

7 *Jubilees* and *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer*

Traditions from *Jubilees*, if not the book itself, were well-known in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Theoretically, it would have been possible for *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* to have had recourse to *Jubilees*, even without postulating a secret transmission of the book among Jews or the sudden reappearance of the book in Hebrew. The present chapter argues, however, that PRE does *not* know *Jubilees*. In most cases, the parallel traditions in PRE come from rabbinic literature or even the Hebrew Bible. In other cases, a tradition, though not attested in rabbinic literature, was so widely attested in contemporary literature (in Greek, Syriac, or Arabic) that PRE could have known it from several different sources. Only a few traditions can be traced back to Second Temple sources—but not, specifically, to *Jubilees*.

This chapter presents ten representative parallels between PRE and *Jubilees* in the order of the biblical narrative. The examples are drawn from previous work on PRE and *Jubilees*, including the books and articles of Hanoch Albeck (in his translation of Leopold Zunz),¹ Steven Ballaban,² Rachel Adelman,³ Katharina Keim,⁴ and Menahem Kister.⁵ In a few instances, I have even consulted the notes

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

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

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

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

5 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. Only one of the four parallels mentioned by Menahem Kister is not discussed below. Kister considers both PRE 14 (end) and *Jub.* 4:5–6 “covert exegesis” of Lev 5:1 (82–83). Both works state that failure to report a sin is tantamount to committing the sin, although in different contexts: PRE 14 refers to the earth’s failure to disclose the sin of Adam, while *Jubilees* is addressing the sin of Cain. Neither work cites Leviticus. Furthermore, the idea is quite common. See, for example, Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, *The Last Pagans of Iraq: Ibn Waḥshiyya and His Nabatean Agriculture* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 263: “Vermin and poisonous reptiles, either lethal or sickening, are generated when someone commits a sinful deed or someone else sees this taking place without rebuking the sinner for this misdeed, or fighting against him, or trying to deflect that misdeed. If on the other hand, someone rebukes the sinner for doing such damage to his own kind and prevents him from doing that deed, then the poisonous and other vermin will be obliterated.”

of Gerald Friedlander,⁶ although I have not included any of the parallels that Anna Urowitz-Freudenstein addressed in her critique of Friedlander.⁷ The list of parallels is not exhaustive. The notion of “parallel” is subjective, and the list could be indefinitely extended. It does, however, cover the most important points of alleged contact between PRE and *Jubilees*.

The method for the present chapter is to assess the *presumed* source of PRE (i.e., *Jubilees*) before proposing (if necessary) a more *probable* source. Each section opens with a claim from the secondary literature about a parallel between PRE and *Jubilees*. I then quote and analyze the parallels. If the parallel is found wanting—as is often the case—then the search for a better source commences, beginning with the Bible and rabbinic literature, followed by other contemporary Jewish literature and, if necessary, Christian and Muslim literature. In most cases, rabbinic literature is sufficient to explain the material in PRE. However, there are a few cases that defy an easy explanation.

Translations of PRE are taken from New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Ms. 3847 (Eliezer Treitl’s 1π).⁸ The English translations of this manuscript are my own. The Hebrew text of *Jubilees* is from Cana Werman’s retroversion.⁹ My English translations of *Jubilees*, however, are based on James VanderKam’s critical edition of the Ethiopic text.¹⁰

7.1 The Hexameron

Following the prologue, PRE opens with a long discourse on the six days of creation. Gerald Friedlander compared PRE’s enumeration of created things to the widely reported tradition of the twenty-two works of creation from *Jub.* 2:2–23, which does

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).

7 Anna Urowitz-Freudenstein, “Pseudepigraphic Support of Pseudepigraphical Sources: The Case of *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*,” in *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, ed. John C. Reeves, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 35–53, restricted herself to the parallels in Friedlander’s introduction. She did not consider his footnotes.

8 Eliezer Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer: Text, Redaction and a Sample Synopsis* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, 2012), 43–53 (a list of the manuscripts) and 278–310 (a description of every manuscript) [Hebrew].

9 Cana Werman, *The Book of Jubilees: Introduction, Translation, and Interpretation* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, 2015) [Hebrew].

10 James C. VanderKam, ed., *The Book of Jubilees: A Critical Text* (Leuven: Peeters, 1989).

not appear in rabbinic literature.¹¹ He refers to the works of the first day as evidence for this parallel (emphasis mine).

Jubilees 2:2¹²

כי ביום הראשון ברא את השמים העליונים ואת הארץ ואת המים ואת כול הרוחות המשרתים לפניו [...] את התהומות מאפלה ואור ושחר וערב אשר הכין בדעתו

For on the first day God created **the heavens** above, **the earth, the waters**, and **every spirit that serves him** [. . .] **the depths, darkness** and **light** (daybreak and evening), which were prepared by his knowledge.

PRE 3 (JTS 3847, f. 81b)

שמונה דברים נבראו ביום הראשון ואלו הן שמים וארץ אור וחשך תוהו ובהו רוח ומים שנ' ורוח אלהים מרחפת

Eight things were created the first day, and they are: **heaven, earth, light, darkness, tohu, bohu, wind**, and **waters**, as it is written, “A wind from God swept [over the waters]” (Gen 1:2).

Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer 3 names eight things which were created on the first day, while *Jubilees* names only seven. Despite the discrepancy in number, the two lists are nearly identical. The depths in *Jubilees* have been split into two works—*tohu* and *bohu*—in PRE. Also, the “spirits” in *Jubilees* are “wind” in PRE, although both are likely derived from the same Hebrew word (רוח). Friedlander cites similar examples from Philo and *Midrash Tadshe* and concludes: “It seems that Philo knew a cosmology which was known to *Jubilees*, to *Midrash Tadshe*, and to our author.”¹³ Indeed he did. The common source is Gen 1:1–3.

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: ²וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תוֹהוּ וָבוֹהוּ וְרוּחַ עֲלִפְנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם: ³וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי אוֹר וַיְהי־אֹר:

[1] In the beginning God created the **heavens** and the **earth**. [2] And the earth was **formless** and **void**, and **darkness** was on the face of **the abyss**, and a **wind from God** was moving over the face of **the waters**. [3] And God said, “Let there be **light**” (my translation and emphasis).

Both PRE and *Jubilees* draw their lists from the first verses of Genesis, which also accounts for the differences between the two lists. First, the “wind” (רוח) in PRE and the “spirits” (רוחות) in *Jubilees* are based on different interpretations of the “wind from God” (רוח אלהים) in Gen 1:2. *Jubilees* attributes the creation of the angels to the first day, while PRE 4, following rabbinic tradition, attributes their creation to the second day (cf. *Gen. Rab.* 1:3).¹⁴ Second, both works refer to the creation of “dark materials”

¹¹ Gerald Friedlander, *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, 14, n. 6.

¹² Werman, *The Book of Jubilees*, 147; VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 7–8.

¹³ Friedlander, *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, 13 n. 6.

¹⁴ The rabbis also accept the possibility that the angels were created on the fifth day. They categorically refuse creation on the first day. Some *piyyut* state otherwise. See Yehoshua Granat, “No

on the first day, but they identify the primordial chaos with different terms. *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* names the formless void (תהו ובהו) while *Jubilees* mentions the abyss (תהום). *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* does not agree with *Jubilees*, yet both agree with Genesis.

The greatest discrepancy between the two accounts involves the number of works created over the six days. In *Jubilees* and dependent literature, the number is fixed at twenty-two. *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* does not refer to this figure. The final tally, which is not specified in the text, is considerably more than twenty-two—it is closer to forty. The twenty-two works of creation is one of the best-represented traditions from *Jubilees* in later literature. Furthermore, it is faithfully reproduced in more than one Hebrew work, including Nissi b. Noah's *Commentary on the Ten Commandments* and *Midrash Tadshe*. These two sources provide an instructive contrast with PRE. There is no reason to believe that *Jubilees* informs any part of the Hexameron in PRE.

7.2 Enoch and the Calendar

The reception of Enoch in rabbinic literature was decidedly mixed. An oft-quoted passage from *Genesis Rabbah* states that Enoch did not ascend to heaven but died at an early age because he was neither righteous nor especially wicked (*Gen. Rab.* 25:1). This passage is a direct polemic against the belief that Enoch ascended to heaven. On the other hand, *Lev. Rab.* 29:11 has a positive evaluation of Enoch: He is especially blessed as the seventh in a series of patriarchs. Outside of classical rabbinic literature, but within late antique Judaism, *3Enoch* (*Sefer Hekhalot*) posits that the angel Metatron (cf. *b. Hagigah* 15a) is a transfigured Enoch. This apotheosis of Enoch goes far beyond anything found in Second Temple or Christian literature. None of these traditions, however, inform the portrayal of Enoch in PRE.

Menahem Kister, following Hanoch Albeck, refers to “the depiction of Enoch as establishing the calendar in *1Enoch* and the *Jubilees* as well as in PRE chapter 7 [sic, chapter 8] (the solar calendar according to *1Enoch* and *Jubilees*, the lunar calendar according to PRE) and the calendar’s transmission to Noah” as one of the stronger cases for PRE’s dependence on Second Temple literature.¹⁵ Albeck himself drew attention to Enoch’s achievements in *Jub.* 4:17.¹⁶ *Jubilees* later specifies that Enoch learned the working of the calendars from his centuries-long sojourn with

Angels Before the World? A Preexistence Tradition and Its Transformation from Second Temple Literature to Early Piyut,” in *Tradition, Transmission, and Transformation from Second Temple Literature through Judaism and Christianity in Late Antiquity*, ed. Menahem Kister et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 69–92.

¹⁵ Kister, “Ancient Material in *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eli’ezer*,” 70.

¹⁶ See Albeck in Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, 139.

the angels (*Jub.* 4:21). *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* only mentions Enoch twice. The first time does indeed involve the calendar, but the details are quite different (emphasis mine).

Jubilees 4:17–21¹⁷

[17] זה ראשון מבני האדם אשר נולדו בארץ אשר למד ספר ומוסר חכמה ואשר כתב בספר את אותות השמים כסדר חודשיהם למען ידעו בני האדם את תקופות השנים כסדרן לכול חודשיהן [18] ראשון הוא אשר כתב תעודה ויעד בבני האדם לקצי עולמים ושבועי היובלים ספר וימות השנה הודיע וחודשים סדר ושבטות השנים אמר כאשר למדנוהו [19] ואשר היה ואשר נהיה ראה בחלומו אשר יהיה על בני האדם לדורותם עד מועד יום הדין ראה והבין הכול ויכתוב לו לעדות וישם אותה על הארץ על כול בני האדם ולדורותם [20] וביובל השנים עשר בשבוע השביעי בו לקח לו אשה ושמה עדני בת דנאל בת אחי אביו לו לאשה ובשנה הששית לשבוע הזה ילדה לו בן ויקרא שמו מתושלח [21] ויהי עוד עם מלאכי אלוהים ששה יובלי שנים ויראו לו כול אשר על הארץ ובשמים ממשלת השמש ויכתוב הכול

[17] He was the first human to learn writing and instruction and wisdom from among humankind, among those who were born on the earth. And he wrote down the signs of the heavens according to the order of their months in a book, so that humankind would know the times of the years according to the arrangements of each of their months. [18] He was the first to write a testimony, and he testified to humankind among the generations of the land. He related the weeks of the jubilees and made known the days of years. He arranged the months and recounted the Sabbaths of years, as we had made known to him. [19] He saw in a vision of his sleep what was and what will be, what

PRE 8 (JTS 3847, 88a)

בעשרים ושמונה באלול נבראו חמה ולבנה מניין שנים וחדשים ימים ולילות ושעות וקצים ומחזורים ועבורות היה תחלה לפני הק' ב'ה' והוא היה מעבר את השנה וא' ח' כ' מסרן לאדם הראשון שנ' זה ספר תולדות אדם וכו' זה ספר דרכי מנין העולם וכל תולדות בני האדם אדם מסר לחנוך ונכנס בסוד העבור ועבר את השנה שנ' ויתהלך חנוך את האלהים ויתהלך חנוך בדרכי מנין העולם שמסר אלהים לאדם חנוך מסר לנח ונכנס בסוד העבור

On the twenty-eighth of Elul, the sun and the moon were created. And the number of years, months, days, nights, the hours, terms, seasons, cycles, and intercalations were, from the beginning, before the Holy One, Blessed be He. He was intercalating the year, and, after this, he transmitted them [the calculations] to the First Adam, as it is written, “This is the counting (ספר) of the generations of Adam” (Gen 5:1). This is a book (ספר) of the methods of calculating the universe and the history of humanity. Adam transmitted [it] to Enoch. He was initiated into the secret of intercalation, and he intercalated the year, as it is written, “Enoch walked with God” (Gen 5:22). He

17 Werman, *Book of Jubilees*, 195–96; VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 24–26.

will occur among humankind in their generations until the Day of Judgment. He saw all of it and understood. He wrote down the testimony concerning all the humankind and their generations and deposited it in the land. [20] In the twenty-second jubilee, in the seventh week, he took to himself a wife, and her name was Edni, the daughter of Danel, the daughter of the sister of his father, for himself as a wife. In the sixth year of this week, she bore him a son, and he named him Methusaleh. [21] Thereafter, he walked with the angels of the Lord six jubilees of years. They showed him everything that was on earth and in the heavens—the sovereignty of the sun—and he recorded everything.

walked in the ways of calculating the universe which God had transmitted Adam. **Enoch** transmitted [it] to Noah, and he was initiated into the secret of intercalation. . .

In PRE, Enoch does not establish the calendar. God has already taught the calendar to Adam, who transmits it to Enoch. Enoch then transmits the secret to Noah. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* 8 narrates the rest of the history of the secret: Noah transmits it to Shem (who is Melchizedek), Shem to Abraham, Abraham to Isaac, Isaac to Jacob, and Jacob to Joseph. When Joseph dies, the secret is lost, and God must retransmit it anew to Moses.

The passage is directly comparable to the explanation of how Moses obtained his staff, which is, incidentally, the only other time Enoch is named in PRE (emphasis mine).

ר' לוי אומ' אותו המטה שנברא בין השמשות נמסר לאדם הראשון בגן עדן ואדם מסר לחנוך וחנוך מסר לנח ונח מסר לשם ושם מסר לאברהם ואברהם מסר ליצחק ויצחק מסר ליעקב ויעקב הורידו למצ' ומסרו ליוסף בנו וכשמת יוסף נשלל כל ביתו והמטה הגיעה לפלסין שלפרעה והיה יתרו אחד מחרטומי מצרים וראה את המטה וחמד אותה ולקחו והביאו ונטעו בגן ביתו וכשבא משה לארץ מדין נכנס לגן ביתו שליתרו וראה את המטה וקרא את האותות שהיו עליו ושלה ידו ולקחו וראה אותו יתרו ואמ' זה הוא האיש שהוא עתיד לגאול את ישראל ממצ'ר

Rabbi Levi said: The very staff, which was created the eve of the first Sabbath, was transferred to Adam in the Garden of Eden. Adam gave it to **Enoch**; **Enoch** gave it to Noah; Noah gave it to Shem; Shem gave it to Abraham; Abraham gave it to Isaac; Isaac gave it to Jacob; and Jacob took it down to Egypt and gave it to Joseph, his son. When Joseph died, his whole house was pillaged, and the staff arrived in the palace of Pharaoh. Jethro was one of magicians of Egypt. He saw the staff and desired it. He took it and brought it and planted it in the garden of his house. When Moses came to the land of Midian and entered the garden of Jethro's house, he saw the staff and read the letters that were on it. He then stretched forth his hand and took it. When Jethro saw him, he said, "This is the man who will redeem Israel from Egypt in the future" (PRE 40, JTS 3847, f. 133a–133b).

In PRE 8, Enoch is only one among several worthies who receives the secret of intercalation. In the second reference, Enoch is only one of the patriarchs who handled the staff that would become the rod of Moses. The two chains are related. The sequence of worthies is the same: Adam—Enoch—Noah—Shem—Abraham—Isaac—Jacob—Joseph—Moses.

Hanoch Albeck, while commenting on the Enoch's knowledge of the calendar in both PRE and *Jubilees*, observed that the presence of Enoch in both chains is problematic, since Enoch had already vanished from the earth before the birth of Noah.¹⁸ If this is not an outright error, then it could be an allusion to the assumption of Enoch, who continued living in Paradise after his translation. If so, this is the only allusion to this event in PRE. There is, in fact, nothing remarkable about Enoch in PRE, and nothing to suggest that its Enoch tradition—if it can be called that—is indebted to *Jubilees* or any other work of Second Temple literature. He is just a link in a chain.

The idea that Adam already knew the calendar, including intercalation, can also be found in other late antique sources. For example, Ephrem the Syrian (d. 373) explains in his *Commentary on Genesis* that the eleven-day difference between the lunar and solar years (necessitating intercalation) was built into the very fabric of creation (emphasis mine).

Just as the trees, the vegetation, the animals, the birds, and even mankind were old, so also were they young. They were old according to the appearance of their limbs and their substances, yet they were young because of the hour and moment of their creation. Likewise, the moon was both old and young. It was young, for it was but a moment old, but was also old, for it was full as it is on the fifteenth day. If the moon had been created a day old or even two, it would have given no light; because of its proximity to the sun, it would not even have been visible. If it had been created about four days old, although it might have been visible, it would still not have given any light. This would have rendered false the verse *God created the two great lights* (Gen 1:16), as well as *He said, "Let there be lights in heaven to give light upon the earth"* (Gen 1:14). Therefore, the moon had to be fifteen days old. The sun, although it was only one day old, was nevertheless four days old, for it is according to the sun that each day is counted and will be reckoned. Accordingly, those eleven days, by which the moon was older than the sun, that were added to the moon at that first moment are also added to it each year, for these [days] are used in the lunar reckoning. There was nothing lacking in that year for Adam and his descendants, for any deficiency in the measure of the moon had been filled in when the moon was created. **Thus, Adam and his descendants learned from this year that, henceforth, eleven days were to be added to every year.** Clearly then, it was not the Chaldeans who arranged the seasons and the years; these things had been arranged before [the creation of] Adam (*Comm. Gen.* 1.25).¹⁹

¹⁸ Albeck in Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, 139.

¹⁹ Ephrem the Syrian, *Selected Prose Works*, trans. Edward G. Mathews and Joseph P. Amar (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 91–92.

Although it is doubtful that PRE knew this or any work of Ephrem, this tradition better reflects the background of the secret of intercalation in PRE 8 than anything from the Second Temple period.

7.3 Passover

Rabbinic literature occasionally intimates that the patriarchs, especially Abraham, observed aspects of the Mosaic Law (e.g., *m. Qiddushin* 5:14; cf. *b. Yoma* 28a). Albeck noted that in PRE the actions of the patriarchs are paradigmatic for later rabbinic customs, such as Adam's observance of *havdalah* (PRE 20).²⁰ In some isolated incidents, the patriarchs in PRE also celebrate Mosaic festivals. For example, both Adam (PRE 21) and Isaac (PRE 32) instruct their sons about the celebration of Passover. Albeck saw in the pre-Mosaic celebration of Passover a direct parallel with *Jubilees*, where Abraham allegedly observes this holy day (*Jub.* 18:18).²¹

While there are many rabbinic traditions about the patriarchs observing the Mosaic Law, there is nothing comparable to PRE's tradition that Adam celebrated Passover. The Babylonian Talmud comes close to saying the opposite, that Adam is the founder of *Gentile* religion.

ת"ר לפי שראה אדם הראשון יום שמתמעט והולך אמר אי לי שמא בשביל שסרחתני עולם חשוך בעדי וחוזר לתוהו ובוהו וזו היא מיתה שנקנסה עלי מן השמים עמד וישב ח' ימים בחענית כיון שראה תקופת טבת וראה יום שמאריך והולך אמר מנהגו של עולם הוא הלך ועשה שמונה ימים טובים לשנה האחרת עשאו לאלו ולאלו ימים טובים הוא קבעם לשם שמים והם קבעום לשם עבודת כוכבים

The Sages taught: When Adam saw the days were shortening, he went and said, "Alas for me! Because I transgressed, the world now becomes dark on my account. It is returning to the primordial chaos. This must be the death that was imputed to me from heaven. He stood up and repented eight days with fasting. When he saw the season of Tevet, and the days were lengthening, he went and said, "This is the way of the world!" He went and feasted for eight days. The next year, he observed both of these festivals. He established them for the sake of heaven, but they [his pagan descendants] established them for idolatry (*b. Avodah Zarah* 8a).²²

The same page of Talmud gives a second version of the same tradition, where Adam sacrifices a bull after he discovers the sequence of day and night is unrelated to his sin. The Sages then discuss Roman festivals, befitting the subject of the tractate: *Gentile* worship.

²⁰ See Albeck in Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, 138.

²¹ Albeck in Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, 137.

²² My translation from the Vilna Shas: *Talmud Bavli*, 37 vols. (Vilna: Widow and Brothers Romm, 1880–1886).

The patriarchal institution of Jewish holidays prior to their codification in the Mosaic Law (but according to the dictates of the heavenly tablets) is one of the recurring themes of *Jubilees*. For example, Enoch makes known the Sabbath (*Jub.* 4:18), Noah institutes Shavuot after the Flood (*Jub.* 6:17), Abraham first observes Sukkot (*Jub.* 16:20–23), and Jacob establishes Yom Kippur after the disappearance of Joseph (*Jub.* 34:18). It is unclear, however, whether Passover was instituted prior to the time of Moses. The relevant passage, *Jubilees'* account of the binding of Isaac, is ambiguous. It can be compared to the two passages from PRE (emphasis mine).

***Jubilees* 17:15 and 18:3.18–19²³**

[17:15] ויהי בשבוע השביעי בשנה הראשונה בחודש הראשון ביובל הזה בשנים עשר לחודש היו דברים בשמים על אברהם כי נאמן הוא בכול דברו ואהבו אלוהים ובכול צרה היה נאמן

[18:3] ויקום עם שחר ויעמוס את חמורו ואת שני נעריו לקח עמו ואת יצחק בנו ואת עצי העולה בקע וילך אל המקום וביום השלישי וירא את המקום מרחוק

[18:18] ויעש חג זה בכול השנים שבוע ימים בשמחה ויקרא אותו חג ה' כמו שבוע הימים אשר הלך ושב בשלום [19] וכן חקוק הוא וכתוב על לוחות השמים לישראל ולזרעו לעשות את המועד הזה שבעה ימים יחגו בשמחה

[17:15] And it was the seventh week, in the first year of this jubilee, **in the first month, on the twelfth of this month**, that there were voices in heaven concerning Abraham, that he believed all that was spoken to him, that God loved him, and that he was steadfast in all adversity. . .

[18:3] He rose in the early morning, loaded his she-ass, and took his two servants with him along with Isaac, his son. He split the wood for the sacrifice, and he came to the place **on the third day**. He saw the place from afar. . .

[18:18] He established this festival for all the years—seven days of joy. He called it a festival of God because **these were the seven days he**

PRE 21 (JTS 3847, f. 106a) and 32 (f. 120a–120b)

[PRE 21] הגיע לילי יום הפסח קרא אדם לבניו ואמ' להם בני בזה היום עתידין בני ישראל להקריב קרבן פסחים לבוראם הקריבו גם אתם לפני בוראכם

[PRE 32] הגיע לילי יום הפסח קרא יצחק לעשו בנו הגדול אמ' לו בני היום הזה יום ברכות וטללים והעליונים אומרין הלל היום הזה בו אוצרות טללים נפתחין

הלך והביא שני גדיי עזים וכי שני גדיי עזים היה מאכלו שלי' אלא אחד הקריבו קרבן פסחים ואחד עשאו מטעמים והביאו לאביו

[PRE 21] The eve of Passover arrived. 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.”

[PRE 32] The eve of Passover arrived. Isaac called Esau, his elder son, and said to him, “My son, today is the day of blessings and dew. The ones on high recite the *hallel*. This is the day on which the treasures of dew are opened. . .”

[Jacob] 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.

23 Werman, *Book of Jubilees*, 316–318; VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 101–5.

went forth and returned in peace. [19]

This is how it was established and written in the heavenly tablets regarding Israel and his descendants, **to observe this festival for seven days in the joy of the festival.**

Although the text of *Jubilees* does not call undue attention to it, the sacrifice of Isaac occurs on the eve of Passover (14 Nisan, according to *Jub.* 49:1). The decision to test Abraham occurs on the twelfth of the first month (i.e., Nisan). Abraham takes three days to arrive at his destination and three days to return. He must have spent one day at his destination (Mount Zion, according to *Jub.* 18:13) since the passage concludes with Abraham instituting a seven-day feast to commemorate his weeklong journey.

Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer implies that Abraham celebrated Passover since, otherwise, Isaac could not have taught it to his children. The binding of Isaac (PRE 31), however, coincides with Yom Kippur rather than Passover, *per* rabbinic tradition (e.g., *Lev. Rab.* 20:2). The second major difference is that Abraham does not institute a festival on this occasion. The binding of Isaac is a prefiguration of a future holiday, but the text does not state that Abraham observed the holiday himself. Indeed, PRE 46 describes the institution of Yom Kippur in the days of Moses, following the sin of the Golden Calf.

Furthermore, the festival Abraham institutes in *Jubilees* is not Passover but the closely related Feast of Unleavened Bread.²⁴ The word “Passover” does not even appear until *Jub.* 49:1, the beginning of the rules for the observance of the festival following the Exodus from Egypt. According to these regulations, Passover lasts a single day (*Jub.* 49:7.10.14), but the Feast of Unleavened Bread continues for a week (*Jub.* 49:22; see Exod 12:18). From the evidence of *Jub.* 49:22, it appears that Moses is the one who instituted Passover, making his personal contribution to the Jewish calendar, just as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Jacob instituted holidays.

The greatest obstacle to this interpretation is that the dates of Abraham’s journey (12–18 Nisan) do not correspond to the dates of the festival as given in the Torah (14/15–21 Nisan). The simple answer is that the dates of the festival are not intended to correspond to the dates of Abraham’s journey. *Jubilees* arranges Abraham’s journey to establish a clear link between the Aqedah and Passover, but this is not the same as Abraham instituting Passover. It is a thematic resonance, as with Abraham and Yom Kippur in PRE. Even if this explanation is not accepted—both

²⁴ See James C. VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Commentary on the Book of Jubilees*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 1:576–82.

Michael Segal and James Kugel believe the divergent dates are an interpolation—it does not change the fact that the holiday Abraham founds in *Jubilees* is the Festival of Unleavened Bread, not Passover.²⁵

In *Jubilees*, Adam is the one major patriarch who does not institute a feast day. In PRE, Adam is the *only* patriarch to institute one of the Mosaic festivals. Furthermore, in *Jubilees*, Passover is not established until the time of Moses—it is the one major holiday in the work that is not pre-Mosaic. *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* only resembles *Jubilees* in that both works attribute contemporary religious practices to the ancient patriarchs. This idea is not unique. A key component of Islamic belief is that Abraham was neither Jew nor Christian but a Muslim (Qurʾān 3:67). Christian works such as the *Cave of Treasures* depict the Antediluvian patriarchs venerating saints and celebrating the Eucharist.²⁶ *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer*’s attribution of Jewish practices to Adam—not just Passover and the *havdalah* but also the observance of the Sabbath (PRE 20) and marriage under a *chuppah* (PRE 12)—participates in the same discourse by transforming Adam into a pious Jew.²⁷

7.4 The Fallen Angels

Almost every researcher who has written about PRE observes that PRE 22 reintroduces the myth of the Watchers, the fallen angels who took human wives and fathered giants, into Jewish literature.²⁸ *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* 22 certainly departs from one established rabbinic tradition by portraying the “Sons of God” (Gen 6:1–4) as literal fallen angels rather than depraved human beings (cf. *Gen. Rab.* 26:5). However, it is an overgeneralization to equate PRE 22 with the myth of the Watchers

²⁵ Michael Segal, *The Book of Jubilees: Rewritten Bible, Redaction, Ideology and Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 198–202; James L. Kugel, *A Walk through Jubilees: Studies in the Book of Jubilees and the World of its Creation* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 112–13; 240–42.

²⁶ Clemens Leonhard, “Observations on the Date of the Syriac Cave of Treasures,” in *The World of the Aramaeans III: Studies in Language and Literature in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion*, ed. P. M. Michèle Daviau, John W. Wevers, and Michael Weigl (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 255–94, touches on Christian practices in *Cav. Tr.* Similarly: Serge Ruzer, “The Cave of Treasures on Swearing by Abel’s Blood and Expulsion from Paradise: Two Exceptional Motifs in Context,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9 (2001): 251–71; Jason Scully, “The Exaltation of Seth and Nazirite Asceticism in the Cave of Treasures,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 68 (2014): 310–28.

²⁷ Some of this material (but not Passover) already appears in *Genesis Rabbah*, such as the institution of *havdalah* (*Gen. Rab.* 11:2) and the *chuppah* (*Gen. Rab.* 18:1).

²⁸ For example, Albeck in Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, 139; Friedlander, *Pirké de Rabbi Eliezer*, xxvi; Adelman, *Return of the Repressed*, 109–37; Kister, “Ancient Material in *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eli’ezer*,” 70; Keim, *Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer*, 171–76.

found in the *Book of the Watchers* (1Enoch 1–36) or in *Jub.* 5. A closer examination of the evidence reveals that the primary source of PRE 22 is simply Gen 6:1–4. This conclusion is even more surprising in light of the evidence that rabbinic literature does, in fact, know the myth of the Watchers. Despite this negative assessment, an allusion to the ancient Watcher tradition does appear in PRE 34.

The best way to illustrate the difference between the two narratives is, once again, to place them side-by-side.

Jubilees 4:15.22 and 5:1–12²⁹

[4:15] ובשבוע השני ליובל העשירי לקח לו מהללאל אשה את דינה בת ברכאל בת אחי אביו לו לאשה ותלד לו בן בשבוע השלישי בשנה הששית ויקרא שמו ירד כי בימיו ירדו מלאכי אלוהים אשר נקראו עירים לארץ ללמד את בני האדם לעשות משפט וצדק על הארץ

[4:22] ויעד בעירים אשר חטאו עם בנות האדם כי החלו מתערבים ומטמאים עם בנות האדם ויעד חנוך על כולם

[5:1] ויהי בימים ההם החלו בני האדם לרבות על פני כול הארץ ובנות נולדו להם ויראו אותן מלאכי האלוהים באחת מהיובל הזה כי יפות מראה הן ויקחו אותן להם לנשים מכול אשר בחרו ותלדנה להם בנים והמה הנפילים [2] וירב החמס בארץ וכול בשר השחית את דרכו מאדם עד בהמה ועד חיה ועד העוף ועד כול הרומש על הארץ כולם השחיתו דרכם וחוקם ויחלו לאכול איש את רעהו וירב החמס בארץ וכול מחשבת יצר כול בני האדם רע כזאת כול היום [3] וירא אלוהים את הארץ והנה נשחתה והשחית כול בשר חוקו והכול הרעו לפני עיניו כול אשר היו בארץ [4] ויאמר להכרית את האדם ואת כול הבשר אשר על פני הארץ אשר ברא [5] ונוח לבדו מצא חן בעיניו [6] ועל מלאכיו אשר שלח לארץ קצף להסירם מכול ממשלתם ויאמר לנו לאסרם במעמקי הארץ והנה הם אסורים בדד בתוכם [7] ועל בניהם יצא קול מלפניו לדוקרם בחרב ולהסירם מתחת השמים [8] ויאמר לא ישכון רוחי על האדם לעולם כי הוא בשר ויהיו ימיו מאה ועשרים שנה [9] וישלח את חרבו ביניהם להרוג איש את רעהו ויחלו להרוג זה

PRE 22 (JTS 3847, f. 107a–107b)

ר' אומ' ראו המלאכים שנפלו ממקום קדושתן מן השמים את בנות הארץ וראו את בנות דורו שלקין שהן מהלכות גלויות בשר ערוה והיו מבחלות עיניהן כזונות ותעו אחריהן ולקחו מהן נשים שנ' ויראו בני האלהים את בנות הארץ ר' שמעון בן קרחא אומ' המלאכים אש לוהט הם וכי יש לך אש שבאה בבועלה בבשר ודם ואינו שורף את הגוף אלא מכאן אתה למד שמשעה שנפלו ממקום קדושתן מן השמים נעשה קומתן וכוחן כבני אדם ולבשו בשרם גוש עפר שנ' לבש בשרי רמה וגוש עפר עורי רגע וימאס ר' צדוק אומ' מהם נולדו בני הענקים המהלכים בזדונות ובגובה קומתן והיו משלחין ידם בגול ובחמס ובשפיכות דמים מניין שהם נולדו הענקים שנ' שם ראינו את הנפילים בני ענק מן הנפילים היו ר' אליעזר אומ' היו מולידין את בניהם ופרים ורבים כמין שרץ גדול ששה ששה בכל לידה ובשעה שהיו מולידין את בניהם היו עומדין על רגליהם ומדברים בלשון אבותם ומרקדים כצאן שנ' ישלחו כצאן את עויליהם וילדיהם ירקדון אמ' להם נוח שובו מדרכיכם הרעים וממעשיכם הרעים עד שלא יבוא עליכם את המבול ויכרית את כל זרע בני אדם מן העולם אמרו הרי אנו מונעים את עצמינו מפריה ורביה מה היו עושין כשהיו באין על הנשים היו משחיתים את מקור זרעם על הארץ וראה הק' ב'ה' שהשחיתו את דרכם על הארץ וכעס עליהם שנ' וירא אלהים את הארץ והנה נשחתה אמרו אם מי המבול הוא מוריד עלינו מן השמים אנו גבוהי קומה ואין המים מגיעים עד צוארינו ואם מי התהומות הוא מעלה עלינו מן הארץ יש בכפות רגלינו לסתום את התהומות מה היו עושין

²⁹ Weran, *Book of Jubilees*, 195–96 and 210–11; VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 24–26 and 28–31.

את זה עד נפלו הכול בחרב ונכרתו מן הארץ [10] ואבותם יביטו ואחר יאסרו במעמקי הארץ עד מועד המשפט הגדול בהיות המשפט לכול אשר השחיתו דרכם ופעולתם לפני אלוהים [11] כולם יכרית ממקומם ולא יותיר מהם אחד אשר לא ישפט ככל רעתו [12] ולכול בריותיו יקים בריאה חדשה וצדיקה ולא יסורו מכול תכונם עד עולם ויצדק כול אחד ואחד למינו כול הימים

[4:15] In the second week of the tenth jubilee, Malael took for himself as a wife Dinah, the daughter of Barakael; the daughter of the sister of his father he had as a wife. She bore him a son in the third week in the sixth year. He named him Jared because in his days the angels of God, the ones called the Watchers, came down to earth in order to teach humankind and to exercise justice and righteousness upon the earth. . .

[4:22] And he [Enoch] testified against the Watchers, against those who sinned with the daughters of men because those ones began to intermingle with the daughters of the land so that they became impure, and Enoch testified against them all.

[5:1] Humankind began to multiply on the face of all the earth, and daughters were born to them. In a certain year of this jubilee, the angels of God saw that they were beautiful to behold. They took them to themselves as wives from any of them whom they chose. They bore children to them—giants. [2] Injustice increased on the earth, and all flesh corrupted its way, from humans to cattle to wild beasts to birds to everything that crawls upon the earth. All of them corrupted their ways and their natures, and they began to devour one another. Injustice increased upon the earth, and the entire consciousness of humanity continuously inclined towards evil. [3] God saw the earth and—behold—it was corrupt, and all flesh had corrupted its nature. All of them behaved wickedly in his eyes, all who walk upon the earth. [4] He swore he would annihilate humanity and all flesh from the face of the earth which he created.

היו פורסין את כפות רגליהן לסתום את המעינות מה עשה הק'ב'ה' הרתיח עליהן מי התהומות והיו עולין ושוקלין בשרם ומפשיטין את עורם מעליהם שנ' בעת יזורבו נצמתו בחמו נדעכו ממקומו אל תהי קורא כן אלא בחמימיו ידעכו ממקומו

Rabbi said: The angels who fell from their holy place in heaven saw the daughters of the land and saw the daughters of the generation of Cain, that they were walking about naked and painting their eyes like harlots. They wandered after them and took them as wives, as it is written, "The Sons of God saw the daughters of the land" (Gen 6:2). R. Simeon [sic, Joshua] b. Korhah said: The angels are flaming fire (cf. Ps 104:4). You have fire that entered into sexual contact with flesh and blood, but they did not burn the body. From here you learn that from the hour that they fell from their holy place in heaven, their stature and strength became like that of human beings. They wore as their flesh clods of dust, as it is written, "My flesh harbors worms and clods of dust; my skin has wrinkled and will soon melt away" (Job 7:5). R. Zadok said, "From them were born the Anakim who comported wickedly and were an astounding height. They set their hands to robbery, violence, and the shedding of blood. From whence were born the Anakim, as it is written, "We saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak" (Num 13:33), hence they were from the Nephilim. R. Eliezer said: They were begetting their children and being fruitful and multiplying like a species of giant vermin, six at every birth. While they were begetting their children, they were standing on their feet and speaking in the language of their fathers and dancing like sheep, as it is written, "They sent forth their young ones like sheep, and their children dance" (Job. 21:11). Noah said to them: "Turn from your wicked ways and your evil deeds, lest He bring upon you the Flood, and it shall cut off the entire seed of Adam from the world. They responded, "In that

[5] Noah alone found favor in his eyes. [6] Concerning his angels which he had sent upon the earth, he was so exceedingly furious that he uprooted them from all their positions of power. He commanded us that we should imprison them in the depths of the earth. And, behold, they are bound within and are alone. [7] Concerning their children, a voice went out from before him that he would give them over to the sword and annihilate them from under heaven. [8] He said, "My spirit shall not remain among humans forever, for they are flesh. Their days will be fixed at 120 years." [9] He sent the sword among them so that each one of them would kill their companion. They began killing each other until all of them fell by the sword, and they were eradicated from the earth. [10] Their fathers were watching, but after this, they were bound in the depths of the earth until the Great Day of the Judgment, when there will be a reckoning over all those who have corrupted their ways and their deeds before God. [11] He swept all of them from their places, and not one of them remained whom he did not judge for all their evil acts. [12] He made for every creature a new and righteous creation, so that they would never again sin with their whole being. And each one would be righteous according to its kind for all time.

case, we shall prevent ourselves from being fruitful and multiplying." What did they do? When they were entering their wives, they wasted the source of their seed on the ground. When the Holy One, Blessed be He, saw that they wasted their seed on the ground, he became angry with them, as it is written, "And the LORD saw the earth and, behold, it was corrupt" (Gen 6:12). They said: "If he brings down the water of the Flood upon us from heaven, we are tall of stature, and the water will not even touch our necks. And if he brings up the water of the depths upon us from the earth, we have the soles of our feet to stop up the depths." What did they do? They spread forth the soles of their feet to stop up the sources of water. What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, do? He heated the waters of the depths over them, and the waters came forth and scolded their flesh and peeled off their skin from them, as it is said, "At the time they heat up, they are destroyed; through heat, they are removed from their place" (Job 6:17).

None of the motifs specific to the Watcher myth is found in PRE 22. The word "Watchers" (עִירִי), for example, never appears in PRE (cf. *Jub.* 4:15:22). The Sons of God are instead denominated "the angels who fell from their holy place in heaven" (הַמְּלָאכִים שֶׁנִּפְּלוּ מִמְּקוֹם קְדוּשָׁתָן מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם). The implication is that the angels are to be identified with the Nephilim (נְפִילִים), although the Nephilim are traditionally the giants (here called Anakim), not the fallen angels. The angels do not teach humans forbidden lore (or any lore, for that matter, as in *Jub.* 4:15). The evil angels are never bound (cf. *Jub.* 5:6:10). Their children, the giants, do not engage in cannibalism, their chief crime in the ancient sources (cf. *Jub.* 5:2). In PRE, the giants are violent, but their crimes are also sexual in nature. In *Jubilees*, the giants kill each other off prior to the Flood (cf. *Jub.* 5:9). In PRE 22, the giants are still alive at the time of the Flood. Enoch, who is integral to the ancient Watchers tradition, is nowhere mentioned in PRE 22 (cf. *Jub.* 4:22). Rather, it is Noah who preaches to the giants.

Almost every element of PRE 22 can be inferred from Gen 6:1–4 alone.

וַיְהִי כִּי־הִחֵל הָאָדָם לָרֹב עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה וּבָנֹת יָלְדוּ לָהֶם: ²וַיֵּרְאוּ בְנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם כִּי טֹבֹת הֵנָּה וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם נָשִׁים מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּחָרוּ: ³וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לֹא־יִדּוֹן רוּחִי בָאָדָם לְעֹלָם בְּשָׁגֶם הוּא בָשָׂר וְהָיוּ יָמֵיו מֵאָה וָעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה: ⁴הַנִּפְלְאִים הָיוּ בָאָרֶץ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם וְגַם אַחֲרֵיכֶן אֲשֶׁר יָבֹאוּ בְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל־בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם וַיִּלְדוּ לָהֶם הֵמָּה הַגִּבֹּרִים אֲשֶׁר מְעֹלָם אֲנָשֵׁי הַשָּׁם:

[1] Humankind began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them.

[2] The Sons of God saw the human women, that they were beautiful, and they took as wives from among them those whom they chose. [3] The LORD said, “My spirit will not sojourn among humanity forever, for they are flesh. Their days will be 120 years.” [4] The Nephilim were in the land in those days, and also after, when the Sons of God entered human women, and they bore to them the giants of old, men of renown (my translation).

The difference between PRE 22 and *Genesis Rabbah* is that PRE 22 offers a literal reading of Genesis rather than a euhemeristic one. The one element which does not come from Genesis, the distinction between the “sons of Seth” and the “daughters of Cain,” is a Christian tradition that will be discussed in chapter ten.

A final point is that the leaders of the Watchers—Shemihazah and Asael—are never named in PRE. Granted, they are not named in *Jubilees* either, but the use of the names in PRE would have been a clear reference to the ancient Watchers tradition. An observation by Annette Reed, who wrote a monograph on the Watchers tradition, is worth quoting in full here. She does not engage PRE because it does not fit the subject of her book: “Space does not permit an inquiry into *Pirqe R. El.*’s approach to the fallen angels, particularly since *we here find no hint of any influence from distinctively Enochic traditions about them. Interestingly, the angels who fall before the Flood are there anonymous*” (emphasis mine).³⁰ *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer*’s deficiency is underscored by the fact that the names *do* appear in other late antique and medieval Jewish works. In two passages of the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Yoma* 67b and *b. Niddah* 61a), Shemihazah (שְׁמִיחָזָה) and Asael (עֲזָאֵל) appear under the forms Shemhazai (שְׁמַחְזַאי) and Azazel (עֲזָאֵל). Their names are also found in *Deut. Rab.* 11:10, *Pesiqta Rabbati* 34, and *3Enoch* 4–5.³¹

The preservation of the names of the Watchers anticipates the full-fledged revival of the tradition in *Midrash Shemhazai*, which is found in several medieval

³⁰ Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 255, n. 81.

³¹ For these, see Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 233–72, and Annette Yoshiko Reed, “From Asael and Šemihazah to Uzzah, Azzah, and Azazel: 3 Enoch 5 (§7–8) and Jewish Reception-History of 1 Enoch,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 8 (2001): 105–36.

Hebrew anthologies.³² The first part of this work is based on a Muslim legend about the fallen angels Hārūt and Mārūt (Qurʾān 2:102).³³ The second part, however, is an adaptation of a Second Temple work, the *Book of Giants*, which survived into Late Antiquity as part of Manichaean scripture.³⁴ *Midrash Shemhazai* is a perfect example of what PRE is not: A rabbinic composition that engages directly with Second Temple literature. *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* does not share a single detail with *Midrash Shemhazai* beyond a connection to Gen 6:1–4. Therefore, PRE 22 breaks with rabbinic tradition in two major ways. It ignores the euhemeristic tradition of *Genesis Rabbah*, but it also ignores the traces of the ancient Watcher tradition preserved in rabbinic literature.

Katharina Keim, however, has drawn attention to PRE 34 as the conclusion of the story of the fallen angels and the giants.³⁵ Although Keim does not note it, this portion of the story is parallel to *Jubilees*. The chapter is a homily on the resurrection of the dead, which incidentally mentions that the generation of the Flood will not be resurrected because their souls have become evil spirits. The basic idea is talmudic (*b. Sanhedrin* 108a), but PRE 34 turns it into an aetiology for the origin of demons. *Jubilees* has a similar conception of the origin of evil (emphasis mine).

³² It is found in the *Chronicles of Jerahmeel*, *Bereshit Rabbati*, *Yalqut Shimʿoni*, and the Latin polemical work *Pugio Fidei*. See Jerahmeel b. Solomon, *The Book of Memory, that is The Chronicles of Jerahmeel: A Critical Edition*, ed. Eli Yassif (Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University Press, 2001), 115–17; Jerahmeel b. Solomon, *The Chronicles of Jerahmeel: Or, The Hebrew Bible Historiale*, trans. Moses Gaster (1899; repr. New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1971), 52–54; Moses ha-Darshan, *Midrash Bereshit Rabbati*, ed. Hanoah Albeck (Jerusalem: Mekitze Nirdamim, 1940), 29; Raymond Martini, *Ordinis praedicatorum pugio fidei adversus mauros et judaeos*, ed. Joseph de Voisin and Johann Benedict Carpzov (Leipzig: Wittegau, 1687), 937–39; *Yalqut Shimʿoni*, Genesis §44. The *Yalqut* text is published in Adolph Jellinek, ed., *Bet ha-Midrash: Sammlung kleiner Midraschim und vermischter Abhandlungen aus der älteren jüdischen Literatur*, 6 vols. (Leipzig and Vienna, 1853–1877), 4:127–28.

³³ John C. Reeves, “Some Parascriptural Dimensions of the ‘Tale of Hārūt wa-Mārūt,’” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 135 (2015): 817–42.

³⁴ See J.T. Milik, ed., with the collaboration of Matthew Black, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrān Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 317–39; John C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony: Studies in the Book of Giants Traditions* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1992); and Ken M. Penner, “Did the Midrash of Shemihazai and Azael Use the Book of Giants?,” in *Sacra Scriptura: How “Non-Canonical” Texts Functioned in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, Lee Martin McDonald, and Blake A. Jurgens (London: Bloomsbury, T. & T. Clark, 2014), 15–45.

³⁵ Keim, *Pirqe deRabbi Eliezer*, 176.

Jubilees 10:5³⁶

ואתה יודע את אשר עשו עיריך אבות רוחות אלה
בימי ואלה הרוחות החיים אסרם ותנם במקום
המשפט ולא יאבידו את בני עבדך אלוהי כי רעים
הם ולהשחית נבראו

You know what your Watchers, the fathers of these spirits, did in my days. And these spirits who remain active, seize them and lock them up in the place of judgment. They will not destroy the children of your servant, my Lord, because they are evil and apt to destroy what has been created.

PRE 34 (JTS 3847, f. 123b)

ר' יוחנן אומ' כל הדורות עומדין בתחית המתים
חוץ מדור המבול שנ' מתים כל יחיו רפאים כל
יקומו מתים אלו אמות העולם שנמשלו במתים
יקומו ביום הדין אבל לא יחיו רפאים זה דור
המבול גם ביום הדין אינן עומדין וכל רוחותם
נעשו רוחות אדורין מזיקין לבני אדם לעת' לבוא
והקב"ה מאבד אותם מן העו' הז' ומן העו' הב'
ואין מזיק לישראל עוד שנ' לכן פקדת ותשמידם
ותאבד כל זכר למו

R. Yohanan said: All the generations will stand [again] during the resurrection of the dead apart from the generation of the Flood, as it is written, "The dead shall not live. The ghosts (רפאים) will not rise" (Isa 26:14a). *Dead*: These are the nations of the world who are likened to the dead. They will rise on the Day of Judgment, but they will not live. *Ghosts*: **This is the generation of the Flood. Even on the Day of Judgment, they will not stand. Their spirits have become accursed phantoms afflicting humanity.** In the future, the Holy One, Blessed be He, will come to destroy them from this world and the World to Come. None shall afflict Israel again, as it is written, "Therefore, you have visited and destroyed them, you have obliterated every memory of them" (Isa 26:14b).

This is not the standard rabbinic explanation for the origin of demons. According to *Gen. Rab.* 7:5, demons are souls who had yet to receive their bodies on the eve of the first Sabbath.³⁷ *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer*'s version was a standard explanation in Second Temple literature, even before *Jubilees*. The *Book of the Watchers* (1*Enoch* 15) is the earliest source to mention that demons are the ghosts of the giants. Annette Reed has drawn attention to similar ideas in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* (VIII.7–8), an early Jewish-Christian work indebted to Second Temple sources.³⁸ Loren Stuckenbruck has offered the provocative idea that the Enochic tradition

³⁶ Werman, *Book of Jubilees*, 253; VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 61.

³⁷ See also Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion* (New York: Behrman's Jewish Book House, 1939), 44–60, for rabbinic views on demons.

³⁸ Annette Yoshiko Reed, "Retelling Biblical Retellings: Epiphanius, the Pseudo-Clementines, and the Reception History of *Jubilees*," in *Tradition, Transmission, and Transformation from Second Temple Literature through Judaism and Christianity in Late Antiquity*, ed. Menahem Kister et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 304–21.

informed all Second Temple demonology, even suggesting that the demons in the Gospels were the spirits of the giants. At the same time, he notes that this conception of the demons was part of the Solomonic magic tradition, citing the *Testament of Solomon* (5:3 and 17:1).³⁹ This brief passage from PRE 34 attests a genuinely ancient Second Temple Jewish idea—and it is not the only work from Late Antiquity to do so. We already saw that *Sefer Refu'ot*, written as early as the seventh century and as late as the tenth, knew this tradition in a form directly parallel to *Jub.* 10:1–15.

7.5 Emzara

The list of the wives of the patriarchs is probably the most widespread tradition from *Jubilees*. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* does not give a list of the names of the wives of the patriarchs, but it might refer to Emzara, the wife of Noah according to Second Temple sources—not only *Jubilees* but also the *Genesis Apocryphon* (1QapGen VI.7). This differs from earlier rabbinic tradition, which gives Na'amah as the name of Noah's wife (*Gen. Rab.* 23:3). The wives tradition as a whole has no precedent in rabbinic literature, which is even dismissive of attempts to name anonymous biblical characters, such as the mother of Abraham (*b. Bava Batra* 91a). The only utility of such lists, the Talmud states, is to answer the *minim* (מינים).⁴⁰ Although this passage names several anonymous women, no similar tradition is found elsewhere in rabbinic literature, and the Talmud, in the passage just cited, names only one patriarch's wife—Amathlai (אמתלאי) the wife of Terah. The reference to Emzara in PRE is complicated by textual problems, but even if PRE knows this part of the wives tradition, so did many other Christian and Muslim authors.

Menahem Kister claims to have found the name Emzara, the wife of Noah according to *Jub.* 4:33, in the *editio princeps* of PRE (Constantinople, 1514, Treitl's 1ד).⁴¹ Chapter 23 of this edition refers to the “necklace of *mzr'* their mother” (רביד של מזרע אמן), with which the good sons cover the nakedness of their father. In Kister's emendation, the two sons took “the cloak of Emzara their mother” (רדיד של אמזרע אמן).

³⁹ Loren T. Stuckenbruck, “The ‘Angels’ and ‘Giants’ of Genesis 6:1–4 in Second and Third Century BCE Jewish Interpretation: Reflections on the Posture of Early Apocalyptic Traditions,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 7 (2000): 354–77 (365, n. 30, and again on 376).

⁴⁰ The term refers to diverse non-rabbinic groups. It is usually translated as “heretic.”

⁴¹ Kister, “Ancient Material in *Pirque de-Rabbi Eli'ezer*,” 79–81.

Eliezer Treitl's online synopsis now makes it very easy to check all of the available manuscript evidence and evaluate Kister's claim.⁴² The reading of the relevant line differs significantly depending on the manuscript.

Jubilees 4:33⁴³

וביובל העשרים וחמשה לקח לו נוח אשה ושמה
אמזרע

And in the twenty-fifth jubilee, Noah took for
himself a wife, and her name was Emzara.

PRE 23 (*editio princeps*, 16a)

ולקחו רביד של מזרע אמנ

מזרע) 2ד, 2ד: They took the necklace of Mizra
their mother.

מזרה) 3צ: They took the cloak of Mizrah with
them.

3ת: They took the cloak of their mother with
them.

2ת, 5ת, 7ת, 7א, 8א: They took the cloak of the
East (מזרח) with them.

3א, 4א: They took a single garment that was
spread out before them on their eastern side—
the cloak of the East (מזרח)—with them.

2א: The two of them took the eastern path
(דרך מזרח).

8א: They took the cloak of the altar (מזבח) with
them.

1ת, 4ת, 5ת, 6ת, 9ת: They took the cloak with them.

6א: They took the cloak upon the shoulders.

ס: [They took the cloak] of *mr'el* (מרעיל).

1א: They took the gown (השמלה).

The diverse readings reveal a series of scribes struggling to understand the text that has been placed before them. The only manuscript to have the same reading as the *editio princeps* is 2ד, the one other manuscript in the same family as the printed edition. Manuscript 3 comes closest, although “Mizrah” might not be a personal name but a misspelling of “East” (מזרח). The Yemenite 3ת is noteworthy as the only other manuscript to mention “their mother.”

The most popular readings, however, are so much guesswork. Both European and Yemenite manuscripts call the garment a “cloak of the East.” Other scribes, confronted with this reading, wondered what a “cloak of the East” was and made several creative attempts to explain it. In two cases, it meant that Shem and Japhet spread out the cloak on their eastern side. Another said that they took the eastern

⁴² The synopsis is available online as part of the Friedberg Genizah Project (<https://fjms.genizah.org>), under the rubric “Mahadura.”

⁴³ Werman, *Book of Jubilees*, 197; VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 28.

path—no cloak involved. Yet another decided that “East” (מזרח) was really altar (מזבח). Yemenite scribes cut the Gordian knot by simply leaving out the word “East.” Finally, one lonely scribe (1א) just changed the sentence to make more sense.

I am inclined to agree with Kister’s hypothesis that the *editio princeps* reflects the original reading, as this text could reasonably explain the diverse readings of the manuscripts, written by scribes who did not know who Emzara was and overcorrected. If one allows that Emzara is part of the original text, there is at least ample precedent within contemporary literature. Emzara appears in lists found in Hebrew, Syriac, Greek, Coptic, Armenian, and Arabic. It is worth nothing that the spelling מזרע, from the *editio princeps* of PRE, is also found in the Farhi Bible.

7.6 The Diamerismos

The Diamerismos refers to the division of the earth among the sons of Noah following the Flood. The term itself comes from the corresponding section of the *Chronicon* of Hippolytus of Rome (d. 236), but the Diamerismos has Second Temple roots.⁴⁴ It appears in *Jub.* 8–10, the *Genesis Apocryphon* (1QapGen XVI–XVII), and the *Antiquities* of Josephus (I.120–147). Furthermore, it is quite widely represented in late antique and medieval literature, mainly in Greek but also in Syriac.⁴⁵ It is only mentioned in passing in rabbinic literature (e.g., *Sifra*, *Qedoshim* 11).

Friedlander claimed that PRE summarizes the detailed description of the territory of the three sons of Noah found in *Jub.* 8:10–30.⁴⁶

Jubilees 8:10–12.22.24.25.29⁴⁷

[8:10] ויהי בראשית היובל השלושים ושלשה ויחלקו את הארץ לשלושה חלקים לשם ולחם וליפת איש איש נחלתו בשנה הראשונה בשבוע הראשון ועמהם אחד מאתנו אשר נשלח אליהם [11] ויקרא לבניו ויגשו אליו הם ובניהם ויחלק את הארץ בגורל ירושה לשלושת בניו ויושיטו

PRE 24 (JTS 3847, f. 109a)

הביא נח לבניו ולבני בניו וברך אותם במתנותיהן והנחילן את הארץ לשבת בה בירך לשם ולבניו שיהיו לבנים ונאין ונחלם את הארץ לשבת ברכ לחם ולבניו שיהיו כולם שחורים כעורב והנחילם את חוף הים וברך ליפת ולבניו שיהיו כולם לבנים והנחילם מדבר ושדותיו אלו נחלות שהנחילן

⁴⁴ James M. Scott, *Geography in Early Judaism and Christianity: The Book of Jubilees* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 135–58. His entire book is an introduction to this tradition.

⁴⁵ Witold Witakowski, “The Division of the Earth Between the Descendants of Noah in Syriac Tradition,” *Aram* 5 (1993): 635–56.

⁴⁶ Friedlander, *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, xxiv–xxv.

⁴⁷ Werman, *Book of Jubilees*, 244–45; VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 52–56.

ידיהם ויקחו ספר מחיק נוח אביהם [12] ויצא
בספר גורל שם פנים הארץ אשר ינחל לרשתה
הוא ובניו לדורות עולם עד אשר יקרבו אל מי
התהום אשר

[22] ולחם יצא החלק השני בעבר הגיחון דרום
לימין הגן [...] [24] זאת הארץ אשר יצאה לחם
כחלק אשר ינחל לעולם לו ולבניו לדורותם עד
עולם

[25] וליפת יצא החלק השלישי בעבר נהר טינה
[...] [29] זאת הארץ אשר יצאה ליפת ולבניו
כחלק אחזתו אשר ינחל הוא ובניו לדורותם עד
עולם איים גדולים חמשה וארץ גדולה בצפון

[8:10] At the beginning of the thirty-third jubilee, they divided the land into three parts for Shem, for Ham, and for Japhet, each one according to his inheritance, in the first year in the first week, when one among us who were sent was dwelling with them. [11] He [Noah] summoned his children, and they drew near to him—they and their children. He divided the land which his three children would possess by lot, and they stretched forth their hands and took the book from the bosom of Noah their father. [12] In the book, the center of the earth emerged as the lot of Shem, which he and his children would possess as his inheritance for all generations. . .

[22] The second division fell to Ham towards the opposite side of the Gihon towards the south on the right side of the garden [. . .]

[24] This is the land which fell to Ham as the division which he would possess forever, he with his children and their families, for eternity.

[25] The third division fell to Japhet, opposite the Tina river [. . .] [29] This is the land which fell to Japhet and to his children as the division of their inheritance, which he would possess for himself and for his children and their descendants for eternity: five large islands and a large land in the north.

Noah brought out his sons and the sons of his sons, and he blessed them with their gifts and endowed them with land to settle in. He blessed Shem and his sons, that they would be white and handsome, and he bequeathed them the land as settlement. He blessed Ham and his sons, that all of them would be black like the raven, and he bequeathed them the shore of the sea. He blessed Japhet and his sons, that all of them would be white, and he bequeathed them the wilderness and its fields. These are the inheritances that he imparted to them.

I have had to elide the passage from *Jubilees* because it contains much that has no parallel in PRE, namely a “scientific” description of the world based on Gen 10 and the Ionian World Map, where each son inhabits one of the three continents.⁴⁸ *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* has no interest whatsoever in geography, giving only the barest possible description of each son’s territory. It does, however, have an uncomfortable interest in race, absent from *Jubilees*.

The Diamerismos in *Jubilees* is distinguished from other examples (whether from the Second Temple period or later) through the addition of Canaan’s occupation of the territory of Shem (*Jub.* 10:28–34), violating the pact among Noah’s sons and meriting the future punishment that would reach its full realization with the conquests of Joshua. This, too, is missing from PRE, which provides a striking contrast with *Midrash Aggadah* (discussed in chapter five). *Midrash Aggadah* does not give a Diamerismos, but it does accurately recount the transgression of Canaan in a manner that recalls *Jubilees*.⁴⁹ Without this tradition about the oath and its transgression, there is nothing to mark the bare-bones account in PRE as being particularly indebted to *Jubilees*—as opposed to literally any other work that mentions the Diamerismos.

For example, minimalist variants of the Diamerismos tradition are found in Syriac and Arabic. The *Cave of Treasures* mentions the tripartite division in a few sentences.

Japheth’s children inhabit the far east from the mountains of Nod and the outer fringes of the east to the Tigris, and from the northern fringes of Bactria to Gadryon. The children of Shem live from eastern Persia to the Adriatic sea in the west; the middle of the earth is theirs. And they are holding kingship and dominion. Ham’s children inhabit all the southern regions and a few of the western ones (*Cav. Tr.* 24:20–22).⁵⁰

The Muslim historian al-Ṭabarī also gives a brief summary of this tradition.

When Noah, his offspring, and all those in the ark came down to earth, he divided the earth among his sons into three parts. To Shem, he gave the middle of the earth where Jerusalem, the Nile, the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Sayhan, the Jayhan (Gihon), and the Fayshan (Pishon) are located. It extends from the Pishon to east of the Nile and from the region from where the southwind blows to the region from where the northwind blows. To Ham, he gave the part (of the earth) west of the Nile and regions beyond to the region from where the westwind blows.

⁴⁸ Philip S. Alexander, “Notes on the ‘Imago Mundi’ of the Book of Jubilees,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33 (1982): 197–213.

⁴⁹ Salomon Buber, ed., *Agadischer Commentar zum Pentateuch nach einer Handschrift aus Aleppo*, 2 vols. (Vienna: A. Fanto, 1894), 1:27 [Hebrew].

⁵⁰ Alexander Toepel, “The Cave of Treasures: A New Translation and Introduction,” in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, ed. Richard Bauckham, James R. Davila, and Alexander Panayotov (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 531–84 (558–59).

The part he gave to Japheth was located at the Pishon and regions beyond to the region from where the eastwind blows.⁵¹

Apart from their brevity, the Arabic and Syriac examples are not especially close to PRE, but they do demonstrate that the idea of the Diamerismos was so widespread that there is no reason why *Jubilees* should be singled out as a source of PRE.

7.7 Bilhah and Zilpah

In the book of Genesis, Bilhah and Zilpah are the maidservants of Rachel and Leah and the mothers of Dan and Naphtali (Bilhah) and Gad and Asher (Zilpah). *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* 36 states that the maidservants are sisters or, at least, half-sisters, since they are both daughters of Laban, the father of Rachel and Leah. This passage builds on an earlier rabbinic tradition that the four patriarchs are all related. Friedlander believed that this tradition came from *Jubilees*.⁵²

Jubilees, following a broader Second Temple tradition, mentions that Bilhah and Zilpah are sisters (*Jub.* 28:9). However, that is where the comparison stops.

Jubilees 28:9⁵³

ובעת אשר עבר שבוע ימי משתה לאה ויתן לבן
את רחל ליעקב למען יעבוד אותו שבע שנים
שנית ויתן לה את בלהה אחות זלפה לאמה

At the time when the seven days of the feast of Leah had passed, Laban gave Rachel to Jacob so that he would serve him another seven years. He also gave her Bilhah, the sister of Zilpah, as a maidservant.

PRE 36 (JTS 3847, f. 126b)

ולקח לבן את שתי שפחותיו ונתן לשתי בנותיו
וכי שפחותיו היו והלא בנותיו היו אלא כך נִימוס
הארץ בנות שלֹאדם מפִּילגשו נקראו שפחות

Laban took his two handmaidens, and he gave them to his two daughters. Were they his handmaidens? Were they not his daughters? They were indeed, but the law of the land is that the daughters of a man by his concubine are called handmaidens.

In *Jubilees*, Bilhah and Zilpah are indeed sisters, but they are not the daughters of Laban. They are the children of slaves. The account in *Jubilees* is comparable to the Qumran manuscript 4Q215 and the corresponding text in the Greek *Testament of Naphtali*, which outlines the genealogy of Bilhah and names Zilpah as her older sister.⁵⁴ The Qumran manuscript is fragmentary, but *T. Naphtali* gives the complete account.

51 Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī, Volume I: General Introduction and From Creation to the Flood*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (New York: SUNY Press, 1989), 370–1.

52 Friedlander, *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, 271, n. 10.

53 Werman, *Book of Jubilees*, 391; VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 155.

54 Michael E. Stone, “The Genealogy of Bilhah,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 3 (1996): 20–36.

And my mother is Bilhah the daughter of Rotheus, a brother of Debora, Rebecca's nurse, who was born the same day as Rachel. And Rotheus was of the family of Abraham, a Chaldean, god-fearing, freeborn and noble. And after having been taken captive he was bought by Laban, and he gave him Aina his servant to wife, who bore him a daughter; and she called her name Zilpah, after the name of the village where he had been taken captive. Next she bore Bilhah, saying: "My daughter is eager for what is new"; for immediately after she was born she was eager to suck" (*T. Naphtali* 1:9–12).⁵⁵

What remains of 4Q215 is a nearly identical.⁵⁶ In this text, the parents are named Ahiyot (אחיית) and Hannah (חנה). The other details are the same. Ahiyot is the brother of Deborah; both parents are servants of Laban; Zilpah is older than Bilhah; Zilpah is named after the city of her father's captivity; Bilhah is named after her eagerness to feed. This account, rather than the rabbinic tradition, informs *Jubilees*.

In making all four matriarchs the daughters of Laban, PRE does not break with rabbinic tradition because the tradition is, in fact, rabbinic. *Genesis Rabbah* mentions the genealogy of Bilhah and Zilpah in a different context, but the emphasis is the same.

ויען לבן ויאמר אל יעקב הבנות בנותי וגו' אמר ר' ראובן כולן בנותיו היו הבנות בנותי הרי שתיים
ולבנותי מה אעשה הרי ארבע רבנן מיתין לה מהכה אם תענה את בנותי הרי שתיים ואם תקח
נשים על בנותי הרי ארבע

Laban answered and said to Jacob, "The daughters are my daughters" (Gen 31:34). R. Reuben said: They were all his daughters, for "The daughters are my daughters" indicates two, while "What will I do for my daughters?" (Gen 31:34) indicates four. The rabbis further cite from here: "If you hurt my daughters" (Gen 31:50) indicates two, and "If you take wives in addition to my daughters" (Gen 31:50) indicates four (*Gen. Rab.* 74:13).⁵⁷

In the biblical text cited here, Laban accuses Jacob of having absconded with all his property. He refers to his daughters and their children, without making a distinction between the children born to Leah and Rachel and the children born to Bilhah and Zilpah. R. Reuben understands this to mean that Bilhah and Zilpah were Laban's daughters too.

Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer, therefore, depends on a rabbinic tradition, while *Jubilees* attests to an older, separate tradition. The two traditions coexisted. *Bereshit*

⁵⁵ Translation of Stone, "The Genealogy of Bilhah," 22–23.

⁵⁶ For the text, see Michael E. Stone, "215. 4QTestament of Naphtali," in *Qumran Cave 4. XVII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 3*, ed. George J. Brooke et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 73–82.

⁵⁷ My translation from Julius Theodor and Hanoch Albeck, eds. *Midrash Bereshit Rabba mit kritischem Apparat und Kommentar*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Itzkowski, 1912–1936), 2:870.

Rabbati (11th c.), the work of the enigmatic Moshe ha-Darshan, awkwardly juxtaposes them without attempting to resolve the inherent contradiction.

ויתן לבן את זלפה וכי שפחותיו היו אלא בנימוס הארץ בנותיו של אדם מפלגשיו נקראו שפחות ואית דאמר אבי בלהה וזלפה אחיה של דבורה מינקת רבקה היה ואחותי היה שמו וטרם שנשא אשה נשבה ושלח לבן ופדאו ונתן לו שפחתו לאשה וילדה לו בת וקרא שמה זלפה על שם העיר שנשבה לשם ילדה עוד בת וקרא שמה בלהה שכשנולדה היתה מתבהלת לינק אמר מה בהולה בתי וכאשר הלך יעקב אצל לבן מת אחותי אביהן ולקח לבן לחוה שפחתו ולשתי בנותיה ונתן זלפה הגדולה ללאה בתו הגדולה לה לשפחה ובלהה הקטנה לרחל בתו הקטנה

“And Laban gave Zilpah” (Gen 29:24). Were they his maidservants? Rather, the daughters of a man by his concubines are called maidservants by a custom of the land.

Someone says: The father of Bilhah and Zilpah was the brother of Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, and Ahotay was his name. Before he married, he was captured, but Laban redeemed him and gave him his maidservant as a wife. She gave birth to a daughter, and she called her Zilpah after the name of the city where he [Ahotay] was captured. She gave birth again and named her Bilhah (בלהה), because when she was born she was eager to suck (מתבהלת לינק). He said, “How eager (בהולה) is my daughter!” When Jacob went to Laban, Ahotay, their father, was dead. Laban took Havah, his maidservant, and her two daughters, and he gave Zilpah, the older, to his elder daughter, Leah, and Bilhah, the younger, to his younger daughter, Rachel.⁵⁸

The opening lines, until the Aramaic expression “someone says” (אית דאמר), are an adaptation of PRE 36. The rest is based on the tradition from 4Q215 and the *Testament of Naphtali*.⁵⁹ Taken as a complete unit, the text makes little sense. The opening lines suggest that Laban is the father of Bilhah and Zilpah, but the rest of the passage demonstrates they are the children of servants. They are indeed Laban’s maids, not his daughters.

7.8 The Election of Levi

Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer 37 describes the election of Levi, the third son of Jacob, to the priesthood after Jacob “tithes” Levi from among his sons. Levi then ascends to heaven and is invested by God as a priest and as the ancestor of the priestly tribe. Kister wrote that every detail of the passage is paralleled in *Jubilees* and in the *Testament of Levi*, but the situation is more complicated.⁶⁰ Although the election

⁵⁸ My translation from Moshe ha-Darshan, *Midrash Bereshit Rabbati*, ed. Hanoch Albeck (Jerusalem: Mekitze Nirdamim, 1940), 119.

⁵⁹ Stone, “The Genealogy of Bilhah,” concludes that *Bereshit Rabbati* knows the tradition from 4Q215 but not the Greek *Testament of Naphtali*.

⁶⁰ Kister, “Ancient Material in *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eli’ezer*,” 81.

of Levi is usually studied in the context of Second Temple literature, it does appear in rabbinic literature. *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* also changes the location of the event and the way Jacob selects Levi. Additionally, the ascension of Levi, part of the PRE narrative, is absent from *Jubilees* and only found in the Greek *Testament of Levi* and the related *Aramaic Levi Document*. This particular parallel is part of the recurring phenomenon of Hebrew works that conflate traditions from *Jubilees* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* without seeming to know either.

According to PRE 37, Jacob tithes Levi as he crosses the Jabbok. At the moment of the crossing, an angel appears to remind Jacob of a vow that he had previously made to tithe everything he had if God prospered his journey (Gen 28:21–22). Jacob is also compelled to tithe one of his sons. He separates the four firstborn sons before he begins counting.

Jubilees 32:1–3⁶¹

[1] וישב בלילה ההוא בבית אל ויחלום לוי כי יוקם וימשח לכהן לאל עליון הוא ובניו עד עולם ויקץ משנתו ויברך את אלוהים [2] וישכם יעקב בבוקר בארבע עשר לחודש הזה ויעשר מכול אשר בא עמו מאדם עד בהמה מכסף ועד כול כלי ובגד ויעשר מכול [3] ובימים ההם היתה רחל מלאה ובנימין בנה במעיה ויספור יעקב את בניו ממנו ויעלה ויפול לוי בחלק אלוהים וילבישו אביו בגדי כהונה וימלא ידיו

[1] He [Jacob] camped for the night at Bethel. Levi dreamed that he and his sons were appointed and established to the priesthood of the Most High Lord forever. He woke from his sleep and blessed God. [2] Jacob rose at dawn on the fourteenth day of the month. He tithed from everything that had come with him, from people to animals, from gold to every kind of instrument and clothing. He tithed everything. [3] In those days, Rachel conceived Benjamin, her son, and Jacob counted his son [sic; “sons”] from him. He went backwards and fell upon Levi for God’s portion. His father vested him with the vestments of priesthood and filled his hands [i.e., ordained him; cf. Exod 28:41].

PRE 37 (JTS 3847, f. 128b)

רצה יעקב לעבור את נחל יבק ונתעכב שם שאמ' לו המלאך לא כך אמרת וכל אשר תתן לי עשר אעשרנו לך והרי יש לך בנים ולא עשרת מה עשה יעקב לקח ארבע בכורות מארבע אמהות ונשארו שמונה התחיל בשמעון וגמר בבנימין שבמעי אמו ועוד התחיל משמעון ועלה לוי מעשר ר' ישמעאל אומ' כל הבכורות כשהן בשמירת העין חייבין בבכורה ולא עישר יעקב אלא למפרע התחיל בבנימין שבמעי אמו ועלה הקדש עליו הכת' אומ' העשירי יהיה קדש ליי'

Jacob wanted to cross the wadi Jabbok, but he was hindered there. 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)? Look, 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 from Simeon and arrived at Levi as the tithe. R. Ishmael said: All firstborn who are visible to the eye are subject to the law of the firstborn. Jacob only tithed retroactively. He began with Benjamin in the womb of his mother and went backwards from there. He consecrated him [Levi], as it is written, “The tenth shall be holy to the LORD” (Lev 27:32).

61 Werman, *Book of Jubilees*, 426; VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 175.

In PRE 37, the law of the firstborn clashes with the law of the tithe. The firstborn cannot be tithed because they are already consecrated to God (cf. Exod 13:13–16). Therefore, the four firstborn sons are removed, and eight are left. Once Jacob reaches Benjamin (number eight) he resumes counting with Simeon, his second son (nine), and ends with Levi (ten). *Jubilees* knows of the tithe of Levi but does not know the idea of separating the firstborn. Its version is simpler. Jacob starts with Benjamin, the twelfth son, and counts backwards to Levi, the third son, but the tenth in reverse order. Furthermore, *Jubilees* and dependent literature (such as the Byzantine chronicles) affirm that the tithe took place at Bethel (Gen 35). In PRE, Jacob offers the tithe much earlier, as he crosses the Jabbok (Gen 32). Only PRE and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* (Gen. 32:25) mention Jabbok and the angel in conjunction with this tradition (see chapter four).

Once again, it is unnecessary to postulate a Second Temple source for PRE because the tradition itself is rabbinic. *Genesis Rabbah* states:

ר' יהושע דסיכנין בשם ר' לוי כותי אחד שאל את ר' מאיר אמר לו אין אתם אומרים 'עקב אמיתי' היה אמר לו הן אמר לו לא כך אמר וכל אשר נתן לי עשר אעשרנו לך הן והפריש שבט לוי [אחד מעשרה] ולמה לא הפריש משני שבטים אמר לו וכי שנים עשר שבטים היו והלא י"ד היו שני אפרים ומנשה בראובן ושמעון יהיו לי אמר ליה כל הכן איספת מים איסיף קמח אמר לו אין את מודה לי שהן ד' אימהות אמר לו הן אמר לו צא מהן ד' בכורות לד' אימהות הבכור קודש ואין קודש מוציא קודש אמר לו אשרי אומתך מה בתוכה

R. Joshua of Siknin said in the name of R. Levi: A certain Samaritan asked R. Meir, "Do you not say that Jacob was truthful?" R. Meir said to him, "Yes." The Samaritan said, "Did he not say, 'All which you give to me, I will give you a tenth' (Gen 28:22)?" R. Meir said, "Yes, and he separated the tribe of Levi, [which is one from ten]." The Samaritan said: "Why did he not set aside the two remaining tribes?" R. Meir said: "Were there only twelve tribes? Were there not fourteen? 'Ephraim and Manasseh, just as Reuben and Simeon, shall be mine' (Gen 48:5)." The Samaritan said: "In that case, if you add water, you must add flour."⁶² R. Meir said, "Do you not acknowledge that there are four matriarchs?" The Samaritan said, "Yes." R. Meir said: "Remove from them the four firstborn sons of the four matriarchs. The firstborn is holy, and the holy does not exempt the holy."⁶³ The Samaritan said: "Blessed is your nation and everything within it" (*Gen. Rab. 70:7*).⁶⁴

This passage is also found (in Aramaic) in *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 10:6. Although PRE does not introduce the idea of fourteen tribes, the basic principle is the same. The separation of the firstborn, then, is a rabbinic idea in PRE which has no parallel in *Jubilees*. There is also an oblique reference to the tithe of Levi in a *piyyut* of Yose b. Yose (5th c.) entitled *Atah Konanta Olam be-Rov Hesed* (אתה כוננת עולם ברב)

⁶² Meaning: This just makes the problem worse.

⁶³ Meaning: The law of the tithe does not exempt the law of the firstborn.

⁶⁴ My translation from Theodor and Albeck, *Bereschit Rabba*, 2:804–5.

חסד),⁶⁵ which shows that the tradition even appears in late antique Jewish literature outside of the rabbinic canon of Talmud and Midrash.

Of particular note is that PRE actually introduces two versions of Levi's election. The second, attributed to R. Ishmael, is indistinguishable from the tradition in *Jubilees*. R. Ishmael begins by disregarding the law of the firstborn as relevant for Jacob's tithe. Instead, the patriarch simply counts backwards and lands on Levi as the tenth son. *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, therefore, was aware of the Second Temple tradition, but it foregrounds a competing explanation of the tithe from rabbinic literature. Another curious detail is that, immediately after the cited passage, the angel Michael takes Levi before the Throne of Glory to receive the mantle of priesthood. The ascension of Levi is found in the *Aramaic Levi Document* and its Greek cognate, the *Testament of Levi*, although these works only scarcely allude to the tithe (cf. *T. Levi* 9:3). *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, alongside *Midrash Tadshe* and *Midrash Vayissa'u*, is among those medieval Hebrew works that seem aware of the fuller traditions underlying *Jubilees* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.

7.9 The Death of Esau

In his unpublished doctoral thesis, Steven Ballaban suggested that the violent death of Esau in PRE 39 is a variation of the war between Jacob and Esau found in *Jub.* 37–38, during which Esau also dies violently.⁶⁶ Ballaban claims that the tradition was mediated via *Midrash Vayissa'u*. While *Midrash Vayissa'u* and *Jub.* 37–38 have much in common, there is hardly a detail shared between them and PRE 39.⁶⁷ *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* 39 is transparently based on the earlier rabbinic tradition found (for example) in the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Sotah* 13a). Nevertheless, Friedlander made the same assertion many years earlier, necessitating a disentanglement of the two traditions.⁶⁸

According to PRE 39, Esau claims the Cave of Machpelah as his own property after the death of Jacob. He is met with resistance by the sons of Jacob. During the confrontation, Esau is killed by the son of Dan.

⁶⁵ Michael D. Swartz and Joseph Yahalom, eds. and trans., *Avodah: An Anthology of Ancient Poetry for Yom Kippur* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 308–9: “You tithed a youngster from his tribes to serve You in return for tithing his fortune for You at the pillar.”

⁶⁶ Ballaban, “The Enigma of the Lost Second Temple Literature,” 110–12.

⁶⁷ Ballaban, “The Enigma of the Lost Second Temple Literature,” 112 states that both PRE and *Midrash Vayissa'u*, against *Jubilees*, locate Esau's grave in the Cave of Machpelah, but this is untrue. Only PRE states that Esau (specifically, his head) was interred at Machpelah.

⁶⁸ Friedlander, *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, xxvii.

Jubilees 37:1.24–25; 38:1–2⁷⁰

[37:1] וביום מות יצחק אבי יעקב ועשו שמעו בני עשו כי נתן יצחק את הבכורה ליעקב בנו הקטן וירגזו מאד [...] [24] ובעת אשר ראה יעקב כי בכול לבו להרע לו ובכול נפשו להורגו [...] [25] אז אמר לבניו ולעבדיו לצאת עליו ועל כול מלוי

[38:1] אז דבר יהודה אל יעקב אביו ויאמר לו אבי דרך קשתך והשלך חצך ודקור את הצר והרוג את האויב ויהי לך כוח כי לא נהרגו את אחיך כי אחיך הוא וקרוב לך הוא וכמוך הוא אצלנו לכבוד [2] אז דרך יעקב את קשתו והשלך את חצו והכה את עשו אחיו אל חזהו הימיני והרג אותו

[37:1] On the day that Isaac, the father of Jacob and Esau, died, the children of Esau heard that Isaac had given the birthright to Jacob, the younger son, and they became very angry. [...] [24] The moment Jacob saw that he intended to cause him evil with his whole heart and to kill him with his whole soul [...] [25] then he told his sons and his servants to pursue him and all his companions.

[38:1] Then Judah spoke to Jacob his father and said to him, “Draw your bow, father, and send forth your arrow. Strike the enemy and kill the adversary. May you have strength, for we will not kill your brother because he is your brother. He is near to you and he is like you in our esteem.” [2] Then Jacob bent his bow, shot an arrow, pierced his brother Esau, and felled him.

Jubilees 37–38 differs in every conceivable way from PRE. First, Jacob is still alive in *Jubilees*, while the setting of PRE 39 is Jacob’s funeral. In *Jubilees*, Esau attacks Jacob in order to reclaim *his own* inheritance (Jub. 37:1–15); in PRE, Esau tries to claim *Jacob’s* inheritance. In *Jubilees*, Judah encourages Jacob to kill Esau, to Judah’s glory (Jub. 38:1–2); in PRE, a deaf-mute kills Esau, to Esau’s disgrace. In *Jubilees*, the combat continues after the death of Esau (Jub. 37:3–10); in PRE, the death of Esau brings the conflict to an end. At the end of the account in *Jubilees*, the armies of Esau are reduced to servitude (Jub. 37:11–14); in PRE, Esau acts alone. There is absolutely no point of contact between the two accounts other than Esau’s violent death.

PRE 39 (JTS 3847, f. 133a)

וכיון שבאו למערת המכפלה בא עליהם עשו מהר שעיר לחרחר ריב אמ' שלי היא מערת המכפלה מה עשה יוסף שלח נפתלי לכבוש במזלות ולהורידו למצר' להעלות כתב עולם שהיה ביניהם שנ' נפתלי אילה שלוחה הנותן אמרי שפר חושים בנו שלדן היה פגום באזנו ובלשונו אמ' להם מפני מה אתם יושבין והראוהו באצבע אמרו בשביל האיש הזה שאינו מניח אותנו לגמול חסד עם יע' אבינו מה עשה שלח את חרבו וחתך את ראשו שלעשו נכנס למערת המכפלה ואת גיתו שלחו לארץ אחוזתו להר שעיר

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, “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.

69 Werman, *Book of Jubilees*, 462–3, 467; VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 201–2; 206–7.

The talmudic passage runs as follows. Some details are different, but the plot is the same.

כיון שהגיעו למערת המכפלה אתא עשו קא מעכב [...] אמר להו הבו לי איגרתא אמרו ליה איגרתא בארעא דמצרים היא ומאן ניזיל נפתלי דקליל כי איילתא דכתיב נפתלי אילה שלוחה [...] חושים בריה דדן תמן הוה ויקירן ליה אודניה אמר להו מאי האי ואמרו ליה קא מעכב האי עד דאתי נפתלי מארעא דמצרים אמר להו ועד דאתי נפתלי מארעא דמצרים יהא אבי אבא מוטל בבזיון שקל קולפא מחייה ארישיה נתון עיניה ונפלו אכרעא דינקב פתחינהו יעקב לעיניה ואחיד

When they arrived at the Cave of Machpelah, Esau came in order to hinder them [. . .] He said to them, "Give me the deed." They said to him, "The deed is in the land of Egypt. Who shall go? Naphtali will go, for he is swift as a hind," as it is written "Naphtali is a swift hind" (Gen 49:21) [. . .] Hushim, the son of Dan, was there, and he was hard of hearing. He said to them, "What is this?" They said to him, "Look, this one is hindering us until Naphtali comes from the land of Egypt." He said to them, "Until Naphtali returns from the land of Egypt, the father of my father is to be left lying in disgrace?" He took his club and struck [Esau] on the head. His eyes fell out and tumbled to the foot of Jacob. Jacob opened his eyes and laughed (*b. Sotah* 13a).⁷⁰

Both PRE and the Talmud accounts have a common origin. They follow the same sequence of events and use the same proof-text (Gen 49:21).⁷¹ They are also broadly comic. Esau, the great warrior, is the victim of a misunderstanding. At the moment of his death, his body parts (eyes, head) go flying. The tone differs considerably from the epic celebration of martial valor in *Jub.* 37–38.

Incidentally, early Palestinian sources, including *Sifre Deuteronomy* (§348) and the Palestinian Talmud (*y. Ketubbot* I:5, 25c; *y. Gittin* V:6, 47a), also refer to the violent death of Esau but claim that Judah killed him, perhaps in an oblique reference to the ancient tradition. According to the Palestinian Talmud, this was a tradition which Romans ("Edom") cited to justify persecution of the Jews. It suggests knowledge of the ancient tradition and offers a cryptic reason for its suppression.⁷² Furthermore, *Midrash Psalms* 18:32 has an interesting variant where Judah does kill Esau—but during the burial of Isaac. The date of this Midrash is disputed. It is probably later (ca. 10th c.) rather than earlier.⁷³ It reads like a harmonization of the Second Temple and rabbinic tradition. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*, however, remains completely aloof from the ancient tradition and adheres strictly to the rabbinic version.

⁷⁰ My translation from the Vilna Shas.

⁷¹ The same tradition is attached to this verse in *Genesis Rabbah* and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* (see chapter four).

⁷² The idea that the Romans of the time of Titus or Hadrian took offense at the Second Temple tradition stretches credulity. However, it is possible to imagine Byzantine writers attacking the story of the war against Esau, especially since the story is well-attested in Byzantine literature. Note that the Byzantine-era Palestinian Talmud is apologetic about this tradition, but the pre-Constantinian *Sifre* is not.

⁷³ Günter Stemberger, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch*, 9th ed. (Munich: Beck, 2011), 358–59.

7.10 The Birth of Moses

The story of Moses' birth in Exodus is a classic example of the traditional motif of the future savior who is exposed at birth.⁷⁴ Later literature would supply an aspect of this tradition missing from the biblical account—a prophecy of the savior's birth. The prophecy appears unambiguously in PRE 48 as well as in classical rabbinic literature. The tradition dates from the Second Temple period and is found in Josephus (*Ant.* II.205). It might also be presupposed in *Jub.* 47:1–3, although the text is ambiguous.⁷⁵ Kister, rather than claiming that *Jubilees* influenced PRE, suggests that PRE gives a fuller rendition of a tradition that is only implicit in *Jubilees*.⁷⁶ He is not concerned with the tradition of the prophecy itself but one detail only, the time at which the decree to kill the children was rescinded. According to Kister, this was the moment of Moses' birth.

Jubilees 47:1–3⁷⁸

[1] ובשבוע השביעי בשנה השביעית ביובל הארבעים ושבעה בא אביך מארץ כנען ויולד אותך בשבוע הרביעי בשנה הששית ביובל הארבעים ושמונה אשר הוא ימי צרה לבני ישראל [2] ויצו פרעה מלך מצרים צו עליהם להשליך את בניהם כול זכר אשר נולד אל הנהר [3] וישוּבו וישליכו שבעה חודשים עד היום אשר נולדת ותחבא אותך אמך שלושה חודים ויגידו עליה

PRE 48 (JTS 3847, ff. 144b–145a)

ר' ינאי אומ' והלא לא העבידו המצרים את ישראל אלא שעה אחת מימיו שלהק' ב'ה' שמונים שנה ושלוש שנים עד שנולד משה שאמרו החרטמים אל פרעה עת' נער אחד להולד להוציא את ישר' ממצר' וחשב פרעה ואמ' השליכו כל הילדים הזכרים היאורה ונשלך עמהן ונמצא הדבר בטל שלש שנים עד שנולד משה וכיון שנולד אמרו לו הרי נולד והרי הוא כמוס מעינינו אמ' להם הואיל ונולד מכן ואלך אל תשליכו הילדים הזכרים ליאורה אלא תנו עליהן עול קשה למרר חיי אבותיהן שנ' וימררו את חייהם

74 Otto Rank, *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero: A Psychological Interpretation of Mythology*, trans. F. Robbins and Smith Ely Jelliffe (New York: The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company, 1914), still useful as a sourcebook of related legends.

75 Jonathan Cohen, *The Origins and Evolution of the Moses Nativity Story* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 30, n. 2, writes: "There is no escaping the far-reaching inference from the structure of the Book of Jubilees and the midrashic parallels that the annunciation of the birth of a savior also underlies the account in the Book of Jubilees." This may be, but it is still an inference.

76 Kister, "Ancient Material in *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eli'ezer*," 89–91.

77 Werman, *Book of Jubilees*, 530; VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 239–40.

[1] In the seventh week, in the seventh year, in the forty-seventh jubilee, your father came from the land of Canaan. You [Moses] were born in the fourth week in the sixth year of the forty-eighth jubilee, which was a time of tribulation for the children of Israel. [2] Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had given the order concerning them, that they had to cast their children, every male that was born, into the river. [3] They continued throwing for seven months until the time you were born. Your mother concealed you for three months. Then they reported her.

R. Yannai said: The Egyptians did not subjugate Israel except for one hour of a day of the Holy One, Blessed be He, eighty-three years, until Moses was born. The magicians told Pharaoh, "In the future, a young man will be born to lead Israel out from Egypt." Pharaoh thought and said, "Throw all the male children into the Nile, and he shall be thrown in with them, and the decree will be annulled." [They did this for] three years until Moses was born. When he was born, they said to him, "Behold, he is born. He is now concealed from our eyes." He said to them, "Since he has been born, henceforth stop throwing male children into the Nile. Instead, place upon them a heavy yoke to embitter the lives of their fathers," as it is written, "And they embittered their lives" (Exod 1:14).

The context of PRE 48 is a discussion of the length of time the Israelites were in Egypt. The tradition, as presented here, supports the unusual idea that the Egyptian servitude lasted a relatively short time, a single hour of a day in the life of God. If a day in God's view lasts one thousand years (Ps 90:4), then one hour (of a twelve-hour day) is approximately eighty-three years. This duration of time accounts for the three years of the decree plus the eighty years of the life of Moses prior to the Exodus (Exod 7:7).⁷⁸ The passage has no exact parallel in earlier rabbinic literature.

However, the basic idea of the prophecy of Moses' birth can be found in the Talmud. In the talmudic version, Pharaoh's court magicians ascertain that Moses would be punished through water, so they decree that the Israelite children be thrown into the Nile until the time of Moses' exposure. What they did not know is that the punishment by water does not refer to the Nile but to the waters of Meribah (cf. Num 20).

והיינו דאמר רבי אלעזר מאי דכתיב וכי יאמרו אליכם דרשו אל האובות ואל הידעונים המצפצפים והמהגים צופין ואינם יודעין מה צופין מהגים ואינן יודעים מה מהגים ראו שמושיען של ישראל במים הוא לוקה עמדו וגזרו כל הבן הילוד היאורה תשליכוהו כיון דשדייה למשה אמרו תו לא חזינו כי ההוא סימנא בטלו לגזירתייהו והם אינן יודעין שעל מי מריבה הוא לוקה

Thus spoke Rabbi Eleazar: What is the meaning of the text "For they will say to you: Consult the wizards and mediums who chirp and mutter" (Isa 8:19). They foresee, but they do not know what they foresee. They mutter, but they do not know what they mutter. They saw that

⁷⁸ The opening, in fact, states that the slavery lasted until the *birth* of Moses, but this is at odds with the logic of the text, which ends by stating that Pharaoh continued persecuting the Israelites after Moses was born. The error appears to belong to the original, as it is in every manuscript.

the savior of Israel would be punished through water. So they arose and decreed, “Every son that is born shall be cast into the Nile” (Exod 1:22). When they had cast Moses, they said, “We no longer see his sign.” They annulled their decree, but they did not know that it was through the waters of Meribah that he would be punished (*b. Sotah* 12b).⁷⁹

Kister is aware of this talmudic parallel and cites it in his article.⁸⁰ In the Talmud, the decree is annulled when Moses touches the water rather than when he is born, as in PRE. The time between Moses’ birth and Moses’ exposure on the Nile is three months (Exod 2:2). This is a small but significant difference.

Instead, the parallel Kister proposes between *Jubilees* and PRE 48 leans heavily on the meaning of “until,” an ambiguous word. “Until” indicates that an action continues up to a certain point, but it does not specify what happens after that point. For example, Deut 34:6 says of Moses: “No one knows [the location of] his grave until today” (וְלֹא יָדָע אִישׁ אֶת־קְבָרָתוֹ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה). This verse does not imply that the grave of Moses was discovered after the writing of Deuteronomy, but it also does not prevent this possibility. The passage in *Jubilees*, which, in its original Hebrew version, would have used the same preposition as Deut 34:6 (עַד) can be read to mean that the decree continued after the birth of Moses.

Even if one grants that the end of the decree coincides with the birth of Moses, there are still many basic differences between *Jubilees* and PRE. *Jubilees* nowhere mentions the court magicians or prophecy. Furthermore, there is a substantial difference in the length of time the decree was in effect. It lasts at least seven months in *Jubilees* but over three years in PRE. Finally, the motif of the prophecy in PRE is in the service of a unique tradition about the duration of the slavery in Egypt, which strongly implies that Moses’ birth is in fact the *cause* of the Israelites’ subjugation. This idea, which overtly contradicts the biblical narrative, seems to be original to PRE. It is certainly not in *Jubilees*.

The prophecy of the birth of Moses was in no way obscure in the time of PRE. Christians undoubtedly knew the tradition from Josephus, and it appeared in some original Christian compositions, such as an Armenian *History of Moses*.⁸¹ The prophecy was also known in Islamic literature.⁸² Even Samaritans had their

⁷⁹ My translation from the Vilna Shas.

⁸⁰ Kister, “Ancient Material in *Pirque de-Rabbi Eli’ezer*,” 89.

⁸¹ Jacques Issaverdens, trans., *The Uncanonical Writings of the Old Testament Found in the Armenian Mss. of the Library of St. Lazarus* (Venice: Armenian Monastery of St. Lazarus, 1901), 165–75 (165): “The diviners of the Egyptians said unto Pharaoh. On such a day of such a month, a Saviour of Israel would be brought forth, and he would deliver Israel from his yoke.”

⁸² Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Tha’labī, *Arā’is al-Majālis fī Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā’ or Lives of the Prophets*, trans. William M. Brinner (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 279–80: “Then Pharaoh called the soothsayers and magicians, the interpreters and astrologers, and asked them about his dream. They said, ‘A boy will

own independent version of the legend.⁸³ In the end, however, PRE 48 is probably a modification of the talmudic legend. Many of the stories in *b. Sotah* 9b–14a, such as the death of Esau, cited immediately above, are also found in PRE (as discussed in chapter three).

7.11 Conclusion

Of the ten traditions examined in this chapter, none clearly depends on *Jubilees*. Two, the Hexameron and the Fallen Angels, are based on Genesis. Four of them, Billah and Zilpah, the Election of Levi, the Death of Esau, and the Birth of Moses, are derived from earlier rabbinic literature. Two, Emzara and the Diamerismos, are ancient traditions which were widely represented in contemporary literature. Their appearance in PRE is not indicative of the use of ancient sources. The two remaining traditions, Enoch and Passover, are simply different from *Jubilees*. Enoch has no presence at all in PRE; he is a name in a series. In the matter of Passover, PRE is a peculiar inversion of *Jubilees*. In PRE, Passover is the *only* major festival celebrated by the patriarchs before Moses, while, in *Jubilees*, it is the *only* major festival that isn't!

Over the course of this chapter, however, two traditions emerged from the periphery which both come from Second Temple literature but are not well-represented in rabbinic, Christian, or Muslim literature. These traditions are the origin of the demons from the bodies of the slain giants and the ascension of Levi. The immediate sources of these traditions are not apparent, yet these traditions have survived in other sources contemporaneous with PRE. The origin of the demons appears in the prologue to *Sefer Asaph/Sefer Refu'ot*, which is directly parallel to *Jub.* 10:1–15. The ascension of Levi is found in both the *Testament of Levi* and the *Aramaic Levi Document*, one of the handful of Second Temple works miraculously

be born among the Children of Israel who will wrest dominion from you [. . .] The time of his birth is drawing near.”

⁸³ Moses Gaster, ed. and trans., *The Asatir: The Samaritan Book of the “Secrets of Moses”* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1927), 270–72: “And in Egypt there was a wizard whose name was Plti and he saw the greatness of Israel [. . .] And his speech reached Pharaoh and he sent and called the wizard. And he said unto him, ‘Truly, out of the loins of this man will come one who will be mighty in faith, in knowledge, and the heaven and earth will hearken to his word; and by his hands will come the destruction of Egypt.’” More recent editions of this work are Zeev Ben-Hayyim, “The Asatir with Translation and Commentary,” *Tarbiz* 14 (1943): 104–25, 174–90; 15 (1944): 71–87 [Hebrew], and Christophe Bonnard, “Asfâr Asâtîr, le ‘Livre des Légendes’, une réécriture araméenne du Pentateuque samaritain: Présentation, édition critique, traduction et commentaire philologique, commentaire comparatif” (PhD Dissertation, Université de Strasbourg, 2015).

recovered from the Cairo Genizah. These two examples constitute the exceptions rather than the rule.

The preceding chapters have shown that many traditions from *Jubilees* were still widely known in the Middle Ages, even among Jews. Why is the work not better represented in PRE? I propose that geography is the main reason. The knowledge and transmission of *Jubilees* was a principally Byzantine phenomenon, restricted to writers in or around Constantinople. The Jews, Christians, and Muslims of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate simply did not know *Jubilees*, apart from perhaps some of the names of the wives of the patriarchs. Knowledge of the work was being pushed out by a competing tradition. Part Three of this study will examine this competitor: the *Cave of Treasures*. This work is the mirror-image of *Jubilees*: It was known within the caliphate but unknown, owing to the lack of a Greek version, in the Byzantine Empire. The comparison will reaffirm that region, rather than religion, was determinative for the sources of PRE.

