and most importantly, this chapter laid out the material that is unique to PRE within the fold of rabbinic literature. It is the precise reason why the Targumist had recourse to PRE in the first place—because of it was an unparalleled source of aggadic lore.

⁷⁴ McDowell, “The Date and Provenance of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan,” 129–35.

⁷⁵ Cook, “Rewriting the Bible,” 242.

⁷⁶ Elbaum, “Rhetoric, Motif, and Subject-Matter,” 114, lists this example, among many others.