

Gavin McDowell

**The Rewritten Bible in Late Antiquity**

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## Volume 138



Gavin McDowell

# **The Rewritten Bible in Late Antiquity**

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»Pirge de-Rabbi Eliezer«, »Jubilees«,  
and the »Cave of Treasures«

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For my father



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R. Akiva said to him, “Master, perhaps a heretical teaching came to you, and it pleased you, and because of it you were arrested?” R. Eliezer said: “Akiva, you have reminded me! I was once walking in the upper market of Sepphoris, and I encountered one of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. . .” (*b. Avodah Zarah* 16b–17a).



# Acknowledgements

The present work is a thorough revision of my doctoral thesis, which I defended in December of 2017. The structure is fundamentally the same as the older iteration, although it is much more detailed and (in my opinion, at least) more nuanced. I have also replaced my reliance on printed editions of the central documents with manuscripts. It is unequivocally better than the previous version, and I hope that the final product justifies the extended time I took to write it, which was not the happiest time in both my personal life and in world history.

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a frequent source of obstruction, have also been a constant source of joy. Thanks are also due to my parents and the rest of my family overseas for their encouragement and interest in my work. This work is dedicated to my father, who first introduced me to authors like Josephus and Eusebius and stoked my interest in religious studies. He is likely to be the only person named in this paragraph who will also enjoy reading the finished book.



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## A Note on Translations

All translations of Hebrew and (Jewish) Aramaic are my own. In the case of Greek, Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and other languages, I have used existing English translations when they were available. When they were not, I reproduced the text and translated it myself. I did this even in instances where a modern translation was available in a language other than English. In the many instances where I compared two texts, I presented both the original text and my own translation, except in chapter four because of the abundance of citations and the questionable utility of printing yet again the text of *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*. Diacritics were a problem. In general, I used as few as possible for Hebrew terms (save for a few where I could not tolerate the absence of gutturals) but as many as possible for Arabic. This was in conformity with perceived trends in Jewish and Islamic studies.

For the three principle works under discussion, I used New York, Jewish Theological Seminary 3847 for *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* and London, British Library Add. 25875 for the *Cave of Treasures*. The secondary literature considers each of these manuscripts to be the *codex optimus* for their respective works. While the notion of a *codex optimus* is problematic, I still needed a text to translate. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* has no critical edition, and Su-Min Ri's idiosyncratic critical edition of the *Cave of Treasures*, which arbitrarily divides the work into "Eastern" and "Western" recensions (while rejecting BL Add. 25875 as a textual base), was inadequate. Neither JTS 3847 nor BL Add. 25875 have been published or edited, although both English translations of the *Cave of Treasures* are based on BL Add. 25875.

*Jubilees* presented an entirely different set of problems. James VanderKam produced the standard critical edition, which is unlikely to be replaced soon. The problem is that the text survives in its entirety only in Ethiopic. None of the other versional evidence, least of all the fragmentary Hebrew manuscripts from Qumran, could substitute for the full work. However, there was no benefit at all to reproducing the Ethiopic text, which is difficult to read and even more difficult to type. After mulling over this problem, I finally hit upon a novel solution. Since *Jubilees* is almost always quoted in this study alongside Hebrew works, I decided to cite the recent Hebrew "retroversion" of Cana Werman to facilitate the comparison. My English translation, however, is based on VanderKam's Ethiopic text, not Werman's Hebrew. The two versions are not completely identical, and I left the differences between the two intact (e.g., repeated references to a patriarch's wife being the daughter of his father's sister, rather than his father's brother). I did this, in part, to demonstrate that I did in fact consult the Ethiopic.

Quotations of the Hebrew Bible are based on the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. The New Testament is cited from the Revised Standard Version. Citations of the Qur'ān come from the King Fahd Medinan Mushaf. Quotations from the Babylonian Talmud are taken from the Vilna Shas. I am aware of the weaknesses of relying exclusively on the printed edition of the Talmud, but since this study is not principally concerned with talmudic matters, I hope I can be forgiven. Entries for all four of these standard references are in the bibliography.

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## Introduction



# 1 The Problem of *Pirge de-Rabbi Eliezer*

## 1.1 Two Modes of Transmission

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 1.2 *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* and the Pseudepigrapha

The modern invention of the Pseudepigrapha<sup>13</sup> can be traced to Johannes Fabricius’ *Codex pseudepigraphus Veteris Testamenti* (1713),<sup>14</sup> a companion volume to his earlier *Codex apocryphus Novi Testamenti* (1703).<sup>15</sup> Fabricius’ work follows in the footsteps of medieval canon lists, which divided received books into three categories: canonical books, disputed books (*antilegomena*, a broad category that encompassed elements of what would become the deuterocanonical books and the Apostolic Fathers but also some books—Revelation, for example—that were later

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>19</sup> Emil Friedrich Kautzsch, ed., *Die Apokryphen und Pseudigraphen des Alten Testaments*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1900).

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

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

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

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

Leopold Zunz, one of the founding fathers of modern Jewish studies, dedicated a chapter to PRE in his seminal study *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden* (1832, second edition 1892), but he did not discuss the relationship between the work and any of the works of the Pseudepigrapha.<sup>23</sup> This vacuum was filled by Haim Meir Horowitz, who had planned a major study of PRE and gave a detailed outline of its contents in an open letter to Adolf Jellinek published as a supplement to the first volume of the short-lived journal *Beth Talmud* (1880).<sup>24</sup> He had already published part of this work, “Mishnat Eliezer, or: A Critical Introduction to *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*,” in the weekly Hebrew-language newspaper *Hamagid* in twenty-two installments between February 19 and July 30, 1879.<sup>25</sup> His “Critical Introduction” is a goldmine of raw data, including copious notes on the rabbinic parallels to PRE, a list of the earliest citations, the Tannaim and Amoraim mentioned in the work, and a list of Palestinian customs. His sketch for Jellinek outlined two

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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<sup>26</sup> Horowitz, “Open Letter,” 12–16.

<sup>27</sup> Most of these will be discussed in chapter seven.

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>29</sup> Friedlander, *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, lii.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

36 Heinemann, "Ancient Legends," 184.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 1) God and his angels casting lots for possession of the different nations in PRE 24, an idea attested in Qumran literature but also implicit in the Bible (Deut 32:8–9) and used by the *paytan* Eleazar Qallir<sup>46</sup> (6th–7th century);
- 2) An apparent reference to Emzara, the wife of Noah (*Jub.* 4:33) in PRE 23;
- 3) The election of Levi in PRE 37, the *Testament of Levi*, and *Jub.* 32:3;
- 4) A “covert exegesis” of Lev 5:1 in PRE 14 and *Jub.* 4:5–6;
- 5) An allusion to the Hebrew name of Moses, “Malachiah” (מלאכיה), in both PRE 48 and the *Visions of Amram* from Qumran—but also later sources such as *Midrash Hadash al ha-Torah* (8th–10th c.);<sup>47</sup>
- 6) The prophecy of Moses’ birth, from PRE 48 (but also Josephus, *Ant.* II.205, and *b. Sotah* 13a), implicit in *Jub.* 47:1–3.

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>49</sup> Dulkan, “The Devil Within,” 157.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

58 Blachorsky, “Beyond Late Midrash,” 28.

59 Blachorsky, “Beyond Late Midrash,” 198.

60 Blachorsky, “Beyond Late Midrash,” 28.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>67</sup> Labendz, “The Book of Ben Sira.”

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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<sup>75</sup> The relevant passage is cited below.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>97</sup> Gaster, *Ilchester Lectures*, 159–60.

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

<sup>99</sup> Gaster, *Ilchester Lectures*, 162.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 1.4 Method

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 1.5 The Plan of This Study

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

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

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

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

<sup>115</sup> Lévi, "Éléments chrétiens," 89.

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

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

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

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

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



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Part One: ***Pirqa de-Rabbi Eliezer***



## 2 *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* in its Time

Since its redaction at the end of Late Antiquity, *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* has enjoyed enormous popularity. The work exists in around fifty printed editions and over a hundred manuscripts from every part of the Jewish Diaspora. The work was cited in the writings of the Geonim Sherira,<sup>1</sup> Hai,<sup>2</sup> and Nissim,<sup>3</sup> in the biblical commentaries of Rashi (e.g., to Gen 27:9 and Deut 12:7), David Kimhi (e.g., to Jonah 1:7), and Moses Nachmanides (e.g., to Gen 1:8, Gen 28:12, and Lev 16:8), and in the philosophical writings of Judah ha-Levi (*Kuzari* III.65 and IV.29), Moses Maimonides (*Guide for the Perplexed* I.70 and II.26),<sup>4</sup> and others.<sup>5</sup> It is used throughout midrashic anthologies such as *Yalqut Shim'oni*<sup>6</sup> and *Midrash ha-Gadol*.<sup>7</sup> It was also a major influence on the *Zohar*.<sup>8</sup>

Christian interest in PRE begins only after the Middle Ages. Konrad Pellikan translated the work in 1546, shortly after the Venice edition of 1544.<sup>9</sup> It was

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1 Isaac b. Moses of Vienna, *Sefer Or Zaru'a*, 2 vols. (Zhytomyr: Akiba Lehren, 1862), 2:53 (*Halakhot Milah* §107.2) [Hebrew], alluding to PRE 29 and citing the work by name.

2 Solomon Aaron Wertheimer, *Sefer Qehilath Shlomo: In Which are Gathered and Assembled the Questions and Responses of the Geonim of Old* (Jerusalem: 1899), 9 (translation) and 77 (text) [Hebrew], citing PRE 10.

3 Nissim Gaon: Jacob Nahum Epstein, "Collectanea from *Sefer ha-Mafteah* of Rabbenu Nissim (Ms. Jemen)," *Tarbiz* 2 (1931): 1–26 (11) [Hebrew], citing PRE 50.

4 On Maimonides and other medieval citations of PRE, see further: Josep-Vicente Niclós, "Misticismo y filosofía judía en la Edad Media: Una cita de « Los Capítulos de Rabbi Eliezer » en Maimónides y en Shem Tob ibn Shaprut," *Revista Catalana de Teologia* 22 (1997), 57–74.

5 David R. Blumenthal, "The Rationalistic Commentary of Ḥoṭer Ben Shelomo to *Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer*," *Tarbiz* 48 (1979): 99–106 [Hebrew]; Paul B. Fenton, "The Judaeo-Arabic Commentary on *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eliezer* by Judah b. Nissim Ibn Malka with a Hebrew Translation and Supercommentary by Isaac b. Samuel of Acre," *Sefunot* 6 (1993): 115–65 [Hebrew]; Katharina E. Keim, *Pirquei deRabbi Eliezer: Structure, Coherence, Intertextuality* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 31–32.

6 See, for example, Genesis §42 (PRE 22); Genesis §95 (PRE 30); and Jonah §550 (PRE 10).

7 Joseph Tobi, "Midrash ha-Gadol: The Sources and The Structure," 2 vols. (PhD Dissertation, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1993), 1:283–88 [Hebrew].

8 Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 3rd ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1960), 170: "The names of the most important members of the group around Simeon ben Yohai are largely taken from a pseudepigraphical Midrash and given a spurious appearance of authenticity by the addition of the name of the father or other cognomens. This particular Midrash, the *Pirke Rabbi Eliezer*, dating from the eighth century, is one of the most important sources for the Aggadah of the *Zohar* in general." Oded Yisraeli, *Temple Portals: Studies in Aggadah and Midrash in the Zohar*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), takes the influence of PRE for granted (see, e.g., 119 and 254).

9 Konrad Pellikan, *Das Chronikon des Konrad Pellikan*, ed. Bernhard Riegenbach (Basel: Bahnmeiers Verlag, 1877), 176 [entry for 1546]: "I also translated the wordy book of R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanus, called 'the Great,' filled with fables added to Genesis, Exodus, and Esther, sporadically called 'The

translated again by Willem Henricus Vorstius and printed in 1644.<sup>10</sup> As with every pre-modern work about Adam and Eve, someone has posited that John Milton used it as a source for *Paradise Lost*.<sup>11</sup>

The first translation of the work into a modern language was Gerald Friedlander's English rendition of 1916.<sup>12</sup> This was followed much later by French (1983),<sup>13</sup> Spanish (1984),<sup>14</sup> and German (2004)<sup>15</sup> translations. A second English translation, intended for a religious rather than an academic audience, has recently appeared.<sup>16</sup> The translation of the work coincides with two important phases in the study of the Pseudepigrapha. The first began with the collections of Emil Friedrich Kautzsch (1900)<sup>17</sup> and R. H. Charles (1913)<sup>18</sup> and lasted until the beginning of World War II. Charles' collection, in particular, had a major impact on Friedlander, who cites it in his introduction.<sup>19</sup> The second phase began with the collection of James

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Chapters of Eliezer' until chapter fifty-four" (*Transtuli quoque librum prolixum Rabi Eliezer, filii Hircani qui magnus cognominatur; refertum fabulis additis ad librum Geneseos et Exodi et libro Hester; usque ad capita quinquaginta quatuor allegatur passim Pirke Eliezer*). I have been unable to find this work.

10 Willem Henricus Vorstius, trans., *Capitula R. Elieser: Continentia inprimis succinctam historiae sacrae recensionem circiter 3400 ann. sive à Creatione usque ad Mardochei aetatem, cum veterum Rabbīnorum Commentariis* (Leiden: Ioannis Maire, 1644).

11 Golda Werman, *Milton and Midrash* (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1995).

12 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).

13 Alain Ouaknin and Eric Smilévitch, trans., *Pirké de Rabbi Eliezer* (Lagrasse: Verdier, 1983).

14 Miguel Pérez Fernández, trans., *Los Capítulos de Rabbí Eliezer* (Valencia: Institución S. Jerónimo para la Investigación Bíblica, 1984).

15 Dagmar Börner-Klein, ed. and trans., *Pirke de-Rabbi Elieser: Nach der Edition Venedig 1544 unter Berücksichtigung der Edition Warschau 1852* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004).

16 Abraham Yaakov Finkel, trans., *Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer*, 2 vols. (Scranton: Yeshivath Beth Moshe, 2009).

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

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

19 Friedlander, *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, xiii: "The book usually designated *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* (*Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer*) is not the least important of the Rabbinic Pseudepigrapha. The attention recently given to the study of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha has, to a certain extent, been limited by the neglect of the Rabbinic side of the subject. The only Hebrew works translated in the magnificent Oxford edition of the *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* [of R. H. Charles] are the *Pirke Aboth* and the *Fragments of a Zadokite Word* [the *Damascus Document*]. The selection of these two books is singularly unfortunate, since neither belongs to the Pseudepigrapha proper. More appropriate would have been the inclusion in the afore-mentioned *corpus* of such works as

Charlesworth, completed in 1985, and is ongoing. The resurgence of interest in PRE in the 1980s, during the modern revival of interest in the Pseudepigrapha, is probably not a coincidence. As noted in the introduction, the fame of the work rests on its rapport with the “Pseudepigrapha,” especially the Enoch and Adam books.

*Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* is attributed to R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanus, a second-generation Tanna of the late first and early second century and one of the most frequently cited authorities in the Mishnah.<sup>20</sup> He was known for his conservative opinions, such as a literal interpretation of the *lex talionis* (*b. Bava Qamma* 84a). Paradoxically, he also had a reputation as a magician and thaumaturge (*b. Sanhedrin* 68a). A combination of these two traits led to his eventual expulsion from the inner circle of rabbis. In order to demonstrate the halakhic fitness of a certain kind of oven (the “Oven of Akhnai”), he engages in magical combat with another rabbi (*b. Bava Metzia* 59b–60a). Another story involves R. Eliezer’s arrest by the Roman government on the suspicion that he was a crypto-Christian (*t. Hullin* 2:24; *b. Avodah Zarah* 16b–17a). Rabbinic tradition, therefore, presents R. Eliezer as a great authority with “heterodox” inclinations.<sup>21</sup> It is fitting that PRE—a work that, as Annette Reed notes, breaks every taboo proscribed in the Mishnah (*m. Hagigah* 2:1)—is attributed to him.<sup>22</sup> However, Eliezer b. Hyrcanus did not write *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*. As this chapter will make clear, it was written much later, in the early Islamic period. Although it was probably written by a single author, we can only deduce his identity by clues left in the composition itself.

The present chapter is intended to introduce the critical issues related to the study of *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*. The first issue is the manuscript tradition. As with many rabbinic works, the manuscript history is complex, and there is not yet a critical edition. The second issue is the content and structure. The work is apparently unfinished, and the structure is unusual, since it frequently departs from a strict chronological order. The date and the provenance of PRE are no longer points of contention—most scholars would date the work to eighth-century Palestine—but they once were, and it is important to document the basis of our current knowledge. Genre is a different matter. *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* is reflexively labeled a Midrash,

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the *Othijoth de Rabbi Akiba* or the *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, now presented, for the first, time, in an English translation.”

<sup>20</sup> On his life and work, see Jacob Neusner, *Eliezer Ben Hyrcanus: The Tradition and the Man*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1973), and Itzhak D. Gilat, *R. Eliezer Ben Hyrcanus: A Scholar Outcast* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1984).

<sup>21</sup> Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1999), 22–41, refers to this episode as an illustration of the porous boundaries between Judaism and Christianity.

<sup>22</sup> Annette Yoshiko Reed, “‘Who Can Recount the Mighty Acts of the Lord?’: Cosmology and Authority in *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer* 1–3,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 80 (2009): 115–41 (116).

and while it is filled with aggadic content typical of Midrashim, it is structurally quite different. The current study argues that PRE is a type of “Rewritten Bible,” part of a chain of unbroken tradition from the Second Temple period that is also reflected in contemporary Muslim and Christian literature.

## 2.1 Manuscripts and Editions

The textual evidence for PRE is abundant and complicated. *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* is extant in well over a hundred manuscripts. Eliezer Treitl, who has written the most complete treatment of PRE’s textual tradition, lists 109, including primary manuscripts, “mixed” manuscripts, Genizah fragments, other fragments, copies of the printed editions, and adaptations and anthologies.<sup>23</sup> The oldest manuscripts come from the Cairo Genizah and are as early as the eleventh century.<sup>24</sup> Most, however, are not earlier than the fourteenth century. Not all this material is of equal value. Many manuscripts are merely copies of printed editions and have no textual value whatsoever. For his electronic synopsis of the text of PRE, Treitl used twenty-four witnesses, only nine of which are complete, while the rest contain major portions of the text.

Treitl divides twenty of his textual witnesses (nineteen manuscripts and the *editio princeps*) into three main branches. The first of these is the א or European (אירופי) branch, for which Treitl adduces nine manuscripts. Friedlander’s English translation was made from a Sephardi manuscript from this family (New York, JTS 10484, Treitl’s 5א). Michael Higger’s widely available edition (included in the Bar Ilan Responsa Project) is also based on a Sephardi manuscript (Rome, Casanatense 258, Treitl’s 4א), with variants from two other manuscripts found in the same library (Rome, Casanatense 1, Treitl’s 2א and Rome, Casanatense 3061, Treitl’s 8א), all of which come from the same family of texts.<sup>25</sup>

23 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].

24 Very little of the Cairo Genizah material has been published. See Zvi Meir Rabinowitz, “Genizah Fragments of Pirke R. Eliezer,” *Bar-Ilan Annual* 16–17 (1979): 102–11 [Hebrew]. Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 45, is skeptical of the textual value of the Genizah material.

25 This edition was initially published in the periodical *Horeb*: Michael Higger, “Pirke Rabbi Eliezer,” *Horeb* 8 (1944): 82–119; 9 (1946): 94–166; 10 (1948): 185–294 [Hebrew]. On this edition, see Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 408–10, and the critical remarks of Lewis M. Barth, “Is Every Medieval Hebrew Manuscript a New Composition?” in *Agendas for the Study of Midrash in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Marc Lee Raphael (Williamsburg: College of William and Mary, 1999), 43–62 (available online at: <https://dornsife.usc.edu/pre-text-editing-project/midrash-study-agenda/>).

Treitl's second branch, ד, consists of only two witnesses, the first printed edition (דפוס) of Constantinople (1514) and a related Sephardi manuscript of the fifteenth or sixteenth century (St. Petersburg, EVR I 249). This textual family is closely related to the European branch. The second printed edition of Venice (1544), which is the basis for most of the printed editions to follow (including David Luria's widely disseminated, though censored, edition and commentary),<sup>26</sup> also belongs to this textual family, inasmuch as the Venice edition is based, in large part, on the edition of Constantinople.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, the 1544 text, most recently published by Dagmar Börner-Klein alongside her translation, is a witness to this branch.<sup>28</sup>

Treitl's third branch, ת, consists of nine Yemenite (תימני) manuscripts. The Yemenite branch is separate from the other two branches, even though all three go back to an original prototype. The Yemenite manuscripts, of which two—New York, JTS 3847 (Treitl's 1ת) and New York, Lehman 300 (Treitl's 2ת)—are complete, are generally considered the best texts. They are lacunose, however, whereas the European manuscripts tend to add text. The manuscript JTS 3847 (JTS Enelow 866) is the basis for the electronic text produced by the Academy of the Hebrew Language and is available at the website Maagarim (<https://maagarim.hebrew-academy.org.il/Pages/PMain.aspx>). Zev Gottlieb, who began a critical edition of PRE but died before its completion, used Lehmann 300 as his base text.<sup>29</sup> One of these two manuscripts is likely to serve as the basis for a future critical edition.

Four other manuscripts figure into Treitl's synopsis. Moscow, Ginzberg 1455, which Treitl has given the siglum צ, belongs to the same textual tradition underlying א and ד and so serves as a joining (צירוף) of the two traditions. It is notable as the only manuscript to preserve subdivisions within the chapters. Another solitary manuscript, HUC 75 (Treitl: ס), belongs to the Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati (סיניסני). It is an Iraqi (מזרחי) manuscript of the fourteenth or fifteenth century. Its relationship to the other branches is not clear, although later hands have restored missing portions of the text by inserting the text of the *editio princeps*.

The two final witnesses, labeled מ by Treitl, belong to mixed (מעורב) textual traditions. The first, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Hebr. 710 (1מ), freely combines the texts of families א and ד, at some points copying two versions of the text, one right after the other. It also includes portions of works unrelated to PRE, such as a

<sup>26</sup> David Luria, ed., *Sefer Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer from the Tanna Rabbi Eliezer b. Hyrcanos with the Commentary of Radal* (Warsaw: Zvi Jacob Bamberg, 1852).

<sup>27</sup> Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 406–7.

<sup>28</sup> Börner-Klein, *Pirke de-Rabbi Elieser: nach der Edition Venedig 1544*.

<sup>29</sup> See Rachel Adelman, *The Return of the Repressed: Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer and the Pseudepigrapha* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 43, n. 46, and Steven Daniel Sacks, *Midrash and Multiplicity: Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer and the Renewal of Rabbinic Interpretive Culture* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 12.

chapter of *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* following PRE 29 (PRE 30 in the printed edition). It is of little textual value. The final witness, 22, is one text that has been catalogued as three manuscripts: St. Petersburg EVR II A 275 (the bulk of the text); St. Petersburg EVR II 582 (five pages that became separated); and St. Petersburg EVR II A 493 (a single page). It also copies alternately from 8 and 7.

There is, as yet, no critical edition of PRE. Lewis Barth has summarized the attempts at a critical text, which includes the aforementioned editions of Luria, Higger, Gottlieb, and the Academy of the Hebrew Language.<sup>30</sup> The only entry in this short catalogue that I have not yet mentioned is the “Critical Edition” of Haim Meir Horowitz, an annotated copy of the Venice edition that was published by Makor in 1972, long after Horowitz’s death in 1905.<sup>31</sup> It is not therefore a critical edition or, really, an edition of any sort, but another document indicating Horowitz’s persistent fascination with his text.

The absence of a critical edition means that one must consult all the available textual evidence. This is now extremely easy thanks to Treitl’s online synopsis of PRE, available online as part of the Friedberg Genizah Project (<https://fjms.genizah.org>), under the rubric “Mahadura.” Quotations of PRE in this study come from JTS 3847 (17), which Barth tentatively cited as the *codex optimus*. I have read this manuscript in conjunction with Treitl’s synopsis to check for any major variants.

## 2.2 Contents and Structure

The discussion of the manuscripts leaves the impression that PRE is too textually unstable to be readable, but this is not the case. Although it is unfinished (an issue that will be addressed below), PRE presents a coherent account of biblical history from creation until the wandering in the wilderness. Typically, the work is divided into fifty-four chapters. The numbering of the chapters varies between manuscript and textual tradition. For example, the 8 family combines the last two chapters. In the printed editions, PRE 18 and 19 are reversed. The end of PRE 23 (Noah dividing the world among his sons) is sometimes found at the beginning of PRE 24. In one manuscript, the first two chapters are not numbered. And so on.<sup>32</sup>

The fifty-four chapters fall into ten major parts, which can be described as follows.

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<sup>30</sup> Barth, “Medieval Hebrew Manuscript.”

<sup>31</sup> Haim Meir Horowitz, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer: A Critical Edition* (Jerusalem: Makor Publishing, 1972) [Hebrew].

<sup>32</sup> Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 403–6, gives the chapter divisions of the major manuscripts.



- 1) All complete manuscripts of PRE begin with a prologue (PRE 1–2), explaining how R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanus, the putative author, became a master of Torah. As Günter Stemberger has noted, Genizah fragments, including the very earliest manuscripts, already have the current chapter numbering, suggesting that these two chapters were already part of the original work.<sup>33</sup> The problem of whether these chapters belonged to the original work will be discussed below.
- 2) The second major section is the Hexameron, the six days of creation described in Gen 1 (PRE 3–11). Two notable subsections here are a long discourse on the calendar (PRE 6–8) on the fourth day (the creation of the sun, moon, and stars) and the story of Jonah and the big fish (PRE 10) attached to the fifth day (the creation of marine animals).
- 3) The creation of Adam on the sixth day (PRE 11) naturally links the second section to the third, the life of Adam and Eve (PRE 12–20; cf. Gen 1–3). In terms of structure, the most significant chapter is PRE 14, which introduces the recurring theme of the ten descents of God. The first of these descents is immediately after Adam's sin, narrated in PRE 13. A large portion of this section is given over to homilies on various subjects, including the doctrine of the two ways (PRE 15) and showing charity to those who rejoice (PRE 16) and to those who mourn (PRE 17). The section ends with several chapters on the celebration of the first Sabbath (PRE 18–20).
- 4) The fourth section, PRE 21–25, follows the descendants of Adam until the time of Abraham. Each chapter deals with a different subject: Cain and Abel (PRE 21), the fallen angels (PRE 22), Noah (PRE 23), the tower of Babel (PRE 24), and Sodom and Gomorrah (PRE 25). Chapters 24 and 25 treat, respectively, the second and third descents of God. Abraham appears briefly in both chapters, anticipating the next section.
- 5) The fifth section (PRE 26–31) is entirely dedicated to the ten trials of Abraham. They are:
  1. Abraham's occultation in infancy (PRE 26).<sup>34</sup>
  2. The fiery furnace (PRE 26; cf. *Gen. Rab.* 38:6).
  3. The migration to Haran (PRE 26; Gen 11:32).
  4. The famine in Canaan (PRE 26; Gen 12:10).
  5. The abduction of Sarah (PRE 26; Gen 12:10–20 and Gen 20).
  6. The war of the kings (PRE 27; Gen 14).
  7. The covenant between the pieces (PRE 28; Gen 15).

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<sup>33</sup> Günter Stemberger, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch*, 9th ed. (Munich: Beck, 2011), 365–66.

<sup>34</sup> This story, abundantly cited in Muslim literature, only appears for the first time in Jewish literature in PRE 26. See Shari L. Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather: Abraham in Islamic and Jewish Exegetical Narratives* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 109–11 and 151–52.

8. The covenant of circumcision (PRE 29; Gen 17).
9. The expulsion of Ishmael (PRE 30; Gen 21).
10. The binding of Isaac (PRE 31; Gen 22).

The trials of Abraham, a theme as old as the book of *Jubilees* (17:17), is also a recurring theme in rabbinic literature (e.g., *m. Avot* 5:3).<sup>35</sup> This section is especially important for dating PRE, since PRE 28 mentions the kingdom of Ishmael while PRE 30 has several additional references to Islam. These will be discussed below.

- 6) Abraham is naturally succeeded by his son Isaac, the subject of the next brief section (PRE 32–34). Chapter 32 follows his life from the Aqedah until the blessing of Jacob (Gen 27). The next two chapters, PRE 33–34, are homilies on the resurrection, for which Isaac is the symbol *par excellence* in later rabbinic literature.<sup>36</sup>
- 7) With PRE 35, the focus shifts to Jacob and his divine encounter at “Bethel,” here identified as the Temple Mount (Gen 28). The next four chapters (PRE 36–39) cover the rest of his life, with only a fleeting interest in the life of Joseph (Gen 37–50). The descent into Egypt (PRE 39) is counted as the fourth descent of God, who accompanies Jacob and his family.
- 8) Two more “descent” chapters introduce a lengthy section on Moses and the Exodus (PRE 40–48). These chapters narrate the two revelations to Moses at Sinai, the burning bush (PRE 40; Exod 3) and the giving of the Torah (PRE 41; Exod 19–24). The narrative then returns to the crossing of the Red Sea (PRE 42;

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35 Lewis Barth has written extensively on this subject: Lewis M. Barth, “The Image of Sarah in Trial Four of a Lektion for the Second Day of Rosh Ha-Shanah,” in *The Bible in the Light of Its Interpreters: Sarah Kalmin Memorial Volume*, ed. Sara Japhet (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1994), 157–69 [Hebrew]; Lewis M. Barth, “Genesis 15 and the Problems of Abraham’s Seventh Trial,” *Maarav* 8 (1992): 245–63 [Hebrew]; Lewis M. Barth, “Abraham’s Eighth Trial: A Comparison of Two Versions,” in *Proceedings of the Tenth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Division C: Jewish Thought and Literature* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1989), 125–32 [Hebrew]. Lewis M. Barth, “Introducing the Akedah: A Comparison of Two Midrashic Presentations,” in *A Tribute to Geza Vermes: Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History*, ed. Philip R. Davies and Richard T. White (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1990), 125–38; Lewis M. Barth, “Textual Transformations: Rabbinic Exegesis of Gen. 22:14,” in *Bits of Honey: Essays for Samson H. Levey*, ed. Stanley F. Chyet and David H. Ellenson (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 3–24. Lewis M. Barth, “Lektion for the Second Day of Rosh Hashanah: A Homily Containing the Legend of the Ten Trials of Abraham,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 58 (1987): 1–48 [Hebrew].

36 See especially Shalom Spiegel, *The Last Trial: On the Legends and Lore of the Command to Abraham to Offer Isaac as a Sacrifice*, trans. Judah Goldin (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1967), 30–37. According to Edward Kessler, *Bound by the Bible: Jews, Christians and the Sacrifice of Isaac* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 129, PRE is the first Jewish work to tie Isaac to the theme of resurrection.

- Exod 14–15) and a related homily on repentance (PRE 43; Pharaoh is the penultimate example). From there, the story follows the biblical order: the war with Amalek (PRE 44; Exod 17), the Golden Calf (PRE 45; Exod 32), and Moses' intercession (PRE 46; Exod 33). Chapter 47 skips ahead to the sin of Baal Peor (Num 25), but PRE 48 circles back to the birth of Moses and the first Passover (Exod 1–12).
- 9) The next section, in its turn, passes over the rest of the biblical history to the story of Esther (PRE 49–50). It continues two separate threads introduced in the previous section 1) the enmity between Israel and Amalek, encapsulated in the person of Haman, a descendant of Amalek (PRE 49; cf. PRE 44); and 2) the significance of Passover, when the events of Esther take place (PRE 50). In this sense, Esther is a logical sequel to the story of Passover in PRE 48.
  - 10) The final section (PRE 51–54) is a potpourri. Chapter 51, on the new creation, would have been a fitting conclusion. It is followed, however, by a homily on the seven wonders of old (PRE 52) and a sermon against slander (PRE 53–54), which takes as its primary example the story of Miriam and Aaron's challenge to Moses' leadership (Num 12). Their rebellion occasions God's eighth descent.

In the manuscripts, the work abruptly ends with the following note (JTS 3847, f. 155a).

R. Jose said: If a man hires a diligent worker, discharges him, and gives him his full salary, what praise will they accord him? But if he hires a lazy man, discharges him, and gives him his full salary, to this one they will accord praise. Thus Solomon said before the Holy One, Blessed be He, "Master of all the worlds! Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were diligent workers. You gave them their full salary, from their own merit you gave it to them. But us? We are lazy workers. When you heal us, give us our full salary. Indeed, the whole world will praise you and bless you, saying, "Blessed are you, LORD, who heals the sick of his people Israel" (PRE 54).

As it stands, the narrative leaves the Israelites stranded in the wilderness, before the crossing of the Jordan or even the death of Moses.

The printed editions of Constantinople and Venice do not even have this ending. The text cuts off mid-sentence, leading to the suspicion that the original ending is missing. Solomon Wertheimer published a complete version of the last chapter from a manuscript,<sup>37</sup> but other mysteries abound. Both Luria<sup>38</sup> and Horowitz<sup>39</sup>

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37 Solomon Aaron Wertheimer and Abraham Joseph Wertheimer, eds., "The Last Chapter of Pirke Rabbi Eliezer," in *Batei Midrashot: Twenty-Five Midrashim Published for the First Time from Manuscripts Discovered in the Genizoth of Jerusalem and Egypt* (Jerusalem: Ktav va-Sepher, 1968) 1: 225–26 (introduction) and 238–43 (text) [Hebrew].

38 Luria, *Sefer Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, "Introduction to Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer," 13a–13b.

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

collected alleged quotations of the work that do not correspond with the surviving text. One manuscript of *Pseudo-Seder Eliyahu Zuta* (Parma, Biblioteca Palatina 3122 [De Rossi 1240]) features seven chapters of a work entitled *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, but their content does not complete the story of the Torah, as one might expect.<sup>40</sup> Nor, according to Treitl, are these chapters written in the author's signature style.<sup>41</sup> Three additional chapters, called "Chapters of the Descents," do belong to PRE.<sup>42</sup> They are versions of PRE 39–41: the fourth, fifth, and sixth descents of God. Therefore, they correspond to material that is already known from the work. No other text has come to light that could be recognized as the work's proper ending.

Two structural deficiencies suggest that, instead of a lost ending, the work is simply incomplete. The first is the recurring motif of the ten descents of God, introduced in PRE 14 and the subject of PRE 24, 25, 39, 40, 41, 46, and 54. The last chapter only reaches the eighth descent. Thanks to PRE 14, we know the occasion of the last two descents. God would appear a second time at the tent of meeting in the wilderness (though the exact circumstances are uncertain) and a final time in the future, presumably in the messianic era.

The second unfinished structural element is the insertion of blessings from the Amidah (the eighteen blessings, the central prayer of the synagogue liturgy) into the narrative. Leopold Zunz identified blessings in the following chapters: PRE 27 (the shield of Abraham), PRE 31 (resurrection of the dead), PRE 35 (sanctification of the name), PRE 40 (understanding), PRE 43 (repentance), PRE 46 (forgiveness), PRE 51 (redemption), and PRE 54 (healing).<sup>43</sup> The citations follow the blessings of the Amidah in their sequential order. Treitl, however, noted some problems with Zunz's analysis.<sup>44</sup> Two of the blessings (forgiveness and redemption) are not explicit. Two more (sanctification and healing) are not present in all the manuscripts. Finally, PRE 10 alludes to the thirteenth blessing (of the righteous; in this context, righteous converts) in its closing lines, meaning that the blessings are not necessarily in sequence. The lack of consistency suggests that the author had not yet figured out how to incorporate all the blessings of the Amidah into the work.

<sup>40</sup> Meir Friedmann, ed., *Pseudo-Seder Eliahu Zuta (Derech Ereç und Pirkê Rabbi Eliezer)* (Vienna: Achiasaf, 1904), 26–49 [Hebrew].

<sup>41</sup> Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 29. He also notes that there were many other works attributed to R. Eliezer besides PRE. See Haim Meir Horowitz, "Open Letter," *Beilage zum Beth Talmud* 1 (1880): 1–24 (1–10) [Hebrew].

<sup>42</sup> Friedmann, *Pseudo-Seder Eliahu Zuta*, 50–56.

<sup>43</sup> Leopold Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden, historisch entwickelt* 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kauffmann, 1892), 285, n. a. See also the table in Adelman, *Return of the Repressed*, 265–68.

<sup>44</sup> Treitl *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 33–39.

As Treitl and others have speculated, the “lazy worker” in the extant ending could be a coded reference to the author himself, who abandoned his work.<sup>45</sup>

Despite the reservations of earlier scholars such as Gerald Friedlander,<sup>46</sup> recent scholars accept the essential unity of the composition, including Jacob Elbaum,<sup>47</sup> Rachel Adelman,<sup>48</sup> Steven Daniel Sacks,<sup>49</sup> Eliezer Treitl,<sup>50</sup> and Katharina Keim.<sup>51</sup> The coherence of the work does not necessarily imply a single author, although this is generally understood. All these scholars point to the repetition of key ideas and phrases as well as the use of organizing principles such as lists (e.g., the ten descents and the blessings of the Amidah). Despite this consensus, a few issues about the work’s structure and organization remain unresolved. One of these is whether the opening chapters of the work (PRE 1–2), recounting the story of R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanus, is part of the original composition or a later addition. Another unresolved mystery is why the chapters are not always arranged in chronological order. This has, in my opinion, never been satisfactorily explained.

The first issue is the prologue, the story of R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanus. The story is traditional. It was not invented by PRE, and it has several rabbinic parallels: *Genesis Rabbah* 41(42),<sup>52</sup> *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan–A* 6, *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan–B* 13, and *Midrash Tanhuma Buber, Lekh Lekha* 10.<sup>53</sup> The text of PRE 1–2 is closest to *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan–B* 13. It appears, in fact, that ARN-B was the direct source for PRE 1–2.

Friedlander doubted the originality of these chapters due to several manuscripts that begin with PRE 3 or else numbered the chapters as if PRE 1–2 were not present.<sup>54</sup> Treitl demolished his arguments.<sup>55</sup> The first manuscript Friedlander referred to, British Library 27089, is not a full manuscript but an excerpt of the

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45 Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 39; Katharina E. Keim, *Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer: Structure, Coherence, Intertextuality* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 71.

46 Friedlander, *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, xv–xviii.

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

48 Adelman, *Return of the Repressed*, 23–25.

49 Sacks, *Midrash and Multiplicity*. The whole book treats the subject.

50 Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 176–200.

51 Keim, *Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer*. The whole book treats the subject.

52 It is chapter 42 of the printed edition but chapter 41 in the critical edition of Julius Theodor and Hanoach Albeck, eds., *Midrash Bereschit Rabba mit kritischem Apparat und Kommentar*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Itzkowski, 1912–1936), 1:397–99.

53 Dina Stein, *Maxims Magic Myth: A Folkloristic Perspective of Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2004), 115–68 [Hebrew].

54 Friedlander, *Pirkê de-Rabbi Eliezer*, xvi.

55 Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 24.

hexameral portion of the work. It therefore should not be expected to have the first two chapters. The same is true of the *Chronicles of Jerahmeel* (Oxford, Bodleian Libraries Hebr. d. 11), which likewise begins with the Hexameron from PRE 3–11.<sup>56</sup> The numbering of the chapters tells us nothing, since the chapters are not always numbered consistently, and in at least one manuscript (St. Petersburg EVR I 249, Treitl's 2ד), the prologue is not numbered at all—but it is still part of the text.

Treitl suggested, with some hesitancy, that PRE 1–2 is the work of the original author.<sup>57</sup> Even though it is taken ultimately from ARN–B 13, the author has not adopted the text directly but rewritten it according to his own style. One phrase in particular, “that bursts forth and brings out water” (שהוא נובע ומוציא מים) is missing from ARN–B 13 but recurs in PRE 5 and PRE 33. Treitl makes a similar observation regarding PRE 13 (the sin of Adam and Eve) and ARN–B 1, where PRE turns the phrase “he was thinking to himself” (היה נותן בינו לבין עצמו) into the synonymous phrase (דן דין נחש בינו לבין עצמו), which the author reuses in PRE 10, PRE 41, and PRE 45.

A further examination of PRE 13 and ARN–B 1, on the serpent's temptation of Eve, reveals that *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* does, in fact, know ARN–B and has freely reworked the text. Placing the two sections in parallel columns illustrates this point. Some of the material from ARN–B (quoted from the text of the oldest manuscript, Ms. Parma 2785 [De Rossi 327], as printed in the synoptic edition of Hans-Jürgen Becker), has been rearranged to facilitate comparison.<sup>58</sup> For the same reason, I have also eliminated those portions of text in ARN–B which have no parallel in PRE.

**PRE 13 (JTS 3847, f. 102a–102b)**

[140] מ"ל ה"ד למלך שנשא אשה והשליט אותה באבנים טובות ומרגליות טובות ואמ' לה כל מה שיש לי בידך חוץ מחבית זו שהיא מלאה עקרבים נכנס זקן אחד אצלה כגון שואל חומץ אמ' לה מה המלך נוהג בך

**ARN–B 1 (Parma, De Rossi 327, ff. 57b–58a)**

[140] ר' אומ' למה היתה חוה דומה באותה שעה למלך שנשא אשה והשליטה על הכסף ועל הזהב ועל כל מה שיש לו ואמ' לה הרי כל שלי נתון בידך חוץ מן החבית זו שהיא מלאה עקרבים נכנסה אצלה זקנה אחת כגון אילו שואלות חומץ אמרה לה מה המלך נוהג עמך

<sup>56</sup> 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), 75–86. For a translation, see Jerahmeel b. Solomon, *The Chronicles of Jerahmeel: Or, The Hebrew Bible Historiale*, trans. Moses Gaster (1899; repr. New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1971), 5–19.

<sup>57</sup> Treitl *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 25–26.

<sup>58</sup> Hans-Jürgen Becker, ed., *Avot de-Rabbi Natan: Synoptische Edition beider Versionen* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 319–321. I selected this manuscript out of the four witnesses in the synopsis because it is the one Becker himself used for his translation: Hans-Jürgen Becker, trans., *Avot de-Rabbi Natan B* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016).

[1.41]= אמרה לו יפה המלך נוהג בי כל מה שיש לו הרי הוא ביד חוץ מחבית זו שהיא מלאה עקרים אמ' לה והלא כל מה שיש למלך הרי הוא בחבית זו והלא קוסמין שלמלך אינו אלא בחבית זו מפני שהוא מבקש לישא לו אשה אחרת ולתנה לה

[1.42]= כך המלך זה אדם ואשה זו חוה ושואל חומץ זה נחש ועליהם הוא אומ' שם נפלו פועלי און דחו ולא יכלו קום

[1.30]= דן דין נחש בינו ובין עצמו אמ' אם אני הולך ואומ' לאדם יודע אני שאינו שומע לי מפני שהאיש לעולם קשה שנ' והאיש קשה אלא הרי אני הולך ואומ' לאשה שאני יודע שהיא שומעת לי שהנשים נשמעות לכל אדם שנ' פתיות ובל ידעה מה הלך הנחש ואמ' לאשה אף אתם מצווין על פירות האילן אמרה לו הין שנ' מפרי העץ אשר בתוך הגן כיון ששמע הנחש מתוך דבריה שלחוה מצא פתח לכנס בו

[1.35b]= אמ' לה והלא אין צווי זה אלא עין רעה שבשע' שאתם אוכלין ממנו תהיו כמוהו אלהות מה הוא בורא עולמות אף אתם יכולין לברות עולמות מה הוא ממית ומחיה אף אתם יכולין להמית ולהחיות שנ' כי יודע אלהים כי ביום אכלכם ממנו והייתם כאלהים יודעי טוב ורע

[1.33–34]= הלך הנחש ונגע באילן והיה האילן צוח ואומ' רשע אל תגע בי שנ' אל תבואני רגל גאווה ויד רשעים אל תנידני

[1.35a]= הלך הנחש ואמ' לאשה הרי אני נגעת באילן ולא מתי אף את הגעי בו לא תמותו

[1.37]= הלכה חוה ונגעה בו באילן וראתה מלאך המות בא כנגדה אמרה אוי לי עכשיו אני מתה והק'ב'ה' עושה אשה אחרת ונותנה לאדם הראשון אלא הרי אני גורמת לו שיאכל עמי אם נמות נמות שנינו ואם נחיה נחיה שנינו ולקחה ואכלה מפירות האילן ונתנה לו ואכל שנ' ותתן גם לאישה עמה ויאכל

[1.41] אמרה לה יפה המלך נוהג עמי שהשליטני על הכסף ועל הזהב ועל כל מה שיש לו אמ' לי הרי כל שלי נתון בידך חוץ מן החבית הזו שהיא מלאה עקרים אמרה לה והלא כל קוזמיה שלו נתון בתוכה אלא שהוא מבקש לישא לו אשה אחרת ונתנם לה שלחה ידה ופתחה את החבית ונשכוה עקרים ומתה

[1.42] המלך זה אדם אשה זו חוה שואל חומץ זה הנחש שנ' והנחש היה ערום מכל חית השדה וכל כך למה שלא היה אדם הראשון יכול לעמוד במצוה קלה שפיקדו המקום

[1.30] היה הנחש נושא ונותן בינו ובין עצמו ואומ' [אם אלך אצל אדם ואומר לו יודע אני שאינו שומע לי אלא אלך]<sup>59</sup> לחוה שאם יודא שהיא שומעת לי שהנשים נשמעות לכל אדם הלך ואמ' לה אף כי אמ' אלהים לא תאכלו אמרה לו הן מכל עץ הגן נאכל ומפרי העץ אשר בתוך הגן כיון ששמע הנחש את דבריה של חוה מצא פתח ליכנס בו

[1.35b] תדעי לך שאין זו אלא רוע עין מה הוא אם בשעה שאתם אוכלים ממנו מה הוא יכול לבראות עולם אף אתם יכולין ליברות עולם מה הוא ממית ומחיה אף אתם יכולין להמית ולהחיות שנ' כי יודע אלהים כי ביום אכלכם ממנו

[1.33–34] הלך ונטל מפירותיו ואכל ויש אומ' כיון שאחז בו הרתיע ונטל מפירותיו ואכל ויש אומ' כיון שראה אילן את הנחש בא כנגדו אמ' לו רשע אל תיגע בי שנ' אל תבואני רגל גאווה ויד רשעים אל תנידני וכן הוא אומ' שם נפלו פועלי און דחו ולא יכלו קום

[1.35a] הלך ואמ' לה הרי נגעת בו ולא מתי אף את אם נגעת בו אינך מתה

[1.37] ויש אומ' כיון שאכלה חוה מפירותיו של אילן ראת מלאך המות שבא כנגדה אמרה דומה אני כאילו שאני מסתלקת מן העולם וסוף לבריא אחרת להבראות לאדם הראשון תחתי מה אני עושה גורמת אני לו שיאכל עמי שנ' ותקח מפריו ותאכל ותתן גם לאשה עמה ויאכל

59 Lacuna supplied by Ms. Munich 222 (following Becker, *Avot de-Rabbi Natan B*, 10).

[=1.38] כיון שאכל מפירו האילן נפקחו עיניו וקהו שניו אמ' לה מה הוא זה שהאכלתיני שעניי נפקחו ושני קהו עלי שכשם שקהו שני עלי כך יקהו שני כל הדורות

[1.38] ויש אומ' כיון שאכל אדם הראשון מפרותיו של אילן התחילו עיניו מתפקחות עליו ושניו קהות בתוך פיו אמ' לה חוה מה הוא זה שהאכלתיני המן העץ אשר צויתך לבלתי אכול ממנו האכלתיני שהרי עיני מתפקחות עלי ושניו קהות בתוך פיו אמ' לה כשם שקהו שניי כך יקהו שניי כל הדורות

Here is my translation of both passages.

**PRE 13 (JTS 3847, f. 102a–102b)**

[=1.40] To what can this be compared? To a king who married a woman and gave her precious stones and pearls. He said to her: “Everything that belongs to me is now in your hands, apart from this barrel that is filled with scorpions.” An old man visited her like one who asks for vinegar. He said to her, “How does the king treat you?”

[=1.41] She responded: “The king treats me well. Everything that is his he has placed in my hands, except for this barrel that is full of scorpions.” He said to her, “Is not everything which belongs to the king in this very barrel? The king’s jewelry is not anywhere but in this barrel, because he seeks to marry another woman and give it to her!”

[=1.42] The king is Adam, the woman is Eve, and the vinegar beggar is the serpent. About them it is said: “There the evil-doers have fallen and cannot rise again” (Ps 36:13).

[=1.30] Thus the serpent deliberated with himself, saying, “If I go and speak to the man, I know that he will not listen to me because the man is always harsh, as it is written, “The man is harsh” (1Sam 25:3) Therefore, I shall go and speak to the woman, for I know that she will listen to me

**ARN-B 1 (Parma, De Rossi 327, ff. 57b–58a)**

[1.40] Rabbi said: To what can Eve be compared in that hour? To a king who married a woman and gave her authority over the silver and the gold and all that he possessed. He said to her: “Behold, all that is mine is given to you, except for this barrel that is full of scorpions.” An old woman entered her house like those who ask for vinegar. She said to her: “How does the king deal with you?”

[1.41] She said to her, “The king treats me well! He has given me authority over the silver and the gold and over everything that is his. He said to me, ‘Behold, all that is mine is given to you, except for this barrel that is full of scorpions.’” She said to her, “Are not all of his jewels inside it? He is seeking to marry another woman and give them to her!” She stretched forth her hand and opened the barrel. The scorpions stung her, and she died.

[1.42] The king is Adam. The woman is Eve. The vinegar beggar is the serpent. As it is written, “The serpent was craftier than all the beasts of the field” (Gen 3:1). What was the reason for all this? Because Adam was not able to obey a light commandment that God had given him.

[1.30] The serpent was thinking to himself and said, “[If I go to Adam and speak to him, I know that he will not listen to me, but I shall go] to Eve. I know she will listen to me, for women listen to everybody.” He went and said to her: “Is it true that God said you shall not eat of any tree of



as women listen to everyone, as it is written, “She is simple and without knowledge” (Prov 9:13). The serpent went and said to the woman: “Have you also been commanded concerning the fruits of the tree?” She said to him: “Yes.” As it is written, “From the fruit of the tree which is in the garden [God said you shall not eat of it and you shall not touch it, lest you die]” (Gen 3:3). When the serpent heard these words of Eve, he found an opening to enter in.

**[=1.35b]** He said to her: “This commandment is nothing but the evil eye, for in the hour that you eat of it, you will become divine like him. Just as he creates worlds, so too will you be able to create worlds. Just as he puts to death and brings to life, so too you will be able to put to death and bring to life,” as it is written, “Because God knows that in the day you eat of it, you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Gen 3:5).

**[=1.33–34]** The serpent went and touched the tree, and the tree was screaming and saying, “Wicked one! Don’t touch me!” As it is written, “Do not let the foot of the proud come against me nor the hand of the wicked drive me away” (Ps 36:12).

**[=1.35a]** The serpent then went and said to the woman, “Behold, I touched the tree and did not die. Just the same, if you touch it, you will not die.”

**[=1.37]** Eve went and touched the tree. She saw the Angel of Death coming against her and said, “Woe is me! Now, I will die, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, will make another woman and give her to the First Adam. Therefore, I must convince him to eat with me. If we die, we shall die together. And if we live, we will live together.” She took and ate the fruit of the tree, and she gave it to him, and he ate, as it is written, “And she also gave it to her husband with her, and he ate it” (Gen 3:6).

the garden?” She said to him, “Yes, from every tree of the garden we may eat, but from the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, [God said you shall not eat of it, and you shall not touch it, lest you die]” (Gen 3:3). When the serpent heard the words of Eve, he found an opening to enter in.

**[1.35b]** [He said to her:] “Know that this is nothing but the evil eye. In the hour that you eat of it, just as he can create a world, so shall you be able to create a world. Just as he can put to death and to bring to life, so shall you be able to put to death and bring to life,” for it is written, “Because God knows that on the day you eat of it [you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil]” (Gen 3:5).

**[1.33–34]** He went and took some of the fruit and ate. Some say that when he seized it, he recoiled. Nevertheless, he took some of the fruit and ate. And some say that when the tree saw the serpent come against it, it said to him, “Wicked one! Don’t touch me!” As it is written, “Do not let the foot of the proud come against me nor the hand of the wicked drive me away” (Ps 36:12). Thus it says: “There the evil-doers have fallen and cannot rise again” (Ps 36:13).

**[1.35a]** He went and said to her, “Behold! I have touched it, and I did not die. All the same, if you touch it, you shall not die.”

**[1.37]** And some say that when Eve ate the fruit of the tree, she saw the Angel of Death, who came against her. She said, “I seem to be departing from the world. In the end, another will be created for the First Adam in my place. What shall I do? I shall make him eat with me.” As it is written, “She took the fruit and ate, and she also gave it to her husband with her, and he ate” (Gen 3:6).

[=1.38] When he ate the fruit of the tree, his eyes were opened and his teeth became dull. He said to her: “What is this that you have made me eat, that my eyes are opened and my teeth have become dull?! For as my teeth are now dull, so shall the teeth of all generations be dull.”

[1.38] Others say when the First Adam ate the fruit of the tree, his eyes began widening, and his teeth became dull in his mouth. He said to her, “Eve, what is this that you made me eat? Is it from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat? You made me eat it, and now my eyes are widening, and my teeth are dull within my mouth.” He said to her, “Just as my teeth have become dull, so shall the teeth of all generations.”

The two passages are far from identical, but they are clearly related. Several sections from ARN-B 1 are missing in PRE 13. The first two textual units (ARN-B 1.31 and 1.32) are asides about the usefulness of the serpent if it had not been cursed. A comment about Adam as Eve’s lord (ARN-B 1.36) is also absent. Finally, one of the two parables (ARN-B 1.39) is gone. The second parable, about the woman and the barrel of scorpions (ARN-B 1.40–42), is now placed at the beginning of the section. It serves as a bridge between the first half of PRE 13 and the ARN-B material in the second half: The parable in PRE 13 is immediately preceded by another parable comparing a man possessed by a demon to the wicked angel Sammael’s control over the serpent. This is an invention of PRE; no earlier rabbinic work links the devil to the serpent. Despite the differences, the two passages are remarkably similar. The serpent chooses Eve because of the same weakness and convinces her to transgress with the same arguments. Each work has also chosen the same unintuitive proof-text (Ps 36:12–13).

If it is clear that the two passages are related, it is equally clear that PRE has derived this passage from ARN-B. First, the parable of the king, his wife, and the beggar in PRE 13 is truncated to the point of incoherence; the wife’s reaction to the beggar and the consequences are never disclosed. Second, in PRE 13 Eve sees the Angel of Death *before* she eats from the tree, while ARN-B 1 more logically presents her as seeing the angel *after* she eats. Most importantly, the context of ARN-B 1 is a discussion of “placing a hedge around the Torah,” that is, observing the commandments more stringently than necessary. Eve reports that she was told that she could not even touch the forbidden tree (Gen 3:3), but this is not what God told Adam (Gen 2:17). The discrepancy is the “opening” the serpent enters to seduce Eve. The retelling of Genesis 3 in PRE does not necessitate this observation. Another telling point: Sammael, the dominant character at the beginning of PRE 13, has been completely absorbed into the character of the serpent in the second part. This is because Sammael is not in the source text. In other words, PRE 13, an integral part

of PRE, uses ARN-B. Therefore, the author of PRE had access to ARN-B and adapted PRE 1–2 from this work.<sup>60</sup>

The importance of this conclusion is that PRE 1–2 is part of the fundamental plan of the work and not a later addition. Its presence strongly implies—though it does not outright state—that R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanus is the author of the entire work. The prologue presents Eliezer as a new Moses, who rose from intellectually humble beginnings, learned the most basic prayers (the Shema, the Amidah, the Grace after Meals), and eventually became a master of Torah who astounds the nobility of Jerusalem. The discourse which follows (beginning with PRE 3) is written in R. Eliezer's voice and constitutes the body of his teaching. The frame narrative gives the work a catechetical dimension. I will return to this subject in the discussion of genre.

The second issue is why PRE mostly, but not always, follows the chronological order of Scripture. The use of the blessings of the Amidah and especially the ten descents as structural features shows that the arrangement of the chapters is not just chronological but thematic. In general, the narrative follows the order of the Torah, and digressions both narrative (Jonah, Esther) and non-narrative (the homilies in PRE 15–17 and PRE 33–34) are linked to the themes in the Pentateuchal narrative. Jonah, for instance, is explicitly linked to the creation of marine animals on the fifth day. Esther's story, which takes place over Passover (implicitly in the Bible but explicitly in PRE) follows the story of the first Passover. The homilies attached to Adam and Eve—following the story of their marriage (PRE 12), their sin (PRE 13), and its calamitous consequences (PRE 14)—address the *apropos* themes of choosing good over evil (PRE 15) and providing charity to those who rejoice (PRE 16) and those who mourn (PRE 17). Isaac, who is resurrected in PRE 31, is connected to the two homilies on resurrection in PRE 33–34.

The chronological disruptions in the Pentateuchal narrative are entirely the result of one structural element, the theme of the ten descents. Clusters of “descent” chapters are twice used as bridges between major units. In the first case, PRE 24 (Babel) and PRE 25 (Sodom and Gomorrah), the descents link the time of Noah to the time of Abraham. Abraham himself even appears briefly in both chapters, but they are formally separate from the sequence of the ten trials. In the second case, three descent chapters (PRE 39–41) provide the transition from Jacob to Moses. This decision has pushed the logical first chapter—the birth of Moses and the first Passover

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<sup>60</sup> These are far from the only instances where PRE may have used ARN-B. They share several lists, such as what Adam did every hour he was in Paradise (PRE 11; ARN-B 1 and 42), the punishments allotted to Adam, Eve, the serpent, and the earth (PRE 14; ARN-B 42), the ten words of creation (PRE 3; ARN-B 36); the ten trials of Abraham (PRE 26–31; ARN-B 36); the objects planned before creation (PRE 3; ARN-B 37), and even the ten descents of God (PRE 14; ARN-B 37). See also Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 160, for a parable derived from Prov 13:20 found in both PRE 25 and ARN-B 11.

(PRE 48)—to the end of the section, but the chapters in between (PRE 42–47) follow biblical chronology. For that matter, the very last chapter, the eighth descent, also disturbs biblical chronology, since the last major event from the Torah is the sin at Baal Peor (Num 25; PRE 47), but the last chapter covers Miriam's slander (Num 12). Without the interruptions of the descent chapters, the internal chronology would be more consistent. This rearrangement of material is typical of "Rewritten Bibles," and that too will be addressed in the section below on genre.

## 2.3 Date

*Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* is traditionally attributed to Eliezer b. Hyrcanus, the tannaitic Sage, but this attribution was not altogether uncritical. In the sixteenth century, Abraham Zacuto, in *Sefer Yuhasin*, could state breathlessly—on the same page!—that later Sages wrote PRE (much like later Sages, and not Simeon bar Yohai, wrote the *Zohar*) and that Eliezer b. Hyrcanus was the author of PRE.<sup>61</sup> Zunz, the first to critically examine the work, deduced that it could not have been written before the Islamic period.<sup>62</sup> Although Zunz was opposed by Haim Meir Horowitz,<sup>63</sup> his opinion has won the day, and for good reason. The work contains numerous, though cryptic, references to early Islamic history.

First, PRE 28—the covenant between the pieces (Gen 15)—introduces the traditional motif of the four kingdoms. The fourth kingdom, even in other parts of the work (e.g., PRE 35), is traditionally Edom, a cipher for the Roman Empire. In PRE 28, the fourth kingdom is Ishmael—the Muslim caliphate. The chapter includes a passage about the duration of the four kingdoms lasting for a little less than a millennium. Zunz and others have attempted to date the work based on the clues provided by this passage.<sup>64</sup> Expectedly, researchers attempting to decipher the date in an apocalyptic text have arrived at different, contradictory conclusions. The meaning might be teased out after establishing the date by other means, but the passage alone cannot be used as proof.

Similarly, PRE 30 tells the tale of Abraham's visit to Ishmael and his encounter with Ishmael's two successive wives, 'Ā'isha and Fāṭima. This story, though not the names of the wives, is frequently found in Islamic literature. 'Ā'isha (the wife

<sup>61</sup> Abraham Zacuto, *Sefer Yuhasin ha-Shalem*, ed. Herschell Filipowski (London, 1857), 56 [Hebrew].

<sup>62</sup> Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, 289.

<sup>63</sup> Horowitz, "Open Letter," 16–19.

<sup>64</sup> Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, 289 (729 CE); Friedlander, *Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer*, 200, n. 6 (832 CE); Abba Hillel Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel: From the First through the Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1927), 39–40 (620 CE).

of Muḥammad and the daughter of Abu Bakr, the first caliph in Sunni Islam) and Fāṭima (the daughter of Muḥammad and the wife of ‘Alī, the first Imam in Shi’a Islam) are portentous names in Islamic history. It is impossible that they are coincidental. Again, some scholars have tried to tease out the hidden meaning behind these names to determine the date of PRE, with mutually exclusive results.<sup>65</sup>

Finally, PRE 30 ends with a list of fifteen signs the “Ishmaelites” will perform, including measuring the land, constructing buildings on the Temple Mount, and establishing the rule of two brothers. Once again, this passage has been the subject of diverse interpretations. The measuring of the land has been attributed to both the Umayyad and the ‘Abbāsid periods.<sup>66</sup> The construction on the Temple Mount has been identified as both the mosque of ‘Umar and the structure that eventually replaced it, the Dome of the Rock.<sup>67</sup> The prophecy of the two brothers has raised the most colorful interpretations. Heinrich Graetz proposed that they were al-Amīn (r. 193–198 AH/809–813 CE) and al-Ma’mūn (r. 198–218 AH/813–833 CE), the warring sons of the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd.<sup>68</sup> Others have suggested a whole range of other candidates.<sup>69</sup>

In the end, the internal evidence, on its own, can only tell us that the work belongs to the early Islamic period. A more precise date requires examining PRE’s latest sources (the *terminus post quem*) and its earliest citations (the *terminus ante quem*). For the *terminus post quem*, four sources are worthy of discussion, even if

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65 For Gordon Newby, the story indicates the author’s sympathy for extremist Shi’ite sects from the early eighth century. For Ute Bohmeier, it is a reference to the Fāṭimid dynasty founded two centuries later. See Gordon Newby, “Text and Territory: Jewish-Muslim Relations 632–750 CE,” in *Judaism and Islam: Boundaries, Communication, and Interaction: Essays in Honor of William M. Brinner*, ed. Benjamin H. Hary, John L. Hayes, and Fred Astren (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 83–96, and Ute Bohmeier, *Exegetische Methodik in Pirke de-Rabbi Elieser, Kapitel 1–24: Nach der Edition Venedig 1544, unter Berücksichtigung der Edition Warschau 1852* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2008), 460.

66 Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634–1099*, trans. Ethel Broido (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 295 (the time of al-Ma’mūn, r. 813–833); Salo Wittmayer Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews, Volume III: Heirs of Rome and Persia*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), 163 (the time of Mu’āwiya, r. 661–680).

67 Silver, *Messianic Speculation*, 40 (Mosque of ‘Umar); Newby, “Text and Territory,” 89 (Dome of the Rock).

68 Heinrich Graetz, “Die mystische Literatur in der gaonäischen Epoche,” *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 8 (1859): 67–78, 103–18, 140–53 (112, n. 5).

69 Silver, *Messianic Speculation*, 41 (Mu’āwiya, the first Umayyad caliph, and his brother Ziyād ibn Abī Sufyān); Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1997), 316 (‘Abd al-Malik, who built the Dome of the Rock, and his brother ‘Abd al-‘Azīz); Newby, “Text and Territory,” 89 (Yazid III and Ibrāhīm ibn al-Walīd, the penultimate Umayyad caliphs); Bernard Lewis, “An Apocalyptic Vision of Islamic History,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 13 (1950): 308–38 (al-Saffāh and al-Manṣūr, the first ‘Abbāsid caliphs). Lewis’ proposal is the one that best fits the other data.

they are not of equal value in determining the time of PRE's redaction. They are, in order of their probable dates of composition: *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan–B*, the *She'iltot* of R. Ahai Gaon, the *Secrets of Simeon bar Yohai*, and the *Baraita de-Samuel*. All these potential sources were likely written in the eighth century.

The previous section of this chapter discussed the strong possibility that PRE made use of ARN-B. The problem is the date of the latter document. Anthony Saldarini posited an upper date of about 700 for ARN-B based on the alleged citation of the work in the *She'iltot*,<sup>70</sup> while Menahem Kister gave a broader range of the eighth or ninth century.<sup>71</sup> In truth, we do not know precisely when this work was written.

The *She'iltot* is not much better as a witness to PRE's date. It is a collection of homilies linking the talmudic halakhah to scriptural pericopes. The author, R. Ahai, is believed to have been an emigrant from Babylonia to Palestine, where he died around the year 752 CE.<sup>72</sup> At least one passage of this work parallels PRE. *She'ilta* 11 has an extended narrative about Cain and Abel that includes two motifs also found in PRE 21.<sup>73</sup> First, the offerings of Cain and Abel are used as the justification for the law of *sha'tnez*, the prohibition of mixing flax and wool (Lev 19:19; Deut 22:11): Cain's paltry offering consisted of a few flax seeds, but Abel brought the wool of his flocks. The corresponding portion of PRE 21 is similar in substance, although the wording is different. Similarly, in *She'ilta* 11, two birds teach Cain the art of burial after Cain has killed Abel. In PRE 21, Adam and Eve, rather than Cain, are the ones who bury the corpse that Cain had abandoned in the field. The story of birds demonstrating how to bury Abel is widely known in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim sources, including the Qur'an (Q 5:31).<sup>74</sup> It is almost always Cain who buries Abel to hide his crime. The version in PRE is secondary. In light of the uniquely Jewish concern about *sha'tnez*, PRE reads like a reworked version of the tradition in the *She'iltot*.

70 Anthony J. Saldarini, *Scholastic Rabbinism: A Literary Study of the Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), 138.

71 See his introduction in Menahem Kister and Solomon Schechter, eds., *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan – Solomon Schechter Edition: With References to Parallels in the Two Versions and to the Addenda in the Schechter Edition* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1997), 13.

72 For basic information, see Robert Brody, *The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 202–15.

73 Ahai Gaon, *She'iltot de-Rav Ahai Gaon: A Critical and Annotated Edition*, ed. Samuel K. Mirsky, 5 vols. (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1959) 1:82–85 [Hebrew].

74 For a multitude of other examples, see Christfried Böttrich, “Die Vögel des Himmels haben ihn begraben”: Überlieferungen zu Abels Bestattung und zur Ätiologie des Grabes (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1995).

Two factors call into question the originality of this passage. First, *She'iltot* 11 is written in Hebrew, while the rest of the work is written in Aramaic. The second factor is decisive. According to Robert Brody's study of the redaction of the *She'iltot*, the story of Cain and Abel is found in only two manuscripts of late provenance.<sup>75</sup> The passage is taken *verbatim* from *Midrash Tanhuma*, *Bereshit* 9–10 (of the “printed” recension). *Midrash Tanhuma* is a complicated work that, in its own transmission history, has borrowed from the *She'iltot* as well as PRE.<sup>76</sup> Consequently, it is difficult to state unequivocally that PRE has used *Midrash Tanhuma* and even more difficult to date that work, which has evolved over time. This problem will come up again in the next chapter.

Another potential late source is the *Secrets of Simeon bar Yohai*,<sup>77</sup> part of a cycle of literature about Jewish responses to the earliest Arab rulers that includes the *Prayer of Simeon bar Yohai*<sup>78</sup> and the *Midrash of the Ten Kings*.<sup>79</sup> All three are “historical” apocalypses that read the early history of Islam through a Jewish lens. Graetz first used the *Secrets* as a potential key to unlocking the Jewish history of the early Islamic period.<sup>80</sup> The kings mentioned in the *Secrets* follow an identifiable historical sequence up to the end of the Umayyad period. Graetz thought that it was written in 750, the year of the ‘Abbāsid revolution. He was opposed by Steinschneider, who thought that the historical references were too imprecise to reflect a contemporary writer.<sup>81</sup> Horowitz, who published the *Midrash of the Ten Kings*, was also skeptical, believing that the cycle originated in the time of the Crusades.<sup>82</sup> Bernard Lewis reconciled these views.<sup>83</sup> The core of the cycle was an apocalypse that originated at the very end of the Umayyad period and was regularly updated with new political crises: the ‘Abbāsid revolution, the rise of the Fāṭimids, and the

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75 Robert Brody, *The Textual History of the She'iltot* (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1991), 118, n. 4 [Hebrew].

76 Marc Bregman, *The Tanhuma-Yelammedenu Literature: Studies in the Evolution of the Versions* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2003), 8–9 [Hebrew].

77 Adolph Jellinek, ed., *Bet ha-Midrash: Sammlung kleiner Midraschim und vermischter Abhandlungen aus der älteren jüdischen Literatur*, 6 vols. (Leipzig and Vienna, 1853–1877), 3:78–82 [Hebrew].

78 Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash*, 4:117–126.

79 Haim Meir Horowitz, ed., *Beth Eked ha-Aggadot* (Frankfurt am Main: Elimelech Slovotsky, 1881), 38–55 [Hebrew].

80 Heinrich Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart*, 11 vols., (Leipzig: Oskar Leiner, 1853–1875), 5: 489–97.

81 Moritz Steinschneider, “Apocalypsen mit polemischer Tendenz,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 28 (1874): 627–59 (635–47).

82 Horowitz, *Beth Eked ha-Aggadot*, 24.

83 Lewis, “An Apocalyptic Vision of Islamic History,” 308–38.

Crusades. In his reading of the *Secrets*, he refined the identification of the kings to include not only the last of the Umayyads but the first 'Abbāsīd rulers.

The *Secrets*, but not the other two apocalypses, includes a *logion* about what the Ishmaelites will do after conquering the land. It is, appropriately enough, attributed to R. Ishmael. It reads like an earlier version of the fifteen signs at the end of PRE 30, which has given rise to so much speculation about the date of the composition. In particular, the *Secrets* anticipates the earlier, negative signs (signs 1 and 2) and the later, positive ones (signs 11–14). The middle signs are vague.

#### PRE 30 (JTS 3847, f. 118a)

ר' ישמעאל אומ' חמשה עשר דברים עתידין בני  
[ישמעאל לעשות] בארץ באחרית הימים ואלו  
הן [1] ימדדו את הארץ בחבלים [2] ויעשו בית  
הקברות מרבץ צאן אשפתות ימדדו מהן ובהן על  
ההרים [3] וירבה השקר [4] ויגנו האמת [5] וירחק  
חוק מִישראל [6] ותרבה עניות בישראל [7] ויתערב  
שני התולעת בצמר [8] ויקמל הנזר והקמוס [9]  
ויפסל סלע מלכות [10] ויבנו את הערים החרובות  
[11] ויפנו הדרכים [12] ויטעו גנות ופרדסים [13]  
ויגדרו פרצות חומות בית המקדש [14] ויבנו בנין  
בהיכל [15] ושני אחים יעמדו עליהם נשיאים

Rabbi Ishmael said: In the future the children [of Ishmael will do]<sup>85</sup> fifteen things in the Land in the last days, and these are: [1] They will measure the land with ropes; [2] They will turn cemeteries into pastures for sheep and garbage heaps; they will measure from them and on them upon the mountains. [3] Falsehood will multiply; [4] Truth will be hidden; [5] Law will be removed from Israel; [6] Poverty will increase in Israel; [7] Crimson worm will become mixed in wool; [8] Paper and pen will decay;<sup>86</sup> [9] They will exchange the currency of the kingdom;<sup>87</sup> [10] They will rebuild the ruined cities; [11] They will clear the roads. [12] They will plant gardens and orchards

#### *Secrets of Simeon bar Yohai*<sup>84</sup>

ועוד היה רבי שמעון אומר ששמע מרבי  
ישמעאל כיון ששמע שמלכות ישמעאל בא  
עחידין למדד הארץ בחבלים שנאמר והארץ  
יחלק במחיר ועושים בתי קברות מרעה לצאן  
וכשימות אדם מהם קוברים אותו בכל מקום  
שהם מוצאים וחוזרין וחורשין הקבר וזורעים  
אותו שנאמר ככה יאכלו בני ישראל את לחמם  
טמא מפני מה שאין בית הפרס נידש [. . .]  
המלך השני שיעמוד מישמעאל יהיה אוהב  
ישראל ויגדור פרצותיהם ופרצו' ההיכל וחוצב  
הר המוריה ועושה אותו מישור כולו ובונה לו שם  
השתחויה על אבן שתיה שנאמר ושים כסלע קנד

And R. Simeon said that he heard from R. Ishmael that he heard that the kingdom of Ishmael would come in the future to measure the land with ropes, as it is written, "he will divide the land for a price" (Dan 11:39). And they will turn cemeteries into pastures for sheep. When a man among them dies, they bury him in any place that they find. Then they will return and plow the grave and sow seeds in it, as it is written, "The children of Israel will eat their bread impure" (Ezek 4:13) because the impure fields are not known. [. . .] The second king that will arise from Ishmael will be a lover of Israel. He will repair their breaches and the breaches of the sanctuary, and he will excavate Mount;

<sup>84</sup> Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash*, 3:78–79.

<sup>85</sup> Lacuna supplied from Ms Lehmann 300.

<sup>86</sup> Following a suggestion of John C. Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic: A Postbiblical Jewish Apocalypse Reader* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 71, n. 27.

<sup>87</sup> See Reeves, *Trajectories*, 71, n. 25.



[13] They will repair the breaches in the wall of the Temple; [14] They will build a building in the place of the sanctuary; [15] And two brothers—princes—will rule over them.

Moriah and make all of it straight. He will build for himself there a place of prayer over the Foundation Stone, as it is written, “Place your nest above the rock” (Num 24:21).

The omitted passage in the *Secrets of Simeon bar Yohai* is a prophecy of Balaam regarding the Kenites (Num 24:21), identified with the Arabs, who will enslave Israel. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* features the same oracle of Balaam, though focusing on the next two verses (Num 24:22–23). The chapter explains how Kedarites, descendants of Ishmael, inherited the land of the Kenites. Balaam himself makes a cryptic statement about how Israel and Ishmael are the only two nations who bear the name of God (“El”), and this similarity is somehow a portent of woe. The two passages are different in substance yet share the same viewpoint: Balaam predicted the Arab conquests.

Again, we are not seeing a direct lift but a reworking where PRE has taken an older tradition, reworded it, and even expanded it. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* not only drew from this cycle of literature. It also contributed to it. The kings in the *Midrash of the Ten Kings* are not the early caliphs but the ten kings who ruled from one end of the world to the other. The list of kings in the apocalyptic work is identical to the one found in PRE 11.

A final source that may have been used by PRE is the *Baraita de-Samuel ha-Qatan*. It is a short astronomical treatise that was first mentioned by Shabbatai Donnolo in the tenth century.<sup>88</sup> It was subsequently lost until its fortuitous rediscovery and publication in 1861.<sup>89</sup> In the intervening centuries, a *Baraita de-Samuel* was cited alongside PRE in the works of Judah ha-Levi (*Kuzari* IV.29) and Abraham b. Hiyya (*Sefer ha-Ibbur* II.2 and II.4). These references led modern scholars to think that the two works were somehow related, especially since PRE 6–8 is, indeed, a major digression on the courses of the sun and moon and the rules for fixing the calendar. Herschell Filipowski, who edited *Sefer ha-Ibbur*, believed that the two works were, in fact, identical.<sup>90</sup> Senior Sachs, opposing Filipowski, saw PRE as an

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<sup>88</sup> Shabbatai Donnolo, *Sefer Hakhmoni: Introduction, Critical Text, and Annotated English Translation*, ed. and trans. Piergabriele Mancuso (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 230: “From these books I realized that the whole of the science of the planets and constellations was based on the Barayta of Samuel the Wise, for the books of the gentiles, too, agree with it, but he has made his book very difficult to understand.” See also the introduction: 14, 23, and 35–36.

<sup>89</sup> Nathan Amram, ed., *Baraita de-Samuel ha-Qatan* (Thessaloniki, 1861) [Hebrew].

<sup>90</sup> Abraham b. Hiyya, *Abraham Bar Chyiah the Prince on the Mathematical and Technical Chronology of the Hebrews, Nazarites, Mahommetans, etc.*, ed. Herschell Filipowski (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1851), xiii [Hebrew].

aggadic compendium of world history in which a later redactor inserted an astronomical section from an entirely different work.<sup>91</sup>

When the *Baraita* was finally published, it was revealed to be quite different from PRE 6–8. The two, though broadly covering similar themes, have no textual overlap. Zunz believed that the material from PRE 6–8 was later incorporated into the *Baraita*, resulting in the confusion between the two in the Middle Ages.<sup>92</sup> Haim Yehiel Bornstein had the opposite opinion. He believed that PRE distilled the ideas of the *Baraita*.<sup>93</sup> In principle, Bornstein's theory is more logical. It is more likely that an encyclopedic work like PRE summarized the obscure and difficult *Baraita* than that the *Baraita* expanded upon a work dedicated mainly to biblical history. This does not mean, however, that PRE used the *Baraita* as a source.

The two documents do share one important element in common: a lunation error. *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* 7 and *Baraita de-Samuel* 5 both state that the length of the lunar month is twenty-nine days, twelve hours, and two-thirds of an hour. This calculation is only approximate. Not long after the eighth century, the correct calculation of twenty-nine days, twelve hours, and 793/1080 of an hour became standard in the rabbinic calendar.<sup>94</sup>

To our good fortune, the *Baraita* provides a date that gives some insight into its origin. All of its calculations stem from the year 4536 *anno mundi* (776 CE), when the lunar and solar new years coincided, representing the conditions at the time of creation. With an improper lunation, the deficiency of this calendar would have become apparent within thirty years. Sacha Stern believed that this calendar was “fictitious,” reflecting a ceremonial rather than practical role.<sup>95</sup> With Katharina Keim, I find this hard to believe, since the calendars of *Baraita de-Samuel* and PRE, despite their inaccuracies, are unduly complicated (compare the elegant, though inaccurate, 364-day solar calendar of *Jubilees*).<sup>96</sup> Whether PRE used the *Baraita*, however, remains speculative.

91 Senior Sachs, “Bemerkungen über das gegenseitige Verhältnis der Beraita des Samuel und der Pirke de R. Eliesar,” *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 1 (1852): 277–82.

92 Leopold Zunz, “Die Baraita Samuels,” *Hebraeische Bibliographie* 5 (1862): 15–19.

93 Haim Yehiel Bornstein, “The Dispute of Rav Saadya Gaon and Ben Meir on Fixing the Calendar, 922–924 CE,” in *Jubilee Volume for Nahum Sokoloff* (Warsaw: Shuldberg, 1904), 19–189 (177–78) [Hebrew].

94 Sacha Stern, *Calendar and Community: A History of the Jewish Calendar, Second Century BCE–Tenth Century CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 186, 203–4.

95 Sacha Stern, “Fictitious Calendars: Early Rabbinic Notions of Time, Astronomy, and Reality,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 87 (1996): 103–29.

96 Keim, *Pirke deRabbi Eliezer*, 157–59. See also: Katharina E Keim, “Cosmology as Science or Cosmology as Theology? Reflections on the Astronomical Chapters of Pirke deRabbi Eliezer,” in *Time*,

All four of these potential sources—ARN-B, the *She'iltot* (or, rather, *Midrash Tanhuma*), the *Secrets of Simeon bar Yohai*, and the *Baraita de-Samuel*—point to the eighth century as the date of composition. The strongest case, the *Secrets of Simeon bar Yohai*, indicates the middle of the century.

The earliest external reference to PRE is generally agreed to be the epistle of Pirqoi ben Baboi, a document found in the Cairo Genizah. There are other alleged citations of PRE from approximately the same time, but none of them are above the suspicion of an interpolated text. In addition to these, there is another witness, even earlier than Pirqoi ben Baboi, which has not been fully considered: the *paytan* Pinhas ha-Cohen.

The earliest possible citation of PRE is in *Massekhet Soferim*, one of the “extracanonical” tractates of the Babylonian Talmud, written sometime in the eighth century. *Soferim* 19:9 cites, in the name of Eliezer b. Hyrcanus, a tradition concerning two Temple gates that Solomon built for (respectively) bridegrooms and mourners (PRE 17).<sup>97</sup> Treitl has identified this citation as a later addition since it interrupts the sequence of thought and otherwise has nothing to do with the passage.<sup>98</sup> An addition to the tractate, published by Michael Higger, contains further material related to PRE, but this is not part of the original.<sup>99</sup>

Another example of an interpolation is found in the legal compilation *Shibbolei ha-Leket* of Zedekiah b. Abraham ha-Rofe (13th century), who cites the *Halakhot Gedolot* attributed to R. Simeon Qayyara, a ninth-century Geonic legal code, as a source of information about the custom of placing a chair for Elijah during the circumcision, a custom that is first attested in PRE (and is cited as such by Zedekiah).<sup>100</sup> The cited passage is not found in *Halakhot Gedolot*. Zedekiah has mistakenly copied the passage from another legal code, the *Or Zaru'a* of Isaac b. Moses of Vienna (d. 1250).<sup>101</sup>

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*Astronomy, and Calendars in the Jewish Tradition*, ed. Sacha Stern and Charles Burnett (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 41–63.

97 Michael Higger, ed., *Massekhet Soferim* (New York: Debe Rabbanan, 1937), 335 [Hebrew].

98 Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 3–4.

99 Higger, *Massekhet Soferim*, 365–72. This section mentions that Eliezer, Abraham’s servant, is Og of Bashan and was given to him by Nimrod (PRE 16). It also states that Aseneth is the daughter of Dinah (PRE 38).

100 Zedekiah b. Abraham ha-Rofe, *Sefer Shibbolei ha-Leket ha-Shalem*, ed. Solomon Buber (1866; repr., New York: Makon Sura, 1966), 376 (*Halakhot Milah* §6) [Hebrew]. For *Halakot Gedolot*, see Brody, *Geonim*, 223–30.

101 See Ezriel Hildesheimer, ed., *Sefer Halakhot Gedolot ad fidem codicum edidit, prolegomnis et notis instruxit*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Mekitze Nirdamim, 1971), 1: 215, n. 30. See footnote 1 for the citation from *Or Zaru'a*.

Yet another problematic early citation occurs in the first Jewish prayerbook, *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*.<sup>102</sup> Amram b. Sheshna was a Babylonian authority who lived in the later part of the ninth century (d. 875). The relevant part of his prayerbook is a *responsum* from another ninth-century authority, R. Natronai bar Hilai (d. ca. 858). The *responsum* refers to PRE 20 and its rendition of the *havdalah* ceremony. Natronai calls into question the necessity of looking at one's fingernails against the *havdalah* light during the ceremony, a practice advocated by PRE. Prayerbooks are susceptible to interpolation, but if the *responsum* is authentic (regardless of its place in the prayerbook), it is still not the earliest reference to PRE.<sup>103</sup>

This brings us back to Pirqoi ben Baboi, a pro-Babylonian pamphleteer and zealous follower of Yehudai Gaon (d. ca. 760), who wrote his missive to warn the Jews of North Africa against following Palestinian customs, which had, in his opinion, become gradually corrupted over centuries of Christian persecution.<sup>104</sup> He identifies himself as the student of a student of R. Yehudai and claims that five centuries have passed since the beginning of Byzantine rule in Palestine. Both factors have led scholars to place his *floruit* around the year 800. The relevant citation appears at the beginning of the fragments published by Louis Ginzberg. It appears to be a citation of the opening lines of PRE 3, the proper opening of the entire book.

**PRE 3 (JTS 3847, f. 81a.)**

רבי אליעזר בן הורקנוס פתח ואמ' מי ימלל  
גבורות יי' וכי יש לך אדם שהוא יכול למלל  
גבורתו שלהק' ב'ה' ולהשמיע כל תהלתו אף  
מלאכי השרת אינן יכולין לומ' ואינן יודעין אלא  
מקצת גבורתו שלהק' ב'ה'

**Pirqoi ben Baboi<sup>105</sup>**

אמר ר' אלעזר מאי דכת' מי ימלל גבורות מי  
שיכול להשמיע כל תהלתו שאפילו מלאכי  
השרת אינם יכולים להשמיע כל תהלתו

<sup>102</sup> Nachman Nathan Coronel, ed., *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, 2 vols. (Warsaw: Kaltar, 1865). 1:32a [Hebrew].

<sup>103</sup> See Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 3, n. 4 and 5.

<sup>104</sup> The major studies of Pirqoi include: Jacob Mann, "Les «Chapitres» de Ben Bâboi et les relations de R. Yehoudaï Gaon avec la Palestine," *Revue des Études Juives* 70 (1920): 113–48; Jacob Nahum Epstein, "Sur les «chapitres» de Ben Baboi," *Revue des Études Juives* 75 (1922): 179–86; Benjamin M. Lewin, "Geniza Fragments," *Tarbiz* 2 (1931): 383–410 [Hebrew]; Shalom Spiegel, "On the Polemic of Pirqoi ben Baboi: From the New Series of the Cambridge Genizah," in *Harry Austryn Wolfson Jubilee Volume*, ed. Saul Lieberman, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1965), 2: 243–74 [Hebrew]; Louis Ginzberg, *Genizah Studies in Memory of Doctor Solomon Schechter II: Geonic and Early Karaitic Halakah* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1929), 504–73 [Hebrew]; Neil Danzig, "Between Eretz Israel and Bavel: New Leaves from Pirqoi ben Baboi," *Shalem* 8 (2008): 1–32 [Hebrew]; Robert Brody, *Pirqoy ben Baboy and the History of Internal Polemics in Judaism* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2003) [Hebrew]. For a general overview, see Brody, *Geonim*, 113–17.

<sup>105</sup> Ginzberg, *Genizah Studies*, 544–45.

Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus began his discourse and said: “Who can recount the mighty acts of the LORD?” (Ps. 106:2). Is there one among you who can recount the mighty acts of the Holy One, Blessed be He? Or to proclaim all his praise? Even the ministering angels are not able to say, and they know but a small portion of the mighty works of the Holy One, Blessed be He.

Rabbi Eliezer said: What is written here? “Who can recount the mighty acts [of the LORD?]” (Ps 106:2). Who is able to proclaim all his praise? Even the ministering angels are not able to proclaim all his praise.

Steven Daniel Sacks drew attention to a parallel passage in the Talmud (*b. Megillah* 18a), likewise an exegesis of Ps 106:2 placed in the mouth of R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanus.<sup>106</sup> It reads: “R. Eliezer said: What is the meaning of the verse, ‘Who can recount the mighty acts of the LORD? Who can proclaim all his praise?’ (Ps 106:2). [It means:] For whom is it fitting to recount the mighty acts of the LORD? For the one who can proclaim all his praise.”<sup>107</sup> The absence of the angels, found in both PRE and Pirqoi’s epistle, is notable here.

Annette Reed found another parallel in the *Chapter of R. Nehunyah ben ha-Qanah*, a *hekhalot* text. Again, it takes the form of an exegesis of Ps 106:2. Reed translates the passage as follows: “Chapter of Rabbi Nehunyah ben ha-Qanah, which he taught to R. Ishmael. Who can recount the mighty acts of the LORD? (Ps 106:2) And who is able to announce the praise of the King of kings of kings? These are the ministering angels!”<sup>108</sup> In addition to having a different tradent, this saying makes exactly the opposite point of the opening of PRE: The angels can recount God’s mighty deeds after all! Therefore, Pirqoi seems to be preserving a tradition original to PRE.

The earliest writer to use PRE as a source might be R. Pinhas ha-Cohen, who shares with PRE a detailed knowledge of Palestinian customs. Unlike the earliest *paytanim*, such as Yose b. Yose, Yannai, or Qallir, the date of Pinhas is approximately known. In one of his poems, Pinhas refers to a fast commemorating a major earthquake that afflicted Palestine in 749 CE.<sup>109</sup> He therefore wrote sometime after this

<sup>106</sup> Sacks, *Midrash and Multiplicity*, 2, n. 3.

<sup>107</sup> My translation from the Vilna Shas: *Talmud Bavli*, 37 vols. (Vilna: Widow and Brothers Romm, 1880–1886).

<sup>108</sup> Reed, “Mighty Acts,” 124.

<sup>109</sup> See Yoram Tsafrir and Gideon Foerster, “The Dating of the ‘Earthquake of the Sabbatical Year’ of 749 CE in Palestine,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 55 (1992): 231–35.

date, though not too long after: Saadia Gaon (d. 942) classes him among the “ancient poets” (including Yose, Yannai, and Qallir) rather than the “poets of our time.”<sup>110</sup>

Shulamit Elizur, the editor of Pinhas’ poetry, has noted several instances where the *paytan* unequivocally alludes to aggadic matter known from PRE.<sup>111</sup> The Shunamite woman visited by Elisha is identified as the sister of Abishag, the Bible’s other Shunamite woman (PRE 33). Isaac gives Abimelech, king of the Philistines, part of his saddle as a sign of a covenant between them (PRE 36). The right horn of the ram sacrificed in Isaac’s place will be blown at the time of redemption (PRE 31). The angels rejoice with Adam and Eve at the occasion of their wedding (PRE 12). Not only this, but Pinhas mentions many customs of Palestinian origin which are otherwise attested for the first time in PRE.<sup>112</sup> Among these are burying the foreskin in the dust at the time of circumcision and blowing the shofar in the month of Elul. The most remarkable similarity, however, is the calendar.<sup>113</sup> Pinhas’ *Qiddush Yerahim* is, along with PRE, the first Jewish source to attest to the 19-year calendrical cycle. They are also the first to introduce the idea of the “secret of intercalation” (סוד העיבור) the knowledge of when to add an additional month to the year, a right reserved (according to these sources) to the Jewish authorities in Palestine.

Elizur presumes that PRE is older than the work of Pinhas, whom she believes lived in the latter half of the eighth century. She cannot state whether Pinhas used PRE as a source. Instead, she claims that they shared the same worldview, the result of living in the same area (Palestine; see the next section) and writing at approximately the same time. There are, however, undeniable links between the two, connections that are far stronger than between PRE and other *piyyutim* (see the next chapter). Although the subject requires further study, there are some clues that the *paytan* might depend directly on PRE. The covenant between Isaac and the Philistines is part of a longer section in PRE 36, where each of the patriarchs makes a covenant with the “people of the land” that David later annulled through his conquests. In isolation, the tradition about Isaac (which also appears in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* to Gen 26:31) does not make much sense. Pinhas ha-Cohen’s calendrical knowledge is also superior to PRE’s. Like PRE, Pinhas knows the 19-year lunar cycle, but he also knows the precise calculation of the lunar month, which

<sup>110</sup> Yannai, *Mahzor Yannai: A Liturgical Work of the VIIIth Century*, ed. Israel Davidson (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1919), xlv, from *Sefer ha-Agron*, written in 913.

<sup>111</sup> Pinhas ha-Cohen, *The Liturgical Poems of Rabbi Pinhas ha-Cohen: Critical Edition, Introduction and Commentaries*, ed. Shulamit Elizur (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2004), 201, n. 29 [Hebrew].

<sup>112</sup> Elizur, *Pinhas ha-Cohen*, 222–23.

<sup>113</sup> Elizur, *Pinhas ha-Cohen*, 232–33.

PRE conspicuously does not know.<sup>114</sup> Based on these two items, it seems that Pinhas wrote later than PRE. If, in the end, Pinhas used PRE, it would be invaluable for dating the work, providing us with a very narrow window between the earthquake of 749 and the composition of Pinhas' liturgical poetry.

Based on the above data, PRE appears to have been composed sometime between 750 and 800 CE.

## 2.4 Provenance

Most scholars today would agree that PRE was composed in Palestine. Among other reasons, the work is written in Hebrew (rather than Aramaic), is primarily aggadic in character (rather than halakhic), cites (with very few exceptions) only Palestinian Sages,<sup>115</sup> and approves of Palestinian customs, tracing their origin back to the biblical period. Nevertheless, the scholarly consensus has not always been unanimous.

Zunz refrained from identifying a precise place of composition, offering the broad suggestions of Syria, Palestine, or even Asia Minor.<sup>116</sup> In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, opinions were varied. Max Grünbaum observed that the work was written under "Arabian rule" ("arabischer Herrschaft") which is not quite the same as saying that it was written in Arabia.<sup>117</sup> Samuel Krauss used PRE 30 as a source for Byzantine history (though not explicitly saying that the work itself was Byzantine).<sup>118</sup> Joseph Jacobs and Schulim Ochser, writing for the *Jewish Encyclopedia* (1901–1906), claimed that the work was composed in Italy in the early ninth century, citing Isaak Marcus Jost as their authority.<sup>119</sup> Finally, Adolf Büchler, in at least two articles, attempted to show that the work was composed in Babylon by appealing to certain halakhic opinions in the work.<sup>120</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Stern, *Calendar and Community*, 203–4.

<sup>115</sup> Horowitz, "Mishnat Rabbi Eliezer," 182.

<sup>116</sup> Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, 290.

<sup>117</sup> Max Grünbaum, *Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sagenkunde* (Leiden: Brill, 1893), 124–25.

<sup>118</sup> Samuel Krauss, *Studien zur byzantisch-jüdischen Geschichte* (Vienna: Verlag der Israelitisch-Theologischen Lehranstalt, 1914), 145.

<sup>119</sup> Joseph Jacobs and Schulim Ochser, "Pirke de-Rabbi Eli'ezer," *The Jewish Encyclopedia* 10:58–60. They cite Isaak Marcus Jost, *Geschichte des Judenthums und Seiner Sekten*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Dörffling und Franke, 1857–1859), 2:35, n. 2.

<sup>120</sup> Adolf Büchler, "Les Dosithéens dans le Midrasch. L'interdit prononcé contre les Samaritains dans les Pirké di R. Eliézer, XXXVIII, et Tanhouma, Va-Yeshev §3," *Revue des Études Juives* 42 (1901): 50–71; Adolf Büchler, "Das Schneiden des Haares als Strafe der Ehebrecher bei den Semiten," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 19 (1905): 91–138.

Each of these propositions is wanting for different reasons. The story of Abraham's visit was well-known throughout the Muslim world and is not exclusively "Arabian."<sup>121</sup> Krauss connects the end of PRE 30 to Muslim attempts to conquer Constantinople (first in 674–678, then in 717–718) and other *realia* reflecting the end of Byzantine rule in Palestine, such as new buildings and the change in currency. The conquest of "Rome" is a *topos* of Muslim eschatology.<sup>122</sup> The author of PRE need not have lived in Asia Minor to be aware of this topic or the other dramatic social changes occurring in his day. Jacobs and Ochser, citing Jost, are undermined by Jost's own position. The nineteenth-century historian points to the *Baraita de-Samuel* and the Islamic elements in PRE 30 as proof of the work's late date, the second of which also points to an Islamicate milieu. Jost does not say anything about Italy, nor is there any reason why Italy should be favored above other options. Jacobs and Ochser interpret the end of PRE 30 as speaking of the Muslim attack on Rome in 830, but there was no such attack on Rome in that year.

Büchler's argument for a Babylonian origin depends on customs mentioned in PRE that reappear in Babylonian sources of the Geonic period: banning Samaritan proselytes (PRE 38) and cutting an adulterous woman's hair (PRE 14). These customs are indeed found in Babylonian sources. The ban on Samaritan proselytes is in *Halakhot Gedolot*,<sup>123</sup> while shaving the head of an adulteress is found in *Halakhot Ketuvot*, a legal code attributed to Yehudai Gaon.<sup>124</sup> The reference to these practices in Babylonian sources does not make them Babylonian. Büchler's attempts to locate anti-Samaritan rulings in Babylonia rather than in the Samaritan heartland seems particularly forced.<sup>125</sup> Supporters of Babylonian hegemony—such as Pirqoi ben Baboi—frequently cite Palestinian customs in their works. It is these customs, above all, which indicate that PRE is a Palestinian work.

Both Zunz<sup>126</sup> and Horowitz<sup>127</sup> made lists of the Palestinian customs found in PRE. Horowitz' list is the direct basis for the one that appears in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*.<sup>128</sup> Treitl gives a succinct list of general customs (the prohibition of women

121 Reuven Firestone, *Journeys in Holy Lands: The Evolution of the Abraham-Ishmael Legends in Islamic Exegesis* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990), 76–79.

122 David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 2002), 54–66.

123 Hildesheimer, *Sefer Halakhot Gedolot*, 2:522.

124 Yehudai Gaon, *Halachoth Kezuvot attributed to R. Yehudai Gaon*, ed. Mordecai Margulies (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1942), 123 [Hebrew].

125 The ending of PRE 38 contains a violent anti-Samaritan polemic that could be offered as a confirmation of PRE's provenance if the evidence were not already overwhelming. See Hagith Sara Sivan, *Palestine in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 136, n. 97.

126 Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, 288.

127 Horowitz, "Mishnat Rabbi Eliezer," 214.

128 Jacobs and Ochser, "Pirke de-Rabbi Eli'ezer," *The Jewish Encyclopedia* 10:59.



from working on the New Moon; punishing adulterous women by shaving their heads), customs specific to Palestine (examining virgins with the finger; blessing a bride under a *chuppah*; standing on one's feet during Yom Kippur; circumcising over earth instead of water); and customs which seem to be unique to PRE (rejoicing over bridegrooms and comforting mourners in the synagogue; setting a chair for Elijah at the time of circumcision; blowing the shofar on the New Moon of Elul).<sup>129</sup> Adelman dedicated an entire section of her book to the study of these customs,<sup>130</sup> while Adiel Kadari has made two special studies of the *havdalah* ceremony.<sup>131</sup>

Some of these customs differed from Babylonian observance. An anonymous work, *Hilluf Minhagim*, describes fifty or so variations between Palestinian and Babylonian customs.<sup>132</sup> Some of the Palestinian customs are attested in PRE, such as circumcising over earth instead of over water (*Minhag* 17; PRE 29), blessing a bride (*Minhag* 28; PRE 12), or deflowering a virgin with one's finger instead of with "the pipe" (*Minhag* 40; PRE 17).<sup>133</sup> This work is purely observational and takes a neutral stance on the discrepancies. Pirqoi ben Baboi, however, had a different perspective. One of his many grievances against Palestinian practice was combining the Shema (Deut 6:4) and the Qedushah, a prayer based on Isa 6:3 and Ezek 3:12.<sup>134</sup> This is precisely what *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* does at the end of PRE 4.<sup>135</sup> Another sticking point for Pirqoi was the use of *piyyut*.<sup>136</sup> *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer's* ties to the work of Pinhas ha-Cohen—to say nothing of the author's likely use of other *paytanim*—firmly places his work in Palestine.<sup>137</sup>

In addition to affirming Palestinian customs, PRE engages in a direct polemic against Babylonian authority. Chapter 8 maintains that Palestinian Sages are the guardians of a "secret of intercalation" (סוד העיבור), which permits them to know when to insert an additional month into the Jewish lunar calendar. The secret was

<sup>129</sup> Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 239–40. Blowing the shofar in Elul also appears in the work of Pinhas ha-Cohen.

<sup>130</sup> Adelman, *Return of the Repressed*, 141–208.

<sup>131</sup> Adiel Kadari, "Narrative and Normative: Havdalah in Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 21 (2014): 136–52; Adiel Kadari, "A Blessing and its Midrash: Liturgical Formulas as an Interpretive Key in Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer," in *Jewish Prayer: New Perspectives*, ed. Uri Ehrlich (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2016), 327–40 [Hebrew].

<sup>132</sup> Brody, *Geonim*, 112–13.

<sup>133</sup> Mordecai Margulies, ed., *The Differences between the Easterners and the People of Palestine* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1937), 125, 144, and 161 [Hebrew].

<sup>134</sup> Ginzberg, *Genizah Studies*, 550–52.

<sup>135</sup> Ezra Fleischer, "The Qedusha of the Amida (and Other Qedushot): Historical, Liturgical and Ideological Aspects," *Tarbiz* 67 (1998): 301–50 (338–39) [Hebrew].

<sup>136</sup> Ginzberg, *Genizah Studies*, 546–47.

<sup>137</sup> See Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 256–66, and the next chapter.

initially given to Adam by God and passed through the generations of biblical worthies. Isaac maintained the secret while Jacob lived with Laban in Mesopotamia. God had to retransmit the secret anew to Moses after the Exodus. During the Babylonian Exile, the captives had to depend on the remnant in the Land of Israel for intercalation. The passage ends with God rebuking Ezekiel for attempting to intercalate the year in Babylon after Ezra and others had already returned from the Exile. The author underlines that the residents of Palestine, however simple they may be, have priority over Babylonians in calendrical matters.

This specific passage from PRE would play a role in future polemics over the calendar. The next to speak of a “secret of intercalation” was Pinhas ha-Cohen in his *Qiddush Yerahim*.<sup>138</sup> In the year 921–922, Saadia Gaon famously came to blows with one Ben Meir, the head of the Palestinian academy, who cited PRE 8 in a circular letter arguing that only Palestinian authorities had the right to determine the calendar.<sup>139</sup> Saadia prevailed, but this did not bring an end to the calendar controversy. Two centuries later, Evyatar ha-Cohen, the head of the Palestinian yeshiva (though, ironically, operating out of Tyre because of the Crusades), once more cites PRE 8 and its “secret of intercalation” to justify Palestinian authority over his political rivals in Babylon and Egypt.<sup>140</sup> *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*, Pinhas, Ben Meir, and Evyatar demonstrate a continuous tradition regarding the “secret of intercalation” as a Palestinian prerogative.

## 2.5 Genre

The present study, as indicated by its title, views PRE as a kind of “Rewritten Bible.” This decision requires some justification. Ordinarily, PRE would be classed as Midrash, even by those who study the work from another perspective. For example, Stein studied it from the perspective of folklore and mythology,<sup>141</sup> while Elbaum

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<sup>138</sup> Stern, *Calendar and Community*, 190.

<sup>139</sup> Sacha Stern, *The Jewish Calendar Controversy of 921/2 CE* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 230–31 (see also the Babylonian riposte, 362–63).

<sup>140</sup> Moshe Gil, “The Scroll of Evyatar as a Source for the History of the Struggles of the Yeshiva of Jerusalem during the Second Half of the Eleventh Century: A New Reading of the Scroll,” in *Chapters on the History of Jerusalem in the Middle Ages*, ed. B. Z. Kedar and Z. Baras (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1979), 39–106 (91–94) [Hebrew]. For the historical context of this scroll, see Marina Rustow, *Heresy and the Politics of Community: The Jews of the Fatimid Caliphate* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 326–40 (especially 337–39).

<sup>141</sup> Stein, *Maxims Magic Myth*.

examined its apocalyptic elements,<sup>142</sup> and Sacks evaluated (negatively) the claim that PRE was “rabbinic Pseudepigrapha.”<sup>143</sup> All three consider the work Midrash. At the same time, modern researchers are keenly aware that PRE is not a typical Midrash, and so they sometimes apply a modified label. Hence, Adelman called PRE a “Narrative Midrash,”<sup>144</sup> while Ute Bohmeier classed it as “Philological Midrash.”<sup>145</sup>

The most popular modified label for PRE is probably “Late Midrash,” indicating that it represents a paradigm shift in the production of midrashic literature. Elbaum characterized this change as a turn away from verse-by-verse exegesis to narrative, or, as he puts it in another article, a progression “from sermon to story.”<sup>146</sup> In this regard, PRE is often coupled with *Seder Eliyahu*, a collection of sermons with a loose narrative framework that likewise breaks the rules of classical Midrash.<sup>147</sup> Lennart Lehmhaus elegantly summarizes Elbaum’s position, which perfectly encapsulates the ways that PRE differs specifically from classical Midrash.

The important difference in late midrash lies in a superordinate thematic arrangement of the text which diverges significantly from the two major principles of order in earlier midrash. The first guiding principle is realized in several midrashim that display a rather linear reading and exposition of a biblical text. The second principle pertains to a division of midrashic texts which is dependent on external factors, like following elements of the liturgical order, the yearly cycle of holidays, or the sequential reading of the Torah.<sup>148</sup>

In the case of PRE, it is abundantly clear what the “superordinate thematic arrangement” of the text is. It is the biblical history itself, as opposed to the biblical text, which is the main organizing principle of classical Midrash, whether homiletical or exegetical. *Seder Eliyahu* also has a superordinate thematic arrangement, but it is not the same: Both PRE and *Seder Eliyahu* might be described as “a col-

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<sup>142</sup> Jacob Elbaum, “Messianism in Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer: Apocalypse and Midrash,” *Teudah* 11 (1996): 245–66 [Hebrew].

<sup>143</sup> Sacks, *Midrash and Multiplicity*.

<sup>144</sup> Adelman, *Return of the Repressed*, 3–21.

<sup>145</sup> Bohmeier, *Exegetische Methodik*, 6–18.

<sup>146</sup> Jacob Elbaum, “Between Redaction and Rewriting: On the Character of the Late Midrashic Literature,” in *The Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Division C: Jewish Thought and Literature* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1985), 57–62 [Hebrew]; Jacob Elbaum, “From Sermon to Story: The Transformation of the Akedah,” *Prooftexts* (1986): 97–116.

<sup>147</sup> In addition to Elbaum, “Between Redaction and Rewriting,” see, Lennart Lehmhaus, “Between Tradition and Innovation: *Seder Eliyahu*’s Literary Strategies in the Context of Late Midrash,” in *Approaches to Literary Readings of Ancient Jewish Writings*, ed. Klaas Smelik and Karolien Vermeulen (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 211–42, and Dina Stein, “Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer and Seder Eliyahu: Preliminary Notes on Poetics and Imaginary Landscapes,” *Jerusalem Studies in Hebrew Literature* 24 (2011): 73–92 [Hebrew].

<sup>148</sup> Lehmaus “Between Tradition and Innovation,” 218.

lection of discourses” (Keim’s preferred designation for PRE), but they have little else in common.<sup>149</sup> An overview of this literature, such as that provided in Günter Stemberger’s *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch*, gives the impression that “Late Midrash” is amorphous, having similar content (aggadah, that is, non-legal material) but a myriad of forms.<sup>150</sup> Furthermore, if “Late Midrash” represents a new paradigm, it did not erase the old one: Arnon Atzmon characterizes several medieval works as “Late Neoclassical Midrash.”<sup>151</sup>

*Pirqa de-Rabbi Eliezer*, then, resembles Midrash with regard to its content (aggadah) but not its form. In fact, it does not always resemble classical Midrash in terms of content either. One notable difference between PRE and Midrash is its focus on biblical matter to the exclusion of any other kind of story, notably the lives of the Sages.<sup>152</sup> Apart from the prologue (PRE 1–2), there is exactly one exception, Resh Laqish and his conversion from a life of banditry (PRE 43). The story is appropriately inserted into a series of *exempla* illustrating the power of repentance and how even the most notorious of sinners can find forgiveness. It also includes an infamous anachronism, since the tale of Resh Laqish, an Amora of the third century, is attributed to Simeon ben Azzai, a Tanna of the second century. This unforced error, though found in every complete manuscript, inculcates doubt about its originality to the work.<sup>153</sup> The only other passage that departs from the biblical tradition is the account of the death of Titus in PRE 49, part of a discussion of the genealogy of Haman and his connection to the kingdom of Edom (that is, Rome).

Since PRE follows the biblical history rather than the biblical text and privileges biblical matter over other subjects, I have opted to call it a Rewritten Bible rather than a Midrash. I am not the first to make this proposition,<sup>154</sup> though it has

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149 Keim, *Pirqa deRabbi Eliezer*, 198. Keim’s views on PRE’s genre are most fully outlined in her entry on PRE for the *Database for the Analysis of Anonymous and Pseudepigraphic Jewish Texts of Antiquity* (<http://literarydatabase.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/>), which she co-authored with Philip Alexander. She consistently subordinates PRE’s narrative elements to its discursive elements. For an introduction to the inventory and its methodology, see Alexander Samely, *Profiling Jewish Literature in Antiquity: An Inventory, From Second Temple Texts to the Talmuds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

150 Stemberger, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch*, 363–88. Appropriately, this section is labeled “Other Aggadic Works” (*Andere Haggadawerke*).

151 Arnon Atzmon, “Old Wine in New Flasks: The Story of Late Neoclassical Midrash,” *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 3 (2009): 183–203.

152 Elbaum, “Rhetoric, Motif, and Subject-Matter,” 126.

153 Sacks, *Midrash and Multiplicity*, 75–79, describes the different scholarly attitudes to this passage. He himself defends its placement in the work as thematically appropriate.

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

been met with opposition in some quarters. Adelman, notably, opposed the idea that PRE was a Rewritten Bible and found it wanting in light of Philip Alexander's nine criteria for the genre.<sup>155</sup> These nine criteria are, in Alexander's own wording:

- 1) Rewritten Bible texts are narratives, which follow a sequential, chronological order.
- 2) They are, on the face of it, free-stranding compositions which replicate the form of the biblical books on which they are based.
- 3) Despite the superficial independence of form, these texts are not intended to replace or to supersede the Bible.
- 4) Rewritten Bible texts cover a substantial portion of the Bible.
- 5) Rewritten Bible texts follow the Bible serially, in proper order, but they are highly selective in what they represent.
- 6) The intention of the texts is to produce an interpretive reading of Scripture.
- 7) The narrative form of the text means, in effect, that they can impose only a single interpretation on the original.
- 8) The limitations of the narrative form also preclude making clear the exegetical reasoning.
- 9) Rewritten Bible texts make use of non-biblical tradition and draw on non-biblical sources.<sup>156</sup>

Adelman's first objection is that PRE does not follow "a sequential, chronological order," in violation of the first criterion. Her second is that PRE does not observe a proper balance between "retelling" and "expansion," a dichotomy that appears in Alexander's comments to his fifth criterion. Her third and final objection is that the use of prooftexts and exegetical questions sometimes make clear the exegetical reasoning. She attaches this to the eighth criterion, but it also applies to the second, where Alexander, in his comments, explicitly says that Rewritten Bibles do not highlight the words of Scripture (unlike Midrash).

Adelman's second objection is purely subjective, but the other two are certainly true of PRE.<sup>157</sup> It does not always follow chronological order, and it makes

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<sup>155</sup> Adelman, *Return of the Repressed*, 6–12. See also Rachel Adelman, "Can We Apply the Term 'Rewritten Bible' to Midrash? The Case of *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*," in *Rewritten Bible after Fifty Years: Texts, Terms, or Techniques? A Last Dialogue with Geza Vermes*, ed. József Zsengellér (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 177–99.

<sup>156</sup> Philip S. Alexander, "Retelling the Old Testament," in *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honour of Barnabas Linders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 99–121 (116–18).

<sup>157</sup> It is not clear what constitutes a "proper" (versus an "improper") balance of retelling and expansion.

abundant use of prooftexts. Both characteristics, however, are also found in Alexander's four key examples: *Jubilees*, Josephus, Pseudo-Philo, and the *Genesis Apocryphon*. Although Second Temple works are presumed to have been written before the establishment of a closed biblical canon (hence the preference for "Rewritten Scriptures"), some are cognizant of—and defer to—a scriptural canon. The book of *Jubilees*, for example, twice quotes from the "First Law" (*Jub.* 6:22; 30:12), indicating both the authority of that First Law (i.e., the Pentateuch) and that *Jubilees* stands outside of it. Similarly, Josephus never cites Scripture directly but does refer to what he has read "in the sacred books" (e.g., *Ant.* I.82; II.347; III.81; IV.326), while Pseudo-Philo rhetorically asks whether its contents can be verified from the canonical books of Judges and Kings (*LAB* 35:7; 43:4; 56:7; 63:5). Even the *Genesis Apocryphon* (1QapGen XV.20) contains the tantalizing phrase "for thus it is written about you" (וכן כתיב עליך) referring to Noah, but the text unfortunately breaks off.<sup>158</sup> The phrase is a citation formula, the very thing that is not supposed to appear in a Rewritten Bible.

The thrust of Alexander's second point is not that prooftexts and citation formulae are forbidden but that Rewritten Bibles, by reason of their narrative format, are not lemmatic commentaries. A Rewritten Bible is a *texte continué* rather than a *texte expliqué*.<sup>159</sup> Whether the prooftexts in PRE clarify the author's exegetical reasoning is a matter of debate. According to Treitl, the relationship of the text to the prooftexts is often tenuous or even completely extraneous.<sup>160</sup>

Similar arguments can be made against Adelman's first objection. The main point of Alexander's first criterion is that Rewritten Bibles are narratives rather than law or poetry. Chronological order cannot be over-emphasized because, once again, all four of his examples break from the sequence of the biblical text. Josephus is the most blatant. He not only breaks chronological order, he informs the reader that he has done so (*Ant.* IV.197; VIII.224). *Jubilees* has a different approach. As Michael Segal has noted, the Hebrew Bible itself does not always follow chronological order, but *Jubilees* will break from the biblical sequence to arrange events chronologically.<sup>161</sup> For example, in *Jubilees*, the sale of Joseph (*Jub.* 34; Gen 37)

<sup>158</sup> Daniel A. Machiela, *The Dead Sea Genesis Apocryphon: A New Text and Translation with Introduction and Special Treatment of Columns 13–17* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 63.

<sup>159</sup> This distinction was first made by Charles Perrot and Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, *Pseudo-Philon. Les Antiquités bibliques. Tome II. Introduction littéraire, commentaire et index* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976), 24–26.

<sup>160</sup> Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 166–70. See also Elbaum, "Rhetoric, Motif, and Subject-Matter," 126.

<sup>161</sup> Michael Segal, *The Book of Jubilees: Rewritten Bible, Redaction, Ideology and Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 121–22.

precedes the death of Isaac (*Jub.* 36; Gen 35:29). According to the data supplied by Genesis, Joseph must have been in Egypt when Isaac died. Pseudo-Philo also shuffles around the biblical narrative. He omits episodes (including most of Genesis) only to allude to them later (such as the Aqedah in LAB 32). Even the *Genesis Apocryphon* reflects subtle shifts in the presentation of material.<sup>162</sup>

Alexander's definition of "Rewritten Bible" is not itself sacred scripture. If the body of literature were expanded beyond the four original examples, it surely would need to be refined a little, especially in light of later works that were written after the establishment of a biblical canon. It would not have to be refined by much, however. In the introduction, I identified the "Rewritten Bible" with the "History Bible" of the Middle Ages. These works not only resemble older compositions like *Jubilees* and Josephus, but they are directly dependent on them. Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica*, the fount of most other History Bibles in Western Europe, makes abundant use of Josephus and—to a much lesser extent—Pseudo-Philo.<sup>163</sup> The Greek and Slavonic *Palaea* literature use both Josephus and *Jubilees*, though indirectly, via the Greek chronographic tradition.<sup>164</sup> During this time, only the *Genesis Apocryphon* was still lying dormant in a cave.

Rewritten Bibles did not disappear between the Second Temple period and the Middle Ages. Birger Pearson considered several Nag Hammadi texts examples of "Rewritten Scripture," including the *Secret Book of John* (NHC II 1, III 1, and IV 1), the *Nature of the Rulers* (NHC II 4), *On the Origin of the World* (NHC II 5), the *Apocalypse of Adam* (NHC V 5), and even the opaque *Paraphrase of Shem* (NHC VII 1).<sup>165</sup> Of these, the *Secret Book of John* comes closest to fulfilling all of Alexander's criteria, even with regard to its interpretation of Scripture.<sup>166</sup> The *Chronica* of Sulpicius Severus (d. 425), also known as the *Historia sacra*, is an even better example. The author, a Nicene Christian of the late fourth and early fifth century, explained why he composed his work in a preface: His friends wanted a concise summary of bib-

<sup>162</sup> Moshe J. Bernstein, "Re-Arrangement, Anticipation and Harmonization as Exegetical Features in the Genesis Apocryphon," *Dead Sea Discoveries* (1996): 37–57.

<sup>163</sup> Peter Comestor, *Scholastica Historia: Liber Genesis*, ed. Agneta Sylwan (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), xix–xx.

<sup>164</sup> William Adler, "Parabiblical Traditions and Their Use in the *Palaea Historica*," in *Tradition, Transmission, and Transformation from Second Temple Literature through Judaism and Christianity in Late Antiquity*, ed. Menahem Kister et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1–39.

<sup>165</sup> Birger A. Pearson, "Use, Authority and Exegesis of Mikra in Gnostic Literature," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Martin Jan Mulder and Harry Sysling (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 635–52 (647–51).

<sup>166</sup> On this, see David Creech, *The Use of Scripture in the Apocryphon of John: A Diachronic Analysis of the Variant Versions* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017).

lical history. It is a clear antecedent of *Comestor* and indebted to Second Temple sources such as Josephus and possibly *Jubilees*.<sup>167</sup>

The *Cave of Treasures* is yet another example. It is not an isolated work but an entire cycle of literature. An outer satellite of this cycle is a discourse of Peter to Clement embedded in the Latin and Syriac Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* (I.27–71), called an “ancient Jewish Christian source” by F. Stanley Jones.<sup>168</sup> Peter’s instruction begins with creation, proceeds point-by-point through the narrative material of the Pentateuch, then transitions rapidly to the time of Jesus and the Apostles. Jones identifies *Jubilees* as one of the primary sources of the Petrine discourse, going so far as calling it the “most important source of this text.”<sup>169</sup> Indeed, it boasts several key narratives from *Jubilees*, including Noah dividing the world among his sons and the subsequent violation of this arrangement by Canaan’s children, the development of warfare in the generation of Serug, and Abraham being instructed by an angel after deducing the existence of God from watching the stars. At the same time, this work anticipates important motifs in the *Cave of Treasures*, such as a euhemeristic interpretation of Gen 6:1–4 (the “Sons of God” were men, not angels, and anathema on those who think otherwise) and the curious portrayal of Nimrod as the founder of Zoroastrianism. Both points oppose *Jubilees*, which features the Watcher myth and never mentions the person of Nimrod. Perhaps most significantly, certain Arabic and Ethiopic versions of the *Cave of Treasures* (the *Book of the Rolls*; see chapter eight) also use the framework of Peter instructing Clement. The Petrine discourse is therefore an important missing link between older and later examples of “Rewritten Bible.”

One problem persists. “Rewritten Bible” is still a modern scholarly heuristic that would have been unknown to the author of PRE. What did the author think he was writing when he put pen to paper? The answer might be a genre of contemporary Islamic literature, the *Stories of the Prophets* (*Qışaş al-Anbiyā’*).<sup>170</sup> It seems strange

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<sup>167</sup> See Sulpicius Severus, *Chroniques*, ed. Ghislaine de Senneville-Grave (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1999), 31–33. Of greatest interest here is that Sulpicius Severus gives the Enochic myth of the Watchers and does not attribute Adam and Eve’s fall to Satanic intervention (I.1.1–3). The editor doubts that Sulpicius Severus used Josephus (42–43), yet he recounts the fall of Masada (II.30.2), something the author could not have known independently of Josephus (but perhaps indirectly, through an intermediary).

<sup>168</sup> F. Stanley Jones, *An Ancient Jewish Christian Source on the History of Christianity: Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions 1.27–71* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995).

<sup>169</sup> Jones, *An Ancient Jewish Christian Source*, 138.

<sup>170</sup> Louis Ginzberg, “Jewish Folklore East and West,” in *On Jewish Law and Lore*, ed. Eli Ginzberg (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1955), 61–73, made a similar proposition long ago. He wrote that PRE “is modeled upon the Arabic collections of Biblical legends in which narrative is emphasized, while a rabbinic Midrash centers interest upon matters exegetical” (72). Aviva



to think of Muslim literature as falling under the category of “Rewritten Bible,” but when one considers that the “Bible” being rewritten is not the sacred text but the sacred history, then that is precisely what the *Stories of the Prophets* are. The *Stories of the Prophets* are histories—or, if one prefers, a series of discourses—covering the pre-Islamic prophets from Adam to Jesus, arranged in chronological order.<sup>171</sup>

The major difference is that the scripture they are supplementing is the Qur’ān rather than the Bible. Even so, there is a clear dialectic at play between the *Stories of the Prophets* and biblical literature. The Torah and Gospel are revealed scripture in Islam, although their extant versions are considered corrupt (the doctrine of *tahrīf*).<sup>172</sup> The *Stories of the Prophets* are not the original, revealed Scriptures, but they do offer a corrective to the Scriptures in use by Jews and Christians. Despite their “Islamicized” approach to biblical history, the *Stories* themselves occupy a perilous liminal space. By the fourteenth century, they had become synonymous with the term *Isrā’īliyyāt*, spurious Jewish and Christian traditions about biblical history with a semantic range akin to the word “apocrypha.”<sup>173</sup> The writers of *Stories* certainly employed Jewish and Christian sources to fill in the gaps left by the Qur’ān. One of these sources was the *Cave of Treasures*.<sup>174</sup> The *Stories* are not merely similar in form to older Rewritten Bibles. They are part of a chain of tradition.

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Schussman, “Stories of the Prophets in Muslim Tradition: With Special Reference to the *Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā’* of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Kisā’ī” (PhD Dissertation, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1981), 91–115 [Hebrew] directly compares PRE to one specific example, the *Stories* of al-Kisā’ī (11th c. or later). In her case, she is arguing for Islamic dependence on a Jewish source.

171 For a recent introduction and general bibliography, see Michael Pregill, Marianna Klar, and Roberto Tottoli, “*Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā’* as Genre and Discourse: From the Qur’ān to Elijah Muḥammad,” *Mizan: Journal for the Study of Muslim Societies and Civilizations* 2 (2017): 5–44. This article is available online: <https://mizanproject.org/journal-post/qisas-al-anbiya-as-genre-and-discourse/#-text>. The most readily available examples (i.e., the ones that have been translated into English) are: Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Tha’labī, *‘Arā’is al-Majālis fi Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā’ or Lives of the Prophets*, trans. William M. Brinner (Leiden: Brill, 2002), Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Kisā’ī, *Tales of the Prophets (Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā’)*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston (Chicago: Great Books of the Islamic World, 1997), and Nāṣir al-Dīn ibn Burhān al-Dīn al-Rabghūzī, *The Stories of the Prophets (Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā’): An Eastern Turkish Version*, ed. and trans. H. E. Boeschoten and J. O’Kane, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

172 See Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 19–49.

173 Roberto Tottoli, “Origin and Use of the Term *Isrā’īliyyāt* in Muslim Literature,” *Arabica* (1999): 193–210.

174 See Michael Pregill, “*Isrā’īliyyāt*, Myth, and Pseudepigraphy: Wāḥb. B. Munabbih and the Early Islamic Versions of the Fall of Adam and Eve,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 34 (2008): 215–84 (245–46), and chapter eight of the present study.

Like PRE, the *Stories of the Prophets* fall somewhere between history (*ta'rikh*) and exegesis (*tafsir*). A *ta'rikh*, such as the compendious chronicles of al-Ṭabarī (d. 310AH/ 923 CE) or al-Ya'qūbī (d. 284 AH/898 CE), will often begin with the stories of the pre-Islamic prophets. A *tafsir* will naturally elaborate on the pre-Islamic prophets since passages related to them constitute at least a fourth of the Qur'ān.<sup>175</sup> However, a *tafsir* has defined formal features—the complete text of the Qur'ān, segmented for commentary, and presented in canonical order<sup>176</sup>—which separate it from the *Stories of the Prophets*. It is the form that is different, not the content. Entire collections of *Stories of the Prophets* have been crafted by excerpting material from world chronicles (in the case of Ibn Kathīr)<sup>177</sup> or from *tafsir* (Ibn Muṭarrif al-Ṭarafī, drawing from the *Tafsir* of al-Ṭabarī).<sup>178</sup> The differences between *tafsir* and the *Stories of the Prophets* is a bit like the difference between classical Midrash and PRE. One is a lemmatic commentary on the sacred text; the other is an account of the sacred history. Both present similar material in different ways.<sup>179</sup>

Among the similarities between PRE and the *Stories of the Prophets*, one can observe, first of all, the content (including Abraham's visit to Ishmael), but also certain formal features. The basic textual unit is like the one found in PRE. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* inverts the structure of classical Midrash. Instead of the interpretation of a biblical verse by one or more rabbis, PRE has individual rabbis offer textual units that gradually form a narrative. Each of these textual units is stamped with a proof-text. This is also the method in the *Stories of the Prophets*, which begins with a tradent and ends with a verse from the Qur'ān. Consider the following example from al-Tha'labī as compared with the analogous passage from PRE, the beginning of the story of Noah (emphases added).

175 For overviews: Roberto Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'ān and Muslim Literature* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2002); Brannon M. Wheeler, *Prophets in the Quran: An Introduction to the Quran and Muslim Exegesis* (London: Bloomsbury, 2002).

176 Norman Calder, "Tafsir from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr: Problems in the Description of a Genre, Illustrated with Reference to the Story of Abraham," in *Approaches to the Qur'ān*, ed. G. R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef (London: Routledge, 2005), 101–40 (101).

177 Pregill, Klar, and Tottoli, "Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā'," 13

178 See the introduction to Muḥammad ibn-Aḥmad ibn-Muṭarrif al-Ṭarafī, *The Stories of the Prophets by Ibn Muṭarrif al-Ṭarafī*, ed. Roberto Tottoli (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2003).

179 This does not mean, however, that the *Stories of the Prophets* are merely *tafsir* with the material rearranged. See the instructive study of Walid A. Saleh, *The Formation of the Classical Tafsir Tradition: The Qur'ān Commentary of al-Tha'labī (d. 427/1035)* (Leiden: Brill, 2004). Al-Tha'labī wrote both a collection of *Stories* and a *Tafsir*, making him an excellent case study of the similarities and differences between the two genres.

**PRE 22 (JTS 3847, ff. 106b–107a)**

**Rabbi Simeon said:** From Seth arose and were descended all the generations of the righteous, and from Cain arose and were descended all the generations of the wicked, criminals and rebels who rebelled against their Maker, so that they said, “We do not need the drops of your rain or knowledge of your ways,” as it is written, “They said to God, ‘Depart from us!’” (**Job 21:14**).

**Rabbi Meir said:** Naked, with their flesh exposed, all the children of the generation of Cain were walking about, men, women, and beasts alike, and they were polluting themselves in every kind of sexual vice: a man with his mother and his daughter, his daughter-in-law or the wife of his neighbor, openly and in the streets. The thoughts of their heart were given over to the evil inclination, as it is written, “Every inclination of the thoughts of his heart [was only constant evil]” (**Gen 6:5**).

**al-Tha’labī, ‘Arā’is al-Majālis<sup>180</sup>**

**Ibn ‘Abbās said** that there were two clans of the sons of Adam, one of which lived in the plain while the other inhabited the mountain. While the men of the mountain were handsome and their wives ugly, the women of the plain were beautiful, but their husbands were ugly. So Iblis came to one of the men of the plain in the form of a young lad, and hired himself out to him and served him. Iblis took something like the pipe that shepherds play, and made it play a sound unlike anything that had ever been heard. This (sound) reached those about them, and they came to hear him. They made this into a festival on which they would gather (each) year, when the women would display their charms to the men and the men to the women. One of the men from the mountain came upon them while they were celebrating their festival and saw the beauty of the women. He returned to his companions, telling them of this, whereupon they moved down to dwell with them. They began to engage in immoral deeds, as He has said: “Display not your finery, as did the pagans of old” (**Q 33:33**).

Like PRE, al-Tha’labī opens with an authority—Ibn ‘Abbās (d. 68 AH/687 CE), the father of Qur’ānic exegesis—and closes the tradition with a proof-text from the Qur’ān. Neither of these elements is strictly necessary for the narrative, but they reinforce the authority of the various traditions. As in PRE, the proof-texts are very loosely connected to the narrative, and the cited authorities are probably invented.<sup>181</sup>

The use of authoritative tradents underscores an element of Rewritten Bibles that has not yet been fully appreciated: their catechetical function. A common framework for the Rewritten Bible is to place its narrative contents in the mouth of a supreme authority, whether the Angel of the Presence (*Jubilees*), the Apostle Peter (the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions*), the Apostle John (the *Secret Book of John*), or Ephrem the Syrian (the *Cave of Treasures*). Even those composing under their own name are writing expressly for the instruction of others. Josephus’ intended audience is a Gentile public with no knowledge of the Hebrew Bible (*Ant.* 1.5–9).

<sup>180</sup> Al-Tha’labī, *Lives of the Prophets*, 92.

<sup>181</sup> Claude Gilliot, “Portrait ‘Mythique’ d’Ibn ‘Abbās,” *Arabica* 32 (1985): 127–84; Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 156–57.

Sulpicius Severus wrote for friends who requested a summary of biblical history. Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica* is literally a textbook. Telling *Stories of the Prophets* for religious instruction was one of the duties of the *quṣṣāṣ*, a diverse group of teachers and preachers in early Islam.<sup>182</sup>

*Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* shows a similar catechetical intent. The work's use of "small forms," such as biblical citations with commentary, question and answer units, lists, and proverbs make it an ideal learning aid.<sup>183</sup> In this light, the prologue not only presents R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanus as a potential author of the work but as an *exemplum* for others. He is introduced as an ignoramus who studied Torah late in life and did not even know basic prayers like the Shema and the Amidah. The reader (or hearer) will learn both prayers and many other things besides, allowing one to become a master of Torah like R. Eliezer.

Furthermore, PRE has a complicated relationship with homiletic literature. For example, Lewis Barth has published a sermon for the second day of Rosh ha-Shanah on the theme of the Ten Trials of Abraham (attached to late manuscripts of *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana*) that bears a striking resemblance to PRE 26–31.<sup>184</sup> Treitl has judged that the sermon depends on PRE,<sup>185</sup> but it could also be reflective of the types of sermons that served as sources for the book. The book itself has certainly been excerpted in this manner.<sup>186</sup>

The establishment of the *Stories of the Prophets* as a genre is contemporaneous with the redaction of PRE. The creation of the genre is credited to Wahn ibn Munabbih (d. ca. 112 AH/730 CE), a Yemenite scholar of Jewish and Christian traditions, although his work has been lost.<sup>187</sup> Michael Pregill, with Marianna Klar and Roberto Tottoli, argued that Muḥammad ibn Ishāq (d. 150 AH/767 CE), the biogra-

<sup>182</sup> Lyall R. Armstrong, *The Quṣṣāṣ of Early Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 33–38, 90–111.

<sup>183</sup> On these "small forms": Katharina E. Keim, "The Role of Small Forms in *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*," in *It's Better to Hear the Rebuke of the Wise than the Song of Fools* (Qoh 7:5): *Proceedings of the Midrash Section, Society of Biblical Literature, Volume 6*, ed. W. David Nelson and Rivka Ulmer (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2015), 141–66.

<sup>184</sup> Barth, "Lecture for the Second Day of Rosh Hashanah."

<sup>185</sup> Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 227–29.

<sup>186</sup> See Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 306–10, for a list of excerpts and adaptations in manuscript. These manuscripts include the prologue, the hexameral chapters (PRE 3–11), isolated chapters on the ten descents (such as the "Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer" attached to *Pseudo-Seder Eliyahu Zuta*), the Ten Trials of Abraham, and the story of Esther.

<sup>187</sup> On Wahn, see Raif Georges Khoury, *Wahn B. Munabbih*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972). He believes that parts of Wahn's *Stories* were preserved in later authors. See also Raif Georges Khoury, *Les légendes prophétiques dans l'Islam: Depuis le Ier jusqu'au IIIe siècle de l'Hégire* (Wiesbaden: 1978).

pher of Muḥammad, was the true founder of the genre.<sup>188</sup> His *Kitāb al-Mubtadaʾ* was a prologue to the biography proper, which gave a history of the major pre-Islamic prophets, constituting a sort of Muslim “Old Testament.” It too has been lost.<sup>189</sup> The earliest surviving work of the genre is the *Mubtadaʾ al-Dunyā wa-Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyāʾ* of Ishāq ibn Bishr (d. 206A H/821 CE).<sup>190</sup> Even this is partially lost and preserved in a unique manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Libraries Huntington 388). One of the ironies of history might be that *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* is the first extant *Stories of the Prophets*. Pregill, Klar, and Tottoli even cite PRE specifically as a counter-discourse to the Islamic reading of biblical history offered by the *Stories of the Prophets*.<sup>191</sup>

## 2.6 Language

Finally, a word should be said about the language of the composition and the linguistic capacities of the author. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* is written in an uncomplicated rabbinic Hebrew. There is a minimum of foreign words, which distinguishes PRE from rabbinic compositions of the classical period. Classical rabbinic literature mixes Aramaic and Hebrew (Aramaic dominates in the Talmud; Hebrew in the Midrash) and attests numerous Latin and Greek loanwords. The vocabulary of PRE is almost exclusively Hebrew, but it does employ a handful of Greek words, such as אוקיינוס (Ωκεανός) in PRE 31, מכיר (μάχαρα) in PRE 38, and פרהסייא (παρρησία) in PRE 47. The Greek, though limited, is perhaps a further indication of a Palestinian (as opposed to Babylonian) provenance.

The author also has a limited Aramaic vocabulary. Steven Daniel Sacks even doubted that the author knew Aramaic at all.<sup>192</sup> Nevertheless, the limited use of Aramaic suggests some knowledge of the language. In one noteworthy example, PRE 28 claims that the fourth animal that Abraham sacrifices for the covenant between the pieces (cf. Gen 15) is not a turtle dove but a bull. In fact, the Hebrew word for “turtle dove” is identical to the Aramaic word for “bull” (תור). In another example, PRE 32 states that the Solomon received his name (שלמה) because he

<sup>188</sup> Pregill, Klar, Tottoli, “*Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyāʾ*,” 12.

<sup>189</sup> A reconstruction based on later citations was attempted by Gordon D. Newby, *The Making of the Last Prophet: A Reconstruction of the Earliest Biography of Muhammad* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), but see Lawrence I. Conrad, “Recovering Lost Texts: Some Methodological Issues,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113 (1993): 258–63.

<sup>190</sup> For a description of this work and some of its contents, see Meir Jacob Kister, “Adam: A Study of Some Legends in Tafsīr and Ḥadīth Literature,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 13 (1993): 113–74.

<sup>191</sup> Pregill, Klar, Tottoli, “*Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyāʾ*,” 39, n. 35.

<sup>192</sup> Sacks, *Midrash and Multiplicity*, 83–87.

would be the king of peace (שלום), citing the Aramaic word instead of the Hebrew cognate (שלום), presumably because of the Aramaic word's graphic similarity to Solomon's name. Sacks believed that such a facile use of Aramaic demonstrated ignorance, but the use of wordplay suggests familiarity, not ignorance.

As a resident of 'Abbāsid Palestine, one presumes that the author of PRE knew *some* Arabic, at least for day-to-day interactions. The evidence of the author's knowledge of Arabic is slight but significant. At the end of PRE 30, the author mentions three wars that the "Ishmaelites" will carry out at the end of time. He cites Isa 21:15, "For they have fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the gravity of war" (כִּי־מִפְּנֵי הַחֲרֹבוֹת נָדְדוּ מִפְּנֵי חֶרֶב נְטוּשָׁה וּמִפְּנֵי) (קִשְׁתֵּי דְרוּכָהּ וּמִפְּנֵי כְבֶד מַלְחָמָה) as a proof-text, claiming that "swords" (חרבות) means "wars," but the word *herev* (חרב) does not mean "war" in Hebrew; rather, this is the meaning of the Arabic cognate *harb* (حرب). It is a play on words: The author derives a meaning from the Hebrew text based on an Arabic cognate, just as in the Aramaic examples above. Similarly, PRE connects the word *milḥamah* (מלחמה) from the same verse to the messianic war at the end of time. This is the common word for "war" in Hebrew, but its Arabic cognate *malḥama* (ملحمة) designates an eschatological conflict, especially the war with Constantinople, which is the exact context of the passage in PRE.<sup>193</sup> The evidence presented here is suggestive rather than decisive. In any case, Arabic remains one channel through which the author could have known non-rabbinic traditions.

## 2.7 Conclusion

*Pirqa de-Rabbi Eliezer* is not the work of R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanus. The name of the actual author is lost to history, but he has left something of himself in the text. *Pirqa de-Rabbi Eliezer* is the work of one author and not a compilation. It was abandoned by its author and left unfinished. The author lived in Muslim Palestine, almost certainly in the second half of the eighth century. Within rabbinic literature, his composition is *sui generis*, but it has affinities with the contemporary *Stories of the Prophets* and may be broadly classed as a Rewritten Bible.

Further clues to the author's identity can be found in the sources he employed. In the next chapter, I will examine PRE's rabbinic and "para-rabbinic" sources, by which I mean those works that fall outside the rabbinic canon but were accepted

<sup>193</sup> Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 22–23; Hayrettin Yücesoy, *Messianic Beliefs and Imperial Politics in Medieval Islam: The 'Abbāsid Caliphate in the Early Ninth Century* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), 47.

by the rabbinic movement in the Middle Ages. This includes apocalypses and the *hekhalot* literature as well as the “synagogal” genres of Targum and *piyyut*. This examination is intended to offer a profile of PRE’s traditions drawn from the full panoply of “Jewish” (Hebrew and Aramaic) literature. It is also intended to facilitate the identification of traditions that would be unusual within rabbinic tradition, ones that could potentially come from outside sources such as *Jubilees* and the *Cave of Treasures*.

### 3 *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* and Rabbinic Tradition

The title *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* seems to tell us all we need to know about the religious proclivities of its author. The work is pseudonymously attributed to a rabbi. The work also imitates earlier midrashic compositions by placing different traditions in the mouths of various other Sages apart from R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanus, although these are probably also pseudonymous. Outside of the Hebrew Bible, the only other work that PRE cites directly is tractate *Avot* of the Mishnah, which outlines the transmission of the Oral Torah from Sinai to the Sages.<sup>1</sup> *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* even uses the word *mishnah* (משנה), in the sense of Oral Torah, at the beginning of PRE 46. In short, the work quotes rabbinic sources, appeals to rabbinic authority, and is even attributed to an early, authoritative Tanna. The question of who wrote PRE seems like an open and shut case. There can be no doubt that it is a rabbinic composition.

Nevertheless, there is a pervasive sense that PRE does not fit perfectly within the program of the rabbinic Sages. As Annette Reed has observed, PRE discusses several prohibited topics outlined in *m. Hagigah* 2:1: the “work of creation” (מעשה בראשית), the “work of the chariot” (מעשה מרכבה), what is above and below (i.e., Heaven and Hell), and what is before and after (i.e., the premundane world and the eschaton).<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, PRE has some evident contact with the literature of the synagogue.<sup>3</sup> The most obvious is the use of the Amidah as a means of structuring the work. The form of the work is generally homiletic, even though it does not follow the order of any lectionary. It has a simple vocabulary, few loanwords, no halakhah, and limited references to the learned literature of the house of study (בית מדרש). On a more speculative note, Hananel Mack has compared the work’s personification of the sun to the mosaic of Helios found in the Sepphoris synagogue—one of the clearest breaks from rabbinic norms.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Several chapters open with citations of *Pirque Avot*, including PRE 13 (*m. Avot* 4:28), PRE 16 (*m. Avot* 1:2), PRE 19 (*m. Avot* 5:6), and PRE 43 (*m. Avot* 4:11).

2 Annette Yoshiko Reed, “Who Can Recount the Mighty Acts of the Lord?: Cosmology and Authority in *Pirquei deRabbi Eliezer* 1–3,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 80 (2009): 115–41 (116) and Annette Yoshiko Reed, “From ‘Pre-Emptive Exegesis’ to ‘Pre-Emptive Speculation’? *Ma’aseh Bereshit* in *Genesis Rabbah* and *Pirquei deRabbi Eliezer*,” in *With Letters of Light: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Early Jewish Apocalypticism, Magic, and Mysticism in Honor of Rachel Eilior*, ed. Andrei A. Orlov and Daphna V. Arbel (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 115–32 (115).

3 This issue is most directly treated in Joseph Yahalom, *Poetry and Society in Jewish Galilee of Late Antiquity* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1999), 130–36 [Hebrew].

4 Hananel Mack, “The Unique Character of the Zippori Synagogue Mosaic and Eretz Israel Midrashim,” *Cathedra* 88 (1998): 39–56 [Hebrew]. See also Gideon Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 252, n. 61.



Indeed, while PRE has many points of contact with the classical rabbinic literature of Talmud and Midrash, it also has much in common with “non-canonical” genres such as *hekhalot*, apocalypses, *piyyut*, and Targum. These genres, which originated outside the rabbinic academy, are not entirely extrinsic to it. Hence, a major apocalyptic work relevant to the dating of PRE is attributed to *Rabbi* Simeon b. Yohai. The mystical *hekhalot* works feature as protagonists *Rabbi* Ishmael and *Rabbi* Akiva. The *paytan* closest in date to PRE is *Rabbi* Pinhas ha-Cohen. The Babylonian Talmud even claims the purported authors of the Targumim, Onqelos and Jonathan b. Uzziel, as students of the Sages (*b. Megillah* 3a). For this reason, I have dubbed these works “para-rabbinic.”<sup>5</sup> They are not rabbinic in origin, but they have come to be included within the “big tent” of rabbinic Judaism—and one of the reasons these texts have survived until the present day.<sup>6</sup>

This chapter is therefore an investigation of the Jewish sources in PRE which did not hail from the Second Temple period: the rabbinic and “para-rabbinic” sources which survived in Hebrew and Aramaic and were transmitted primarily among Jews. These traditions form the “negative space” against which one can identify other, non-rabbinic sources. They come from the six corpora mentioned above: 1) the two Talmudim (Yerushalmi and Bavli); 2) Midrashim (especially on Genesis—*Genesis Rabbah* and *Midrash Tanhuma*); 3) the *hekhalot* literature (*Hekhalot Zutarti*, *Massekhet Hekhalot*); 4) Hebrew apocalypses (*Sefer Zerubbabel*, the *Secrets of Simeon b. Yohai*); 5) the *piyyutim* of Yose b. Yose, Yannai, Qallir, and others; and finally 6) Targumim, particularly *Targum Neofiti*. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, which has the most material in common with PRE, will be the subject of the next chapter. This work is later than PRE, and the comparison of the two illuminates many of the traditions that PRE has in fact introduced into rabbinic literature.<sup>7</sup>

### 3.1 Talmud

Commensurate with its status as a rabbinic work, PRE has much in common with talmudic literature. According to Gerald Friedlander, PRE only cites from the Pal-

<sup>5</sup> The use of the term (with this meaning) is not yet common, but see Tzvi Novick, *Piyyut and Midrash: Form, Genre, and History* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), 149–50, 178, and 221.

<sup>6</sup> The “big tent” metaphor is a coinage of Philip S. Alexander, “What Happened to the Jewish Priesthood after 70?,” in *A Wandering Galilean: Essays in Honour of Seán Freyne*, ed. Zuleika Rodgers, Margaret Daly-Denton, and Anne Fitzpatrick-McKinley (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 5–33 (19 and 30).

<sup>7</sup> For the date of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, see Leeor Gottlieb, “Towards a More Precise Understanding of Pseudo-Jonathan’s Origins,” *Aramaic Studies* 19 (2021): 104–20, and Gavin McDowell, “The Date and Provenance of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: The Evidence of Pirque DeRabbi Eliezer and the Chronicles of Moses,” *Aramaic Studies* 19 (2021): 121–54.

estinian Talmud and never the Babylonian.<sup>8</sup> In fact, it is doubtful whether PRE even cites from the Palestinian Talmud. There are only a few substantial overlaps between them. I have chosen two.<sup>9</sup>

In the first example, PRE 34—a sermon on the resurrection of the dead—contains an Aramaic *logion* from R. Tanhum of Edrei: “The earth will give up its deposits” (ארעא תפקידה תפליט) interpreting Isa 26:19, “The earth shall cast forth its dead” (וְאָרֶץ יִפְתֹּקֶה רִפְּאִים תִּפְלִי). The exact same phrase, attributed to the same obscure Sage, is found in the Palestinian Talmud (y. *Berakot* V:2, 9b). Friedlander believed that the phrase was a gloss.<sup>10</sup> Given the paucity of other parallels with the Palestinian Talmud, and PRE’s preference for Hebrew over Aramaic, this seems likely.

While Friedlander thought the first example was a gloss, he cited y. *Qiddushin* IV:1, 65b-c as the source for a story in PRE 17, where David recovers the remains of Saul and Jonathan and buries them as an act of charity and to put an end to a drought.<sup>11</sup> In the Palestinian Talmud, the story, which bears little textual resemblance to the one in PRE 17, is couched in an explanation of why the Gibeonites are excluded from Israel—because they demanded the death of Saul’s sons in exchange for seven of their number whom Saul had killed. The blood guilt that had accrued from Saul’s slaughter was, in fact, the reason for the drought, not his delayed burial. The mass execution of Saul’s descendants and the repatriation of his remains occur in the same biblical chapter (2Sam 21:1–14). *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* and the Palestinian Talmud emphasize different elements of the chapter to make different points.

These two examples, at least, are not sufficient to support Friedlander’s claim that PRE cites the Palestinian Talmud, although the second example provides two variants of the same tradition.

Turning to the Babylonian Talmud, one finds much more shared aggadic material. However, this does not necessarily indicate PRE’s dependence on the Talmud. The parallels between the two are never precise, meaning that either PRE has reworked its source (the author’s *modus operandi*) or else PRE reflects a version separate from the one found in the Babylonian Talmud. I incline to the second position, in part because much of the aggadic material in the Bavli comes from Palestin-

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

9 For additional examples, see Haim Meir Horowitz, “Mishnat Rabbi Eliezer, or: A Critical Introduction to Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer,” *Hamagid* 24 (1879): 62, 70, 78, 86, 94, 102, 110, 118, 126, 134, 142, 150, 158, 166, 174, 182, 190, 206, 214, 222, 230, 238–39 (78) [Hebrew], and Eliezer Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer: Text, Redaction and a Sample Synopsis* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, 2012), 206–10 [Hebrew].

10 Friedlander, *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, 260, n. 6.

11 Friedlander, *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, 118, n. 11.

ian sources,<sup>12</sup> and when medieval Jewish literature adopts talmudic traditions, the works usually do so directly.<sup>13</sup>

Since the Talmud is a vast corpus, I will focus on only one section, the beginning of tractate *Sotah*, which is dense with parallels. The Talmud recounts a continuous narrative from the end of Jacob's life until the early life of Moses. Many of these traditions appear in the later chapters of PRE. The Talmud, for example, recounts a conflict between Esau and the sons of Jacob when the latter bury their father in the Cave of Machpelah (*b. Sotah* 13a). Esau asserts his claim to the family tomb; Naphtali departs to look for the deed in Egypt. In the interim, Hushim, the disabled son of Dan, mistakes Esau for an enemy combatant and slays him. The story, as outlined above, is the same in both PRE 39 and *b. Sotah* 13a, but individual details, not to mention the language (Hebrew in PRE; Aramaic in the Talmud) differ. The talmudic version of this story is the best known, but variants already appear in *Genesis Rabbah* (New Version 97 and 98:17) and in the Targumim (e.g., *Pseudo-Jonathan* to Gen 49:21 and 50:13). While it is possible that PRE has reformulated the talmudic story, it is also possible that PRE is preserving a Palestinian tradition reflected only distantly in sources such as *Genesis Rabbah*.

Another example is the fate of the Israelite children targeted by Pharaoh's decree. The Talmud (*b. Sotah* 11b) states that the Hebrew women gave birth to the children in the field, where angels cared for them. When the Egyptians came for the children, the earth swallowed them and only later restored them to their families. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* 42 states that the children whom the Egyptians had already thrown into the Nile were saved by angels and suckled by rocks that secreted milk and honey. They rejoined their families at the Red Sea. The two versions are sufficiently different that the *Chronicles of Moses*, a work of the tenth or eleventh century that uses both PRE and the Talmud, harmonizes them.<sup>14</sup> Unlike the first example, PRE's version of the story is not reflected in another Palestinian rabbinic

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12 Richard Kalmin, *Migrating Tales: The Talmud's Narratives and Their Historical Context* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014), 236–237, concluded that “traditions from the Roman East achieved literary expression in the Bavli during the fourth century, a phenomenon that continued for two or more centuries thereafter,” but further stipulates, in cases where the Bavli attests something missing in Palestinian Jewish literature, “it is unlikely [...] Palestinian rabbinic literature was the true source of the tradition in the Bavli, and that it is simply a historical accident that the traditions are missing from Palestinian rabbinic compilations.”

13 For the specific case I am about to discuss, compare *b. Sotah* 11a–14a with the *Chronicles of Moses* and *Exodus Rabbah*, chapter 1, both of which hew closer to the talmudic narrative than PRE. Both have been published by Avigdor Shinan: Avigdor Shinan, “The Chronicles of Moses Our Teacher,” *HaSifrut* 24 (1977): 100–116 [Hebrew]; Avigdor Shinan, ed., *Midrash Shemot Rabbah: Chapters I–XIV; a Critical Edition Based on a Jerusalem Manuscript with Variants, Commentary and Introduction* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1984), 35–102 [Hebrew].

14 Shinan, “Chronicles of Moses,” 107.

source. This does not mean it is dependent on the Talmud. Both PRE and the Babylonian Talmud could be drawing on a common Palestinian tradition.

Finally, PRE 48, which treats the early life of Moses, has several thematic overlaps with the Talmud but no precise parallels. Both works, for example, state that Pharaoh's magicians foresaw the birth of Moses. In the Talmud (*b. Sotah* 12b), they learn that Moses will be punished through water and hence advocate that the Hebrew children be thrown into the Nile. The Egyptians stop when they ascertain that Moses has touched the water. Unfortunately for them, the prophecy referred to Moses' disobedience at the waters of Meribah (Num 20:1–13) and not his untimely death as an infant. In PRE 48, the magicians foresee Moses' birth and advise Pharaoh to throw the children into the Nile, just as in the Talmud. In this case, however, Pharaoh stops the slaughter after the magicians ascertain that Moses has already been born. They instead advise harsh labor as a way of destroying the future redeemer of Israel. The difference is subtle but important.

While it is possible that PRE knows the talmudic traditions and simply reshapes them into a different form, the Babylonian Talmud could also be reshaping common Palestinian traditions. When we look to later works such as *Exodus Rabbah* and the *Chronicles of Moses*, which contain much overlapping material with *b. Sotah* 11a–14a, they follow both the order and the contents of the Talmud. They do not substantially change their sources, leaving little doubt that they are drawing on the Babylonian Talmud (or, at least, tractate *Sotah*). *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* is simply too different to affirm its dependence on the Talmud.

### 3.2 Midrash

In the previous chapter, I discussed the ways in which PRE deviates from classical Midrash. However, this pertains only to the form of the work, not the content. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* is still a fundamentally aggadic work, and, consequently, it has much in common with aggadic Midrash. Most of PRE is concerned with the events of Genesis, and so the natural point of comparison is the oldest Midrash to focus exclusively on that book: *Genesis Rabbah*, a Palestinian work of the fifth century CE. The points of contact between PRE and *Genesis Rabbah* are too numerous for a complete list; an exhaustive list would be exhausting. The following are only a few illustrative examples of their shared traditions.

1. The Torah, among other things, was created before the foundation of the world (*Gen. Rab.* 1:1; PRE 3)
2. God's command that Adam "work and keep" the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:15) is interpreted as observing the commandments of the Torah (*Gen. Rab.* 16:5; PRE 12).

3. Abraham, persecuted by the temporal powers of his age, is thrown into the fiery furnace (*Gen. Rab.* 38:13; PRE 26).
4. Shem, the son of Noah, is identified with the mysterious Melchizedek from Gen 14:18–20 (*Gen. Rab.* 44:7 and 56:10; PRE 8).
5. The animals sacrificed to ratify the covenant between the pieces (Genesis 15) are interpreted as a prophecy of the Four Kingdoms (*Gen. Rab.* 44:15; PRE 28).
6. Jacob and Esau inherit Adam's raiment, which had previously been the possession of the tyrant Nimrod (*Gen. Rab.* 63:13 and 97:6; PRE 24).
7. During the vision of Jacob's Ladder, the angels witness a heavenly image of Jacob that corresponds to the earthly Jacob (*Gen. Rab.* 68:12; PRE 35).
8. Bethel, the location of Jacob's dream, is explicitly identified as the Temple Mount (*Gen. Rab.* 69:7; PRE 35).
9. The angel who wrestles with Jacob must return for the morning prayers (*Gen. Rab.* 78:2; PRE 37).
10. Joseph, *en route* to Hebron to meet his brothers, encounters an angel in the guise of a man (*Gen. Rab.* 84:14; PRE 38).
11. During a dispute over the ownership of the cave of Machpelah, Naphtali runs to Egypt to retrieve the title deed (*Gen. Rab.* 98:17; PRE 39).
12. Joseph, elevated to Pharaoh's viceregent, rides his chariot through the streets while young girls throw jewelry at him to attract his attention, but he ignores them (*Gen. Rab.* 98:18; PRE 39).

It must be stated at the outset that none of these motifs are unique to the two works. Every one of these traditions is also found in other Palestinian sources, such as *Targum Neofiti* (see below).<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the parallels are not exact, but I wanted to emphasize similarity rather than difference. As with the talmudic literature—apart from tractate *Avot* and its commentaries—there is no intertextual relationship between PRE and *Genesis Rabbah*.

Whether the author of PRE had a copy of *Genesis Rabbah* before him seems doubtful. The best illustration of this non-use is *Gen. Rab.* 41(42):1,<sup>16</sup> which tells the story of how R. Eliezer became a master of Torah, the same story found in PRE 1–2. The text, however, is completely different. The version in *Genesis Rabbah*

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<sup>15</sup> See *Targum Neofiti* to Gen 2:15; 3:24; 11:28; 14:18; 15:11–12; 28:10; 28:17; 32:27; 37:15; 48:22; 49:21; 49:22.

<sup>16</sup> There is a divergence here between the printed editions and manuscripts. It is chapter 41 in the edition of Julius Theodor and Hanoah Albeck, eds., *Midrash Bereschit Rabba mit kritischem Apparat und Kommentar*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Itzkowski, 1912–1936), 1:397–99 based on the manuscript Vatican 30, but chapter 42 in the printed edition. For a translation, see Harry Freedman and Maurice Simon, eds., *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, trans. Harry Freedman, 2 vols. (London: Soncino Press, 1961), 1:340 (*Gen. Rab.* 42:1).

is greatly abridged. The two works most likely share a common background. This is reflected in some traditions that are only mentioned in passing in *Genesis Rabbah*. Thus, for example, *Genesis Rabbah* is cognizant of the tradition about the Ten Descents of God, such as the descent at Babel (Gen Rab 38:9; cf. PRE 24) and the descent at Sodom (Gen Rab 49:6; cf. PRE 25), but it does not give the complete list of ten.

By contrast, there is a clear intertextual relationship between PRE and another early Midrash on Genesis, the “printed” recension of *Midrash Tanhuma*.<sup>17</sup> The *Tanhuma* literature consists of homilies on the Palestinian lectionary cycle of Torah readings. It is a tangled and unwieldy corpus, but the “printed” recension (so named because it was first published at the dawn of the age of print) has passages that repeat sections of PRE *verbatim*. Among these are *Tanhuma*, *Vayetzei* 12 (PRE 36, on the teraphim), *Tanhuma*, *Vayeshev* 2 (PRE 38, the discourse on the ban),<sup>18</sup> and *Tanhuma Vayiqra* 8 (PRE 10, the story of Jonah). These parallels are absent from the other major version of *Midrash Tanhuma*, the “Buber” recension, named after its editor, Salomon Buber.<sup>19</sup> Even though the sections on Genesis and Exodus are quite different in the Buber recension, the commentary on Leviticus is not, meaning that the parallels from PRE in the printed *Tanhuma* are additions to the text. Hence, the printed *Tanhuma* is one of many later midrashic collections to cull from PRE.

However, as discussed in the last chapter, *Midrash Tanhuma*, *Bereshit* 9–10 recounts the sacrifices of Cain and Abel and the subsequent death and burial of Abel in a manner that recalls PRE 21. Two details stand out. Both works see in the sacrifices of Cain and Abel the aetiology of *sha'tnez* (Lev 19:19; Deut 22:11), and both indicate that birds instructed human beings (Cain in *Midrash Tanhuma*; Adam and Eve in PRE 21) how to bury their dead. These parallels are *not verbatim*, separating them from the other examples. The story of the birds is common, but Cain

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17 See Marc Bregman, *The Tanhuma-Yelammedenu Literature: Studies in the Evolution of the Versions* (Piscataway Gorgias Press, 2003) [Hebrew], and the recent collection of Arnon Atzmon and Ronit Nikolsky, eds., *Studies in the Tanhuma-Yelammedenu Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2022). There is no critical edition of the “printed” *Midrash Tanhuma*, which is instead available in numerous popular editions. I consulted *Midrash Tanhuma* (Jerusalem: Lewin Epstein, 1945) [Hebrew]. For a partial translation, see Samuel A. Berman, trans., *Midrash Tanhuma-Yelammedenu: An English Translation of Genesis and Exodus from the Printed Version of Tanhuma-Yelammedenu* (Hoboken: Ktav Publishing House, 1996).

18 For which, see Lewis M. Barth, “The Ban and the ‘Golden Plate’: Interpretation in *Pirke d’Rabbi Eliezer* 38,” in *The Quest for Context and Meaning: Studies in Biblical Intertextuality in Honor of James A. Sanders*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Shemaryahu Talmon (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 625–40.

19 Salomon Buber, ed., *Midrasch Tanchuma: Ein agadischer Commentar zum Pentateuch von Rabbi Tanchuma ben Rabbi Abba*, 3 vols. (Vilna: Widow and Brothers Romm, 1885) [Hebrew].

is usually the protagonist.<sup>20</sup> *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* departs from this tradition, suggesting that its version of the story is secondary. The author has, typically, rewritten it. The intrinsically Jewish interest in *sha'tnez* suggests that *Midrash Tanhuma* might be PRE's source. This was the conclusion of Eliezer Treitl.<sup>21</sup> It would mean that, as in the case of the relationship between *Midrash Tanhuma* and the *She'iltot*, the two works have mutually influenced each other.

### 3.3 Hekhalot

The *hekhalot* literature is a small corpus of pre-kabbalistic mystical literature that flourished in Late Antiquity.<sup>22</sup> The literature is characterized by two major themes: 1) the contemplation of the divine chariot or *merkavah* (מרכבה) after ascending through the seven heavenly palaces or *hekhalot* (היכלות), and 2) the adjuration of angels to obtain knowledge of Torah. The relationship of this literature to PRE is understudied. Annette Reed has written a preliminary article that compares the exegesis of Ps 106:2 in PRE 3 to the short *hekhalot* text known as the *Chapter of R. Nehunyah ben ha-Qanah* (Schäfer, *Synopse* §307).<sup>23</sup> This parallel was briefly discussed in the last chapter; the *hekhalot* text affirms that the angels are able to recount God's mighty deeds, but the opening line of PRE 3 denies that even the angels are capable of this.

A closer parallel found is found in *Hekhalot Zutarti*, although only in one manuscript, and then only in one paragraph. *Hekhalot Zutarti*, the “Lesser Palaces,” was once believed to be the oldest *hekhalot* text. This was the opinion of Gershom Scholem, who grounded his opinion on the fact that *Hekhalot Zutarti* refers to an “ascent” to heaven, while later *hekhalot* texts use the paradoxical formulation “descent to the chariot.”<sup>24</sup> Dating the text has proven to be problematic, since it

<sup>20</sup> See Christfried Böttrich, “Die Vögel des Himmels haben ihn begraben”: Überlieferungen zu Abels Bestattung und zur Ätiologie des Grabes (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1995).

<sup>21</sup> Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 214–16.

<sup>22</sup> The standard edition is Peter Schäfer, Margarete Schlüter, and Hans-Georg von Mutius, eds., *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981). English translations of the major “macroforms” are now available: James R. Davila, *Hekhalot Literature in Translation: Major Texts of Merkavah Mysticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

<sup>23</sup> Reed, “Who Can Recount the Mighty Acts of the Lord?”

<sup>24</sup> Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 3rd ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1960), 45–46. On the “descent” to the chariot, see: Annelies Kuyt, *The “Descent” to the Chariot: Towards a Description of the Terminology, Place, Function and Nature of the Yeridah in Hekhalot Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995).

presumes that a “text” exists in the first place. Even though *Hekhalot Zutarti* is first named (and even cited) in a *responsum* of Hai Gaon (d. 1038),<sup>25</sup> it is never so named in any of the manuscripts, where it is grouped together with other *hekhalot* texts. Even though Rachel Elior published a critical edition,<sup>26</sup> Peter Schäfer considered it insufficient for representing the complexity of the text.<sup>27</sup> It has no apparent beginning or ending, no overarching theme, and no internal structure. Even the contents of the manuscripts differ wildly from one another.

Instead, Schäfer speaks of *Hekhalot Zutarti* as a “macroform” composed of many smaller “microforms.” One such microform (§ 368–374) is unique to New York, JTS 8128. Christopher Morray-Jones, in his translation of *Hekhalot Zutarti*, gave it the apt title “The Throne Midrash,” since it is a description of the heavenly court.<sup>28</sup> One paragraph (§ 372) is similar to PRE 4.

**PRE 4 (JTS 3847, f. 83a)**

ארבע כתות שלמלאכי משרתי לפני הק'ב'ה'  
המחנה הראשונה שלמכאל על ימינו מחנה  
שניה שלגבריאל לפני ומחנה שלישית שלאוריאל  
על שמאלו מחנה רביעית שלרפאל מאחוריו  
ושכינתו שלהק'ב'ה' באמצע והוא יושב על  
כסא רם ונשא וכסאו גבוה ותלול למעלה  
למעלה באויר ומראת כבודו כעין החשמל חציו  
אש וחציו ברד ועטרת תגה בראשו וכתר שם  
המפורש על מצחו ועיניו משוטטות בכל הארץ  
מימינו חיים ומשמאלו מות ושרביט שלאש בידו  
ופרוכת פרוסה לפניו ושבעה מלאכים שנבראו  
מתחלה משרתים לפניו לפני הפרוכת

***Hekhalot Zutarti* (JTS 8128, ff. 18b–19a)<sup>29</sup>**

ולמעלה הכסא הוא האש הגדולה כי אין לדמות  
מן הפרוכת של אש פרוסה לפניו ושבעה ראשי  
שמי גבורי כח לפני ולפנים מן הפרוכת ומחוץ  
הכסא שנים עשר ממונים לכל רוח שלשה ואלה  
הם כובכיאל פדיאל מיכאל מן הימין עזריאל  
זכריאל שמעאל מן השמאל גבריאל רפאל  
אחזיאל אחריו רעזיאל דנאל אוריאל לפניו  
והוא יושב באמצע כבודו כעין החשמל ובמצחו  
כתר שם המפורש הכולל מאש וברד<sup>30</sup> על ראשו  
עטרת הוד שנ' מנגה נגדו מימינו חיים משמאלו  
מות ובידו שבטי אש על ימינו שני שרים אש  
גבורים כח ואלה שמותם שבביאל ופריאל  
ועל שמאלו שני גבורי כח מקיימי גזירות ואלה  
שמותם הבורא וגליצור

25 Benjamin M. Lewin, ed., *Otzar ha-Geonim: Thesaurus of the Gaonic Responsa and Commentaries Following the Order of the Talmudic Tractates*, 13 vols. (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Press Association, 1928–1962), 4: *Hagigah*, 13–15 [Hebrew].

26 Rachel Elior, ed., *Hekhalot Zutarti* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982) [Hebrew].

27 Peter Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God: Some Major Themes in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 55, n. 1.

28 Christopher Rowland and Christopher R. A. Morray-Jones, *The Mystery of God: Early Jewish Mysticism and the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 288–91.

29 Text from Schäfer, *Synopse*, 156–158.

30 For this one word (“hail”) I have followed the reading of Elior, *Hekhalot Zutarti*, 30 (l. 275).



Four divisions of ministering angels are before the Holy One, Blessed be He. The first camp, of Michael, is on his right. The second camp, of Gabriel, is before him. The third camp, of Uriel, is on the left. The fourth camp, of Raphael, is behind him. The Shekhinah of the Holy One, Blessed be He, is in the middle. He sits on a high and elevated throne. His throne is steep and tall—high, high in the air. The appearance of his Glory is like *hashmal*, half fire and half hail. A crown of brilliance is on his head. A diadem of the Ineffable Name is on his forehead, and his eyes survey the whole earth. On his right is Life; on his left, Death. A rod of fire is in his hand. The veil is spread out before him, and seven angels that were created from the beginning serve before him and before the veil.

Above the throne is the great fire, for there is no likeness from the veil of fire spread out before him. Seven chiefs of the servants, great ones of power, are before and within the veil. From the outside of the throne twelve are appointed, three for each direction. They are: Kobakiel, Pediel, and Michael from the right; Azriel, Zechariel, and Shemael from the left; Gabriel, Raphael, and Ahaziel behind; and Ragaiel, Dananel, and Uriel before. He sits in the middle of his Glory like *hashmal*. On his forehead is a diadem of the Ineffable Name, entirely made of fire and hail.<sup>31</sup> On his head is a crown of splendor, as it is written, “From the brightness before him” (2Sam 22:13=Ps 18:13). On his right is Life; on his left, Death. In his hand are scepters of fire. On his right are two fiery princes of the mighty ones of power. These are their names: Shababiel and Pariel. On his left are two mighty ones of power who carry out his decrees, and these are their names: Habore and Galitzur.

Schäfer dismissed the “Throne Midrash” as a creation or revision of the Ashkenazi Hasidim, the European mystics who, for the most part, preserved the *hekhalot* manuscripts that have come down to us.<sup>32</sup> On the one hand, he is correct to state that this passage is not part of the *hekhalot* literature. Against Scholem’s theory that *hekhalot* was primarily a literature of ascent, a continuation of the Second Temple apocalyptic tradition, Schäfer and other scholars (David Halperin,<sup>33</sup> Martha Himmelfarb,<sup>34</sup> Michael Swartz,<sup>35</sup> and James Davila<sup>36</sup>) have argued for the ritual context of the *hekhalot* texts. In the “Throne Midrash,” we have neither ritual nor ascent—it is pure cosmology. On the other hand, PRE 4 appears to be rewriting the “Throne Midrash,” suggesting that this text (regardless of whether it was part of *Hekhalot*

<sup>31</sup> Following the reading of Elijor, *Hekhalot Zutarti*, 30 (l. 275).

<sup>32</sup> Schäfer, *Hidden and Manifest God*, 64.

<sup>33</sup> David J. Halperin, “A New Edition of the Hekhalot Literature,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104 (1984): 543–52.

<sup>34</sup> Martha Himmelfarb, “Heavenly Ascent and the Relationship of the Apocalypses and the ‘Hekhalot’ Literature,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 59 (1988): 73–100.

<sup>35</sup> Michael D. Swartz, *Mystical Prayer in Ancient Judaism: An Analysis of Ma’aseh Merkavah* (Mohr Siebeck, 1992), and Michael D. Swartz, *Scholastic Magic: Ritual and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

<sup>36</sup> James R. Davila, *Descenders to the Chariot: The People Behind the Hekhalot Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

*Zutarti*) existed by the eighth century. The texts are not identical, but the adjustments PRE has made are minor. The author has reduced the heads of each camp from three to one, picking the most famous angels (Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel) to lead the camps. The other angelic names (magical names?) have been omitted. The seven archangels have been moved from the beginning to the end. A reference to the Shekhinah has been added, a proof-text subtracted.

Another parallel passage is found in a minor work called *Massekhet Hekhalot*, which was not included in Schäfer's *Synopse*. The primary reason is that the work is not found in the major *hekhalot* manuscripts. Another reason is that it does not fit the modern scholarly understanding of what constitutes a *hekhalot* text—there is a description of the seven heavenly realms but no ritual instructions or narratives of ascent. In this regard, it resembles PRE. More than that, two different sections of the work (§16 and §28) are taken directly from PRE 4.

**PRE 4 (JTS 3847, f. 83a)**

[§16] ארבע כתות שלמלאכי' משרתי' לפני הק"ב' המחנה הראשונה שלמיכאל על ימינו מחנה שניה שלגבריאל לפניו ומחנה שלישית שלאוריאל על שמאלו מחנה רביעית שלרפאל מאחוריו ושכינתו שלהק"ב' באמצע והוא יושב על כסא רם ונשא

[§28] וכסאו גבוה ותלול למעלה למעלה באויר ומראת כבודו כעין החשמל חציו אש וחציו ברד ועטרת תגה בראשו וכתר שם המפורש על מצחו ועינו משוטטות בכל הארץ מימינו חיים ומשמאלו מות ושרביט שלאש בידו ופרוכת פרוסה לפניו ושבעה מלאכים שנבראו מתחלה משרתים לפני לפני הפרוכת

[§16] Four divisions of ministering angels are before the Holy One, Blessed be He. The first camp, of Michael, is on his right. The second camp, of Gabriel, is before him. The third camp, of Uriel, is on the left. The fourth camp, of Raphael, is behind him. The Shekhinah of the Holy One, Blessed be He, is in the middle. He sits on a high and elevated throne.

***Massekhet Hekhalot* (Vatican 288)<sup>37</sup>**

[§16] ארבע כיתות של מלאכי השרת מקלסין לפני ה'ב'ה' מחנה ראשונה של מיכאל על ימינו [ומחנה] שניה של גבריאל על שמאלו ומחנה שלישית של אוריאל מלפניו ומחנה רביעית של רפאל מאחוריו ושכינת הק"ב' באמצע והוא יושב על כסא רם ונישא וכסאו גבוה למעלה

[§28] וכסא הכבוד גבוה למעלה למעלה באויר ומראה כבודו כעין החשמל ועטרת נוגה בראשו וכתר שם המפורש במצחו חציו אש וחציו ברד מימינו חיים ומשמאלו מות ושרביט שלאש בידו ופרוכת פרוסה לפניו ושבעה מלאכים שנבראו תחלה משרתים לפני לפני מן הפרוכת

[§16] Four Divisions of ministering angels continually praise the Holy One, Blessed be He. The first camp, of Michael, is on the right. The second camp, of Gabriel, is on the left. The third camp, of Uriel, is before him. The fourth camp, of Raphael, is behind him. The Shekhinah of the Holy One, Blessed be He, is the middle. He sits on a high and elevated throne. His throne is high above.

<sup>37</sup> Klaus Herrmann, ed. and trans., *Massekhet Hekhalot: Traktat von den himmlischen Palästen, Edition, Übersetzung und Kommentar* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 54\*–55\*, 82\*. I have silently corrected some of the errors in this manuscript.

[=§28] His throne is steep and tall—high, high in the air. The appearance of his Glory is like *hashmal*, half fire and half hail. A crown of brilliance is on his head. A diadem of the Ineffable Name is on his forehead, and his eyes survey the whole earth. On his right is Life; on his left, Death. A rod of fire is in his hand. The veil is spread out before him, and seven angels that were created from the beginning serve before him and before the veil.

[§28] His Throne of Glory is elevated—high, high in the air. The appearance of his Glory is like *hashmal*. A crown of brilliance is on his head, and a diadem of the Ineffable Name is on his forehead, half fire and half hail. On his right is Life and his left, Death. A rod of fire is in his hand. The veil is spread out before him, and seven angels who were created from the beginning serve before him and before the veil.

The more than passing resemblance between PRE and the two *hekhalot* texts (in name, if nothing else) has not gone unnoticed. Halperin dedicated an appendix of his *Faces of the Chariot* to the subject of “*Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, the Hekhalot, and the Nag Hammadi Texts.”<sup>38</sup> He agreed that *Massekhet Hekhalot* uses PRE but believed that PRE and *Hekhalot Zutarti* shared a common source: ancient synagogue exegesis. An independent witness of this exegesis could be found in the Nag Hammadi texts, namely the *Nature of the Rulers* (NHC II 4) and *On the Origin of the World* (NHC II 5). The key image is God sitting on a throne of Cherubim with Life on his right and Death on his left. In the *Nature of the Rulers*, God is the repentant archon Sabaoth, who is instructed by Zoe (literally, “Life”) on his right, while the Angel of Wrath sits on his left. *On the Origin of the World* has a similar image—this time it is Sophia, divine Wisdom, who sits in the middle, with the good archon Sabaoth on her right and the “First Father,” the (evil) demiurge, on her left—but in a court with groups of seven and twelve celestial beings. Morray-Jones built upon the work of Halperin.<sup>39</sup> He concluded that, if “gnostic” sources are drawing upon the “Throne Midrash,” then the text must be much earlier than previously supposed—the second or third century.

Although I remain agnostic on any connections to the Nag Hammadi literature, a chapter like PRE 4 may have developed in a synagogue setting, the key element being the Qedushah prayer that ends the chapter.

<sup>38</sup> David J. Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988), 511–19.

<sup>39</sup> Christopher R. A. Morray-Jones, *A Transparent Illusion: The Dangerous Vision of Water in Hekhalot Mysticism: A Source-Critical and Tradition-Historical Inquiry* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 173–91.

### 3.4 Apocalypses

Beginning in the sixth and seventh centuries, Jews once more began composing apocalypses in the Hebrew language.<sup>40</sup> *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* itself is sometimes classed among these apocalypses, even though the work does not take the form of an apocalypse and only a handful of chapters are concerned with the eschatological content typical of late antique Hebrew apocalypses.<sup>41</sup> One of these, the *Secrets of Simeon bar Yohai*, was already discussed in the previous chapter. Some of the elements of this apocalypse, notably the list of the signs the Ishmaelites will perform at the end of time, were further developed by PRE in its most prominent apocalyptic chapter (PRE 30).

The *Secrets of Simeon bar Yohai* is not the only apocalypse with some overlap with PRE. The other is *Sefer Zerubbabel*, probably the best known of the late antique Hebrew apocalypses.<sup>42</sup> *Sefer Zerubbabel* describes an end-times scenario where not one but two Jewish Messiahs—the Messiah b. Joseph and the Messiah b. David—confront Armilos, a Judaized version of the Antichrist who embodies the imperial ambitions of Christian Rome. Armilos will succeed in slaying the Messiah b. Joseph but will eventually be defeated in the days of the Messiah b. David.

This is the barest description of the work, but PRE only contains the barest of references to it. In PRE 18 or 19—the two are reversed depending on the manuscript or edition—Adam composes Psalm 92 in praise of the Sabbath. The exegesis of Ps 92:10 mentions a figure named Menahem b. Ammiel, the Messiah b. Joseph. The name also appears in *Sefer Zerubbabel*—except, in this work, it is the name of the Messiah b. David. The mix-up is not unique to PRE. It also appears in an anonymous *piyyut*, *Oto ha-Yom* (“On that very day”), which, like PRE, gives Menahem b. Ammiel as the name of the Messiah b. Joseph but does not name the Messiah

<sup>40</sup> The most extensive discussion of PRE and apocalyptic literature (more properly, messianism) is Jacob Elbaum, “Messianism in Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer: Apocalypse and Midrash,” *Teudah* 11 (1996): 245–66 [Hebrew]. He includes *piyyut* as well as the apocalyptic literature under discussion here.

<sup>41</sup> Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1997), 307–21, and John C. Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic: A Postrabbinic Jewish Apocalypse Reader* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005).

<sup>42</sup> On this text, see especially Israël Lévi, “L’Apocalypse de Zorobabel et le roi de Perse Siroès,” *Revue des Études Juives* 68 (1914): 129–73; 69 (1919): 108–21; 71 (1920): 57–65 and Martha Himmel-farb, *Jewish Messiahs in a Christian Empire: A History of the Book of Zerubbabel* (Harvard University Press, 2017).

b. David at all. The *piyyut*, rather than the apocalypse, might have supplied this information to PRE.<sup>43</sup>

### 3.5 *Piyyut*

*Piyyut*—liturgical poetry—has been part of the critical reception of PRE since the inaugural study of Leopold Zunz, who observed: “Qallir already knew this *baraita*.”<sup>44</sup> In fact, it is PRE that must have used Qallir, who lived before the Arab conquests.<sup>45</sup> Multiple studies have touched upon PRE and *piyyut*, although it has never, to my knowledge, been a subject of investigation in its own right. Nor will this brief section fill that gap. Instead, I have gathered some of the disparate references to instances where PRE may have known the works of the classical *paytanim*, namely Yose b. Yose, Yannai, and Qallir.

Yose b. Yose is the oldest *paytan* known by name. Little is known of his life, but he is believed to have lived around the fourth or fifth century, long before the time of PRE. Aharon Mirsky has edited his poetry and dedicated a section of his introduction to the relationship between Yose b. Yose and PRE.<sup>46</sup> Yose b. Yose primarily wrote *piyyutim* in the *Seder Avodah* tradition. These were long poems recited on Yom Kippur that recount sacred history from creation to the very first Yom Kippur (Lev 16). Such poems then describe the Yom Kippur ritual as it appears in the Mishnah tractate *Yoma*. The sacred history portion corresponds to most of the narrative material in the Torah—and all the narrative material in PRE. Mirsky considered the telling of a continuous story the first similarity between them.

Mirsky also elaborates on other common themes, especially those found in PRE’s hexameral material (PRE 3–11) and Yose ben Yose’s poem *Azkir Gevurot*

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43 This *piyyut* was initially printed in Lévi, “L’Apocalypse de Zorobabel,” 61–63. Joseph Yahalom published the whole poem in “On the Validity of Literary Works as Historical Sources,” *Cathedra* 11 (1979): 125–33 (130–33) [Hebrew]. The relationship of this *piyyut* to PRE is briefly discussed in Alexei M. Sivertsev, *Judaism and Imperial Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 118 and 124, and Himmelfarb, *Jewish Messiahs in a Christian Empire*, 54–55.

44 Leopold Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden, historisch entwickelt*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kauffmann, 1892), 290: “Schon Kalir kannte diese Boraitha.”

45 Ezra Fleischer, “Solving the Qiliri Riddle,” *Tarbiz* 54 (1985): 383–427 [Hebrew].

46 Yose ben Yose: *Poems*, ed. Aharon Mirsky, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1991), 35–42 [Hebrew].

*Elohah* (אֱלֹהִים גְּבוּרוֹת אֱלֹהִים).<sup>47</sup> The similarities begin with the title of Yose b. Yose's poem, a call to remember God's great deeds, which Mirsky compares to the opening lines of PRE 3. Mirsky also highlights God's use of the Torah as a blueprint for creation (PRE 3), his establishment of the sand bar as a means to separate the sea from the land (PRE 5), the description of plants as a feast laid out for humankind (PRE 5), poetic descriptions of the sun and moon respecting each other's boundaries (PRE 6–8), the distinction between pure and impure birds and land animals (PRE 9 and 11), a reference to the slaughter of monstrous animals for the eschatological feast (PRE 10), and the portrayal of Adam and Eve as the crown of creation, including the awe of other creatures and the celebration of their marriage under a canopy (PRE 12). There is also passing mention of Adam and Eve's garments of glory (PRE 14) and their entombment in a cave, where Yose b. Yose, like PRE, uses the curious term *or beit m'lokh* or "inn" (PRE 20; *Azkir Gevurot Elohah*, l. 51). Mirsky's parallels have been criticized as being too general to establish a connection between Yose ben Yose and PRE.<sup>48</sup> Many of these themes, for example, already appear in *Genesis Rabbah*.

Shari Lowin, in her study of shared themes in Jewish and Islamic portraits of Abraham, touched upon a more specific connection between Yose ben Yose and PRE.<sup>49</sup> She credits Yose with preserving a Second Temple tradition about how Abraham came to believe in one God by observing celestial phenomena. The motif appears in *Jubilees* (12:16–18), Philo (*De Abrahamo* 69–71), Josephus (*Ant.* I.154–57), and other, lesser-known sources.<sup>50</sup> Lowin isolates Yose ben Yose because his account of Abraham's discovery of God in *Azkir Gevurot Elohah* anticipates the Qur'anic version of the story (Q 6:74–78).

<sup>47</sup> For an edition, translation, and commentary, see Michael Swartz and Joseph Yahalom, eds. and trans., *Avodah: An Anthology of Ancient Poetry for Yom Kippur* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 221–89.

<sup>48</sup> Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 256; Pinhas ha-Cohen, *The Liturgical Poems of Rabbi Pinhas ha-Cohen: Critical Edition, Introduction and Commentaries*, ed. Shulamit Elizur (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2004), 201, n. 28 [Hebrew].

<sup>49</sup> Shari L. Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather: Abraham in Islamic and Jewish Exegetical Narratives* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 95–96, 121–23.

<sup>50</sup> See further James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible As It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 249–51.

*Azkir Gevurot Eloah, ll. 79–86*<sup>51</sup>

[79] They passed as a storm passes and are no longer, and the righteous man, everlasting foundation of the world, arose. [80] He strove to understand the secret of creations that act as following a ruler. [81] When he saw the sun setting and rising, going out eager as a warrior and returning weak, [82] And the windows of the sky in the east and in the west, in which the moon daily leaps, [83] And lightening arrows and the brilliance of the stars running and returning and no one is absent; [84] The confused one became wise, gained insight by himself, and said: These have a master; I will follow [lit. run after] Him. [85] Before the Lord approached him, he discerned for himself the proper way; [thus it says:] Go forth from death to the path of life. [86] Pure in his actions, he spoke heroically: Please, O Lord of Justice, judge mercifully.

*Qur'an 6:74–78*<sup>52</sup>

[74] Remember when Abraham said to Āzar his father: “Why do you take idols for Gods? I certainly find you people in error.” [75] Thus We showed to Abraham the visible and invisible world of the heavens and the earth, that he could be among those who believe. [76] When the night came down with her covering of darkness he saw a star and said: “This is my Lord.” But when the star set, he said: “I love not those that wane.” [77] When he saw the moon rise all aglow, he said: “This is my Lord.” But even as the moon set, he said: “If my Lord had not shown me the way, I would surely have gone astray.” [78] When he saw the sun rise all resplendent, he said: “My Lord is surely this, and the greatest of them all.” But the sun also set and he said: “O my people, I am through with those you associate (with God).”

The importance of this comparison is that the opening of PRE 26 (JTS 3847, f. 111b) contains the barest allusion to this incident. It is notable because the motif had never previously appeared in rabbinic literature.

Abraham our father was tested with ten trials, and he stood firm in them all. The first trial was when he was born. All the magnates and magicians of the regions sought to kill him, so he was hidden underground for ten years,<sup>53</sup> where he did not see the sun or the moon. After ten years, he emerged from the underground speaking the holy tongue, despising false gods and abhorring idols. He took refuge in the shade of his Creator, and he said, “Blessed is the one who takes refuge in you” (Ps 84:12).

The point is not that PRE has depended on Yose ben Yose for this allusion. The reference to the attempts on young Abraham’s life—a motif first attested in Muslim sources—indicates that the probable source is Islamic literature.<sup>54</sup> However, Yose ben Yose does serve as a bridge between a Second Temple tradition and a later tradition that reemerged in both Islamic and post-talmudic rabbinic literature. It is a possible indicator of a “lost world” of Jewish texts and traditions.

<sup>51</sup> Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 139. Compare the translation (with Hebrew text) found in Swartz and Yahalom, *Avodah*, 242–43.

<sup>52</sup> Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 138.

<sup>53</sup> All other witnesses say “thirteen years.”

<sup>54</sup> See Lowin, *Making of a Forefather*, 109–11 and 151–52.

The next of the major *paytanim* is Yannai, who lived in Palestine in the sixth or seventh century, before the Arab conquests. He is often linked with his student Qallir, although the fortunes of the two have been quite different. Qallir's poetry was preserved in the prayer books of various rites until the present day. Yannai was mostly forgotten until the discovery of the Cairo Genizah. In the academic study of *piyyut*, the rediscovered oeuvre of Yannai now seems to loom larger than the works of his more familiar contemporary. Zvi Meir Rabinowitz included several references to PRE in his *Halakha and Aggada in the Liturgical Poetry of Yannai*.<sup>55</sup> The one extended parallel—and, therefore, the most interesting—occurs in a *piyyut* composed for (again) Yom Kippur, *Anna Slach Na* (אנא סלח נא).<sup>56</sup> The contents of the *piyyut* correspond to PRE 46, the account of the first Yom Kippur. This chapter enumerates the ways Israel resembles the angels on this day: They neither eat nor drink, “peace mediates between them,” they are pure from all sin, and they have no joints—because they are standing on their feet all day. The most remarkable similarity is not the shared content but the use of the unusual phrase “peace mediates between them” (שלום שלום ביניהם). Treitl drew attention to the same parallel (among others), including in a *piyyut* by Qallir with similar content, *Ki Mi Yada Dinekha* (כי מי ידע דינך).<sup>57</sup>

In spite of his prolific output, Qallir (d. ca. 640) has not figured prominently in research on PRE and *piyyut*. Zunz hinted at parallels without providing any, while Haim Meir Horowitz, though speaking generally of PRE's connections to Yose ben Yose, Yannai, and Qallir, only specifies one of Qallir's poems for Tisha b'Av, *A'avikh be-Yom Mevekh* (אאביך ביום מבך). This *piyyut* begins with a reference to a period of 900 years of suffering, which Horowitz thought referred to the millennial reign of the four kingdoms in PRE 28 (like Zunz, Horowitz believed that Qallir flourished after the redaction of PRE).<sup>58</sup> The parallel, on its own, is not terribly compelling.

Menahem Kister, however, discovered a *piyyut* of Qallir that preserves, like Yose ben Yose's *Azkir Gevurot Elohah*, a Second Temple tradition not found in rabbinic literature but present in PRE.<sup>59</sup> This *piyyut*, *Afsei Chug* (אפסי חוג), written for Shavuot, recalls God's division of the nations among the heavenly powers. God,

55 Zvi Meir Rabinowitz, *Halakha and Aggada in the Liturgical Poetry of Yannai: The Sources, Language and Period of the Payyetan* (Tel-Aviv: Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation, 1965), 30, 109, 178, 268, 274 [Hebrew].

56 Rabinowitz, *Halakha and Aggada*, 267–68. See also Yannai, *The Liturgical Poems of Rabbi Yannai According to the Triennial Cycle of the Pentateuch and the Holy Days*, ed. Zvi Meir Rabinowitz, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1985–1987), 2:225–26 [Hebrew].

57 Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 263–66. The whole chapter (256–66) is dedicated to *piyyut* and PRE. Nine of his seventeen examples, including this one, are drawn from the work of Yannai.

58 Haim Meir Horowitz, “Open Letter,” *Beilage zum Beth Talmud* 1 (1880): 1–24 (10–11) [Hebrew].

59 Menahem Kister, “Ancient Material in *Pirke de-Rabbi Eli'ezer*: Basilides, Qumran, the *Book of Jubilees*,” in “Go Out and Study the Land” (Judges 18:2): *Archaeological, Historical and Textual*



however, kept the nation of Israel for himself. The story is told at length in PRE 24—the Tower of Babel—where the angels cast lots for dominion over the different nations. The author cites, as prooftext, Deut 32:8, “He established the boundaries of nations according to the number of the sons of Israel.” As Kister points out, the original reading of Deut 32:8 (preserved in the Septuagint and the Dead Sea Scrolls) was “according to the number of the sons of God,” understood as angels. The notion that each nation had its own “guardian angel” was prevalent in both Second Temple and early Christian literature. This is yet another instance of a “lost world” of Jewish traditions not reflected in classical rabbinic literature.

In addition to the named *paytanim*, certain anonymous *piyyutim* have been cited as influences on PRE. One of these, *Oto ha-Yom* (אִתּוֹ הַיּוֹם), was mentioned in the previous section on apocalypses; this *piyyut* names Menahem b. Ammiel as the Josephite, rather than the Davidic, Messiah. However, the most substantial example is an anonymous *Avodah* poem, *Az be-Ein Kol* (אֶז בְּעֵין כּוֹל), which was edited by Joseph Yahalom.<sup>60</sup> Yahalom, like Mirsky, dedicates an introductory chapter outlining the similarities between PRE and the poem.<sup>61</sup> Both works touch on similar themes (sacred history) without many specific overlaps.<sup>62</sup> However, the overlaps are important. They include references to Palestinian customs (the cantor who blesses the bride) and similarities of language, such as the use of redundant phrases. Treitl noticed these similarities as well and devoted a chapter of his study to the ways PRE imitates the language of *piyyutim*.<sup>63</sup>

### 3.6 Targum

The last corpus to be examined is the targumic literature. Since PRE covers primarily stories from the Torah, the most pertinent point of comparison is *Targum Neofiti*, the only complete Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch still in existence. It is distinguished from *Targum Onqelos*, the Babylonian Targum to the Torah, the Palestinian *Fragment Targum*, which consists of only partial translations, and

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*Studies in Honor of Hanan Eshel*, ed. Aren M. Maeir, Jodi Magness, and Lawrence H. Schiffman (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 69–93 (76).

<sup>60</sup> Joseph Yahalom, ed., *Priestly Palestinian Poetry: A Narrative Liturgy for the Day of Atonement* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1996) [Hebrew]. See also Swartz and Yahalom, *Avodah*, 95–220.

<sup>61</sup> Yahalom, *Priestly Palestinian Poetry*, 46–54. This material is repeated in Yahalom, *Poetry and Society*, 130–36.

<sup>62</sup> See the critiques of Katharina E. Keim, *Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer: Structure, Coherence, Intertextuality* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 177–84.

<sup>63</sup> Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 267–77.

*Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, which has a substantial amount of unique material that sets it apart. The printed edition of PRE 38 cites *Targum Onqelos* to Gen 45:27, but this citation is not found in any manuscript and is obviously a gloss. It would be very difficult to evaluate PRE's relationship to *Onqelos* because, first of all, PRE uses very little Aramaic, while *Onqelos* has comparatively little aggadic material—compared, that is, to the other Targumim to the Torah. *Neofiti*, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, and the *Fragment Targum* share many of the same aggadic additions, constituting what I call the Palestinian Targum tradition. Even though the manuscript of *Neofiti* comes from the sixteenth century, it is still the most complete witness to this tradition.

As is the case with *Genesis Rabbah*, there is much thematic overlap between PRE and *Neofiti* but no precise parallels. Where PRE does share points of contact with *Neofiti*, it is invariably a tradition that is also found in *Genesis Rabbah* and other midrashim. For example, all three sources report the following traditions: the Torah existed before the beginning of the world (PRE 3; *Gen. Rab.* 1:1; *Tg. Neof.* to Gen. 3:24); Abraham was thrown into a fiery furnace (PRE 26; *Gen. Rab.* 38:13; *Tg. Neof.* to Gen. 11:28); Shem is Melchizedek (PRE 8; *Gen. Rab.* 44:7 and 56:10; *Tg. Neof.* to Gen 14:18); Abraham had a vision of Daniel's four kingdoms (PRE 28; *Gen. Rab.* 44:15; *Tg. Neof.* to Gen. 15:11–12); the stones at Bethel miraculously became one (PRE 35; *Gen. Rab.* 68:11; *Tg. Neof.* to Gen. 28:10); Joseph met an angel *en route* to his brothers (PRE 38; *Gen. Rab.* 84:14; *Tg. Neof.* to Gen. 37:15); and Egyptian girls threw jewelry at Joseph to attract his attention (PRE 39; *Gen. Rab.* 98:18; *Tg. Neof.* to Gen. 49:22). Since there is no textual overlap among the three works, one can only say that they draw upon a common interpretive background.

At the same time, *Neofiti* and the other Palestinian Targumim share many passages (often speeches) that do not appear in PRE or any other midrashic work. Examples include the messianic prophecy attached to Gen 3:15, Sarah's complaint in Gen 16:5, Simeon and Levi's reply to Jacob in Gen 34:31, Tamar's speech to Judah in Gen 38:25; Judah's speech to Joseph in Gen 44:18, the details of Jacob's funeral in Gen. 50:1, and the "Poem of the Four Nights" in Exod. 12:42. In other words, material that is distinctive to the Palestinian Targum tradition is missing in PRE.

There is one exception, but it is the exception that proves the rule. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* 46 features a passage with a close parallel in all the Palestinian Targumim (*Pseudo-Jonathan*, *Neofiti*, *Fragment Targum* P and V) to Exod 33:23.

**PRE 46 (JTS 3847, f. 142b)**

ואני מעביר עליך את כל המלאכים המשרתים  
שנ' ואני אעביר כל טובי לפניך

And I will cause to pass over you all the ministering angels, as it is written, “And I will cause all my goodness to pass before you” (Exod 33:19).

**Neofiti to Exod 33:23 (ff. 182b–183a)**

אעבר ית כיתי מלאכיה דקיימין ומשמשיין קדמי  
ותחמי ית דברא דיקר שכינתי ואפי איקר שכינתי  
לית איפשר דתחמי

And I will cause bands of angels who stand and minister before me to pass by, and you will see the Word of the Glory of my Shekhinah, but the face of the Glory of my Shekhinah you will not be able to see.

As can be seen, PRE attaches this tradition to a different verse, Exod 33:19, which is then quoted as a proof-text. The proof-text in PRE is the correct one; the Palestinian Targum tradition is secondary. The tradition—that God’s ministering angels would pass before Moses—is an interpretation of Exod 33:19, where the words “all my [i.e., God’s] goodness” are taken to refer to the angels. In the Targumim, the tradition hides the anthropomorphisms in Exod 33:23 (which refers, in a single verse, to God’s hand, back, and face), but it is not actually translating any text. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*, therefore, did not receive this tradition from any extant Targum.

It appears that, for whatever reason, PRE did not consult a Targum—or, at least, not a Palestinian Targum to the Torah. The Hebrew work only overlaps with the Palestinian Targumim in cases where the traditions are ubiquitous and not restricted to targumic literature. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* never draws on a tradition exclusive to the Targumim apart from the special material shared between PRE and *Pseudo-Jonathan*. Whether this observation holds true for the other Targumim—notably the Targumim to Esther—remains to be seen.<sup>64</sup>

### 3.7 Conclusion

The foregoing survey of PRE’s Jewish sources is illustrative rather than exhaustive. The author had a wide knowledge of rabbinic and para-rabbinic tradition, but it is hard to pinpoint specific sources because of the author’s tendency to rewrite them. The overlap between PRE and Midrash, Talmud, and Targum is considerable, yet there is hardly any passage where it can be said that the author made specific use of specific sources.

<sup>64</sup> Salomon Posner, *Das Targum Rishon zu dem biblischen Buche Esther* (Breslau: Th. Schatzky, 1896), 45–48, believed that PRE used *Targum Rishon* and was, in turn, used by *Targum Sheni*. That may well be, but I am not impressed by his list of elements that PRE allegedly drew from *Targum Rishon*.

The most surprising conclusion is the author's apparent non-use of a Targum to the Torah. The reason this is surprising is that PRE otherwise seems to be closely linked to the literature of the synagogue, especially *piyyut* but also, to a much lesser extent, *hekhalot* literature and its emphasis on mystical prayer. Why would the author of PRE draw on all other available sources but not a Targum? Steven Daniel Sacks suggested that the author of PRE did not even know Aramaic, which would certainly be one explanation.<sup>65</sup> The preference for Hebrew might simply represent the decline of Aramaic as a spoken language following the Arab conquests. It might even reflect the vacuum left by the Targum in the synagogue.

Nevertheless, Targumim were still written after Aramaic ceased to be spoken. The next chapter will examine the special relationship between PRE and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*. The two share numerous parallels where PRE is the earliest datable rabbinic source. A detailed comparison of their contents will thus achieve a complementary goal. Instead of highlighting what is typical within rabbinic literature, it will underscore what is unique about PRE.

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<sup>65</sup> Steven Daniel Sacks, *Midrash and Multiplicity: Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer and the Renewal of Rabbinic Interpretive Culture* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 83–87.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Horowitz<sup>5</sup> all remarked on the close resemblance between the Targum and PRE. They all assumed that the Targum drew from PRE. This view predominated, often without argument, for most of the next century. Other proponents of this view include Gerald Friedlander, the first English translator of PRE,<sup>6</sup> Hanoch Albeck, the Hebrew translator of Zunz,<sup>7</sup> Pierre Grelot,<sup>8</sup> Etan Levine,<sup>9</sup> Andrew Chester,<sup>10</sup> and Michael Maher, who translated TPJ to Genesis into English for the Aramaic Bible series.<sup>11</sup>

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

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

5 Haim Meir Horowitz, “Mishnat Rabbi Eliezer, or: A Critical Introduction to *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*,” *Hamagid* 24 (1879): 62, 70, 78, 86, 94, 102, 110, 118, 126, 134, 142, 150, 158, 166, 174, 182, 190, 206, 214, 222, 230, 238–39 (94) [Hebrew]: “The later Targumim, which contain in their interpretations also words of aggadah, such as *Targum Jonathan* and *Targum Yerushalmi* [i.e., the *Fragment Targum*] on the Torah, the *Targum of the Five Scrolls*, and others, drew their remarks from *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* and copied many words from it” (my translation).

6 Gerald Friedlander, trans., *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer (The Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer the Great) According to the Text of the Manuscript Belonging to Abraham Epstein of Vienna* (1916; repr., New York: Hermon Press, 1970), xix: “Again, there is a very close connection between the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch, usually known as the Pseudo-Jonathan ben Uzziel, and our author. The present writer inclines to the view that our book was one of the sources used by this Targumist.”

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

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

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

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

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

Ishmael—‘Ā’isha and Fāṭima—in TPJ to Gen 21:21 is derived from PRE 30.<sup>12</sup> Ohana reasoned that TPJ must depend on PRE in this instance, since the Targum only alludes to a story that PRE reports in full. Similarly, Donald Splansky found that TPJ to Gen 1:16 has a more sophisticated understanding of the rabbinic calendar than the astronomical chapters of PRE.<sup>13</sup> Edward Cook identified two Hebraisms in the Targum that he believed were taken directly from PRE.<sup>14</sup> Finally, Avigdor Shinan indicated that the phraseology of certain traditions is far too close for the two works to depend on a common source. Furthermore, like Ohana, he found several places in the Targum where a tradition is explicable only in light of PRE. He advocated the Targum’s unilateral dependence on PRE.<sup>15</sup>

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

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

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12 Moise Ohana, “La polémique judéo islamique et l’image d’Ismaël dans Targum Pseudo-Jonathan et dans Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer,” *Augustinianum* 15 (1975): 367–87.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

## 4.1 Substantial Borrowing of Material

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 20 (JTS 3847, f. 104b)**

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 23 (JTS 3847, f. 109a)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 31 (JTS 3847, f. 118b)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 32 (JTS 3847, f. 120a)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### PRE 21 (JTS 3847, f. 106a)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 32 (JTS 3847, f. 120a)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 32 (JTS 3847, f. 120a–120b)**

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

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

**PRE 32 (JTS 3847, f. 120b)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

## 4.2 Identical Phraseology and Vocabulary

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

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

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

**PRE 8 (JTS 3847, f. 88a)**

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 8 (JTS 3847, f. 88a)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 9 (JTS 3847, f. 89b)**

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

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

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

The same occurs on the sixth day.

**PRE 11 (JTS 3847, f. 92a–92b)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>32</sup> Once again, a missing word must be supplied from the other manuscripts.

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

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

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

**PRE 14 (JTS 3847, f. 98a)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 20 (JTS 3847, f. 105a)**

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 21 (JTS 3847, f. 106b)**

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 22 (JTS 3847, f. 107a)**

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 22 (JTS 3847, f. 107a)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>36</sup> Menahem Kister, “Ancient Material in *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer*: Basilides, Qumran, the *Book of Jubilees*,” in “Go Out and Study the Land” (*Judges 18:2*): *Archaeological, Historical and Textual Studies in Honor of Hanan Eshel*, ed. Aren M. Maeir, Jodi Magness, and Lawrence H. Schiffman (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 69–93 (71–78).

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

#### PRE 24 (JTS 3847, f. 109b)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### PRE 24 (JTS 3847, ff. 109b–110a)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### PRE 30 (JTS 3847, f. 117a)

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

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

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

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



**PRE 30 (JTS 3847, f. 117a)**

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 30 (JTS 3847, f. 117a)**

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 33 (JTS 3847, f. 120b)**

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

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

Isaac sowed charity (זרעו יצחק לצדקתא).

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

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

**PRE 36 (JTS 3847, f. 127b)**

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 36 (JTS 3847, f. 126a)**

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 36 (JTS 3847, ff. 126b–127a)**

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

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

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

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

**PRE 36 (JTS 3847, f. 127a)**

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 36 (JTS 3847, f. 127a)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 38 (JTS 3847, f. 130a)**

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 45 (JTS 3847, f. 140b)**

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 48 (JTS 3847, f. 145a)**

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 50 (JTS 3847, f. 148a)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 4.3 The Same Material for the Same General Purpose

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

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

#### PRE 14 (JTS 3847, f. 98a)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 32 (JTS 3847, f. 120a)**

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 24 (JTS 3847, f. 110a)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 45 (JTS 3847, f. 141a)**

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

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

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

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

**PRE 45 (JTS 3847, f. 141a)**

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

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

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

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

## 4.4 Not Dependent on Earlier Rabbinic or Targumic Sources

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



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

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

#### PRE 14 (JTS 3847, f. 102b)

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

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

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

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

#### PRE 20 (JTS 3847, f. 105a)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### PRE 21 (JTS 3847, f. 105b)

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

#### TPJ to Gen 4:1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 23 (JTS 3847, f. 108a)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 23 (JTS 3847, f. 108a)**

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 25 (JTS 3847, ff. 110b–111a)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### PRE 30 (JTS 3847, f. 117a–117b)

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### PRE 32 (JTS 3847, f. 119b)

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

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

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

<sup>52</sup> Ohana, “La polémique judéo islamique,” 370, n. 11.

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

<sup>54</sup> Dan, *Sefer Hayashar*, 111.

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

One of the more prominent parallels between PRE and TPJ is how Levi, uniquely among Jacob's twelve sons, obtained the priesthood for himself and his descendants. This tradition is first attested in the book of *Jubilees* (Jub 32:1–3). *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* 37 tells a somewhat different version of this story. Allusions are already found in earlier rabbinic literature, such as *Gen. Rab.* 70:7 and *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 10:6.<sup>55</sup> In both cases, Jacob removes the four sons who are the first-born of their respective mothers before selecting Levi as the “tenth” son. Only PRE and TPJ give a full account—in suspiciously similar language.

**PRE 37 (JTS 3847, f. 128b)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 38 (JTS 3847, f. 129a)**

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

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

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

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

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



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

**PRE 38 (JTS 3847, f. 129b)**

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 38 (JTS 3847, f. 130a)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 39 (JTS 3847, f. 133a)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 45 (JTS 3847, f. 141a)**

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

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

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

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

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

The next example also involves the appeasement of God's wrath. An ancient tradition equates Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron who killed an idolatrous couple and stymied a plague (Num 25), with the mysterious prophet Elijah. Origen already reports it in his commentary on John (VI.83–84).<sup>60</sup> It is also reported, though obliquely, in Pseudo-Philo's *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* 48:1.<sup>61</sup> Only PRE and TPJ have preserved this tradition in Jewish transmission. They both mention this identification overtly, though not in passages that are otherwise parallel to each other.

**PRE 47 (JTS 3847, f. 143b)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 48 (JTS 3847, f. 145b)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 48 (JTS 3847, f. 146a)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 4.5 Unlikely Coincidences and Errors

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

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

<sup>65</sup> Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 234–35.

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

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

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

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

**PRE 7 (JTS 3847, f. 86a–86b)**

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>68</sup> Stern, *Calendar and Community*, 204.

<sup>69</sup> Stern, *Calendar and Community*, 203.

<sup>70</sup> Splansky, “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan,” 100–5.

<sup>71</sup> Stern, *Calendar and Community*, 205.



**PRE 13 (JTS 3847, f. 102b)**

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

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

**PRE 13 (JTS 3847, f. 102b)**

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

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

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

**ARN-B 1 (Parma, De Rossi 327, f. 58a)<sup>73</sup>**

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

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

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

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

<sup>72</sup> Becker, *Avot de-Rabbi Natan*, 320.

**PRE 16 (JTS 3847, f. 100b)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 23 (JTS 3847, f. 107b)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRE 21 (JTS 3847, f. 106a)**

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

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

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

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

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

## 4.6 Conclusion

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

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

<sup>75</sup> Cook, “Rewriting the Bible,” 242.

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

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Part Two: ***Jubilees***



## 5 Vestiges of Hebrew *Jubilees*

The book of *Jubilees* is a “Rewritten” or History Bible which covers the period from creation to the entry of the Israelites into Canaan.<sup>1</sup> The work presents itself as a revelation to Moses on Mount Sinai. The narrator is an angel who dictates the records of the heavenly tablets. All of history is divided into “jubilees” (forty-nine years), which are further subdivided into “weeks” (periods of seven years) and “days” (single years). The book covers the first fifty jubilees until the year 2450 *anno mundi*. The narrative largely follows Genesis, its primary source. Most “extra-biblical” episodes are concentrated in the period up to the time of Abraham. There is also a substantial amount of additional material on Jacob and his sons Levi and Judah. In Late Antiquity, *Jubilees* was viewed as a supplement to Genesis. It supplied information that was missing from the canonical book, such as the names of the wives of the patriarchs. For this reason, Greek authors called it the *Little Genesis* (ἡ Λεπτὴ Γένεσις) or the *Details of Genesis* (τὰ λεπτὰ Γενέσεως).<sup>2</sup>

*Jubilees* was written in Hebrew sometime in the second century BCE. All known Hebrew manuscripts of *Jubilees* come from Qumran.<sup>3</sup> The *Damascus Document* (1st c. BCE) contains the earliest reference to the work under its presumed original title (CD A xvi 3–4), “The Book of the Divisions of the Times according to their Jubilees and their Weeks” (ספר מחלקות העתים ליובליהם ובשבועותיהם).<sup>4</sup> This early citation suggests the importance of this work for the sectarian movement. The eventual translation of *Jubilees* into Greek indicates the popularity of the work beyond the confines of Jewish sectarians. Among Christians, *Jubilees* enjoyed a status comparable to the *Antiquities* of Josephus, with which it was often confused.<sup>5</sup> Christian writers,

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1 For a catalogue of *Jubilees*’ literary features, see Alexander Samely, *Profiling Jewish Literature in Antiquity: An Inventory, from Second Temple Texts to the Talmuds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 357–72.

2 For a list of examples, see R. H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees, or The Little Genesis* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1902), xv–xvi.

3 The official publication of the Qumran *Jubilees* manuscripts is James C. VanderKam and J. T. Milik, eds., “Jubilees,” in *Qumran Cave 4, VIII, Parabiblical Texts, Part 1*, ed. Harold W. Attridge et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 1–185.

4 Deborah Dimant, “Two ‘Scientific’ Fictions: The So-Called Book of Noah and the Alleged Quotation of Jubilees in CD 16:3–4,” in *Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, and the Septuagint Presented to Eugene Ulrich*, ed. Peter W. Flint, James C. VanderKam, and Emanuel Tov (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 230–49, has questioned whether this title really refers to *Jubilees*, although the identification is still generally accepted.

5 William Adler, *Time Immemorial: Archaic History and Its Sources in Christian Chronography from Julius Africanus to George Syncellus* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1989), 188–93.

especially chroniclers, made extensive use of the work from the fourth to the fifteenth century.<sup>6</sup> The Ethiopian Church eventually canonized *Jubilees*, and it was only in Ethiopia that a complete book of *Jubilees* was found in the modern period.<sup>7</sup>

The rediscovery of *Jubilees* is credited to the German missionary Johann Ludwig Krapf (1810–1886).<sup>8</sup> He sent a transcribed copy of an Ethiopic manuscript to Tübingen, where it came to the attention of Heinrich Ewald. Ewald announced the rediscovery of *Jubilees* in an article describing Krapf's finds in 1844.<sup>9</sup> Ewald's student, August Dillmann, published a German translation of the text in 1850–1851.<sup>10</sup> This publication inaugurated the modern study of *Jubilees*. A second “rediscovery” of *Jubilees* occurred at Qumran after 1947. The caves there yielded numerous manuscripts of *Jubilees* (the conventional number is 14 or 15).<sup>11</sup> The findings at Qumran resolved many important questions regarding the original language (Hebrew) and the date (second century BCE) of *Jubilees*. Since its rediscovery, almost all work on *Jubilees* has focused on the origins rather than the transmission of the book.

The primary goal of this chapter is to assess whether *Jubilees* survived in Hebrew, such that PRE could have drawn from it. The conclusion is more complicated than a “yes” or “no” response. While there is no evidence that a full Hebrew version of *Jubilees* has survived intact, many of the ancient traditions did persist, often existing in tandem with competing traditions found in rabbinic literature. Furthermore, they reveal a complex of *Jubilees*-like literature that is not identical to the book found at Qumran and preserved in Ethiopic. In the end, there may have been multiple “books of *Jubilees*” in Late Antiquity.

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6 Albert-Marie Denis, ed., *Fragmenta pseudepigraphorum quae supersunt graeca: Una cum historicorum et auctorum judaeorum hellenistarum fragmentis* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 70–102. See also J. T. Milik, “Recherches sur la version grecque du Livre des Jubilés,” *Revue Biblique* 78 (1971): 545–57.

7 Leslie Baynes, “*Enoch and Jubilees* in the Canon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church,” in *A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. Vanderkam*, ed. Eric F. Mason et al., 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 2: 799–818.

8 James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 13–17, recounts the modern rediscovery of *Jubilees*.

9 Heinrich Ewald, “Über die aethiopischen Handschriften in Tübingen,” *Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 5 (1844): 164–201.

10 August Dillmann, “Das Buch der Jubliaën oder die kleine Genesis,” *Jahrbücher der biblischen Wissenschaft* 2 (1850): 230–56; 3 (1851), 1–96.

11 James C. VanderKam, “The Manuscript Tradition of *Jubilees*,” in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 3–21.



## 5.1 *Sefer Asaph* or *Sefer Refu'ot* (7th–10th c.)

*Sefer Asaph* or *Sefer Refu'ot* is the first book of Hebrew medicine.<sup>12</sup> The work is pseudepigraphically attributed to Asaph b. Berakhiah, a biblical figure (1Chr 6:24), who, in Islamic lore, became the vizier of king Solomon and inherited some of his traits, such as vast scientific knowledge and mastery over the occult.<sup>13</sup> The book is also a composite work. The core may be as old as the seventh century. It has Syriac antecedents as well as references to Persian lore.<sup>14</sup> However, at least part of the work—the aphorisms of Hippocrates—are adapted from the Hebrew translation of Shabbatai Donnolo (d. 982), who lived in Southern Italy.<sup>15</sup> The nature of the work makes it impossible to state definitively when and by whom it was written.

The parallel to *Jubilees* occurs right at the beginning. According to a prologue, the children of Noah were once physically tormented by demons. Noah prayed for respite, and the angel Raphael bound most of the demons but allowed others to remain to punish sinners. Raphael then sent one or more demons to teach Noah the medicinal practices found in the book. There are at least seven Hebrew manuscripts of the prologue, not all of which are attached to the complete *Sefer Refu'ot* (conversely, there are manuscripts of *Sefer Refu'ot* that do not have the prologue or feature it in an abridged form).<sup>16</sup> The prologue is also found in multiple Latin man-

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12 Important introductory studies include (in chronological order): Ludwig Venetianer, *Asaf Judaeus: Der älteste medizinische Schriftsteller in hebraeischer Sprache*, 2 vols. (Strasbourg: Trübner, 1916–1917); Isidore Simon, *Asaph Ha Iehoudi, Médecin et Astrologue du Moyen Âge: Avec une étude sur la Médecine dans la Bible et dans le Talmud* (Paris: Lipschutz, 1933); Süssmann Muntner, “The Antiquity of Asaph the Physician and His Editorship of the Earliest Hebrew Book of Medicine,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 25 (1951): 101–31; Süssmann Muntner, *Introduction to the Book of Assaph the Physician, the Oldest Existing Text of a Medical Book Written in Hebrew* (Jerusalem: Geniza, 1957) [Hebrew]; Aviv Melzer, “Asaph the Physician: The Man and His Book. A Historical-Philological Study of the Medical Treatise ‘The Book of Drugs’ (‘Sefer Refuoth’)” (PhD Dissertation, The University of Wisconsin, 1972); Elinor Lieber, “Asaf’s ‘Book of Medicines’: A Hebrew Encyclopedia of Greek and Jewish Medicine, Possibly Compiled in Byzantium on an Indian Model,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 38 (1984): 233–49; Stephen Newmyer, “Asaph the Jew and Greco-Roman Pharmaceutics,” in *The Healing Past*, ed. Irene Jacob and Walter Jacob (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 107–20.

13 Jacob Lassner, *Demonizing the Queen of Sheba: Boundaries of Gender and Culture in Postbiblical Judaism and Medieval Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 106–09.

14 Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim, “Exploring Persian Lore in the Hebrew *Book of Asaf*,” *Aleph* 18 (2018): 123–46.

15 Tamás Visi, “The *Book of Asaf* and Shabbatai Donnolo’s Hebrew Paraphrase of Hippocrates’ Aphorisms,” in *Defining Jewish Medicine*, ed. Lennart Lehmhaus (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2021), 313–35.

16 Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim, “Exploring Eurasian Transmissions of Medical Knowledge: Cues from the Hebrew *Book of Asaf*,” in *Defining Jewish Medicine: Transfer of Medical Knowledge in Premodern Jewish Cultures and Traditions*, ed. Lennart Lehmhaus (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2021), 295–311.

uscripts (most frequently interpolated into the works of Isidore of Seville, d. 636), representing more than one distinct translation of the prologue from Hebrew.<sup>17</sup>

The prologue closely resembles *Jub.* 10:1–14. Below is a synoptic presentation of the two texts. The Hebrew text of *Jubilees* is from Cana Werman's Hebrew "retroversion," which incorporates portions of the Qumran text where available. The text of *Sefer Refu'ot* is taken from Frankfurt, University Library Johann Christian Senckenberg Hebr. Oct. 185 (NLI F 22031). It is a late manuscript (19th c.), but it has never been edited or translated, and it only contains the prologue, which is labeled "Sefer Shem b. Noah" (ספר שם בן נח). It was copied from an "ancient manuscript" (כתביה ישנה) containing the work of "Asaph the Jew" (אספ היהודי).<sup>18</sup>

#### *Jubilees* 10:1–15<sup>19</sup>

[1] ובשבוע השלישי ביובל ההוא החלו הרוחות הטמאים להתעות את בני נוח לתעתע במ ולאבדם [2] ויביאו בני נוח אל נוח אביהם יגידו לו על הרוחות אשר התעו ועוורו והרגו את בני בניהם [3] ויתפלל לפני ה' אלוהים ויאמר אלוהי הרוחות אשר בכול בשר אשר עשית עמי חסד והצלת אותי ואת בני ממי המבול ולא כליתיני כאשר עשית לבני השחת כי גדול רחמך עלי ורב חסדך עם נפשי ירבו רחמך על בני בניך ואל ימשלו בהם הרוחות הרעים פן יכרתו מן הארץ [4] ואתה ברכת אותי ואת בני כי נפרה ונרבה ונמלא את הארץ [5] 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 [6] ולא ימשלו בנפשות החיים כי אתה לבדך יודע חוקם ולא ימשלו בבני צדיקים מעתה ועד עולם [7] ויאמר לנו אלוהינו לאסור את כולם [8] ויבוא שר

#### *Sefer Refu'ot* (Frankfurt 185, ff. 1–7)

זה ספר רפואות אשר העתיקו החכמים הראשונים מספר שם בן נח שנמסר לנח בראש ההר מהרי אררט אחר המבול כי בימים ההם ובעת ההיא החלו רוחות הממזרים להתגרות בבני נח להשתיות אל הטעות ולחבל ולהכות אותם בחליים ומכאבות ובכל מיני מדוה הממיתים והמשחיתים את בני אדם אז באו בני נח יחדיו ויספרו נגיעיהם לנח אביהם ויגידו לו על אודות המכאובים הנוראים בבניהם וידע נח כי מעון בני האדם ומדרך פשעם יתנגהו כל עיני תחלואים ומדוים אז קדש נח ובניו ובני בניו ובנותיו ויגש אל המזבח אשר בנה ויעל עולת ויתפלל אל ה' האלהים ויעתר לו וישלח מלאך אחד מן הקדושים שר הפנים ושמם רפאל לכלות את רוחות הממזרים מתחת השמים לבלתי השחית עוד בבני אדם ויעש המלאך כן ויכלאם בבית במשפט אך אחר מעשה הניח להתהלך בארץ לפני שר המשטמה להכות המרשיעים ליגע ולענות בהם כל מיני מדוה ותחלואי' ויגד המלאך

17 Vivian Nutton, "From Noah to Galen: A Medieval Latin History of Medicine," in *Ritual Healing: Magic, Ritual and Medical Therapy from Antiquity until the Early Modern Period*, ed. Ildikó Csepregi and Charles Burnett (Florence: SISMEL edizioni del Galluzzo, 2012), 53–69. See also Karl Sudhoff, "Ein neuer Text der 'Initia Medicinæ,'" *Mitteilungen zur Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften* 15 (1916): 281–87, and Carmen Codoñer Merino, "La medicina en algunos manuscritos de Isidoro de Sevilla," in *Isidorus medicus: Isidoro de Sevilla y los textos de medicina* (La Coruña: Servizo de Publicacións, 2005), 65–84.

18 Of the other extant manuscripts, it is most closely related to Oxford, Bodleian Libraries Laud. Or. 113, f. 97a–97b (NLI F 19956), from 16th-century Provence.

19 Cana Werman, *The Book of Jubilees: Introduction, Translation, and Interpretation* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, 2015), 253–54 [Hebrew].

הרוחות משטמה ויאמר אלוהי הבריאה השאר מהם לפני וישמעו בקולי ויעשו כול אשר אומר להם כי אם לא ישארו לי מהם לא אוכל לעשות ממשלת רצוני בבני האדם כי בהם אשחית ואאבד במשפטי כי פשע בני האדם רב הוא [9] ויאמר כי ישארו לפני עשירית ותשעת מפלגיהם יוריד אל מקום המשפט [10] ולאחד מאתנו אמר ללמד את נוח כול רפואתם כי ידע כי לא באמת ילכו ולא בצדק יריבו [11] ונעשה ככול אשר דבר וכול הרעים אשר פשעו אסרנו אל מקום המשפט ועשירית מהם הותרנו למען ישפטו לפני השטן על הארץ [12] וכול רפואת נגיעיהם הגדנו לנוח עם כחשם למען ירפא בצמחי הארץ [13] ויכתוב נוח בספר הכול כאשר למדנוהו על כול מיני הרפואות וחדלו הרוחות הרעים מאחורי בני נוח [14] ויתן את כול הספרים אשר כתב לשם בנו הגדול כי אהב אותו יותר מכול בניו [15] וישן נוח עם אבותיו ויקבר בהר לובר בארץ אררט

לנח לרפא בעצי הארץ וצמחי האדמה ועקריה וישלח שר הרוחות הנותרים מה להראות אל נח ולהגיד לו את עצי הרפואות עם כל דשאייהם וירקיהם מעשביהם וזרעיהם ולמדו כל דברי תרופות עד פלט למרפא ולחיים

ויכתב נח כל הדברים האלה על ספר ויתנהו אל שם בנו הגדול ומן הספר הזה העתיקו החכמים הראשונים ויכתבו ספרים הרבה איש ואיש בלשונו ותרב דעת הרפואה בארץ ובכל הגוים אין חכמים אשר לו בחרו ספרי הרפואות בחכמי הודו וחכמי מצרים וחכמי אדום כי חכמי הודו הם שטטו למצוא עצי הרפואות והבשמים וחכמי מצרים דשא הארץ וצמחי האדמה וחכמי אדום מצאו את העשבים לכל מיניהם וזרעיהם לרפא

ואת פשר הדברים העתיקו ארמים וחכמי מוקדון החלו ראשונה לרפא בארץ וחכמי מצרים החלו ראשונה לחבר ולנחש במזלות ובכוכבים ללמוד ספר מדרש הכשדים אשר העתיק קינן בן כשד לכל החרטומים והגדיל חכמתו עד קום אסקפליטאס אחד מחכמי מוקדון וארבעים איש מן החרטומים מלמדי ספרים הגעתקים וילכו הלוך בארץ ויעברו מעבר להודו אל ארץ נוד קדמת עדן למצוא מקצת עצי הרפואה ועץ החיים למען הגדיל רפואתם על כל חכמי הארץ ויהי בבואם למקום ההוא וימצאו את עצי הרפואה ואת עץ החיים וישלחו ידיהם לקחתם ויברק עליהם להט החרב המתחפכת ויתלהטו כלם בשבבי הברק ולא נמלט מהם איש ותשביט הרפואה מן הגוים שש מאות ושלישים שנה עד מלוך ארתחשתא המלך בימיו עמד איש נבון וחכם ומלמד דעת ספרי הרפואה ומבין דבר מתוך דבר ושמו אפוקראט המוקדומי ושאר חכמי הגוים אסף וחכמי היהודי והרבה חכמים אחרים ויחדשו את עבודת הרפואה ותהי עד היום הזה

Here is my translation of both texts. The English translation of *Jubilees* is based on James VanderKam's critical edition of the Ethiopic text and not Werman's Hebrew.

#### *Jubilees* 10:1–15<sup>20</sup>

[1] In the third week of this jubilee, the impure spirits began to lead astray the descendants of the children of Noah, to drive them mad and to

#### *Sefer Refu'ot* (Frankfurt 185, 1–7)

This is the *Book of Remedies* (ספר רפואות) which the ancient sages copied from the book of Shem b. Noah that was transmitted to Noah

<sup>20</sup> Translation based on James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees: A Critical Text* (Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 60–62.

destroy them. [2] The children of Noah came to Noah, their father, and told him about the spirits who led astray and overshadowed and killed the children of their children. [3] Noah prayed before the Lord God and said, “Lord of Spirits, who is in all flesh, who showed me favor and saved me and my children from the waters of the Flood, you did not destroy me as you did the children of destruction because great is your mercy towards me and great is your favor upon my person. May your mercy extend over the children of your children. Do not let evil spirits dominate them lest they be annihilated from the earth. [4] Bless me and my children, and we will grow and become numerous and fill the earth. [5] 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. [6] They will not rule over living souls because you alone know their judgment. They will not lead astray the children of the righteous from now until the end of time.” [7] Our Lord told us [i.e., the angels] that we should bind all of them. [8] Mastema, the leader of those spirits, appeared and said, “Lord creator, leave some of them before me. They obey my voice and will do everything that I tell them. If you do not leave any of them, I will be unable to exercise my authority over humanity, for they are intended to corrupt and to lead astray according to my judgment, because great is the wickedness of humanity.” [9] God said that a tenth would remain before him, while nine parts would descend to the place of judgment. [10] He said to one of us that we should teach Noah all their remedies because he knew that humans would neither walk in righteousness

on the summit of the mountain in the mountain range of Ararat after the Flood. For in those days, and at that time, the spirits of the bastards (רוחות המזורים) began to harass the children of Noah, to induce them into error, and to injure and hurt them with diseases and pains and all manner of ailments that were killing and destroying the human race. Then the children of Noah came together and complained of their ills to Noah, their father, and they told him all about the terrible suffering among them. Noah knew that every kind of disease and malady was the result of human transgression and their iniquitous behavior. Then Noah sanctified his sons and the sons of his sons and his daughters. He approached the altar which he had built. He offered a burnt offering and prayed to the LORD God, pleading with him. God sent an angel—one of the holy ones, the prince of the divine presence (שר הפנים), whose name was Raphael—to eliminate the spirits of the bastards from under heaven to prevent the destruction of more humans. The angel did so and imprisoned them in a place for judgment (בבית במשפט), but afterwards he allowed them to wander the earth in the presence of Prince Mastema (שר המשטמה) to strike down evil doers and to hurt and afflict them with all kinds of maladies and diseases. The angel instructed Noah how to heal with the trees of the earth and the plants of the ground and their roots. He sent the prince of the remaining spirits in order to show Noah and tell him about the trees of healing with all their grasses, their greens, their herbs, and their seeds, and to teach him every detail of their curative properties for healing and for life.

Noah wrote all these things in a book and gave it to Shem, his eldest son. The ancient sages copied from this book and wrote many other

nor contend with justice. [11] We did this in accordance with his whole command. All the evil ones who behaved wickedly we bound in the place of judgment, but we left a tenth of them before Satan to exercise power on earth. [12] We told Noah all the remedies for their illnesses with their errors so he could heal by means of the world's trees. [13] Noah wrote down everything which we taught him in a book, every kind of remedy, and the evil spirits were prevented from tailing the children of Noah. [14] He gave all the books which he had written to Shem, his eldest son, because he loved him more than all his children. [15] Noah slept with his fathers and was buried on Lubar, a mountain in the land of Ararat.

books, each man in his own language. Knowledge of medicine increased in the land and in every nation. There was no sage who did not have his choice of medical books among the wise men of India or the wise men of Egypt or the wise men of Rome (אדום). The wise men of India wandered around finding the trees of healing and spices. The wise men of Egypt [found] the grass of the earth and the plants of the ground. The wise men of Rome found herbs of every kind and seeds for healing.

Aramaeans copied the meaning of the words. The wise men of Macedon were the first to heal in the land. The wise men of Egypt were the first to observe and to speculate about the constellations and the stars and to teach the book *The Inquiry of the Chaldaeans* (מדרש קינן בן כשד), which Cainan b. Kesed (הכשדים) copied for all the enchanters. His wisdom prevailed until the coming of Asclepius, one of the wise men of Macedon, and forty men from the enchanters, teachers of the copied books. They traversed the land and crossed over to India, to the land of Nod, east of Eden, to find some of the trees of healing and the Tree of Life to increase [knowledge of] their medicine for all the sages of the world. When they came to that place, they found the trees of healing and the Tree of Life. They extended their hands to take from them, but the twirling sword of flame gleamed upon them [cf. Gen 3:24]. All of them were burnt up from the lightning, and not one of them escaped. Medicine ceased among the nation for 630 years, until the rule of King Artaxerxes (ארתחשטא המלך). In his days an intelligent and wise man arose. He reestablished knowledge of the books of medicine. He understood matters intuitively. His name was Hippocrates the Macedonian. The rest of the Gentile sages, Asaph and the Jewish sages, and many other wise men—they renewed the practice of medicine. And so it is until today.

The differences between the two accounts are as apparent as their similarities. First, however, a word must be said about the variants in the prologue to *Sefer Refu'ot*. Other manuscripts of the work, such as Florence, Laurentian Library, Plut.88.37, f. 1b (NLI F 20367, 14th–15th c.), Oxford, Bodleian Libraries Laud. Or. 113, f. 97a–97b (NLI F 19956, 16th c.), and Munich, Bavarian State Library Hebr. 231, ff. 1b–2a (NLI F 23134, 13th–14th c.), from which Adolf Jellinek excerpted the first half of the story,<sup>21</sup> mention the toponym Mount Lubar (*Jub.* 10:15) in the opening lines. The Munich and Florence manuscripts (which appear to be related) also name Dioscorides (d. 90 CE) and Galen (d. 216 CE) along with Hippocrates (d. 370 BCE) as the most important Greek medical authorities, while a couple of the Latin manuscripts omit Asaph. This raises obvious questions about the date of this passage. It seems that its original intent was to connect Hippocrates, the father of medicine, to divine wisdom. Dioscorides, Galen, and even Asaph could all be later interpolations.

Jellinek initially published this short excerpt as the “Book of Noah,” and this title has been a persistent source of controversy. *Jubilees* implies both in *Jub.* 10:13 and elsewhere (*Jub.* 8:11–12; 21:10) that Noah committed his knowledge to writing, but it is impossible to know if this was ever an ancient book or a literary fiction. Support for the existence of an actual book of Noah appeared in the Qumran literature and related writings. The *Genesis Apocryphon* (1QapGen V.29) refers to a “copy of the book of the words of Noah” (פרשנן כתב מלי נוח), while a Greek passage translated from the *Aramaic Levi Document* (10:10) draws precepts from “a book of Noah about the blood” (τῆς βίβλου τοῦ Νῶε περὶ τοῦ αἵματος).<sup>22</sup> Others, however, have cast doubt on the existence of a literal book, indicating that such references cannot be taken at face value and that the material attributed to the “Book of Noah” is too diverse to constitute a literary unity.<sup>23</sup>

Whether a “Book of Noah” ever existed is immaterial. The relevant point is that *Jubilees* did not invent this tradition—or many of the other extrabiblical traditions found in the book. Michael Segal observed that *Jubilees* already consists of “rewrit-

21 Adolph Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash: Sammlung kleiner Midraschim und vermischter Abhandlungen aus der älteren jüdischen Literatur*, 6 vols. (Leipzig and Vienna, 1853–1877) 3: xxx–xxxiii (introduction) and 155–60 (text). This was translated by Martha Himmelfarb, “The Book of Noah: 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), 40–46.

22 Michael E. Stone, “The Book(s) Attributed to Noah,” in *Noah and His Book(s)*, ed. Michael E. Stone, Aryeh Amihay, and Vered Hillel (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2010), 7–25.

23 Dimant, “Two ‘Scientific’ Fictions,” 231–42; Cana Werman, “Qumran and the Book of Noah,” in *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Michael E. Stone and Esther G. Chazon (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 171–81.

ten stories” that often contradict *Jubilees*’ legal and chronological framework.<sup>24</sup> Some of the sources of these rewritten stories are still available. Segal, for example, names the *Book of the Watchers* (*1Enoch* 1–36, specifically *1Enoch* 10–11) as the source for *Jub.* 5:1–12.<sup>25</sup> We know that other *Jubilees*-like compositions existed because they have survived. The *Genesis Apocryphon* is one such example. This work reflects many of the traditions of *Jubilees* without necessarily being directly related to the book.<sup>26</sup> It, along with *1Enoch*, the *Antiquities* of Josephus<sup>27</sup> and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*,<sup>28</sup> might be said to belong to the same “exegetical universe” as *Jubilees*, where they all exhibit shared interpretations of the biblical text that did not obtain in later generations.

Martha Himmelfarb has argued that the tradition in *Sefer Refu'ot* is more ancient than the one in *Jubilees* and might have originally belonged to one of *Jubilees*’ sources.<sup>29</sup> *Jubilees*, for example, seems to improve on the claim that Noah learned about medicine, in part, from the demons themselves. *Jubilees* has eliminated this claim, although a relic of the tradition remains in *Jub.* 10:10, where the angelic narrator refers to “their” (the demons’) remedies. In her recent introduction and translation of the prologue to Asaph, Himmelfarb further points out that the designation of the evil spirits as “bastards” (ממזרים) is not found in *Jubilees* but in the more ancient *Book of the Watchers* (*1Enoch* 10:9), while the term “place of judgment” (בית משפט) means “prison” in Second Temple literature (e.g., 1QpHab) but, in medieval Hebrew, means “court.”<sup>30</sup> One can add other arguments in favor of her position. For example, Vivian Nutton has pointed out that, in the second part of the prologue, the Greeks are consistently called “Macedonians,” a usage that is

24 Michael Segal, *The Book of Jubilees: Rewritten Bible, Redaction, Ideology and Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 21–35.

25 Segal, *The Book of Jubilees*, 32. He treats the story at length in chapter five (103–43). See similarly (but more hesitantly) James C. VanderKam, “The Angel Story in the Book of Jubilees,” in *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Michael E. Stone and Esther G. Chazon (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 151–70, and Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 86–95.

26 Daniel A. Machiela, *The Dead Sea Genesis Apocryphon: A New Text and Translation with Introduction and Special Treatment of Columns 13–17* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 13–17, gives a brief overview of differing viewpoints.

27 Betsy Halpern-Amaru, “Flavius Josephus and *The Book of Jubilees*: A Question of Source,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 72 (2001): 15–44.

28 Charles, *The Book of Jubilees*, xlv.

29 Martha Himmelfarb, “Some Echoes of Jubilees in Medieval Hebrew Literature,” in *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, ed. John C. Reeves (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 115–41 (127–36).

30 Himmelfarb, “Book of Noah,” 41–42.

found in 1Maccabees and the Greek translation of Esther.<sup>31</sup> Both of these are Second Temple Jewish works found in the Septuagint.

Perhaps most telling, the second half of the prologue mentions one Cainan b. Kesed, the author of a book of Chaldean divination.<sup>32</sup> Despite the patronymic, this is clearly a reference to Cainan b. Arpachshad, a patriarchal figure found in the Septuagint's rendering of Gen 10:24 and 11:12–13 (cf. Luke 3:36) but missing from the Masoretic Text. In *Jub.* 8:1–4, this Cainan stumbles upon the esoteric lore of the Watchers carved in a rock. The implication is that he is responsible for reviving ancient evil, although he pointedly never tells anyone and never reappears in the text. The book of *Jubilees*, however, does connect Cainan to Kesed, who is Cainan's brother (*Jub.* 8:6). Kesed is the father of Ur and the great-grandfather of Serug, in whose generation idolatry and violence exploded. In this context, Kesed and Ur build their famous city, Ur of the Chaldeans (אור כסדים), the hometown of Abraham (*Jub.* 11:1–3).

In certain Syriac sources (Jacob of Edessa and Michael the Syrian, both discussed in the next chapter)—but not in *Jubilees*—Cainan is worshiped as the god of the Chaldeans. When Abraham burns down the idolatrous temple, he is in fact destroying the idol of Cainan (cf. *Jub.* 12:12). *Jubilees* only alludes to a more ancient tradition where Cainan is directly connected to the decline of human civilization after the Flood. *Jubilees* did not invent the story of Cainan. His inclusion in the genealogy of Abraham contradicts the earlier statement (*Jub.* 2:23) that there are twenty-two generations from Adam to Jacob. Cainan makes twenty-three. It therefore seems correct that the prologue to *Sefer Refu'ot* is a separate attestation of a Second Temple tradition and not dependent on the book of *Jubilees*.

## 5.2 Saadia Gaon and His Karaite Opponents

Saadia Gaon (d. 942), an Egyptian-born polymath, is the father of medieval Jewish philosophy, the translator of the Bible into Arabic, and a noted controversialist.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Nutton, "From Noah to Galen," 64.

<sup>32</sup> The name is garbled in other manuscripts. Munich 231 and Florence, Ms. Plut.88.37 have "Kangar." Ur is also named as the son of Kesed and the father of "Kangar." Two Latin manuscripts (Vaticanus latinus 2378, f. 228b, and Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Lat. Folio 88, f. 243b) have "[H]ur filius C[h]as" but no Cainan. The manuscripts of Isidore of Seville have "Cinarius filius Hur filii Cedebe."

<sup>33</sup> For him, see Robert Brody, *Sa'adyah Gaon*, trans. Betsy Rosenberg (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013) and Henry Malter, *Saadia Gaon: His Life and Works* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1921).



Among his antagonists was the emerging sect of the Karaites, a coalition of Jews opposed to rabbinic tradition, who, from the eighth to the tenth centuries, slowly united into a group that drew their halakhic positions entirely from Scripture.<sup>34</sup>

Saadia's comments on the book of Chronicles have been preserved along with others (Judah ibn Quraysh, Yiram of Magdiel, the "men of Kairouan") in an anonymous commentary on Chronicles published by Raphael Kirchheim from three manuscripts in 1874.<sup>35</sup> Kirchheim drew attention to an alleged citation of *Jubilees* but left open the question of its relationship to the recently rediscovered Ethiopic book. Abraham Epstein believed that the Ethiopic text of *Jubilees* was incomplete based on *Jub.* 1:27–29, which implies that the work will end with the establishment of the Temple in Jerusalem. He found evidence for a longer version of *Jubilees* in Saadia's comments about the twenty-four priestly courses (משמרות), allegedly taken from a "Book of Jubilees."<sup>36</sup>

ובענין דברים הללו מעיני במדות חכמים ובספר היובלות שהביא אלפיומי רב סעדיה גאון מספרי  
הישיבה בשנת ארבעים למלכות דוד בחצי היובל בד' בשבוע התקין משמרות כהונה ולויה כמו  
שמסר לו שמואל בניות ברמה שנאמר המה יסד דויד ושמואל הרואה באמונתם

Concerning these matters, consult the teachings of the Sages (מדות חכמים) and the "Book of Jubilees" (ספר היובלות), which Rav Saadia Gaon al-Fayyumi quoted from the books of the Yeshiva: "In in the fortieth year of the reign of David, in the middle of the jubilee, on the fourth day of the week, he established the priestly and levitical courses," just as Samuel transmitted the plans to him in Ramah, as it is written, "David and Samuel the seer established them in their permanent function" (1Chr 9:22).<sup>37</sup>

This passage does not come from the extant version of *Jubilees*, which ends long before the time of David, yet the language, especially the system of dating, is reminiscent of the Second Temple work. However, the concept of the "jubilee" is not exclusive to the book of *Jubilees*. It is a biblical concept (Lev 25) which was used in other Jewish works. *Seder Olam Rabbah*, the standard work of rabbinic chronology,

<sup>34</sup> For this movement, see Meira Riva Polliack, ed., *Karaite Judaism: A Guide to Its History and Literary Sources*, (Leiden: Brill, 2003) and Barry Dov Walfish and Mikhail Borisovich Kizilov, eds., *Bibliographia Karaitica: An Annotated Bibliography of Karaites and Karaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2011). More generally: Daniel Lasker, *Karaism: An Introduction to the Oldest Surviving Alternative Judaism*, The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2022).

<sup>35</sup> Raphael Kirchheim, ed., *Ein Commentar zur Chronik aus dem 10ten Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: H. L. Brönnner, 1874).

<sup>36</sup> Abraham Epstein, "Le Livre des Jubilés, Philon et le Midrasch Tadsché," *Revue des Études Juives* 21 (1890): 80–97; 22 (1891): 1–25 (82–83, 94).

<sup>37</sup> Kirchheim, *Commentar zur Chronik*, 36.

also uses the jubilee to indicate dates.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, *Tolidah*, a Samaritan chronicle (12th c.), dates events by jubilees and by weeks (שמיטות, sabbatical years).<sup>39</sup> This system could have been used in any Jewish or Samaritan chronicle. The reference to a “Book of Jubilees”, however, remains a mystery.

In his introduction to the commentary, Kirchheim drew attention to a resemblance between the long section attributed to Saadia Gaon (p. 36–43), starting with the above quotation, and the extended comments on 1Chr 23 that the Karaite Jacob b. Reuben (fl. 12th c.) attributed to Salmon b. Yerūham (fl. 10th c.) in his digest of Karaite biblical exegesis, *Sefer ha-Osher*.<sup>40</sup> The shared exegesis is surprising because Salmon was an implacable enemy of Saadia and wrote a polemical work (*The Book of the Wars of the Lord*) against him.<sup>41</sup> The unstated implication of Kirchheim’s comments is that the two opponents drew from a common source—this “Book of Jubilees.” Epstein separately observed that both men knew a *Baraita de-R. Pinhas b. Yair* containing information from *Jubilees*.<sup>42</sup> This is another name for *Midrash Tadshe*, a work with a close connection to *Jubilees*. I will revisit this issue when I discuss this work below.

Salmon b. Yerūham was not the only Karaite to possibly refer to *Jubilees*. Yoram Erder,<sup>43</sup> following J. T. Milik,<sup>44</sup> suggested that the Karaite exegete Yefet b. ‘Alī (10th c.) knew *Jubilees* based on a reference to the demonic figure Mastema in his commentary on Exodus. The context is the episode of the Golden Calf.

[The Children of Israel] said: “This is thy god, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (Exod 32:4). In all probability, the Children of Israel believed in a single Creator, who created an angel to whom He entrusted the world, to run it and implant in it wisdom and understanding. This [belief] corresponds to the Sadducean belief in “Prince Mastema.” They

<sup>38</sup> Chaim Milikowsky, ed., *Seder Olam: Critical Edition, Commentary, and Introduction*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, 2013), 1:297 (chapter 23) [Hebrew]: “In the eleventh year of the jubilee cycle, in the fourth year of the sabbatical week, Sennacherib attacked.” My translation.

<sup>39</sup> Adolf Neubauer, “Chronique samaritaine: Suivie de courtes notices sur quelques autres manuscrits samaritains et sur un commentaire samaritain inconnu de Genèse I à XXVIII,1,” *Journal Asiatique* 14 (1869): 385–470.

<sup>40</sup> Kirchheim, *Commentar zur Chronik*, vi. For Jacob b. Reuben’s comments, see Aaron b. Joseph and Jacob b. Reuben, *Mibhar Yesharim*, ed. Abraham Firkovich (Eupatoria: Koslov, 1834), *Commentary on the Ketuvim*, 23a–24a.

<sup>41</sup> Salmon b. Yerūham, *Sefer Milhamot ha-Shem*, ed. Israel Davidson (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1934).

<sup>42</sup> Epstein, “Le Livre des Jubilés,” 5.

<sup>43</sup> Yoram Erder, *The Karaite Mourners of Zion and the Qumran Scrolls: On the History of an Alternative to Rabbinic Judaism* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), 138–41.

<sup>44</sup> J.T. Milik, ed., with the collaboration of Matthew Black, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 331, n. 1.

believed that human beings cannot conceptualize such an angel through the intellect or the senses, since his glory defies imagination. Therefore, he created angels who stand before him, and he sends them out as he sees fit. [They] believed that if they fashioned his likeness and worshipped it, they would be glorifying him. Moreover, they believed that a little of the light of this angel would reside in this likeness, and it was this principle that prompted the Children of Israel to act as they did. This would appear to be the most likely interpretation of this whole episode (*Commentary on Exodus* 32, 1–4).<sup>45</sup>

Mastema is a prominent character in *Jubilees* (10:8; 11:5.11; 17:16; 18:9.12; 19:28; 48:2.9.12.15; 49:2), but he is not exclusive to this work. At the time Yefet b. 'Ali wrote, "Mastema" was still used as a designation for the devil among Christians, particularly in Coptic literature.<sup>46</sup> It was still found occasionally in Hebrew, such as *Sefer Refu'ot*, cited above. The benevolent depiction of Mastema in this passage—which more closely resembles an angelic intermediary figure like Metatron—has nothing in common with the malevolent entity from *Jubilees*. It is highly doubtful that this passage is informed by *Jubilees*.

A third Karaite of interest is Nissi b. Noah, a tenth- or eleventh-century Persian about whom little is known. Abraham Epstein drew attention to the enumeration of the twenty-two works of creation (cf. *Jub.* 2:2–15) in his *Commentary on the Ten Commandments* as evidence of the survival of Hebrew *Jubilees*.<sup>47</sup> The Hebrew text was published by Simhah Pinsker at the beginning of the second volume of *Lickute Kadmoniot* (לקוטי קדמוניות), an anthology of medieval Karaite writing.<sup>48</sup> It does indeed read like an abridged version of *Jubilees*' creation account, although it also adds prooftexts from Genesis (omitted in my translation).

<sup>45</sup> Erder, *Mourners of Zion*, 138.

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, Theodosius of Alexandria's *Encomium on St. Michael the Archangel* in E. A. Wallis Budge, ed. and trans., *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt* (London: Longmans & Co., 1915), cxxxv–cxliv (introduction), 321–421 (text), and 893–947 (translation); Hugo Lundhaug, "The Investiture of the Archangel Michael," in *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures, Volume 2*, ed. Tony Burke (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 499–552; Lance Jenott, "The Investiture of the Archangel Gabriel," in *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures, Volume 2*, ed. Tony Burke (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 559–79; Arnold van Lantschoot, "Un Texte Palimpseste de Vat. Copte 65," *Le Muséon* 60 (1947): 261–68. For further references, see Walter Ewing Crum, "Texts Attributed to Peter of Alexandria," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 4 (1903): 387–97 (396–97, n. 3).

<sup>47</sup> Epstein, "Le Livre des Jubilés," 84.

<sup>48</sup> Simhah Pinsker, *Lickute Kadmoniot zur Geschichte des Karaismus und der karäischen Literatur nach handschriftlichen Quellen bearbeit*, 2 vols. (Vienna: Adalbert della Torre, 1860), 2: 2–13 [Hebrew]. For an English translation of the whole text, see Leon Nemoy, "Nissi Ben Noah's Quasi-Commentary on the Decalogue," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 73 (1983): 307–48.

*Jubilees 2:2–5.7–8.10–15*<sup>49</sup>

[2] 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 [3] אז ראינו מעשיו ונברכו על כול מעשיו ונהללה לפניו כי שבעה מעשים גדולים עשה ביום הראשון [4] וביום השני עשה רקיע בתוך המים ויבדלו המים ביום הזה [...] ויעש מעשה זה לבדו ביום השני [5] וביום השלישי עשה באומרו למים לעבור מפני כול הארץ אל מקום אחד מתחת לרקיע ותראה היבשה [6] [...] [7] ביום הזה ברא להם את כול הימים בכול מקויהם [...] וזרע מזרע למינו ואת כול הצמח ועץ עושה פרי ואת היערים ואת גן עדן בעדן לתענוג ולמאכל את ארבעת המינים הגדולים האלה עשה ביום השלישי [8] וביום הרביעי עשה אלוהים את השמש ואת הירח ואת הכוכבים ויתן אותם ברקיע השמים להאיר על כול הארץ ולמשול ביום ובלילה ולהבדיל בין האור לחושך [9] [...] [10] את שלושת המינים האלה עשה ביום הרביעי [11] וביום החמישי ברא את התנינים הגדולים בתוך תהומות המים [...] ואת כול השורץ במים דגי הים ואת כול העוף המעופף לכול מיניהם [12] [...] את שלושת המינים הדגולים האלה עשה ביום החמישי [13] וביום הששי את כול חית הארץ ואת כול הבהמה ואת כול הרומש על הארץ [14] ואחרי כול אלה עשה את האדם זכר ונקבה עשה אותם [...] את ארבעת המינים האלה עשה ביום הששי [15] ויהיו כולם שנים ועשרים מינים

[2] 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 he prepared through the knowledge of his mind. [3] Whereupon we saw his works and blessed and praised him for all his works because he had made seven great works on the first day. [4] On the second day he made a firmament in the midst of the waters, and the waters were divid-

*Nissi b. Noah*<sup>50</sup>

שכן מצאנו כי ברא יתברך זכרו ביום הראשון שבעה דברים והם שמים וארץ וחשך ואור ומים ותהום ורוח [...] וביום השני ברא הרקיע לבדו והבדיל בין המים התחתונים למים העליונים [...] וביום השלישי הקוה המים למקוה אחד והראה היבשה וקראה ארץ וקרא למקוה המים ימים והוציא מן הארץ עשבים ועצים [...] וביום הרביעי ברא שלשה דברים שמש וירח וכוכבים [...] וביום החמישי ברא שלשה דברים השרצים והתנינים והעופות [...] וביום הששי ברא ארבעה דברים החיה והבהמה והרמש והאדם

Therefore we find that the one whose memory is blessed created seven things on the first day, and they are: heaven, earth, darkness, light, water, the abyss (תהום), and wind/spirit (רוח) [...] On the second day, he only created the firmament, to divide the waters below from the water above [...] On the third day, he collected the waters into one pool and revealed dry land. He called it earth, and he called the

49 Werman, *Book of Jubilees*, 147–48; VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 7–11.

50 Pinsker, *Lickute Kadmoniot*, 2:7.

ed on that day [...] This was the sole work he made on the second day. [5] On the third day, he made through his word the waters, that they should pass from before the face of the whole earth to one place so that dry land would appear. [6] [...] [7] On that day he created for the waters all the seas in their gathering places [...] [He also created] the seed that is sown according to its type, everything that is consumed, the trees which bear fruit, the forests, the Garden of Eden in [the land of] Eden, whatever is pleasing and good for food. These four great things he made on the third day. [8] On the fourth day, God made the sun, the moon, and the stars. He placed them in the firmament so that they would shine over all the earth, reign over the day and the night, and separate light from darkness. [9] [...] [10] [...] These three species he made on the fourth day. [11] On the fifth day, he created the great sea monsters in the depths of the waters [...] and all the fish that move about in the water, and all the birds that fly in the air, and all their kinds. [12] [...] These three great species he made on the fifth day. [13] On the sixth day, he made all the wild beasts of the earth and all the cattle, and everything that creeps upon the earth. [14] After all these things, he made humanity—a man and a woman he made them [...] These four species he made on the sixth day. [15] Altogether it was twenty-two species.

of the waters, seas. He brought forth from the earth, grass, and trees [...] On the fourth day, he created three things: the sun, the moon, and the stars [...] On the fifth day, he created three things: the swarming creatures, the sea monsters, and the birds [...] On the sixth day, he created four things: wild animals, domestic animals, creeping things, and humanity. . .

Nissi's text is an accurate summary of *Jubilees* and even helps interpret the text. For example, *Jubilees* mentions light, darkness, evening, and dawn in the same breath, but these constitute only two created things (light and darkness). Similarly, it is not clear from *Jubilees* what four works were created the third day, but Nissi's text leaves little doubt. The four are dry land, seas, and two types of vegetation (trees and grass).

Nevertheless, the list of the twenty-two works is one of the best-known traditions from the *Jubilees* and could have come from multiple sources. Knowledge of the tradition was widespread in Christian literature, chiefly due to Epiphanius of Salamis, who provided a Greek translation of the *Jub.* 2:2–15 in his *De mensuribus et ponderibus* (see the next chapter). It reentered Hebrew literature, at the latest, in *Midrash Tadshe*, a work contemporaneous with Nissi b. Noah's commentary (see the

next section). Nissi's work has no other points of contact with *Jubilees*. As Martha Himmelfarb indicates, Nissi does not mention the figure twenty-two or explain the greater significance of the tradition.<sup>51</sup> In *Jubilees*, the number correlates with the twenty-two patriarchs from Adam to Jacob (*Jub.* 2:23). Epiphanius of Salamis and other Christian authors add the letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the number of books of the Hebrew Bible.

### 5.3 “Minor Midrashim”

The term “Minor (or Medieval) Midrash” refers to an indeterminate number of aggadic works, mainly on biblical topics. They do not necessarily (and, in fact, very rarely) adopt the form of classical Midrashim. The foundational collection is Adolf Jellinek's *Bet ha-Midrash*, published in six volumes from 1853 to 1877.<sup>52</sup> Several other collections were published at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.<sup>53</sup> Not much research has been carried out on this corpus as a whole, although modern interest in the Pseudepigrapha has rekindled interest in individual texts.<sup>54</sup> Since the “Minor Midrashim” are exclusively Hebrew and Aramaic texts in Jewish transmission, they are a Jewish counterpart to the Pseudepigrapha, which are largely parabiblical works in Christian transmission. However, they are generally much later than the Pseudepigrapha. All three works discussed in this section were first printed in *Bet ha-Midrash*.<sup>55</sup>

*Aggadat Bereshit* belongs to the larger circle of *Tanhuma* midrashim. Although it is principally a series of homilies on Genesis, it has a unique structure where every cycle of three chapters (except the very last) comments first on Genesis, then

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51 Himmelfarb, “Some Echoes of *Jubilees*,” 125.

52 Adolph Jellinek, ed., *Bet ha-Midrash*. For a bibliography, see John T. Townsend, “Minor Midrashim,” in *Bibliographical Essays in Medieval Jewish Studies: The Study of Judaism Volume II* (New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1976), 333–92.

53 Bernard H. Mehlman and Seth M. Limmer, *Medieval Midrash: The House for Inspired Innovation* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 3–59, provides a history of research (the rest of the volume has translations of some examples).

54 Many of the texts in Richard Bauckham, James R. Davila, and Alexander Panayotov, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), are in fact “Minor Midrashim,” including the *Book of Noah*, discussed above, and *Midrash Vayissa'u*, discussed below.

55 Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash*, 4:1–116 (*Aggadat Bereshit*); 3: 164–93 (*Midrash Tadshe*); 3:1–5 (*Midrash Vayissa'u*)

a text from the Prophets, and then a text from the Psalms. The work is typically dated to the tenth century, though earlier and later dates have been proposed. It is believed to have been composed in Southern Italy.<sup>56</sup> The work has only recently received a critical edition;<sup>57</sup> previous scholarship was dependent on the semi-critical edition of Salomon Buber.<sup>58</sup> The work contains a solitary parallel to *Jubilees*. Even then, it is not found in the only complete manuscript, Oxford Ms. 2340, but only in the printed edition.

*Jubilees* 4:31<sup>59</sup>

ובקץ היובל הזה הומת קין אחריו בשנה ההיא  
ויפול ביתו עליו וימות בביתו עליו ויומת באבניו  
כי באבן המית את הבל ובאבן הומת במשפט צדק

Cain was killed one year after him [Adam] at the end of this jubilee. His house fell upon him, and he died in the midst of his house. He was killed with its stones because he had killed Abel with a stone. Therefore, he was killed with a stone by a just decree.

*Aggadat Bereshit* 26<sup>60</sup>

כורה שחת בה יפול וגולל אבן אליו תשוב קין הרג  
את הבל אחיו באבן שנ' ויקם קין [אל הבל אחיו  
ויהרגו] והיאך הרגו אלא שנטל אבן והיה מכה  
בו בכל איבריו פצעים פצעי' עד שמת מנין שכך  
אמ' למך לנשיו כי איש הרגתי לפצעי וגו' ואף קין  
נהרג באבן שנא' ויצא קין [מלפני יי' וישב בארץ  
נוד וגו'] שמה נפל עליו אבן ומת למה וגולל אבן  
[אליו תשוב]

“Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and whoever rolls a stone, it shall return to him” (Prov 26:27). Cain killed Abel, his brother, with a stone, as it is written, “Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and killed him” (Gen 4:8). How else did he kill him, except that he snatched a stone and was hitting him in all his limbs multiple times until he died? Because of this, Lamech said to his wives, “Because I killed a man for striking me,” etc. (Gen 4:23). So even Cain was killed with a stone, as it is written, “Cain went out from before the LORD

Here, *Aggadat Bereshit* alludes to the tradition about Abel’s death found in the “printed” recension of *Midrash Tanhuma*, which similarly states that Cain killed Abel by bruising him all over his body with a stone until he found the neck

56 Lieve Teugels, “The Provenance of Aggadat Bereshit: A Reassessment of the Origins of the Work as a ‘Tanhuma Satellite,’” in *Studies in the Tanhuma-Yelammedenu Literature*, ed. Arnon Atzmon and Ronit Nikolsky (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 202–21.

57 Ezra Kahalani, ed. *Midrash Aggadat Bereshit: A Critical Edition Based on the 1618 Venice Printing* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2021) [Hebrew].

58 Salomon Buber, ed., *Agadath Bereschith: Midraschische Auslegungen zum ersten Buche Mosis* (Krakow: Josef Fischer, 1902) [Hebrew].

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

60 Kahalani, *Aggadat Bereshit*, 283–84.

and dwelt in the land of Nod,” etc. (Gen 4:16). There, a stone fell upon him, and he died. Why? “Whoever rolls a stone, it shall return to him” (Prov 26:27).

(*Bereshit* 9). However, in *Midrash Tanhuma*, Cain is finally killed by Lamech, his own descendant, in a hunting accident (*Bereshit* 11). This is a common legend used to explain Lamech’s boast in Gen 4:23.<sup>61</sup> The prooftext for this legend has found its way into the printed edition of *Aggadat Bereshit*, although, in this context, it is a *non sequitur*, implying that Lamech killed Cain when no such tradition is reported.

The manuscript of *Aggadat Bereshit*, however, explains the reference to Gen 4:23 while harmonizing the two dominant traditions about the death of Cain: that Lamech was his murderer and that he was killed by a stone. The manuscript reads, “Cain killed Abel, his brother, with a stone; therefore Lamech killed him with a stone, as it is written, ‘I have killed a man for wounding me, a child for striking me’ (Gen 4:23).”<sup>62</sup> The idea that Lamech killed Cain in a hunting accident (with an arrow, not a stone) was by far the predominant tradition in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. That both the manuscript and printed tradition attempt to harmonize this tradition with the earlier one from *Jubilees* is notable, but it does not mean that the work knows *Jubilees*. There are no other traditions from *Jubilees*. Furthermore, other authors have similarly harmonized the two traditions (see the section on Didymus the Blind in the next chapter).

The next example moves from the complicated cycle of *Tanhuma* literature to the equally complicated world of R. Moshe ha-Darshan of Narbonne (11th c.). *Midrash Tadshe* is a short mystical work which compares the creation of the universe to the construction of the tabernacle.<sup>63</sup> Abraham Epstein attributed the work directly to R. Moshe ha-Darshan,<sup>64</sup> although modern scholarship now considers *Midrash Tadshe* to be a work that the Darshan consulted and employed in his own compositions.<sup>65</sup> This leaves open the possibility that *Midrash Tadshe* was produced in an environment more receptive to Greek influence, such as tenth-century Southern Italy.

<sup>61</sup> Brian Murdoch, *The Medieval Popular Bible: Expansions of Genesis in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), 70–95. It is also found in the *Cave of Treasures* (8:2–10).

<sup>62</sup> Kahalani, *Aggadat Bereshit*, 283–84.

<sup>63</sup> Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash*, 3:164–93.

<sup>64</sup> Epstein, “Le Livre des Jubilés,” 83.

<sup>65</sup> Hananel Mack, *The Mystery of Rabbi Moshe Hadarshan* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2010), 123–27, 203–4 [Hebrew].



Epstein found three parallels between *Midrash Tadshe* and *Jubilees* (as well as two parallels with Philo of Alexandria’s *De opificio mundi*). The first has already been discussed above in the previous section; it is the account of the twenty-two works of creation.<sup>66</sup> *Midrash Tadshe* provides an even more concise summary of the tradition.

כ"ב מינים נבראו בעולם בז' ימים ביום א' ז' השמים והארץ והמים והחושך והרוח והתהומות והאור ביום ב' א' הרקיע בלדב ביום ג' ד' הכניס המים אל מקום אחד והעלה מים מתוקים מן הארץ והעשבים והעצים ביום ד' ג' השמש והירח והכוכבים ביום ה' ג' השרצים והעופות והתנינים ביום ו' ד' החיה והבהמה והרמש והאדם כנגד כ"ב אותיות שבא"ב וכנגד הכ"ב דורות מאדם עד שבא יעקב

Twenty-two species were created in the world over seven days. On Day One, seven: The heavens, the earth, the waters, the darkness, the spirit/wind (הרוח), the depths (התהומות), and the light. On Day Two, one: the firmament alone. On Day Three, four: the introduction of waters into one place, the elevation of the sweet waters above the earth, the herbs, and the trees. On Day Four, three: the sun, the moon, and the stars. On Day Five, three: the swarming creatures, the birds, and the sea monsters. On Day Six, four: wild animals, cattle, creeping things, and humanity. Just as there are twenty-two letters in the alphabet and twenty-two generations from Adam until the coming of Jacob (*Midrash Tadshe* 6).<sup>67</sup>

The account largely agrees with *Jubilees* with a few notable exceptions. *Midrash Tadshe* agrees with Nissi b. Noah against *Jubilees* that God created “the wind” (הרוח) on the first day. The same word can also mean “spirit,” and the Hebrew text of *Jub.* 2:2 must have either employed the term as a collective plural or used the plural itself, since the work goes on to enumerate the different kinds of angels (that is, “spirits”), a passage notably missing from the two Hebrew accounts. *Midrash Tadshe* also interprets the four works of the third day slightly differently than Nissi. It adds something that is not found in *Jubilees* at all: the sweet waters above the earth (rainwater). Finally, *Midrash Tadshe* explicitly mentions the figure twenty-two and correlates them with the number of generations from Adam to Jacob and the number of Hebrew letters.

The next parallel offered by Epstein involves the purification of Adam and Eve before their entrance into Eden.<sup>68</sup> In an anticipation of the law of Lev 12:1–5, Adam must wait forty days before he enters Eden, while Eve must wait eighty days.

<sup>66</sup> Epstein, “Le Livre des Jubilés,” 83–84.

<sup>67</sup> Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash*, 3:169

<sup>68</sup> Epstein, “Le Livre des Jubilés,” 86.

*Jubilees 3:8–11*<sup>69</sup>

[8] בשבוע הראשון נברא אדם וצלעו היא אשתו ובשבוע השני הראה אותה לו ועל כן נתן חוק לשמור בטמאתן שבוע ימים לזכר ולנקבה שני שבועי ימים [9] ובמלאת לאדם ארבעים יום בארץ אשר בה נברא הבאנו אותו אל גן עדן לעבדו ולשמרו ובמלאת לאשתו שמונים ימים הביאנוה אל גן עדן [10] על כן נכתב חוק על לוחות השמים ליולדת אם ילדה זכר שבוע ימים תשב בטמאתה כשבוע הימים הראשון ושלושים ימים ושלושה יום תשב בדם טהרה ובכול קודש לא תיגע ואל המקדש לא תבוא עד היום אשר ימלאו ימיה לזכר [11] ואם נקבה שני שבועי ימים בטמאתה כשני השבועות הראשונים וששים ימים וששה יום תשב בדם טהרה ויהי הכול שמונים יום

[8] In the first week, Adam and the rib, his wife, were created. In the second week, he [God] showed her to him [Adam]. Therefore, this commandment was given to preserve a male for seven days and a female twice seven days in their impurity. [9] After forty days were completed for the man in the land where he was created, we [the angels] brought him to the Garden of Eden to work and to keep it. His wife was brought in on the eightieth day. Only after this did she enter the Garden of Eden. [10] Because of this, a decree was written in the Heavenly Tablets for those who give birth. If she gives birth to a male child, she remains in her impurity seven days like the first seven days. Then she will remain thirty-three days in the blood of purification. She will not handle anything holy, and she will not enter the Temple until the time that she has completed the days for a male child. [11] For a female child, she is in her impurity two weeks of days like the first two weeks, and she will remain in the blood of purification sixty-six days. Altogether, it will be eighty days.

*Midrash Tadshe 15*<sup>70</sup>

למה גזר הקדב"ה על [יולדת זכר] שטמאה ז' ימים ואם נקבה שבועים אלא להזכיר יצירת אדם הראשון שנברא בז' ימי בראשית של שבת ראשון ויצירת חוה שנטלה מצלעותיו בשבת שנייה (נבראו ביום של שבת ראשונה) למה גזר חקדב"ה שהיולדת זכר אחר ארבעים יום ויולדת נקבה אחר פ' יום תבא לבית המקדש להזכירך מה פעל הקב"ה עם אד"הר שנברא חוץ מגן עדן ואח"כ נכנס לג"ע לכן היולדת זכר אחר מ' יום שהוא שיעור יצירת הולד לזכר ופ' יום לנקיבה שהוא שיעור ליצירת הנקיבה תכנס לב"ה

Why did the Holy One, Blessed be He, decree seven days of impurity for [bearing a male child] but two weeks if the child is female, except to recall the creation of the First Adam, who was created during the seven days preceding the first Sabbath, and the creation of Eve, who was taken from his side on the second Sabbath? (They were both created on the day of the first Sabbath). Why did the Holy One, Blessed be He, decree that the one who bears a male should go to the Temple after forty days, and one who bears a female, after eighty days? To recall what the Holy One, Blessed be He, did with the First Adam, who was created outside the Garden of Eden. After this, he entered the Garden of Eden. Therefore, the one who bears a male enters the Temple after forty days, for it is a lesson about the creation of the male offspring, and eighty days for a female, for it is a lesson about the creation of the female.

69 Wermer, *Book of Jubilees*, 179; *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 16–18.

70 Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash*, 3:178.

*Midrash Tadshe* is not identical to the text of *Jubilees*, but it is clearly an adaptation of the same tradition. Of note is the parenthetical remark (a gloss) objecting to the first part of the tradition, that Adam and Eve were not created together. Their separate creation is not found in rabbinic literature, which posits that Adam and Eve were created and expelled from Eden on the very same day. It is, however, comfortably anchored in the text of *Jubilees*.

Finally, *Midrash Tadshe* lists the ages of the sons of Jacob in its eighth chapter, “The Years of the Righteous” (שני הצדיקים). Epstein observed that the birthdates of the patriarchs are similar to the ones in *Jubilees*.<sup>71</sup>

#### *Jubilees* 28:11–24<sup>72</sup>

[11] ופתח אלוהים את רחם לאה ותהר ותלד  
ליעקב בן ויקרא שמו ראובן בארבעה עשר  
לחודש התשיעי בשנה הראשונה בשבוע השלישי  
[12] [...] [13] ויבוא יעקב שנית אל לאה ותהר  
ותלד ליעקב בן שני ויקרא שמו שמעון בעשרים  
ואחד בחודש העשירי בשנה השלישית לשבוע  
הזה [14] וישוב יעקב לבוא אל לאה ותהר ותלד  
לו בן שלישי ויקרא שמו לוי באחד בחודש  
הראשון בשנה הששית בשבוע הזה [15] וישוב  
עוד ויבוא אליה ותלד בן רביעי ויקרא שמו יהודה  
בחמשה עשר לחודש השלישי בשנה הראשונה  
בשבוע הרביעי [16] [...] [17] ובעת אשר ראתה  
רחל כי ילדה לאה ארבעה בנים ליעקב את ראובן  
ואת שמעון ואת לוי ואת יהודה ותאמר בוא אל  
בלהה אמותי והיא תהרה ותלד לי בן [18] כי נתנה  
את אמתה בלהה לאשה ותהר ותלד לו בן ויקרא  
שמו דן בתשעה בחודש הששי בשנה הששית  
בשבוע השלישי [19] וישוב יעקב עוד ויבוא אל  
בלהה ותהר ותלד בן שני ליעקב ותקרא רחל שמו  
נפתלי בחמשה לחודש השביעי בשנה השניה  
לשבוע הרביעי [20] ובראות לאה כי עצרה מלד

#### *Midrash Tadshe* 8<sup>73</sup>

ראובן נולד ביום י"ד לחודש הט' ומת בן קכ"ה  
שנים שמעון נולד בכ"א לחודש ה' ומת בן ק"כ  
שנים לוי נולד בי"ו לחודש הא' ומת בן קל"ז  
שנים דן נולד בט' לחודש הששי ומת בן קכ"ה  
שנים יהודה נולד בט"ו לחודש השלישי ומת בן  
קי"ט שנה נפתלי נולד בה' לחודש השלישי ומת  
בן קל"ג שנה גד נולד בי' לחודש השביעי ומת בן  
קכ"ה יששכר נולד בי' לחודש החמישי ומת בן  
קכ"ב שנה אשר נולד בכ' לעשתי עשר חודש  
ומת בן קכ"ג יוסף נולד כ"א לחודש השביעי  
ומת בן קי' שנה

<sup>71</sup> Epstein, “Le Livre des Jubilés,” 87.

<sup>72</sup> Werman, *Book of Jubilees*, 391–92; VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 155–58.

<sup>73</sup> Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash* 3:171.

ותקנא גם היא ברחל ותתן גם היא את זלפה אמתה ליעקב לאשה ותהר ותלד בן ותקרא לאה את שמו גד בשנים עשר לחודש השמיני בשנה השלישית בשבוע הרביעי [21] וישוב לבוא אליה ותהר ותלד לו בן שני ותקרא לאה שמו אשר בשני לחודש האחד עשר בשנה החמישית בשבוע הרביעי [22] ויבוא יעקב אל לאה ותהר ותלד ליעקב בן ויקרא שמו יששכר בארבעה בחודש החמישי בשנה הרביעית בשבוע הרביעי ותתן אותו למינקת [23] ויבוא יעקב שנית אליה ותהר ותלד תאומים בן ובת ותקרא שם הבן זבולון והבת דינה שמה בשביעי בחודש השביעי בשנה הששית בשבוע הרביעי [24] וירחם אלוהים על רחל ויפתח את רחמה ותהר ותלד בן ותקרא שמו יוסף באחד בחודש הרביעי בשנה הששית בשבוע הרביעי הזה

[11] God opened the womb of Leah. She conceived and bore to Jacob a child, whom he named Reuben, on the fourteenth day of the ninth month in the first year of the third week. [12] [...] [13] Again Jacob went into Leah. She conceived and bore to him a second son, whom he called Simeon, the twenty-first day of the tenth month in the third year of this week. [14] And again Jacob went into Leah. She conceived and bore to him a third son, whom he named Levi, on the new moon of the first month, on the sixth year of the week. [15] And yet again he went into her, and she bore a fourth child, whom he named Judah, on the fifteenth day in the third month, in the first year of the fourth week. [16] [...] [17] And when Rachel saw that Leah had borne four sons to Jacob—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah—she said to him, “Enter Bilhah, my maidservant, and she will conceive and bear for me a child.” [18] So he entered, and she conceived and bore a son to him, whom he named Dan, on the ninth day of the sixth month, in the sixth year of the third week. [19] Jacob entered Bilhah a second time. She conceived and bore another child to Jacob, whom Rachel named Naphtali, on the fifth day of the seventh month, in the second year of the fourth week. [20] When Leah saw that she was now barren and could not bear, she became jealous of Rachel, and she gave Zilpah,

Reuben was born on the fourteenth day of the ninth month and died age 125. Simeon was born on the twenty-first day of the tenth month and died age 120. Levi was born on the sixteenth day of the first month and died age 137. Dan was born on the ninth day of the sixth month and died age 125. Judah was born the fifteenth day of the third month and died age 119. Naphtali was born the fifth day of the third month and died age 133. Gad was born on the tenth day of the seventh month and died age 125. Issachar was born in the tenth day of the fifth month and died age 122. Asher was born on the twentieth day of the eleventh month and died age 123. Joseph was born on the twenty-first day of the seventh month and died age 110.

her servant, to Jacob as a wife. She conceived and bore a son, whom Leah named Gad, on the twelfth day of the eighth month, in the third year of the fourth week. [21] He entered her again, and she conceived and bore a second son to him, whom Leah called Asher, on the second day of the eleventh month in the fifth year of the fourth week. [22] Jacob went into Leah, and she conceived and bore to Jacob a child, whom he called Issachar, on the fourth day of the fifth month in the fourth year of the fourth week. She gave him to a nurse. [23] Jacob went into her a second time, and she conceived and bore two, a son and a daughter, calling the son Zebulun and the daughter Dinah, on the seventh day of the seventh month in the sixth year of the fourth week. [24] Then God showed kindness to Rachel and opened her womb. She conceived and bore a son, whom she called Joseph, on the new moon of the fourth month, on the sixth year of the fourth week.

Jellinek's text is incomplete. In a footnote, he supplied the birthdates of the two missing patriarchs (Zebulun and Benjamin) from a citation of *Midrash Tadshe* in the Exodus commentary of Bahya b. Asher (d. 1340).<sup>74</sup> According to Bahya, Zebulun was born on 7 Tishre (the seventh day of the seventh month according to the biblical calendar, agreeing with *Jubilees*). Benjamin was born on 11 Marheshvan (the eighth month). Although Benjamin does not appear in the above passage (because he was born much later), this date also tallies with the one in *Jubilees* (32:33). Not all the dates agree, however. Half of them (Levi, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, and Joseph) are different in the two accounts. The other half is surprising enough to warrant further investigation.

Martha Himmelfarb suggested that the parallel passages in *Midrash Tadshe* might derive from the Greek chronographic tradition.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, there are parallels in Greek sources, although not all of them are chronicles. In the first instance, *Midrash Tadshe* correlates the twenty-two works of creation with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This concept is not found in *Jubilees*. It is first observed in the works of Origen (d. 254), who mentions it in his *Homiliae in*

<sup>74</sup> Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash* 3:171, n. 2.

<sup>75</sup> Himmelfarb, “Some Echoes of *Jubilees*,” 124–26.

*Numeros* (IV.1.2).<sup>76</sup> It also appears in chapter 22 of *De mensuris et ponderibus* of Epiphanius of Salamis, a short Greek treatise which was translated into numerous languages.<sup>77</sup> The reference to the twenty-two letters is a telltale sign of secondary dependence.

The second tradition, the purification of Adam and Eve before entering the garden, appears only sporadically in Greek chronicles. George Syncellus (d. after 810) mentions it,<sup>78</sup> as does Michael Glycas (d. ca. 1200).<sup>79</sup> Syncellus, however, points to an additional place where the tradition might be found.

For this reason, I have been compelled also to make a statement about this matter in turn, to the extent that among other historians who have composed either Jewish antiquities or Christian histories there has been discussion of this matter on the basis of *Little Genesis* [ἐκ τῆς λεπτῆς Γενέσεως, i.e., from *Jubilees*] and the so-called *Life of Adam* [λεγόμενου βίου Ἀδὰμ] (even if it appears not to be authoritative). I do this lest those who investigate these matters fall into even more absurd notions. At all events, there is found in the so-called *Life of Adam* the numbering of the days for the naming of the beasts and the forming of the woman, the entry of Adam himself into Paradise and God's command to him concerning the eating from the tree, and the subsequent entry of Eve into Paradise, as well as the narrative of the transgression and what happened after the transgression, as is given below.<sup>80</sup>

He proceeds to give an account close to *Jub.* 3:1–14 but with some additional information, such as the Greek names of the months and the day that God commanded Adam to abstain from the fruit of the tree (on the fiftieth day of the world's creation).

A similar report appeared a century earlier in the exegetical writings of Anastasius of Sinai (ca. 700 CE). His commentary on the Hexameron contains an offhand comment that Adam entered Paradise after forty days and that this information came from an apocryphal book.

The children of the Hebrews say that Adam entered into Paradise on the fortieth day, and they cite a non-canonical book of the Old Testament, the one called *The Testament of the Protoplasts* [Διαθήκης τῶν Πρωτοπλάστων]. This seemed correct also to a certain historian and chronologist, Pyrrho, as well as to some commentators.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>76</sup> This work is cited in the next chapter.

<sup>77</sup> Denis, *Fragmenta pseudepigraphorum*, 74–75. Epiphanius is also discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>78</sup> George Syncellus, *Ecloga Chronographica*, ed. Alden A. Mosshammer (Leipzig: Teubner, 1984), 4–5.

<sup>79</sup> Michael Glycas, *Annales*, ed. Immanuel Bekker (Bonn: Impensis Ed. Weberi, 1836), 392.

<sup>80</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation*, trans. William Adler and Paul Tuffin (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 6–7.

<sup>81</sup> Anastasius of Sinai, *Hexameron*, ed. Clement A. Kuehn and John D. Baggarly (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2007), 266–67 (Greek text with translation on facing pages; I am citing the editors' translation).

Anastasius not only mentions this apocryphal book and anonymous “commentators,” but he cites an otherwise unknown historian, Pyrrho, who promulgated the tradition.

William Adler, who has written much on the apocrypha in Byzantine chronography (and in Syncellus’ chronicle in particular) associates George Syncellus’ *Life of Adam* with Anastasius of Sinai’s *Testament of the Protoplasts*, but he presumes that these works have been lost.<sup>82</sup> It could, however, be a reference to the widespread *Life of Adam and Eve*. The *Jubilees* tradition appears as an addition (chapter 54) to the common (“vulgate”) Latin version: “Truly, Adam entered Paradise after forty days, and Eve after eighty. And Adam was in Paradise seven years. And on the very day in which Adam sinned, all the beasts were changed” (*Adam uero post quadraginta dies introiuit in paradisum et Eua post octoginta. Et fuit Adam in paradiso annos septem. Et in ipso dei in quo peccauit Adam omnes bestiae mutauerunt se*).<sup>83</sup> Not only this, but the forty-day delay before Adam’s transfer to Paradise is also mentioned in an Armenian apocryphon dubbed *Adam Story 2*.<sup>84</sup> The tradition from *Jubilees* was thus transmitted with Adam literature in several languages.

*Midrash Tadshe* did not necessarily know the tradition from the Adam books (for one, it has more information than is found in the Latin version of the *Life of Adam and Eve*), but the Adam books show that the tradition had a transmission history independent of *Jubilees* and could be embedded in different contexts. This fact raises some doubt whether *Midrash Tadshe* knew the tradition from *Jubilees* directly.

At first glance, the third parallel, the “Years of the Righteous,” reads like an independent textual unit that could be found in a chronicle such as *Seder Olam*. In fact, another Hebrew chronicle, *Seder Olam Zuta* (eighth century?), chapter four, lists the lifespans of the twelve patriarchs.<sup>85</sup> The data is similar to what is found in *Midrash Tadshe*. Furthermore, both Hebrew works share the patriarchal lifespans with the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Table 5.1).

<sup>82</sup> Adler, *Time Immemorial*, 85 and 103.

<sup>83</sup> My translation from the Latin text of Jean-Pierre Pettoirelli and Jean-Daniel Kaestli, eds. and trans., *Vita Latina Adae et Euae*, 2 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 1:434.

<sup>84</sup> Michael E. Stone, *Armenian Apocrypha Relating to Adam and Eve* (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1996), 111: “And after forty days from the Friday [of his creation] he was placed in the Garden.”

<sup>85</sup> Manasseh Grosberg, ed., *Seder Olam Zuta and Complete Seder Tannaim v’Amoraim* (London: Y. Broditzky, 1910), 8–10 [Hebrew].

**Table 5.1:** Lifespans of the Twelve Patriarchs.

	<i>Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs</i> <sup>86</sup>	<i>Midrash Tadshe</i> 8	<i>Seder Olam Zuta</i> 4
Reuben	125	125	124
Simeon	120	120	120
Levi (Exod 6:16)	137	137	137
Judah	119	119	119
Dan	125	125	127
Naphtali	132	133	133
Gad	127 (or 125)	125	125
Asher	126 (or 120)	123	126
Zebulun	114	114	124
Issachar	122	122	122
Joseph (Gen 50:26)	110	110	110
Benjamin	120 (or 125)	109	111

Despite the occasional disparities (likely due to scribal errors), the three clearly reflect a common tradition.<sup>87</sup> *Seder Olam Zuta* goes even further and mentions the dates of certain patriarchs in relation to the death of Joseph. Thus, Reuben died two years after Joseph, Simeon one year later, and Zebulun eleven years later. These are the same three patriarchs whose deaths are dated relative to Joseph's in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (T. Reu. 1:2; T. Sim. 1:1; T. Zeb. 1:1).<sup>88</sup> This raises the possibility that the Hebrew tradition is dependent on some form of the *Testaments*.

Likewise, the birthdates of the patriarchs could have been drawn from *Jubilees*. While the lifespans of the twelve patriarchs are found in various sources, the birth dates are not, as already noted by Epstein.<sup>89</sup> Even though *Midrash Tadshe* does not employ the distinctive calendar of *Jubilees* (there is no mention of the weeks of years that make up each jubilee), the order in which the births of the patriarchs occur reflects the chronology of *Jubilees*. *Jubilees* reports the birth of each patriarch according to the biblical sequence, but the actual order of their birthdates is the one given in *Midrash Tadshe* (Table 5.2).

<sup>86</sup> This data is taken from Harm W. Hollander and Marinus de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), *passim*.

<sup>87</sup> *Sefer ha-Yashar* also knows the lifespans of the patriarchs. See Joseph Dan, ed., *Sefer Hayashar* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1986), 262–69 [Hebrew].

<sup>88</sup> The *Testament of Levi* (11:7) states that Joseph died when Levi was 118. *Seder Olam Zuta* states that Judah (not Joseph) died 18 (and not 19) years before Levi. It also adds that Issachar died 15 years before Levi. There is nothing comparable to this datum in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.

<sup>89</sup> Epstein, “Le Livre des Jubilés,” 87.



**Table 5.2:** Birth Order of the Twelve Patriarchs.

<b>Patriarch Order</b> <b>(<i>Midrash Tadshe</i> 8)</b>	<b>Birth Year <i>Anno Mundi</i></b> <b>(<i>Jubilees</i> 28)</b>
Reuben	2122
Simeon	2124
Levi	2127
Dan	2127
Judah	2129
Naphtali	2130
Gad	2131
Issachar	2132
Asher	2133
Joseph	2134 [2232]

In this sequence, Dan is born before Judah and Issachar is born between Gad and Asher. Michael Segal has pointed out that this chronology creates an internal inconsistency in *Jubilees* since the text explicitly states that Dan was born after Judah (*Jub.* 28:17–18).<sup>90</sup> The placement of Asher before Joseph could also be significant. The Ethiopic text dates Joseph’s birth to 2134 AM, but the same text states he was seventeen years old in 2149 AM (*Jub.* 34:10) and died in 2242 AM (*Jub.* 46:8), presumably at age 110.<sup>91</sup> Thus, Joseph was really born in 2232, a year before Asher, but both *Jubilees*—and *Midrash Tadshe*—say otherwise. The internal discrepancies are part of Segal’s argument that *Jubilees* consists of rewritten biblical stories with an independent chronology imposed on them.

There are two ways to read this data. On the one hand, the birth order of the patriarchs in *Midrash Tadshe* could be evidence that such an independent chronology did exist and is reflected in the Hebrew texts. On the other hand, *Midrash Tadshe* could be seen as conserving an error from the text in *Jubilees*, in which case the book of *Jubilees* is almost certainly the source. In this case, it would require that *Midrash Tadshe* took the lifespans of the patriarchs from a second source. A more elegant—though purely hypothetical—solution would be that *Midrash Tadshe* drew upon a lost source of both *Jubilees* and the *Testaments*. We are confronted with the same problem for the next work to be discussed, *Midrash Vayissa’u*: The Hebrew works either independently drew upon both *Jubilees* and the *Testaments* in some form (Greek?), or they reflect a common source. Although one of these solutions must be correct, neither seems wholly satisfactory.

<sup>90</sup> Segal, *The Book of Jubilees*, 85–91.

<sup>91</sup> Segal, *The Book of Jubilees*, 86, n. 10.

Before moving on to *Midrash Vayissa'u*, however, a final word must be said about Pinhas b. Yair, the only Sage named in *Midrash Tadshe* and its putative author (its alternative title is *Baraita de-R. Pinhas b. Yair*). Salmon ben Yerūham, a Karaite opponent of Saadia Gaon, accused him of ignoring (or even suppressing) the evidence of a book by Pinhas b. Yair arguing that Shavuot always falls on a Sunday.<sup>92</sup> This observance concords with Karaite practice—and also with the calendar found in *Jubilees*.<sup>93</sup> No such passage is currently found in *Midrash Tadshe*. Whether this is empty rhetoric or a reference to a real book attributed to Pinhas b. Yair (Another version of *Midrash Tadshe*? Another book with *Jubilees* material? A Hebrew recension of *Jubilees*?) cannot, at present, be answered.

The last “Minor Midrash” to be discussed is *Midrash Vayissa'u*, which recounts a series of wars between the sons of Jacob and their hostile neighbors, first the Ninevites (chapter one), then the Amorites (chapter two), and finally the Edomites (chapter three).<sup>94</sup> The work is preserved in at least ten manuscripts, seven of which contain all or part of chapter one.<sup>95</sup> It is also found in three medieval anthologies. *Bereshit Rabbati*, attributed to R. Moshe ha-Darshan of Narbonne, quotes the opening lines of chapter two and the entirety of chapter three.<sup>96</sup> The *Chronicles of Jerahmeel* includes chapters two and three but not chapter one,<sup>97</sup> as does the printed edition of *Yalqut Shim'oni* (Genesis §133).<sup>98</sup> This evidence suggests that chapter one was composed independently of the rest of the work. It is, at least, the one chapter without any analogue in ancient Jewish literature.

*Midrash Vayissa'u* presents many of the same problems as *Midrash Tadshe* in that it combines elements from both *Jubilees* and the *Testaments of the Twelve*

<sup>92</sup> Pinsker, *Lickute Kadmoniot*, 2:16–17.

<sup>93</sup> This occasional confluence between Karaite halakhah and Second Temple tradition is at the center of Yoram Erder's *The Karaite Mourners of Zion and the Qumran Scrolls*, cited above. Erder says little about *Jubilees*, however.

<sup>94</sup> There are two critical editions: Jacob Z. Lauterbach, “Midrash Vayissa'u: Or, The Book of the Wars of the Sons of Jacob,” in *Abhandlungen zur Erinnerung an Hirsch Perez Chajes*, ed. Victor Aptowitzer and A. Z. Schwarz (Vienna: Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation, 1933), 205–22 [Hebrew], and Alexander Tamar and Joseph Dan, “The Complete Midrash Vayissa'u,” *Folklore Research Center Studies* 3 (1972): 67–76 [Hebrew]. The second was made in ignorance of the first and on the basis of a different set of manuscripts.

<sup>95</sup> Martha Himmelfarb, “Midrash Vayissa'u: 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), 143–59 (144).

<sup>96</sup> Moshe ha-Darshan, *Midrash Bereshit Rabbati*, ed. Hanoah Albeck (Jerusalem: Mekitze Nirdamim, 1940), 153 and 160–63.

<sup>97</sup> 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), 136–43.

<sup>98</sup> Copied by Jellinek in *Bet ha-Midrash* 3:1–5.

*Patriarchs. Jubilees* and *T. Judah* mention the conflicts with the Amorites and the Edomites, the subjects of chapters two and three. The more detailed account of the war with the Amorites appears in *T. Judah* 3–7 (cf. *Jub.* 34:1–9), while the more detailed account of the war with the Edomites occurs in *Jub.* 37–38 (cf. *T. Judah* 9). *Midrash Vayissa'u* has full accounts of *both* wars. This creates a conundrum: Either the author drew upon *Jubilees* and the *Testament* separately, or the medieval work preserves the source of the two ancient texts. Martha Himmelfarb favors the second hypothesis, yet she acknowledges that the text is written in medieval Hebrew and shows evidence of translation from Greek.<sup>99</sup> Either way, *Midrash Vayissa'u* cannot be a witness to the Hebrew text of *Jubilees*. It is either a reflection of a lost Hebrew composition or an indirect witness to the Greek text of *Jubilees*.

## 5.4 Late Midrashic Anthologies

This section is entitled “Late Midrashic Anthologies” but concerns two very different texts. The first, the imaginatively titled *Midrash Aggadah*, is a traditionally structured Midrash on the Torah, compiled from a number of different sources after the manner of Tobiah b. Eliezer’s *Leqah Tov* (which is one of its sources). The second is *Sefer ha-Yashar*, Geza Vermes’ original example of the “Rewritten Bible.”<sup>100</sup> It too covers the Torah using a variety of sources, but its style is purely narrative. The two together are perfect illustrations of the difference between *texte continué* and *texte recherché*. More to the point, they are both witnesses to traditions from *Jubilees*.

*Midrash Aggadah*, an aggadic Midrash, is yet another work associated with R. Moshe ha-Darshan. Salomon Buber purchased a manuscript from Aleppo that had been written around 1547, which he then published in 1894.<sup>101</sup> Buber also gave the work its name. In his introduction, he established parallels between the work and Rashi’s quotations of R. Moshe ha-Darshan in his commentaries on the Bible.<sup>102</sup> On account of these quotations—some of which are longer than the parallel passages in Rashi—Hanoah Albeck believed that *Midrash Aggadah* was an anthology (ליקוט) of the Darshan’s biblical exegesis.<sup>103</sup> However, Buber also gave a second, much shorter list of parallels between *Midrash Aggadah* and Tobiah b. Eliezer’s

<sup>99</sup> Himmelfarb, “Midrash Vayissa’u,” 148.

<sup>100</sup> Geza Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 67–95.

<sup>101</sup> Salomon Buber, ed., *Agadischer Commentar zum Pentateuch nach einer Handschrift aus Aleppo*, 2 vols. (Vienna: A. Fanto, 1894) [Hebrew].

<sup>102</sup> Buber, *Agadischer Commentar*, 1:x–xvi.

<sup>103</sup> Moshe ha-Darshan, *Bereshit Rabbati*, Albeck’s Introduction, 5–21 (especially 19–20).

*Leqah Tov*, which Buber had also published.<sup>104</sup> As Hananel Mack has pointed out, if *Midrash Aggadah* quotes *Leqah Tov*, which was written in the late eleventh or the early twelfth century, then it cannot be the work of R. Moshe ha-Darshan, who lived in the early eleventh century.<sup>105</sup> There is therefore no reason to think that the *Jubilees* material in the work comes from Moshe ha-Darshan.

Martha Himmelfarb found three parallels between *Midrash Aggadah* and *Jubilees*.<sup>106</sup> Two of these are paraphrases of *Jubilees* 4:15 and 4:21. The first is the descent of angels in the time of Jared.

*Jubilees* 4:15<sup>107</sup>

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

In the second week of the tenth jubilee, Mahalalel 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 humanity and to exercise justice and righteousness upon the earth.

*Midrash Aggadah, Bereshit* 5<sup>108</sup>

ויחי ירד ולמה נקרא שמו ירד שבימיו ירדו  
המלאכים מן השמים והיו מלמדים הבריות היאך  
יעבדו להקב"ה

"And Jared lived" (Gen 5:18) Why was his name called Jared (ירד)? Because in his days the angels came down (ירדו) from heaven and they were teaching humanity how they should serve the Holy One, Blessed be He.

The second, related passage, concerns Enoch's sojourn with the angels.

*Jubilees* 4:21<sup>109</sup>

ויהי עוד עם מלאכי אלוהים ששה יובלי שנים  
ויראו לו כול אשר על הארץ ובשמים ממשלת  
השמש ויכתוב הכול

*Midrash Aggadah, Bereshit* 5<sup>110</sup>

ויתהלך חנוך את האלהים עם המלאכים הלך  
שלוש מאות שנה בגן עדן היה עמם ולמד מהם  
עיבור ותקופות ומזלות וחכמות רבות

<sup>104</sup> Buber, *Agadischer Commentar*, 1:xvi–xvii. See Tobiah b. Eliezer, *Midrash Lekah Tov*, 2 vols., ed. Salomon Buber (Vilna: Widow and Brothers Romm, 1880–1884) [Hebrew].

<sup>105</sup> Mack, *The Mystery of Rabbi Moshe Hadarshan*, 195–97.

<sup>106</sup> Himmelfarb, "Some Echoes of *Jubilees*," 118–23.

<sup>107</sup> Werman, *Book of Jubilees*, 195; VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 24.

<sup>108</sup> Buber, *Agadischer Commentar*, 1:14.

<sup>109</sup> Werman, *Book of Jubilees*, 196; VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 25–26.

<sup>110</sup> Buber, *Agadischer Commentar*, 1:14–15.

Therefore, he [Enoch] was 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.

“And Enoch walked with God” (Gen 5:22). He walked with the angels three hundred years in the Garden of Eden. He was with them, and he learned from them intercalation and the seasons and the constellations and much wisdom.

Both passages have been “rabbinized.” In the first example, the Watchers from *Jub.* 4:15 become ordinary angels in *Midrash Aggadah*. The story of the Watchers is entirely absent from the Midrash. In the second passage, the Midrash translates the system of jubilees into common years. It has inadvertently touched upon one of thorniest issues in the modern interpretation of *Jubilees*: whether the six “jubilees” in *Jub.* 4:21 are six periods of 49 years (as in the rest of the book) or 50 years (the rest of the life of Enoch after the birth of his son).<sup>111</sup> *Midrash Aggadah* opts for 50 years, conforming to the rabbinic opinion about the length of a jubilee (cf. *b. Rosh ha-Shanah* 9a). It also changes the “sovereignty of the sun,” a reference to *Jubilees*’ idiosyncratic solar calendar, into “intercalation and seasons and constellations” (עיבור ותקופות ומזלות), important elements of the rabbinic lunar calendar.

The third tradition is a summary of Canaan’s occupation of the territory of Shem (*Jub.* 10:28–34). *Midrash Aggadah* alludes to the division of the earth among the sons of Noah, the *Diamerismos*, a prominent theme of Second Temple, Greek, and Arabic historiography, which is only fleetingly mentioned in classical rabbinic literature (e.g., *Sifra*, *Qedoshim* 11). In the Midrash, as in *Jubilees*, the sons of Noah take an oath to respect the boundaries of each other’s land (cf. *Jub.* 9:14–15). However, Canaan, the son of Ham, violates that oath (cf. *Jub.* 10:28–34). The Midrash adds that not only Canaan, but all seven Canaanite nations (cf. Deut 7:1) occupied the land. Hence, Joshua’s conquest of the seven nations was an act of repossession. These ideas do not appear in *Jubilees*.

#### *Jubilees* 10:28–34<sup>112</sup>

[28] וילך חם ובניו אל ארץ נחלתו אשר יצאה  
בחלקו בארץ דרום [29] וירא כנען את ארץ  
הלבנון עד נחל מצרים כי יפה מאד ולא הלך אל  
ארץ נחלתו אל מערב הים וישב בארץ הלבנון  
ממזרח וממערב לשפת הירדן ועל שפת הים [30]  
ויאמר לו חם אביו וכוש ומצרים אחיו כי ישבת

#### *Midrash Aggadah, Lekh Lekha* 12<sup>113</sup>

והכנעני אז בארץ לפי שארץ ישראל נפלה בחלקו  
של שם כמו שנאמר ומלכי צדק מלך שלם נח  
החרים בשעה שחלק הקב"ה את הארץ לשלשת  
בניו שלא יהא אחד מהם נכנס לתחום חבירו  
וז' עממין עברו בארץ ישראל ועברו על החרם  
לפיכך צוה הקב"ה כי החרם תחרימו ובעת שעבר

<sup>111</sup> See, for example, the opposing viewpoints of James C. VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Commentary on the Book of Jubilees* 2 vols. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 1:256–57 and Werman, *Book of Jubilees*, 200–1.

<sup>112</sup> Werman, *Book of Jubilees*, 255; VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 65–66

<sup>113</sup> Buber, *Agadischer Commentar*, 1:27.

בארץ אשר לא לך ולא יצאה לנו בגורל לא תעשה כזאת כי אם תעשה כדבר הזה אתה ובניך תפלו בארץ ותקוללו בחרם כי בחרם ישבתם ובחרם יפלו בניך ויכרתו לעולם [31] לא תשב במושב שם כי לשם ולבניו יצאה בגורלם [32] ארור אתה וארור תהיה מכול בני נוח בקללה אשר הקמנו בשבועה לפני השר הקדוש ולפני נוח אבינו [33] ולא שמע להם וישב בארץ לבנון מחמת עד מבוא מצרים ובניו עד היום הזה [34] על כן נקראה הארץ הזאת ארץ כנען

[28] Ham and his sons went into the land which he was to occupy, which he acquired as his division, in the southern land. [29] But Canaan saw the land of Lebanon until the river of Egypt, that it was very beautiful. So he did not go to the land of his inheritance west of the sea. Instead, he resided in the land of Lebanon, from the east and from the west, from the border of Lebanon and until the coast of the sea. [30] Ham, his father, and Kush and Mizraim, his brothers, said to him, "You have resided in a land that is not yours and did not come to us by lot. Do not do this thing! If you do this thing, you and your children will fall in the land and be cursed with chaos because in chaos you have settled and in chaos your children will fall and be dispersed forever. [31] Do not dwell in the dwelling of Shem because it came up by lot to Shem and to his children. [32] You are cursed and will be cursed more than all the children of Noah by the curse we have established with an oath before the holy judge and before our father Noah." [33] But he did not listen to them and settled in the land of Lebanon from Hamath to the entrance of Egypt, he and his children until this day. [34] Therefore the land is called the land of Canaan.

אברהם לא היה עדיין נכנס לשם אלא הכנעני בלבד ולפיכך נפלה ארץ ז' עממים לישראל לפי שנפלה כל הארצות לז' עממים בחלקו של שם וכן הוא אומר יצב נבולות עמים למספר בני ישראל

"The Canaanite was then in the land" (Gen 12:6). The land of Israel fell to the division of Shem, as it is written, "Melchizedek, the king of Salem" (Gen 14:18). Noah swore an oath (החרם) when the Holy One, Blessed be He, divided the world among his three sons, that he would not let one of them infringe on the boundary of his fellow. The seven nations crossed into the land of Israel and transgressed the oath (החרם). Therefore, the Holy One, Blessed be He, commanded that "You shall subject [them] to the ban (חרם תחרימו)" (cf. Deut 20:7). At the time Abraham crossed over, they had not yet entered there except the Canaanite alone. Therefore, the land of the seven nations fell to Israel, for all the lands of the seven nations belonged to the division of Shem, and thus God said, "Establish the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut 32:8).

A similar tradition is found in Rashi's comments *ad loc* (Gen 12:6).

והכנעני אז בארץ היה הולך וכובש את ארץ ישראל מזרעו של שם שבחלקו של שם נפלה כשחלק נח את הארץ לבניו שנאמר ומלכי צדק מלך שלם לפיכך ויאמר ה' אל אברהם לזרעך אתן את הארץ הזאת עתיד אני להחזירה לבניך שהם מזרעו של שם

"And the Canaanite was then in the land" (Gen 12:6). He was in the process of conquering the land of Israel from the descendants of Shem, for it fell in the portion of Shem when Noah divided the land among his sons, as it is written, "Melchizedek, king of Salem" (Gen 14:18).

Therefore, “The LORD said to Abram, ‘I will give this land to your descendants,’” (Gen 12:7), that is, “I will return it to your children, for they are the descendants of Shem.”<sup>114</sup>

*Midrash Aggadah* is aware of the works of Rashi (who is a theoretical source for *Midrash Aggadah*’s knowledge of Moshe ha-Darshan). The influence of Rashi can be detected in the citation of Gen 14:18 as a proof-text, which is not the most obvious source for proving that the land of Israel was within the territory of Shem. It requires knowledge of the extrabiblical tradition that identifies Melchizedek with Shem (found, e.g., in PRE 8). However, *Midrash Aggadah* also includes details that are not found in Rashi. In addition to the division of the land, *Midrash Aggadah* adds the detail of the oath which the brothers swore not to infringe on each other’s territory. Whereas the division of the earth is a common motif, the oath is not, and *Jubilees* is the oldest source for it. The oath, however, resurfaces in Greek sources, such as the chronicle of George Syncellus, who even mentions the seven nations.<sup>115</sup>

Regarding the other two near-citations, they both come from a pericope in *Jubilees* recounting the life of Enoch (*Jub.* 4:15–26). The story of Enoch (as it appears in *Jubilees*) is not especially common in Byzantine sources, but it is found there. The Greek *catena* literature includes a note about Enoch as the first scribe who recorded signs of heaven, the times, and the seasons.<sup>116</sup> This is an approximate citation of *Jub.* 4:17 and includes some of the information repeated in *Jub.* 4:21, the verse paraphrased in *Midrash Aggadah*. The descent of the Watchers appears in the chronicle of Symeon the Logothete (10th c.), a popular work which used earlier chronicles and inspired numerous imitators (see the next chapter).<sup>117</sup> Symeon—or a glossator<sup>118</sup>—states that the Watchers descended in Enoch’s day rather than a generation earlier, in the time of Jared. The descent of the Watchers in the time of Jared—also mentioned in *1 Enoch* 6:6—was known in Greek chronography, however. It appears in the lost chronicle of Annianus and is quoted in the extant chronicle of Michael the Syrian (d. 1199).<sup>119</sup> Even though these precise Greek texts are unlikely to be the

114 Rashi, *Der Kommentar des Salomo b. Isak über den Pentateuch*, ed. Abraham Berliner, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kauffmann, 1905), 23.

115 George Syncellus, *Chronography*, 61–62.

116 Françoise Petit, ed., *La Chaîne sur la Genèse: Édition intégrale*, 4 vols. (Leuven: Peeters, 1991–1995), 2:60. See also the similar remark in George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, ed. Immanuel Bekker, 2 vols. (Bonn: Impensis Ed. Weberi, 1838), 1:17.

117 Text: Symeon the Logothete, *Symeonis Magistri et Logothetae Chronicon*, ed. Staffan Wahlgren (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006), 27. Translation: Symeon the Logothete, *The Chronicle of the Logothete*, trans. Staffan Wahlgren (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019), 29–30.

118 So Wahlgren, *The Chronicle of the Logothete*, 30, n. 2.

119 Sebastian P. Brock, “A Fragment of Enoch in Syriac,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 19 (1968): 626–31 (627) cites the passage (from Book I, chapter 3).

immediate sources of *Midrash Aggadah*, they do show that *Jubilees*' biography of Enoch was known in Late Antiquity, opening the possibility that *Midrash Aggadah* took it from a Greek work.

As for *Sefer ha-Yashar*, R. H. Charles named this work alongside *Midrash Tadshe* and the *Chronicles of Jerahmeel* as the main medieval Hebrew works that might have known *Jubilees*.<sup>120</sup> *Midrash Tadshe* was discussed above. The *Chronicles of Jerahmeel* includes a version of *Midrash Vayissa'u*, which was also discussed above. *Sefer ha-Yashar* has likewise made use of *Midrash Vayissa'u*, but it has other areas of interest.

*Sefer ha-Yashar* is a retelling of the Torah narrative written in pseudo-biblical Hebrew and considerably amplified with aggadic material, including PRE, several "Minor Midrashim" (e.g., *Midrash Vayissa'u*, the *Chronicles of Moses*), and *Sefer Yosippon*, the medieval Hebrew account of Josephus' *Jewish War*. The date of the composition is a point of disagreement among scholars. Vermes dated it to the eleventh century, while Joseph Dan, the book's most recent editor, thought it was written in the sixteenth century, only a few decades before the *editio princeps* (1625).<sup>121</sup> There is no manuscript, but the work is already cited in the *Chronicles of Jerahmeel* (12th c.), which would support Vermes' dating.<sup>122</sup> It also relies on Islamic *Stories of the Prophets*, indicating a Middle Eastern rather than a European provenance.<sup>123</sup> One thing is certain: It is not an early book.

*Sefer ha-Yashar* overlaps with *Jubilees* on only a couple of points. The first is the career of the patriarch Kenan—or, rather, Cainan. As mentioned above, the second Cainan (the names are the same in Hebrew: קינן), born after the Flood and known only to the Septuagint (Gen 10:24; 11:12–13), appears in *Jub.* 8:1–4 as the man who rediscovered the secrets of the Watchers carved in stone.

[1] וביובל העשרים ותשעה בשבוע הראשון בראשיתו לקח לו ארפכשד אשה ושמה רצויה בת ושון בת עילם לו לאשה ותלד לו בן בשנה השלישית לשבוע הזה ויקרא שמו קינן [2] ויגדל הילד וילמדו אביו ספר וילך לבקש לו מקום לבנות לו שם עיר [3] וימצא כתוב אשר חרטו ראשונים בסלע ויקרא את אשר בו ויעתיקו וירשע בו כי היתה בו תורת העירים אשר היו צופים בסימני השמש והירח והכוכבים ובכול אותות שמים [4] ויכתוב ולא ספר על זאת כי היה ירא מנוח להגיד על זאת פן יקצוף עליו על זאת

[1] In the twenty-ninth jubilee, in the first week, at its beginning, Arpachshad took for himself a wife, and her name was Resueya, daughter of Susan, daughter of Elam, for himself as a wife.

<sup>120</sup> Charles, *The Book of Jubilees*, xxxiii; lxxiii–lxxvi.

<sup>121</sup> Joseph Dan, "When was *Sefer ha-Yashar* Written?," in *Sefer Dov Sadan*, ed. Shmuel Werses, Nathan Rotenstreich, and Chone Shmeruk (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1977), 105–10 [Hebrew].

<sup>122</sup> Jerahmeel b. Solomon, *The Book of Memory*, 164–65. This corresponds to Joseph Dan, ed., *Sefer Hayashar* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1986), 284–86.

<sup>123</sup> On *Sefer ha-Yashar* and Islamic sources, see Shari L. Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather: Abraham in Islamic and Jewish Exegetical Narratives* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 56–59; 106; 112–16; 152–54; 201; 260.



She bore him a son in the third year of this week, and he named him Cainan. [2] And the boy grew up, and his father taught him writing, and he went to seek out a place for himself where he could found a city. [3] He found the writing that the ancients carved in rock. He read what was in it and copied it. He went astray on account of what was in it because the things in it were the teachings of the Watchers by which they observed the augurs of the sun, moon, and stars, and all the signs of heaven. [4] He wrote but did not speak about it because he was afraid to tell Noah about it lest he become angry at him about it.<sup>124</sup>

Yashar has flipped the script and given these attributes to the first Cainan (Gen 5:9–14), who is no longer an evil figure but a sagacious ruler who knew of the coming Flood and recorded his prophecy on stone. A similar portrait of the ruler appears in chapter 11 of the traditional printed text of *Sefer Yosippon* (Venice, 1544). It is not found in the earliest manuscripts or in the critical edition. Cainan is mentioned during the adventures of Alexander the Great, who stumbles across his tomb and describes it in a letter to Aristotle.

*Sefer Yosippon* (ed. Hominer)<sup>125</sup>

כאשר באתי בארץ פרסיאקון היא מדינת ארץ  
הודו באתי באי הים ושם מצאתי בני אדם דומים  
לנשים ואוכלים דגים חיים ומדברים כלשון בני  
אדם בלשון יונית ויאמרו לי ראה כי בתוך זה האי  
קבר מלך קדמון ושמו קינן בן אנוש שהיה קודם  
המבול מולך על כל העולם כולו והיה האיש ההוא  
חכם ומבין בכל החכמות ומושל ברוחות ובשדים  
ובמזיקים ויבן בחכמתו כי השם יתברך יביא מבול  
על הארץ בימי נח וכתוב את העתיד להיות מזה  
על לוחות האבן והנם שם והכתב כתב עברי

When I came to the land of Parsiakon (a region of the land of India), I came to the islands of the sea. There I found men who resembled women and ate raw fish and spoke a human language similar to Greek. They said to me, “Look, on this island is the grave of an ancient king, and his name is Cainan b. Enosh, who lived before the Flood, ruling over the entire world. That man was wise. He understood all manner of wisdom and reigned over spirits and demons and devils. He understood with wisdom that

*Sefer ha-Yashar* (ed. Dan)<sup>126</sup>

ויחי אנוש תשעים שנה ויולד את קינן ויגדל  
קינן ויהי בן ארבעים שנה ויחכם וידע וישכל  
בכל חכמה וימלוך על כל בני האדם וידרך את  
בני האדם בחכמה ובדעת כי היה האיש קינן  
חכם מאד ומבין בכל חכמה וימשול בחכמתו גם  
ברוחות ובשדים וידע קינן בחכמתו כי ישחית  
אלהים את בני האדם על חטאם בארץ וכי יביא  
ה' עליהם את מי המבול באחרית הימים ויכתוב  
קינן את העתיד להיות בימים ההם על לוחות אבן  
ויתנם באוצרותיו וימלוך קינן בכל הארץ וישב  
מבני האדם לעבוד את האלהים

Enosh lived ninety years and begot Cainan. Cainan grew up, and by the time he was forty, he had become wise and knew and perceived all wisdom. He ruled over all the children of Adam and guided them in wisdom and knowledge, for Cainan was truly a wise man who understood all wisdom. He also reigned with his wisdom over spirits and demons. Cainan knew by wisdom that God would wipe out the children of Adam from the earth for their sins, and that the LORD would bring upon them the waters of the

<sup>124</sup> Werman, *Book of Jubilees*, 241; VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 50–51.

<sup>125</sup> Hayim Hominer, ed., *Josiphon*, 3rd ed. (Jerusalem: Hominer Publication, 1967), 52.

<sup>126</sup> Dan, *Sefer Hayashar*, 46.

the Name, may it be blessed, would bring a Flood upon the earth in the days of Noah and wrote what was to occur on stone tablets. He placed them there. The document is written in Hebrew.”

Flood at the end of the age. Cainan wrote what was to occur in those days on tablets of stone, and he placed them in his treasuries. Cainan ruled over all the world, and he convinced some of the children of Adam to serve God.

*Sefer ha-Yashar* is dependent on *Sefer Yosippon* in other matters, although this does not mean that it depends on this amplified version of *Sefer Yosippon*. The works are nevertheless closely linked. The story of the stone tablets is as old as the authentic Josephus, who writes that the descendants of Seth recorded Antediluvian knowledge in stone (*Ant.* 1.68–71). The choice of Cainan rather than Enoch or Seth himself seems motivated by the notoriety surrounding Cainan’s post-Diluvian namesake. *Sefer ha-Yashar* only recognizes the first Cainan because he is the only one mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. He is virtuous because he belongs to the virtuous lineage of Seth. Such a passage seems like a correction of the negative portrait of the second Cainan found in *Jubilees* and subsequent works, including some in Syriac and Arabic, to be discussed in the next chapter.

The second overlap is more straightforward. Both *Jubilees* (*Jub.* 17:15–18) and *Sefer ha-Yashar* preface their respective accounts of the binding of Isaac with a “prologue in heaven” modeled on the one found at the beginning of the book of Job.<sup>127</sup> This similarity is not as surprising as it might first appear. As nomadic patriarchs put to the test by God, Abraham and Job had much in common. Their shared experiences, though not remarked upon in the Hebrew Bible, attracted the attention of the earliest rabbis (e.g., *b. Bava Batra* 15b–16a).<sup>128</sup> *Sefer ha-Yashar*, however, is the only other work besides *Jubilees* to evoke this comparison with a parallel narrative. Did *Sefer ha-Yashar* know this story from *Jubilees*? Not necessarily, although the parallel is striking.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Dan, *Sefer Hayashar*, 116–17.

<sup>128</sup> Joanna Weinberg, “Job versus Abraham: The Quest for the Perfect God-Fearer in Rabbinic Tradition,” in *The Book of Job*, ed. W.A.M. Beuken (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1994), 281–96; Devorah Dimant, “The Biblical Basis of Non-Biblical Additions: The Binding of Isaac in *Jubilees* in Light of the Story of Job,” in *Connected Vessels: The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Literature of the Second Temple Period* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2010), 348–68 [Hebrew]; Nicholas J. Ellis, “The Reception of the Jobraham Narratives in Jewish Thought,” in *Authoritative Texts and Reception History: Aspects and Approaches*, ed. Dan Batovici and Kristin De Troyer (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 124–40.

<sup>129</sup> In Gavin McDowell, “Satan at the Sacrifices of Isaac and Jesus,” in *New Vistas on Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Lorenzo DiTommaso and Gerbern S. Oegema (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 337–54, I observed a general difference between *Jubilees*, where the satanic figure incites the sacrifice of the beloved son, and rabbinic literature, where the satanic figure is attempting to prevent the same. *Sefer ha-Yashar* is unusual for presenting both motifs together.

Finally, *Sefer ha-Yashar* records the lifespans of the twelve sons of Jacob, and this information largely accords with the tradition found in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *Midrash Tadshe*, and *Seder Olam Zuta*.<sup>130</sup> This makes it yet another source that seems to know information from both *Jubilees* and the *Testaments*. *Sefer ha-Yashar* also gives the names of the wives of the twelve patriarchs but, curiously, they are completely different from the list found in *Jubilees*, which reappears in at least a few other medieval Hebrew sources.<sup>131</sup>

## 5.5 Wives of the Patriarchs (14th–16th c.)

W. Lowndes Lipscomb has proposed that Hebrew lists of the wives of the patriarchs, which appear in a few late sources, come directly from the Hebrew version of *Jubilees*.<sup>132</sup> One such list is found at the beginning of *Toledot Adam*, a short chronicle by the Venetian Jew Samuel Algazi written in 1583 (the year from which every event is dated) but published in 1585.<sup>133</sup> Lipscomb also drew attention to two other manuscripts that have partial, frequently corrupt lists of the wives: 1) a fourteenth-century biblical manuscript that Abraham Harkavy saw in Damascus and described in his travel diary, which is none other than the Farhi Bible, written between 1366–1382 by Elisha b. Abraham Benvenisti Crescas (Sassoon Collection 368; NLI F 8894),<sup>134</sup> and 2) a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century Ashkenazi manuscript (Munich, Bavarian State Library Hebr. 391; NLI F 1134) consisting of a commentary on Isaiah and the Minor Prophets, with the list of the wives scribbled on the last page (f. 91b).<sup>135</sup> Both manuscripts have the full list of patriarchs' wives from before the Flood, but the list of the later wives is defective. At the same time, they include information that is not found in *Toledot Adam*, such as the wife of Abel or, in the case of the Farhi Bible, some *miscellanea* drawn from the Talmud (*b. Bava Batra* 91a) and the wives of the twelve sons of Jacob, which is also quite similar to the one in *Jubilees*.

<sup>130</sup> Dan, *Sefer Hayashar*, 205–7.

<sup>131</sup> Dan, *Sefer Hayashar*, 262–69.

<sup>132</sup> W. Lowndes Lipscomb, “A Tradition from the Book of Jubilees in Armenian,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 29 (1978): 149–63.

<sup>133</sup> Samuel Algazi, *Toledot Adam* (Venice: Giovanni di Gara, 1585) [Hebrew].

<sup>134</sup> Abraham Harkavy, “Things Old and New: Memories from My Trip to Jerusalem,” *Hapisgah* 1 (1895): 55–64 [Hebrew]. See the full description of contents in David Solomon Sassoon, *Ohel David: Descriptive Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts in the Sassoon Library*, London, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), 1: 6–14.

<sup>135</sup> Joseph Perles, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der hebräischen und aramäischen Studien* (Munich: T. Ackermann, 1884), 90, n. 1. At the time he wrote, the manuscript was bound with a Hebrew dictionary (Munich, Hebr. 420, 14th c.) which was the true object of Perles' study.

The Hebrew lists are clearly related to each other as well as to *Jubilees*. Here is a synoptic presentation of the four lists, minus the first entry, Adam and Eve, for the patriarchs until the time of Abraham.

**Table 5.3:** Wives of the Patriarchs.

	<i>Jubilees</i> <sup>136</sup>	<i>Toledot Adam, 2a–b</i>	Farhi Bible, p. 24	Munich 391, f. 91b
Cain	Awan his sister (אחותו עון)	[No data]	Hevyah (הויה)	Tuyah (תויה)
Abel	[No data]	[No data]	Sumqama (סומקמא)	Sumqama (סומקמא)
Seth	Azura his sister (עזורה אחותו)	Azura (עזורה)	Petorah (פטורה)	Patrah (פטרה)
Enosh	Noam his sister (אחותו נועם)	Noam (נועם)	Naim (נעים)	Naimah (נעימה)
Kenan	Mualelit his sister (אחותו מהוללת)	Maholelaot (מהוללות)	Maholelet (מחוללת)	Holelet (הוללת)
Mahalalel	Dinah bt. Barakiel (דינה בת ברכאל)	Dinah (דינה)	Dinar (דינר)	Dinah (דינה)
Jared	Barakah bt. Rasu'eyal (ברכה בת רצויאל)	Barakah bt. Retzuyah (ברכה בת רצויה)	Berakyah bt. Ditzyah (ברכיה בת דיציאה)	Bat Ritziyah (בת ריצייה)
Enoch	Edni bt. Daniel (עדני בת דנאל)	Ednah bt. Daniel (עדנה בת דניאל)	Erni bt. Daniel (ערני בת דניאל)	Edni bt. Daniel (בת דניאל)
Methusaleh	Edna bt. Ezrael (עדנה בת עזראל)	Ednah bt. Azariah (עדנה בת עזריה)	Ednah bt. Othdel (עדנה בת עתדל)	Ednah bt. Othel (עדנה בת עתאל)
Lamech	Betanosh bt. Barakiel (בת-אנוש בת ברכאל)	Baronosh bt. Barakael (ברונוש בת ברכאל)	Bat Enosh (בת אנוש)	Bat Enosh (בת אנוש)
Noah	Emzara bt. Barakiel (אמזרע בת ברכיאל)	Amura bt. Barakiel (אמורע בת ברכיאל)	Mezra bt. Barakiel (מזרע בת ברכיאל)	Mizria bt. Barakiel (מזריע בת ברכיאל)
Shem	Sedeqatelebab (צדקת-לבב)	Mecholah bt. Benno (מחלה בת בנו)	Machleteven (מחלתיבן)	Machletehen (מחלתיהן)
Ham	Neelatamauk (נחלת-מחוק)	[No data]	Samnatnebo (סמנתנבו)	Samaknatnefo (סמכנתנפו)
Japhet	Adataneses (עדתן-שש)	[No data]	Batnatnebo (בתנתנבו)	[No data]

<sup>136</sup> The English orthography comes from VanderKam's *Commentary*. The Hebrew names come from Werman, *Book of Jubilees*. The names of the wives can be found throughout *Jub.* 4, *Jub.* 7:14–16; *Jub.* 8:1.5–7, *Jub.* 10:18, and throughout *Jub.* 11.

**Table 5.3** (continued)

	<i>Jubilees</i>	<i>Toledot Adam, 2a–b</i>	Farhi Bible, p. 24	Munich 391, f. 91b
Arpachshad	Rasueya bt. Susan bt. Elam (רצויה בת שושן עילם)	Retzuyah bt. Sasoon (רצויה בת ששון)	Retzuyah (רצויה)	[No data]
Cainan	Melcha bt. Madai (מלכה בת מדי)	[No data]	[No data]	[No data]
Shelah	Muak bt. Kesed (מעכה בת כשד)	Malkah bt. Madai (מלכה בת מדי)	Malkah bt. Kebar (מלכה בת כבר) <sup>137</sup>	[No data]
Eber	Azura bt. Nebrod (עזורה בת נמרוד)	Azurah bt. Nimrod (עזורה בת נמרוד)	[No data]	[No data]
Peleg	Lomna bt. Sinaor (לבנה בת שנער)	Lavnah bt. Shinar (לבנה בת שנער)	[No data]	[No data]
Reu	Ara bt. Ur b. Kesed (אורה בת אור בן כשד)	Urah bt. Hur (אורה בת חור)	[No data]	[No data]
Serug	Melcha bt. Kaber (מלכה בת כבר)	Malkah bt. Nahor (מלכה בת נהור)	[No data]	[No data]
Nahor	Iyaseka bt. Nestag (יסכה בת נסתג)	Yashgav bt. Yashchuv (ישגב בת ישחוב)	Yiskah bt. Nosah (יסכה בת נוסה)	[No data]
Terah	Edna bt. Abram (עדנה בת אברם)	Ednah bt. Evarnahu (עדנה בת אברנהו)	Amthela bt. Barnebo (אמתלא בת ברנבו)	[No data]

The book of *Jubilees* and the Farhi Bible have an additional list of the wives of the sons of Jacob.

**Table 5.4:** Wives of the Sons of Jacob.

	<i>Jubilees</i> 34:20 <sup>138</sup>	Farhi Bible, p. 24
Reuben	Oda (אודה)	Adah (עדה)
Simeon	Adebaa (אדבה)	Yev'ah (יבעה)
Levi	Melcha (מלכה)	Nevnat (נבנת)
Judah	Betasuel (בת שוע)	Bath Shua (בת שוע)
Issachar	Hezaqa (חזקה)	Azaqah (עזקה)

<sup>137</sup> This is clearly supposed to be the wife of Serug. The scribe, via *parablepsis*, jumped from “Malkah” to “Malkah.” This is why the wives of the next four patriarchs are missing.

<sup>138</sup> Vanderkam, *Jubilees: A Commentary* 2:916; Werman, *Book of Jubilees*, 447.

Table 5.4 (continued)

	<i>Jubilees</i> 34:20	Farhi Bible, p. 24
Zebulun	[Ne'eman] <sup>139</sup> (נעמנה)	Ezni (עזני)
Dan	Egla (עגלה)	Eglah (עגלה)
Naphtali	Rasu'u (רצויה)	Retzuyah (רצויה)
Gad	Maka (מכה)	Ma'akah (מעכה)
Asher	Iyona (יונה)	Yonah (יונה)
Joseph	Aseneth (אסנת)	Aseneth (אסנת)
Benjamin	Iyaska (יסכה)	Yiskah (יסכה)

Lipscomb acknowledged the popularity of this tradition, citing similar lists in Armenian, Syriac (which also has the wives of the sons of Jacob), and Greek. Traces of such lists are also found in Coptic<sup>140</sup> and Arabic<sup>141</sup> (which support, incidentally, the Ethiopic version of the names of Noah's daughters-in-law against the very different Hebrew names). He also notes that the Ethiopic, Syriac, and probably the Armenian lists come from one of the many Greek lists. However, he argues that the three Hebrew lists come *directly* from a Hebrew version of *Jubilees*, based on the following arguments. First, he notes that the orthographic variants among the lists represent typical graphic confusions between similar looking Hebrew letters. Second, the Hebrew names do not give any evidence of transliteration, such as the guttural *aleph* (א) in place of an *ayin* (ע), which is a common feature of the Ethiopic and Syriac texts. Third, the Hebrew names are not garbled beyond comprehension.<sup>142</sup>

These arguments are insufficient to prove that the source of the lists was a Hebrew version of *Jubilees*. Granted, there are many obvious cases of orthographic corruptions within the lists, such as the shifting forms of the name “Emzara.” However, this does not mean that the common Hebrew *Vorlage* of the three lists was a Hebrew version of *Jubilees*. Given the popularity of this tradition across

<sup>139</sup> According to VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Commentary*, 2:918, note b, the name of this wife is inconsistent and often missing in the manuscripts.

<sup>140</sup> According to Andrew Crislip, “The Book of Jubilees in Coptic: An Early Christian Florilegium on the Family of Noah,” *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 40 (2003): 27–44 (32–33), the Coptic papyrus P.CtYBR inv. 4995 (from the Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscript Library at Yale University) gives the names “Nehelathmaouk,” “Adathneses,” and “Sedekathlebab” as the wives of (respectively) Ham, Japhet, and Shem. The wife of Noah is “Emmezara.”

<sup>141</sup> Giorgio Levi Della Vida, “Una traccia del Libro dei Giubilei nella letteratura araba musulmana,” *Orientalia* 1 (1932): 205–12, gives several examples of partial lists of the wives in Arabic literature, both Christian and Muslim. I will return to this subject in the next chapter.

<sup>142</sup> Lipscomb, “Jubilees in Armenian,” 154.

several different languages and religious cultures, the *Vorlage* could have just as easily have been another independent list of the wives in Hebrew.

The absence of any marks of transliteration seems like a stronger argument, but it too is not probative. One recurring name in the list is “Ednah” (עדנה) or a variant, which is indeed spelled with an *aleph* in Ethiopic and Syriac. However, it would not have been difficult to “retrovert” this name properly back into Hebrew. In fact, it has been done. Medieval copies of the book of Tobit in Hebrew and Aramaic, based on Greek and Latin versions of the text, consistently transliterate this name—as well as other names with gutturals, such as “Anna” (חנה) and “Raguel” (רעואל)—correctly.<sup>143</sup> Consequently, if a scribe can recognize the Hebrew name behind a Greek or Latin transliteration, then the recorded name will be intelligible, refuting Lipscomb’s third point.

The Syriac list, which will be discussed briefly in the next chapter, claims to have recorded the names from a Hebrew “Book of Jubilees”, yet the list shows evidence of dependence on a Greek text. The witness of this list is important because it closely resembles the one in the Farhi Bible, the oldest and most complete of the Hebrew lists (they are the only two, for example, to include the wives of the sons of Jacob). The Hebrew lists could have ultimately come from several sources, whether Greek, Syriac, or another language.

*Toledot Adam* has another feature that links it to both *Jubilees* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. The lifespans of the patriarchs (which need to be worked out from the given data) closely resemble the numbers found in the *Testaments*, *Midrash Tadshe*, *Seder Olam Zuta*, and *Sefer ha-Yashar*. Furthermore, the order of the patriarchs’ birth is close to the one given in *Midrash Tadshe* and implied by the chronological data of *Jubilees*, where Dan is born before Judah and Zebulun is born after Joseph. This is yet another example of a medieval Hebrew work that combines data from *Jubilees* and the *Testaments*—a recurring phenomenon.

## 5.6 Conclusion

At the end of this survey, it is difficult to state conclusively that any of these Hebrew sources knew the Hebrew version of *Jubilees*. In several cases there are examples of “floating traditions,” material that has been excerpted from *Jubilees* (or one of its

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<sup>143</sup> See the parallels texts in Stuart Weeks, Simon J. Gathercole, and Loren T. Stuckenbruck, eds., *The Book of Tobit: Texts from the Principal Ancient and Medieval Traditions* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004). The character Ednah appears throughout chapters seven and eight of Tobit.

sources) and circulated independently. The lists of the wives of the patriarchs are good examples of this phenomenon—not only in Hebrew but in other languages as well. Another example is the enumeration of the twenty-two works of creation. Even the birth order of the patriarchs, which is given in a peculiar sequence in *Midrash Tadshe* and in Samuel Algazi's *Toledot Adam*, might represent a tradition that existed apart from *Jubilees*. On a related note, both works, along with *Sefer ha-Yashar*, combine material from *Jubilees* with the lifespans of the sons of Jacob, a tradition best-known from the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.

Another interesting case involves those works which seem to reflect a lost source of *Jubilees*. This is most prominent in *Sefer Refu'ot*. *Midrash Vayissa'u*—another case where material from *Jubilees* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* coexist in the same document—might be another example. The *Testaments* and *Jubilees* have much in common. It leaves one to wonder if they might have originally drawn from a common source.

An isolated curiosity is Saadia Gaon's reference to a "Book of Jubilees" that is unrelated to the work preserved in Ethiopic and rediscovered at Qumran. Is this a lost version of *Jubilees*, a continuation, or something else? Even more strangely—as the next chapter will witness—the phenomenon of "phantom citations" recurs in Syriac literature. The matter requires further investigation.

For the remaining cases, one can suspect the influence of *Jubilees* traditions from intermediary works transmitted by Christians, especially chronicles. Some of the Hebrew works, such as *Midrash Tadshe*, *Midrash Aggadah*, and *Aggadat Bereshit*, might reflect the influence of the most widely promulgated *Jubilees* traditions in Christian history and exegesis. This will be the subject of the next chapter.



## 6 *Jubilees* in Christian Tradition

The preceding chapter considered the survival of Hebrew *Jubilees* into Late Antiquity and beyond, although the evidence was ultimately wanting. The current chapter turns to the Greek version, which certainly existed in Late Antiquity but has since vanished—though not without leaving a trace. Traditions from *Jubilees*, though very little of the text itself, are scattered throughout Christian literature until the beginning of the modern period, mainly in the form of patristic citations and in Byzantine chronicles. This chapter is organized according to language traditions, although it proved impossible to separate Greek and Latin Fathers (Where does one put Origen, a Greek writer often preserved only in Latin?). Hence, there are sections on the Greek and Latin Fathers (which includes all the Latin evidence), Byzantine historians (exclusively Greek), Syriac evidence, and a final section covering all other Christian liturgical languages. The conclusion tabulates the most popular traditions from *Jubilees* in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages—the ones that would be most likely to appear in a work like *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer*.

The Christian transmission of *Jubilees* spans the duration of the Byzantine Empire, from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries. The first direct reference to the work is Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 4365, from the third or fourth century, calling it by its most common Greek appellation, the *Little Genesis*.

Τῇ κυρία μου φυλάττῃ ἀδελφῇ ἐν κυρίῳ χαίρειν. χρῆσον τὸν Ἑσδραν. ἐπεὶ ἔχρησα σοι τὴν λεπτὴν Γένεσιν. ἔρρωσο ἐν θεῷ.

To my beloved lady sister in the Lord, greetings. Lend Ezra, since I lent you the *Little Genesis* (τὴν λεπτὴν Γένεσιν). Farewell in God.<sup>1</sup>

From this point onward, there is continuous citation of *Jubilees* in Latin, Greek, and Syriac. The web of *Jubilees* traditions is so dense that it proved necessary to impose some parameters. First, I have not included lost or hypothetical sources. The chronicles of Julius Africanus and the Alexandrians Panodorus, and Annianus most likely contained much material inherited from *Jubilees*. I have made no attempt to reconstruct these lost chronicles. I only refer to what has remained of them in later works.

Second, I have not included works whose primary relationship to *Jubilees* is the Diamerismos tradition. This refers to the division of the world among the sons of Noah, which was a popular theme in Byzantine literature. James Scott has written a

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1 Dieter Hagedorn, "Die 'Kleine Genesis' in P. Oxy. LXIII 4365," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 116 (1997): 147–48.

monograph on *Jubilees*' contribution to this tradition and proposed that Theophilus of Antioch (d. 185) and Hippolytus of Rome (d. 236) both knew *Jubilees* based on their geographical writings.<sup>2</sup> The *Diamerismos*, however, was not merely popular in the Byzantine period. It was a popular theme in Second Temple literature too. Variations are found in the *Genesis Apocryphon* (1QapGen XVI–XVII) and in the *Antiquities* of Josephus (*Ant.* I.120–147), who exerted the greatest influence on Christian writers. I have only mentioned the *Diamerismos* when it is coupled with the oath to respect national borders and Canaan's violation of this oath, a theme not found in Josephus but for which *Jubilees* is the oldest witness.

On the subject of Josephus, I have also excluded works related to *Jubilees* but not necessarily dependent on it, of which the *Antiquities* is the preeminent example.<sup>3</sup> Other works with an indeterminate relationship to *Jubilees* include the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*<sup>4</sup> and the *Pseudo-Clementines*.<sup>5</sup> I have also excluded “apocryphal” works in general. Several have an intriguing relationship to *Jubilees* (e.g., the *Life of Adam and Eve*<sup>6</sup> and the *Palaea historica*<sup>7</sup>), but intractable problems with dating and different recensions across diverse languages made the issue, well, byzantine. Some obscure apocryphal works, however, are discussed briefly in the final section on miscellaneous language traditions.

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2 James M. Scott, *Geography in Early Judaism and Christianity: The Book of Jubilees* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 126–58.

3 Betsy Halpern-Amaru, “Flavius Josephus and *The Book of Jubilees*: A Question of Source,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 72 (2001): 15–44.

4 See, for example, *T. Reuben* 3:11–15 and *Jub.* 33:1–9 (the rape of Bilhah); *T. Simeon* 8 and *Jub.* 46:9–11 (the war between Canaan and Egypt); the whole of *T. Levi* and *Jub.* 30–32 (the election of Levi); *T. Judah* 1–9 and *Jub.* 34 and 37–38 (the wars against the Amorites and the Edomites); *T. Naphtali* 1 and *Jub.* 28:9–10 (the genealogy of Bilhah); *T. Benjamin* 12 and *Jub.* 46:9–11 (the war between Canaan and Egypt).

5 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. See also F. Stanley Jones, *An Ancient Jewish Christian Source on the History of Christianity: Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions 1.27-71* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 138–39.

6 The Greek recension is called *The Apocalypse of Moses*, which invites comparison to the frame setting of *Jubilees*.

7 See William Adler, “Parabiblical Traditions and Their Use in the *Palaea Historica*,” in *Tradition, Transmission, and Transformation from Second Temple Literature through Judaism and Christianity in Late Antiquity*, ed. Menahem Kister et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1–39.

In writing this chapter, I have relied on the earlier lists of Hermann Rönsch<sup>8</sup> and R. H. Charles,<sup>9</sup> although I have not always agreed with their judgments. They were especially helpful in tracking down obscure patristic references. For the Greek chronicles, however, I went through each text individually without reference to Rönsch or Charles.

## 6.1 Greek and Latin Fathers

The patristic period includes at least the first seven Christian centuries and is generally seen as ending with John of Damascus (d. 749). In this period, *Jubilees* is known principally by stray citations from the pens of important Christian Fathers. This section ends with anonymous citations from the Greek *catena* tradition, which only cites authorities from this period. Since very few Byzantine chronicles from this era have come down to us, and even the earliest Syriac references to *Jubilees* (or a *Jubilees*-like composition) are from the seventh century or later, the patristic evidence constitutes the earliest surviving Christian engagement with *Jubilees*.

The first Christian theologian who appears to have been conversant with *Jubilees* is also one who had a capacious knowledge of apocryphal works: Origen of Alexandria (d. 254).<sup>10</sup> Surprisingly, he never cites *Jubilees* by one of its many names, although he refers to a couple of traditions known from the work. J. T. Milik observed that Origen is the first Christian writer to refer to the twenty-two works of creation from *Jubilees* 2:2–23.<sup>11</sup> The reference comes from his *Homiliae in Numeros* IV.1.2, which has only survived in the Latin translation of Rufinus.

Now if one observes the divine Scriptures, one will frequently find that the number twenty-two has been recorded for important reasons. For the Hebrews hand down the tradition that there are twenty-two letters in the alphabet. Once again, twenty-two fathers are enumerated from the first-formed, Adam, to Jacob, from whose seed the twelve tribes receive their commencement. They also hand down the tradition that the species of all the creatures of God are restricted to within twenty-two.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Hermann Rönsch, *Das Buch der Jubiläen: Oder die Kleine Genesis* (Leipzig: Fues Verlag, 1874), 251–382.

<sup>9</sup> R. H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees or The Little Genesis, Translated from the Editor's Ethiopic Text* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1902), lxxvii–lxxxiii.

<sup>10</sup> On Origen and the apocrypha (but not *Jubilees*), see Joseph Ruwet, “Les ‘Antilegomena’ dans les œuvres d’Origène,” *Biblica* 23 (1942): 18–42; 24 (1943): 18–58; 25 (1944): 143–173.

<sup>11</sup> J. T. Milik, “Recherches sur la version grecque du Livre des Jubilés,” *Revue Biblique* 78 (1971): 545–57 (550).

<sup>12</sup> Origen, *Homilies on Numbers*, ed. Christopher A. Hall, trans. Thomas P. Scheck (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009), 13.

This near-citation alludes to *Jub.* 2:23, which correlates the twenty-two works of creation with the twenty-two generations from Adam to Jacob. An expanded form of this tradition appears in the *De mensuris et ponderibus* of Epiphanius of Salamis, discussed later on in this section.

Charles drew attention to another possible reference to *Jubilees* in the works of Origen, referring to the *catena ad Gen* 41:45 (no. 1940), which cites Origen regarding an apocryphal source claiming that Aseneth is none other than the daughter of Potiphar, Joseph's former master (*Gen* 39).<sup>13</sup>

Τὸ μὲν Φουτιφάρ ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ πατρός ἐστι τῆς γαμηθείσης τῷ Ἰωσήφ. Οἰήσεται δέ τις ἕτερον εἶναι τοῦτον τὸν ἄνδρα παρὰ τὸν ὠνησάμενον τὸν Ἰωσήφ. Οὐ μὴν οὕτως ὑπελήφασιν Ἑβραῖοι, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀποκρύφου γνόντες τὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι λέγουσιν, τὸν δεσπότην αὐτοῦ γενόμενον καὶ τὸν πενθερόν.

Potiphar is the name of the father of the one to whom Joseph was married. Some will consider him to be different from the one who bought Joseph. Nevertheless, the Hebrews do not understand it in this way, but they say, on the basis of an apocryphal source, that he came to be both his master and his father-in-law.<sup>14</sup>

This view accords with the one found in *Jubilees* (34:11 and 40:10). However, the apocryphal legend Origen goes on to recount explains how Aseneth exculpated Joseph after he was accused of adultery, and Potiphar offered Aseneth in marriage as recompense. Nothing of this is found in *Jubilees*. The identification of Potiphar and Potiphara is found in *Gen. Rab.* 86:3 and 89:2, although the final redaction of this work was centuries after Origen. The view was rejected in later works, such as PRE, which makes Aseneth Joseph's niece.

Charles was also of the opinion that Origen referred to *Jub.* 32:21 and 45:14 when he cited from an apocryphal work called the *Prayer of Joseph*.<sup>15</sup> Despite some thematic overlap between the two, namely the concept of the heavenly tablets, the *Prayer of Joseph* is a separate work.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Charles, *The Book of Jubilees*, 227, n. 10.

<sup>14</sup> My translation from Françoise Petit, ed., *La Chaîne sur la Genèse: Édition intégrale*, 4 vols. (Leuven: Peeters, 1991–1995), 4:255. In the same volume (4:209, no. 1850, *ad Gen* 39:5, the story of Potiphar), Petit suggests that Origen's comments to the verse are an analogue to *Jub.* 39:3, but both Origen and *Jubilees* are merely echoing Genesis.

<sup>15</sup> Charles, *Book of Jubilees*, lxxx.

<sup>16</sup> See Jonathan Z. Smith, "Prayer of Joseph: A New Translation with Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1983–1985), 2:699–714.

Next, Diodorus of Tarsus, also known as Diodorus of Antioch (d. ca. 390), has his name attached to an otherwise unidentified passage in the Greek *catena* literature, *ad Gen* 9:25–27. It is number 805 in François Petit’s edition of the Greek *Catena* to Genesis.<sup>17</sup> Both Ronsch and Charles cite the passage as an example of *Jubilees* in patristic literature, although their text, from the eighteenth-century *Catena of Nicephorus* (I.167), differs slightly from Petit’s.<sup>18</sup> The brief passage alludes to the curious idea that the Medes, descendants of Japhet, were dissatisfied with their initial allotment and decided to dwell in the current territory of Media within the boundaries of Shem (cf. *Jub.* 10:35), thus fulfilling the prophecy that Japhet will “dwell in the tents of Shem” (*Gen* 9:27). The passage in Petit reads: “Do you see that the words of Noah were a prophecy? For Madaim, that is, the Mede, being a son of Japhet, possessed Media, the most beautiful of the tents of Shem, not a small portion of the land of the Persians (Ορᾶς ὅτι προφητεία ἦν τὰ παρὰ τοῦ Νώε; Καὶ γὰρ Μαδαίμ, τουτέστιν ὁ Μήδος, τοῦ Ἰάφεθ ὧν υἱός, τὸ κάλλιστον τῶν τοῦ Σὴμ οἰκήσεων κατέσχευ, τὴν Μηδίαν μέρος οὐκ ἐλάχιστον τῆς τῶν Περσῶν γῆς).” It goes on to discuss the Roman occupation of the land of Shem and Canaan and their subjugation of the natives, fulfilling Noah’s curse in *Gen* 9:25.

A more substantive, though still quite mysterious, citation of a *Jubilees*-like book comes from Didymus the Blind (d. 398), an Alexandrian exegete in the vein of Philo and Origen.<sup>19</sup> In his biblical commentaries on Genesis and Job, Didymus mentions a *Book of the Covenant* (ἡ Βίβλος τῆς Διαθήκης), which shares at least some material with *Jubilees*. He is the primary transmitter of this largely unknown work. A Latin translator of Didymus called this book *Leptogenesis* (“Little Genesis”), a common Greek designation for *Jubilees*.<sup>20</sup> However, James VanderKam, who has translated the fragments, doubted that the two books were identical due to the broadness of the traditions cited and substantive differences between them.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Petit, *La Chaîne sur la Genèse*, 2:185.

<sup>18</sup> Ronsch, *Das Buch der Jubiläen*, 334–35; Charles, *The Book of Jubilees*, 85, n. 30.

<sup>19</sup> For an overview of his life and works, see Richard A. Layton, *Didymus the Blind and His Circle in Late-Antique Alexandria: Virtue and Narrative in Biblical Scholarship* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004).

<sup>20</sup> R.H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees, or The Little Genesis*, London, 1902, p. lxxvii.

<sup>21</sup> James C. VanderKam, “The Book of the Covenant: 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), 28–32. See also Dieter Lührmann, “Alttestamentliche Pseudepigraphen bei Didymos von Alexandrien,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 104 (1992): 231–49 (239–45).

The references to the *Book of the Covenant* are few and vague. According to Didymus, the book contains the following traditions: Cain and Abel were born several years apart (*Commentary on Genesis* 118,29–119,2; *Jub.* 4:1);<sup>22</sup> fire consumed the sacrifice of Abel (*Genesis* 121,22–27);<sup>23</sup> Cain killed Abel with either stone or wood (*Genesis* 126,24–26; cf. *Jub.* 4:31);<sup>24</sup> Cain died when Lamech pushed a wall onto him (*Genesis* 142,28–143,3; cf. *Jub.* 4:31);<sup>25</sup> Enoch ascended bodily into Paradise (*Genesis* 149,5–8; *Jub.* 4:23);<sup>26</sup> and Abraham was once tested by Satan (*Commentary on Job* 6,17–24; *Jub.* 17:15–18).<sup>27</sup>

Of these traditions, the only one that certainly does not come from *Jubilees* is the reference to the fire that consumed Abel's sacrifice, a detail that is sometimes misattributed to *Genesis* itself and, indeed, might once have been there.<sup>28</sup> Didymus' description of Cain's death is an amalgamation of two different traditions. In *Jubilees*, a house collapses on Cain (*Jub.* 4:31). In a competing tradition, Lamech kills Cain in a hunting accident. This story is found, among many other places (such as *Cav. Tr.* 8:2–10), in a letter of Didymus' contemporary Jerome (*Epistula* 36.4).<sup>29</sup> There are other instances where the two traditions are conflated or harmonized, such as the report in *Aggadat Bereshit*, discussed in the previous chapter. Given the vagueness of Didymus' assertions, and the apparent confusion between sources, one can wonder how Didymus' blindness might have impacted his writings.

Didymus is not the only witness to a *Book of the Covenant*. Two passages from the Greek *catena* literature collected by Françoise Petit cite "The Covenant" or "The

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22 For the full context of the passage, see Didymus the Blind, *Commentary on Genesis*, trans. Robert Charles Hill (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 115. VanderKam's numbering refers to the page and line number of the Tura papyri containing Didymus' writings.

23 Hill, *Commentary on Genesis*, 117–18.

24 Hill, *Commentary on Genesis*, 122.

25 Hill, *Commentary on Genesis*, 133.

26 Hill, *Commentary on Genesis*, 139.

27 Edward F. Duffy, "The Tura Papyrus of Didymus the Blind's *Commentary on Job*: An Original Translation with Introduction and Commentary" (PhD Dissertation, Graduate Theological Foundation, 2000), 38.

28 Sebastian P. Brock, "Fire from Heaven: From Abel's Sacrifice to the Eucharist: A Theme in Syriac Christianity," *Studia Patristica* 25 (1993): 229–43 (231): "Though it is possible that Aphrahat introduced the theme of the divine fire of acceptance here solely under the influence of biblical passages such as those cited earlier, it is rather more likely that his exegesis goes back indirectly (and by paths which can no longer be traced) to one of the Greek revisions of the Septuagint, for at Gen. 4.4, where the Hebrew has *wayyiša'*, generally rendered by both ancient and modern translators by 'And (God) had regard for (Abel and his offering)', the very different translation 'and he en-fired' is attributed to Theodotion."

29 Jerome, *Epistulae*, ed. Isidor Hilberg, 3 vols. (Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1910–1918), 1:271–72. Jerome found the story "written in a certain Hebrew volume" (*in quodam Hebraeo uolumine scribitur*).

Testament” (ἡ Διαθήκη) as their source. The first of these (no. 839, *ad Gen 11:4*), translated below, is a direct citation of *Jub.* 10:21.<sup>30</sup> The second attributed passage, however, (no. 1829, *ad Gen 38:18*) testifies that Tamar was a virgin when Judah slept with her, aggravating the enormity of his crime, and this has no parallel in *Jubilees*.<sup>31</sup> The testimonies regarding the *Book of the Covenant* are therefore contradictory, and there is no way to confirm the contents of the book.

A contemporary of Didymus, Epiphanius, the Palestine-born bishop of Salamis in Cyprus (d. 403), is most famous as the author of the *Panarion*, a catalogue of heresies. He also wrote a short treatise, *De mensuris et ponderibus*, about the weights and measures found in the Bible. The *Panarion* mentions *Jubilees* by name, both as *Jubilees* and as the *Little Genesis*. The widely-translated *De mensuris et ponderibus*, which quotes *Jub.* 2 at length, is more important for the history of the transmission of *Jubilees*, even though this short work does not cite the book by name. In addition to its original Greek version,<sup>32</sup> it was translated into Syriac,<sup>33</sup> Armenian,<sup>34</sup> Georgian,<sup>35</sup> and paraphrased in Latin<sup>36</sup> and Slavonic.<sup>37</sup>

Epiphanius of Salamis has probably done more to promote knowledge of *Jubilees* than any other Church Father. The citation of *Jub.* 2:2–23 in *De mensuris et ponderibus* is among the longest passages from *Jubilees* preserved in Greek. The widespread translation of this passage, which enumerates the twenty-two works of creation, greatly promoted knowledge of *Jubilees*’ creation account across Christendom. Epiphanius does not explicitly name his source or the fact that he is citing anything at all. He also slightly adapts the text of *Jubilees*, mentioning, for example, that the twenty-two works of creation correspond to a canon of Scripture in twenty-two books. The author of *Jubilees* did not know such a canon (and probably would have anticipated being included in it). The figure twenty-two comes from Josephus (*Against Apion* I. 38–41), and Epiphanius adapted his canon list to fit this number. The reference to twenty-two books is a telltale sign of dependence on Epiphanius

<sup>30</sup> Petit, *La Chaîne de la Genèse*, 2:202

<sup>31</sup> Petit, *La Chaîne de la Genèse*, 4:197.

<sup>32</sup> Epiphanius of Salamis, *Opera Omnia*, ed. Dionysius Petavius, 2 vols. (Paris: Michaelis Sonni, Claudii Morelli, et Sebastiani Cremonensis, 1622), 2:178–80.

<sup>33</sup> Epiphanius of Salamis, *Epiphanius’ Treatise on Weights and Measures: The Syriac Version*, ed. James Elmer Dean (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935).

<sup>34</sup> Epiphanius of Salamis, *The Armenian Texts of Epiphanius of Salamis: De mensuris et ponderibus*, ed. Michael E. Stone and Roberta R. Ervine (Leuven: Peeters, 2000).

<sup>35</sup> Epiphanius of Salamis, *Les Versions géorgiennes d’Épiphane de Chypre: Traité des poids et des mesures*, ed. Michel Van Esbroeck, 2 vols. (Leuven: Peeters, 1984).

<sup>36</sup> Charles, *The Book of Jubilees*, lxxxi (citing Isidore of Seville, *Origenes*, XVI.26.10).

<sup>37</sup> Florentina Badalanova Geller, “The Alphabet of Creation: Traces of *Jubilees* Cosmogony in Slavonic Tradition,” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 24 (2015): 182–212.

rather than *Jubilees* (see, for example, *Midrash Tadshe*, discussed in the previous chapter).

Epiphanius mentions several traditions from *Jubilees* in the *Panarion*, but he only names the book once. Among the unattributed traditions, he claims that evil came into the world in the days of Jared (*Panarion* 1.3; cf. *Jub.* 4:15), that the Ark came to rest on Mount Lubar (*Panarion* 2.1; cf. *Jub.* 5:28), and that idolatry began in the days of Serug (*Panarion* 3.4; cf. *Jub.* 11:1–6). In his polemic against the Manichaeans, he mentions that Canaan, the son of Ham, occupied the territory of Shem in violation of an oath (*Panarion* 66.84.1; cf. *Jub.* 10:28–34), responding to the accusation that Joshua unjustly acquired the land of Canaan.

In all four examples, Epiphanius does not explicitly cite *Jubilees* but refers to received tradition (*paradosis*).<sup>38</sup> Epiphanius treats the traditions from *Jubilees* as part and parcel of orthodox Christian belief. This comes to the fore in the one instance where Epiphanius cites *Jubilees* by name. In *Panarion* 39.6, he gives the names of the daughters of Adam and Eve from *Jub.* 4:1–11 against a comparable Sethian gnostic tradition. In neither case is there any scriptural support for the names (or number) of the children of the first parents. Epiphanius favors *Jubilees* simply because of its antiquity and, presumably, its place in early Christian tradition.

But as we find in *Jubilees* (Ιωβηλαίους) which is also called the *Little Genesis* (λεπτὴ Γενέσει καλουμένη), the book even contains the names of both Cain's and Seth's wives, so that the persons who recite myths to the world may be put to shame in every way. For after Adam had sired sons and daughters it became necessary at that time that the boys marry their own sisters. Such a thing was not unlawful, as there was no other human stock. Indeed, in a manner of speaking Adam himself practically married his own daughter who was fashioned from his body and bones and had been formed by God in conjunction with him, and it was not unlawful. And his sons were married, Cain to the older sister, whose name was Saue (Σαυή); and a third son, Seth, who was born after Abel, to his sister named Azura (Ἀζουρά).<sup>39</sup>

In a separate passage (*Panarion* 26.1.6), Epiphanius gives “Barthenos” as the name of the wife of Noah, apparently confusing the traditional name of Noah's mother for his wife. (cf. *Jub.* 4:28). These are the only references to the wives of the patriarchs in Epiphanius.

<sup>38</sup> See Anne Kreps, “From Jewish Apocrypha to Christian Tradition: Citations of *Jubilees* in Epiphanius's *Panarion*,” *Church History* 18 (2018): 345–70.

<sup>39</sup> Epiphanius of Salamis, *The Panarion: Book I (Sects 1–46)*, trans. Frank Williams, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 280. Citations of the Greek text are from Epiphanius of Salamis, *Ancoratus und Panarion*, ed. Karl Holl, 3 vols. (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1915–1933), 2:76.



Although some scholars have questioned whether Epiphanius knew *Jubilees* firsthand,<sup>40</sup> he has internalized much important material from the work. More significantly, he believed that *Jubilees* constituted authentic sacred history against the competing histories of the Sethians (*Panarion* 39) and the Manichaeans (*Panarion* 66). *Jubilees* formed the basis for how this Christian author understood the history of Israel.

Epiphanius' correspondent and sometime ally Jerome of Stridon (d. 420), the trilingual man (*vir trilinguis*), is most famous for the Vulgate, his Latin translation of the Bible from the original languages. In doing so he adopted the principle of "Hebrew Truth" (*hebraica veritas*) and cast aspersions on those books lacking a Hebrew version, which he dubbed "apocrypha" (although Jerome translated some of them anyway). He is probably the least likely person to cite *Jubilees*, and yet he does so twice in a letter to Fabiola (*Epistula* 78.20 and 26) explaining the different stations of the Israelites' wandering in the wilderness as recounted in Numbers 33.<sup>41</sup>

Jerome refers to *Jubilees* under its Greek name, *Little Genesis* (*libro apocrypho, qui a Graecis λεπτή, id est parua, Genesis appellatur*). Both references, however, are inexact. In the first citation (*Epistula* 78.20), Jerome suggests the Tower of Babel was surrounded by an athletic stadium.

Et profecti de Lebna castra metati sunt in Ressa. Octauadecima mansio in 'frenos' uertitur. sienim post profectum rursum ad luti opera descendimus, infrenandi sumus et cursus uagi atque praecipites scripturarum retinaculis dirigendi. hoc uerbum, quantum memoria suggerit, nusquam alibi in scripturis sanctis apud Hebraeos inuenisse me noui absque libro apocrypho, qui a Graecis λεπτή, id est parua, Genesis appellatur; ibi in aedificatione turris pro stadio ponitur, in quo exercentur pugiles et athletae et cursorum uelocitas conprobatur.

*They left Libnah and camped at Rissah* (Num 33:21). The eighteenth station is termed "reins." For if, after departure, we descend again into filthy works, we are reined in again and our vagrant and precipitous courses are once more directed by the bridles of Scripture. This word, as far as memory serves, I have found nowhere else in the Sacred Scriptures of the Hebrews apart from an apocryphal book, which is called by the Greeks λεπτή, that is "little," Genesis. There, it is used in the context of the building of the tower for a stadium, in which boxers and athletes are trained and the speed of runners is tested.

Jerome seems to be thinking of the reference to *stadia* in *Jubilees'* account of the construction of the Tower of Babel (*Jub.* 10:21). This is the word used in the reference to Babel in a Syriac list of the wives of the patriarchs (see below).<sup>42</sup> This

<sup>40</sup> For example, William Adler, "The Origins of the Proto-Heresies: Fragments from a Chronicle in the First Book of Epiphanius' *Panarion*," *Journal of Theological Studies* 41 (1990): 472–501.

<sup>41</sup> Jerome, *Epistulae*, 2:49–87 (68 and 70–71).

<sup>42</sup> Antonio Maria Ceriani, ed. and trans., "Nomina uxorum patriarcharum priorum juxta librum hebraeum Jobelia nuncupatum," in *Monumenta sacra et profana ex codicibus praesertim bibliothecae Ambrosianae* (Milan: Typis et Impensis Bibliothecae Ambrosianae, 1863), ix–x.

unit of length is not the same as a stadium for sporting events, although this is the meaning of the Hebrew word *ris* (ריס), which Jerome has connected to the name of the station, Rissah (רסה).

In the second reference (*Epistula* 78.26), Jerome states that Terah, rather than Abraham, chased away the ravens during the time of famine (cf. *Jub.* 11:18–24).

Et profecti de Thaath castra metati sunt in Thare. Vicesima quarta mansio, quam nonnulli uertunt in ‘malitiam’ uel in ‘pasturam’, nec errarent, si per ain litteram scriberetur; nunc uero, cum adspiratio duplex in extrema sit syllaba, erroris causa manifesta est. hoc eodem uocabulo et isdem litteris scriptum inuenio patrem Abraham, qui in supra dicto apocrypho Geneseos uolumine abactis coruis, qui hominum frumenta uastabant, abactoris uel depulsoris sortitus est nomen. itaque et nos imitemur Thare et uolucres caeli, quae iuxta uiam satum triticum deuorare festinant, solliciti prohibeamus. nam et Abraham patriarches in typo Israhelis hostiarum diuisit membra sacrificiaque a uolucris non sinit deuorari.

*They left Tahath and pitched camp in Terah* (Num 33:27). The twenty-fourth station, which some term “malice” or even “pasture.” They are not wrong if it is written with the letter *ayin*. Now truly, when there is a double aspiration at the end of the syllable, the cause of the error becomes manifest. I find in this same word and these same letters the father of Abraham, who in the above-mentioned apocryphal book of Genesis, having chased away the crows that were devastating the grain of men, inherited the name “chaser” or “driver.” Therefore, let us be imitators of Terah and careful to hinder the birds of heaven, who hasten to devour the wheat sown by the roadside (cf. Matt 13:4). For even the patriarch Abraham, who is a type of Israel, divided the members of the offerings and sacrifices and did not allow them to be devoured by birds (Gen 15:11).

Jerome is likely thinking of *Jub.* 11:12, where Terah (תרה) is born at the very moment that ravens devastated (תרעו) the land. In this passage, as in the one above, Jerome bends the narrative of *Jubilees* to make an exegetical point about the Hebrew Bible. In order to explain the name of the station, he needs a tradition about Terah, not Abraham, who chases away the birds in *Jubilees*. The most astounding feature of either passage is that, if taken at face value, Jerome implies that he read *Jubilees* in Hebrew, even though he cites the name of the work in Greek.

After the intriguing witnesses of the near-contemporaries Didymus, Epiphanius, and Jerome, references to *Jubilees* drop off precipitously. The next chronologically is Isidore of Pelusium (d. 449), an Egyptian ascetic known for his many letters. As with the case of Diodorus of Tarsus, the passage from his writings pertaining to *Jubilees* is known only from the *catena* literature. Charles cited the Greek text from the *Catena of Nicephorus* (I.1660–61), published in two volumes from 1772–1773 and based on only two manuscripts.<sup>43</sup> The passage is *ad* Deut 33:9, but the *catena* to Deuteronomy, to my knowledge, has not yet benefited from a critical edition. The

<sup>43</sup> Charles, *The Book of Jubilees*, lxxxi.

biblical context is Moses' blessing of the twelve tribes at the end of his life. This becomes the occasion to discuss why Reuben, the firstborn, was denied the priesthood and kingship, while Judah inherited the kingship and Levi, the priesthood.

ἐπειδὴ ἐπελύτῃσῃ τῇ πατρώᾳ εὐνῇ ὁ Ῥουβείμ, διὰ τοῦτο οὔτε βασιλείας οὔτε ἱερωσύνης ἤξιώθη, καίτοι πρωτότοκος ὢν. ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν Λευὶ τρίτος ὢν οὐ μόνον διὰ τὸ ἐπαγγείλασθαι τὸν πατέρα δεκάτην ἀφιερῶσιν κάτωθεν γὰρ ἀριθμούμενος δέκατος ἦν, ἀνωθεν δὲ εἰ ἡριθμήθη, εἰς τῶν παιδισκῶν ἠύρίσκετο ἀλλὰ καὶ δι' ὁσιότητα, καὶ τὸ συγγενικῶν αἱμάτων διὰ τὴν εἰς τὸ θεῖον τιμὴν τὰς χεῖρας ἐμπλήσαι, ἱερωσύνης ἤξιώθη.

Because Reuben violated his father's bed [Gen 35:22], for this reason he was not deemed worthy of either the kingdom or the priesthood, even though he was the firstborn. But Levi, even though he was the third born, not only because he was promised by the father to consecrate him as a tithe (for counting from below he was tenth, but when counted from above, it was found to be one of the maidservants' children), but also because of his holiness and because, for the glory of God, he filled his hands with the blood of relatives [cf. Gen 34], was he found worthy of the priesthood.<sup>44</sup>

The curious parenthetical remark is a likely reference to *Jub.* 32:1–3, where Jacob resolves to tithe all his belongings, including his children. He counts his sons backwards from Benjamin and lands on Levi. For this reason, and for his special merits (such as his zeal in the Shechem affair), Levi alone inherited the priesthood among Jacob's sons. Most tellingly, the reference to filling his hands is a technical reference to priestly consecration (Exod 28:41). The same allusion is found in *Jub.* 32:3 and is sometimes glossed over in translations.

One of the few Latin references to *Jubilees* is attributed to Pope Gelasius I (d. 496), the alleged author of the *Gelasian Decree*. This short document is a list of authoritative and spurious books written around the mid-sixth century. It exerted a great influence on the canon of Scripture in the West. One of the spurious items is a book entitled “The Book of the Daughters of Adam [or] Leptogenesis” (*Liber de filiabus Adae Leptogenesis*).<sup>45</sup> The double title leaves in doubt whether the intended work was the entire book of *Jubilees* or merely an excerpt, such as a list of the wives of the patriarchs, which circulated in several languages, including Latin. In any case, the book of *Jubilees* did exist in Latin once, as attested by a fifth-cen-

<sup>44</sup> Translated from Charles *The Book of Jubilees*, lxxxi. The text goes on to state that Judah merited the kingship because he confessed to his sin with Tamar, but this could be inferred from the biblical text (Gen 38:26).

<sup>45</sup> Ernst von Dobschütz, *Das Decretum Gelasianum: De libris recipiendis et non recipiendis in kritischem Text* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1912), 52. Matthew P. Monger, “The Book of the Daughters of Adam in the Gelasian Decree,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 143 (2024): 545–61, has shown the instability of this short title in the broader manuscript tradition. He concludes this reflects medieval unfamiliarity with the work.

tury palimpsest (Biblioteca Ambrosiana C 73 inf.) published by Antonio Ceriani, which conserves between a third and a fourth of the text from chapters 13 to 49.<sup>46</sup> Strangely, the *Gelasian Decree* is the only canon list that explicitly proscribes *Jubilees*, although it might be hiding in Greek canon lists under a different name. This possibility will be discussed immediately below.

Severus of Antioch (d. 538), a partisan of Miaphysite Christianity, was bishop of Antioch from 512 until his death. He appears to refer to *Jubilees* in comments appended to Deut 34:6 in the *Catena of Nicephorus* (l.1672–73). The context is the death of Moses and Severus' assertion that at one's death good and evil angels contend over the body. M. R. James has translated the pertinent passage.

God, willing to show this also to the children of Israel by means of a bodily image, ordained that at the burial of Moses there should appear before their eyes at the time of the dressing of the body and its due depositing in the earth, the evil demon as it were resisting and opposing; and that Michael, a good angel, should encounter and repel him, and should not rebuke him on his own authority, but retire from giving judgment against him in favour of the Lord of All, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee," in order that those who are being instructed in the word might learn that a measure of conflict awaits souls after their departure hence [. . .] Further, when this heavenly image had come before their eyes, there came a cloud or light about the place which dazzled the eyes of the onlookers, and walled his grave off, that they might not see it. Therefore also it says in the Scripture, "No man hath seen his end, or his grave, unto this day" (Deut 34:6). This, it is said, is set forth in an apocryphal book which contains the more detailed account of the genesis or creation (ταῦτα δὲ ἐν ἀποκρύφῳ βιβλίῳ λέγεται κεῖσθαι λεπτοτέραν ἔχοντι τῆς Γενέσεως ἢ τοι τῆς κτίσεως τὴν ἀφήγησιν).<sup>47</sup>

The final sentence appears to be an allusion to the common Greek title of *Jubilees*, the *Little Genesis* (ἡ Λεπτὴ Γένεσις) or the *Details of Genesis* (τὰ λεπτὰ Γενέσεως). The story recounted by Severus, however, is not found in *Jubilees*. It is believed to be part of the apocryphal work known as the *Assumption of Moses*, commonly linked to a confrontation between Michael and Satan mentioned in Jude 9.<sup>48</sup> In fact, the *catena* on Jude includes Severus' comments on the matter, including much of what is said in his comments on Deut 34:6.<sup>49</sup> A portion of the *Assumption of Moses* has survived, but the incident with Moses' body has not. Even so, this one extant manuscript immediately follows the unique Latin copy of the book of *Jubi-*

<sup>46</sup> Antonio Maria Ceriani, ed., "Fragmenta Parvae Genesis et Assumptionis Mosis ex veteri versione latina," in *Monumenta sacra et profana ex codicibus praesertim bibliothecae Ambrosianae* (Milan: Typis et Impensis Bibliothecae Ambrosianae, 1861), 1:9–64 (9–54).

<sup>47</sup> Montague Rhodes James, *The Lost Apocrypha of the Old Testament: Their Titles and Fragments* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1920), 45–46.

<sup>48</sup> For ancient witnesses to this tradition, see Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, Bloomsbury. (London, 2015), 259–64.

<sup>49</sup> James, *Lost Apocrypha*, 46, also quotes these additional comments.

lees, leaving one to wonder if the *Assumption of Moses* once served as a sequel to *Jubilees*.<sup>50</sup> In canon lists, such as Pseudo-Athanasius' *Synopsis of Sacred Scripture*,<sup>51</sup> the *Stichometry of Nicephorus*,<sup>52</sup> and the *List of Sixty Books*,<sup>53</sup> the *Assumption of Moses* is preceded by a "Testament of Moses." If "The Testament" or "The Covenant" (ἡ Διαθήκη) is another name for *Jubilees*, as I have suggested above, then these lists might support a tradition of placing the *Assumption of Moses* after *Jubilees*.<sup>54</sup>

As we near the end of the patristic era, we return to the West momentarily. Theodore of Tarsus was a Byzantine divine who served as Archbishop of Canterbury from 668 to 690 CE.<sup>55</sup> He did not leave any written works, but the notes of his students have survived in the form of *scholia* on the Pentateuch and the Gospels. These little-known works provide a unique window into the transmission of *Jubilees* in Western Europe. There are two direct references to *Jubilees* (as *Leptigeneseos*) and two possible allusions.<sup>56</sup>

The first reference occurs in a discussion of the length of time Adam spent in Paradise.

*Ad auram post meridiem* [III.8]: .i. incipiente septima hora, quia Iohannes Crisostomus dicit Adam factum tertia hora et sexta peccasse et quasi ad horam nonam eiectum de paradiso. Et hoc dicit per convenientiam futuram de passione Christi destinatum. Alii autem eum septem annos peregrisse in paradiso praeter .xl. dies, ut in Leptigeneseos dicit.

*At the afternoon air* (Gen 3:8): that is, at the beginning of the seventh hour, since John Chrysostom says that Adam was created at the third hour, sinned at the sixth hour, and was cast out of Paradise at the ninth hour. And he says this *à propos* the future occurrences at the crucifixion

50 Ceriani, "Fragmenta Parvae Genesis et Assumptionis Mosis," 55–64.

51 Theodor Zahn, *Geschichte des Neutestamentlichen Kanons. Zweiter Band: Erste Hälfte* (Erlangen und Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1890), 317.

52 Nicephorus of Constantinople, *Opuscula Historica*, ed. Carol de Boor (Leipzig: Teubner, 1880), 134–35.

53 Zahn, *Geschichte des Neutestamentlichen Kanons*, 289–93.

54 James, *Lost Apocrypha*, 50, writes (without citing his source) that R. H. Charles objected that *Jubilees* could not be the *Testament of Moses* in the *Stichometry of Nicephorus* because it is a mere 1100 *stichoi*. James supposed the numbers could be grossly in error. In addition to this possibility (the *Stichometry* expects one to believe the book of Susanna is longer than Esther), I would add that the *Stichometry* is based on the Pseudo-Athanasius list (their list of apocrypha is the same), and so the numbers are secondary.

55 For a brief notice on the life of Theodore, see Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000*, 10th Anniversary Rev. Ed. (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 368–71. According to Brown, Theodore fled his native Antioch for Rome to escape the Arab conquests. He was then appointed to Canterbury in order to keep him (and his opinions) far away from debates over the Monothelite controversy.

56 Bernhard Bischoff and Michael Lapidge, eds. and trans., *Biblical Commentaries from the Canterbury School of Theodore and Hadrian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 200.

of Christ. Other commentators say that he spent seven years less forty days in Paradise, as it says in the *Little Genesis* (*PentI* 44).<sup>57</sup>

The passage here refers to the forty days of purification (*Jub.* 3:9). It also mentions the seven years Adam spent in Eden (*Jub.* 3:17). This tradition was also attached to the end of the Latin *Life of Adam and Eve*.<sup>58</sup> Theodore of Tarsus could represent one channel for the transmission of this tradition from East to West.

The second direct reference appears a few pages after the first.

*Quoniam occidi uirum* [IV.23]. Nescimus quem occidit, et de quo dicit, nisi tan turn quod non ipse est Cain, licet multi arbitrentur ut in Leptigeneseos dixit.

*I have slain a man* (Gen 4:23) We do not know whom he killed, and of whom he is here speaking, except that it is not Cain, even though many commentators think it was Cain, as was said in the *Little Genesis* (*PentI* 54).<sup>59</sup>

This comment refers to Lamech's boast about having killed a man (Gen 4:23–24). The tradition that Lamech killed Cain does not appear in *Jubilees*, but the story was well-known in Christian sources. Like Didymus the Blind, the author has conflated the two traditions about the death of Cain. In *Jubilees*, Cain dies when his house collapses on him (*Jub.* 4:31).

Bernhard Bischoff and Michael Lapidge, the editors of the *scholia*, also point to two traditions that may have come from *Jubilees*.<sup>60</sup> The commentaries state that Enoch was transported from earth to the mountain of Paradise (*PentI* 62; cf. *Jub.* 4:23)<sup>61</sup> and that Cain killed Abel with a stone (Gn-Ex-EvIa 7; cf. *Jub.* 4:31).<sup>62</sup> While both are found in *Jubilees* (and Didymus the Blind's *Book of the Covenant*), they are also quite common. In any case, the *scholia* demonstrate that at one point the channels between Western Europe and Byzantium were sufficiently open that Latin Christians could import their clergy from the East—and, with them, knowledge of works like *Jubilees*.

All other references to *Jubilees* from the first seven centuries come from *catenae*. A *catena* is a commentary on Scripture composed entirely of previous biblical commentaries. They normally draw upon the Church Fathers but will occasionally cite early Jewish sources, including Philo and Josephus. Françoise Petit has edited and arranged this diverse material into a single Greek *Catena on Genesis* in

<sup>57</sup> Text and translation of Bischoff and Lapidge, 310–11.

<sup>58</sup> Jean-Pierre Pettorelli and Jean-Daniel Kaestli, eds. and trans., *Vita Latina Adae et Evae*, 2 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 1:434.

<sup>59</sup> Text and translation of Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, 314–15.

<sup>60</sup> Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, 200.

<sup>61</sup> Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, 314–15.

<sup>62</sup> Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, 388–89.

four volumes, which includes named authorities ranging from Philo of Alexandria in the first century to Cyril of Alexandria in the fifth, with some manuscripts adding the sixth-century Miaphysite bishop Severus of Antioch, briefly mentioned above.<sup>63</sup> Numerous entries cite *Jubilees* or otherwise contain traditions from the book. The following is a list of these entries.

Number 551 (*ad Gen 4:17*) is a reference to *Jub.* 4:9. It simply names “Asaoul” (Ἀσαούλ) as the sister and wife of Cain (Ἡ γυνὴ Κάϊν, Ἀσαούλ, ἡ ἀδελφὴ αὐτοῦ).<sup>64</sup>

Number 585 is a list of the wives of the patriarchs from *Jub.* 4:11–33.<sup>65</sup>

*Ad Gen 5:6*: The wife of Seth, Azura, his sister (Γυνὴ Σήθ, Ἀζούρα, ἡ ἀδελφὴ αὐτοῦ).

*Ad Gen 5:9*: The wife of Enos, Noa, his sister (Γυνὴ Ἐνώς, Νωα, ἡ ἀδελφὴ αὐτοῦ).

*Ad Gen 5:12*: The wife of Kenan, Maolith, his sister (Γυνὴ Καϊνᾶν, Μαωλιθ, ἀδελφὴ αὐτοῦ).

*Ad Gen 5:15*: The wife of Mahalalel, Dina, the daughter of Barachiel, his uncle (Γυνὴ Μαλελεήλ, Δίνα, θυγάτηρ Βαραχιὴλ πατραδέλφου αὐτοῦ).

*Ad Gen 5:18*: The wife of Jared, Baraka, the daughter of Arouel, his uncle (Γυνὴ Ἰάρεδ, Βαραχα, θυγάτηρ Ἀρουήλ πατραδέλφου αὐτοῦ).

*Ad Gen 5:21*: The wife of Enoch, Eani, the daughter of Daniel, his uncle (Γυνὴ Ἐνώχ, Ἐανι, θυγάτηρ Δανιήλ πατραδέλφου αὐτοῦ).

*Ad Gen 5:25*: The wife of Methusaleh, Edna, the daughter of Ezriel, his uncle (Γυνὴ Μαθουσάλα, Ἐδνα, θυγάτηρ Ἐζριήλ, πατραδέλφου αὐτοῦ).

*Ad Gen 5:28*: The wife of Lamech, Bethenos, the daughter of Barachiel, his uncle (Γυνὴ Λάμεχ, Βεθενός, θυγάτηρ Βαραχιήλ πατραδέλφου αὐτοῦ).

*Ad Gen 5:32*: The wife of Noah, Emmazara, the daughter of Barachiel, his uncle (Γυνὴ Νῶε, Ἐμμαζάρα, θυγάτηρ Βαραχιήλ πατραδέλφου αὐτοῦ).

These names are comparable to the ones found in Hebrew, with some obvious cases of textual corruption, such as “Eani” (Ἐανι) for “Edni” (Ἐδνι). The names which appear here and later (number 833 *ad Gen 10:24–25* and number 861 *ad Gen 11:20–25*) are the ones found in the tenth- or eleventh-century Septuagint manuscript Basel 135 (currently Basel, Univeristätsbibliothek AN III 13), which is in fact a *catena*.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Petit, *La Chaîne sur la Genèse*. She has also edited a *catena* on Exodus, but I did not find *Jubilees* material there.

<sup>64</sup> Petit, *La Chaîne sur la Genèse*, 2:38.

<sup>65</sup> Petit, *La Chaîne sur la Genèse*, 2:57.

<sup>66</sup> See Rönsch, *Das Buch der Jubiläen*, 367–74.

Number 590 (*ad Gen.* 5:21–24), approximating *Jub.* 4:17, names Enoch as the first scribe: “Enoch was the first who learned the art of letters, and he wrote down the signs of heaven and the seasons and the months (Ἐνὼχ πρῶτος ἔμαθε γράμματα, καὶ ἔγραψε τὰ σημεῖα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τὰς τροπὰς καὶ τοὺς μῆνας).”<sup>67</sup>

Number 833 (*ad Gen.* 10:24–25) is yet another list of the wives of the patriarchs, this time from the period after the Flood (*Jub.* 8:5–7; 10:18).<sup>68</sup>

The wife of Cainan, Melcha, the daughter of Madai, the son of Japhet (Γυνὴ Καϊνάν, Μελχά, θυγάτηρ Μαδαὶ υἱοῦ Τάφεθ).

The wife of Shelah, Mocha, the daughter of Chedem, his uncle (Γυνὴ Σαλά, Μωχά, θυγάτηρ Χεδέμ πατρὸς ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ).

The wife of Eber, Azodra, the daughter of Nimrod (Γυνὴ Ἑβερ, Ἀζοδρά, θυγάτηρ Νεβρώδ).

The wife of Peleg, Domra, the daughter of Senaar (Γυνὴ Φαλέγ, Δόμρα, θυγάτηρ Σενναάρ).

The most notable aspect of this section of the list is that the Greek has preserved Cainan and his wife. In Hebrew lists (*Toledot Adam* and the *Farhi Bible*), Cain has been excised and his wife given to Shelah.

Number 839 (*ad Gen.* 11:4) quotes *Jub.* 10:21 on the dimensions of the tower of Babel.

Ἡ Διαθήκη. Ἐπὶ μγ' ἔτη ἔμειναν οἰκοδομοῦντες. Τὸ ὕψος, ἑυλγ' πήχεις καὶ δύο παλαισταί. Τὸ πλάτος, ἐπὶ σγ' πλίνθους. Τῆς πλίνθου τὸ ὕψος, τρίτον μιᾶς πλίνθου. Τὸ ἔκταμα τοῦ ἐνὸς τοίχου, στάδιοι ιγ' καὶ τὸ ἄλλο, λ'.

The Covenant. For forty-three years, they continued building. The height was 5,433 cubits and two handbreadths. The breadth was 203 bricks. The height of a brick was a third of one brick. The extent of one wall was thirteen *stadia*, and the other, thirty.<sup>69</sup>

Unlike other references to *Jubilees* in the *catenae*, the above is an exact citation of *Jub.* 10:21. The attribution to “The Testament” or “The Covenant” (ἡ Διαθήκη) is a possible reference to the *Book of the Covenant* mentioned by Didymus the Blind. Didymus’ references were inexact, but this one is precise, leaving one to wonder if “The Book of the Covenant” or “The Testament” (of Moses?) were indeed names for *Jubilees*. This is counterbalanced by number 1829 *ad Gen.* 38:18, which cites “The Testament” but does not evoke any clear tradition from *Jubilees*.

Number 857 (*ad Gen.* 11:13) refers to Cainan’s experiments in astrology and divination from *Jub.* 8:1–4: “From the time of Cainan were astronomy and omens”

<sup>67</sup> Petit, *La Chaîne sur la Genèse*, 2:60.

<sup>68</sup> Petit, *La Chaîne sur la Genèse*, 2:199.

<sup>69</sup> Petit, *La Chaîne sur la Genèse*, 2:202.



(Ἀπὸ τῶν χρόνων Καϊνὰν ἡ ἀστρονομία καὶ οἱ οἰωνισμοί).<sup>70</sup> This short notice can be contrasted with Syriac sources discussed below, such as the *Chronicle of 1234*, which translates the entire passage from *Jubilees*, and the chronicle of Michael the Syrian (d. 1199), who has a more extensive biography of Cainan, including information not found in *Jubilees*.

Number 861 (*ad Gen 11:20–25*) completes the list of the wives of the patriarchs (cf. *Jub.* 11:1.7.9).

The wife of Reu, Ora, daughter of Ur, son of Cheza (Γυνὴ Ῥαγαῦ, Ὠρα, θυγάτηρ Οὐρ, υἱοῦ Χέζα).

The wife of Serug, Melcha, daughter of Chaber, his uncle (Γυνὴ Σερούχ, Μελχά, θυγάτηρ Χαβέρ, πατραδέλφου αὐτοῦ).

The wife of Nahor, Iestha, daughter of Nestha, the Chaldaean (Γυνὴ Ναχώρ, Ἰεσθά, θυγάτηρ Νεσθά, τοῦ Χαλδαίου).<sup>71</sup>

The wife of Terah does not appear. The Greek *catenae* also lack the names of the wives of Shem, Ham, and Japhet.

Number 867 (*ad Gen 11:28*) refers to the death of Haran in the conflagration of the idols. The passage explicitly refers to *Jubilees*, but it is a paraphrase of *Jub.* 12:12 rather than a direct citation.

Ἀρράν ἀπέθανεν ἐν τῷ ἐμπυρισμῷ ᾧ ἐνεπύρσεν Ἀβραμ τὰ εἰδῶλα τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ, ἐν τῷ εἰσελθεῖν αὐτὸν τοῦ ἐξελεσθαι αὐτά. Ἦν δὲ Ἀβραάμ τότε ἐτῶν ξ' ὅτε τὰ εἰδῶλα ἐνεπύρσεν, ἅτινα οὐδὲ ἀριθμοῦνται εἰς ἔτη ζωῆς αὐτοῦ διὰ τὸ μέχρι τότε ἐν ἀπιστίᾳ αὐτὸν εἶναι, καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ἰωβηλαίῳ.

Haran died in the conflagration, which Abraham set to his father's idols, when he went in to save them. Abraham was then sixty years old when he burned the idols. These however are not counted as years of his life because until that moment he was in unbelief, as it is written in *Jubilees* (γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ἰωβηλαίῳ).<sup>72</sup>

The reference to Abraham's age and the new computation based on his newfound belief in the one God is an interpolation designed to resolve an exegetical issue about Abraham's departure from Harran relative to the death of his father. This issue was of particular concern to Christians.<sup>73</sup>

Number 1804b (*ad Gen 37:29–30*) refers to the death of Bilhah and Dinah after they hear the news of Joseph's disappearance. They are buried near the tomb of

<sup>70</sup> Petit, *La Chaîne sur la Genèse*, 2:213.

<sup>71</sup> Petit, *La Chaîne sur la Genèse*, 2:215.

<sup>72</sup> Petit, *La Chaîne sur la Genèse*, 2:218.

<sup>73</sup> See especially William Adler, "Abraham and the Burning of the Temple of Idols: Jubilees' Traditions in Christian Chronography," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 77 (1987): 95–117. This issue is further discussed below in the section on Syriac sources.

Rachel. Jacob then institutes Yom Kippur to commemorate Joseph's presumed death.

Ἐν τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἤκουσεν Βάλλα ὅτι ἀπώλετο Ἰωσήφ, ἥτις καὶ ἐθήλασεν αὐτὸν μετὰ τὸν θάνατον τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ Ῥαχὴλ, καὶ πενθοῦσα ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἀπέθανεν καὶ γε ἡ Δίνα ἡ θυγάτηρ Ἰακώβ ἐτελεύτησεν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀπωλείας τοῦ Ἰωσήφ καὶ ἔσκεν Ἰακώβ τρία πένθη. Καὶ ἔθαψαν τὴν Βάλλαν καὶ τὴν Δίνα ἀπέναντι τοῦ τάφου Ῥαχὴλ. Διὰ τοῦτο τὸ πένθος κακοῦσιν ἑαυτοὺς υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ ἐν τῇ δεκάτῃ τοῦ μηνὸς ἐβδόμου, σποδὸν ἔσθοντες.

At that time, Bilhah heard that Joseph was lost, she who had nursed him after the death of his mother Rachel. Mourning over him, she died. Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, also perished over the loss of Joseph, and so Jacob mourned three times. He buried Bilhah and Dinah across from the tomb of Rachel. Because of this mourning, the children of Israel mortify themselves on the tenth day of the seventh month, eating ashes.<sup>74</sup>

The passage is an abridgment of *Jub.* 34:15–18.

Number 2268 (*ad* Gen 50:26) is a citation of *Jub.* 46:3, a brief timetable of Joseph's life.<sup>75</sup>

Ἰωσήφ ἑπτακαίδεκα ἔτη ἐποίησεν ἐν γῇ Χαναάν, καὶ δέκα ἐτῶν εἴλκυσε δουλείαν, τρία δὲ ἔτη ἐν τῷ δεσμοτηρίῳ διέτριψεν, καὶ ὀγδοήκοντα ἔτη ἦν δευτερός τῷ βασιλεῖ καὶ ἐξουσιάζων ἐν πάσῃ τῇ γῇ Αἰγύπτου. Ἐτελεύτησε δὲ ἐτῶν ρι'.

Joseph lived seventeen years in the land of Canaan. Ten years he was a slave, three years he was in prison, and eighty years he was second to the king and exerted power over the whole land of Egypt, a total of 110 years.

Apart from the final tally at the end (missing in some manuscripts), the Greek text is very close to the Ethiopic.

Finally, number 2270, *ad* Gen 50:25–26, is a lengthy citation of *Jub.* 46:6–12a and 47:1, bridging the gap between the books of Genesis and Exodus.

Ἐξώρκεισεν Ἰωσήφ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ περὶ τῶν ὁσίων αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἐγίνωσκεν ὅτι οὐ μὴ ἐπιτρέψωσιν οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι ἀπενεχθῆναι αὐτὸν εἰς γῆν Χαναάν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τῆς τελευτῆς αὐτοῦ, διότι Μαχμαρῶν βασιλεὺς Χαναάν ἐποίησε πόλεμον μετὰ τοῦ βασιλέως Αἰγύπτου καὶ ἐθανάτωσεν αὐτὸν ἐκεῖ ἐν τῇ κοιλάδι. Καὶ ἐπεδίωξεν ὀπίσω τῶν Αἰγυπτίων ἕως τῶν ὁρίων Αἰγύπτου, καὶ οὐκ ἠδυνήθη Μαχμαρῶν εἰσελθεῖν εἰς Αἴγυπτον, διότι ἀνέστη βασιλεὺς ἕτερος νέος ἐπ' Αἴγυπτον καὶ ἐνίσχυσεν ὑπὲρ αὐτὸν καὶ ἐκλείσθησαν αἱ πύλαι Αἰγύπτου καὶ οὐκ ἦν ὁ εἰσπορευόμενος καὶ ἐκπορευόμενος εἰς Αἴγυπτον. Καὶ ἐτελεύτησεν Ἰωσήφ καὶ ἔθαψαν αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ σορῷ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ ἐτελεύτησαν πάντες οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ μετ' αὐτόν. Καὶ ἐξήνεγκαν οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰακώβ τὰ ὅσα τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ πάντα, παρεκτὸς τῶν ὁσίων Ἰωσήφ, καὶ ἔθαψαν αὐτὰ ἐν τῷ ἄργῳ τοῦ σπηλαίου τοῦ διπλοῦ ἐν Χεβρών ἐν τῷ ὄρει. Καὶ ἀπέστρεψαν πολλοὶ εἰς Αἴγυπτον,

<sup>74</sup> Petit, *La Chaîne sur la Genèse*, 4:183.

<sup>75</sup> Petit, *La Chaîne sur la Genèse*, 4:452.

καὶ ὀλίγοι περιελείφθησαν ἐπ’ αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ ὄρει Χεβρών. Καὶ περιελείφθη Ἄμβραμ ὁ πατὴρ Μωϋσέως μετ’ αὐτῶν. Καὶ ἐτροπώσατο βασιλεὺς Χαναάν βασιλέα Αἰγύπτου, καὶ ἀπέκλεισε τὰς πύλας Αἰγύπτου ὁ βασιλεὺς Αἰγύπτου. Καὶ ἐλογίσατο λογισμοὺς πονηροὺς ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ κακῶσαι αὐτούς. Ἐπανελθὼν δὲ Ἄμβραμ ἀπὸ γῆς Χαναάν εἰς Αἴγυπτον, γεννᾷ τὸν Μωϋσέα. Οὗτος ἦν ὁ καιρὸς θλίψεως ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ.

Joseph made his brothers swear about his bones, for he knew that the Egyptians would not permit him to be carried away to the land of Canaan on the day of his death because Machmaron, king of Canaan, waged war with the king of Egypt and killed him there in the valley. He pursued the Egyptians until the borders of Egypt, but Machmaron was not able to enter Egypt because another, new king had ascended over Egypt and overpowered him. The gates of Egypt were then closed, and no one could enter or exit Egypt. Then Joseph died, and they buried him in a sarcophagus in Egypt. His other brothers died after him. The sons of Jacob brought out the bones of all the children of Israel —except for the bones of Joseph—and buried them in the field of the double cave in Hebron on the mountain. Many returned to Egypt, but a few remained with them on Mount Hebron. Amram, the father of Moses, remained with them. Again, the king of Canaan defeated the king of Egypt, and the king of Egypt closed the gates of Egypt. He devised evil plans against the children of Israel, to do them harm. When Amram returned from the land of Canaan to Egypt, he begot Moses. This was the time of affliction for the children of Israel.<sup>76</sup>

James VanderKam has studied the relationship between the Greek and Ethiopic texts.<sup>77</sup> He observed that the Greek text lacks “Jubilean” characteristics such as date formulas and second person addresses to Moses. Both changes, he surmises, are part of the work of adapting the text for the *catena*: These features, without their full context risked confusing the reader. Otherwise, it appears to be a faithful version of the text, and in a couple of cases offers better readings than the Ethiopic.

Jeremiah Coogan, however, warns against using the *catena* for textual criticism of *Jubilees*.<sup>78</sup> Like VanderKam, he underlines the adaptational elements of the Greek text of *Jubilees* in the *catena*, but he also emphasizes that these adaptations go beyond facilitating the comprehension of the reader. The *catena* passage just cited includes not only material from *Jubilees* but an excerpt from the *Oratio ad Graecos* of Tatian (d. ca. 180), which discusses what was happening elsewhere in the world during the centuries between the end of Genesis and the beginning of Exodus. Coogan thus cites Petit’s number 2270 *ad* Gen 50:25–26 as a passage that entered the *catena* tradition through an intermediary, most likely a chronicle.<sup>79</sup> He brings

<sup>76</sup> Petit, *La Chaîne de la Genèse*, 4:453–54.

<sup>77</sup> James C. VanderKam, “Another Citation of Greek Jubilees,” in *Textual Criticism and Dead Sea Scrolls Studies in Honour of Julio Trebolle Barrera*, ed. Andrés Piquer Otero and Pablo A. Torijano (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 377–92.

<sup>78</sup> Jeremiah Coogan, “The Reception of Jubilees in Greek *Catena* Manuscripts of Genesis,” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 31 (2022): 264–86.

<sup>79</sup> Coogan, “Reception of Jubilees in Greek,” 276.

other examples as well, such as number 867 *ad* Gen 11:28, a paraphrase of *Jubilees* that adds the distinctly Christian concern to link Abraham's final call to the death of Terah<sup>80</sup> and the names of the various wives of the patriarchs, which do not take the form of a citation from *Jubilees* but the form of a (probably preexisting) list.<sup>81</sup>

Despite this, the *catena* literature hardly accounts for all the *Jubilees* material known from Greek chronography. It does contain a great deal of material from *Jubilees* which does not appear elsewhere. Conversely, it lacks many recurring motifs found in the Greek chronicles. It is to these that we now turn.

## 6.2 Byzantine Historians

Greek chroniclers pick up right when the patristic references trail off. The amplest chronicle is that of George Syncellus, who has preserved much material from earlier, lost chronicles. Many of his successors are dependent on him or a combination of his sources. Nevertheless, they are all important witnesses to what appealed to Byzantine authors in the medieval period. By the end of this period, however, *Jubilees* was held in low esteem, and its eventual disappearance is unsurprising.

Syncellus had many antecedents, but they are mostly lost. The loss of Julius Africanus, Panodorus, and Annianus means that the Antiochene John Malalas (d. 578) is the first extant Byzantine historian to use material from *Jubilees* in his chronicle. The popularity of Malalas' chronicle has an inverse relationship to its utility as a work of history.<sup>82</sup> It only has a handful of elements in common with *Jubilees* (which he never names), but its success, including its translation into Slavonic, meant that these few themes became widespread.

The Jewish traditions in Malalas' chronicle have already received an in-depth study from Katell Berthelot.<sup>83</sup> There is little to add to what she has said, except to delimit those traditions that belong to *Jubilees*. On the very first page (Book I.1), Malalas names the daughters of Adam and Eve, "Azoura" (Αζουρα) and "Asouam" (Ασουαμ), that is, *Jubilees*' Awan and Azura, the eventual wives of Cain and Seth.

<sup>80</sup> Coogan, "Reception of Jubilees in Greek," 271–74.

<sup>81</sup> Coogan, "Reception of Jubilees in Greek," 277–81.

<sup>82</sup> See the negative assessment of Warren T. Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 235–56.

<sup>83</sup> Katell Berthelot, "La chronique de Malalas et les traditions juives," in *Recherches sur la Chronique de Jean Malalas*, ed. Joëlle Beaucamp (Paris: Imprimerie Chirat, 2003), 37–51. See also William Adler, "From Adam to Abraham: Malalas and Euhemeristic Historiography," in *Die Weltchronik des Johannes Malalas: Quellenfragen*, ed. Laura Carrara, Mischa Meier, and Christine Radtke (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2017), 27–47.

Strangely, Malalas assigns Asouam to Seth and Azoura to Cain. It is the reverse in *Jubilees*.<sup>84</sup>

In Book I.5, Seth himself is endowed with some of the qualities given to Enoch in *Jubilees*, such as the invention of writing and astronomy. In a significant departure from *Jubilees*, Cainan discovers Seth's beneficent astronomical writings rather than the forbidden knowledge of the Watchers, who do not appear in Malalas.<sup>85</sup> As William Adler notes, this is a conflation of the positive tradition of Antediluvian knowledge in Josephus with the negative one in *Jubilees*.<sup>86</sup>

In the second book (II.18), Malalas attributes idolatry and "Hellenism" to Serug (cf. *Jub.* 11:1–8), claiming Eusebius as his source.<sup>87</sup> As Adler points out, this idea actually comes from Epiphanius' *Panarion*.<sup>88</sup> At the beginning of the third book (III.1), Abraham is said to have confronted his father about his idolatry. He breaks his father's idols, however, after the manner of a commonly disseminated Jewish tradition (cf. *Gen. Rab.* 38:13).<sup>89</sup> He does not burn a temple of idols as in *Jubilees*. This is the extent of Malalas' knowledge of *Jubilees*. The traditions he reports are meager but became widespread, reappearing in numerous later chronicles.

The next historian is the most important. George Syncellus (d. ca. 810) was a Byzantine functionary.<sup>90</sup> His unfinished *Ecloga chronographica* ("Extract of Chronography") represents the most extensive use of *Jubilees* in a Byzantine chronicle. He cites the work under several titles, including the *Little Genesis* and the *Apocalypse of Moses*. He also mentions a *Life of Adam*, which shares a tradition from the book. Occasionally he misattributes material from *Jubilees* to Josephus. In one exceptional instance, he ascribes a verse from *Jubilees* to the canonical book of Genesis. In many other cases, he gives common traditions without obvious attribution.

Heinrich Gelzer, in a pioneering study, argued that Syncellus did not know *Jubilees* directly but only through the mediation of earlier, lost chronicles, namely the works of Julius Africanus (the father of Christian chronography, d. 240) and

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<sup>84</sup> John Malalas, *Chronographia*, ed. Johannes Thurn (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2000), 4. This edition has been translated into German: John Malalas, *Weltchronik*, trans. Hans Thurn and Mischa Meier (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2009). There is an earlier English translation, but it is not based on the critical edition: John Malalas, *The Chronicle of John Malalas: A Translation*, trans. Elizabeth Jeffreys, Michael J. Jeffreys, and Roger Scott (Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986).

<sup>85</sup> John Malalas, *Chronographia*, 7.

<sup>86</sup> Adler, "From Adam to Abraham," 32–38.

<sup>87</sup> John Malalas, *Chronographia*, 38.

<sup>88</sup> Adler, "From Adam to Abraham," 35–36.

<sup>89</sup> John Malalas, *Chronographia*, 41.

<sup>90</sup> For general information, Warren T. Treadgold, *The Middle Byzantine Historians* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 38–63, and Leonora Neville, *Guide to Byzantine Historical Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 56–60.

the two fifth-century Alexandrian chroniclers Annianus and Panodorus.<sup>91</sup> William Adler continued Gelzer's work and refined his conclusions, instead claiming that Syncellus relied on epitomes and excerpts of earlier sources.<sup>92</sup> The citation of *Jubilees* under so many different titles and with different degrees of textual fidelity certainly does not inspire confidence that Syncellus consulted the book directly. His example provides an instructive contrast with the anonymous *Syriac Chronicle of 1234* (see below), which cites *Jubilees* accurately and at length.

The following overview organizes the *Jubilees* material according to Syncellus' attribution, beginning with those traditions attributed to the *Little Genesis* itself. This will be followed by traditions cited under the title *Apocalypse of Moses*. The third section will be those traditions mistakenly attributed to Josephus. The final section consists of unattributed traditions.

The references to the *Little Genesis* are concentrated in the discussion of history before the Flood. Syncellus first mentions it in conjunction with the twenty-two works of creation (*Jub.* 2:2–23), but he includes references to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the twenty-two books of the Hebrew Bible, which are part of Epiphanius' *De mensuris et ponderibus* but not the text of *Jubilees*. Though Syncellus cites the *Little Genesis* as his source, he qualifies it with the phrase, "which some say is a revelation of Moses" (ἣν καὶ Μωϋσέως εἶναι φασὶ τινες ἀποκάλυψιν), without explicitly calling it the *Apocalypse of Moses*.<sup>93</sup>

The *Little Genesis* is also invoked for purely chronographical issues, such as the length of Adam's stay in Paradise (*Jub.* 3:8–14), for which Syncellus also cites a *Life of Adam*.<sup>94</sup> The tradition is indeed found in some Adam books, such as the Latin *Life of Adam and Eve*, certain Armenian apocrypha (see below, under "Other Languages"), and the *Testament of the Protoplasts* mentioned by Anastasius of Sinai.<sup>95</sup> He relies on *Jubilees* for his account of the Antediluvian generations (*Jub.* 3:17–4:9),

91 Heinrich Gelzer, *Sextus Julius Africanus und die byzantinische Chronographie*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1885–1898), 2: 249–97.

92 William Adler, *Time Immemorial: Archaic History and Its Sources in Christian Chronography from Julius Africanus to George Syncellus* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1989), 159–231.

93 George Syncellus, *The Chronography of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation*, trans. William Adler and Paul Tuffin (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4. This is a translation of the Greek text of George Syncellus, *Ecloga Chronographica*, ed. Alden A. Mosshammer (Leipzig: Teubner, 1984), 3. I have favored the translation unless I needed to explicitly quote the Greek text.

94 George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 6 and 11–12.

95 Anastasius of Sinai, *Hexaemeron*, ed. Clement A. Kuehn and John D. Baggarly (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2007), 266–67.

although he makes several adjustments to the book's chronological system.<sup>96</sup> First, he uses a solar year of 365 days (rather than *Jubilees'* idiosyncratic calendar of 364 days), and he takes his dates from the Septuagint rather than *Jubilees'* network of days, weeks, and jubilees (later, he will state, *contra Jubilees*, that a "jubilee" consists of fifty years).<sup>97</sup> Syncellus rarely names the wives of the patriarchs, although he mentions the two daughters of Adam, whom he calls (like John Malalas) Asouam and Azoura.<sup>98</sup>

Much later, Syncellus cites the *Little Genesis* in a series of *miscellanea* about the life of Abraham. Some of this material comes from *Jubilees*, though other parts are found in Josephus' *Antiquities* or even the Bible.

The *Little Genesis* states that the maternal grandfather of Abraham was named Abraham, and Sarah his sister had the same father as Abraham (*Jub.* 11:14; 12:9). Abraham was the first to proclaim as creator the God of the universe (cf. *Jub.* 11:16–17; *Ant.* I.155). Abraham was the first to surround the altar with olive and palm branches (*Jub.* 16:31). In the time of Abraham, an angel is first named in the divine scripture (Gen 16:7). From him, Egyptians learned the placement and movement of the stars and the knowledge of arithmetic (*Ant.* I.167).<sup>99</sup>

On the following pages, Syncellus mentions two more items, both attributed to the *Little Genesis*.

The angel speaking to Moses said to him, "I have taught Abraham the Hebrew tongue as it was customarily spoken by all the forefathers from the beginning of creation," according to *Little Genesis* (cf. *Jub.* 12:25–26).<sup>100</sup>

Mastiphm, the leader of the demons, as *Little Genesis* says, approached God and said, "If Abraham loves you, let him offer to you his own son" (cf. *Jub.* 17:16).<sup>101</sup>

The staccato nature of this rehearsal resembles the form of an unusual work, the *Hypomnestikon* of "Josephus Christianus," a fourth-century collection of Bible trivia.<sup>102</sup> At least, for each of the individual items where he names the work, Syncellus correctly attributes the information to *Jubilees*, not Josephus.

A final direct citation of *Jubilees* occurs in a short section labeled "From Genesis" (Τῆς Γενέσεως), where Syncellus writes: "Isaac said to Esau in his blessings, 'There will be a time when you shall break and loosen his yoke from your

<sup>96</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 11–12.

<sup>97</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 139.

<sup>98</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 12–13.

<sup>99</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 138.

<sup>100</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 139.

<sup>101</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 144.

<sup>102</sup> Greg W. Menzies, ed., *Joseph's Bible Notes: Hypomnestikon*, trans. Robert M. Grant and Greg W. Menzies (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996).

neck, and you shall commit a sin to death.”<sup>103</sup> The sentence conflates Gen 27:40 with *Jub.* 26:34. Perhaps Syncellus intended to write *Little Genesis* instead? Another case of mistaken attribution is Syncellus’ short account of the war between Jacob and Esau (*Jub.* 37–38) in a section entitled “From Josephus” (Ἰωσήπου) but ending with the statement “This is reported in the *Little Genesis*” (ταῦτα ἐν λεπτῇ Γενέσει φέρεται).<sup>104</sup>

Syncellus initially qualifies the *Little Genesis* as a work that some believe to be a “revelation of Moses,” but he only uses the title *Apocalypse of Moses* during a digression on the utility of apocrypha, attached to his account of the Watchers. While he draws upon the *Book of the Watchers* rather than *Jubilees* for this story, he does name an *Apocalypse of Moses* twice.

First, he claims that Paul cites the *Apocalypse of Moses* in Galatians: “For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation” (Gal 6:15 RSV).<sup>105</sup> This claim, which is not unique to Syncellus, has long been a source of bewilderment.<sup>106</sup> Perhaps Syncellus is thinking of *Jub.* 5:12, where God makes a “new creation” after the Flood. Or perhaps he is thinking of another part of Galatians. M. R. James proposed that the intended referent was Gal 3:19 (RSV): “It [the Mosaic Law] was ordained by angels through an intermediary,” which would accord with the frame story of *Jubilees*.<sup>107</sup>

Syncellus’ second (and final) reference to the *Apocalypse of Moses* is a summary of the story told in *Jub.* 10:1–14, which Syncellus cites as the sort of apocryphal story a good Christian ought not to believe.

Indeed, in the so-called *Apocalypse of Moses*, it is reported about them [the ghosts of the giants] that after the Flood in AM 2582 they were moved by envy and after their death led astray the sons of Noah. And when Noah prayed that they withdraw from them, the Lord ordered the archangel Michael to cast them into the abyss until the day of judgement. But the devil requested to receive a portion of them in order to test humanity. And a tenth of them was given to him according to a divine order, so as to try humanity and probe the loyalty of each person to God; but the remaining nine parts were cast into the abyss. But this seems absurd to us, that a living person should be tested by the soul of one who has died. Therefore, we also advise that those who read apocrypha either here or elsewhere should not follow in all things the ideas reported in them.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>103</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 154; *Ecloga Chronographica*, 123.

<sup>104</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 155; *Ecloga Chronographica*, 124.

<sup>105</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronographs*, 36.

<sup>106</sup> Adler in George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 36, n. 3, names Euthalius the Deacon (*Editio Epistolarum Pauli, Divinorum testimoniorum IV*) and Photius (*Quaestiones ad Amphilochium* 151). These two authors cite “apocrypha of Moses.”

<sup>107</sup> James, *Lost Apocrypha*, 42.

<sup>108</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 37.



As we saw in the last chapter, this story was not exclusive to *Jubilees* but was also found in the prologue to *Sefer Asaph/Sefer Refu'ot*, which was known to Christians, at least, in a Latin version. It is not clear that Syncellus realizes that the *Apocalypse of Moses* shares this story with the *Little Genesis*. He does not heap opprobrium on the *Little Genesis* as he does the *Apocalypse of Moses*. There are also some signs that his source is neither *Jubilees* nor *Sefer Asaph*. The anonymous angel in *Jubilees* (Raphael in *Sefer Asaph*) is now called Michael, while Mastema (named by Syncellus elsewhere as “Mastipham”)<sup>109</sup> becomes the devil.

The third block of *Jubilees* material consists of misattributions to Josephus. In one sense, this is understandable, since *Jubilees* and Josephus’ *Antiquities* have similar aims (an account of sacred history) and share many traditions.<sup>110</sup> Syncellus’ first explicit reference to Josephus—that animals could speak before the transgression of Adam and Eve—is correctly attributed to both him (*Ant.* I.41, 50) and to *Jubilees* (3:28).<sup>111</sup> This is the only time, however, that he correctly attributes something to Josephus that is also found in *Jubilees*.

Syncellus always misattributes *Jubilees* material to Josephus; he never attributes material from Josephus to *Jubilees*. On account of this, Adler (following Gelzer) postulated that Syncellus knew an interpolated “Pseudo-Josephus” with passages from *Jubilees* inserted into the text of the *Antiquities*.<sup>112</sup> Gelzer proposed a single, conveniently lost work that Syncellus or one of his sources had used. Adler instead characterizes Pseudo-Josephus as a cumulative development, a pileup of historical accidents. The unilateral misattribution is not difficult to explain. Josephus’ *Antiquities* was better-known and more authoritative than *Jubilees*. Misattribution—which is not necessarily intentional—will generally go “upward” (from a less authoritative work to a more authoritative work) rather than “downward.” The subsequent chroniclers who repeat Syncellus’ errors, of which there are many, are doing just that: repeating what they found in Syncellus.

The misattributed material comes from the middle portion of *Jubilees*, from the life of Abraham to the life of Jacob. Syncellus narrates Abraham’s liberation from idolatry no fewer than three times, assigning it to Josephus in the second instance.

In his 14th year, Abraham came to know and worship the God of the universe. After destroying the idols of his father, he burned them along with their house. And Arran, Abraham’s brother, was consumed in the fire along with them, when he was hastening to extinguish the

<sup>109</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 144.

<sup>110</sup> See Halpern-Amaru, “Flavius Josephus and *The Book of Jubilees*.”

<sup>111</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 11.

<sup>112</sup> Adler, *Time Immemorial*, 188–93.

fire. Abraham also began strongly to urge his father to abandon idolatry and the manufacture of idols, as Josephos says (cf. *Jub.* 11:16–18; 12:1–5.12–14).<sup>113</sup>

Only a few pages earlier, Syncellus summarized this tradition without attributing it to anyone.<sup>114</sup> He does so again on the very next page, adding only that Abraham was sixty-one when he burned the temple (against *Jub.* 12:12–14, which says he was sixty).<sup>115</sup> This story does not appear at all in Josephus, but it was well-known from other sources (such as Malalas). It is surprising that Syncellus felt the need to attribute it to anyone at all.

All the other misattributed material comes from the life of Jacob: Abraham's blessing of Jacob (*Jub.* 22:4–23:5);<sup>116</sup> Jacob's declaration to his mother that he is still a virgin (*Jub.* 25:9);<sup>117</sup> the war between Jacob and Esau (*Jub.* 37–38);<sup>118</sup> Isaac's blessing of Levi and Judah (*Jub.* 31:13–20);<sup>119</sup> and Jacob's tithe of Levi (*Jub.* 32:1–3).<sup>120</sup> These passages share a similar theme: Jacob's election and the blessings bestowed on his children. While I doubt that Syncellus was dependent on an interpolated version of the *Antiquities*, whoever initially gathered these passages together seems to have collected them like a florilegium and then misattributed them *en bloc*.

The remaining parallels with *Jubilees* are unattributed. They consist of widely reported traditions from the work. The relevant traditions are: the death of Cain via collapsing house (*Jub.* 4:31);<sup>121</sup> various traditions about the Tower of Babel (*Jub.* 10:21.26);<sup>122</sup> the oath among the sons of Noah and Canaan's violation of that oath (*Jub.* 10:28–34);<sup>123</sup> Cainan's rediscovery of Antediluvian lore (*Jub.* 8:1–4);<sup>124</sup> and two different anonymous reports about Abraham burning the temple of idols.<sup>125</sup> Syncellus' lack of an attribution could be an indicator that they were "common knowledge" (compare a similar set of unsourced traditions from Malalas). He might not have even known that they came from *Jubilees*.

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<sup>113</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 138.

<sup>114</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 133–34.

<sup>115</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 139.

<sup>116</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 148.

<sup>117</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 149.

<sup>118</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 155.

<sup>119</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 159.

<sup>120</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 161. This is mentioned again (without attribution) on 172.

<sup>121</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 15. Syncellus alludes to the competing tradition about Lamech (12), but he does not identify Lamech's victim.

<sup>122</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 58 (viz., that it took about forty years to build and was toppled by wind).

<sup>123</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 61–62.

<sup>124</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 114.

<sup>125</sup> George Syncellus, *The Chronography*, 133–34; 139.

Syncellus successfully though haphazardly documented nearly every extrabiblical element from *Jubilees*. His chronicle attests to the continued preservation of traditions from *Jubilees* beyond Late Antiquity, even if it is a poor witness to the text. Significantly for the present study, Syncellus' work is roughly contemporary with PRE. The *Ecloga chronographica* shows that all the major traditions from *Jubilees* were circulating as late as the early ninth century.

The next author of note is also a George. George the Monk (d. ca. 875), also known as George Hamartolos ("the sinner"), is the author of one of the more popular Byzantine chronicles.<sup>126</sup> As with the chronicle of Malalas, its popularity is inversely proportional to its worth as a historical source. It covers the whole span of history from creation to the year 842. George often inserted entertaining and edifying stories into the work. His chronicle is partially based on Malalas and preserves his store of traditions from *Jubilees*. For example, in the first book, he names the daughters of Adam and Eve<sup>127</sup> and mentions Seth's discovery of writing and astronomy and their rediscovery by Cainan.<sup>128</sup> In the second book, he covers the remainder of the traditions known to Malalas: the introduction of "Hellenism" in the days of Serug<sup>129</sup> and Abraham's rejection of idolatry.<sup>130</sup> He also has material not found in Malalas. In book two, he mentions the construction of the Tower of Babel over forty years<sup>131</sup> and Canaan's occupation of Shem's territory.<sup>132</sup> Both of these are among George Syncellus' "unsourced" traditions. He also mentions the election of Levi and the war between Jacob and Esau, erroneously attributing the second to Josephus.<sup>133</sup> It seems reasonable to assume that he used Syncellus' sources without necessarily using Syncellus himself.

While Malalas, Syncellus, and George the Monk are probably the most significant tradents of *Jubilees* material, certain traditions also popped up in minor chronicles. The *Selection of Histories* (*Ekloge historion*) is an anonymous, incomplete ninth-century Byzantine world chronicle whose most notable relationship to *Jubilees* is the names of the wives of the patriarchs, although Cainan and the decline of civilization in the time of Serug are also incidentally mentioned.<sup>134</sup> The list of

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<sup>126</sup> Neville, *Byzantine Historical Writing*, 87–92.

<sup>127</sup> George the Monk, *Chronicon*, ed. Carl de Boor, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1904), 1:6.

<sup>128</sup> George the Monk, *Chronicon*, 1:10.

<sup>129</sup> George the Monk, *Chronicon*, 1:57.

<sup>130</sup> George the Monk, *Chronicon*, 1:92–95.

<sup>131</sup> George the Monk, *Chronicon*, 1:54.

<sup>132</sup> George the Monk, *Chronicon*, 1:57.

<sup>133</sup> George the Monk, *Chronicon*, 1:113–14.

<sup>134</sup> J.A. Cramer, *Anecdota graeca e codd. manuscriptis bibliothecae regiae Parisiensis*, 2 vols. (Oxford: E Typographeo Academico, 1839), 2:165–230 (169–72).

wives is slightly different from that found in the *catena* literature.<sup>135</sup> It includes, for example, Edna, the wife of Terah.

Another minor work is that of Peter of Alexandria, the otherwise unknown author of a short tenth-century chronicle extant in a single manuscript (Coislinianus 229).<sup>136</sup> Zinaida Samodurova edited and published the Greek text in 1961, preceded by a lengthy introduction in Russian.<sup>137</sup> It too features a list of the wives of the patriarchs, in two installments: the wives before the Flood<sup>138</sup> and the wives after.<sup>139</sup> A lot of the intervening space is dedicated to the Diaperismos, although the oath taken by the sons of Noah does not make an appearance. Peter uses other Second Temple sources as well, such as Artapanus' rendition of the early life of Moses.

Yet another minor tenth-century chronicle is the recently rediscovered work of Pseudo-Eusthatius.<sup>140</sup> It was initially published by Leo Allatius (d. 1669) under the misleading name *In hexahemeron commentarius*.<sup>141</sup> Even though the hexameral material is extensive, it is in fact a chronicle from creation until the time of Joshua. A newly identified manuscript (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Grec 1336, ff. 9a–111a) continues the history to the time of Alexander the Great. Since the printed edition covers all the biblical history found in *Jubilees*, it will suffice for this analysis.

Pseudo-Eusthatius owes an obvious debt to John Malalas. Seth, rather than Enoch, invents writing and astronomy.<sup>142</sup> Cainan discovers augury through his own observation of the stars.<sup>143</sup> Serug devises the Chaldaean arts, and Abraham burns his father's idols.<sup>144</sup> In fact, Pseudo-Eusthatius does not report anything that is not already said by Malalas. There are, however, other points of interest for students of early Judaism and Christianity, such as the chronicle's use of Eupolemus,<sup>145</sup> a report

135 W. Lowndes Lipscomb, "The Wives of the Patriarchs in the Ekloge Historian," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 30 (1979): 91.

136 Neville, *Byzantine Historical Writing*, 93–94.

137 Zinaida G. Samodurova, "Khronika Petra Aleksandriiskogo," *Vizantiiskii Vremennik* 18 (1961): 150–97.

138 Samodurova, "Khronika," 180–81.

139 Samodurova, "Khronika," 186–87.

140 Paolo Odorico, "Une chronique byzantine inconnue," in *Von der Historienbibel zur Weltchronik: Studien zur Psepha-Literatur*, ed. Christfried Böttrich, Dieter Fahl, and Sabine Fahl (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2020), 188–204.

141 Pseudo-Eusthatius, *In hexahemeron commentarius ac De engastrimytho dissertatio adversus Originem*, ed. Leo Allatius (Lyon: Laurentii Durand, 1629).

142 Pseudo-Eusthatius, *In hexahemeron commentarius*, 47.

143 Pseudo-Eusthatius, *In hexahemeron commentarius*, 54.

144 Pseudo-Eusthatius, *In hexahemeron commentarius*, 56–57.

145 Pseudo-Eusthatius, *In hexahemeron commentarius*, 83.

that Moses' original name was Melchis,<sup>146</sup> and a strange digression on the *Protevan-gelium of James* in the midst of the story of Judah and Tamar (Gen 38).<sup>147</sup>

The end of the tenth century saw the appearance of another major chronicle that introduced—or rather reintroduced—*jubilees* material into the Byzantine historical record: the chronicle of Symeon the Logothete. Little is known about Symeon, but his title suggests that he, like George Syncellus, was a Byzantine functionary.<sup>148</sup> His work is one of several related “Logothete” chronicles. The others include the chronicles of Leo Grammaticus,<sup>149</sup> Theodosius Melitenus (or Melissenus),<sup>150</sup> and Pseudo-Julius Pollux (also called the *Chronicle of Creation*).<sup>151</sup> Staffan Wahlgren has edited, published, and translated the presumptive original.<sup>152</sup> Earlier studies, including those of Gelzer and Adler, often favored the chronicle of Leo Grammaticus instead. Their conclusions about Leo Grammaticus are applicable to the Logothetes as a whole.

Symeon's chronicle—including his account of biblical history—resembles George Syncellus and George the Monk, but he differs enough from them that Adler (again, following Gelzer) has proposed that his sources hearken back to the very first Christian chronicle, the *Chronographiae* of Julius Africanus.<sup>153</sup> One telltale sign is that Symeon assigns the rediscovery of the teachings of the Watchers (Greek: *egregoroi*) to Shelah (Greek: Sala) rather than to Cainan—a person Julius Africanus omitted from his chronology:

At the age of 135 Arphaxad begot Sala. When he grew up, his father taught him letters. And when Sala once had set out on his own, thinking about founding a colony, he comes to the land of the Chaldeans, where he finds letters carved into rocks. This was the tradition stemming

146 Pseudo-Eusthatius, *In hexahemeron commentarius*, 79. On the significance of this tradition, see Menahem Kister, “Ancient Material in *Pirke de-Rabbi Eli'ezer*: 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 (84–89).

147 Pseudo-Eusthatius, *In hexahemeron commentarius*, 66–74.

148 Treadgold, *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, 203–17; Neville, *Byzantine Historical Writing*, 118–123.

149 Leo Grammaticus, *Chronographia*, ed. Immanuel Bekker (Bonn: Impensis Ed. Weberi, 1842).

150 Theodosius Melitenus, *Chronographia*, ed. Lucas Tafel (Munich: Königlich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1859).

151 Pseudo-Julius Pollux, *Historia physica seu Chronicon ab origine mundi usque ad Valentis tempora*, ed. Ignatius Hardt (Munich and Leipzig: Joseph Landauer, 1792).

152 Text: Symeon the Logothete, *Chronicon*, ed. Staffan Wahlgren (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006). Translation: Symeon the Logothete, *The Chronicle of the Logothete*, trans. Staffan Wahlgren (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019).

153 Adler, *Time Immemorial*, 193–206.

from the *egregoroi*. Sala wrote it down, and he himself sinned because of it and also taught others the absurdities contained in it.<sup>154</sup>

Another clue to the antiquity of the Logothete tradition is embedded in the above passage. The Logothetes do not give the euhemeristic interpretation of Gen 6:1–4, where the “Sons of God” are the children of Seth rather than the Watchers (even though this very interpretation is credited to Julius Africanus). Symeon the Logothete therefore offers a variation of the biography of Enoch (*Jub.* 4:15–26) not found in earlier extant chronicles. This biography mentions the Watchers.

At the age of 162 Jared begot Enoch. He is the first to learn and to teach reading and writing, and he is deemed worthy of revelations concerning the divine mysteries. At the age of 165 Enoch begot Methuselah and, having lived for a further 200 years and having borne witness to the *egregoroi* concerning the punishment for the transgression, he is removed to Eden where paradise is. It should be noted that, whenever angels falter and turn to vile behaviour, then man is deemed worthy to experience a change for the better. For it is said that it was in his days that those angels who are also called *egregoroi* came down to earth.<sup>155</sup>

These are the places in which Symeon the Logothete most drastically departs from the chronicles of the two Georges.

Symeon cites the *Little Genesis* by name at least once and at most four times. Two of these are textually dubious (and also inaccurate); the remaining example is attributed to “Moses.” The two accurate citations both involve the Hexameron. Chapter one states that the angels were created on the first day (1.5): “This is what happened on the first day of Creation. On this day the heavenly powers were created, according to Moses in the *Lesser Genesis*” (λέγει Μωσῆς ἐν τῇ Λεπτῇ Γενέσει).<sup>156</sup> At the end of his creation account, in chapter eight (8.4), Symeon mentions the twenty-two works of creation.

The works which, as Moses says, God made in the six days, were twenty-two in number. Therefore, there are twenty-two letters in the alphabet, and the same number of books of the Hebrews, and twenty-two generations from Adam to Jacob.<sup>157</sup>

The attribution to Moses here would normally signify Genesis, although Symeon was not averse to attributing the *Little Genesis* to Moses, as the first citation shows. The form of the tradition, as usual, is the one from Epiphanius’ *De mensuris et ponderibus*.

<sup>154</sup> Symeon the Logothete, *The Chronicle*, 31. Note that Shelah spreads the information instead of keeping it to himself, as Cainan does in *Jubilees*.

<sup>155</sup> Symeon the Logothete, *The Chronicle*, 29–30.

<sup>156</sup> Symeon the Logothete, *The Chronicle*, 15; *Chronicon*, 6.

<sup>157</sup> Symeon the Logothete, *The Chronicle*, 19.

The dubious attributions include a reference to Cain's natural disposition to evil (22.2)<sup>158</sup> and Nimrod's role in the construction of Babel (26.5).<sup>159</sup> Wahlgren considers the first to be a gloss. The second is only listed in the apparatus of his edition. Neither idea is found in *Jubilees* (which does not even name Nimrod), but both are in Josephus (*Ant.* I.53; I.113–14). These glosses are evidence that the confusion between *Jubilees* and Josephus could go both ways.

The rest of the *Jubilees* material in Symeon is familiar from other chronicles. It includes: the talking animals (15.4);<sup>160</sup> the daughters of Adam (24.1,5);<sup>161</sup> the death of Cain (24.2);<sup>162</sup> the construction of Babel during forty-three years (26.8);<sup>163</sup> Canaan occupying the territory of Shem (31);<sup>164</sup> the wickedness of Serug's generation (32.2–3);<sup>165</sup> Abraham burning the temple of idols (33.1–3);<sup>166</sup> Abraham instituting the feast of tabernacles (33.8);<sup>167</sup> the election of Levi (34.6);<sup>168</sup> and the war with Esau (34.8–9).<sup>169</sup> The majority of these—except for the depredations of the generation of Serug—have an equivalent in the chronicle of George Syncellus.

In addition to Symeon and the other Logothete chronicles, there is an entirely separate chronicle with the moniker “Pseudo-Symeon,” so named because it abruptly begins after some thirty folios of the chronicle of the genuine Symeon in the one manuscript in which it survives (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Grec 1712). It has not been edited or translated into any modern (or ancient) language. Fortunately, it was a major source for George Cedrenus, who has imported this chronicle's *Jubilees* material.<sup>170</sup>

As an individual, George Cedrenus (d. 1115) is little more than a name, and his *Compendium historiarum* little more than a compilation of what has come before.<sup>171</sup> The significance of Cedrenus' work lies in its enormous popularity, reflected by at least

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158 Symeon the Logothete, *The Chronicle*, 27.

159 Symeon the Logothete, *Chronicon*, 30.

160 Symeon the Logothete, *The Chronicle*, 23.

161 Symeon the Logothete, *The Chronicle*, 28–29. Some other wives are named incidentally, such as Emma, the wife of Enosh (chapter 24.8, p. 29) and Edna, the wife of Terah (chapter 32.5, p. 35)

162 Symeon the Logothete, *The Chronicle*, 29.

163 Symeon the Logothete, *The Chronicle*, 32.

164 Symeon the Logothete, *The Chronicle*, 34.

165 Symeon the Logothete, *The Chronicle*, 34–35. Symeon emphasizes warfare rather than idolatry as the primary sin of this generation.

166 Symeon the Logothete, *The Chronicle*, 35.

167 Symeon the Logothete, *The Chronicle*, 36.

168 Symeon the Logothete, *The Chronicle*, 37.

169 Symeon the Logothete, *The Chronicle*, 37.

170 Treadgold, *Middle Byzantine Historians*, 218.

171 Treadgold, *Middle Byzantine Historians*, 339–41. Neville, *Byzantine Historical Writing*, 162–68.

forty manuscripts. Cedrenus names the *Little Genesis* as one of his sources.<sup>172</sup> His work abounds in references to the book, but most of them are taken from elsewhere. Adler has demonstrated that this chronicle regularly conflated the work of George Syncellus with traditions from other chroniclers, such as the Logothetes or John Malalas.<sup>173</sup>

For this reason, Cedrenus' dossier of traditions from *Jubilees* is quite full but extremely derivative: the twenty-two works of creation;<sup>174</sup> talking animals;<sup>175</sup> Adam's seven years in Paradise;<sup>176</sup> the death of Cain;<sup>177</sup> the daughters of Adam;<sup>178</sup> a note on Enoch (cf. *Jub.* 4:17);<sup>179</sup> the descent of the Watchers (here identified with the children of Seth) in the time of Jared;<sup>180</sup> Noah on Mount Lubar (cf. *Jub.* 5:28);<sup>181</sup> the construction of Babel over forty-three years;<sup>182</sup> Canaan in the territory of Shem;<sup>183</sup> the rediscovery of Antediluvian knowledge by either Cainan or Shelah (Cedrenus names both);<sup>184</sup> the wickedness of Serug's generation;<sup>185</sup> miscellaneous traditions about Abraham (abbreviated from Syncellus);<sup>186</sup> an angel teaching Abraham Hebrew (cf. *Jub.* 12:25–27);<sup>187</sup> Abraham burning the temple of idols;<sup>188</sup> Abraham instituting the feast of tabernacles (*Jub.* 16:20);<sup>189</sup> Mastema testing Abraham (cf. *Jub.* 17:15–18);<sup>190</sup> diverse traditions about Jacob, again taken from Syncellus;<sup>191</sup> the election of Levi (cf. *Jub.* 32:1–3);<sup>192</sup> and the war with Esau.<sup>193</sup>

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172 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, ed. Immanuel Bekker, 2 vols. (Bonn: Impensis Ed. Weberi, 1838), 1:6.

173 Adler, *Time Immemorial*, 206–31.

174 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:9.

175 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:9–10.

176 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:12–13.

177 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:16.

178 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:16. Or, rather, one daughter: Seth is said to marry Asuama in a passage reminiscent of John Malalas.

179 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:17. This is similar to no. 590 *ad* Gen 5:21–24 in the *catena*.

180 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:18–19.

181 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:21.

182 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:21.

183 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:24–25.

184 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:27.

185 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:47.

186 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:47–48.

187 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:48.

188 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:48.

189 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:50.

190 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:53.

191 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:59.

192 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:60.

193 George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:60–61.



Cedrenus does make some new references. For example, he mentions the ten months during which the infants were thrown into the Nile (cf. *Jub.* 47:3).<sup>194</sup> He also briefly summarizes the frame narrative.

Ὅτι Εὐπόλεμός φησι τὸν Μωϋσέα πρῶτον σοφὸν γενέσθαι καὶ γράμματα παραδοῦναι Ἰουδαίοις πρῶτον, παρὰ δὲ Ἰουδαίων Φοίνικας παραλαβεῖν, Ἕλληνας δὲ παρὰ Φοινίκων. Νόμους δὲ πρῶτον Μωϋσῆς γράφει τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις. Καταλιπὼν δὲ Μωϋσῆς τὰς κατ' Αἴγυπτον διατριβάς εἰς τὴν ἔρημον ἐφιλοσόφει, διδασκόμενος παρὰ τοῦ ἀρχαγγέλου Γαβριὴλ τὰ περὶ τῆς γενέσεως τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τοῦ πρώτου ἀνθρώπου καὶ τῶν μετ' ἐκείνων, καὶ τοῦ κατακλυσμοῦ, καὶ τῆς συγχύσεως καὶ ποικιλίας τῶν γλωσσῶν, καὶ τῶν περὶ τὸν πρῶτον ἄνθρωπον, καὶ τῶν μέχρι αὐτοῦ χρόνων, καὶ περὶ τῆς νομοθεσίας τῆς μελλούσης παρ' αὐτοῦ δίδοσθαι τῷ Ἰουδαίῳ ἔθνεϊ, καὶ τὰς τῶν ἀστρῶν θέσεις καὶ τὰ στοιχεῖα καὶ ἀριθμητικὴν καὶ γεωμετρίαν καὶ πᾶσαν σοφίαν, ὡς ἐν τῇ λεπτῇ Γενέσει κεῖται.

Eupolemus says that Moses was the first wise man and the first to transmit letters to the Jews. The Phoenicians received them from the Jews, and then the Greeks from the Phoenicians. Moses was also the first to write laws for the Jews. Having abandoned his Egyptian way of life, he practiced philosophy in the wilderness, being taught by the archangel Gabriel about the creation of the world and the first man and those who came after him, and about the Flood, and about the confusion and multiplication of languages, and about the first man and of the times up to his times, and of the coming legislation to be given to the Jewish nation by him, and of the placement of the stars and the elements and arithmetic and geometry and all manner of wisdom, as it is related in the *Little Genesis* (ὡς ἐν τῇ λεπτῇ Γενέσει κεῖται).<sup>195</sup>

Therefore, his knowledge of *Jubilees* is not entirely dependent on earlier chronicles—at least among those that are still in existence.

Cedrenus' attitude towards *Jubilees* can be contrasted with John Zonaras (d. 1145), a bureaucrat turned monk, who authored one of the most influential (and longest) of all the Byzantine chronicles.<sup>196</sup> Despite its prodigious length, his chronicle mentions the *Little Genesis* only to dismiss it.

Οἶδα μὲν οὖν ἐν τῇ Λεπτῇ Γενέσει γεγραμμένον ὡς ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ ἡμέρᾳ καὶ αἱ οὐράναι δυνάμεις πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων ὑπέστησαν παρὰ τοῦ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργοῦ, ἀλλ' ὅτι μὴ ταῖς παρὰ τῶν θεῶν πατέρων ἐγκεκριμέναις βίβλοις τῆς Ἑβραϊκῆς σοφίας καὶ ἡ Λεπτὴ αὕτη συνηριθμηταὶ Γένεσις, οὐδὲν τι τῶν ἐν ἐκείνῃ γεγραμμένων λογίζομαι βέβαιον, οὐδὲ τῷ λόγῳ συντιθεμαι.

I know that it is written in the *Little Genesis* that on the first day the powers of heaven were established before all else by the Maker of All, but since this same *Little Genesis* is also not

<sup>194</sup> George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:86.

<sup>195</sup> George Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum*, 1:87.

<sup>196</sup> Theofili Kampianaki, *John Zonaras' Epitome of Histories: A Compendium of Jewish-Roman History and Its Reception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022); Treadgold, *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, 388–99; Neville, *Byzantine Historical Writing*, 191–99.

counted among the books of Hebrew wisdom approved by the Divine Fathers, I do not consider any of the things written in it as certain, nor do I agree with it.<sup>197</sup>

This is the extent of Zonaras' engagement with *Jubilees*.

Albert-Marie Denis, in his collection of Greek citations of *Jubilees*, adduced additional textual evidence for *Jubilees* from Zonaras' chronicle, citing a passage attributed to Josephus about the hardships endured by the Israelites under the Egyptians and comparing it to *Jub.* 46:14.<sup>198</sup> The parallel is not convincing. The verse from *Jubilees* is already very close to its counterpart in Exod 1:11, and the text of Zonaras is a pale reflection of both.<sup>199</sup> Furthermore, it is a nearly word-for-word transcription of an authentic passage from Josephus (*Ant.* II.203). Zonaras had a much higher opinion of Josephus than he did of *Jubilees* and used the Jewish historian liberally. Theofili Kampianaki, in a monograph on the chronicle, its sources, and its reception, pointed out the irony that Zonaras inherited some traditions from *Jubilees* via Josephus, such as the name of Pharaoh's daughter, Thermuthis (*Jub.* 47:5; *Ant.* II.224), but this is the extent that he can discuss *Jubilees'* influence on the chronicle.<sup>200</sup> Zonaras' flat rejection of *Jubilees* represents a turning point in the Byzantine attitude to *Jubilees*, also reflected by the next author.

This author, Michael Glycas (fl. 12th c.) was a historian and theologian who wrote his chronicle for the instruction of his son.<sup>201</sup> His attitude towards *Jubilees* is like that of John Zonaras. In a direct address to his son, he dismisses the work as a joke.

Ἡ δὲ Λεπτὴ Γένεσις λέγει τὸν Ἀδὰμ ἀπροόπτως ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου λαβεῖν καὶ φαγεῖν, καὶ μὴ προσχεῖν ὅλως τῷ λόγῳ τῆς Εὐας, ὅτι λειποθυμῶν ἦν ἀπὸ τε μόχθου καὶ πείνης. Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν, ἀγαπητέ, σιωπᾶν ἄμεινον, ὅτι καὶ σιωπῆς, ὡς προεῖρηται, τυγχάνουσιν ἄξια. Εἰ μὴ βούλει καὶ σύ λέγειν ὅτι γυναικὰ ἔλαβεν ὁ Ἀδὰμ, ἵνα μὴ ἐφ' ἕτερα τῶν ζώων τραπήσεται. Ὁ ὄφεις ἀπὸ κτήνους ἐρπετὸν ἐγένετο, χεῖράς τε καὶ πόδας ἐκέκτητο. Ἀφηρέθη δὲ ταῦτα διὰ τὸ τολμηρῶς εἰς τὸν παράδεισον εἰσελθεῖν, καὶ διὰ τὸ πρῶτος ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου λαβεῖν καὶ φαγεῖν. Ὁ Ἀδὰμ ἀπεσόβει τὰ πετεινὰ καὶ ἐρπετὰ, συνῆγε τὸν καρπὸν ἐν παραδείσῳ, καὶ σὺν τῇ γυναικὶ αὐτοῦ ἤσθιεν αὐτόν. Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν, ἵνα μὴ λέγω, καὶ ἔτι πολλὰ πλεῖονα τούτων, ἡ Λεπτὴ διέξεισι Γένεσις. Ἀλλ' ἄφες αὐτά. τοῖς γὰρ ὅπως οὖν ἐγκύπτουσι τῇ ἁγίᾳ γραφῇ γέλως ἀντικρυς δοκοῦσι καὶ παίγνια.

<sup>197</sup> John Zonaras, *Annales*, ed. Maurice Pinder, 2 vols., (Bonn: Impensis Ed. Weberi, 1841), 1:18.

<sup>198</sup> Albert-Marie Denis, ed., *Fragmenta pseudepigraphorum quae supersunt graeca: Una cum historicorum et auctorum judaeorum hellenistarum fragmentis* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 99.

<sup>199</sup> John Zonaras, *Annales*, 1:52.

<sup>200</sup> Kampianaki, *Epitome of Histories*, 45–46, referring John Zonaras, *Annales*, 1:53.

<sup>201</sup> Treadgold, *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, 403–7; Neville, *Byzantine Historical Writing*, 205–9. His theological impulses appear in the first, longest section of his chronicle, which is entirely dedicated to the Hexameron. This section is over two hundred pages long in the edition of Immanuel Bekker: Michael Glycas, *Annales*, ed. Immanuel Bekker (Bonn: Impensis Ed. Weberi, 1836), 3–221.

The *Little Genesis* says Adam suddenly took from the tree and ate it, not heeding at all the words of Eve, because he was weary from toil and hunger. But these things, beloved, it is better to be silent about, as has been said before, for they happen to be worthy of silence, unless you want to say that Adam took the woman so that he would not be diverted to one of the other animals. The serpent, changed from a beast to a reptile, once had hands and feet, but he lost these after he boldly entered Paradise and became the first to take and eat from the tree. Adam used to drive away the birds and reptiles, gather the fruit in Paradise, and eat it with his wife (cf. *Jub.* 3:16). The *Little Genesis* narrates these matters, not to mention many others besides. But leave these things! For to those who have examined the Sacred Scriptures in any way, they seem outright laughable, like children's games.<sup>202</sup>

The passage is a paradox. On the one hand, Glycas gives a sarcastic and not particularly accurate account of the Adam and Eve story in *Jub.* 3. On the other hand, he incidentally cites *Jub.* 3:16, a verse for which he is the only Greek textual witness. Where did he find it? Did he take it from an earlier, unknown chronicle? Or did he read the beginning of *Jubilees* only to discard it?

Even stranger, Glycas goes on to use *Jubilees* material taken from other chronicles without argument. They offer no new surprises: the daughters of Adam and Eve;<sup>203</sup> the death of Cain;<sup>204</sup> the construction of Babel during forty-odd years;<sup>205</sup> Canaan occupying the territory of Shem;<sup>206</sup> the discoveries of Cainan;<sup>207</sup> the origin of idolatry in the time of Serug;<sup>208</sup> Abraham's rejection of idolatry;<sup>209</sup> the election of Levi;<sup>210</sup> and intimations about the war with Esau (which Glycas does not narrate, although he does misattribute the story to Josephus).<sup>211</sup> These themes are well-known from the chronicles of George Syncellus, Symeon the Logothete, and George Cedrenus. Glycas does not entirely dissimulate here, often giving "George" (Syncellus? Hamartolos? Cedrenus?) as his authority.<sup>212</sup> True to his principles, he only cites traditions from these authors that are not attributed to *Jubilees*.

Glycas does explicitly cite the *Little Genesis* a handful of other times, all pertaining to Adam and Eve. For example, he cites both Josephus and the *Little*

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<sup>202</sup> Michael Glycas, *Annales*, 206.

<sup>203</sup> Michael Glycas, *Annales*, 221.

<sup>204</sup> Michael Glycas, *Annales*, 223 (here, a mere allusion to the fact that some believe Cain died differently than in the standard narrative where Lamech kills Cain).

<sup>205</sup> Michael Glycas, *Annales*, 240.

<sup>206</sup> Michael Glycas, *Annales*, 242.

<sup>207</sup> Michael Glycas, *Annales*, 242–43.

<sup>208</sup> Michael Glycas, *Annales*, 245.

<sup>209</sup> Michael Glycas, *Annales*, 246–47.

<sup>210</sup> Michael Glycas, *Annales*, 263.

<sup>211</sup> Michael Glycas, *Annales*, 263–64.

<sup>212</sup> Michael Glycas, *Annales*, 221, 223, 228, 229, 243, 246, 262.

*Genesis* as claiming that the serpent had limbs prior to the Fall, though only Josephus states this (*Ant.* I.50).<sup>213</sup> Much later, he mentions the purification of Adam and Eve before entering the Garden, appealing to the *Little Genesis* (*Jub.* 3:8–14).<sup>214</sup> The only other time he comes close to naming his source as *Jubilees* is a “Mosaic history” (Μωσαϊκὴν ἱστορίαν) stating, against Josephus (*Ant.* I.211), that Abraham and Sarah were half-siblings, children of the same mother.<sup>215</sup> *Jubilees* 12:9 says they are children of the same father—as does *Genesis* (Gen 20:12). Glycas was not necessarily the closest reader of his sources.

Closing out the Byzantine period is a pair of minor chronicles. Joel is the attributed author of a brief chronicle (1614 lines) that runs from creation to the Crusader conquest of Constantinople in 1204.<sup>216</sup> The ending bemoans that Christians should attack other Christians, a possible suggestion that it was composed sometime during the brief Latin Empire (1204–1261). It survives in only four manuscripts. George the Monk and George Cedrenus are among its sources.

Both Rönsch and Charles cite Joel as part of the chain of transmission of *Jubilees*.<sup>217</sup> As an independent witness, it does not have much to offer. The most interesting aspect of the chronicle might be its date. Even in the thirteenth century, *Jubilees* formed part of the backbone of Byzantine sacred history. That does not mean that Joel, whoever he was, consulted *Jubilees*. On the contrary, his sources are already an indicator of what to expect. Joel’s traditions are: the daughters of Adam;<sup>218</sup> the death of Cain;<sup>219</sup> the discoveries of Cainan;<sup>220</sup> Abraham burning the idols;<sup>221</sup> the election of Levi;<sup>222</sup> and the war with Esau (dutifully misattributed to Josephus).<sup>223</sup> Given the chronicle’s brevity, these isolated tradition might indicate what a typical Byzantine historian considered the points of greatest interest.

John Anagnostes (“the Reader”) is the last Byzantine writer to use *Jubilees*.<sup>224</sup> He lived in the final days of the empire. His most famous work is an eyewitness account of the fall of Thessaloniki to the Ottoman Turks in 1430. The work of inter-

213 Michael Glycas, *Annales*, 197–98.

214 Michael Glycas, *Annales*, 392.

215 Michael Glycas, *Annales*, 250.

216 Neville, *Byzantine Historical Writing*, 216–19.

217 Rönsch, *Das Buch der Jubiläen*, 364–67; Charles, *The Book of Jubilees*, lxxxii.

218 Joel Historicus, *Chronographia compendiaria*, ed. Immanuel Bekker (Bonn: Impensis Ed. Weberi, 1836), 3.

219 Joel Historicus, *Chronographia*, 3.

220 Joel Historicus, *Chronographia*, 3–4.

221 Joel Historicus, *Chronographia*, 8.

222 Joel Historicus, *Chronographia*, 9–10.

223 Joel Historicus *Chronographia*, 9–10.

224 Neville, *Byzantine Historical Writing*, 285–88.

est here is not this account but a florilegium found in a manuscript: Athos, Koutloumos 178, ff. 11b–13b, a collection of historical excerpts that includes, in addition to material from *Jubilees*, citations of Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, Epiphanius of Salamis, and even Paul. Albert-Marie Denis described the manuscript and named the traditions recounted within: the twenty-two works of creation, the death of Cain, the talking animals, the parentage of Abraham and Sarah (i.e., that they were half-siblings), the sacrifice of Isaac, the life of Jacob, the death of Abraham, and the chronology of the patriarch Joseph.<sup>225</sup> Denis claims that Anagnostes is the only witness for the material about Abraham and Joseph. This is not accurate, as the chronology of Joseph is found in *catenae* (no. 2268 *ad* Gen 50:26), and the material about Abraham is only questionably related to *Jubilees* (except for Abraham's blessing of Jacob, which is from Syncellus). Denis included all these passages in his collection of Greek citations of *Jubilees*.<sup>226</sup>

### 6.3 Syriac Sources

Strictly speaking, there is no Syriac version of *Jubilees*. The *Chronicle of 1234* contains lengthy excerpts from the book in Syriac translation, but it has not yet been settled whether this came from an existing Syriac version of the book. There are traces of *Jubilees* before this late chronicle, notably a list of the wives of the patriarchs. In addition, there are other interesting cases where an author appears to be drawing on *Jubilees*. In one instance, Jacob of Edessa quotes a tradition similar to a passage from *Jubilees* but different enough to warrant further investigation. In other instances, Syriac authors cite a “Book of Jubilees” that does not at all resemble the extant text. Both phenomena also appeared in Hebrew literature.

Strangely, I know of no Syriac references to *Jubilees* prior to the Islamic period. The first author of interest is the West Syrian polymath Jacob of Edessa (d. 708). The beginning of his thirteenth letter to John of Litarba (d. 737) contains an extensive narrative about Abraham which resembles *Jub.* 8–12.<sup>227</sup> John had posed a

<sup>225</sup> Albert-Marie Denis, *Introduction aux pseudépigraphes grecs d'Ancien Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 156.

<sup>226</sup> Albert-Marie Denis, ed., *Fragmenta pseudepigraphorum quae supersunt graeca: Una cum historicorum et auctorum judaeorum hellenistarum fragmentis* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 70–102.

<sup>227</sup> William Wright, “Two Epistles of Mar Jacob, Bishop of Edessa,” *Journal of Sacred Literature* 10 (1867): 430–60. For a French translation, see: François Nau, “Traductions des Lettres XII et XIII de Jacques d'Édesse,” *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 10 (1905): 197–208, 258–82. Jacob refers to the same tradition in one of his *scholia*: Jacob of Edessa, *Scholia on Passages of the Old Testament by Mar Jacob, Bishop of Edessa*, ed. George Philips (London: Williams & Norgate, 1864), 3–6.

series of exegetical questions to Jacob, the first of which concerns Gen 15:13: Why were Abraham's children enslaved in a foreign land for four hundred years? Jacob begins at the beginning, with the partition of the world among Noah's sons (cf. *Jub.* 8:10–30) and the Canaanites' squatting on the land following the dispersion of the nations at the tower of Babel (cf. *Jub.* 10:28–34). Only the children of Eber in Ur of the Chaldaeans retained the primordial language after Babel.

This background leads Jacob into a story of Abraham's time in Ur of the Chaldeans that only loosely resembles the story in *Jub.* 11–12. Jacob's only named sources are certain "Jewish histories."

*Jubilees* 11:18–24; 12:12–14<sup>228</sup>

**[11:18]** ויהי זמן הזרע בארץ ויצאו הכול יחדיו לשמור את הזרע מפני העורבים ויצא אברם עם היוצאים והוא נער בן ארבע עשרה שנה **[19]** וענן עורבים בא לאכול את הזרע וירוח אברם לקראתם טרם ישוב על הארץ ויעקב אליהם לפני שבתם על הארץ לאכול זרע ויאמר לא תרדו שובו למקום משם באתם ויפנו **[20]** שבעים עשה ביום ההוא לענן העורבים ולא ישב אחד מבין העורבים בכול השדות אשר שם היה אברם **[21]** וכול אשר אתו בכול השדות ראו אותו כי יעקב וכי פנו כול העורבים ויגדל שמו בכול ארץ הכשדים **[22]** ויבואו אליו בשנה ההיא כול הזורעים וילך עמם עד תום עת הזרע וזרעו אדמתם ויביאו בשנה ההיא די תבואה ויאכלו וישבעו **[23]** ובשנה הראשונה בשבוע החמישי למד אברם לעושים כלים לשורים חרשי העץ ועשו כלי מעל הארץ מול יד קורת המחרשה למען ישב עליו הזרע ויפול ממנו הזרע אל קצה המחרשה ויטמן בתוך הארץ ולא יראו עוד מפני העורבים **[24]** ויעשו כך על כול קורת מחרשה מעל הארץ וזרעו וישבו כול הארץ כאשר צוה אותם אברם ולא יראו עוד מהעופות

**Jacob of Edessa, Letter 13 (BL Add. 12172 f. 113a)<sup>229</sup>**

[illegible]

228 Hebrew text from Cana Werman, *The Book of Jubilees: Introduction, Translation, and Interpretation* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, 2015), 266 and 272 [Hebrew]. My English translation is based on VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 70–74.

229 Text from Wright, "Two Epistles," \*4–\*6, followed by my English translation.



the place from whence you came!" And they turned away. **[20]** On that day, he did this to the murder of crows seventy times. Not a single one of the crows could settle in any of the fields where Abram made his presence known. **[21]** All of those who were with him in all of the fields saw him when he shouted, and all the crows turned aside. His name became great in all the land of Chaldaea. **[22]** All those who were sowing came to him this year, and he went to be present with them until the harvest time came to an end, and they sowed the land, and they brought in enough food that year. They ate and were satisfied. **[23]** In the first year of the fifth week, Abram taught those who make equipment for cattle, the workers of wood, and they made a device over the surface of the earth facing the beam of the plough, so that one could place the seed above it. The seed would drop down from it onto the tip of the plough, and it would be hidden in the earth. Thus, they would no longer fear the crows. **[24]** They made something like this for every plough beam above the ground, and they sowed. All the world did just as Abram commanded them, and they no longer feared the birds.

**[12: 12]** In the sixtieth year of the life of Abram (it was the fourth week in its fourth year), Abram woke up in the night and burned the temple of idols and burned everything in the temple, but there was no one who knew. **[13]** The others woke up in the night and wanted to save their gods from the midst of the fire. **[14]** Haran rushed to save them. The fire overtook him, and he burned in the fire and died in Ur of the Chaldaeans before Terah, his father. They buried him in Ur of the Chaldaeans.

as the Jewish histories (אברהם אבינו) show. Becoming exhausted from the work, he was overcome by the murder of crows. Even though he had driven them away before him and behind him and from every direction, he was still overcome. He did not know what he should do, so he stretched his hands to heaven in frantic haste: "O God, who made heaven and earth by His Word, drive forth and murder these crows." He said this out loud. God immediately, swiftly, and without delay drove the crows from Abraham's field. Then he spoke to Abraham calmly and gently, "Abraham! Abraham! It is indeed I whom you called, and I heard you and drove away the crows from your field because, as you said, I am the God who made heaven and earth, and everything that is in it belongs to me. Even the beasts of the field are mine. Even the birds of heaven. I even brought upon you these crows, but because you called out to me and knew my name, I heard you and drove away the crows from your field." This was the first call of Abraham by God. Then he went before Terah, his father, and informed him about the things which God said to him. He counseled him to separate from Cainan, the god of the Chaldaeans, and that he should fear and worship the one true God. Thus Abraham was fifteen years old when he was called by God and was truthfully established in the fear of God, just as he was able to teach and to instruct Terah his father and Nahor his brother to separate from error and know the true God.

In the sixtieth year of his life, when he burned with zeal, he secretly took fire in the night and burned the Temple in which stood the image of Cainan the god. When the Chaldaeans gathered to extinguish the fire, Haran, the elder brother of Abraham, also ran to put it out, but he fell into the fire and died. Thus the priestly book says: "Haran died before Terah, his father, in the land where he was born, in Ur of the Chaldaeans" (Gen 11:28). When the Chaldaeans learned that this was Abraham's doing, they began pressuring Terah, saying,



“Hand over Abraham, your son, over to us so that we may kill him for burning the temple of our god, or else we are going to kill you and burn down your house.” Terah, when he was so pressured, fled from Ur in the night and secretly led out Abraham, his son, Lot, the son of Haran, the son of his son, and Sarah, his daughter-in-law. He arrived in Harran, in Aram-Naharaim, and he settled there. After these things, Nahor, the brother of Abraham, also came to join them. Fourteen years later, Terah died in Harran. This is the reason for the departure of Terah and Abraham from Ur of the Chaldaeans.

Sebastian Brock drew attention to the numerous discrepancies between the two accounts.<sup>230</sup> Among the most significant differences are attributing the crows to the agency of God (so Jacob) rather than Mastema (so *Jubilees*). In Jacob, the crow incident is how Abraham first encounters God. In *Jubilees*, it is how Abraham becomes a culture hero, the inventor of a type of plough. In Jacob of Edessa, Abraham’s burning of the temple of idols and the consequent death of Haran are causally linked to the family’s flight to the city of Harran under threat of death. In *Jubilees*, this is not the case: Terah and family tarry a few years longer in Ur, and Abraham’s crime goes undiscovered. Finally, Jacob introduces into the narrative the idol of Cainan, the son of Arpachshad, whom Jacob identifies as the father of the Chaldaeans.<sup>231</sup>

Brock believed that Jacob’s story represented a more archaic form of the story that may have served as a source of *Jubilees*.<sup>232</sup> His argument rests on a complicated chronological schema that presumed Abraham’s departure from Harran at age seventy-five (Gen 12:4) was, in fact, seventy-five years after his departure from Ur at age sixty. The rationale was that Abraham had not truly “lived” until he recognized the one God. Such a tradition existed to account for the discrepancy between Abraham’s departure and the death of Terah at age 205. Terah, who fathered Abraham at age seventy, would have been only 145 when Abraham left. Jews were potentially bothered by the morally suspect behavior of abandoning one’s parent (see *Gen. Rab.* 39:7), but Christians were in an even greater quandary because Stephen, in his speech before the Sanhedrin, explicitly says that Abraham left Harran after his

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<sup>230</sup> Sebastian P. Brock, “Abraham and the Ravens: A Syriac Counterpart to Jubilees 11–12 and Its Implications,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 9 (1978): 135–52 (140–41).

<sup>231</sup> Wright, “Two Epistles,” \*4 (f. 113a).

<sup>232</sup> Brock, “Abraham and the Ravens,” 142–49.

father died (Acts 7:4). Brock's argument is that the Syriac story correctly employs a tradition that *Jubilees* misunderstood and only imperfectly incorporated into the book's chronological framework.

Brock's chronological tradition is attested in some ancient sources. He cites Jerome's *Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim* to Gen 12:4, where Jerome affirms that when Abraham left Ur of the Chaldaeans at age sixty, his days were counted anew.<sup>233</sup> Jerome, however, attaches this chronological datum to a different tradition about Abraham's flight from Ur, the one better known in rabbinic tradition, where he is thrown, like Daniel's friends, into a fiery furnace (*Gen. Rab.* 38:13). The Greek *Catena* on Genesis, however, does explicitly attach Jerome's chronology to the tradition from *Jubilees*.<sup>234</sup>

William Adler has challenged Brock's interpretation in several articles.<sup>235</sup> He correctly points out that Jacob's letter is not responding to any chronological problem. In fact, Jacob seems unaware that any chronological problem is present if Terah dies on the eve of Abraham's seventy-fifth birthday. Adler instead reads Jacob's letter as a rewriting of the account in *Jubilees*, which has been molded to better serve Christian exegetical needs.

I agree with Adler that Brock's argument regarding the chronology of Abraham is unpersuasive. Nevertheless, I believe that Brock is correct that Jacob's narrative is a more primitive version of the story in *Jubilees*. Adler views Jacob's narrative as a rewriting of *Jubilees*, and while Christian writers often offer tendentious readings of apocryphal sources—such as the *catena* passage cited above—no chronicler rewrites their source as extensively as Jacob would have needed to in order to produce the narrative in his letter. Jacob did not invent this story. A slightly different version of the same story is found in the *Catena Severi* of 861 (also translated by Brock).<sup>236</sup> Kyriakos of Tagrit (d. 817) alludes to the story in one of his theological treatises.<sup>237</sup> Michael the Syrian (d. 1199), who cites Jacob of Edessa as a source,

233 Brock, "Abraham and the Ravens," 143–44. For the full passage in English, see Jerome, *Saint Jerome's Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, trans. C. T. R. Hayward (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 43–44.

234 Petit, *La Chaîne sur la Genèse*, 2: 218 (no. 867 ad Gen 11:28, cited above).

235 See Adler, "Abraham and the Burning of the Temple of Idols," 110–17. He also touched on the topic in William Adler, "Jacob of Edessa and the Jewish Pseudepigrapha in Syriac Chronography," in *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of the Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, ed. John C. Reeves, (Atlanta: SBL Press, 1994), 143–71, and William Adler, "Jewish Pseudepigrapha in Jacob of Edessa's Letters and Historical Writings," in *Jacob of Edessa and the Syriac Culture of His Day*, ed. Robert Baster Haar Romeny (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 49–65.

236 Brock, "Abraham and the Ravens," 137–39.

237 David Taylor, "The Patriarch and the Pseudepigrapha: Extra-Biblical Traditions in the Writings of Kyriakos of Tagrit (793–817)," ed. Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet and Muriel Debié, *Sur les pas des Araméens chrétiens: Mélanges offerts à Alain Desreumaux* (2010): 35–61 (49–50).

records the story in his chronicle, as does Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286), who uses Michael (see below). Dionysius bar Salibi (d. 1171), a prodigious West Syrian exegete, also knows the story (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Syr. 66, f. 21).<sup>238</sup> It is also commonly found in Armenian apocrypha about Abraham.<sup>239</sup> Both Brock and Adler postulate a Greek source behind Jacob's narrative, yet the versions in Greek chronicles do not have the supposed accretions omnipresent in the Syriac tradition, most notably the presence of the idol Cainan.<sup>240</sup> Cainan, however, is a clue to the Syriac narrative's relationship to *Jubilees*.

Cainan is the figure inserted between Arpachshad and Shelah in the Greek rendition of Genesis (and in the New Testament: Luke 3:36). *Jubilees* says little about him, apart from the fact that he rediscovered the lore of the Watchers (*Jub.* 8:1–4). A close reading of the genealogical information in *Jubilees* reveals that Cainan is also the brother of Kesed, the father of the Chaldaeans and the co-founder of Ur of the Chaldaeans (*Jub.* 11:3). In the previous chapter, I proposed that Cainan is an intruder in the book of *Jubilees*. His presence in the genealogical record contradicts the stated claim that the twenty-two generations from Adam to Jacob correspond to the twenty-two works of creation (*Jub.* 2:23); Cainan would make twenty-three generations. Furthermore, he has no meaningful function in the narrative. His rediscovery of forbidden knowledge suggests that he is destined to play a major role in the degradation of humanity following the Flood, but this does not happen. He writes down his discovery but tells no one.

No Greek source states that Cainan had his own established cult at Ur. Only Syriac sources know this tradition. Andy Hilkins, in his detailed *exposé* of the sources of the *Chronicle of 1234* (discussed below), traces the tradition to the lost chronicle of Andronicus, who lived during the reign of Justinian (528–565) and wrote an outline of history in the style of Eusebius' *Chronicon*.<sup>241</sup> Andronicus cites several otherwise unknown oriental sources, one of whom is a certain Asaph. Michael the Syrian, who used Andronicus as a source, has preserved some of these traditions of Asaph, one of which is indeed about Cainan's pretensions to godhood. Hilkins' reconstruction of Andronicus' history between the Flood and Abraham is similar to *Jubilees* but follows a more natural flow of ideas. After the manner of Adler, Hilkins concludes that Andronicus rewrote *Jubilees* to provide a more coherent narrative. My own position resembles Segal's source criticism of *Jubilees*.

<sup>238</sup> Translated in Nau, "Jacques d'Édesse," 204, n. 2.

<sup>239</sup> Michael E. Stone, *Armenian Apocrypha Relating to Abraham* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 36–50, 127–65, and 206–12.

<sup>240</sup> For the Greek chronicles, see Adler, "Abraham and the Burning of the Temple of Idols," 95–100.

<sup>241</sup> Andy Hilkins, *The Anonymous Syriac Chronicle of 1234 and Its Sources* (Leuven: Peeters, 2018), 191–228.

I suspect *Jubilees* rewrote an existing story about the downfall of humanity after the Flood and somewhat carelessly integrated it into the overall narrative.

This suspicion is confirmed by a curious feature in Jacob's narrative. He attributes the crows and the resulting famine to God. One exegetical strategy of "Rewritten Bibles" is attributing the questionable actions of God to the devil. This is already observable in the biblical book of Chronicles, where Satan has replaced God as the instigator of David's census, which is punished by plague (1Chr 21; cf. 2Sam 24). In *Jubilees*, Mastema fills the same function. Thus, Mastema, rather than God, demands the sacrifice of Isaac (*Jub.* 17:15–18; cf. Gen 22:1). Mastema, rather than God, attempts to kill Moses when he returns to Egypt (*Jub.* 48:2–4; cf. Exod 4:24). Mastema, rather than God, slays the first-born of the Egyptians (*Jub.* 49:2; cf. Exod 12:29). In continuity with this practice, the author of *Jubilees* has ascribed the famine to Mastema rather than God. The reverse tactic, ascribing the work of the devil to God, seems unthinkable, and certainly inadvisable.

Andronicus' source, Asaph the Jew, recalls *Sefer Asaph* or *Sefer Refu'ot*, which is ascribed to Asaph ben Berakiah. Adler has already supposed that the two Asaphs might be related.<sup>242</sup> In support of this position, I can offer two observations. One, *Sefer Asaph* knows of Cainan, his family relationship to Kesed (though it is a slightly different relationship), and his role in disseminating Chaldaean magic. Since Cainan does not appear in the Hebrew Bible, such a reference cannot be taken for granted. Neither he nor Kesed appear in the Hebrew lists of wives of the patriarchs. *Sefer ha-Yashar*, with *Sefer Yosippon*, has taken the tradition about Cainan and reworked it as a positive tradition about his Antediluvian namesake, Kenan. Second, the remedies to the ills that beset humanity are revealed by demons in *Sefer Asaph* but by the angels in *Jubilees*. As with the story of the crows, it seems unlikely that someone would have deliberately rewritten *Jubilees* to ascribe the origins of medicine to demons instead of angels.

While it seems astounding that Jacob of Edessa could have preserved a summary of a work older than *Jubilees*, similar documents have been partially preserved by Syriac writers, such as the Syriac fragments of the *Aramaic Levi Document*,<sup>243</sup> the citation of the *Book of the Watchers* by Michael the Syrian,<sup>244</sup> and the excerpts from *Jubilees* itself in the *Chronicle of 1234*. In these cases, the antiquity of such traditions could not be absolutely proven without additional documentary and archeological discoveries.

<sup>242</sup> Adler, "Jacob of Edessa and the Jewish Pseudepigrapha," 165.

<sup>243</sup> William Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired Since the Year 1838*, 3 vols. (London: Longmans & Co., 1870–1872), 2:997.

<sup>244</sup> Sebastian P. Brock, "A Fragment of Enoch in Syriac," *Journal of Theological Studies* 19 (1968): 626–31.

In addition to Jacob of Edessa's letter, which is cognate to *Sefer Asaph*, Syriac literature has its own tradition of listing wives of the patriarchs. Lists of wives appear in two Syriac manuscripts: the eighth-century British Library Add. 12154, f. 180,<sup>245</sup> and British Library Add. 14620, f. 30b, from the ninth century.<sup>246</sup> The first and better-known list includes the wives of the patriarchs before the Flood, the wives after the Flood (until Abraham), the wives of the sons of Jacob, and the name of the daughter of Pharaoh.<sup>247</sup> For the generation of Peleg, the author includes a notice on the tower of Babel, including its height of 5,433 cubits (cf. *Jub.* 10:21). The title of this brief work identifies its source as "the Hebrew book called *Jubilees*" (ܠܟܬܒܬܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐܐܐܡ ܕܝܬܝܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ). Nevertheless, the list comes from Greek rather than Hebrew. First, the wives already appear in numerous Greek sources, such as the *catena* literature or the *Ekloge historion*. More significantly, the name Asawa for Cain's wife (ܐܫܐܘܐ) is comparable to the Greek forms (Epiphanius: Σαυη;<sup>248</sup> John Malalas: Ἀσουα;<sup>249</sup> *Catena*: Ἀσαουλ<sup>250</sup>). Finally, James VanderKam has noted other Grecisms in the text, such as the word στάδιον (ܥܪܕܐ).<sup>251</sup>

The second list has only reemerged after a long period of obscurity due to the recent studies of Matthew Monger and Sergey Minov.<sup>252</sup> It is, however, mentioned in Wright's catalogue of Syriac manuscripts<sup>253</sup> and was initially published by Paul

245 Antonio Maria Ceriani, ed. and trans., "Nomina uxorum patriarcharum priorum juxta librum hebraeum Jobelia nuncupatum," in *Monumenta sacra et profana ex codicibus praesertim bibliothecae Ambrosianae* (Milan: Typis et Impensis Bibliothecae Ambrosianae, 1863), ix–x.

246 Matthew P. Monger, "A Syriac List of the Names of the Wives of the Patriarchs in BL Add 14620," in *Synopses and Lists: Textual Practices in the Pre-Modern World*, ed. Teresa Bernheimer and Ronny Vollandt, (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2023), 141–71.

247 In the transliteration of James C. VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Commentary on the Book of Jubilees*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 1:8–9, the names are: Eve (Adam), 'Asawa (Cain), 'Azura (Seth), Na'um (Enosh), Mahalalut (Cainan), Dina (Mahalalel), Baraka (Jared), 'Edni (Enoch), 'Edna (Methusaleh), 'Enushay (Lamech), 'Amizara (Noah), Sedqatnebab (Shem), Nahalmahuq (Ham), 'Adnatnashe (Japhet), Rusa bt. Shushan (Arpachshad), Malka bt. Maday (Cainan), Ma'aka (Shelah), 'Azura bt. Nebrod (Eber), Mana bt Sana'ar (Peleg), 'Arwa bt. Ur (Reu), Malka bt. Keber (Serug), Isaqa bt. Nastag (Nahor), 'Edna bt. Abram (Terah), 'Ada (Reuben), Ya'aka'a (Simeon), Malka (Levi), Bat-shua' (Judah), 'Azaqa (Issachar), 'Ednay (Zebulun), Tob-hagla (Dan), Rusha from Bet-Naharin (Naphtali), Ma'aqa (Gad), Yona (Asher), Asnat (Joseph), and 'Asamana (Benjamin). The daughter of Pharaoh is given as either Tarmutay or Ra'usa.

248 Epiphanius of Salamis, *Ancoratus und Panarion*, 2:76.

249 John Malalas, *Chronographia*, 4.

250 Petit, *Chaine sur la Genèse*, 2:38.

251 James C. VanderKam, "The Manuscript Tradition of Jubilees," in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 3–21 (11).

252 Monger, "A Syriac List;" Sergey Minov, "A Syriac *Tabula Gentium* from the Early Abbasid Period: Dawid Bar Pawlos on Genesis 10," *Khristianskiy Vostok* 9 (2021): 57–76.

253 Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts*, 2:803.

de Lagarde in Hebrew characters.<sup>254</sup> This list only covers the wives of the patriarchs until Abraham. It is noteworthy for including some alternative names taken from the *Cave of Treasures*, showing that these two works competed.

Most reminiscent of the Byzantine chroniclers from the previous section is Michael the Syrian, patriarch of the West Syrian church from 1166–1199 and the most famous Syriac historian. His work has been preserved in a unique Syriac manuscript and an Armenian abridgment.<sup>255</sup> Among his sources, given at the beginning of his chronicle, are Julius Africanus, Annianus of Alexandria, and “Jews,” all of whom are common links in the chain of transmission of *Jubilees*.<sup>256</sup> This leaves little doubt about the sources of his knowledge of the book. At the same time, he names Jacob of Edessa as a source and cites Andronicus and his source, the mysterious Asaph. There are therefore moments where Michael’s chronicle more closely resembles Jacob of Edessa’s letter than *Jubilees*.

Michael cites Annianus immediately, allegedly drawing from Enoch. No such information is found in *1Enoch*, but some of the information could come from *Jubilees*.

***Jubilees* 4:1–2<sup>258</sup>**

[1] And in the third week in the second jubilee [64–70 AM] she gave birth to Cain, and in the fourth she gave birth to Abel [71–77 AM] [. . .]  
[2] And in the first year of the third jubilee, Cain slew Abel. [99 AM] [1] ובשבוע השלישי ליובל השני ילדה את קין וברביעי ילדה את הבל [2] ובאחד ליובל השלישי הרג קין את הבל.

***Chronicle of Michael the Syrian, Book 1.1<sup>259</sup>***

The monk Annianus, based on the *Book of Enoch*, says, “After his expulsion from Paradise, Adam knew his wife Eve when he was seventy years old, and she gave birth to Cain. Seven years later, she brought forth Abel. Fifty-three years later, Cain killed Abel, and Adam and Eve mourned him one hundred years. Then, Seth was born. He resembled perfectly his parents.”

254 Paul de Lagarde, *Praetermissorum Libri Duo e Recognitione* (Göttingen: Officina Academica Dieterichiana, 1879), 249.

255 The main edition is Michael the Syrian, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, ed. and trans. Jean-Baptiste Chabot, 4 vols. (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1899–1910). The first three volumes are a French translation, and the fourth is the Syriac text. I will be quoting from an English translation: Michael the Syrian, *The Syriac Chronicle of Michael Rabo (the Great): A Universal History from the Creation*, trans. Matti Moosa (Teaneck: Beth Antioch Press, 2014).

256 See Heinrich Gelzer, *Sextus Julius Africanus und die byzantinische Chronographie*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1898), 2: 249–97.

257 Werman, *Book of Jubilees*, 194; VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Critical Text*, 21–22.

258 Michael the Syrian, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 31. This section is not preserved in the Syriac manuscript but is in the Armenian abridgment and in the chronicle of Bar Hebraeus (discussed below).

Michael only has vague notions of the story of the Watchers as found in *Jubilees*. He is more conversant with the *Book of the Watchers*, from which he cites an entire chapter (*1Enoch* 6) and recites a euhemerized version of the story inherited from Annianus.<sup>259</sup> In Book I, chapter 6, however, he gives an account of the civil war that wiped out most of humanity prior to the Flood, omitting all reference to the fallen angels and the giants in the process.<sup>260</sup> Michael's source is not *Jubilees* itself but a source shared with the *Chronicle of 1234* and related to Jacob of Edessa's *Scholion* 10 on the giants (quoted in chapter ten). It is only apparent that Michael (indirectly) draws from *Jubilees* at all if one consults a synoptic table of the passages.<sup>261</sup>

In Book II, chapter 2, he mentions Cainan. After noting that this character does not appear in either the Hebrew or the Syriac text of Genesis, he enumerates the evils Cainan introduced into the world.

Kenan [Cainan] is the one who invented the science of celestial bodies (ܟܢܢܐܢܐ), magic and astrology. His sons worshiped him as god and set up an idol of him. Here began the worship of idols. He built a city and called it Hara (ܚܪܐ) after his son's name Haron (ܚܪܐܢ). Luke, the Evangelist, mentioned the name of Kenan (Luke 3:36).<sup>262</sup>

While this tradition is reminiscent of the story of Cainan in *Jub.* 8:1–4, it is closer to the story that Jacob of Edessa tells in his letter. Michael mentions Cainan in several other contexts, some of which are attributed to Asaph. For example, Asaph mentions that Serug transmitted knowledge of “the religion of the Chaldaeans” (ܡܠܚܬܐ ܕܡܠܚܬܐ) to his son Nahor, who became a zealous priest of Cainan (cf. *Jub.* 11:8).<sup>263</sup> In the days of Terah (Nahor's son), the Chaldaean mysteries were adopted in Egypt, where they too built a statue of Cainan.<sup>264</sup> These passages supply important information missing from *Jubilees*, such as the name of the city Cainan built (Harran) and the causal link between the discoveries of Cainan and the widespread notion that human civilization deteriorated in the generation of Serug.<sup>265</sup>

In Book II, chapter 3, Michael agrees with *Jubilees* that the construction of the Tower of Babel began in the days of Reu rather than Peleg, and construction lasted

<sup>259</sup> Brock, “Enoch in Syriac.”

<sup>260</sup> Michael the Syrian, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 35.

<sup>261</sup> See Hilken, *The Anonymous Syriac Chronicle*, 61–64, and Eugene Tisserant, “Fragments syriaques du Livre des Jubilés,” *Revue Biblique* 30 (1921): 55–86, 206–32 (79–80).

<sup>262</sup> Michael the Syrian, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 39. The Syriac text is quoted from Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, 4:8.

<sup>263</sup> From the Syriac text of Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, 4:12. My translation.

<sup>264</sup> Michael the Syrian, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 42.

<sup>265</sup> Brock, “Abraham and the Ravens,” 151, considers the stories of Cainan and Serug to be competing narratives about the decline of civilization. Rather, I believe that they were originally linked, but *Jubilees* severed the connection.

at least forty years (*Jub.* 10:18.26). He also mentions that, at this time, the Canaanites transgressed the boundaries established by Noah (in Book II, chapters 1 and 2; see *Jub.* 8:10–30 and 10:28–34). Michael then enters into a discussion about whether Hebrew or Syriac was the primitive language (cf. *Jub.* 12:26), deciding in favor of Syriac against the opinion of Jacob of Edessa, whom he cites by name. Like *Jubilees*, he attributes the destruction of the tower to a blast of wind (*Jub.* 10:26). Unlike *Jubilees*, Babel is linked to the reign of Nimrod (conspicuously absent from *Jubilees*).<sup>266</sup>

In Book II, chapter 6, Michael briefly mentions the story of Abraham and the ravens. Abraham asks God to chase off the ravens. Then, at age sixty, he burns down the temple of idols and leaves for Harran.<sup>267</sup> This version is closer to the letter of Jacob of Edessa than *Jub.* 11–12. Michael does not name his source.

One of the last great Syriac writers, Gregory Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286), used the chronicle of Michael the Syrian for the early part of his own historical work.<sup>268</sup> All the traditions found in Michael reappear in Gregory, often in identical language. He even supplies a tradition missing from the unique Syriac manuscript of Michael: Esau and his children, along with the nations of Moab, Ammon, and Aram, attack Jacob and his children at Hebron after the death of Isaac.<sup>269</sup> This is a transparent reference to the events of *Jub.* 37–38, often repeated in Byzantine chronicles.

The most substantial extract from *Jubilees* in Syriac—or in any language—is found in the anonymous *Chronicle of 1234*.<sup>270</sup> Eugène Tisserant was the first to discover the chronicle's use of *Jubilees*.<sup>271</sup> He documented seventeen parallels covering 160 verses and proposed that the chronicler's source was a Syriac translation of *Jubilees* made from the original Hebrew. In his critical edition and translation, James VanderKam compiled a similar collection of *Jubilees* extracts from the chronicle as part of the "Versional Evidence."<sup>272</sup> VanderKam only published those passages that are useful for textual criticism; this is not true of all of the *Jubilees* traditions found in the chronicle. The most comprehensive list is now found in Andy

266 Michael the Syrian, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 38–40.

267 Michael the Syrian, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 43.

268 Gregory Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon syriacum*, ed. Paul Bedjan (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1890). For an English translation, see Gregory Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l Faraj, the Son of Aaron, the Hebrew Physician, Commonly Known as Bar Hebraeus: Being the First Part of His Political History of the Word: Translated from the Syriac*, trans. Ernest A. Wallis Budge (Amsterdam: APA-Philo Press, 1932).

269 Text: Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon syriacum*, 12. Translation: Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 11.

270 Jean-Baptiste Chabot, ed., *Anonymi auctoris chronicum ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens 1*, (Paris: E Typographe Reipublicae, 1920).

271 Tisserant, "Fragments syriaques du Livre des Jubilés."

272 VanderKam, *A Critical Text*, 257–300. They are translated in James C. VanderKam, trans., *The Book of Jubilees* (Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 328–68.



Hilkens' monograph on the sources of the chronicle.<sup>273</sup> He did not republish the text, but he did make a table of all the parallels with the corresponding citations from Jean-Baptiste Chabot's edition of the chronicle and the chapter and verse numbers from *Jubilees*.<sup>274</sup> This also include a list of *Jubilees* traditions that do not come from the book itself but from a source shared with Michael the Syrian. In fact, all the *Jubilees* material from Michael's chronicle reappears in the *Chronicle of 1234*.

The *Chronicle of 1234* differs from other Syriac sources in that it reproduces text from *Jubilees* frequently, accurately, and at length. The chronicler covers much of the extrabiblical material of *Jubilees*, including the Hexameron (*Jub.* 2), the biography of Enoch (*Jub.* 4:16–26), the Watchers and the birth of the giants (*Jub.* 5), Cainan (*Jub.* 8:1–4), the division of the earth among the sons of Noah and the transgression of the Canaanites (*Jub.* 8:10–30 and 10:28–34), the stories of young Abraham (*Jub.* 11–12), and the war between Jacob and Esau (*Jub.* 37–38).<sup>275</sup> These themes are also found in Greek chronicles. However, the chronicler is not dependent on the Greek chronographic tradition. The selection of material differs from the stereotyped repetition of traditions found in Byzantine histories. Consequently, the chronicler avoids their errors, such as attributing the war with Esau to Josephus.<sup>276</sup>

The author appears to have directly consulted a copy of *Jubilees*, but there is some controversy over the language of the author's *Vorlage*. Tisserant believed the Syriac version was translated from Hebrew without a Greek intermediary, since he found no Greek loanwords in the fragments.<sup>277</sup> It would indeed be incredible if a Syriac text had no Greek words whatsoever. However, Tisserant's assertion is incorrect. Several Greek words appear in the citations from *Jubilees*, such as: ܬܐܓܡܐ (τάγμα),<sup>278</sup> ܫܡܝܢܐ (σπόνγος),<sup>279</sup> ܕܢܝܢܐ (γένος),<sup>280</sup> ܡܠܟܐ (Παλαιστίνη),<sup>281</sup> ܕܠܝܦܐ (γλυφί),<sup>282</sup> ܟܘܪܥܝܐ (κόραξ),<sup>283</sup> and ܢܘܡܘܣܐ (νόμος).<sup>284</sup> Of course, it is completely unsurprising that a Syriac text would have Greek loanwords, but this is exactly what undermines Tisserant's claim. There is no particular reason to think that the text was translated from Hebrew rather than Greek.

273 Hilkens, *The Anonymous Syriac Chronicle*, 51–84.

274 Hilkens, *The Anonymous Syriac Chronicle*, 82–83.

275 All of the *Jubilees* material is found within Chabot, *Ad annum Christi 1234*, 32–60.

276 Adler, *Time Imemorial*, 188–93.

277 Tisserant, "Fragments syriaques du Livre des Jubilés," 229–32.

278 Chabot, *Ad annum Christi 1234*, 27.15, citing *Jub.* 2:2.

279 Chabot, *Ad annum Christi 1234*, 28.6, citing *Jub.* 2:7.

280 Chabot, *Ad annum Christi 1234*, 28.14, citing *Jub.* 2:11.

281 Chabot, *Ad annum Christi 1234*, 43.22, citing *Jub.* 8:12.

282 Chabot, *Ad annum Christi 1234*, 51.16, citing *Jub.* 11:16.

283 Chabot, *Ad annum Christi 1234*, 51.17, citing *Jub.* 11:18.

284 Chabot, *Ad annum Christi 1234*, 56:9, citing *Jub.* 33:16.

Furthermore, the chronicler demonstrates no other knowledge of Hebrew sources, and his chronicle, though written in Syriac, uses numerous Greek sources, including Flavius Josephus, Hippolytus of Rome, Eusebius of Caesarea, Annianus of Alexandria, Socrates Scholasticus, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, John Malalas, and John of Ephesus.<sup>285</sup> In light of these sources, the chronicler's source is likely a Greek text of *Jubilees* which had been translated into Syriac.

Sebastian Brock suggested that the *Chronicle of 1234* drew on an earlier, lost Greek chronicle for its knowledge of sources otherwise unattested in Syriac.<sup>286</sup> In the case of *Jubilees*, however, the chronicler has interwoven material from that book with the text of *Cave of Treasures*—a work which was not translated into Greek before the modern period.<sup>287</sup> Furthermore, no extant Greek (or Syriac!) work cites *Jubilees* as extensively or as accurately as this chronicle. The simplest explanation is that the chronicler himself knew *Jubilees* in Syriac. The issue is comparable to Josephus in Syriac. In the analysis of Hilken, the chronicler used Josephus abundantly without ever directly consulting his work.<sup>288</sup> Yet portions of Josephus were translated into Syriac. A Syriac version of book six of the *Jewish War* survives in at least two manuscripts: the famous seventh-century biblical manuscript from Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana B 21 inf. (ff. 320b–330a),<sup>289</sup> and Deir al-Surian 9 (*olim* 27), ff. 3a–30b, from the early ninth century.<sup>290</sup> Although Syriac versions of Josephus were uncommon, they did exist. Perhaps it was the same with *Jubilees* in Syriac.

Finally, there is a strange phenomenon in Syriac literature where authors cite a “Book of Jubilees” (ܕܟܬܒܬܐ ܕܝܘܒܝܠܐ) that does not correspond to anything found in the Ethiopic text. Ceslas Van den Eynde has collected the pertinent data.<sup>291</sup> Unknown citations from a “Book of Jubilees” appear in the *Liber scholiorum* of Theodore bar

285 Hilken, *The Anonymous Syriac Chronicle*. The entire book is consecrated to the work's sources.

286 Sebastian P. Brock, “Some Syriac Legends Concerning Moses,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33 (1982): 237–55 (249).

287 See the synoptic table in Tisserant, “Fragments syriaques du Livre des Jubilés,” 62–66.

288 Hilken, *The Anonymous Syriac Chronicle*, 97–105.

289 For a lithograph of this manuscript, see: Antonio Maria Ceriani, *Translatio syra pescitto Veteris Testamenti ex Codice Ambrosiano sec. fere VI, 2 vols. photolithographice edita curante et adnotante* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1876–1883).

290 Lucas Van Rompay, “Flavius Josephus’ *Jewish War* in Syriac: Ms. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana B 21 inf. and Two Recently Studied Manuscripts from Deir al-Surian,” in *Gli studi di storiografia: Tradizione, memoria e modernità*, ed. Alba Fedeli et al. (Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 2019), 425–42. The second manuscript from Deir al-Surian (Ms. 28, *olim* 2) is a collection of sayings that includes translations from books 3 and 7 of the *Jewish War*.

291 Isho’dad of Merv, *Commentaire sur l’Ancien Testament 3: Livre des Sessions*, trans. Ceslas Van den Eynde (Leuven: Peeters, 1962), xv–xxi.

Koni (d. ca. 792),<sup>292</sup> the biblical commentaries of Isho'dad of Merv (9th c.),<sup>293</sup> the Syriac-Arabic dictionary of the lexicographer Hassan bar Bahlul (10th c.),<sup>294</sup> and an anonymous exposition of the liturgical offices attributed to George of Arbela (11th c.).<sup>295</sup> For example, Isho'dad claims that a “Book of Jubilees” specifies the time between the Exodus and the building of Solomon’s Temple (637 years)<sup>296</sup> as well as the length of time of Job’s trials (twelve years), both of which extend far beyond the timeline of the Ethiopic version.<sup>297</sup>

The solution to this mystery depends on the meaning of the word “jubilee” in Syriac: The word *yubal* (ܝܘܒܠ) has the general meaning of “generation” or “succession.” It is *not* the word used in the Peshitta to designate the forty-nine-year period from Leviticus 25 (ܠܗܝܒܠ).<sup>298</sup> Rather, *yubal* is closer in meaning to the Hebrew word *toledot* (תולדות). The Syriac term “succession of years” (ܠܗܝܒܠ ܕܥܬܝܢ) is used in the same sense as “chronicle.”<sup>299</sup> One title of the *Cave of Treasures*, for example, is the

292 Theodore bar Koni, *Liber scholiorum*, ed. Addai Scher, 2 vols. (Paris: E Typographeo Reipublicae, 1910–1912) 1:110–11, 114, and 253–55. For a French translation, see Theodore bar Koni, *Livre des Scolies: Recension de Seert*, trans. Robert Hespel and René Draguet, 2 vols. (Leuven: Peeters, 1982), 1:125, 128 and 223–24.

293 Isho'dad of Merv, *Commentaire sur l'Ancien Testament 1: Genèse*, ed. Jacques-Marie Vosté and Ceslas Van den Eynde (Leuven: Peeters, 1950), 134–35 and 139, and Isho'dad of Merv, *Commentaire sur l'Ancien Testament 3: Livre des Sessions*, ed. Ceslas Van den Eynde (Leuven: Peeters, 1962), 103 and 267. See also the French translations of these respective volumes: Isho'dad of Merv, *Commentaire sur l'Ancien Testament 1: Genèse*, trans. Ceslas Van den Eynde (Leuven: Peeters, 1955), 146 and 151, and Isho'dad of Merv, *Commentaire sur l'Ancien Testament 3: Livre des Sessions*, trans. Ceslas Van den Eynde (Leuven: Peeters, 1962), 121 and 319. Finally, see Isho'dad of Merv, *The Commentaries of Isho'dad of Merv*, ed. and trans. Margaret Dunlop Gibson, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), 1:155 (translation) and 3:14 (text), where he refers to a “Book of Jubilees” in his *Commentary on Luke*.

294 Hassan bar Bahlul, *Lexicon syriacum auctore Hassano Bar Bahlule*, ed. Rubens Duval, 3 vols. (Paris: E Reipublicae Typographaeo, 1901), 3: xvi, gives twenty-four citations. Duval thought “Jubilees” referred to a book of etymologies, but Van den Eynde (translation of Isho'dad of Merv, *Livre des Sessions*, xxi) called this into question.

295 R. Hugh Connolly, ed. and trans., *Expositio officiorum Ecclesiae Georgio Arbelensi vulgo adscripta I*, 2 vols. (Paris: E Typographeo Reipublicae, 1913), 1:38, 47, and 63 (Syriac text); 2:33, 40, and 52 (Latin translation).

296 Text: Isho'dad of Merv, *Livre des Sessions*, 103. Translation: Isho'dad of Merv, *Livre des Sessions*, 121.

297 Text: Isho'dad of Merv, *Livre des Sessions*, 267. Translation: Isho'dad of Merv, *Livre des Sessions*, 319.

298 Tisserant, “Fragments syriaques du Livre des Jubilés,” 58.

299 Muriel Debié, *L'Écriture de l'histoire en syriaque: Transmissions interculturelles et constructions identitaires entre hellénisme et islam* (Leuven: Peeters, 2015), 43.

“Book of the Succession of Generations” (ܕܟܬܒܬܐ ܕܬܪܬܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ), but the work is not directly related to *Jubilees*.<sup>300</sup>

The “Book of Jubilees,” therefore, could refer to any historical work. This includes historical books of the Bible. In the places where Theodore bar Koni cites “Jubilees,” for example, he contrasts the chronology of the Septuagint with the chronology of the Peshitta. Here, “Jubilees” (ܕܟܬܒܬܐ) means nothing other than the Syriac Bible. Even the verifiable references in the works of Isho’dad of Merv do not necessarily come from *Jubilees*. In his *Commentary on Genesis*, he cites a “Book of Jubilees” (ܕܟܬܒܬܐ ܕܟܬܒܬܐ) for the opinion that Hebrew was the original language (*Jub.* 12:25–27) and that idolatry began in the days of Serug (cf. *Jub.* 11:1–6).<sup>301</sup> Both traditions, however, are quite common. They are found, for instance, in the *Cave of Treasures* (24:11; 25:8), a native Syriac work. Despite these preliminary answers, the phenomenon merits further study.

## 6.4 Other Languages

Andrew Crislip has drawn attention to a solitary Coptic fragment of *Jubilees*, a florilegium of the fourth or fifth century (Yale University, P. CtYBR inv. 4995).<sup>302</sup> The florilegium consists of six individual passages, interrupted by a second text, a private letter. The six passages are: 1) *Jub.* 8:28–30; 2) *Jub.* 7:14–16; 3) an unidentified passage about Abraham; 4) a passage quoting *Jub.* 15:3; 5) a quotation of Gen 9:27a (with an additional allusion to *Jub.* 8:30); and 6) an allusion to *Jub.* 4:33. Most of the text deals with the division of the earth among the sons of Noah. The wives of Noah and his sons are also incidentally named.

The entire text in Crislip’s translation reads as follows. I have added numbering and citations from *Jubilees* to clarify the division between the passages.

1. It [the Ark] reached the limits of its waters at Mount Rapha and it turns to the north. This is the land which came forth for Japheth and his children through a portion of an inheritance, eternal dwelling places for him and also for his children, for their generations for ever: great islands or dwellings, which amount to five in number, and a great, broad land in the [north . . .]. [The land of] Japheth is cold, and the land of Ham is hot. But the land of Shem is neither hot, scorching, nor cold, but [it is mixed] hot and cold (*Jub.* 8:28–30).

<sup>300</sup> Paul de Lagarde, “Die Schatzhöhle,” in *Mittheilungen III* (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1889), 49–79 (55), mocked those who suggested the *Cave of Treasures* and *Jubilees* were related based on this title.

<sup>301</sup> Text: Isho’dad of Merv, *Genèse*, 134–35 and 139. Translation: Isho’dad of Merv, *Genèse*, 146 and 151.

<sup>302</sup> Andrew Crislip, “The Book of Jubilees in Coptic: An Early Christian Florilegium on the Family of Noah,” *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 40 (2003): 27–44.

2. As for Ham, he built the city, and he named it after his wife Nehelathmaouk. And Japheth saw and was jealous of his brother Ham. And he too built a city for himself, and he named it after his wife Adathneses. Shem likewise named [his city] after his wife Sedekathlêbab (*Jub.* 7:14–16).
3. And Abraham took/received the customs/creatures and possessions of his ancestors.
4. And this is written in Hebrew: “Japheth shall live in the dwellings of Shem” (*Gen.* 9:27). Therefore, he is in the cold (cf. *Jub.* 8:30).
5. I am God, Saddai, the true God (*Jub.* 15:3).
6. And the name of Noah’s wife is Emmezara (cf. *Jub.* 4:33).<sup>303</sup>

Following the letter, the beginning of a second text simply reads: “And the angel of the presence stood.”<sup>304</sup> In the frame narrative of *Jubilees*, the Angel of the Presence narrates the contents of the book to Moses.

Crislip argues for the possibility that the *Jubilees* once existed in a Coptic version, citing the Alexandrian chroniclers Panodorus and Annianus as well as Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 4365 (the letter quoted in the introduction of this chapter) as evidence for the popularity of *Jubilees* in Egypt. A single papyrus is not substantial enough to prove the existence of a Coptic version of *Jubilees* (the verses could have been translated *ad hoc* from Greek), but it is an important witness to what about the book interested Christian readers, namely, the wives of the patriarchs and Diamerismos material. This has been a running theme throughout the chapter.

There is no version of *Jubilees* in Armenian, not even stray citations (as in Coptic). Many traditions from *Jubilees*, however, can be found in Armenian literature. Michael Stone, a specialist of both Armenian and Second Temple literature, has uncovered most of this material. For example, Elishe, a fifth-century Armenian historian and exegete who wrote a *Commentary on Genesis*, records a variation of the purification of Adam after forty days:

Certain people, foreigners, ventured to say that man was in the Garden for a thousand years, bringing as witness David’s saying, “A thousand years in the Lord’s eyes is as yesterday” [Ps 90:4]. But others, of our associates, said (that it was) 40 days in accordance with the spiritual birth of the male.<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> Crislip, “The Book of Jubilees in Coptic,” 33.

<sup>304</sup> Crislip, “The Book of Jubilees in Coptic,” 33.

<sup>305</sup> Michael E. Stone, *Adam and Eve in the Armenian Traditions: Fifth through Seventeenth Centuries* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 247.

As Stone has noted, this does not accord precisely with *Jub.* 3:9, where Adam spends forty days outside of Eden before he can enter. Both traditions, however, are linked to the idea of purification after birth (cf. Lev 12:1–5).<sup>306</sup>

On the same theme, Gregory Arsharuni, an eighth-century exegete who wrote a *Commentary on the Lectionary*, wrote: “As some say, man was created on the sixth day, and entered the Garden of Eden on the fortieth day, and came out after an equal period, which is not obvious.”<sup>307</sup> He correctly states the tradition of Adam’s purification before entering Eden but then adds the variant tradition of Elishe, discussed above.

In a calendrical and cosmological work, the twelfth-century priest and historian Samuel of Ani, names the twenty-two works of creation.<sup>308</sup> A very similar passage appears in the *Book of Questions* of the fourteenth-century writer Gregory of Tatev.<sup>309</sup> Samuel of Ani also named the wives of the patriarchs in a chronicle.<sup>310</sup>

Turning to the Armenian apocrypha collected by Stone, one finds in “Adam Story 2,” from a seventeenth-century manuscript, the idea that Adam entered Paradise forty days after his creation.<sup>311</sup> A tenth-century miscellany lists the ten trials of Abraham, an uncommon theme in Christian literature<sup>312</sup> first introduced *Jubilees* (19:8).<sup>313</sup>

Several lists of the wives of the patriarchs circulated in Armenian. W. Lowndes Lipscomb published an Armenian list from a fifteenth-century manuscript along with a study of the tradition as a whole.<sup>314</sup> Michael Stone republished Lipscomb’s list in parallel columns with four other examples.<sup>315</sup> The list published by Lipscomb names the wives from the generations before and after the Flood; Stone only includes the wives of the Antediluvian patriarchs.

<sup>306</sup> Stone, *Adam and Eve in the Armenian Traditions*, 35–36.

<sup>307</sup> Stone, *Adam and Eve in the Armenian Traditions*, 312.

<sup>308</sup> Stone, *Adam and Eve in the Armenian Traditions*, 446.

<sup>309</sup> Stone, *Adam and Eve in the Armenian Traditions*, 533.

<sup>310</sup> Samuel of Ani, *Temporum usque ad suam aetatem ratio e libris historicum summatim collecta*, ed. Hovhannes Zohrabian (Milan: Regiis Typis, 1818), 3–5.

<sup>311</sup> Michael E. Stone, *Armenian Apocrypha Relating to Adam and Eve*, (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 109–13 (111).

<sup>312</sup> Andy Hilkens, *The Anonymous Syriac Chronicle of 1234 and Its Sources* (Leuven: Peeters, 2018), 56, calls the anonymous chronicle “the only Christian witness to the tradition of the ten trials of Abraham.” Though demonstrably false, Hilkens’ statement exemplifies the theme’s rarity in Christian literature. The theme is quite common in Jewish literature, however, including PRE 26–31.

<sup>313</sup> Michael E. Stone, *Armenian Apocrypha Relating to Abraham* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 204–5.

<sup>314</sup> W. Lowndes Lipscomb, “A Tradition from the Book of Jubilees in Armenian,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 29 (1978): 149–63.

<sup>315</sup> Stone, *Adam and Eve*, 89–91.

In Arabic, practically the only material from *Jubilees* to have survived is the names of the wives of the patriarchs. It is found, however, in both Christian and Muslim sources. Although this chapter focuses on the Christian transmission of *Jubilees*, it is worth including Muslim references as well, both because of the intrinsic interest of this information and because the most likely source is still probably a Christian list of the wives.

The only study (to my knowledge) of *Jubilees* in Muslim literature is Giorgio Levi Della Vida's "Una traccia del Libro dei Giubilei nella letteratura araba musulmana."<sup>316</sup> He found three authorities from the formative period of Islam who recorded names of the wives of the patriarchs in different contexts. The most curious example is in the *Kitab 'Uyūn al-Akhhbār* of Ibn Qutayba (d. 276AH/ 889 CE), who, in the name of Hishām ibn al-Kalbī (d. 204 AH/819 CE), reports the magical use of the names of the wives of Shem, Ham, and Japheth for, of all things, the purpose of nourishing pigeons.<sup>317</sup>

Levi Della Vida goes on to state that only the wives of Ham and Japheth are found in the extensive chronicle of the great historian Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 AH/923 CE), but this is untrue.<sup>318</sup> Not only does Ṭabarī name Shem's wife, he gives the name of every patriarch's wife until the time of the Flood.<sup>319</sup>

Cain: Ashūt bt. Adam  
 Seth: Ḥazūrah bt. Adam  
 Enosh: Na'amah bt. Seth  
 Kenan: Dīnah bt. Barākīl  
 Mahalalel: Sim'an bt. Barākīl  
 Jared: Baraknā bt. Darmasīl  
 Enoch: Hadānah or Adānah bt. Bāwīl  
 Methusaleh: 'Adnā bt. 'Azrā'il  
 Lamech: Batanūsh bt. Barākīl  
 Noah: 'Amzūrah bt. Barākīl  
 Japheth: Arbasisah bt. Marāzīl  
 Ham: Naḥlab bt. Mārib  
 Shem: Ṣalīb bt. Batāwīl

<sup>316</sup> Giorgio Levi Della Vida, "Una traccia del Libro dei Giubilei nella letteratura araba musulmana," *Orientalia* 1 (1932): 205–12.

<sup>317</sup> Levi Della Vida, "Libro dei Giubilei," 206–7. Both of these writers are discussed further in chapter nine.

<sup>318</sup> Levi Della Vida, "Libro dei Giubilei," 208.

<sup>319</sup> 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), 335–47 (the patriarchs until Noah), and *The History of al-Ṭabarī, Volume II: Prophets and Patriarchs*, trans. William M. Brinner (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987), 11–12 (the sons of Noah).

This list, despite the expected corruptions, derives from the same tradition as the other lists of wives. In every case, without exception, Ṭabarī cites as his authority Muḥammad ibn Ishāq (d. 150 AH/767 CE), the biographer of the Prophet, as the origin of the tradition. The first part of Ibn Ishāq's biography recounted the creation of the world and the stories of the earlier prophets of Islam (the *Kitāb al-Mubtada'*). Unfortunately, the *Mubtada'* is now lost, although there have been attempts at a reconstruction.<sup>320</sup> In order to write such a work, Ibn Ishāq must have been quite knowledgeable about biblical and extrabiblical material.<sup>321</sup> Levi Della Vida suspects that he had access to a list of the wives of the patriarchs via a Syriac or Greek model, proposing that the corruptions in spelling reflect a specifically Syriac *Vorlage*.<sup>322</sup>

The final Muslim witness to the wives of the patriarchs is Muṭahhar ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī (d. ca. 355 AH/965 CE), the author of a multivolume historical and philosophical encyclopedia, where he names Noah's daughters-in-law.<sup>323</sup> He too cites Ibn Ishāq as his source. Consequently, the names of the wives are similar to Ṭabarī's.

Names of the wives also crop up in Christian Arabic literature. Albrecht Götze found a notable example in Eutychius of Alexandria (Sa'īd ibn Baṭrīq, d. 940), author of the chronicle *The String of Gems* (*Naẓm al-Jawhar*).<sup>324</sup> For the wives of Cain and Abel he combines two competing traditions. First, he names Cain and Abel's sisters/wives as "Azrun" (ازرون) and "Awain" (اوين).<sup>325</sup> These are variants of the names in *Jub.* 4:1–11, but the narrative attached to the names is the one from the *Cave of Treasures*. In *Jubilees*, the daughters are not the twin sisters of their brothers, and neither is married to Abel. Hence, Cain does not kill Abel out of jealousy for his

320 Gordon D. Newby, *The Making of the Last Prophet: A Reconstruction of the Earliest Biography of Muhammad* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989). But see the critical review of Lawrence I. Conrad: "Recovering Lost Texts: Some Methodological Issues," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113 (1993): 258–63.

321 Levi Della Vida, "Libro dei Giubilei," 208, cites the Yemenite scholar Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. 732 CE) as Ibn Ishāq's source. He was a reputed master of such material. See, for example, Raif Georges Khoury, *Wahb B. Munabbih*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972) and Alfred-Louis de Prémare, "Wahb B. Munabbih, une figure singulière du premier islam," *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 60 (2005): 531–49.

322 Levi Della Vida, "Libro dei Giubilei," 210–11.

323 Muṭahhar ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī, *Le Livre de la Création et de l'Histoire*, ed. and trans. Clément Huart, 6 vols. (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1899–1919), 3:\*27–\*28 (Arabic text) and 3:28–29 (French translation).

324 Albrecht Götze, "Die Nachwirkung der Schatzhöhle," *Zeitschrift für Semitistik und verwandte Gebiete* 2 (1923): 51–94; 3 (1924): 53–71, 153–77 (161–64).

325 Eutychius of Alexandria [Sa'īd ibn Baṭrīq], *Annales*, ed. Louis Cheikho, 2 vols. (Beirut: E Typographeo catholico, 1906), 1:6.



wife. All of these features are part of the *Cave of Treasures* (6:18–29). No other wife names appear until the time of the Flood, where Eutychius gives the same names to Noah's daughters-in-law as Ṭabarī and Maqdisī.<sup>326</sup>

Finally, an Arabic *Catena* to Genesis falsely attributed to Hippolytus of Rome names Adam's daughters and Noah's daughters-in-law in the same forms as Eutychius.<sup>327</sup> It also attributes the name “Emraza” (أمرازا)—a garbled form of Emzara—to Noah's wife, a part of the *Jubilees* tradition not found in Eutychius.<sup>328</sup>

Götze noticed that both Eutychius and the Arabic *Catena* harbored other tradition from *Jubilees*, such as details about the construction of the Tower of Babel from *Jub.* 10:21.<sup>329</sup> Jeremiah Coogan, when considering the transmission of *Jubilees* material in (Greek) *catena* manuscripts, suggested that stray traditions could be transmitted alongside lists of wives of the patriarchs, citing the Syriac list published by Antonio Ceriani as one example.<sup>330</sup> In fact, the Syriac manuscript's notice about the Tower of Babel is identical to the information found in Eutychius and the Arabic *Catena*.<sup>331</sup> Coogan hypothesized that the brief notice about Enoch in the Greek *catenae* (Petit's no. 590 *ad Gen* 5:21–24) could have also been transmitted with such material.<sup>332</sup> His intuition proved correct: Ibn Ishāq (*apud* Ṭabarī) makes such a statement about Enoch in the midst of his genealogical list.<sup>333</sup>

Apart from Maqdisī, every one of these authors reappears in chapter nine as major tradents of material related to the *Cave of Treasures*. The list of the wives of the patriarchs was the last gasp of an ancient tradition that was being overtaken by a newer one.<sup>334</sup>

Slavia Orthodoxa inherited various traditions from *Jubilees* via translated Greek literature, especially Epiphanius' *De mensuris et ponderibus* and the chronicles of

326 Eutychius of Alexandria, *Annales*, 1:12; Levi Della Vida, “Libro dei Giubilei,” 211.

327 Paul de Lagarde, ed., *Materialien zur Kritik und Geschichte des Pentateuchs*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1867), 2:48 and 71–72.

328 Lagarde, *Materialien*, 2:68. See Tal Ilan, “Biblical Women's Names in the Apocryphal Traditions,” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 6 (1993): 3–67 (18).

329 Götze, “Nachwirkung,” 162. See Eutychius, *Annales*, 16; and Lagarde, *Materialien*, 92.

330 Coogan, “Reception of Jubilees in Greek,” 282.

331 Ceriani, “Nomina uxorum,” x: “In the days of Peleg the tower was built, and its height was 5,433 cubits and . . . stadia” (*In diebus Phaleg aedificata est turris, et altitudo ejus MMMMCDXXXIII cubit et . . . stadia*).

332 Coogan, “Reception of Jubilees in Greek,” 281–83.

333 al-Ṭabarī, *The History, Volume I*, 343: “When Jared was 162 years old, he married Baraknā, the daughter of al-Darmasil b. Mehujael b. Enoch b. Cain b. Adam. She bore him his son Enoch, who is the prophet Idris. He was the first of Adam's children to be given prophecy—as Ibn Ishāq assumed—and the first to write with a pen.”

334 See, similarly, Monger, “A Syriac List” and Ilan, “Biblical Women's Names,” where they observe two sets of names— one from *Jubilees* and one from the *Cave of Treasures*—in competition.

John Malalas and George the Monk. From these Byzantine sources, traditions from *Jubilees* filtered into original Slavonic works. Florentina Badalanova Geller names the anonymous *Chronographic Compendium from Hellenistic and Roman Times* and the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, both of which use *Jubilees'* creation account as related by Epiphanius.<sup>335</sup> The Slavonic *Palaea* books, such as the recently published bilingual edition of the *Palaea chronographica*, make use of John Malalas, George the Monk, George Syncellus, George Cedrenus, Peter of Alexandria, and even Pseudo-Eustathius, importing traditions from *Jubilees* through them.<sup>336</sup>

The Ethiopic version of *Jubilees*, which was translated from a Greek text, was presumably made between the fourth and sixth centuries. However, *Jubilees* did not manifest itself in Ethiopian culture until much later, when it played a key role in the theological reforms of the Negus Zar'a Yā'qob (r. 1434–1468) following a century of controversy over Christian observance of the Sabbath.<sup>337</sup> The controversy coincides with the date of the earliest Ethiopic manuscript of *Jubilees*.<sup>338</sup> The evidence suggests a gap of almost a millennium between the translation of *Jubilees* and its *de facto* canonization.

The place of *Jubilees* in Ethiopian culture is little studied, even though the Ethiopian Church is responsible for the preservation of the text.<sup>339</sup> The work that has been done, however, makes the book's influence apparent. Traces of *Jubilees* can be found in several medieval texts that are unknown outside Ethiopia. For this reason, I will not examine them in detail but leave only a few bibliographical notes. Published texts influenced by *Jubilees* include the *Book of the Mysteries of the Heavens*

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335 Geller, "Alphabet of Creation," 207–12.

336 Sabine Fahl, Dieter Fahl, and Christfried Böttrich, eds., *Die kurze chronographische Paleja: Kritische Edition mit deutscher Übersetzung*, 2 vols. (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2019), 2:6–46.

337 Taddesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia, 1270-1527* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 206–47. See also Robert Beylot, "La Controverse sur le Sabbat dans l'Église éthiopienne," in *La controverse religieuse et ses formes*, ed. Alain Le Boulluec (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1995), 165–88.

338 VanderKam, "The Manuscript Tradition of *Jubilees*," 18.

339 For a brief overview, see Leslie Baynes, "Enoch and *Jubilees* in the Canon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church," in *A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. Vanderkam*, ed. Eric F. Mason et al., 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 2:799–818. For specific uses of *Jubilees* in theological treatises, see Jacques T.A.G.M. Van Ruiten, "The Book of *Jubilees* in the *Maṣḥafa Milād* and the *Maṣḥafa Bārḥān*," in *The Embroidered Bible: Studies in Biblical Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Honour of Michael E. Stone*, ed. Lorenzo DiTommaso, Matthias Henze, and William Adler (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 852–76.

and the Earth,<sup>340</sup> *Mashqfa Berhān*,<sup>341</sup> *Mashqfa Milād*,<sup>342</sup> a Ge'ez commentary on the Apocalypse of John,<sup>343</sup> and the *Ethiopian Commentary on the Book of Genesis*.<sup>344</sup> This last work is part of the Amharic *Andämta* (commentary) tradition. There is indeed an *Andämta* on *Jubilees*, but it has never been published.<sup>345</sup> Finally, there are the texts published in the *Falasha Anthology* of Wolf Leslau<sup>346</sup> and the *Commandements du Sabbat* of Joseph Halévy, although these are not Christian texts but belong to the literature of the Jews of Ethiopia.<sup>347</sup> None of these works predate the fourteenth century. Since the Ethiopian Church regards *Jubilees* as scripture, they use the book for theological purposes, that is, in support of Trinitarian and Christological arguments. Against the Byzantine tradition, there is little interest in *Jubilees* as a historical work.

## 6.5 Conclusion

While the Greek text of *Jubilees* did not survive, many traditions from the work evidently did. The memory of the book was never forgotten, as the material in this chapter covers the entire history of the Byzantine Empire. The recollection of the work did become increasingly stereotyped, with the result that the *Jubilees* material found in (for example) George Cedrenus and Michael Glycas is a stultifying rehearsal of older chronicles.

Certain traditions commanded more attention than others. The most popular by far is the list of the wives of the patriarchs, especially if one includes partial lists like the names of Adam's daughters. The sacred history according to *Jubilees* as

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**340** Bakhayla Mikael, *Le Livre des Mystères du Ciel et de la Terre*, ed. and trans. Jules Perruchon (Paris: Librairie de Paris, 1903). The text has been translated into English: Bakhayla Mikael, *The Book of the Mysteries of the Heavens and the Earth and Other Works of Bakhayla Mikā'el (Zōsimās)*, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (1935; repr., Berwick: Ibis Press, 2004).

**341** Carlo Conti Rossini, *Il Libro della Luce del Negus Zar'a Yā'qob (Mashqfa Berhān)*, 4 vols. (Leuven: Peeters, 1964).

**342** Kurt Wendt, *Das Mashqfa Milād (Liber Nativitatis)*, 2 vols. (Leuven: Peeters, 1962).

**343** Roger W. Cowley, *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of St. John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 109 (a reference to Mastema and *Jub.* 10).

**344** Mersha Alehegne, *The Ethiopian Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Critical Edition and Translation* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011).

**345** Alehegne, *Ethiopian Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 19.

**346** Wolf Leslau, trans., *Falasha Anthology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951).

**347** Joseph Halévy, ed. and trans., *Te'ezaza Sanbat (Commandements du Sabbat), accompagné de six autres écrits pseudo-épigraphiques admis par les Falachas ou Juifs d'Abyssinie* (Paris: Librairie Émile Bouillon, 1902).

filtered through Greek tradition goes something like this: God created twenty-two works over the six days of creation, corresponding to the twenty-two patriarchs (and, Epiphanius adds, the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the twenty-two books of the Hebrew Bible). Adam and Eve had two daughters who became the wives of Cain and Seth. Cain, because he had killed Abel with a stone, was killed by stones when his house collapsed on him. After the Flood, Cainan discovered Antediluvian knowledge, whether this was beneficial knowledge left by Seth or forbidden knowledge given by the Watchers. The Tower of Babel was built over the course of forty (or forty-three) years and was exactly 5,433 cubits high. After the dispersion of the nations, Canaan, a descendant of Ham, encroached on Shem's territory. Human depravity increased significantly in the time of Serug, either through warfare or idolatry or both. Abraham, who discovered God sometime between the ages of fourteen and sixty-one, reversed course and burned down a temple of idols. Much later, Jacob selected Levi to be a "tithe" by counting his sons backwards from Benjamin. After his father died, Jacob fought and killed his brother Esau in a war (as is allegedly reported by Josephus).

George Syncellus is central to the development of this stereotyped list. He includes nearly all these items (Serug's depravity, oddly, is absent). His eclecticism, and the mere fact that his chronicle survived the ravages of time while many others did not, allowed these traditions to perdure for centuries. Most importantly, as a near-contemporary of PRE, Syncellus shows that there was a breadth of knowledge about *Jubilees* in the eighth and ninth centuries, even if that knowledge was second-hand. His choice of material also helps establish what one might expect to find in a work that has been influenced by *Jubilees*, even through an intermediary source. This sets the stage for the next chapter, the investigation of how much material PRE and *Jubilees* have in common and, if so, how PRE could have obtained it.

## 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),<sup>1</sup> Steven Ballaban,<sup>2</sup> Rachel Adelman,<sup>3</sup> Katharina Keim,<sup>4</sup> and Menahem Kister.<sup>5</sup> In a few instances, I have even consulted the notes

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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,<sup>6</sup> although I have not included any of the parallels that Anna Urowitz-Freudenstein addressed in her critique of Friedlander.<sup>7</sup> 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).<sup>8</sup> The English translations of this manuscript are my own. The Hebrew text of *Jubilees* is from Cana Werman’s retroversion.<sup>9</sup> My English translations of *Jubilees*, however, are based on James VanderKam’s critical edition of the Ethiopic text.<sup>10</sup>

## 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

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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.<sup>11</sup> He refers to the works of the first day as evidence for this parallel (emphasis mine).

*Jubilees* 2:2<sup>12</sup>

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."<sup>13</sup> Indeed he did. The common source is Gen 1:1–3.

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: <sup>2</sup>וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תוֹהוּ וָבוֹהוּ וְרוּחַ עֲלִפְנֵי תְהוֹם וְיָוֶה אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֵף עַל־פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם: <sup>3</sup>וַיֹּאמֶר 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).<sup>14</sup> Second, both works refer to the creation of "dark materials"

<sup>11</sup> Gerald Friedlander, *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, 14, n. 6.

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

<sup>13</sup> Friedlander, *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, 13 n. 6.

<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> Albeck himself drew attention to Enoch’s achievements in *Jub.* 4:17.<sup>16</sup> *Jubilees* later specifies that Enoch learned the working of the calendars from his centuries-long sojourn with

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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.

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

<sup>16</sup> 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* 4:17–21<sup>17</sup>

[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.<sup>18</sup> 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).<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Albeck in Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, 139.

<sup>19</sup> 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).<sup>20</sup> 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).<sup>21</sup>

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 בתענית 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).<sup>22</sup>

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.

<sup>20</sup> See Albeck in Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, 138.

<sup>21</sup> Albeck in Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, 137.

<sup>22</sup> 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 18:3.18–19<sup>23</sup>**

[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.<sup>24</sup> 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

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<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup>

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.<sup>26</sup> *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.<sup>27</sup>

## 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.<sup>28</sup> *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

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<sup>25</sup> 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.

<sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> 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).

<sup>28</sup> For example, Albeck in Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, 139; Friedlander, *Pirkē de Rabbi Eliezer*, xxvi; Adelman, *Return of the Repressed*, 109–37; Kister, “Ancient Material in *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eli’ezer*,” 70; Keim, *Pirqei deRabbi 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 5:1–12<sup>29</sup>

[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

<sup>29</sup> 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" (עִירִיָּן), 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־הִחַל הָאָדָם לָרֹב עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה וּבָנֹת יָלְדוּ לָהֶם: <sup>2</sup>וַיֵּרְאוּ בְנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם כִּי טִבּוֹת הֵנָּה וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם נָשִׁים מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּחָרוּ: <sup>3</sup>וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לֵאמֹן רוּחִי בָאֲדָם לְעַלְמָא בְּשָׁגֶם הוּא בָּשָׂר וְהָיוּ יָמֵיו מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה: <sup>4</sup>הַנִּפְלְאִים הָיוּ בָאָרֶץ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם וְגַם אַחֲרֵיכֶן אֲשֶׁר יָבֹאוּ בְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל־בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם וַיֵּלְדוּ לָהֶם הֵמָּה הַגִּבּוֹרִים אֲשֶׁר מְעֹלָם אֲנָשֵׁי הָשָׁם:

[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).<sup>30</sup> *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.<sup>31</sup>

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

<sup>30</sup> 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.

<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup> The first part of this work is based on a Muslim legend about the fallen angels Hārūt and Mārūt (Qurʾān 2:102).<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup> *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.<sup>35</sup> 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).

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<sup>32</sup> 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.

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

<sup>34</sup> 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.

<sup>35</sup> Keim, *Pirqe deRabbi Eliezer*, 176.

*Jubilees* 10:5<sup>36</sup>

ואתה יודע את אשר עשׂו 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 בל יחיו רפאים בל  
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.<sup>37</sup> *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.<sup>38</sup> Loren Stuckenbruck has offered the provocative idea that the Enochic tradition

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

<sup>37</sup> 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.

<sup>38</sup> 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).<sup>39</sup> 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).<sup>40</sup> 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).<sup>41</sup> 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).

<sup>39</sup> 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).

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

<sup>41</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup> The reading of the relevant line differs significantly depending on the manuscript.

**Jubilees 4:33<sup>43</sup>**

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.

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

מזרח) 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.

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

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

מזרח) 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

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

<sup>43</sup> 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.<sup>44</sup> 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.<sup>45</sup> 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.<sup>46</sup>

*Jubilees* 8:10–12.22.24.25.29<sup>47</sup>

[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

<sup>44</sup> 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.

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

<sup>46</sup> Friedlander, *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, xxiv–xxv.

<sup>47</sup> 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.<sup>48</sup> *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*.<sup>49</sup> 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).<sup>50</sup>

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.<sup>51</sup>

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 matriarchs are all related. Friedlander believed that this tradition came from *Jubilees*.<sup>52</sup>

*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* 28:9<sup>53</sup>

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 נימוס  
הארץ בנות שלאדם מפילגשו 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.<sup>54</sup> 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).<sup>55</sup>

What remains of 4Q215 is a nearly identical.<sup>56</sup> 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).<sup>57</sup>

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*

<sup>55</sup> Translation of Stone, "The Genealogy of Bilhah," 22–23.

<sup>56</sup> 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.

<sup>57</sup> My translation from Julius Theodor and Hanoch Albeck, eds. *Midrash Beresheet 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.<sup>58</sup>

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*.<sup>59</sup> 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.<sup>60</sup> Although the election

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

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

<sup>60</sup> 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* 32:1–3<sup>61</sup>

[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 ידי

[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 אמית' היה אמר לו הן אמר לו לא כך אמר וכל אשר תתן 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."<sup>62</sup> 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."<sup>63</sup> The Samaritan said: "Blessed is your nation and everything within it" (*Gen. Rab. 70:7*).<sup>64</sup>

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)

<sup>62</sup> Meaning: This just makes the problem worse.

<sup>63</sup> Meaning: The law of the tithe does not exempt the law of the firstborn.

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

חסד),<sup>65</sup> 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.<sup>66</sup> 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.<sup>67</sup> *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.<sup>68</sup>

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.

<sup>65</sup> 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.”

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

<sup>67</sup> 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.

<sup>68</sup> Friedlander, *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, xxvii.



*Jubilees* 37:1.24–25; 38:1–2<sup>70</sup>

[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 דרוך קשתך והשלך חצץ 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).<sup>70</sup>

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).<sup>71</sup> 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.<sup>72</sup> 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.<sup>73</sup> 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.

<sup>70</sup> My translation from the Vilna Shas.

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

<sup>72</sup> 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.

<sup>73</sup> 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.<sup>74</sup> 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.<sup>75</sup> Kister, rather than claiming that *Jubilees* influenced PRE, suggests that PRE gives a fuller rendition of a tradition that is only implicit in *Jubilees*.<sup>76</sup> 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* 47:1–3<sup>78</sup>

[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).<sup>78</sup> 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 צופן 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

<sup>78</sup> 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).<sup>79</sup>

Kister is aware of this talmudic parallel and cites it in his article.<sup>80</sup> 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 (עד) 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*.<sup>81</sup> The prophecy was also known in Islamic literature.<sup>82</sup> Even Samaritans had their

<sup>79</sup> My translation from the Vilna Shas.

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

<sup>81</sup> 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.”

<sup>82</sup> 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.<sup>83</sup> 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

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

<sup>83</sup> 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.





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## Part Three: **The *Cave of Treasures***



## 8 The *Cave of Treasures* Cycle

The *Cave of Treasures* (*Cav. Tr.*) is not merely a book but an entire cycle of literature. In fact, it is two cycles. One is a tributary of the apocryphal work known as the *Testament of Adam*.<sup>1</sup> This short work begins with an astrological section enumerating the properties of the hours of the day and night before abruptly turning to a prophecy Adam gives to Seth concerning the Flood and the coming of Christ. Seth writes down the prophecy in a book—the testament of Adam—and deposes it in the cave of treasures.<sup>2</sup> After Adam's death, he is buried in the first city, Enoch. The work was written in Syriac, but the earliest manuscript (Kölner Papyruskodex 3221) is a Coptic text from the fifth century or earlier.<sup>3</sup> It is probably the first work to mention the cave. The book called *Cave of Treasures* is the starting point for the second cycle.

It is important to know the difference between the *Cave of Treasures* (the work) and the cave of treasures (the cave).<sup>4</sup> In both cycles, the cave of treasures is the repository of the gifts that the Magi bring to the infant Jesus. It is therefore a Christian *topos*. The difference between the *Testament of Adam* cycle and the *Cave of Treasures* cycle lies in the contents of the cave apart from gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

In the *Testament of Adam*, the cave holds Adam's prophecy, passed down from generation to generation among the Magi until the birth of Christ. This story, naturally, reappears in Infancy Gospels and other literature affiliated with the Nativity story, including writings about Mary. It is found, for example, in the *Transitus Mariae* (both Syriac and Ethiopic)<sup>5</sup> as well as the Armenian *Infancy Gospel* (which was translated from Syriac).<sup>6</sup> It is mentioned incidentally in an astronomical and

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1 Stephen E. Robinson, *The Testament of Adam: An Examination of the Syriac and Greek Traditions* (Chico Scholars Press, 1982).

2 The model for this story is Josephus, *Ant.* I.68–71, the stelae erected by the children of Seth intended to preserve Antediluvian knowledge.

3 For the codex in general (including its contents), see: Gesa Schenke and Gesine Schenke Robinson, eds., *Der koptische Kölner Papyruskodex 3221: 1, Das Testament des Iob* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2009).

4 See also: Gerrit J. Reinink, “Das Problem des Ursprungs des Testamentes Adams,” in *Symposium Syriacum 1972*, (Rome: Pontificium institutum studiorum orientalium, 1974), 387–99.

5 Agnes Smith Lewis, ed. and trans. *Apocrypha Syriaca: The Protevangelium Jacobi and Transitus Mariae* (London: C. J. Clay and Sons, 1902), \*68–69 (Syriac text) and 41 (English translation); E. A. Wallis Budge, *The History of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the History of the Likeness of Christ*, 2 vols. (London: Luzac and Co., 1899), 1:133 (Syriac text) and 2:146 (English translation); Stephen J. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 388 (English translation of the Ethiopic).

6 Abraham Terian, trans., *The Armenian Gospel of the Infancy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 51–52.

meteorological treatise attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite<sup>7</sup> and in Theodore bar Koni's *Liber scholiorum*.<sup>8</sup> The most extensive treatment of the tradition appears in the *Revelation of the Magi*, a lengthy apocryphon embedded in the eighth-century *Zuqnin Chronicle*.<sup>9</sup> The substance of this tale, however, was already summarized in an unfinished fifth-century Latin commentary on Matthew dubbed the *Opus imperfectum*.<sup>10</sup> Every one of these sources is rooted in the Syriac tradition.

In the work called the *Cave of Treasures*, the eponymous cave is not the repository of Adam's prophecy but of Adam himself. This work, pseudonymously attributed to Ephrem the Syrian (d. 373) but written no earlier than the sixth century, presents itself as a genealogy of the Messiah. Its expressly stated purpose (although stated quite late in the work, at the beginning of chapter 44) is to defend the integrity of Mary against the calumny of the Jews. It also presents Judaism as a deviation from an original, Antediluvian religion that centered around the veneration of the body of Adam entombed in the cave of treasures on a Holy Mountain. The children of Seth, however, corrupted themselves by abandoning the Holy Mountain and mingling with the children of Cain in the valley below. When the Flood destroyed this primitive race, Noah preserved the body of Adam in the Ark and then ordered his reburial at the site of Golgotha, where Melchizedek, a descendant of Shem, was installed as a priest. It is the mountain where Abraham offered Isaac, where Jacob had his vision, and where Christ was crucified.

The *Cave of Treasures* was originally written in Syriac. Su-Min Ri, the most recent editor of the text, divided it into Eastern and Western recensions.<sup>11</sup> As Sergey

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7 Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *Un traité astronomique et météorologique syriaque attribué à Denys l'Aréopagite, Extrait de Tome II des Actes du XIV<sup>e</sup> Congrès international des orientalistes*, ed. and trans. Marc-Antoine Kugener (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1907), 25 (Syriac text) and 54 (French translation).

8 Theodore bar Koni, *Liber scholiorum*, ed. Addaï Scher, 2 vols. (Paris: E Typographeo Reipublicae, 1910–1912), 69; Theodore bar Koni, *Livre des Scolies: Recension de Séert*, trans. Robert Hespel and René Draguet, 2 vols. (Leuven: Peeters, 1982), 2:49–50 (Memra VII.15).

9 Amir Harrak, ed. and trans., *The Chronicle of Zuqnin, Parts I and II: From the Creation to the Year AD 506/7* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2017), 108–53. For an English translation of this section alone, see Brent Landau, trans., *Revelation of the Magi: The Lost Tale of the Three Wise Men's Journey to Bethlehem* (New York: HarperOne, 2010).

10 Alexander Toepel, "The Apocryphon of Seth: 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), 33–39. The entire work (what remains of it) has been translated into English: James A. Kellerman, trans., *Incomplete Commentary on Matthew (Opus Imperfectum)*, 2 vols. (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2010).

11 Su-Min Ri, ed., *La Caverne des Trésors: Les deux recensions syriaques* (Leuven: Peeters, 1987). He also translated the text into French: Su-Min Ri, trans., *La Caverne des Trésors: Les deux recensions syriaques* (Leuven: Peeters, 1987).

Minov indicated, this division was based merely on the script rather than textual evidence.<sup>12</sup> It does, however, exist in a multiplicity of versions, most of them Arabic. In fact, there are no fewer than three Arabic versions. The first is a direct translation from the Syriac, preserved in three Garshuni manuscripts.<sup>13</sup> The second and most widely-diffused Arabic version is called the *Book of the Rolls*, part of a massive compilation belonging to the Pseudo-Clementine literature (this same compilation also includes the Arabic *Apocalypse of Peter*).<sup>14</sup> The third is a greatly expanded, paraphrastic version in two parts: the *Hexameron* of Pseudo-Epiphanius (whose Arabic version has not yet been edited) and the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*.<sup>15</sup> The first Arabic version, the one translated from Syriac, was itself translated at some point into Georgian.<sup>16</sup> The *Book of the Rolls* (under the title *Qalēmentōs*),<sup>17</sup> the *Hexameron*,<sup>18</sup> and the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*<sup>19</sup> were all translated

12 Sergey Minov, *Memory and Identity in the Syriac Cave of Treasures: Rewriting the Bible in Sasanian Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 26–36.

13 Mingana Syr. 32, ff. 89b–145b and Mingana Syr. 258, ff. 87b–146a, from the University of Birmingham, and Borgia Arab. 135, ff. 228a–274b, from the Vatican Library.

14 Margaret Dunlop Gibson, ed. and trans., *Apocrypha Arabica: 1. Kitab al Magall, or the Book of the Rolls; 2. The Story of Aphikia; 3. Cyprian and Justa, in Arabic; 4. Cyprian and Justa, in Greek* (London: C. J. Clay and Sons, 1901), \*1–55 (translation: 1–58). Alphonse Mingana, ed. and trans., *Woodbrooke Studies III: Vision of Theophilus and Apocalypse of Peter* (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1931), 93–450. He did not publish the full manuscript, as he intended to supplement the work of Gibson.

15 Antonio Battista and Bellarmino Bagatti, eds. and trans. *Il Combattimento di Adamo: Testo arabo inedito con traduzione italiana e commento* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1982). They have only published the first part. The Arabic text has not been published in full.

16 Text: Ciala Kourcikidzé, ed., *La Caverne des Trésors: Version géorgienne* (Leuven: Peeters, 1993). Translation: Jean-Pierre Mahé, trans., *La Caverne des Trésors: Version géorgienne* (Leuven: Peeters, 1993).

17 The relevant portion is the first two books: Sylvain Grébaut, trans., *Le Qalēmentos: Livres premier et deuxième* (Paris: Librairie A. Picard et Fils, 1913). For the rest of the work (Books 3–7), see Alessandro Bausi, *Qalēmentos etiopico: La rivelazione di Pietro a Clemente I, Libri 3–7* (Naples: Istituto universitario orientale, 1992).

18 For the Ethiopic text and a German translation, see Ernst Trumpp, ed. and trans., “Das Hexäëron des Pseudo-Epiphanius: Aethiopischer Text verglichen mit dem arabischen Originaltext und deutscher Uebersetzung,” *Abhandlungen der Philosophisch-Philologischen Klasse der Königlich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 16 (1882): 167–254. The text comes from British Library Or. 751 (ff. 90a–104b). Trumpp’s work was severely criticized by August Haffner, “Das Hexäëron des Pseudo-Epiphanius,” *Oriens Christianus* 10–11 (1923): 91–145, who accused him of being overly dependent on the Arabic version to address obscurities in the Ethiopic text. He has called for an edition of the Arabic text, which, in the century since he wrote this article, has yet to appear.

19 August Dillmann, trans., *Die christliche Adambuch des Morganlandes* (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1853), published the first translation of the Ethiopic version taken from a paper copy of Johann Ludwig Krapf. Ernst Trumpp, ed., *Die Kampf Adams (gegen die Versuchungen des Satans), oder: Das christliche Adambuch des Morgenlandes: Aethiopischer Text, verglichen mit dem arabischen Origin-*

into Ethiopic. A Coptic version, embedded in an *Encomium on Mary Magdalene*, is related to the *Book of the Rolls* and may have been the basis for it.<sup>20</sup> An Armenian commentary on Genesis and Luke attributed to Epiphanius of Salamis is in fact a continuous narrative indebted to the *Cave of Treasures*.<sup>21</sup> This constellation of texts constitutes the *Cave of Treasures* cycle.

The *Cave of Treasures* was never a lost text; it was continually copied until the nineteenth century. However, it did not play a role in the literary history of Western Christianity. In modern research, the first reference appears in the *Bibliotheca Orientalis* of Giuseppe Simoni Assemani (d. 1768),<sup>22</sup> but the work was not published until the translation (1883) and edition (1888) of Carl Bezold.<sup>23</sup> In his edition, he published both a Syriac text and an Arabic text from the *Book of the Rolls*.<sup>24</sup> In 1927, E. A. Wallis Budge published an English translation of British Library Add. 25875. Until recently, this was the only English translation.<sup>25</sup> In the same year, Zurab Avalichvili published an important study of the Georgian

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*altex*t (Munich: Verlag der K. Akademie, 1880), published the Ethiopic text of British Library Or. 751. Solomon Caesar Malan, trans., *The Book of Adam and Eve: Also Called the Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1882), translated this text into English.

20 Paul-Hubert Poirier, "Fragments d'une version copte de la 'Caverne des Trésors'," *Orientalia* 52 (1983): 415–423; Gérard Coquin and René-Georges Godron, "Un encomion copte sur Marie-Madeleine attribué à Cyrille de Jérusalem," *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 90 (1990): 169–212. English translation: Christine Luckritz Marquis, "An Encomium on Mary Magdalene," in *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures, Volume 1*, ed. Tony Burke and Brent Landau (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 197–216.

21 See F. C. Conybeare, "The Gospel Commentary of Epiphanius," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 7 (1906): 318–332; F. C. Conybeare, "Epiphanius on the Baptism," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 8 (1907), 221–25; Igor Dorfmann-Lazarev, "Eve, Melchizedek and the Magi in the Cave of the Nativity According to the Armenian Corpus of Homilies Attributed to Epiphanius of Salamis," in *The Protevangelium of James*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer et al. (Leuven: Peeters, 2020), 264–294; Igor Dorfmann-Lazarev, "Adam in the Church at Alt'amar (915–921) and in a Pseudepigraphal Homily on Genesis," in *Von der Historienbibel zur Weltchronik: Studien zur Pseudepigrapha-Literatur*, ed. Christfried Böttrich, Dieter Fahl, and Sabine Fahl (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2020), 306–332.

22 Giuseppe Simone Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, 3 vols. in 4 (Rome: Typis Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, 1719–1728), 2:498; 3.1: 281.

23 Carl Bezold, ed. and trans., *Die Schatzhöhle: Syrisch und deutsch*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1883–1888).

24 Both were subjected to separate scathing reviews by Paul de Lagarde: "Die Schatzhöhle," in *Mittheilungen III* (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1889), 49–79, and "Noch einmal die Schatzhöhle," in *Mittheilungen IV* (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1891), 9–16.

25 E. A. Wallis Budge, trans., *The Book of the Cave of Treasures, A History of the Patriarchs and the Kings Their Successors from the Creation to the Crucifixion of Christ* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1927).

version of the *Cave of Treasures*.<sup>26</sup> He noted that an edition, taken from a seventeenth-century Georgian chronicle, was printed in Tbilisi in 1906, but an independent version also existed. Paul Riessler updated the German translation of Bezold in 1928 with an important new addition to the text—chapter and verse numbers.<sup>27</sup> His divisions would reappear in all future publications, including the critical editions of the Syriac and Georgian versions as well as the most recent English translation.<sup>28</sup> The work has only now been translated into Greek and (partially) into Hebrew.<sup>29</sup>

The history of research on the *Cave of Treasures* is brief. The first major studies focused on presumed Jewish elements of the work. The early study of Jacob Bamberger in 1901 outlined several parallels between *Cav. Tr.* and rabbinic literature.<sup>30</sup> He believed that *Cav. Tr.* represented a Christian adaptation of an originally Jewish Adam book. A few decades later, in 1921, Albrecht Götze argued that *Cav. Tr.* was a revision of a Jewish-Christian work.<sup>31</sup> Götze's study proved highly influential. In a seminal 1979 article on "Jewish Traditions in Syriac Sources", Sebastian Brock singled out *Cav. Tr.* as the "richest source of Jewish traditions" within the Syriac tradition.<sup>32</sup> In the same year, Antonio Battista and Bellarmino Bagatti published an Italian translation of multiple texts relating to *Cav. Tr.*<sup>33</sup> They believed *Cav. Tr.* illustrated ancient Jewish-Christian beliefs about the grave of Adam. Their position, however, was refuted by Joan E. Taylor, who criticized this "myth of Jewish-Christian

26 Zurab Avalichvili, "Notice sur une version géorgienne de la Caverne des Trésors," *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 26 (1927): 381–95.

27 Paul Riessler, ed., *Altjüdische Schriftum ausserhalb der Bibel* (Augsburg: Benno Filser, 1928), 942–1013.

28 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.

29 Emmanouela Grypeou, trans., *Hē Spēlia tōn Thēsaurōn* (Thēra: Thesbitēs, 2010); Bar Belinitzky and Youval Rotman, eds., *The Cave of Treasures: Syriac Anthology from Late Antiquity in Hebrew Translation* (Tel Aviv: Tau Press, 2018), 23–31 (translation of *Cav. Tr.* 2–6 by Sergey Minov) [Hebrew].

30 Jacob Bamberger, *Die Literatur der Adambücher und die haggadischen Elemente in der syrischen Schatzhöhle* (Aschaffenburg: W. Hausmann, 1901).

31 Albrecht Götze, *Die Schatzhöhle: Überlieferung und Quellen* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1922).

32 Sebastian P. Brock, "Jewish Traditions in Syriac Sources," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 30 (1979): 212–32.

33 Antonio Battista and Bellarmino Bagatti, eds. and trans. *La Caverna dei Tesori: Testo arabo con traduzione italiana e commento* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1979).

origins.”<sup>34</sup> In the following decades, Su-Min Ri published, in addition to his critical text and translation, several shorter studies,<sup>35</sup> culminating in a commentary on the whole work in 2000.<sup>36</sup> Ri, like Götze, believed that the work was originally Jewish-Christian.

Recent research on *Cav. Tr.*, however, is marked by a distancing from the “Jewish-Christian” hypothesis. In 2001, Clemens Leonhard criticized the atomization of *Cav. Tr.* by Götze and Ri. He argued for the essential unity of the text and a sixth-century date.<sup>37</sup> In a separate study, he showed that *Cav. Tr.* is entrenched in the Christological controversies of the fifth and sixth centuries.<sup>38</sup> Hence, it is not Jewish-Christian. In 2006, Alexander Toepel published a monograph on the Adam and Seth traditions in *Cav. Tr.* 1–6.<sup>39</sup> Although he found a few motifs shared with Jewish literature (both Second Temple and rabbinic), he concluded that the author derived most of his material from Syriac literature. Finally, Sergey Minov has argued at length for a West Syrian origin of the text.<sup>40</sup> The conclusions of this

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34 Joan E. Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places: The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 128. She maintains, however, the possibility that *Cav. Tr.* was originally a Jewish text: “The Christian author used a Jewish Syriac text written in the fourth century near Edessa, but while the work has a Jewish source and a Christian redaction, this does not make it a Jewish-Christian text as such.” She is referring to the hypothesis of Götze, although she does not name him.

35 Su-Min Ri, “La Caverne des Trésors: Problèmes d’analyse littéraire,” in *Literary Genres in Syriac Literature: IV Symposium Syriacum 1984*, ed. Hendrik Jan Willem Drijvers, Corrie Molenberg, and René Lavenant (Rome: Pontificium institutum studiorum orientalium, 1987), 183–90; Su-Min Ri, “La Caverne des Trésors et le Testament d’Adam,” in *V (Quintum) Symposium Syriacum 1988*, ed. René Lavenant (Rome: Pontificium institutum studiorum orientalium, 1990), 111–22; Su-Min Ri, “La Caverne des Trésors et Mar Ephrem,” in *Symposium Syriacum VII*, ed. René Lavenant (Rome: Pontificium institutum studiorum orientalium, 1998), 71–83; Su-Min Ri, “Les Prologues de la ‘Caverne des Trésors’ et la notion d’‘Apocryphe’,” in *Entrer en Matière: Les Prologues*, ed. Jean-Daniel Dubois and Bernard Roussel (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1998), 135–50.

36 Su-Min Ri, *Commentaire de la Caverne des Trésors: Étude sur l’histoire du texte et de ses sources* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000).

37 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.

38 Clemens Leonhard, “Die Beschneidung Christi in der syrischen Schatzhöhle: Beobachtungen zu Datierung und Überlieferung des Werks,” in *Syriaca II: Beiträge zum 3. Deutschen Syrologen-Symposium in Vierzehnheiligen 2002*, ed. Martin Tamcke (Münster: Lit, 2004), 11–28.

39 Alexander Toepel, *Die Adam- und Seth-Legenden im syrischen “Buch der Schatzhöhle”: Eine Quellenkritische Untersuchung* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006).

40 Sergey Minov, “Date and Provenance of the Syriac Cave of Treasures: A Reappraisal,” *Hugoye* 20 (2016): 129–229. A West Syrian origin was not an impediment to a Sasanian provenance: Sergey



most recent research, rather than the older assumptions of Götze and Ri, guide the present study. Ri himself has summarized these recent developments in his most recent article on *Cav. Tr.*<sup>41</sup>

This chapter reviews each of the different versions of *Cav. Tr.* The main goal, besides introducing the work, is to demonstrate the popularity of *Cav. Tr.* in Arabic, a language which the author of PRE, a resident of 'Abbāsid Palestine, likely knew. Many versions of *Cav. Tr.* are not straightforward translations of the original Syriac work but adaptations that are incorporated into larger works. The relevant texts can be divided into primary and secondary versions. The primary versions are 1) the Syriac original, 2) an Arabic translation, and 3) the Georgian version, which was translated from an Arabic text. The secondary versions are found in 1) the *Book of the Rolls*, 2) an *Encomium on Mary Magdalene*, and 3) the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*. The Armenian commentary of Pseudo-Epiphanius might also be considered a secondary version.

## 8.1 Primary Versions

The *Cave of Treasures* was originally written in Syriac and completed around the sixth century. Following the Arab conquests, the Syriac version was rapidly translated into Arabic and from Arabic into Georgian. Like the Greek version of *Jubilees*, the Arabic translation of the primary version of *Cav. Tr.* is poorly attested. The only independent Arabic translations of *Cav. Tr.* survive in a handful of Garshuni manuscripts, which are potentially (but not necessarily) representative of the earliest Arabic translation. The Georgian version was also translated from Arabic, but the translator has taken a few liberties with the text. Nevertheless, the Georgian text remains an important witness to the early Arabic translation.

The original version of the *Cave of Treasures* is the Syriac text, which is attested by at least fifty manuscripts, none of them older than the sixteenth century.<sup>42</sup> In his critical edition of the work, Su-Min Ri divided the Syriac text into two recensions, East Syrian and West Syrian, based on only nineteen manuscripts. This division was

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Minov, "Dynamics of Christian Acculturation in the Sasanian Empire: Some Iranian Motifs in the *Cave of Treasures*," in *Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians: Religious Dynamics in a Sasanian Context*, ed. Geoffrey Herman (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2014), 149–201.

<sup>41</sup> Su-Min Ri, "La Caverne des Trésors et les recherches sur Mar Éphrem," in *Christianisme des origines: Mélanges en l'honneur du Professeur Paul-Hubert Poirier*, ed. Eric Crégheur, Julio Cesar Dias Chaves, and Steve Johnston (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 417–28.

<sup>42</sup> Ri, *La Caverne des Trésors* (edition), vi–xxv, lists thirty-five. Minov, *Memory and Identity*, 26, claims he has found fifteen others which will be listed in an as-yet unpublished article.

inspired by a major lacuna in a family of East Syrian manuscripts, where a scribe jumped from *Cav. Tr.* 36:9 to 41:11, that is, from the time of Solomon to the time of Zedekiah. Instead of acknowledging this as a scribal error, Ri maintained that this missing text was an addition of West Syrian scribes, and that the shorter text was more primitive.<sup>43</sup> He described the East Syrian manuscripts which do not fit this typology, including British Library Add. 25875, considered the *textus optimus*, as “contaminated” by the West Syrian tradition.<sup>44</sup>

By this standard, most early textual evidence for *Cav. Tr.* is also “contaminated.” Many witnesses to the text of *Cav. Tr.* have readings from both “recensions,” which suggests that the division between the East Syrian and West Syrian manuscripts is arbitrary. Among these are the Georgian version,<sup>45</sup> the *Book of the Rolls*,<sup>46</sup> the *Encomium on Mary Magdalene*,<sup>47</sup> the *Zuqnin Chronicle*,<sup>48</sup> and the *Chronicle of 1234*.<sup>49</sup> The manuscripts of some of these works, such as the eighth-century autograph of the *Zuqnin Chronicle* (Vat. Syr. 162), are considerably older than the oldest Syriac manuscripts (sixteenth century). In light of this evidence, I propose only one major recension of the Syriac *Cav. Tr.* The East Syrian and West Syrian manuscripts are

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43 See especially Ri, “La Caverne des Trésors: Problèmes d’analyse littéraire,” for his view of the problem. See further the criticisms of Leonhard, “Observations,” especially 274–77.

44 Ri, *La Caverne des Trésors* (edition), x. On British Library Add. 25875, see Minov, *Memory and Identity*, 32–36.

45 Mahé, *La Caverne des Trésors: Version géorgienne*, xxiv.

46 Mahé, *La Caverne des Trésors: Version géorgienne*, xxiv. He notes the common points between the Georgian and Arabic versions, one of which is the juxtaposition of readings from the two Syriac “recensions.”

47 Coquin and Godron, “Un encomion copte,” 212: “Nous laissons à des spécialistes le soin de comparer ce texte avec celui de la *Caverne des trésors* dont les deux recensions sont bien différenciées maintenant. On remarquera seulement que si, dans l’ensemble, notre homélie témoigne en faveur de la recension occidentale, du moins les passages ne manquent pas où elle s’en écarte, et semble plus proche de la recension orientale. L’auteur aurait-il eu à sa disposition un texte plus ancien que les manuscrits syriaques, dont nous disposons; se serait-il servi d’un exemplaire plus proche de l’archétype?” (“We leave it to the task of specialists to compare this text with that of the *Cave of Treasures*, of which two recensions are now well distinguished. We will only remark that if, on the whole, our homily favors the Western Recension, there are at least some passages that depart from it and seem closer to the Eastern Recension. Did the author have at his disposition an older text than the Syriac manuscripts we currently possess? Did he use an exemplar closer to the archetype?”)

48 Harrak, *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 18–19. Noah’s sons are instructed to transport the gold, frankincense, and myrrh from the cave of treasures to the Ark. The chronicle is West Syrian, yet this tradition appears only in Ri’s East Syrian recension. (*Cav. Tr.* 17:16–28).

49 Andy Hilkens, *The Anonymous Syriac Chronicle of 1234 and Its Sources* (Leuven: Peeters, 2018), 187–90, gives two examples.

distinguished mainly by their script and occasional confessional glosses (on which see below). Otherwise, the text of the two families is very similar.

Most (but not all) manuscripts of *Cav. Tr.* present Ephrem the Syrian as the author, but *Cav. Tr.* is not the work of the great Syriac father. The *Cave of Treasures* almost immediately contradicts the teachings of the authentic Ephrem. The opening chapter states that the Holy Spirit was the wind from God hovering over the waters (*Cav. Tr.* 1:4; cf. Gen 1:2), but Ephrem categorically denies that the wind is the Holy Spirit in his *Commentary on Genesis* (I.7).

After Moses spoke of the darkness that was spread over the face of the abyss, he then said, *the wind of God was hovering over the face of the waters* (Gen 1:2). Because Moses called it *the wind of God* and said it *was hovering*, some posit that this is the Holy Spirit and, because of what is written here, associate it with the activity of creation. Nevertheless, the faithful do not make this connection, for these things cannot be so related. Rather, by those things that are truly said about it, they associate it with that element, just as, on the basis of the names employed, they cannot posit the Spirit as maker; for it is said that an evil spirit of God consumed Saul.<sup>50</sup>

The *Cave of Treasures*, nevertheless, draws heavily on the work of Ephrem. Its description of Eden and the Holy Mountain where Adam and Eve live after their expulsion is indebted, in particular, to the *Hymns on Paradise*.<sup>51</sup>

The actual author of the work is a West Syrian (Miaphysite) author of the sixth century or later. Clemens Leonhard drew attention to the references to the christological controversies of the sixth century in the work, including passages which evoke the radical anti-Chalcedonian Christology of Julian of Halicarnassus (d. ca. 527), who believed that the body of Jesus was incorruptible on account of its inherent divinity (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 46:17–18).<sup>52</sup> These passages alone denote the work as Miaphysite. Sergey Minov adduced other arguments for the West Syrian provenance of the original work, noting, for example, that East Syrian manuscripts preserve “Miaphysite” passages (such as *Cav. Tr.* 46:17–18), but West Syrian manuscripts do not attest the “Nestorian” glosses found in some East Syrian manuscripts.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Ephrem the Syrian, *Selected Prose Works*, trans. Edward G. Mathews and Joseph P. Amar, (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 78–79.

<sup>51</sup> Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on Paradise: Introduction and Translation*, trans. Sebastian P. Brock (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1990), especially the first two hymns. See also Gary A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain: Eden and Its Early Interpreters in Syriac Christianity,” in *Genesis 1–3 in the History of Exegesis: Intrigue in the Garden*, ed. Gregory Allen Robbins (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988), 187–224.

<sup>52</sup> Leonhard, “Die Beschneidung.” For more information on this heresy, see Yonatan Moss, *Incorruptible Bodies: Christology, Society, and Authority in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016).

<sup>53</sup> Minov, “Date and Provenance,” 151–64.

The assertion that *Cav. Tr.* reflects Jewish (or Jewish-Christian) influence is mainly based on the work's relation to the *Life of Adam and Eve*.<sup>54</sup> For a long time, the Adam books were presumed to be Jewish, but the *Life of Adam and Eve* is only known in Christian transmission, and there are no Jewish references to the Adam books before PRE. The earliest attestations of the *Life of Adam and Eve* appear only in the fourth century,<sup>55</sup> while the earliest manuscript evidence is a Coptic fragment of the sixth or seventh century.<sup>56</sup> While it is possible that this popular composition was never cited by anyone during the first five centuries of its existence, this does not seem likely. The simplest explanation is that the Adam books are a late antique Christian phenomenon that builds upon centuries of Christian speculation on Adam and Eve. Since the *Life of Adam and Eve* was never translated into Syriac, one might venture to call the *Cave of Treasures* the "Syriac Adam Book."

The unity of *Cav. Tr.* is a final point of contention. Beginning with *Cav. Tr.* 44:17, the author repeatedly addresses one Namosaya, who has not been mentioned before.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, all secondary versions of *Cav. Tr.* stop before the Passion narrative, a major section of the Syriac, Arabic, and Georgian versions. It is tempting to see the Namosaya section—corresponding to the life of Christ (*Cav. Tr.* 44–54)—as an addition. Namosaya, however, is part of the original work. Secondary versions, such as the *Book of the Rolls* and the *Encomium on Mary Magdalene*, maintain the Namosaya passages. In fact, they have replaced the name Namosaya

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54 Michael E. Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 90–96, classifies *Cav. Tr.* as a "secondary" Adam book, one that was dependent in some way on the *Life of Adam and Eve*. The work shares several traditions with the *Life of Adam and Eve*, but they are restricted, as one would expect, to the chapters about Adam and Eve (*Cav. Tr.* 2–6). Two major episodes from the *Life of Adam and Eve*, however, are missing from *Cav. Tr.*: 1) the penitence of Adam in the Jordan and 2) the quest of Seth for the oil of life.

55 Stone, *Adam and Eve*, 75–83 provides a list of *testimonia*. The earliest, from the *Apostolic Constitutions* (VI.16.3), only mentions a work written in Adam's name, but this could refer to a gnostic work (like the *Apocalypse of Adam*). The *Gelasian Decree* mentions a "Penitence of Adam" (*Paenitentia Adae*). This is the name of the longer Armenian recension of the *Life of Adam and Eve*. The title might have applied to other versions of the work which feature this episode (including the Latin versions). Origen might already refer to this work in the third century, but this is uncertain. Johannes Tromp, "Origen on the Assumption of Moses," in *Jerusalem, Alexandria, Rome: Studies in Ancient Cultural Interaction in Honour of A. Hilhorst*, ed. Florentino García Martínez and Gerard P. Luttikhuisen (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 323–40, reversed an earlier position that Origen was our earliest attestation of the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve*.

56 Simon J. Gathercole, "The Life of Adam and Eve (Coptic Fragments)," in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, ed. Richard Bauckham, James R. Davila, and Alexander Panayotov (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 22–27.

57 See also the references at *Cav. Tr.* 44:19.49.53; 45:1.13; 47:6; 48:5; 49:20; 51:11; 52:14; 53:11.

with different interlocutors—Clement and Theophilus—in the *exact places* where Namosaya appears in the original text.<sup>58</sup>

The sudden appearance of Namosaya is explicable in light of the overall plan of the work. Namosaya appears at the very moment that the work adopts a specifically polemical tone against the Jews, that is, when the author begins the story of Jesus. Paul de Lagarde mentioned the possibility that the name Namosaya (ناموسا) is related to *nomikos* (νομικός), the title of the “lawyers” in the New Testament (Matt 22:35; Luke 10:25).<sup>59</sup> The word *nomos* (νόμος), of course, is also the Greek designation for the Torah. Lagarde saw *Cav. Tr.* as a conversation between the Church and the Synagogue. Although Namosaya is addressed as “my brother,” he does seem to be representative of some kind of Judaism, perhaps a potential convert receiving instruction in the faith, much like Clement and Theophilus in the secondary versions. Explicit polemic is not necessary for the history of Israel before the Babylonian Exile, which is the common patrimony of Jews and Christians.

Finally, there is a strong thematic unity which supports the integrity of the composition. The typology between Adam and Christ, introduced in the early chapters of the work, only finds its fulfillment in the Passion narrative. In *Cav. Tr.* 48, for instance, the author coordinates the hours of the crucifixion with the hours of Adam’s day in Paradise (*Cav. Tr.* 4:1). Chapter 49:1–10 refers to the different roles Golgotha has played throughout sacred history, including the reburial of Adam, a motif from *Cav. Tr.* 23. The next section, *Cav. Tr.* 49:11–22, refers to Christ’s purple garment, which, as Clemens Leonhard has indicated, was anticipated by story of the discovery of purple dye in the time of Solomon (*Cav. Tr.* 36:1–9).<sup>60</sup> Adam’s role as king, priest, and prophet (*Cav. Tr.* 2:18) anticipates the Jews’ loss of these gifts (*Cav. Tr.* 50:13–18). Most importantly, Christ baptizes Adam with his blood and restores his lost garments of glory (*Cav. Tr.* 51:22; cf. *Cav. Tr.* 3:14). The entire narrative of Adam’s reburial anticipates this moment.<sup>61</sup>

58 Luckritz Marquis, “An Encomium on Mary Magdalene,” 215 (78:12, cf. *Cav. Tr.* 44:19) and 216 (81:4; cf. *Cav. Tr.* 48:5) and Gibson, *Apocrypha Arabica*, \*53 (translation: 55; cf. *Cav. Tr.* 44:49). See also Malan, *The Book of Adam and Eve*, 203 (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 44:49.53), which addresses an anonymous “brother.” Finally, see Paul-Hubert Poirier, “Note sur le nom du destinataire des chapitres 44 à 54 de la Caverne des Trésors,” in *Christianisme d’Egypte: Hommages à René-Georges Coquin*, ed. J. M. Rosenstiehl, (Paris: Peeters, 1995), 115–22, who similarly noted the *Encomium*’s dependence on *Cav. Tr.* with regard to Namosaya.

59 Lagarde, “Die Schatzhöhle,” 75. In Matt 22:35 of the Peshitta, one such lawyer is called *namusa*.

60 Leonhard, “Observations,” 267.

61 Jacob Thekeparampil, “Adam-Christus in den Passionssedre und in der Schatzhöhle,” in *III Symposium Syriacum 1980: Les contacts du monde syriaque avec les autres cultures*, ed. René Lavenant (Rome: Pontificium institutum studiorum orientalium, 1983), 323–32. Like Minov, “Date and Provenance,” he notes that Adam-Christ typology is distinctively West Syrian (as opposed to East Syrian).

To summarize: The Syriac *Cave of Treasures* is a unified composition. The work is often attributed to Ephrem the Syrian, but he is not the author. It was written around the sixth century by a West Syrian Christian. Its reading of the history of Israel is primarily typological: Everything, but especially the life of Adam, anticipates the coming of Christ. The work has a pronounced anti-Jewish tone, and the addressee appears to be a Jew, but the actual content of the work owes little to Jewish literature.

The *Cave of Treasures* was translated into Arabic by the ninth century at the latest. Muslim authors begin referring to *Cav. Tr.* in this century.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, the *Book of the Rolls*, an Arabic adaptation of the *Cave of Treasures*, dates from this century.<sup>63</sup> The Arabic version of *Cav. Tr.* is extant in at least three Garshuni manuscripts: Mingana Syr. 32, ff. 89b–145b (1575)<sup>64</sup> and Mingana Syr. 258, ff. 87b–146a (ca. 1570), from the University of Birmingham,<sup>65</sup> and Borgia Arab. 135, ff. 225a–275a (ca. 1406), from the Vatican Library.<sup>66</sup> The text of Mingana Syr. 258 is a straightforward rendering of the Syriac text and has none of the eccentricities of the secondary Arabic versions or, for that matter, the Georgian version (for which see below). Mingana Syr. 32, however, is interpolated in several places with the notice *صفة*, meaning “description.”<sup>67</sup> These interpolations also appear in Borgia Arab. 135. They appear to come from the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*. This is certainly the case for the story of Jacob. Both manuscripts, following the *Conflict*, omit the episode of “Jacob’s ladder” and its interpretation, skipping directly from Jacob’s departure from home to the birth of his children (Mingana Syr. 32, f. 120a; Borgia Arab. 135, f. 249b). A fourth Garshuni text mentioned by Ri, British Library Or. 4436, ff. 45a–64b, is in fact Books I and II of the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> See the next chapter.

<sup>63</sup> Barbara Roggema, “Biblical Exegesis and Interreligious Polemics in the Arabic *Apocalypse of Peter*—The *Book of the Rolls*,” in *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, ed. David R. Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 131–50 (138–40).

<sup>64</sup> Ri, *Commentaire de la Caverne des Trésors*, 58, n. 13, corrects an error in Mingana’s catalogue, which gives 1675 as the date.

<sup>65</sup> Alphonse Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1933–1936), 1:87 and 514–15.

<sup>66</sup> Eugene Tisserant, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits arabes du Fonds Borgia à la Bibliothèque vaticane* (Rome: Biblioteca Vaticana, 1924), 17.

<sup>67</sup> Ri, *Commentaire de la Caverne des Trésors*, 60, gives a list.

<sup>68</sup> Ri, *Commentaire de la Caverne des Trésors*, 57, n. 11. For this manuscript, see George Margo-liouth, *Descriptive List of Syriac and Karshuni Mss. in the British Museum Acquired since 1873* (London: Longmans & Co., 1899), 43.

The last primary version of *Cav. Tr.* is the Georgian text. It was translated from Arabic, but it does not reflect the text found in extant Arabic manuscripts.<sup>69</sup> The earliest manuscripts of the Georgian version come from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Ciala Kourcikidzé, who edited the critical text, dates the translation to the ninth or tenth century based on the language.<sup>70</sup> This date coheres with the posited Arabic translation before the ninth century. The Georgian version is therefore another potentially valuable witness to the Arabic text of *Cav. Tr.* However, it also contains a few idiosyncrasies which appear to have been introduced by the Georgian translator.

The Georgian version differs in three major ways from the Syriac version. These differences anticipate the changes found in secondary Arabic versions. First, the *Testament of Adam* is inserted into the text right before the death of Adam (*Cav. Tr.* 6). The Georgian version also has many lacunae, the most notable of which is a complete absence of the fall of Satan (*Cav. Tr.* 3:1–7). Finally, the Georgian version substantially abridges the Passion narrative. Each of these differences will be discussed in turn.

As mentioned in the introduction, the *Testament of Adam* is one of the earliest works—if not the earliest—the mention a “cave of treasures.” Despite its brevity, it has a long and complex literary history.<sup>71</sup> The idea of a testament of Adam is a literary fiction which appears in several Syriac works about the Nativity of Jesus.<sup>72</sup> In all cases, the book is a prophecy of the coming of Christ dictated by Adam. The written work called the *Testament of Adam* is a miscellany which, in its most ample form, contains three parts: 1) an *horarium* of the days and nights; 2) the testament proper, about the coming of Christ; and 3) a list of the hierarchy of angels. The work is composite. While the hierarchy of angels is a late addition, the *horarium* is much earlier and circulated independently in Greek, Arabic, and Armenian.<sup>73</sup> The author of *T. Adam* probably joined the *horarium* to the testament. George Syncellus (d. ca.

69 Mahé, *La Caverne des Trésors: Version géorgienne*, xxiii–xxvi.

70 Kourcikidzé, *La Caverne des Trésors: Version géorgienne*, vi.

71 See Robinson, *The Testament of Adam*, 19–43, who gives a history of scholarship. For a brief summary of his own positions, see Stephen E. Robinson, “The Testament of Adam: An Updated *Arbeitsbericht*,” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 5 (1989): 95–100. He believes that it is a Jewish work from the second or third century.

72 Harrak, *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 108–53; Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, \*68–69 (Syriac text) and 41 (English translation); Terian, *Armenian Gospel of the Infancy*, 51–52.

73 Michael E. Stone, *Armenian Apocrypha Relating to the Patriarchs and Prophets* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1982), 39–80; Ri, “La Caverne des Trésors et le Testament d’Adam,” 112. Stone indicates that the *Vorlage* of the Armenian version was Arabic.

810)<sup>74</sup> and al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 AH/923 CE)<sup>75</sup> mention the two parts together. The original language of the composition is Syriac. It was written sometime before the fifth century, the date of the earliest (Coptic) manuscript (Kölner Papyruskodex 3221).

The exact date of the *T. Adam* and its relationship to the *Cave of Treasures* is still a mystery. The *Testament of Adam*, like *Cav. Tr.*, shares traditions with the *Life of Adam and Eve* and, consequently, belongs to the greater cycle of Adam literature.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, both works mention a location called the cave of treasures. Gerrit J. Reinink has shown that the cave of treasures functions differently in the two works.<sup>77</sup> In *T. Adam*, the cave is where the testament is deposited. In *Cav. Tr.*, it is the final resting place of Adam himself. The tradition of *T. Adam* is older. The other Syriac works which refer to a testament of Adam all claim that the Magi kept this document in a cave of treasures along with the three gifts, which Adam had taken out of Paradise. This is the original meaning of the “cave of treasures.” The idea that the cave of treasures was the tomb of Adam in addition to the depository for the three gifts is an innovation of *Cav. Tr.* Therefore, *T. Adam* is an independent document which was initially unrelated to *Cav. Tr.* The *Testament of Adam* is integrated into some (but not all) copies of the *Book of the Rolls*.<sup>78</sup> It is not found in the Garshuni texts of *Cav. Tr.* The Georgian translator might have introduced it into *Cav. Tr.* under the influence of the *Book of the Rolls*.

Another telling difference between the Syriac and the Georgian versions is the latter's complete omission of the fall of Satan (*Cav. Tr.* 3:1–7), where Satan refuses to worship Adam. In the Syriac version, this passage is directly comparable to the fall of Satan in the Qurʾān.

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74 George Syncellus, *The Chronography of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation*, trans. William Adler and Paul Tuffin (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 14–15.

75 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), 324 and 332.

76 Stone, *Literature of Adam and Eve*, 97–98.

77 Reinink, “Das Problem des Ursprungs des Testamentes Adams,” 387–99.

78 Gibson, *Apocrypha Arabica*, 12–15, has *T. Adam*, but the Arabic text of Bezold, *Die Schatzhöhle*, does not.



***Cav. Tr. 3:1–7* (BL Add. 25875, f. 5b)**

[illegible]

**[1]** When the leader of the lowest division saw what greatness had been bestowed upon Adam, he envied him from that day and did not want to bow down to him with the angels. He said to his hosts: **[2]** “Do not bow down with the [other] angels and do not glorify him. It is proper that he bow down to me, for I am a being of fire and spirit. I will not bow down to dust formed from dirt!” **[3]** When the rebel conceived these things and was disobedient with regard to his free will, he separated himself from God. **[4]** He was cast down, and he fell, he and all his division on the sixth day in the second hour. Thus was his fall from heaven. **[5]** They were stripped of their garments of glory. **[6]** Thus he was called Satan (سَاطَن) because he turned aside (اَعْبَسَ), and Demon (دِيمُون) because he was cast out (اُخْرِجَ), and

**Qur'ān 7:10–18 (cf. Q 38:71–85)<sup>79</sup>**

[10] وَلَقَدْ مَكَدْنَاكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكَ فِيهَا مَعْيِشًا قَلِيلًا مَا تَشْكُرُونَ [11] وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكَ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكَ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ [12] قَالَ مَا مَكَّدَكَ إِلَّا تَسْبُدُ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ ۚ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ [13] قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ [14] قَالَ أَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يَبُثُّونَ [15] قَالَ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِينَ [16] قَالَ فِيمَا أُوعِيتَنِي لِأَفْقِدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ [17] ثُمَّ لَأَقْدَنَّ مِنَ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَنِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ ۚ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ [18] قَالَ أَخْرُجْ مِنْهَا مَذْمُومًا مَخْرُوجًا لِمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

**[10]** Indeed, We established you on the earth, and We formed for you a means to live on it for a little while. What thanks do you give for it? **[11]** Indeed, We created you and We fashioned you, and We called upon the angels to prostrate to Adam. They prostrated, except Iblis, who was not among those who prostrated. **[12]** [God] said: "What prevented you from prostrating as I commanded you?" [Iblis] said: "I am better than he. You created me from fire, but you created him from clay." **[13]** [God] said: "Get down from here! It is not your place to be arrogant around here. Get out, you disgraceful creature!" **[14]** [Iblis] said, "Spare me until the Resurrection Day!" **[15]** [God] said, "You are spared." **[16]** [Iblis] said: "Because you allowed me to go astray, I will lie in wait for them on your straight road. **[17]** Then I will approach

79 My translation.

Devil (شيطان) because he lost (فقد) his garments of glory. [7] From then on, they were stripped and naked and frightful in appearance, he and all his hosts.

them from before and behind and on their right and left, and you will not find most of them to be grateful.” [18] [God] said: “Depart from here, disgraceful and rejected wretch! Certainly, anyone who follows you, I will fill up Hell with all of you together!”

This shared tradition evidently upset some Christian writers. Anastasius of Sinai, who lived in the time of the Arab conquests (d. after 700), addressed a question about Satan’s fall with a harsh dismissal of the Qur’anic tradition.

Question. Some people want to say that Satan fell away because of his not paying homage to Adam.

Answer 1. Such silly myths belong to the pagans (Ελλήνων)<sup>80</sup> and the Arabs, because from the Prophets, and especially from the great Ezekiel (Ezek 28:11–19), one can learn that it was because of pride that Satan was cast away from God, before Adam had come into being.

2. When God was bringing into being this visible creation, the devil thought that God would place him to be its emperor. So when he saw that God had made Adam and set *him over the works of His hands and subjected all things under his feet* (Psalm 8:7), then indeed he took up arms against Adam and deceived him.<sup>81</sup>

Similarly, a text attributed to Severus ibn al-Muqaffa’ (d. 987), a Coptic Orthodox bishop, warned of this narrative as it appears in a Christian text, *The Investiture of Abbaton, the Angel of Death*. Chapter nine of the catechetical work *Kitāb al-Īdāḥ* rails against this particular narrative. The criticisms are applicable to other forms of the story.

As for his saying that the angels prostrated to Adam, this is not satisfactory to the believers at all to mention because it is blasphemy upon God and the angels (to say) he made them prostrate to the created but not to the creator. And his saying that the devil transgressed and (his refusal) to prostrate to Adam made him fall down, by this the author of that *maimar* invalidates both the Old and New Testaments, because both testaments agreed that the devil fell down on Sunday, on which he was created, six days before the formation of Adam. The reason for his falling down is his not sharing with the other angels in praising God and he was arrogant and (wished to) imitate God. The prophet Isaiah witnesses saying, “How you are fallen, O

<sup>80</sup> Literally, “Hellenes.” The story of Satan’s fall as recounted in *Cav. Tr.* 3:1–7 is also found in several versions of the *Life of Adam and Eve* (Latin, Armenian, Georgian)—but not the Greek! Walter Ewing Crum, “Texts Attributed to Peter of Alexandria,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 4 (1903): 387–97, discusses a few Coptic texts that attribute this belief to gnostic heretics (a possible meaning of “Hellenes”).

<sup>81</sup> Anastasius of Sinai, *Questions and Answers*, trans. Joseph A. Munitiz, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 195 (Question 80).

Day Star, who was above all the stars!” But he became arrogant and said, “I will ascend to my throne above the clouds and make myself like the Most High” (Isa 14:12–14).

The prophet declared that the reason for his fall is his arrogance but not what is told by the author of this *maimar* due to his inability. If Adam was created before the falling of Satan, as that author stated, then God need not have created Adam. On the contrary, the truth is what all the holy books of God declare, that when Satan fell down from his rank as an archangel—together with all his host to whom he was a leader, due to their obedience to him in stopping God’s praise, just like him—God created Adam in order to create offspring (in place) of the host who fell down with the devil, and to raise them to the rank of archangels from which the devil and his host fell down. For this reason, the devil envied them: for their rank. He deceived them until they became arrogant like him and asked for divinity. As a result, God cast them down like him and put on them the same punishment forever because their sins were the same.<sup>82</sup>

The story of Satan’s fall is already altered in the *Book of the Rolls* to omit the reason for Satan’s refusal. In the *Hexameron* of Pseudo-Epiphanius, which precedes the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*, the tradition has been replaced by an entirely different story about the fall of Satan, conforming to the Christian tradition of Lucifer attempting to place his throne above the stars (cf. Isa 14:12–14). Like these examples, the omission of this episode in the Georgian *Cav. Tr.* is a possible reaction to the Islamic adoption of the Christian myth.

Finally, the Georgian Passion narrative differs in many places from the Syriac text. Verses (e.g., *Cav. Tr.* 48:4–8; *Cav. Tr.* 49:4–8; *Cav. Tr.* 54:1–3) and even entire chapters (e.g., *Cav. Tr.* 52; most of *Cav. Tr.* 51) have vanished. The name Namosaya has been replaced by the generic “my brothers” (e.g., *Cav. Tr.* 44:19; 45:1; 45:13). Some of the passages addressed to him have disappeared (e.g., *Cav. Tr.* 49:20–22; 53:11–19). The missing passages are often typological explanations of the Passion directed to Namosaya. These could be viewed as either additions to the Syriac text or omissions of the Georgian translator. The Georgian version also omits references to the Descent into Hell (*Cav. Tr.* 51:20–23; *Cav. Tr.* 54:1–3) and, hence, the redemption of Adam which is anticipated by the rest of the work. This change, at least, seems like an editorial decision.

Another intentional change occurs at the moment Pilate sentences Jesus to death. In the Syriac version, the Jews rush into the Temple and build the cross out of the poles of the Ark of the Covenant (*Cav. Tr.* 50:20–21). In the Georgian version, the Jews tear down the Temple Veil—which, the narrator explains, had covered the Ark of the Covenant—and clothe Jesus in it. The Syriac tradition is odd, but it follows

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<sup>82</sup> Alin Suciu and Ibrahim Saweros, “The Investiture of Abbaton, the Angel of Death,” in *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Texts, Volume 1*, ed. Tony Burke and Brent Landau (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 526–54 (547–48).

a narrative logic. The Jews build the instrument of Jesus' execution at the moment he is condemned to death. The action is also highly significant from a typological perspective. The death of Jesus is implicitly compared to the sacrifice for the Day of Atonement, as in the New Testament Epistle to the Hebrews. The Georgian version maintains the typology but loses the narrative logic. It is not clear why the pronouncement of death would inspire the Jews to clothe Jesus with the Temple Veil.

The text gives two further indications that the "Temple Veil" tradition is secondary. First, in both the Syriac and Georgian versions, the Jews fight each other over possession of Jesus' clothing, which would be highly irregular if Jesus' clothing is part of the Temple furniture (*Cav. Tr.* 49:11; 50:4). By contrast, the Jews return the wood of the cross to the Temple in the Syriac version (*Cav. Tr.* 53:6). Second, the Georgian version does mention the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark and the Veil are both connected to the Holy of Holies, but the two are not connected to each other: The Veil does not cover the Ark in the Hebrew Bible. The Georgian scribe had no need to mention the Ark unless it was part of the text he was translating.

One suspects that a number of these changes occurred during the process of translating the Arabic text. The presence of *T. Adam*, in particular, suggests the influence of the *Book of the Rolls*. Apart from these major changes, the Georgian version is close to the Syriac text. The retention of the Passion narrative, despite the changes, is particularly significant. The Passion was part of the translator's Arabic *Vorlage*, even though it is missing in the most widespread Arabic version of the work. The Georgian version proves that the Passion narrative was part of the early Arabic translation of the *Cave of Treasures*.

## 8.2 Secondary Versions

The secondary versions of *Cav. Tr.* are distinguished from the primary versions in a several ways. First, they are all parts of longer works. In most cases, the text of *Cav. Tr.* is placed in the mouth of an authoritative figure who recounts the Christian version of sacred history to a privileged disciple. This addressee replaces the character of Namosaya from the Syriac *Cav. Tr.* Second, they end with the genealogy of Mary or the birth of Christ and contain only brief allusions to the Passion and Resurrection. Finally, the secondary versions modify the story of the angels' adoration of Adam to obscure the nature of Satan's disobedience.

The most popular version of *Cav. Tr.* is part of a late Pseudo-Clementine work, attributed to the Apostle Peter but directed to Clement, his disciple and successor.<sup>83</sup> This work has been translated under several titles, such as the *Book of the Rolls*, the *Apocalypse of Peter*, or (in the Ethiopic version) *Qalēmentōs*. The nomenclature is apt to confuse. Although the work belongs to the Pseudo-Clementine literature, and the author is cognizant of the earlier Clementine romances (the *Recognitions* and the *Homilies*), the Arabic book is not in any way a recension or translation of these works.<sup>84</sup> It is also, emphatically, Miaphysite rather than Jewish-Christian.

The Arabic Pseudo-Clement is divided into several discrete sections. The *Book of the Rolls* denotes the extract from *Cav. Tr.*, where Peter instructs Clement about the genealogy of Mary (the “Rolls” of the title). The title *Apocalypse of Peter* properly belongs to the next section, where Jesus reveals to Peter the course of world history, including the advent of Islam.<sup>85</sup> In the Ethiopic *Qalēmentōs*, the *Book of the Rolls* (Book 1) and the *Apocalypse of Peter* (Book 2) are followed by a series of discourses on church ordinances and other ecclesial topics (Books 3–7).<sup>86</sup> The *Qalēmentōs*, incidentally, is also part of the greater canon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. It is classed with the books of the New Testament.<sup>87</sup>

The *Book of the Rolls* was written before the ninth century. Margaret Gibson tentatively dated her manuscript of the work (Sinai 508) to this century based

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83 For general information, see Emmanouela Grypeou, “Kitāb al-Majālī; Jalayān Butrus,” in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History: Volume 1 (600–900)*, ed. David Thomas and Barbara Roggema (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 634–39, and Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1997), 291–94.

84 François Nau, “Clémentins (Apocryphes),” in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, edited by Alfred Vacant, Eugène Mangenot, and Émile Amann, 15 vols. (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1908), 3:201–23 (216–19). See also the early report of August Dillmann, “Bericht über das aethiopische Buch clementinischer Schriften,” *Nachrichten von der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* 17–19 (1858): 185–226, who disavows the connection to the earlier Clementine writings.

85 For a translation of this part of the work, see Mingana, *Woodbrooke Studies III*, 93–450. This *Apocalypse of Peter* should not be confused with the second-century Greek apocalypse of the same name, where Peter has a vision of hell. For this work see James Keith Elliott, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005), 593–612, and Martha Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell: An Apocalyptic Form in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 8–11. There is also a gnostic *Apocalypse of Peter* (NHC VII 3:70–84). For a comparison of the Ethiopic and Arabic texts, see Emmanouela Grypeou, “‘I Have Given You the Keys of Heaven and Earth’: The Arabic *Apocalypse of Peter* and the History of Christian Apocalyptic Literature,” in *The Apocalypse of Peter in Context*, ed. Daniel C. Maier, Jörg Frey, and Thomas J. Kraus (Leuven: Peeters, 2024), 214–32.

86 This part was translated by Bausi, *Qalēmentōs etiopico*.

87 Roger W. Cowley, “The Biblical Canon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Today,” *Ostkirchliche Studien* 23 (1974): 318–23.

on paleography.<sup>88</sup> There is also internal evidence within the Pseudo-Clementine complex which suggests a ninth-century date. The associated *Apocalypse of Peter*, a “historical” apocalypse, refers multiple times to the ‘Abbāsīd revolution of 750 CE. Barbara Roggema has further adduced coded references to ninth-century ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs.<sup>89</sup>

The *Book of the Rolls* differs from the Syriac *Cav. Tr.* in several respects. The first difference is the addition of Peter and Clement to the narrative framework. Clement takes the place of Namosaya as the addressee. Peter also underlines that the purpose of his instruction is the defense of Mary from Jewish attacks on her family history (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 44). Thus, the work ends shortly after the genealogy of Mary and does not include the Passion narrative. The ending is not consistent in the manuscripts. The text published by Gibson stops after the genealogy of Mary in *Cav. Tr.* 44. Bezold’s Arabic text of *Cav. Tr.*, which is from the *Book of the Rolls*, ends with *Cav. Tr.* 48:7, after the Nativity. The Ethiopic *Qalēmentos*, stops during the reign of Joram (*Cav. Tr.* 37:18). This is a scribal error. As in the Arabic version, Peter promises to give the genealogy of Mary, which indicates an ending after *Cav. Tr.* 44.

Some manuscripts of the *Book of the Rolls* insert the *Testament of Adam* into the text of *Cav. Tr.* The *Testament of Adam*, however, was not part of the original.<sup>90</sup> Since *T. Adam* briefly summarizes the life of Christ, its insertion may have been inspired by the omission of the Passion narrative. This hypothesis is confirmed by the different endings of the text of Gibson and Bezold. The text of Gibson, which includes *T. Adam*, ends after the genealogy of Mary (*Cav. Tr.* 44). The text of Bezold does not include *T. Adam* and, consequently, includes the Nativity as well as a notice about the ministry and death of Jesus at the end of the work (*Cav. Tr.* 48:1–7). The other secondary versions of *Cav. Tr.*, which are related to the *Book of the Rolls*, also end at this point.

The *Book of the Rolls* sometimes paraphrases rather than translates the Syriac text. This is especially true of the early sections on the Hexameron and the creation of Adam (much longer) as well as the fall of Satan (much shorter). Differences such as these should be understood as editorial changes rather than reflections of the original Syriac text of *Cav. Tr.* In particular, the absence of the Passion narrative in the *Book of the Rolls* is a conscious omission. The Georgian version shows that the

<sup>88</sup> Gibson, *Apocrypha Arabica*, p. x. See also Roggema, “Biblical Exegesis and Interreligious Polemics,” 135.

<sup>89</sup> Roggema, “Biblical Exegesis and Interreligious Polemics,” 138–40.

<sup>90</sup> Of the four manuscripts of the *Book of the Rolls* in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale (BNF Arab. 76, 77, 78, and 79), only BNF Arab. 76 has the *Testament of Adam*. See Gérard Troupeau, “Notes sur quelques apocryphes conservés dans des manuscrits arabes de Paris,” in *Les Apocryphes syriaques*, ed. Muriel Debié et al. (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 2005), 197–203 (198).

Passion narrative is an integral part of the original text. If the Passion narrative is an addition, it would be difficult to explain why almost every Syriac manuscript has a Passion narrative, but no Syriac manuscript inserts *T. Adam*, which is certainly an addition. The reason for the omission of the Passion is obscure. Perhaps the author thought that it was redundant within the new literary framework.

According to Alexander Toepel, there are forty-six manuscripts of the *Book of the Rolls*.<sup>91</sup> If this figure is accurate, then the *Book of the Rolls* was almost as popular as the Syriac *Cave of Treasures* (around fifty manuscripts). It is certainly the most popular Arabic version of *Cav. Tr.* Extant manuscripts come mainly from Egypt and Syria. Not coincidentally, the tenth-century chronicles of the Egyptian Eutychius of Alexandria (Saʿīd ibn Baṭṭīq, d. 940) and the Syrian Agapius of Manbij (Maḥbūb ibn Qusṭanṭīn, d. 942) use an Arabic version of *Cav. Tr.*—probably the *Book of the Rolls*. Both chroniclers were Melkite bishops, that is, neither East Syrian nor West Syrian. Sidney Griffith has speculated that Muslim historians who use *Cav. Tr.* material, such as al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 284 AH/898 CE), might have instead consulted the *Book of the Rolls*.<sup>92</sup>

From the eleventh century onwards, Muslims began citing the work directly. Ḥamid al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. 412 AH/1021 CE), an Ismāʿīlī scholar who knew Hebrew and Syriac, cited the apocalyptic section as a “proof of prophecy” about the coming of Muḥammad.<sup>93</sup> The fourteenth-century Persian mystic Faḍl Allāh Astarābādī (d. 796AH/1394 CE) referred to both parts of the *Book of the Rolls*, along with the Gospel of John and Revelation, in his principle writing, the *Great Book of Eternity* (*Jāvidān-nāma-yi Kabīr*).<sup>94</sup> A Sunni historian, Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808 AH/1406 CE),

91 Toepel, “The Cave of Treasures,” 533. However, Roggema, “Biblical Exegesis and Interreligious Polemics,” 134, n. 11, lists only 23, not including fragments. See also Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, 5 vols. (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944–1953), 1:283–92, and Eduard Bratke, “Handschriftliche Überlieferung des Petrus Apokalypse,” *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie* 36 (1893): 454–93.

92 Sidney H. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic: The Scriptures of the “People of the Book” in the Language of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 186, n. 41. He cautions: “Whether or not al-Yaʿqūbī could have had access to it remains an open question. If so, he did not simply copy from it, as a comparison of the two texts shows.”

93 J. M. F. Van Reeth and D. De Smet, “Les Citations bibliques dans l’oeuvre du dāʿī ismaélien Ḥamid al-Dīn al-Kirmānī,” in *Law, Christianity and Modernism in Islamic Society*, ed. Urbain Vermeulen, and J. M. F. Van Reeth (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 147–60 (157–60).

94 Orkhan Mir-Kasimov, *Christian Apocalyptic Texts in Islamic Messianic Discourse: The ‘Christian Chapter’ of the Jāvidān-nāma-yi kabīr by Faḍl Allāh Astarābādī (d. 796/1394)* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 27–33 and 185 (the index of citations). More succinctly: Orkhan Mir-Kasimov, “Jesus as Eschatological Saviour in Islam: An Example of the ‘Positive’ Apologetic Interpretation of the Christian Apocalyptic Texts in an Islamic Messianic Milieu,” *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World* 6 (2018): 332–58.

renowned for his *Muqadimmah* (“Prolegomena”) to world history, attributes the compilation of canonical books to Clement of Rome and names “Clement” as part of the New Testament: “The Book of Clement which contains the laws.”<sup>95</sup> While this could designate several books stamped with Clementine authority (such as the *Apostolic Constitutions*, which includes itself as part of the canon in Book VIII.47),<sup>96</sup> it could also refer to the *Book of the Rolls*, which eventually became canonical in Ethiopia and may have been canonical in Coptic Christianity at some point.<sup>97</sup> Latin Christians discovered the work during the Fifth Crusade and found in it promising signs about their impending (but short-lived) conquest of Egypt.<sup>98</sup> The *Book of the Rolls*, therefore, had wide diffusion across both geographical and confessional boundaries.

Like the *Book of the Rolls*, the Coptic text of *Cav. Tr.* is part of a larger work, an *Encomium on Mary Magdalene* attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386).<sup>99</sup> The work belongs to a Coptic cycle that Alin Suciu dubbed “Pseudo-Apostolic Memoirs.”<sup>100</sup> The texts in this genre share a similar literary framework. They claim to be writings of the Apostles about the life of Christ which were deposited in the “library of Jerusalem,” where they were found by one of the Church Fathers and incorporated into their homilies. The *Encomium on Mary Magdalene* is only one of a cycle of homilies on the Passion of Christ attributed to Cyril.<sup>101</sup> This background is a literary fiction. The works are anonymous Coptic productions.

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95 Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqadimmah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, ed. and abridged by N. J. Dawood (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 186. According to Martino Diez in al-Makīn Jirjis ibn al-ʿAmīd, *Universal History: The Vulgate Recension. From Adam to the End of the Achaemenids*, ed. and trans. Martino Diez (Leiden: Brill, 2023), 753, n. 10, Ibn Khaldūn copied the canon list from the chronicle of the Coptic Christian historian Ibn al-ʿAmīd.

96 Edmon L. Gallagher and John D. Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists from Early Christianity: Texts and Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 134–41.

97 For a similar journey of a medieval book into and out of the Coptic canon, see Ronny Vollandt, “Ancient Jewish Historiography in Arabic Garb: *Sefer Josippon* between Southern Italy and Coptic Cairo,” *Zutot* 11 (2014): 70–80.

98 Carlo Conti Rossini, “Il libro dello Pseudo-Clemente et la crociata di Damietta,” *Rivista degli studi orientali* 9 (1921): 32–35.

99 Coquin and Godron, “Un encomion copte sur Marie-Madeleine,” have published an edition with French translation. Luckritz Marquis, “An Encomium on Mary Magdalene,” 197–216, translated the work into English.

100 Alin Suciu, *The Berlin-Strasbourg Apocryphon: A Coptic Apostolic Memoir* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 70–138, defines the term and gives a list of examples.

101 Roelof Van den Broek, *Pseudo-Cyril of Jerusalem: On the Life and Passion of Christ: A Coptic Apocryphon*, (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 105–11.



The *Encomium* has survived in three fragments: Institut français d'archéologie orientale (IFAO), Copt. 27 (11th–12th c.);<sup>102</sup> Pierpont Morgan Library 665 (9th c.);<sup>103</sup> and a fragment belonging to Sylvestre Chauleur.<sup>104</sup> Only the first two fragments preserve material from *Cav. Tr.* The Chauleur fragment is an excerpt on the life of Mary Magdalene. The whole work is classed as a homily, but it more closely resembles hagiography. At one point, Mary Magdalene discusses the Scriptures with her attendant, Theophilus, who desires clarification on the different genealogies in the sacred text. Mary summons the angel Gabriel, who recounts *Cav. Tr.*, beginning with the creation of Adam (*Cav. Tr.* 2). The first manuscript (IFAO Copt. 27 6r–10v) breaks off shortly after the death of Adam in *Cav. Tr.* 6. The second manuscript (Pierpoint-Morgan 665, ff. 1–2) has the beginning of the genealogy of Mary (*Cav. Tr.* 44:21–31), extracts from the Infancy narrative (*Cav. Tr.* 47), and a chronological notice about the ministries of Jesus and John the Baptist (*Cav. Tr.* 48:1–7). This manuscript ends before the Passion narrative. Presumably, the *Encomium* contained the entire text between *Cav. Tr.* 2–48.

The original language of the Coptic text raises some difficulties. René-Georges Coquin and Gérard Godron argued that it was translated from a Greek version.<sup>105</sup> However, there is no other evidence of a Greek translation of *Cav. Tr.* A translation from the Syriac text would be unusual, but it is not unprecedented. Among the Manichaean texts found at the Dakhleh Oasis were bilingual Syriac-Coptic texts.<sup>106</sup> Presumably, other Coptic Manichaean works were translated from Syriac, Mani's mother tongue. The most famous case of Syriac being translated into Coptic is probably the *Odes of Solomon* scattered throughout the “gnostic” tractate *Pistis Sophia*.<sup>107</sup>

The Coptic text of the *Encomium* is closely related to the *Book of the Rolls*. In the first place, the frame narrative, in which an authoritative figure (Peter, Gabriel) teaches a privileged disciple (Clement, Theophilus), is very similar. Second, the two works have a similar abbreviated tradition about the fall of Satan, reworded to avoid the Qur'ānic boast of fire trumping dust.

<sup>102</sup> Luckritz Marquis, “An Encomium on Mary Magdalene,” 198.

<sup>103</sup> Poirier, “Fragments d’une version copte de la *Caverne des Trésors*,” initially published this manuscript of the *Encomium*.

<sup>104</sup> Coquin and Godron, “Un encomion copte sur Marie-Madeleine,” class IFAO Copt 27 as “Codex A” and the Chauleur fragment with Pierpoint-Morgan 665 as “Codex B.”

<sup>105</sup> Coquin and Godron, “Un encomion copte sur Marie-Madeleine,” 173.

<sup>106</sup> Sarah J. Clackson, “Coptic or Greek? Bilingualism in the Papyri,” in *The Multilingual Experience in Egypt, from the Ptolemies to the Abbasids*, ed. Arietta Papaconstantinou (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 73–104 (90).

<sup>107</sup> W. H. Worrell, “The Odes of Solomon and the *Pistis Sophia*,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 13 (1911): 29–46.

**Encomium on Mary Magdalene 16:1–7<sup>108</sup>**

When Satan [. . .] saw the height and the glory that God had granted Adam, he became jealous from that moment, and he did not want to worship him. When the jealousy overtook him, he fled.

**Book of the Rolls<sup>109</sup>**

When the Satan saw the gift that was given to Adam from the Lord, he envied him from that day, and the schismatic from God set his mind in cunning toward him to seduce him by his boldness and his curse; and when he denied the grace of the Lord towards him, he became shameless and warlike.

Third, there are other parallels between the *Book of the Rolls* and the *Encomium* that are missing in the primary versions. For example, the Coptic and Arabic texts name the wives of the patriarchs from Shem to Reu, who are not in the Syriac version (*Cav. Tr.* 44:31).<sup>110</sup> Finally, both the *Encomium* and longer texts of the *Book of the Rolls* (e.g., the Arabic text published by Bezold) end with the same paragraph, a brief notice about the ministry of John the Baptist and the death of Jesus.<sup>111</sup> However, this could be a coincidence, as the Coptic text breaks off mid-sentence, and it is unknown how much further the *Encomium* continued.

From these comparisons, it is not too much to propose that the *Book of the Rolls* is, in fact, a translation of the Coptic version of the *Cave of Treasures* embedded in the *Encomium on Mary Magdalene*.<sup>112</sup> The *Encomium* must already predate the ninth century, which is the date of the earliest manuscript of the *Book of the Rolls*. One can deduce a *terminus post quem* by the presence of certain Islamic traditions in the work. Gabriel mentions that God left the body of Adam for forty days before he blew the breath of life into him. During this period, Satan examined the body.<sup>113</sup> This idea appears in no Christian work prior to the Islamic period. However, it is abundantly attested in Muslim sources.<sup>114</sup> Since this tradition appears only here in

<sup>108</sup> Luckritz Marquis, “An Encomium on Mary Magdalene,” 212.

<sup>109</sup> Gibson, *Apocrypha Arabica*, 7 (her translation, slightly modified).

<sup>110</sup> Luckritz Marquis, “An Encomium on Mary Magdalene,” 216 (80:10–15); Gibson, *Apocrypha Arabica*, \*54 (translation, 56).

<sup>111</sup> Luckritz Marquis, “An Encomium on Mary Magdalene,” 216 (82:1–5); Bezold, *Die Schatzhöhle*, 2:247.

<sup>112</sup> Indeed, it is often presumed that the *Book of the Rolls* has an Egyptian provenance: Emmanouela Grypeou, “The Re-Written Bible in Arabic: The Paradise Story and its Exegesis in the Arabic *Apocalypse of Peter*,” in *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, ed. David R. Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 113–30 (114–15). But see the dissenting opinion of Roggema, “Biblical Exegesis and Interreligious Polemics,” 137.

<sup>113</sup> Luckritz Marquis, “An Encomium on Mary Magdalene,” 201 (14:24–34).

<sup>114</sup> See, for example, the notes to Muḥammad ibn-Aḥmad ibn-Muṭarrif al-Ṭarāfī, *The Stories of the Prophets by Ibn Muṭarrif al-Ṭarāfī*, ed. Roberto Tottoli (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2003), 22–23 (§10).

Christian literature but universally in Muslim literature, one can suppose the influence of Islam (and, hence, a date after the Arab conquests).<sup>115</sup>

The *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* is a final, much looser adaptation of the *Cave of Treasures*. This work exists in both Arabic and Ethiopic.<sup>116</sup> Despite the survival of numerous Arabic manuscripts, the Ethiopic version has received more scholarly attention.<sup>117</sup> The work can be divided into three parts. The first part is a description of the Hexameron attributed to Epiphanius of Salamis (d. 403), with an interlude on the fall of Satan attributed to Gregory of Nazianzus (d. 390).<sup>118</sup> Scholars continue to treat the *Hexameron* of Pseudo-Epiphanius as a separate work, although it appears in every manuscript of the *Conflict*.<sup>119</sup> Apart from the headings attributing these sections to Epiphanius and Gregory of Nazianzus, the text flows

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For a concrete example, see Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Thaʿlabī, *ʿArāʾis al-Majālis fī Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyāʾ or Lives of the Prophets*, trans. William M. Brinner (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 44–45.

**115** The *Encomium* is not the only Pseudo-Apostolic Memoir that knows Muslim traditions. The *Investiture of Abbaton, the Angel of Death*, in which the Angel of Death forcefully takes dust from an unwilling Earth so that God can create Adam, also reflects a commonly found story in Islamic literature. For this text and Muslim parallels see Alin Suciu and Ibrahim Saweros, “The Investiture of Abbaton, the Angel of Death,” in *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Texts, Volume 1*, ed. Tony Burke and Brent Landau (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 526–54.

**116** Battista and Bagatti, *Il Combattimento di Adamo*, 14–20, describe the contents of nine Arabic manuscripts. They missed Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Arab. 4894, a manuscript of 228 folios which contains only this text. Mingana, Syr. 258 has the first half of the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* (ff. 1–87b). It is supplemented by an Arabic (Garshuni) version of the *Cave of Treasures* (ff. 87b–146a). For a description of the manuscript, see Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts*, 1:514–15. British Library Or. 4436 also reproduces the first part of the *Conflict* (f. 45a–78b). For the description of this manuscript, see Margoliouth, *Descriptive List of Syriac and Karshuni Mss. in the British Museum*, 42–43. The Ethiopic manuscripts include British Library Or. 751 (ff. 90a–171b), which also has *Qalēmentōs*, (ff. 2a–89b), and Paris, Coll. Abbadie 125 (ff. 85a–151b). For these manuscripts, see William Wright, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: Longmans & Co., 1877), 211–13 (number 320), and Marius Chaine, *Collection des manuscrits éthiopiens de la collection Antoine d’Abbadie* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1912), 80. I personally consulted BNF Arab. 4894 and Abbadie 125.

**117** Dillmann, *Die christliche Adambuch*, published the first translation of the Ethiopic version. Jacques-Paul Migne, ed., *Dictionnaire des Apocryphes, ou Collection de tous les livres apocryphes relatifs à l’Ancien Testament et au Nouveau Testament*, 2 vols. (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1856–1858), 1:297–392, has a French translation of Dillmann. Trumpp, *Die Kampf Adams*, published the Ethiopic text of British Library Or. 751. Malan, *The Book of Adam and Eve*, translated Trumpp’s text into English. Battista and Bagatti, *Il Combattimento di Adamo*, published a part of the Arabic text of Vatican Arab 129.

**118** For the Ethiopic text and a German translation, see Trumpp, “Das Hexaëmeron des Pseudo-Epiphanius.” The text comes from British Library Or. 751 (ff. 90a–104b).

**119** Graf, *Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur*, 1:201–3, treats them as one work (and a subsidiary of the *Cav. Tr.* literature).

seamlessly.<sup>120</sup> The second part, the *Conflict* proper, describes a series of encounters between the first couple and Satan from the time of their expulsion until their marriage. Antonio Battista and Bellarmino Bagatti published the Arabic text of this section as an independent work.<sup>121</sup> However, the manuscript they used, Vatican Arab 129, contains the complete text and does not isolate this section from the other two parts.<sup>122</sup> The third part, covering the history of the world from the first generations to the death of Christ, corresponds to *Cav. Tr.* 5–48.<sup>123</sup> The entire work follows the outline of the *Cave of Treasures*, but only this last section incorporates the text of *Cav. Tr.* into the work.

The author's primary method is to rewrite *Cav. Tr.* using as many words as possible. The Hexameron, the life of Adam and Eve, and the Antediluvian history are described in minute detail. History following the Flood is recounted in a summary fashion; the life of Christ is shockingly brief. The changes to the story of *Cav. Tr.* are noteworthy but familiar. Most importantly, Pseudo-Gregory of Nazianzus' aside on the fall of Satan completely replaces the story of the adoration of the angels. Pseudo-Gregory explains that Satan fell on the fourth day (rather than the sixth) on account of his pride, drawing on Isa 14 and Ezek 28. Through this device, the author replaces an Islamic tradition with an exclusively Christian account of Satan's fall. The *Testament of Adam* does not appear, but the *Conflict* ends at the same point as the longer text of the *Book of the Rolls*, the short notice on Jesus and John the Baptist which follows the Nativity (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 48:1–7). The *Conflict* blurs the line between a translation of *Cav. Tr.* and a separate work that uses *Cav. Tr.* as a source. It is probably best described as an adaptation of *Cav. Tr.* rather than a translation.

The date of the *Conflict* cannot be pinpointed with precision. The earliest citation of the work is in Yuhannā ibn Abī Zakariyyā ibn Sabbā's liturgical encyclopedia *The Precious Jewel on the Ecclesiastical Sciences (Al-Jawharah al-Nafīṣah fī 'Ulūm al-Kanīṣah)*.<sup>124</sup> He begins with a recital of sacred history. Chapters five and six, on

<sup>120</sup> In Abbadie 125, the *Conflict* is sandwiched between the *Hexameron of Pseudo-Epiphanius* and the *Ancoratus*, a genuine work of Epiphanius of Salamis. This suggests that the scribe thought that the whole of the *Conflict* was the work of Epiphanius and therefore a unity.

<sup>121</sup> Battista and Bagatti, *Il Combattimento di Adamo*. Their work ends with Book I, chapter 73, according to the division of Malan, *The Book of Adam and Eve*. Two manuscripts, Mingana Syr. 258 and British Library Or. 4436, end with Book II, chapter 1.

<sup>122</sup> Graf, *Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur*, 1:202, describes the contents of this manuscript.

<sup>123</sup> The *Conflict* only begins to closely follow the *text* (rather than the *plot*) of *Cav. Tr.* from the story of Noah. This corresponds to Books III and IV of Malan, *The Book of Adam and Eve*.

<sup>124</sup> On his life and work, see Mark N. Swanson, "Ibn Sabbā," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History, Volume 4 (1200–1350)*, ed. David R. Thomas and Alex Mallett (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 918–23.

Adam, are based on the *Conflict*.<sup>125</sup> At the end of this section, in chapter twenty-six, he states that 1300 years have passed since the days of the Apostles, giving a *terminus ante quem* for the *Conflict*.<sup>126</sup> The *terminus post quem* is any time after the redaction of the *Book of the Rolls*, which seems to inform the ending of the *Conflict*. It certainly postdates the translation of *Cav. Tr.* into Arabic. The work was therefore composed sometime between the ninth and the thirteenth centuries. A later date fits the work's position as the culmination of the development of the Adam books.

### 8.3 An Armenian Version?

There is no Armenian translation of *Cav. Tr.*, but there is a work close enough to it in content that it merits a brief discussion here. At the beginning of the twentieth century, F. C. Conybeare published translations of excerpts of a manuscript held in San Lazzaro, Venice, with the title *Homilies on the Original Text of Genesis and on the Gospel Preachings according to Luke*, attributed to Epiphanius of Salamis.<sup>127</sup> The work is not a commentary at all but a narrative in two parts. The first, much shorter part resembles the beginning of the *Cav. Tr.* In the excerpts Conybeare published, God creates Adam from the four elements and from Mount Zion (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 2:7–16) and endows him with the gifts of kingship, priesthood, and prophecy (*Cav. Tr.* 2:18). The next excerpt speaks of Melchizedek, who assists Shem with the reburial of Adam (*Cav. Tr.* 23). The second part—the bulk of the work—is an elaborate Infancy Gospel based, ultimately, on the *Protevangelium of James*. It is revealed in the course of the narrative that the relics of Eve were buried at Bethlehem, while Adam is interred at Golgotha. Melchizedek lives until the time of Christ's birth. Like Simeon in the Gospel (Luke 2:25–35), he can finally expire when he meets the Lord. Igor Dorfmann-Lazarev has brought some attention back to this work after a century of neglect, pointing out that the work is indebted to both *Cav. Tr.* and the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*.<sup>128</sup> It is therefore an original contribution to the *Cave of Treasures* cycle.

<sup>125</sup> Yūḥannā ibn Zakariyyā al-Qibṭī ibn Sabbāʾ, *Pretiosa Margarita de scientiis ecclesiasticis*, ed. Vincentio Mistrih (Cairo: Edizioni del Centro francescano di studi orientali cristiani, 1966), 12–16 (Latin translation: 396–98).

<sup>126</sup> According to Albrecht Gotze, “Die Nachwirkung der Schatzhöhle,” *Zeitschrift für Semitistik und verwandte Gebiete* 2 (1923): 51–94; 3 (1924): 53–71, 153–77 (169–75), the Arabic *Catena* to Genesis (see the next chapter) also cites the *Conflict*, but this work is contemporaneous with Ibn Sabbāʾ.

<sup>127</sup> Conybeare published it in two parts: “The Gospel Commentary of Epiphanius” and “Epiphanius on the Baptism.”

<sup>128</sup> Igor Dorfmann-Lazarev, “Eve, Melchizedek and the Magi in the Cave of the Nativity,” 267–68.

## 8.4 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the Syriac *Cave of Treasures* is a narrative unity, the product of one specific time and place. However, the Arabic *Cav. Tr.* was polymorphic and could be found in at least three distinct versions: 1) one or more straightforward Arabic translations; 2) the *Book of the Rolls*; and 3) the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*. Of these versions, the *Book of the Rolls* was the most influential. It was perhaps translated from the Coptic *Encomium on Mary Magdalene* and served as the basis for the first book of the Ethiopic *Qalēmenṯos*. The *Book of the Rolls* has also probably influenced the Georgian version of *Cav. Tr.* and the *Conflict*. Therefore, all the versions of *Cav. Tr.* are related, in some way, to the *Book of the Rolls*. If the number of manuscripts is an indication, this Arabic version appears to have been nearly as popular as its Syriac counterpart. The next chapter will confirm that Arabic literature was the primary (though not exclusive) means of the diffusion of texts and traditions related to the *Cave of Treasures*.

## 9 The *Cave of Treasures* in Christian and Muslim Tradition

As a source of sacred history, the *Cave of Treasures* enjoyed a popularity in the Islamicate world comparable to that of *Jubilees* in Byzantium. Although there are snatches of *Jubilees* in both Jewish and Muslim works, *Cav. Tr.* has a much better-documented cross-confessional appeal. Not only was it used by Christians across all denominations (East Syrian, West Syrian, Melkite), it provided Muslim historiographers with the basic details of biblical history. This chapter traces the transmission of the work across the centuries as a means of determining its most popular traditions. This will inform the comparison to *Pirqa de-Rabbi Eliezer* in the next chapter.

The previous chapter established that there are in fact two “Cave of Treasures” cycles. The earlier one, arising out of Syriac Nativity Gospels, identifies the cave as the repository for the gifts of the Magi as well as a special prophecy concerning the coming of Christ—the *Testament of Adam*. In the *Cave of Treasures*, the cave is instead the tomb of Adam, part of the work’s elaborate Adam-Christ typology. The older conception was not only found in several Christian works (mentioned in the last chapter), but it penetrated Islamic literature as well. In the Islamic tradition, Daniel replaces the Magi; the two become associated via a shared link with Chaldaea (indeed, Islamic stories about Daniel simply call the Chaldaeans “Magi”).<sup>1</sup>

For example, the savant al-Bīrūnī (d. 440 AH/1048 CE) mentions the cave of treasures in his *Chronology of Ancient Nations*: “People say even that the source of his [a certain philosopher’s] wisdom was that learning which Daniel had derived from the Treasure-Cave, the same one where Adam the father of mankind had deposited his knowledge.”<sup>2</sup> This is a reference to the cave of treasures but not the *Cave of Treasures*. Yet another example appears in the *Thousand and One Nights*-

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1 See, for example, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Tha’labī, *‘Arā’is al-Majālis fi Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā’ or Lives of the Prophets*, trans. William M. Brinner (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 568: “They say that when Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s dream for him, he honored him and his companions and would come to him seeking his counsel until he became the most honored and beloved person to him. For that reason the Magi became envious of him and denounced him and his companions to Nebuchadnezzar.”

2 Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Bīrūnī, *Chronology of Ancient Nations: An English Version of the Arabic Text of the Athār-ul-Bākiya of Albīrūnī*, trans. Eduard Sachau (London: William H. Allen and Co., 1879), 300.

style anthology *Tales of the Marvelous and News of the Strange*.<sup>3</sup> The fourteenth tale, “The Story of Said Son of Hattim al-Bahili and the Marvels He Encountered at Sea with the Monk Simeon,” describes the encounter between a sailor and Simeon, a disciple of Daniel modeled on Simeon from the Gospel of Luke (2:25–35), who has been alive for over five hundred years, waiting to hear news of Muḥammad’s birth. He tells the sailors how Adam recorded his knowledge on clay tablets and deposited them in a secret cave—the cave of treasures—which Daniel then recovered and wrote down.<sup>4</sup> A final example is from the *Malḥamat Dāniyāl* or “Forecasts of Daniel,” a prognostic text that has a tale about the cave of treasures similar to the one in the *Tales of the Marvellous*.<sup>5</sup> Muslim writers, however, were also cognizant of the basic storyline of *Cav. Tr.*, where the cave first serves as the tomb of Adam, who is then reburied after the Flood. It is these works, and not the Daniel tradition, that are the focus of the current chapter.

Albrecht Götze initially examined the long afterlife of the *Cav. Tr.* in a lengthy, three-part article entitled “Die Nachwirkung der Schatzhöhle.”<sup>6</sup> It is something of a template for the present chapter, although the organization is different. First, I have separated the Christian and Muslim reception of *Cav. Tr.* into two different sections instead of mixing them indiscriminately. Second, I have organized the Christian reception according to language: first Syriac works, then Arabic, then Ethiopic. Works in Götze’s list that I discussed in the last chapter (Pseudo-Dionysius, the *Hexameron* of Pseudo-Epiphanius, the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*) are not discussed again here. I have also left aside Michael the Syrian and Bar Hebraeus as not terribly compelling witnesses to *Cav. Tr.*’s traditions. I am aware of many more texts than Götze had at his disposal. However, there are still many items I have not included. For example, I did not look at *tafsīr* (commentaries on the Qur’ān), which could be an interesting avenue for future research.<sup>7</sup>

3 Malcolm C. Lyons, trans., *Tales of the Marvellous and News of the Strange* (London: Penguin Classics, 2015).

4 Lyons, *Tales of the Marvellous*, 317–30.

5 Lorenzo DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 285–93.

6 Albrecht Götze, “Die Nachwirkung der Schatzhöhle,” *Zeitschrift für Semitistik und verwandte Gebiete* 2 (1923): 51–94; 3 (1924): 53–71, 153–77.

7 For an introduction to this literature, see Walid A. Saleh, *The Formation of the Classical Tafsīr Tradition: The Qur’ān Commentary of al-Tha’labī (d. 427/1035)* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).



## 9.1 Christian Tradition

The first known Christian work to use *Cav. Tr.* as a source is also the most famous. The *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* (ca. 691) is one of the most consequential apocryphal apocalypses, rivaling *4Ezra* in terms of its diffusion and influence.<sup>8</sup> It is perhaps most famous for its histrionic account of the Arab conquests, where “Ishmaelites” swarm the Near Eastern territories of the Roman Empire to punish the sinful Christian population. It also incorporates the legends of Gog and Magog and the Last World Emperor, where the final ruler of the Roman Empire beats back the barbarians imprisoned in former times by Alexander the Great. *Pseudo-Methodius* is the first work to use *Cav. Tr.* as a literary source, but its influence is restricted to the early chapters.

*Pseudo-Methodius* is concerned not only with the eschaton but the whole sweep of human history. It begins with Adam and Eve and proceeds through biblical history, with a particular interest in the Gentile nations. Much is said of Nimrod, but Abraham is not even mentioned. In place of the kings of Israel and Judah is the story of Alexander and a convoluted attempt to make him the ancestor of the Roman emperors. Even Jesus’ life is glossed over. The impression one gets is that Rome has replaced Israel as the chosen people.

For the first three chapters, however, *Pseudo-Methodius* is indebted to the Bible or, rather, the *Cave of Treasures*. The apocalypse shares with *Cav. Tr.* the division of human history into seven millennia, the *septimana mundi*.<sup>9</sup> In the first millennium, Adam and Eve leave Paradise as virgins and then produce four children: Cain, Abel, and their sister-wives, Qalima and Lebuda. These names, or variants of them (e.g., Qalmina, Delbora), are inherited from *Cav. Tr.* 5:18–20 and had a long afterlife. As seen in chapter six, the names of the daughters of Adam in *Cav. Tr.* competed with and eventually replaced the names given to the daughters in *Jubilees*.

In the second chapter, the apocalypse describes a physical separation between the sons of Seth, who inhabit a Holy Mountain, and the sons of Cain, who live in the valley below. In the days of Jared, Sethites are eventually enticed to join the Cainites through music and the beauty of their women. This sequence of events is described at greater length in *Cav. Tr.* 11–12. It is a euhemerized version of the Second Temple Watcher myth, where the “Sons of God” are now virtuous men instead of fallen angels.

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<sup>8</sup> For the Syriac text, see Gerrit J. Reinink, ed. and trans., *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, 2 vols. (Leuven: Peeters, 1993). For Greek and Latin translations, see: Benjamin Garstad, ed. and trans., *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius & An Alexandrian World Chronicle* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).

<sup>9</sup> Witold Witakowski, “The Idea of *Septimana Mundi* and the Millenarian Typology of the Creation Week in Syriac Tradition,” in *V (Quintum) Symposium Syriacum 1988* (Rome: Pontificum institutum studiorum orientalium, 1990), 93–109.

The third chapter mentions Noah founding of a new city, “Temnun” (تمنن), after the Flood, in honor of the eight survivors (*Cav. Tr.* 20:8). It also introduces the mysterious character Yoniton, the fourth son of Noah, who first appears in *Cav. Tr.* 27 and teaches Nimrod the occult sciences.<sup>10</sup> In Western Europe, Yoniton (as Jonitus) would replace Enoch, Seth, and Zoroaster as the inventor of astronomy.<sup>11</sup> This episode likely influenced the Latin astronomical treatise *Liber Nemroth*, where, however, Nimrod is the master and Yoniton is the student.<sup>12</sup>

After this point, the *Cave of Treasures* and the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* diverge. The major difference between *Pseudo-Methodius* and the other works discussed in this chapter is that it was translated into Latin and Greek very early on and became the primary conduit by which Christians living in Europe could learn about *Cav. Tr.* The *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, however, never once mentions the cave!

Like *Jubilees*, the *Cave of Treasures* made its strongest impact in the world of historiography. The first extant chronicle to use *Cav. Tr.* is the *Zuqnin Chronicle* or the *Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre* (ca. 775).<sup>13</sup> This anonymous West Syrian work, which survives in a single manuscript, uses the *Chronicon* of Eusebius for its account of Israelite history. Eusebius, however, begins with the time of Abraham. The *Zuqnin Chronicle* fills the gap with the biblical account of creation, followed by a summary of *Cav. Tr.* until the time of the Flood.<sup>14</sup> According to the chronicle, Adam and the other Antediluvian patriarchs lived on a mountain in the land of Shir (Seir or Seiris).<sup>15</sup> All of them are buried in the cave of treasures. The chronicler also mentions the descent of the Sethites and the translation of Adam’s body from the cave to Noah’s Ark. The chronicle does not, however, mention Melchizedek or the

<sup>10</sup> Stephen Gero, “The Legend of the Fourth Son of Noah,” *Harvard Theological Review* 73 (1980): 321–30, and Alexander Toepel, “Yonton Revisited: A Case Study in the Reception of Hellenistic Science within Early Judaism,” *Harvard Theological Review* 99 (2006): 235–45, both try to trace Yoniton back to Jewish sources, yet *Cav. Tr.* remains the earliest source to name this figure.

<sup>11</sup> Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100–1450* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 82–88.

<sup>12</sup> See Isabelle Draelants, “Le *Liber Nemroth de Astronomia*: État de la question et nouveaux indices,” *Revue d’Histoire Des Textes* 13 (2018): 245–329.

<sup>13</sup> The most recent edition (with English translation) is Amir Harrak, ed. and trans., *The Chronicle of Zuqnin, Parts I and II: From the Creation to the Year AD 506/7* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2017). It was preceded by Jean-Baptiste Chabot, ed., *Incerti auctoris chronicon anonymum Pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum* (Leuven: Impimerie orientaliste, 1927). For an introduction to the work, see Witold Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre: A Study in the History of Historiography* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1987).

<sup>14</sup> Harrak, *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 14–22.

<sup>15</sup> On this toponym: Gerrit J. Reinink, “Das Land ‘Seiris’ (Shir) und das Volk der Serer in Jüdischen und Christlichen Traditionen,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 6 (1975): 72–85.

reburial of Adam in Jerusalem. The cave reappears when the chronicle enters the New Testament period in the so-called *Revelation of the Magi*.<sup>16</sup> In this instance, the cave is only the repository of Adam's prophecy about Christ, not his tomb. It comes from a different stream of tradition separate from *Cav. Tr.*

Despite many East Syrian manuscripts of *Cav. Tr.*, the *Book of the Bee* by Solomon of Basra (d. ca. 1222) is the only East Syrian ("Nestorian") work to use *Cav. Tr.* as a major source.<sup>17</sup> The *Book of the Bee*, like *Cav. Tr.*, is a History Bible that covers the period from creation to the time of Christ. It also includes a section on eschatology. The work was composed in Syriac but was also translated into Arabic.<sup>18</sup> The style of the work is remote from the chronicles of West Syrian Christians and Muslims. Rather, the orientation of the *Book of the Bee* is catechetical. True to its name, the *Book of the Bee* draws from several sources, as a bee collects pollen from several flowers. One of the "flowers" is the *Cave of Treasures*: Chapters 13–25 draw primarily on *Cav. Tr.* for its account of sacred history from the creation of Adam (*Cav. Tr.* 2) until the sacrifice of Isaac (*Cav. Tr.* 29).<sup>19</sup>

The cave itself is only mentioned once in the work, in an unusual context. It is part of a chain of transmission of the rod of Moses, directly comparable to a tradition found in PRE 40 (cited above, in chapter seven).

After Jacob, Judah his fourth son took it [the rod]; and this is the rod which Judah gave to Tamar his daughter-in-law, with his signet ring and his napkin, as the hire for what he had done (cf. Gen 38). From him [it came] to Pharez. At that time there were wars everywhere, and an angel took the rod, and laid it in the Cave of Treasures, in the mount of Moab, until Midian was built. There was in Midian a man, upright and righteous before God, whose name was Jethro. When he was feeding his flock on the mountain, he found the cave and took the rod by divine agency.<sup>20</sup>

The *Book of the Bee* does, however, tell the story of Adam's translation to Jerusalem via the Ark, so his burial in the cave of treasures on the Holy Mountain is at least implied, if not directly stated.<sup>21</sup>

Unlike most adaptations of *Cav. Tr.*, the *Book of the Bee* also includes the typologies of the Passion, including the detail that Jesus was crucified on the bars of the

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16 Brent Landau, *Revelation of the Magi: The Lost Tale of the Three Wise Men's Journey to Bethlehem* (New York: HarperOne, 2010).

17 For the Syriac text and English translation, see Solomon of Basra, *The Book of the Bee*, ed. and trans. E. A. Wallis Budge, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886).

18 Budge in Solomon of Basra, *Book of the Bee*, viii–ix.

19 Solomon of Basra, *Book of the Bee*, \*20–42 (translation: 15–43).

20 Solomon of Basra, *Book of the Bee*, 50 (Budge's translation).

21 Solomon of Basra, *Book of the Bee*, \*34–36 (translation: 35).

Ark of the Covenant (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 50:20–21).<sup>22</sup> The work serves as a reminder that *Cav. Tr.* continued to circulate in Syriac, despite its popularity in Arabic, and that East Syrian Christians, like West Syrian and Melkite Christians, also knew the work.

The *Chronicle of 1234*, like the *Zuqnin Chronicle*, is a West Syrian universal history known from a single manuscript. As discussed in chapter six, it contains the most extensive account of *Jubilees* in Syriac literature. The *Cave of Treasures*, however, is the primary source for the chronicler's account of patriarchal history.<sup>23</sup> His adaptation of the material is extensive and includes most of the material found in *Cav. Tr.* 1–29, that is, from creation until the sacrifice of Isaac.<sup>24</sup> He resorts to *Jubilees* and other sources (such as Michael the Syrian) only in places where *Cav. Tr.* is silent, such as the early history of Abraham (*Jub.* 11–12)<sup>25</sup> or the war between Jacob and Esau (*Jub.* 37–38).<sup>26</sup> The chronicle is an additional attestation that *Cav. Tr.* remained popular in its original language despite the many Arabic versions.

Between the *Zuqnin Chronicle* (775) and the *Chronicle of 1234* is a substantial period during which *Cav. Tr.* proliferated in Christian Arabic literature. The first to use the book was Eutychius of Alexandria (Saʿīd ibn Baṭṭīq, d. 940) the Melkite patriarch of Alexandria.<sup>27</sup> The early pages of his *Annales* (*Naẓm al-Jawhar*) is heavily indebted to *Cav. Tr.* References are early and abundant.<sup>28</sup> Eutychius begins his history with the story of Cain, Abel, and their twin sisters. The two brothers marry

<sup>22</sup> Solomon of Basra, *Book of the Bee*, \*106–11 (translation: 94–99).

<sup>23</sup> Andy Hilken, *The Anonymous Syriac Chronicle of 1234 and Its Sources* (Leuven: Peeters, 2018), 187–190.

<sup>24</sup> Jean-Baptiste Chabot, ed., *Anonymi auctoris chronicum ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens 1* (Paris: E Typographe Reipublicae, 1920), 28–55.

<sup>25</sup> Chabot, *Ad annum Christi 1234*, 51–52.

<sup>26</sup> Chabot, *Ad annum Christi 1234*, 56–58.

<sup>27</sup> For a general introduction, see Uriel Simonsohn, “Saʿīd ibn Baṭṭīq,” in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History. Volume 2, 900–1050*, ed. David R. Thomas and Barbara Roggema (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 224–33, and Uriel Simonsohn, “The Biblical Narrative in the *Annales* of Saʿīd ibn Baṭṭīq and the Question of Medieval Byzantine-Orthodox Identity,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 22 (2011): 37–55.

<sup>28</sup> I refer to the edition of Eutychius of Alexandria [Saʿīd ibn Baṭṭīq], *Annales*, 2 vols, ed. Louis Cheikhō (Beirut: E Typographeo catholico, 1906). I have also consulted the much earlier edition (with Latin translation): Eutychius of Alexandria [Saʿīd ibn Baṭṭīq], *Contextia Gemmarum sive Eutychii Patriarchae Alexandrini Annales*, ed. John Selden, trans. Edward Pococke, 2 vols. (Oxford: Humphrey Robinson, 1658). Michael Breydy has edited what he believes to be the autograph, but the manuscript begins with Exodus, after the section that corresponds to *Cav. Tr.*: Eutychius of Alexandria [Saʿīd ibn Baṭṭīq], *Das Annalenwerk des Eutychios von Alexandrien: Ausgewählte Geschichten und Legenden kompiliert von Saʿīd ibn Baṭṭīq um 935 A.D.*, ed. and trans. Michael Breydy, 2 vols. (Leuven: Peeters, 1985).

their sisters, but Cain covets Abel's wife and kills him (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 5:21–32).<sup>29</sup> Adam and the other patriarchs are buried in the cave of treasures.<sup>30</sup> The Sethites take an oath on the blood of Abel to separate from the Cainites (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 7:18–20; 8:13–15; 9:5–7; 10:6–8; 12:11; 13:3–7).<sup>31</sup> The Sethites, attracted by the music of the Cainites, descend in the time of Jared (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 11).<sup>32</sup> In the time of the Flood, Adam's body is transferred from the cave of treasures to Noah's Ark (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 17).<sup>33</sup> Adam is reburied at the center of the earth, with Melchizedek as the guardian of Adam's body (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 23).<sup>34</sup> Further traditions from *Cav. Tr.* appear intermittently for the rest of the history of Israel, but his dependence on the work wanes after the time of Abraham.<sup>35</sup>

Eutychius' use of *Cav. Tr.* is far more extensive than what appears in the *Zuqnin Chronicle* and is comparable to what is found in the much later *Chronicle of 1234*. Unlike those chronicles, Eutychius' *Annales* was copied, expanded, and read by Christians and Muslims alike. For example, the Muslim historian al-Mas'ūdī (d. 345 AH/956 CE) cites Eutychius as one of his sources in his great historical work, the *Meadows of Gold*.<sup>36</sup> Much later, the Muslim controversialist Ibn Taymīyah (d. 728 AH/1328 CE) read—and refuted—the work of Eutychius.<sup>37</sup> Eutychius' chronicle is a high point in the vitality of *Cav. Tr.* within the Christian community. It represents the standardization of *Cav. Tr.* as a historical source.

Agapius of Manbij (Maḥbūb ibn Qusṭantīn, d. 942) was the Melkite bishop of Hierapolis (Manbij) in Syria.<sup>38</sup> Like his contemporary, Eutychius of Alexandria, the first part of his *Historia universalis* makes frequent (but independent) use of *Cav. Tr.*<sup>39</sup> However, his work has generally been overlooked in the study of the transmission

<sup>29</sup> Eutychius of Alexandria, *Annales*, 1: 6–7.

<sup>30</sup> Eutychius of Alexandria, *Annales*, 1:7.

<sup>31</sup> Eutychius of Alexandria, *Annales*, 1:7–8.

<sup>32</sup> Eutychius of Alexandria, *Annales*, 1:9–10.

<sup>33</sup> Eutychius of Alexandria, *Annales*, 1:11–14.

<sup>34</sup> Eutychius of Alexandria, *Annales*, 1:15–16.

<sup>35</sup> Götze, “Die Nachwirkung der Schatzhöhle,” 155–68.

<sup>36</sup> Simonsohn, “Saʿīd ibn Baṭrīq,” 229.

<sup>37</sup> Gérard Troupeau, “Ibn Taymiyya et sa réfutation d'Eutychès,” *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 30 (1978): 209–20. Ibn Taymīyah attacks Eutychius' presentation of Jesus.

<sup>38</sup> See Mark N. Swanson, “Maḥbūb ibn Qusṭantīn al-Manbijī,” in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History, Volume 2 (900–1050)*, ed. David R. Thomas and Alex Mallett (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 241–45.

<sup>39</sup> The relevant portion with a French translation appears in Agapius of Manbij [Maḥbūb ibn-Qūṣṭāntīn], “Kitāb al-Unvan: Histoire universelle, première partie (I),” ed. and trans. Alexandre Vasiliev, *Patrologia Orientalis* 5 (1909): 565–691. At about the same time, Louis Cheikhō issued an edition: Agapius of Manbij [Maḥbūb ibn-Qūṣṭāntīn], *Historia universalis*, ed. Louis Cheikhō (Beirut: E Typographeo catholico, 1912).

of *Cav. Tr.*<sup>40</sup> As other authors, Agapius concentrates mostly on the story of Adam. The first reference is his description of the heavenly Paradise, which is only several cubits above the earth, as in *Cav. Tr.* 3:15.<sup>41</sup> The same page refers to Adam's glorification above all other creatures and his investiture as king (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 2:17). When Adam disobeys, God orders him to descend to the mountains opposite Paradise (*Cav. Tr.* 5:15).<sup>42</sup> Surprisingly, Agapius does not refer to the story of the twin sisters. He does, however, describe the death of Cain at the hands of Lamech, a common story that also appears in *Cav. Tr.* 8:2–10.<sup>43</sup> Music eventually lures the Sethites from the mountains (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 11–12).<sup>44</sup> Agapius refers briefly to the translation of Adam aboard the Ark (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 17–18).<sup>45</sup> Much later, during his description of the sacrifice of Isaac, he returns to the subject of Adam: Abraham brought Isaac to the mountain where Adam was buried, where the Temple Mount will be built, and where Christ will be crucified (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 29:3–8).<sup>46</sup> Melchizedek builds the city of Jerusalem around this mountain (*Cav. Tr.* 30). A final allusion to *Cav. Tr.* occurs in his description of the nativity: The Magi claim that they knew about the birth of the Messiah in advance thanks to writings left by Nimrod (*Cav. Tr.* 45:12).<sup>47</sup>

Agapius' independent use of *Cav. Tr.* is a second attestation of the popularity of the work as a history. Both Eutychius and Agapius, Melkite bishops, confirm the popularity of *Cav. Tr.* among Christians outside of the West Syrian "Miaphysite" community. They also demonstrate this popularity in two distinct regions: Syria and Egypt. The two chronicles were known in both communities. Syrians read and expanded the *Annales* of Eutychius,<sup>48</sup> while the thirteenth-century Egyptian chronicler George ibn al-'Amīd names both Eutychius and Agapius as sources.

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40 Götze, "Die Nachwirkung der Schatzhöhle," completely neglected him despite the publication of two different editions of his work at the beginning of the twentieth century.

41 Agapius of Manbij, "Histoire universelle," 576.

42 Agapius of Manbij, "Histoire universelle," 577.

43 Agapius of Manbij, "Histoire universelle," 578–79.

44 Agapius of Manbij, "Histoire universelle," 580.

45 Agapius of Manbij, "Histoire universelle," 584.

46 Agapius of Manbij, "Histoire universelle," 664–66.

47 Agapius of Manbij [Mahbūb ibn-Qūṣṭānīn], "Kitab al-'Unvan: Histoire universelle, second partie (II)," ed. and trans. Alexandre Vasiliev, *Patrologia Orientalis* 7 (1911): 457–591 (464–66).

48 So Michael Breydy, *Études sur Saïd ibn Baṭṭīq et ses sources* (Leuven: Peeters, 1983), 42–87. According to him, the standard version of Eutychius is a Syrian expansion of the original. He later edited what he believed to be the autograph (unfortunately, missing the section on *Cav. Tr.*): Eutychius of Alexandria [Saïd ibn Baṭṭīq], *Das Annalwerk*.

This George (al-Makīn Jirjis ibn al-ʿAmīd, d. ca. 1280) was an Arabo-Coptic historian who was born in Cairo but also lived in Damascus.<sup>49</sup> His only work is the *Kitāb al-Taʾrīkh* or *Book of History*, although in its latest recension it is also known as *Majmūʿ mubārak*, the *Blessed Collection*. It is a universal history spanning creation to the accession of the Mamluk Sultan Baybars in 1260. The work is divided into two parts, with the appearance of Islam as the turning point. Until very recently, only this second part of the work had been printed.<sup>50</sup> Martino Diez has now made the beginning of the work, from Adam to the Achaemenids, generally available, and with it all the material pertaining to the *Cave of Treasures*.<sup>51</sup> His lengthy introduction also reveals the chronicle's complicated textual history. Ibn al-ʿAmīd wrote two versions in his lifetime: a lengthy "Old Recension" and a condensed, "Vulgate" recension, which is now the most commonly represented among the work's forty manuscripts. It is the version edited by Diez. The Vulgate recension was later interpolated, possibly by Ibn al-ʿAmīd himself, creating what Diez dubs the "Late Vulgate" recension. Among these interpolations are direct citations from *Cav. Tr.*, from the story of Cain and Abel to the building of Jerusalem by Melchizedek. It includes the *Testament of Adam*.<sup>52</sup>

Prior to the Late Vulgate recension, the chronicle of Ibn al-ʿAmīd already had allusions to *Cav. Tr.* via the author's sources, which he graciously names in the opening and includes Eutychius and Agapius.<sup>53</sup> Diez, in a table comparing the various recensions, notes the places where Ibn al-ʿAmīd depends on these earlier Christian Arabic chronicles, frequently overlapping with *Cav. Tr.* material from Adam to Abraham.<sup>54</sup> The Vulgate abridgment did not entirely do away with these traditions, although nothing related to *Cav. Tr.* appears until the death of Adam, when he instructs Seth about his burial (*Cav. Tr.* 6). The Vulgate maintains the story of the Sethites on the Holy Mountain and follows *Cav. Tr.*—as told by Eutychius and Agapius—until the installment of Melchizedek as king of Jerusalem following the

49 For general information, see Samuel Moawad, "Al-Makīn Jirjis ibn al-ʿAmīd (the Elder)," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History, Volume 4 (1200–1350)*, ed. David R. Thomas and Alex Mallett (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 566–71.

50 Thomas van Erpen, *Historia Saracenica qua Res Gestae Muslimorum* (Leiden: Ex Typographia Erpeniana Linguarum Orientalium, 1625).

51 al-Makīn Jirjis ibn al-ʿAmīd, *Universal History: The Vulgate Recension. From Adam to the End of the Achaemenids*, ed. and trans. Martino Diez (Leiden: Brill, 2023).

52 Diez in Ibn al-ʿAmīd, *Universal History*, 49. Diez reproduces some of these interpolated passages in Appendix 2: 979–991.

53 Ibn al-ʿAmīd, *Universal History*, 992–93. He also names Epiphanius, which might be a reference to the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* (preceded by the *Hexameron* of Pseudo-Epiphanius).

54 Diez in Ibn al-ʿAmīd, *Universal History*, 84–87.

sacrifice of Isaac (*Cav. Tr.* 29).<sup>55</sup> This is the point where Ibn al-'Amīd's sources part ways with *Cav. Tr.*, and he follows suit, doubling back to the Tower of Babel and the Table of Nations.

Ibn al-'Amīd's chronicle proved highly influential, achieving supra-confessional status. Among Christians, it was translated into Ethiopic, and it is highly regarded within the Ethiopian Church.<sup>56</sup> Among Muslims, he received the sobriquet "historian of the Christians" and was copied by two Egyptian historians of renown, al-Maqrīzī (d. 845 AH/1441 CE), who primarily wrote about his own country, and Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808 AH/1406 CE), who wrote a massive universal history prefaced by his famous *Muqadimmah*.<sup>57</sup> Unlike Europeans, who were primarily interested in the second part, on Islamic history, Ethiopians and Egyptians showed greater interest in the first part, on biblical history: The first Ethiopic translation was of the pre-Islamic section only, while Ibn Khaldūn needed Ibn al-'Amīd for his second book, on the history of Israel. Thus the work became a major disseminator of *Cav. Tr.* traditions.

One last Arabic work merits discussion before turning to *Cav. Tr.* in the Ethiopic tradition. The Arabic *Catena* to Genesis is a remarkable work which has not yet received its due. Though written in Arabic, it draws overwhelmingly on Syriac sources from the West Syrian tradition. In 1716, Johann Albert Fabricius published excerpts with a Latin translation from Leiden, Orient. 2364 (Scalinger 230), a sixteenth-century manuscript.<sup>58</sup> In 1867, Paul de Lagarde published the *catena* in full from the same manuscript.<sup>59</sup> The *catena* was written in Arabic rather than Syriac, since it draws from Arabic authors such as Eutychius of Alexandria, but it occasionally cites sources in Syriac. The latest authority is Dionysius bar Salibi, who died in 1171. His death provides the *terminus post quem* for the whole work, which probably was not compiled until the thirteenth or even fourteenth century.<sup>60</sup>

55 Ibn al-'Amīd, *Universal History*, 197–245 (paragraphs 32–79 in Martino Diez's numbering).

56 Witold Witakowski, "Ethiopic Universal Chronography," in *Julius Africanus und die Christliche Weltchronistik*, ed. Martin Wallraff (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006), 285–301. See also Diez in Ibn al-'Amīd, *Universal History*, 140–43.

57 Diez in Ibn al-'Amīd, *Universal History*, 143–51.

58 Hippolytus of Rome, *Opera*, ed. Johann Albert Fabricius, 2 vols. (Hamburg: Christiani Liebezeit, 1716), 2:33–44.

59 Paul de Lagarde, ed., *Materialien zur Kritik und Geschichte des Pentateuchs*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1867). The first volume is an Arabic translation of the Pentateuch. The *catena* is in the second volume.

60 Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen Arabischen Literatur*, 5 vols. (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944–1953), 2:284–93.



The most accessible part of the *catena* is the English translation of the excerpts first published by Fabricius in his collected works of Hippolytus of Rome (d. 235). The excerpts, however, are not the work of this Hippolytus. Instead, they are the work of one “Hippolytus, the Syrian expositor of the Targum” (إيفوليطوس مفسر السرياني) (الترجوم).<sup>61</sup> He is quoted in sections dealing with the Flood.<sup>62</sup> Some of his material is drawn from *Cav. Tr.* First, Pseudo-Hippolytus describes the three stories of the Ark in exactly the same terms as found in *Cav. Tr.* 14:5–14. He then mentions that Noah and his sons withdrew the body of Adam and the three gifts from the cave of treasures, which also contains the bodies of the other Antediluvian patriarchs (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 17:5–6). They bid farewell to Paradise and then load the body of Adam onto the Ark (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 17:7–18). In a later passage, Hippolytus mentions that the Ark made the sign of the cross over the waters (*Cav. Tr.* 19:5).<sup>63</sup>

Götze has indicated that the *catena* knows *Cav. Tr.* from many different sources apart from Pseudo-Hippolytus.<sup>64</sup> First, the *catena* cites the original Syriac work under the name of Ephrem the Syrian. The *catena* also cites the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* under the name of Epiphanius, the purported author of this work. As mentioned above, the *catena* refers to the *Annales* of Eutychius under the author’s Arabic name, Sa’id ibn Baṭrīq. When confronted with so many different accounts of the same story, the compiler of the *catena* was not above harmonizing his sources, essentially creating a new account of the same story.<sup>65</sup> The work is a testament to the prominence of *Cav. Tr.* in the West Syrian tradition.

Ethiopian Christians encountered *Cav. Tr.* under several guises. The book was essentially canonized as part of the *Qalēmentōs*, while the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* circulated under the name of Epiphanius. The translation of the chronicle of Ibn al-ʿAmīd brought yet another form of the *Cav. Tr.* story into the fold. Given these circumstances, it is perhaps unsurprising that the Ethiopian Church added much material from *Cav. Tr.* to their translation of the West Syrian (“Jacobite”) *Synaxarium*, called *Maṣḥafa Senkesar*.<sup>66</sup> I present them here in a summary fashion.

61 Lagarde, *Geschichte des Pentateuchs*, 2:75.

62 Lagarde, *Geschichte des Pentateuchs*, 2:71–73.

63 Lagarde, *Geschichte des Pentateuchs*, 2:78.

64 Götze, “Die Nachwirkung der Schatzhöhle,” 169–75.

65 Götze, “Die Nachwirkung der Schatzhöhle,” 172–73.

66 E. A. Wallis Budge, trans., *The Book of the Saints of Ethiopian Church: A Translation of the Ethiopic Synaxarium*, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928). For general information, see Gérard Colin, “Le Synaxaire Éthiopien: État actuel de la question,” *Analecta Bollandiana* 106 (1988): 273–317.

- The entry on Abel (2 Terr), refers to the descent of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden to a lower land (*Cav. Tr.* 5:14–15), the story of the twin sisters (*Cav. Tr.* 5:21–32), and the oath by the blood of Abel (*Cav. Tr.* 7:11).<sup>67</sup>
- The entry on Noah (6 Terr) mentions the veneration of Adam's body (*Cav. Tr.* 7:13–14), the intermarriage of Sethites and Cainites (*Cav. Tr.* 12), and the translation of Adam onto the Ark (*Cav. Tr.* 18:3).<sup>68</sup>
- The entry on Mahalalel (2 Miyazya) states that he was buried in the cave of treasures (*Cav. Tr.* 10:9–10).<sup>69</sup>
- The entry on Adam and Eve (6 Miyazya) closely follows the early chapters of *Cav. Tr.* (2–6) and includes a brief reference to the testament of Adam.<sup>70</sup>
- The entry on Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (28 Nahasê) mentions Adam's burial on Golgotha in the context of the binding of Isaac (*Cav. Tr.* 29).<sup>71</sup>
- The entry on Melchizedek (3 Pâguemên) tells the story of the reburial following the Flood (*Cav. Tr.* 23).<sup>72</sup>

The information in the *Synaxarium* probably derives from one of the above-named intermediaries rather than the original *Cav. Tr.* In the first place, the Syriac version of *Cav. Tr.* was never translated into Ethiopic. Furthermore, certain details in the narratives reveal the influence of the longer works. For instance, Melchizedek is the son of the Cainan, the son of Shelah (as in the *Conflict*) rather than the otherwise unknown Melek and Yozadaq from *Cav. Tr.* 23.<sup>73</sup>

Finally, the *Maṣḥafa Qəddase* or the “Book of Hallowing” is an Ethiopian liturgical book, which has *Cav. Tr.* material in its *andəmta*. The word *andəmta* denotes a commentary on biblical and ecclesiastical books. Every *andəmta* begins with a preliminary historical section called a *tarik*, “history,” which offers the contextual background of the work which is the subject of the commentary. The *tarik* for *Maṣḥafa Qəddase* begins in a familiar manner. Tedros Abraha offers a summary.

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<sup>67</sup> Budge, *Ethiopic Synaxarium*, 2:439–41.

<sup>68</sup> Budge, *Ethiopic Synaxarium*, 2:457–59.

<sup>69</sup> Budge, *Ethiopic Synaxarium*, 3:778.

<sup>70</sup> Budge, *Ethiopic Synaxarium*, 3:787–91.

<sup>71</sup> Budge, *Ethiopic Synaxarium*, 4:1256–58.

<sup>72</sup> Budge, *Ethiopic Synaxarium*, 4:1277–78.

<sup>73</sup> Solomon Caesar Malan, trans., *The Book of Adam and Eve: Also Called the Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1882), 166–67.

The commentary traces back to Adam the habit of praying. While in paradise, before “the fall,” Adam “separated” a place for prayer. When God expelled him from paradise, he was allowed to live in the “holy mountain” and there too Adam “separated” a place for prayer. After his death, his sons kept his bones as an altar (a relic) and offered prayers and sacrifices over it. This was a practice that continued until the time of Noah, who when entering the ark took with himself Adam’s remains. He placed them in the middle of the ark and asked his sons to stay on the right side of the remains and his daughters to stay on the left. The commentator does not resist the temptation to allegorize and points out that Noah’s ship is a type of the church; the places Noah assigned to his male and female children within the ark would be a type of the current church practice of having men standing on the right and women on the left during liturgical services. When the deluge ended, and Noah and his family left the ark, he offered a thanksgiving sacrifice to God who spared his life, again using the remains of Adam as an altar. After that, he called his son Sem and ordered him to put Adam’s bones in the place God would show him. Sem took away Malki Šadeq from his parents, loaded on him the bones of Adam, and under the guidance of angels brought them up to Kranion, the site where one day the cross would be planted. When they got there, the earth opened itself for them. Sem buried Adam’s bones in that place and departed, leaving Malki Šadeq to keep them. Malki Šadeq used to offer sacrifices and prayers to God over Adam’s remains, which he used as an altar.<sup>74</sup>

Every part of this narrative, even the parts that Abraha flags as the work of the commentator (e.g., the allegory of the Ark, cf. *Cav. Tr.* 18:1–6) come from *Cav. Tr.* 5–23. Once the *tarik* reaches the patriarchal period, it abandons *Cav. Tr.*’s narrative in favor of other sources. In analyzing the sources of *Maṣḥafa Qəddase*’s theology, Abraha names the *Hexameron* of Pseudo-Epiphanius and the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* as well as *Cav. Tr.*<sup>75</sup> The use of the *Cav. Tr.* cycle as a historical introduction to liturgical works is reminiscent of Ibn Sabbā’s use of the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* in the *Precious Jewel on the Ecclesiastical Sciences*.<sup>76</sup>

## 9.2 Muslim Tradition

Just as the earliest Christian work to use *Cav. Tr.* is the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, the first possible Muslim use of *Cav. Tr.* is also an apocalypse—the

<sup>74</sup> Tedros Abraha, “The Place of the Angels in the *Māṣḥafā Qəddase* (The Book of Hallowing) and in Its *Andəmta*,” in *Representations of Angelic Beings in Early Jewish and in Christian Traditions*, ed. Amsalu Tefera and Loren T. Stuckenbruck (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021), 151–74 (155–56).

<sup>75</sup> Abraha, “The Book of Hallowing,” 159–60.

<sup>76</sup> Yūḥannā ibn Zakariyyā al-Qibṭī ibn Sabbā’, *Pretiosa Margarita de scientiis ecclesiasticis*, ed. Vincentio Mistrih (Cairo: Edizioni del Centro francescano di studi orientali cristiani, 1966), 12–16 (Latin translation: 396–98).

Qur'ān, the revelation of God to the prophet Muḥammad.<sup>77</sup> The *Cave of Treasures* is especially prominent in comparative studies of the Bible and the Qur'ān.<sup>78</sup> It is commonly cited as a parallel to the narrative of Iblīs' expulsion from heaven following his refusal to venerate the newly-created Adam.<sup>79</sup> The narrative appears seven times in the Qur'ān (2:31–34; 7:10–18; 15:26–48; 17:61–65; 18:50; 20:116; 38:71–85). The account of *Cav. Tr.* is closest to Suras 7 and 38, where the rationale for the devil's refusal is the same as in the Syriac work: Iblīs, a being of fire, will not bow before Adam, a being of earth (*Cav. Tr.* 3:1–7). This reasoning is notably different from the argument given in a parallel tradition found in the numerous versions of the *Life of Adam and Eve* (in Latin, Armenian, and Georgian—but not Greek), where Satan demurs because he was created before Adam. Beyond the parallel stories of the fall, the two works differ considerably. Even this universally recognized parallel is problematic. In the first place, the parallel is only impressive when compared to two of the Qur'ānic accounts, but there are five other Qur'ānic versions of this story, none of which have the key motif.

It is not only the vague similarities between the Qur'ān and *Cav. Tr.* that complicate any argument for dependence. The two works have fundamentally different conceptions of biblical history. The Qur'ān, like *Cav. Tr.*, dedicates much space to the beginning and ending of Christian salvation history—that is, Adam and Jesus. The *Cave of Treasures* bridges the two with a potted history of the kingdom of Judah.

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77 On reading the Qur'ān this way: Stephen J. Shoemaker, "A New Arabic Apocryphon from Late Antiquity: The Qur'ān," in *The Study of Islamic Origins: New Perspectives*, ed. Mette Bjerregaard Mortensen et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 29–42.

78 The following is adapted from my article: Gavin McDowell, "The *Cave of Treasures* and the Qur'ān: A Reappraisal," in *The Qur'ān and Syriac Christianity: Recurring Themes and Motifs*, ed. Ana Davitashvili (Leiden: Brill), forthcoming. I discuss additional (though slight) parallels in the article.

79 Abraham Geiger did not know the *Cave of Treasures* but made some perceptive comments in his *Judaism and Islam: A Prize Essay by Abraham Geiger*, trans. F. M. Young (Madras: M.D.C.S.P.C.K. Press, 1898), 77: "The legend bears unmistakable marks of Christian development." See also: Max Grünbaum, *Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sagenkunde* (Leiden: Brill, 1893), 60–61; Karl Ahrens, "Christliches im Qoran. Eine Nachlese," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 84 (1930): 15–68, 148–90 (176); Samuel M. Zwemer, "The Worship of Adam by Angels (with Reference to Hebrews 1:6)," *The Muslim World* 27 (1937): 115–27; Haim Zeev Hirschberg, *Jüdische und christliche Lehren im vor- und frühislamischen Arabien: Ein Beitrag zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Islams* (Krakow: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1939), 47–53; Tor Andrae, *Les origines de l'islam et le christianisme*, trans. Jules Roche (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1955), 201–202; Heinrich Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, (1931; repr., Hildesheim: Olms Verlag, 1961), 54–58; Gabriel Said Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and its Biblical Subtext* (London: Routledge, 2010), 39–54; Joseph Benzion Witztum, "The Syriac Milieu of the Quran: The Recasting of Biblical Narratives" (PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 2011), 66–110; Gabriel Said Reynolds, *The Qur'an and the Bible: Text and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 37, 39, 69, 251–255, 407, 502.

The Qur'ān emphasizes an entirely different set of events within this intervening period. Of principle note are the *Straflegenden*, the stereotyped stories of Noah, Hud, Saleh, Lot, and Shu'ayb, with Moses and Abraham providing variants on the theme. In these stories, a prophet preaches to his own people, who reject his message. Consequently, they are annihilated from the face of the earth. Noah is a prominent figure in *Cav. Tr.* 14–22, but the contrast with his Qur'ānic counterpart (Q 71:1–28; 7:59–64; 10:71–73; 11:25–49; 23:23–30; 26:105–120) is stark. The Christian Noah leads a quasi-monastic existence on the Holy Mountain, watching over the body of Adam. He never interacts with the children of Cain below. Both works also happen to feature a fourth son of Noah, but to different ends: The Qur'ānic son, who drowns in the Flood, serves as a warning to unbelievers (Q 11:42–43); Yoniton, the fourth son in *Cav. Tr.*, is born after the Flood and serves as a transmitter of Antediluvian culture (*Cav. Tr.* 27).

Although the Qur'ān's use of *Cav. Tr.* is debatable, *Cav. Tr.* soon made itself known in Muslim literature. The earliest sliver of evidence for an Arabic translation of *Cav. Tr.*, like the earliest evidence for Greek *Jubilees*, comes from a papyrus. Nabia Abbott cited an eighth-century Arabic papyrus (Oriental Institute of Chicago, No. 17624) as the first use of *Cav. Tr.* by a Muslim author (the papyrus cites the Qur'ān).<sup>80</sup> The evidence is promising but inconclusive. There are only scraps of a story about Adam and Eve. Abbott does not even have enough text to offer a translation. Without the rest of the text, it is difficult to deliberate on its relationship to *Cav. Tr.* However, the text is suggestive. It refers to a place called Baudh (بؤد), a misspelling of Nawdh or Nod (نود).<sup>81</sup> Nod, the biblical toponym (Gen 4:17), is named several times in *Cav. Tr.* Cain flees to the “forest of Nod” (حكه نود) after the murder of Abel (*Cav. Tr.* 5:31). Nimrod goes to Nod to visit Yoniton (*Cav. Tr.* 27:6). The Magi go to the “mountains of Nod” (جبال نود) to recover the three gifts from the cave of treasures (*Cav. Tr.* 45:12). One can infer from these examples that “Nod” was the name of the region where Adam and Eve lived after their expulsion from Paradise. This was certainly the case in later Islamic tradition.

Once we arrive at named authors—in this case, in the ninth century—a curious phenomenon happens. Several authors of historical works rehearse stories from *Cav. Tr.* without naming the work. They do, however, name each other, creating an *isnād* (chain of transmission) running from Ibn 'Abbās to Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 AH/923 CE), the most influential early Islamic historian (the beginning of the Islamic section of Ibn al-'Amīd's chronicle is taken from al-Ṭabarī). In

<sup>80</sup> Nabia Abbott, ed. and trans. *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri I: Historical Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 38–56.

<sup>81</sup> Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri*, 39 (page 2, l. 10).

other words, the chain of transmission was a conduit by which *Cav. Tr.* traditions reached the broadest possible audience.

The first documented member of this chain is Hishām ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbī (d. 204 AH/819 CE), an Arab historian who lived in Baghdad. He was prolific, although most of his work has been lost. One extant work, the *Book of Idols* (*Kitāb al-Aṣnām*), alludes to *Cav. Tr.* This short text is an account of polytheism in pre-Islamic Arabia. The author's explanation of the origin of idolatry depends on a tradition first found in *Cav. Tr.*

ان آدم عليه السلام لما مات جعله بنو شيث بن آدم في مغرة في الجبل الذي اهبط عليه آدم بارض الهند ويقال الجبل نود  
[ . . . ] وكان بنو شيث ياتون جسد آدم في المغارة فيعظمونه ويترحمون عليه فقال رجل من بنى قابيل بن آدم يا بنى قابيل ان  
لبنى شيث دوارا يدورون حوله ويعظمونه وليس لكم شيء فنحت لهم صنما فكان اول من عملها

Behold, when Adam, peace be upon him, died, the children of Seth b. Adam laid him in a cave on the mountain where he had descended in the land of India, and they called the mountain Nod (نود) [ . . . ] The children of Seth would come to the body of Adam in the cave, and they magnified him and asked for mercy upon him. A man from the children of Cain b. Adam said: "Children of Cain! Behold, the children of Seth have a sacred space that they circumambulate and worship, and you have no such thing." He sculpted an idol for them, and he was the first of those who make them.<sup>82</sup>

The reference to the story of *Cav. Tr.* could not be clearer. The first couple lives on a mountain below the heavenly Paradise (*Cav. Tr.* 5:14–15), and the children of Seth venerate the body of Adam after his death (*Cav. Tr.* 7:12). In *Cav. Tr.*, the cult of Adam is a prefiguration of the Christian religion. Here, it is the very origin of idolatry. The transformation of the tradition represents an "Islamicization" of *Cav. Tr.* material. It is a recurring trend in Muslim adaptations of *Cav. Tr.* There is no doubt that Ibn al-Kalbī knew *Cav. Tr.* from his father, Muḥammad ibn al-Sā'ib al-Kalbī (d. 146 AH/763 CE).<sup>83</sup> Whether he knew *Cav. Tr.* directly is an open question. It is a great misfortune that among Hishām ibn Muḥammad's lost works is a book on Adam and his descendants.<sup>84</sup>

Muḥammad ibn Sa'd (d. 230 AH/845 CE) was a prominent Muslim biographer. He is the author of the eight-volume *Book of the Major Classes* (*Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt*

<sup>82</sup> My translation from Hishām ibn al-Kalbī, *Le Livre des Idoles*, ed. Ahmad Zaki Pasha (Cairo: Maṭba'a Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1995), 50–51. The translation is my own. The whole work has been translated into English: Hishām ibn al-Kalbī, *The Book of Idols: Being a Translation from the Arabic of the Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, trans. Nabih Amin Faris (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952). The passage under discussion is on 43–44.

<sup>83</sup> For father and son, see Tilman Nagel, "Die Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā': Ein Beitrag zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte" (PhD Dissertation, University of Bonn, 1967), 74–78.

<sup>84</sup> Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri*, 48.

*al-Kabīr*), which focuses mainly on the life of the Prophet and his companions but also gives a short account of Muḥammad's ancestors, including the prophets from Adam to Ishmael. His work is not a continuous narrative but a collection of traditions (*ḥadīth*), each with its own *isnād*. A handful of these traditions recounts the story of *Cav. Tr.* from the expulsion from Eden to the reburial of Adam. Ibn al-Kalbī and his father are both members of this chain of transmission. Ibn Sa'd's additional information reveals the extent to which Ibn al-Kalbī and his father knew the *Cave of Treasures*.

The material dealing with *Cav. Tr.* is divided into two parts. The first part is cited under traditions about Adam.<sup>85</sup> Ibn Sa'd reports that Adam spent half a day in Paradise before he descended to Mount Nod (نود, cf. *Cav. Tr.* 5:14–15). A number of gifts descend with him, including frankincense and myrrh (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 5:17), the rod of Moses, and the black stone of the Ka'ba.<sup>86</sup> The narrator then recounts the story of Cain, Abel, and their twin sisters (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 5:21–32).<sup>87</sup> Cain is eventually killed by his descendant Lamech in a hunting accident (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 8:2–10).<sup>88</sup> The section ends with the death of Adam and the separation of the Sethites and the Cainites.<sup>89</sup> The Sethites guard the body of Adam from the Cainites (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 6:22). Eventually, the Sethites intermingle with the Cainites (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 11–12), and they all die in the Flood.

The second part appears in the traditions about Noah.<sup>90</sup> Ibn Sa'd states that Noah placed the body of Adam on the Ark, and the body divided the males from the females (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 18:3–6).<sup>91</sup> During the Flood, the Ark circumambulates the Ka'ba, whereas in *Cav. Tr.* the Ark makes the sign of the cross over the waters (*Cav. Tr.* 19:5).<sup>92</sup> This change marks another example of the Islamicization of *Cav. Tr.* material. When Noah disembarks, he and the other survivors establish the city of Thamanin (ثمانين), commemorating the *eighty* (not eight) survivors (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 20:7–8).<sup>93</sup>

85 Muḥammad ibn Sa'd, *Biographien Muhammeds, seiner Gefährten, und der spätern Träger des Islams bis zum Jahre 230 der Flucht*, ed. Eugen Mittwoch and Eduard Sachau, 9 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1904–1921), 1:12–16.

86 Ibn Sa'd, *Biographien Muhammeds*, 1:12.

87 Ibn Sa'd, *Biographien Muhammeds*, 1:13–14.

88 Ibn Sa'd, *Biographien Muhammeds*, 1:14.

89 Ibn Sa'd, *Biographien Muhammeds*, 1:15–16.

90 Ibn Sa'd, *Biographien Muhammeds*, 1:16–18.

91 Ibn Sa'd, *Biographien Muhammeds*, 1:17.

92 Ibn Sa'd, *Biographien Muhammeds*, 1:17.

93 Ibn Sa'd, *Biographien Muhammeds*, 1:17. The Qur'an does not specify the numbers of people aboard the Ark. Muslims, unlike Christians and Jews, are not canonically restricted to fixing the number of survivors at eight.

A final tradition concerning Noah mentions the birth of Yoniton (يوناظن) and the burial of Adam at Jerusalem (بيت المقدس).<sup>94</sup>

The *isnād* of these traditions is always the same: Ibn Sa'd — Hishām ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbī — his father — Abu Ṣāliḥ — Ibn 'Abbās. Abu Ṣāliḥ is the author of a lost commentary on the Qur'ān.<sup>95</sup> Little is known about him. The purported originator of these traditions, Ibn 'Abbās (d. 68 AH/687 CE), is the father of Qur'ānic exegesis (*tafsīr*) and a specialist in matters concerning the history of Israel. He was considered a bastion of orthodoxy. Consequently, he features prominently in fabricated *isnāds*.<sup>96</sup> The first certain link in the chain is Muḥammad al-Kalbī (d. 146 AH/763 CE), the father of Ibn al-Kalbī. Knowledge of these traditions from *Cav. Tr.* can therefore be tentatively dated to the middle of the eighth century, if not earlier.

Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 AH/923 CE) is the author of two massive works: a *Tafsīr* and a chronicle entitled *History of Prophets and Kings* (*Ta'rikh al-Rusul wa-l-Mulūk*).<sup>97</sup> This latter work, available in English in forty volumes, totaling over ten thousand pages, covers history from creation to the beginning of the tenth century. It contains some material from *Cav. Tr.*, although al-Ṭabarī did not know the work firsthand. He only used what were, in his eyes, authentic Muslim traditions with reliable chains of transmission. In theory, this means his work consists of pure Muslim tradition. In practice, he included Jewish and Christian traditions from Muslims who were less discriminating in their choice of materials.

His traditions from *Cav. Tr.* are identical to those found in Ibn Sa'd and have the same *isnād*. That is, they go back to Ibn 'Abbās via Ibn al-Kalbī and his father. Therefore, his chronicle reports Adam and Eve's descent to the land of Nod,<sup>98</sup> the story of the twin sisters and the death of Cain,<sup>99</sup> the burial of Adam,<sup>100</sup> the descent

<sup>94</sup> Ibn Sa'd, *Biographien Muhammeds*, 1:18.

<sup>95</sup> Abbott, *Arabic Literary Papyri*, 47.

<sup>96</sup> Raif Georges Khoury, *Les légendes prophétiques dans l'Islam: Depuis le Ier jusqu'au IIIe siècle de l'Hégire* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1978), 81, offers the following remark: "L'exemple d'ibn 'Abbās auquel on se reporte sans cesse, et non seulement dans le ḥadīth, suffirait à donner de lui une image multicolore, reproduisant à la fois presque toutes les tendances idéologiques, théologiques, et littéraires dans l'Islam" ("The example of Ibn 'Abbās, about whom we hear unceasing reports, and not only in the ḥadīth, suffices to give him a multicolored image, reproducing at the same time almost all the ideological, theological, and literary tendencies in Islam."). See also Claude Gilliot, "Portrait 'Mythique' d'ibn 'Abbās," *Arabica* 32 (1985): 127–84.

<sup>97</sup> Camilla Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible: From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm*, (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 39–44; 120–22.

<sup>98</sup> 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), 303.

<sup>99</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *The History*, 314.

<sup>100</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *The History*, 334.



of the Sethites,<sup>101</sup> and the translation of Adam aboard the Ark.<sup>102</sup> Al-Ṭabarī is a further witness to the progressive Islamicization of *Cav. Tr.* materials: According to him, some believe that Adam was buried in a cave of treasures on Mount Abu Qubays near Mecca rather than in Jerusalem.<sup>103</sup> Many of these traditions already appear in his *Tafsīr*, which is even longer than his chronicle.<sup>104</sup> Whether through his *Tafsīr* or through his *Ta'rikh*, Ṭabarī's influence was unparalleled compared to any of the other authors discussed in this section. His collection of *Cav. Tr.* traditions would become standard in later works.

Ṭabarī traced all of his *Cav. Tr.* traditions back to Ibn 'Abbās, whose name was synonymous with Sunni orthodoxy. Two other tradents from the first century of Islam were similarly renowned for their scriptural prowess, although they were also considered suspect. These two are Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. ca. 112 AH/730 CE), a prolific Yemenite writer of Persian descent and the earliest known author of a *Stories of the Prophets*,<sup>105</sup> and Ka'b al-Aḥbār (d. 35 AH/656 CE), a semi-legendary Jewish convert (also Yemeni) to Islam.<sup>106</sup> Both were purveyors of *Isrā'īliyyāt*, the Islamic equivalent of “apocrypha,” designating suspicious stories originating from Jews and Christians. This concept, however, only gradually took hold. The term was not originally negative, and its negative connotation did not fully form until the fourteenth century. It is usually attributed to the radical Hanbali jurist Ibn Taymīyah (d. 728 AH/1328 CE) and his student Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 AH/1373 CE), who wrote his own “purified” *Stories of the Prophets* as part of his chronicle *The Beginning and the End (Al-Bidāya wa-l-Nihāya)*. The negative connotation perdured, and both Ka'b and Wahb were among the victims.<sup>107</sup>

Nothing of Ka'b and very little of Wahb survives, except in the writings of others. Wahb, for instance, is found in the work of 'Abd Allāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutayba (d.

<sup>101</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *The History*, 338–40.

<sup>102</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *The History*, 362.

<sup>103</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *The History*, 333.

<sup>104</sup> Only one volume was ever published in English: Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *The Commentary on the Qur'ān*, trans. John Cooper (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). Muḥammad ibn-Aḥmad ibn-Muṭarrif al-Ṭarafī, *The Stories of the Prophets*, ed. Roberto Tottoli (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2003), briefly discussed below, is principally derived from the *Tafsīr* of Ṭabarī.

<sup>105</sup> Raif Georges Khoury, *Wahb B. Munabbih*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972).

<sup>106</sup> Israel Wolfensohn, *Ka'b al-Aḥbār und seine Stellung im Ḥadīth und in der islamischen Legendenliteratur* (Gelnhausen: F. W. Kalbfleisch, 1933). More recently: John C. Reeves, “Jewish Apocalyptic Lore in Early Islam: Reconsidering Ka'b al-Aḥbār,” in *Revealed Wisdom: Studies in Apocalyptic in Honour of Christopher Rowland*, ed. John Ashton (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 200–16.

<sup>107</sup> Jane Dammen McAuliffe, “Assessing the *Isrā'īliyyāt*: An Exegetical Conundrum,” in *Story-Telling in the Framework of Non-Fictional Arabic Literature*, ed. Stefan Leder (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 345–69.

276 AH/889 CE), a Muslim polymath of Persian descent who lived and taught in Baghdad. His *Book of Noteworthy Information* (*Kitāb al-Ma'ārif*) is a handbook of historical knowledge. The work begins with the lives of the prophets and is notable for its accurate citation of the book of Genesis.<sup>108</sup> Some of the non-biblical sections come from the *Cave of Treasures*. He mentions, for instance, the descent of Adam from Paradise to an eastern mountain, the story of the twin sisters, and the translation of Adam's body during the Flood.<sup>109</sup> His knowledge of the Bible—uncommon among early Muslim writers—does not prevent him from confusing the Jewish and Christian Scriptures with apocryphal traditions. For instance, he claims that he found the story of the translation of Adam's body in the Torah (emphasis mine).

وفى التوراة إنَّ الله عز وجل أوحى إليه أن أصنع الفلك وليكن طولها ثلاثمائة ذراع وعرضها خمسين ذراعا وارتفاعها فى السماء ثلاثين ذراعا وليكن بابها فى عرضها وادخل الفلك أنت وامراتك وبنوك ونساء بنيك ومن كل شئ من اللحم اثنين اثنين ذكورا وإناثا فإنى أمطر على الأرض أربعين يوما أربعين ليلة أتلغ كل شئ خلقه على الأرض وأن تعمل تابوتا تجعل فيه جسد آدم وتصنع التابوت من خشب الشمشار وتجعل معك زاد سنة ففعل نوح

**According to the Torah:** The mighty and glorious God revealed to him [Noah], “Make the Ark. Its length shall be three hundred cubits, and its width fifty cubits, and its height until heaven thirty cubits. Its door shall be part of the width. Enter the Ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons’ wives, and a male and female pair from all flesh. For I am sending down rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy everything I have created upon the earth. **Therefore, you will make a box in which you shall place the body of Adam, and you shall make the box from *shimshar* wood,** and you shall take with you a year’s supply of food.” And Noah did so.<sup>110</sup>

Ordinarily, though, Ibn Qutayba ascribes *Cave of Treasures* material to Wahb ibn Munabbih. Even though Wahb was a historical person, Michael Pregill suspects that Ibn Qutayba’s Wahb is a construct, akin to the portrait of Ibn ‘Abbās as a standard-bearer of orthodoxy. If Ibn ‘Abbās represents orthodoxy, then Wahb might stand for the apocryphal tradition.

After citing more apocryphal traditions, Ibn Qutayba goes on to relate another in the name of Wahb that strengthens the connection to the *Cave of Treasures* since it is about the legendary Cave itself. It describes how Adam’s remains were placed in the *ghār al-kanz* (i.e. the *maghārat al-kunūz*, the eponymous *me’arāth gazzē* of the Syriac apocryphon). Noah then took them away during the Flood, replacing them when the waters receded. Ibn Qutayba concludes

<sup>108</sup> Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible*, 30–36, 112–17.

<sup>109</sup> ‘Abd Allāh b. Muslim ibn Qutayba, *Kitāb al-Ma’ārif*, ed. Tharwat ‘Ukāsha (Cairo: Dār al-Ma’ārif, 1960), 9–19.

<sup>110</sup> Ibn Qutayba, *Kitāb al-Ma’ārif*, 22. The text is the same in the older edition: ‘Abd Allāh b. Muslim ibn Qutayba, *Handbuch der Geschichte*, ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1850), 11–12.

by saying that he read in the Torah that Adam lived to be 930 years old, while Wahb, on the other hand, claimed that he lived to be 1,000.

Again, Ibn Qutayba does not include anything about the story of the Fall here. This is perhaps unsurprising, because the treatment of the story of Adam in the *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* is only three pages long, whereas al-Ṭabarī has numerous traditions devoted to him. This contrast is due primarily to the nature of their respective works. But one is struck by the fact that there is virtually no description of the Fall in the *Cave of Treasures* either. This might suggest that Ibn Qutayba is mainly interested in rectifying Wahb's account of the story of Adam by citing the biblical account directly, but nevertheless allows Wahb's account (that is, the account of the *Cave of Treasures*) to dictate the basic scope of the narrative.<sup>111</sup>

Oddly enough, despite his reputation as a purveyor of "Israelite" traditions, Wahb is only connected to the *Cav. Tr.* via Ibn Qutayba's citations. None of the other Muslim tradents discussed above mention Wahb in this context.

As for Ka'b al-Aḥbār, he is allegedly responsible for the *Cav. Tr.* material in *Crowns from the Accounts of al-Yemen and the Genealogies of Ḥimyar* (*Kitāb al-Iklīl min Akhbār al-Yaman wa-Ansāb Ḥimyar*), a descriptive geography of Yemen by al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn Ya'qūb al-Hamdānī (d. 333 AH/945 CE). The citations of Ka'b involve, as one might expect for *Cav. Tr.* material, the stories of Adam and Noah.<sup>112</sup> The brief passage covers a lot of familiar ground and only some unexpected material. Ka'b recounts how Adam, after his disobedience, descended from Paradise to a mountain in India. Adam makes a pilgrimage to Mecca, after which the drama with the twin sisters plays out. Then follows the succession of generations until the time of Jared, when the Cainites invent music and lure the Sethites to perdition. Ka'b names Noah's wife (Haykal bt. Namos) and claims that Noah only married her after an extended period of celibacy (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 14:2–3). The structure of the Ark, with animals at the bottom, birds in the middle, and humans at the top, is the same as in *Cav. Tr.* 14:9. The Ark, guided by angels, encircles the Ka'ba instead of making the sign of the cross (*Cav. Tr.* 19:5). All of these traditions have appeared elsewhere, although some are more common than others. One common tradition, however, has disappeared. There is no reference to Adam's body anywhere. Whether this material can be truly be attributed to Ka'b al-Aḥbār is doubtful—but it is undoubtedly yet another manifestation of *Cav. Tr.* in an Islamic context.

Whereas figures like Ibn Qutayba and al-Ṭabarī were bastions of Sunni orthodoxy, the last two writers both had Shī'ī sympathies. This had no effect whatsoever on their approach to biblical history. Ahmad ibn Ishāq ibn Wāḍih al-Ya'qūbī (d. 284

<sup>111</sup> Michael Pregill, "Isrā'īliyyāt, Myth, and Pseudepigraphy: Wahb. B. Munabbih and the Early Islamic Versions of the Fall of Adam and Eve," (2008): 215–84 (245).

<sup>112</sup> Al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn Ya'qūb al-Hamdānī, *Al-Iklīl: Erstes Buch*, ed. Oscar Löffgren (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1954), 23–29.

AH/898 CE) was a geographer and historian. He lived in Armenia and Khorasan, but he traveled widely and died in Egypt.<sup>113</sup> His history of Israel, the first part of his large chronicle (*Ta'rikh*), has two notable features. First, like Ibn Qutayba, he accurately quotes the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, one of the few Muslim authors to do so.<sup>114</sup> Second, his chronicle constitutes the most extensive use of *Cav. Tr.* in an extant Muslim source. His traditions do not come from Muslim transmitters but directly from the “People of the Book” or even the “Book” itself—in this case, probably the *Book of the Rolls*.<sup>115</sup>

Like other authors, al-Ya'qūbī relies on *Cav. Tr.* for Antediluvian history in particular. His knowledge of *Cav. Tr.* is far more precise and detailed than any other Muslim author before or after his time. For instance, he names Lebuda, rather than Qalima, as the twin sister of Cain, against Islamic tradition, which tends to reverse the names (*Cav. Tr.* 5:19).<sup>116</sup> He notes that the name of Noah's wife is Haykal (*Cav. Tr.* 14:3).<sup>117</sup> He even names Melchizedek, a figure who does not appear in the Qur'ān and has no role in mainstream Muslim tradition.<sup>118</sup> As in *Cav. Tr.* 23, Melchizedek guards the body of Adam at the center of the earth. Al-Ya'qūbī mentions that there is some controversy about whether Adam was buried in Jerusalem or Mecca, another example of the gradual Islamicization of *Cav. Tr.*<sup>119</sup> Consequently, al-Ya'qūbī does not mention the *Testament of Adam* or the prophecies of Yoniton, both of which anticipate the coming of Christ. He returns to *Cav. Tr.* towards the end of his history of the kings of Judah, namely the hiding and recovery of the Scriptures before and after the Babylonian Exile (*Cav. Tr.* 42–43).<sup>120</sup>

<sup>113</sup> For general information, see Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible*, 36–39 and 117–120.

<sup>114</sup> In addition to Adang, see Sidney H. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic: The Scriptures of the “People of the Book” in the Language of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 182–98.

<sup>115</sup> Marcel Poorthuis discusses this in two separate articles: Marcel Poorthuis, “From Noah to Nuḥ: The Making of a Prophet,” in *Prophecy and Prophets in Stories Papers Read at the Fifth Meeting of the Edinburgh Prophecy Network, Utrecht, October 2013*, ed. Bob Becking and Hans M. Barstad (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 214–29, and Marcel Poorthuis, “About Naked Women and Adam's Body: The Syriac-Christian *Cave of Treasures* as a Source of Islamic Storytelling,” in *Sanctifying Texts, Transforming Rituals: Encounters in Liturgical Studies: Essays in Honour of Gerard A.M. Rouwhorst*, ed. Paul van Geest, Marcel Poorthuis, and Els Rose (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 81–102.

<sup>116</sup> Ahmad ibn Ishāq ibn Wādih al-Ya'qūbī, *The Works of Ibn Wādih al-Ya'qūbī: An English Translation*, ed. Matthew S. Gordon et al., 3 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 2:262–63.

<sup>117</sup> al-Ya'qūbī, *The Works*, 2:269.

<sup>118</sup> al-Ya'qūbī, *The Works*, 2:272. Melchizedek does, however, play a role in esoteric tradition: Georges Vajda, “Melchisédec dans la mythologie ismaélienne,” *Journal Asiatique* 234 (1943): 173–83.

<sup>119</sup> al-Ya'qūbī, *The Works*, 2:283–84.

<sup>120</sup> al-Ya'qūbī, *The Works*, 2:328.

Al-Ya'qūbī does not distinguish between canonical scriptures and apocryphal narratives. The book of Genesis is just one source among many. His choice of *Cav. Tr.* as a historical source is eminently logical. The *Cave of Treasures* contains more information on the primordial history than Genesis. He uses Genesis and other biblical books to fill in the information that only appears briefly in *Cav. Tr.* Unfortunately, al-Ya'qūbī has no successors in the realm of Islamic historiography. Future authors would avoid both *Cav. Tr.* and the Bible as inherently unreliable. His work remains an impressive example of direct contact with the primary sources.

ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Masʿūdī (d. 345 AH/956 CE), like al-Ya'qūbī, was a Muslim historian and geographer. He was born in Baghdad but—again, like al-Ya'qūbī—traveled extensively. Finally, like al-Ya'qūbī, he had Shīʿī sympathies.<sup>121</sup> The longest of his extant works is a historical and geographical treatise called the *Meadows of Gold* (*Murūj al-Dhahab*).<sup>122</sup> The major part of this work is dedicated to a description of different civilizations and a history of the world from the time of Muḥammad onwards. The first few chapters after the preface and the table of contents are an account of the history of Israel from creation until Jesus.

Many of the traditions in this early section come from the *Cave of Treasures*. The collection is similar to material found in other Muslim authors. This is hardly surprising, since in his preface he names several familiar names as sources, including Wahb b. Munabbih, Ibn al-Kalbī, Ibn Qutayba, al-Ya'qūbī, and al-Ṭabarī.<sup>123</sup> Although he does not name them in his preface, in his last work, the *Book of Warning and Revision* (*Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa'l-Ishrāf*), a digest of and supplement to his earlier writing, he acknowledges the chronicles of Eutychius and Agapius (under their Arabic names) and even claims to have met Eutychius in person.<sup>124</sup> He was therefore well-equipped with knowledge of *Cav. Tr.* without even needing to read the work.

Given this pedigree, the rehearsal of traditions should by now be over-familiar. Al-Masʿūdī's account of the fall of Iblīs follows the story of Suras 7 and 38, that is, the story that is parallel to *Cav. Tr.* 3:1–7.<sup>125</sup> He refers to the descent to Nod and

121 Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible*, 44–48 and 122–26.

122 ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī al-Masʿūdī, *Les Prairies d'Or*, ed. and trans. Charles Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille, 9 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1861–1877). The relevant part of the work has been translated into English: ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Masʿūdī, *El-Masʿūdī's Historical Encyclopaedia Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems*, trans. Aloys Sprenger (London: Oriental Translation Fund, 1841).

123 al-Masʿūdī, *Les Prairies d'Or*, 1:10, 15, and 18.

124 ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Masʿūdī, *Le Livre de l'Avertissement et de la Revision*, trans. Bernard Carra de Vaux (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1896), 212.

125 al-Masʿūdī, *Les Prairies d'Or*, 1:53–54.

the twin sisters of Cain and Abel (*Cav. Tr.* 5:17–32).<sup>126</sup> He mentions the transfer of Adam's body aboard the Ark and even the city of Temnun founded by Noah (*Cav. Tr.* 20:8).<sup>127</sup> All these traditions appear abundantly in earlier literature. In addition to these common motifs, al-Mas'ūdī includes material which seems to come specifically from al-Ya'qūbī. For example, "Lamech," son of Shem, son of Noah, still lives and watches over the grave of Adam at the center of the world.<sup>128</sup> "Lamech," of course, is Melchizedek. The misidentification comes from al-Ya'qūbī, who stated that Melchizedek was the son of Lamech. Al-Ya'qūbī has confused "Lamech" with "Melek," Melchizedek's father in *Cav. Tr.* 23.

The work of al-Mas'ūdī exhibits the continuing popularity of *Cav. Tr.* material as a historical source, but, compared to al-Ya'qūbī, it shows stagnation. Mas'ūdī, like Ṭabarī, only knew of the *Cave of Treasures* from secondhand sources. His work represents the culmination of Islamic knowledge of the *Cave of Treasures*. With few exceptions, later Muslim sources generally do not know more about this work than what is represented in the tenth century sources of al-Ṭabarī and al-Mas'ūdī.

Another work, falsely attributed to al-Mas'ūdī, is indicative of the path that *Cave of Treasures* material would take in later Islamic literature. This oddity, called the *Digest of Marvels* (*Mukhtasar al-'Adjā'ib*), is sometimes misidentified in manuscripts as al-Mas'ūdī's lost *Akhbār al-Zamān*, even though it does not at all resemble his style. It falls somewhere between historical writing and popular tales made famous by anthologies such as the *Thousand and One Nights*. It begins with an account of creation and the generations from Adam to Noah before focusing solely on the early history of Egypt until the time of Moses. Large portions of the text were taken over by the Egyptian historian al-Maqrīzī (d. 845 AH/1442 CE) in his description of his homeland.<sup>129</sup> Al-Maqrīzī attributed these passages to the enigmatic Ibrāhīm ibn Wasīf Shāh (fourth century AH/tenth century CE), who is apparently the true author of the text.<sup>130</sup>

The majority of the *Cav. Tr.* material falls into chapter five, "The History of Adam and his Children."<sup>131</sup> The beginning of the chapter recounts Adam's expulsion from the Garden to a mountain in Serendib, the equivalent of the Holy Mountain in Islamic sources. Gabriel instructs him in religious rituals, including the pil-

126 al-Mas'ūdī, *Les Prairies d'Or*, 1:60–64.

127 al-Mas'ūdī, *Les Prairies d'Or*, 1:74–75.

128 al-Mas'ūdī, *Les Prairies d'Or*, 1:80.

129 Bernard Carra de Vaux, trans., *L'Abrégé des Merveilles* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1898), xxvii–xxviii.

130 Gregor Schoeler, "Ibn Wasīf Shāh," in *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. Graeme Dunphy, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1:841–42.

131 Carra de Vaux, *L'Abrégé des Merveilles*, 75–99.

grimage to Mecca. Its adherence to *Cav. Tr.* becomes apparent with the birth of Cain and Abel and their respective twin sisters, Iklima and Lebuda. Abel is promised to Cain's sister Lebuda, which Cain contests. The sacrifice is intended to resolve this dispute, but when God rules in favor of Abel, Cain kills him. When Adam dies, he is buried in the cave of treasures in Abu Qubays. Seth succeeds Adam, and the children of Seth and Cain separate. At the time of the Flood, angels bring Adam's coffin aboard the Ark. After the Flood, Noah and the other survivors build a "City of Eighty." Adam is returned to the cave of treasures. Many other incidents occur in this chapter, notably battles between the Sethites and the Cainites; this is the only kind of intermingling that occurs between the two groups in Pseudo-Mas'ūdī's account. The major *Cav. Tr.* traditions are scattered throughout and anticipate their passage from historical works into the *Stories of the Prophets*.

In chapter two, I briefly discussed the *Stories of the Prophets* (*Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā'*) in conjunction with the question of the genre of *Pirqa de-Rabbi Eliezer*.<sup>132</sup> The *Stories of the Prophets* recount the lives of Muḥammad's predecessors and are replete with biblical and extrabiblical material. Some of this material, naturally, comes from *Cav. Tr.* Due to an accident of history, the earliest surviving example of the *Stories of the Prophets*, the *Mubtada' al-Dunyā wa-Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā'* of Ishāq ibn Bishr (d. 206 AH/821 CE), is roughly contemporaneous with PRE. It is preserved in a unique, unpublished manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Libraries Huntington 388, from the year 1203 CE). Meir Jacob Kister has described the Adam legends from the work. Towards the end of this lengthy article, he mentions the fate of Adam's body.

The progeny of Adam were ordered to take care of his body: Seth transmitted the order to Enosh, Enosh transmitted it in turn to Cainan [ . . . ] Finally, the coffin with Adam's body was handed over to Noah. God ordered Noah not to move the coffin until after the flood; then Noah should wait until he saw at his door an ox with a cart. He should place the coffin on the cart and follow the ox. This is what happened, and the ox led the cart to Jerusalem: here Noah buried Adam.<sup>133</sup>

This is an unusual variant on a familiar theme, where the reburial of Adam is described without the intervention of Melchizedek.

Not all of the *Stories of the Prophets* are so original, however. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Tha'labī (d. 1035), whose collection of *Stories* is probably the best-known and most influential, has multiple *Cav. Tr.* traditions—but they

<sup>132</sup> For an accessible introduction, see Michael Pregill, Marianna Klar, and Roberto Tottoli, "Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā' as Genre and Discourse: From the Qur'ān to Elijah Muḥammad," *Mizan: Journal for the Study of Muslim Societies and Civilizations* 2 (2017): 5–44. This article is available online: <https://mizanproject.org/journal-post/qisas-al-anbiya-as-genre-and-discourse/#text>.

<sup>133</sup> Meir Jacob Kister, "Adam: A Study of Some Legends in *Tafsīr* and *Ḥadīth* Literature," *Israel Oriental Studies* 13 (1993): 113–74 (171).

are nearly identical to those found in the history of al-Ṭabarī, without necessarily being taken from his writings.<sup>134</sup> The traditions are attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās, the starting point of the recurring *isnād* of Ibn Sa’d—Hishām ibn al-Kalbī—his father—Abu Ṣāliḥ—Ibn ‘Abbās. Thus, one finds in al-Tha‘labī: Adam’s descent from Eden to the land of Nod (*Cav. Tr.* 5:14–15),<sup>135</sup> the story of the twin sisters of Cain and Abel (*Cav. Tr.* 5:21–32),<sup>136</sup> the burial of Adam at Jerusalem (*Cav. Tr.* 23),<sup>137</sup> and the translation of Adam aboard the Ark (*Cav. Tr.* 18:3).<sup>138</sup> Al-Tha‘labī was not the only *quṣṣāṣ* to provide this standard rehearsal. Ibn Muṭarrif al-Ṭarafī (d. 1062), who wrote a *Stories of the Prophets* based on the *Tafsīr* of al-Ṭabarī, includes every one of these traditions as well.<sup>139</sup> The editor of this collection, Roberto Tottoli, has included copious annotations and cross-references for these traditions, providing a sort of motif index of *Cav. Tr.* material in Muslim *Stories of the Prophets*.<sup>140</sup>

The counterpart to the “scholarly” *Stories* of al-Tha‘labī is the “popular” collection of al-Kisā‘ī, a cipher whose collection appears in different manuscripts of different sizes, none earlier than the eleventh century. The old edition of Isaac Eisenberg has become quasi-canonical in Western scholarship.<sup>141</sup> This edition has also benefited from a readily available English translation.<sup>142</sup> It hardly does justice to the textual variety of al-Kisā‘ī, but it at least provides an illustration of how the *Cave of Treasures* radically transformed over centuries of Muslim transmission. Instead

<sup>134</sup> On this point, see Claude Gilliot, “Les Histoires des Prophètes d’al-Ta‘labi: Sources et Traductions,” *Oriente Moderno* 89 (2009): 333–47.

<sup>135</sup> 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), 53. Gilliot, “Les Histoires des Prophètes d’al-Ta‘labi,” prefers the German translation: Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Tha‘labī, *Islamische Erzählungen von Propheten und Gottesmännern: Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā’ oder ‘Arā’is al-mağālis*, trans. Heribert Busse (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), which corrects several errors in the printed edition. There is no critical edition of this work.

<sup>136</sup> al-Tha‘labī, *Lives of the Prophets*, 74.

<sup>137</sup> al-Tha‘labī, *Lives of the Prophets*, 82.

<sup>138</sup> al-Tha‘labī, *Lives of the Prophets*, 98.

<sup>139</sup> For general information, see Roberto Tottoli, “The *Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā’* of Ibn Muṭarrif al-Ṭarafī (d. 454/1062): Stories of the Prophets from al-Andalus,” *Al-Qantara* 19 (1998): 131–60. For an edition, see the next note.

<sup>140</sup> Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muṭarrif al-Ṭarafī, *The Stories of the Prophets by Ibn Muṭarrif al-Ṭarafī*, ed. Roberto Tottoli (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2003), 26–27 (§38); 28–29 (§46–47); 29–30 (§49); 35 (§73).

<sup>141</sup> Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Kisā‘ī, *Vita Prophetarum*, ed. Isaac Eisenberg (Leiden: Brill, 1923).

<sup>142</sup> Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Kisā‘ī, *Tales of the Prophets (Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā’)*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston (Chicago: Great Books of the Islamic World, 1997).



of a cave of treasures or a testament of Adam, there is now “Adam’s coffer,” which contains a bewildering number of items.

The coffer first appears in a “flash-forward” to the time of Abraham, where he discovers the “Book of Adam” and the “Books of Seth and Enoch” inside.<sup>143</sup> Other items are later revealed to be in the coffer, such as Adam’s white cloth from Paradise, a handful of hair from Adam’s beard, and a ring from Adam’s finger.<sup>144</sup> When Noah needs to build the Ark, he opens Adam’s coffer and finds the tools he needs: “a saw, an axe, a drill, and other things.”<sup>145</sup> Noah brings the coffer aboard the Ark, where it is now said to contain the staffs of the prophets as well as—in the most overt reflection of *Cav. Tr.*—Adam’s body.<sup>146</sup> Iblīs, who has stowed away on the Ark, is ordered to do penance for his clandestine passage by bowing down before Adam’s body in the coffer, a comic recapitulation of his initial act of disobedience.<sup>147</sup> The saga of the coffer comes to an end when God orders Noah to return it to its original place, which he does.<sup>148</sup> Al-Kisā’ī’s *Stories* only distantly echoes *Cav. Tr.*, but its influence is clearly felt, even in some minor details, such as the Ark’s circumambulation of the Ka’ba (i.e., the “Islamicized” form of *Cav. Tr.* 19:5) and Noah’s establishment of the village of “Qaryat al-Thamanin” after the Flood (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 20:8).<sup>149</sup>

This discussion of the *Stories of the Prophets* is necessarily curated. There is much that had to be eliminated for lack of space, such as a discussion of Persian<sup>150</sup> and Turkish<sup>151</sup> *Stories of the Prophets*, as well as the presence of *Cav. Tr.* material in Shi’i sources.<sup>152</sup>

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143 al-Kisā’ī, *Tales of the Prophets*, 76.

144 al-Kisā’ī, *Tales of the Prophets*, 82.

145 al-Kisā’ī, *Tales of the Prophets*, 98.

146 al-Kisā’ī, *Tales of the Prophets*, 101.

147 al-Kisā’ī, *Tales of the Prophets*, 101.

148 al-Kisā’ī, *Tales of the Prophets*, 105.

149 al-Kisā’ī, *Tales of the Prophets*, 103–4.

150 Ibrāhīm ibn Manṣūr ibn Khalaf al-Nishābūrī, *Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā’*, ed. Ḥabīb Yaghmā’ī (Tehran: Shirkat-i Intishārāt-i ‘Ilmī va Farhangī, 1962).

151 Nāṣir al-Dīn ibn Burhān al-Dīn al-Rabghūzī, *The Stories of the Prophets (Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā’): An Eastern Turkish Version*, ed. and trans. H. E. Boeschoten and J. O’Kane, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

152 See, for example, Etan Kohlberg, “Some Shi’i Views of the Antediluvian World,” *Studia Islamica* 52 (1980): 41–66. Kohlberg, citing diverse sources, mentions the separation between Sethites and Cainites (46), Adam’s translation in the Ark (58), and the description of Adam’s burial (64), which Kohlberg directly compares to the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*.

### 9.3 Conclusion

The *Cave of Treasures* was the History Bible of Eastern Christianity and early Islam just as *Jubilees* was the History Bible of Byzantium. It was a primary source of information about the earliest events of human history for both Christians and Muslims. Eastern Christian traditions—whether Syriac, Arabo-Coptic, or Ethiopic—preserved the work and its traditions because it was part of their heritage. The Islamic use of *Cav. Tr.* is more difficult to explain. One can draw a parallel between the use of *Jubilees* by Byzantine historians and the use of *Cav. Tr.* in early Islamic historiography. Byzantine Christians shared few of the theological presuppositions of *Jubilees*. Nevertheless, they continued to use the work as a historical source, in part, one suspects, because the work was ancient and therefore had a pedigree. More importantly, the work contained information that could not be found in the canonical Scriptures. The same is true of *Cav. Tr.* in Islamic tradition. Although the work is Christian in orientation, it provides important details that supplement the sparse narratives of the Qurʾān.

What were those details? The *Cave of Treasures* covers five and a half millennia of human history, but its readers were only interested in one epoch: the time before the Flood. The *Cave of Treasures* itself is most interested in this period. The work has fifty-four chapters; twenty-three of them are about the Antediluvian period. The history of Israel and, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the life of Christ did not attract the same attention, even among Christian readers.

Unlike *Jubilees*, the most popular traditions from *Cav. Tr.* are part of a continuous narrative. Adam is expelled from Paradise but dwells on a mountain in some faraway region (Nod). There, he establishes a cult, whether around the veneration of his own body or some other nebulous form of prayer and worship. Cain kills his brother Abel in a dispute over a woman, one of the twin sisters. He flees to the base of the mountain, where he begets the wicked race of Cainites. Once these Cainites invent the musical arts, they lure the righteous Sethites from their holy habitation. The remaining patriarchs preserve the body of Adam on the Ark and rebury him after the Flood. In Christian sources, they invariably bury Adam at Jerusalem and, specifically, Golgotha, the site of the crucifixion. Muslim sources might relocate his burial to Mecca, part of a strategy of “Islamicizing” *Cav. Tr.* This process manifests itself in other ways, such as a tradition that Noah’s Ark circumambulated the Ka’ba instead of making the sign of the cross. Other traditions are minor, yet curiously persistent, such as the notion that Noah, after the Flood, founded a city named after the eight (or eighty) survivors.

*Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* was written in a world where these stories were circulating in a variety of contexts across multiple religious traditions. The next chapter, the last, will evaluate whether such traditions found their way into PRE.

## 10 The Cave of Treasures and Pirqa de-Rabbi Eliezer

Chapter eight established that both Syriac and Arabic versions of the *Cave of Treasures* maintained a steady popularity from the end of Late Antiquity to the end of the Middle Ages. Chapter nine showed that the work was known to both Christians and Muslims, and it was the primary vehicle for traditions about the history of Israel in both Christianity and Islam. The current chapter is a comparison of PRE with several representative traditions from the *Cav. Tr.* cycle. The main goal of the chapter is *not* to prove that PRE used *Cav. Tr.* as a written source but that PRE was aware of the traditions from the *Cav. Tr.* cycle—traditions that were common in Syriac and Arabic sources but foreign to rabbinic literature.

The method is the same as the one employed in chapter seven. That is, I assess *presumed* sources (in this case, rabbinic literature and other Jewish sources) before addressing other *probable* sources from the surrounding environment. However, since I am, so to speak, in the defensive rather than the offensive position, the application of this method will look slightly different. Instead of a claim from secondary literature, the opening of each section addresses the way in which PRE departs from some established rabbinic tradition. Only when this discontinuity has been established do I cite the full tradition in parallel with a passage from the *Cave of Treasures*. At the end of each section, I justify PRE's apparent knowledge of traditions from *Cav. Tr.* through illustrations of that tradition's widespread presence in contemporary Christian and Muslim literature.

The working hypothesis of this chapter is that PRE knew of *Cav. Tr.* and its traditions through oral channels. Knowledge of Syriac varied among Jews. Some Jews knew and even wrote in Syriac (which is, after all, a dialect of Aramaic).<sup>1</sup> Concrete examples of Judeo-Syriac, however, are rare.<sup>2</sup> Others knew Syriac without writing it. Such was the case of Dāwūd ibn Marwān al-Muqammiṣ (d. 937), the first medieval Jewish philosopher, preceding even Saadia Gaon, who studied under the Christian philosopher Nonnus of Nisibis (d. 860) and translated a Syriac commentary

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1 Sergey Minov directed me to one of the canons of Jacob of Edessa (no. 59), where he responds affirmatively to the question of whether a priest may teach the children of pagans, Harranians, and Jews to read and write (in Syriac). Not only is it harmless, the priest may also teach them Psalms and Scripture. See Jacob of Edessa, *Die Canones Jacob's von Edessa: Übersetzt und erläutert*, trans. Karl Kayser (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1886), 29–30.

2 All known examples are given in Christian Stadel, "Judaean-Syriac: Syriac Texts in Jewish Square Script (with an Appendix on Syriac as a Religio-Linguistic Marker in a Judaean-Arabic Treatise)," in *Jews and Syriac Christians: Intersections across the First Millennium*, ed. Aaron Michael Butts and Simcha Gross (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 281–90.

on Genesis into Judeo-Arabic.<sup>3</sup> Still others composed original Judeo-Arabic works based on Syriac models. David Sklare has proposed that two eighth- or ninth-century Judeo-Arabic manuscripts of questions and answers on biblical difficulties were influenced by this genre in Syriac writing.<sup>4</sup> *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* might correspond to this third possibility, as its basic form resembles *Cav. Tr.* more than mid-rashic literature.

The *Cave of Treasures*, however, is not an exclusively Syriac book. It is also an Arabic one. The author of PRE did not need a Syriac environment—or even a Christian one—to be exposed to the book. Since its material had also penetrated the *Stories of the Prophets*, a genre closely aligned with Islamic preaching and storytelling, PRE did not even need to know the text to be exposed to its traditions. This is not to discount the possibility of oral transmission via Christians channels. The *Cave of Treasures* is filled with the sort of anti-Jewish traditions one might envision Christians preaching to Jews.<sup>5</sup> In this regard, it is significant that the addressee of this work, Namosaya, is probably intended to be a Jew. In the end, the author of PRE could have encountered *Cav. Tr.*, in one of its myriad forms, in several different environments: oral or written, Christian or Muslim.

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3 Georges Vajda, “Du prologue de Qirqisānī à son commentaire sur la Genèse,” in *In Memoriam Paul Kahle*, ed. Matthew Black and Georg Fohrer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1968), 222–31 (224): “David b. Marwān ar-Raqqī, connu sous le nom d’al-Miqmās, a composé sur la Genèse un bon ouvrage qu’il avait tiré de l’exégèse des Syriens” (“Dāwūd ibn Marwān al-Raqqī, known under the name al-Muqammiš, composed a good work on Genesis that he took from the exegesis of the Syrians”). Qirqisānī claims that he has taken the best from Muqammiš (and another, unnamed source) in his own commentary on Genesis. The anonymous commentator is none other than Saadia Gaon, left anonymous due to his noted hostility to Karaism. See Bruno Chiesa, “A New Fragment of al-Qir-qisānī’s ‘Kitāb al-Riyāḍ,’” *Jewish Quarterly Review* (1988): 175–85.

4 David Sklare, “Ninth-Century Judeo-Arabic Texts of Biblical Questions and Answers,” in *Senses of Scripture, Treasures of Tradition: The Bible in Arabic among Jews, Christians and Muslims*, ed. Miriam L. Hjälm (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 104–24 (116–20).

5 Most directly: Sergey Minov, *Memory and Identity in the Syriac Cave of Treasures: Rewriting the Bible in Sasanian Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 49–141. See also Sidney H. Griffith, “Theodore Abū Qurrah’s Arabic Tract on the Christian Practice of Venerating Images,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 105 (1985): 53–73 (59–62), who discusses several examples of renewed polemics between Jews and Christians following the rise of Islam. The anonymous *Polemic of Nestor the Priest: Qiṣṣat Muḥādalat al-Uṣquf and Sefer Nestor ha-Komer*, ed. and trans. Daniel J. Laster and Sarah Stroumsa, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1996), is a particularly aggressive example of Jewish attacks on Christian beliefs. According to these polemical tracts, Christians saw Jews as complicit with Islam; conversely, Jews looked to Muslims for support against Christians on topics such as the Incarnation, the Trinity, and the veneration of images.

## 10.1 Satan and the Serpent

*Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* is the first rabbinic text to introduce the devil into the Garden of Eden. The idea that the devil—via the serpent—tempted the First Parents was so widespread that Qur’ānic renditions of the story (e.g., Q 2:30–39; 7:11–25; 20:115–124.) do not even mention the serpent and speak only of Satan. Rabbinic literature, on the other hand, only ever treats the serpent as an animal. Satan does not appear in any rabbinic exposition of Gen 1–3, nor is the serpent ever identified with the devil or any other angelic being.

One typical example of the rabbinic treatment of the serpent appears in the first chapter of *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan*, recension A.

### Translation

[1.51] What was the first serpent thinking at that hour? “I will go and kill Adam, and I will take his wife. Then I shall be king over the entire world. Then I shall walk upright, and I shall taste all the world’s delicacies!”

[1.52] The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: “You have said, ‘I will kill Adam and take Eve.’ Therefore, I shall put enmity [between you and the woman] (Gen 3:15). You have said, ‘I shall be king over the whole world.’ Therefore, cursed are you above all animals (Gen 3:14).

[1.53] “You have said, ‘I shall walk upright.’ Therefore, on your belly you shall crawl (Gen 3:14). You have said, ‘I shall eat all the delicacies of the world.’ Therefore, you shall eat dust all the days of your life” (Gen 3:14).

[1.54] R. Simeon b. Menasiah said: Alas for the great utility that was lost from the world! If the serpent had not been cursed, everyone in Israel would have two serpents in their household. They would dispatch one to the west and one to the east, and they would bring to them beautiful gems and precious stones and pearls

### Text (*editio princeps*)<sup>6</sup>

[1.51] מה חושב נחש הראשון באות' שעה אלך ואהרוג את אדם ואשא את אשתו ואהיה מלך על כל העולם כלו ואלך בקומה זקופה ואוכל כל מעדני עולם

[1.52] א"ל הקב"ה אתה אמרת אהרוג את אדם ואשא את חוה לפיכך איבה אשית אתה אמרת אהיה מלך על כל העולם לפיכך ארור אתה מכל הבהמה

[1.53] אתה אמרת אלך בקומה זקופה לפיכך על גחונך תלך אתה אמרת אוכל כל מעדני עולם לפיכך עפר תאכל כל ימי חיך

[1.54] ר' שמעון בן מנסיא אומ' חבל על שמש גדול שאבד מן העולם שאלמלא לא נתקלקל נחש היה לו לכל אחד ואחד מישראל היו לו שני נחשים בתוך ביתו אחד משגרו למערב ואחד משגרו למזרח ומביאים להם סנדליכ' טובים אבנים טובות ומרגליו' וכל כלי חמדה טוב' שבעולם ואין כל בריה יכולה להחזיק אותן

<sup>6</sup> Text from Hans-Jürgen Becker, ed., *Avot de-Rabbi Natan: Synoptische Edition beider Versionen* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 18, where it is the first of eight columns in a synoptic edition. The printed edition was chosen simply as a representative text. The paragraph divisions are Becker's. The English translation is mine.

and all manner of good things in the world.  
No creature would be able to harm them.

[1.55] Not only this, but they would ride them instead of camels or donkeys or asses, and they would transport fertilizer to gardens and orchards.

[1.56] R. Judah b. Bathyra said: The First Adam was sitting in the Garden of Eden while the ministering angels stood before him in the Garden of Eden cooking meat and chilling wine for him. The serpent came and saw them. He perceived his glory and grew jealous of him.

[1.55] ולא עוד אלא שהיו מכניסין אותן תחת גמל תחת חמור תחת פרד ומוציאין זבלים לגנות ולפרדסות

[1.56] רבי יהודה בן בתירה אומר אדם הראשון היה מיסב בגן עדן ומלאכי השרת עומדין בגן עדן לקראתו וצולין לו בשר ומצננין לו יין בא נחש וראה אותן והציץ בכבודו ונתקנא בו

Although this text is relatively late, it embodies many traditions known from Tannaitic and Amoraic literature. First, *Gen. Rab.* 18:6 mentions the serpent's sexual jealousy. He became envious of Adam and Eve when he saw them making love (שראם מתעסקין בדרך הארץ).<sup>7</sup> The Babylonian Talmud even reports a tradition that the serpent successfully seduced Eve: "Why are the nations contaminated? Because they did not stand on Mount Sinai. When the serpent came to Eve, he injected filth into her. Israel, who stood on Mount Sinai, their filth departed, but those who did not stand on Mount Sinai, their filth did not depart" (*b. Shabbat* 145b–146a; cf. *b. Yevamot* 103b and *b. Avodah Zarah* 22b; cf. 4Macc 18:7–8).<sup>8</sup> This *logion* has been adduced as proof that the talmudic Sages are aware of a "gnostic" tradition about Satan as the father of Cain.<sup>9</sup> However, the two constituent elements are missing.

7 Translated from Julius Theodor and Hanoach Albeck, eds., *Bereschit Rabba mit kritischem Apparat und Kommentar*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Itzkowski, 1912–1936), 1:168. Literally: "He saw them engaging in the custom of the land." The context is a discussion of Gen 2:24, "They were naked and not ashamed."

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

9 Nils Alstrup Dahl, "Der Erstgeborene Satans und der Vater des Teufels," in *Apophoreta: Festschrift für Ernst Haenchen*, ed. W. Eltester and F. H. Kettler (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1964), 70–84 (73); Arnold Goldberg, "Kain: Sohn des Menschen oder Sohn der Schlange?," *Judaica* 25 (1969): 203–21 (212); Jan Dochhorn, "Kain, der Sohn des Teufels: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu 1. Joh 3,12," in *Das Böse, der Teufel und Dämonen (Evil, the Devil, and Demons)*, ed. Jan Dochhorn, Susanne Rudnig-Zelt, and Benjamin G. Wold (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 169–87 (176); Oded Yisraeli, "Cain as the Scion of Satan: The Evolution of a Gnostic Myth in the *Zohar*," *Harvard Theological Review* 109 (2016): 56–74 (60). See, however, Israel Knohl, "Cain: Son of God or Son of Satan?," in *Jewish Biblical Interpretation and Cultural Exchange*, ed. Natalie B. Dohrmann and David Stern (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 37–50 (46–47), who mentions the talmudic tradition but then concludes: "However, the idea that Cain was the son of the snake is absent from early rabbinic literature" (47).

Neither Cain nor the devil are mentioned. The serpent is not identified with the devil, nor is such an identification necessary to make sense of the passage. It does not even state that Eve's union with the serpent was fruitful. The "gnostic" tradition does, however, surface in later Jewish literature, including PRE 21 and, much later, the *Zohar*, which has prejudiced the reading of the talmudic text.<sup>10</sup>

Second, *Genesis Rabbah* (*Gen. Rab.* 20:5), the Tosefta (*t. Sotah* 4:17–18), and the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Sotah* 9b) all reverse-engineer the characteristics of the serpent from the curses placed upon him. He desired to be king of the animals (henceforth, he will be the most abhorred of all animals); he desired Eve (henceforth, she will detest him); and he used to walk upright (henceforth, he will crawl on his belly, deprived of limbs). This tradition finds its parallel in ARN–A, cited above. *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan* goes on to characterize the serpent as a potential beast of burden and a creature that desired material comforts. In all these respects, the serpent is presented as a mere animal, albeit one that can speak. This is, frankly, no different than what can be deduced from the plain sense of the biblical text.

Even in PRE 13, the serpent is an animal and a beast of burden, although now he is the mount of Sammael, the designation for Satan throughout PRE. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* 13 opens with Adam demonstrating his superior wisdom by naming the animals, which the ministering angels cannot do. A similar tradition is already found in rabbinic literature (cf. *Gen. Rab.* 17:4), but the sequel is an innovation of PRE. Some of the angels become jealous of Adam and plot against him. Sammael, the leader of these jealous angels, decides to exact revenge on Adam by inciting him to rebel against God. He descends to earth and finds a partner in the serpent. At this point PRE begins to resemble the *Cave of Treasures*.

*Cav. Tr.* 4:4–12 (BL Add. 25875, ff. 6b–7a)

[4] ויהי סמאל שר הגדול בשמים ושרפים ושש  
כנפים והחיות מארבע כנפים וסמאל בשמים  
עשרה כנפים מה עשה לקח את הכת שלו וירד  
וראה כל הבריות שברא הק' ב'ה' ולא מצא בהם  
חכם להרע כנחש שנ' והנחש ערום והיתה דמותו  
של נחש כמין גמל ועלה ורכב עליו [...] משל למה  
הדבר דומה לאדם שיש בו רוח רעה כל מעשים  
שהוא עושה מדעתו הוא עושה או כל הדברים  
שהוא מדבר מדעתו הוא מדבר והלא מדעת רוח  
רעה שיש עליו כך הנחש כל מעשים שעשה וכל  
הדברים שדבר מדעתו שלסמאל

PRE 13 (JTS 3847, f. 95b)

[4] ויהי סמאל שר הגדול בשמים ושרפים ושש  
כנפים והחיות מארבע כנפים וסמאל בשמים  
עשרה כנפים מה עשה לקח את הכת שלו וירד  
וראה כל הבריות שברא הק' ב'ה' ולא מצא בהם  
חכם להרע כנחש שנ' והנחש ערום והיתה דמותו  
של נחש כמין גמל ועלה ורכב עליו [...] משל למה  
הדבר דומה לאדם שיש בו רוח רעה כל מעשים  
שהוא עושה מדעתו הוא עושה או כל הדברים  
שהוא מדבר מדעתו הוא מדבר והלא מדעת רוח  
רעה שיש עליו כך הנחש כל מעשים שעשה וכל  
הדברים שדבר מדעתו שלסמאל

<sup>10</sup> See Gavin McDowell, "Rabbinization of Non-Rabbinic Material in *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*," in *Diversity and Rabbinization: Jewish Texts and Societies between 400 and 1000 CE*, ed. Gavin McDowell, Ron Naiweld, and Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra (Cambridge: OpenBook Publishers, 2021), 381–412 (391–403), where I argue that PRE has harmonized the talmudic tradition with the "gnostic" one.

אֵלֶּה הַמַּלְאָכִים הַגְּדֹלִים הַיּוֹדֵעִים  
 ,וְהַמַּלְאָכִים הַקְּטָנִים הַיּוֹדֵעִים ,וְ  
 [10] הַמַּלְאָכִים הַיּוֹדֵעִים וְהַמַּלְאָכִים  
 הַיּוֹדֵעִים [11] וְהַמַּלְאָכִים הַיּוֹדֵעִים  
 הַיּוֹדֵעִים וְהַמַּלְאָכִים הַיּוֹדֵעִים ,וְהַמַּלְאָכִים  
 הַיּוֹדֵעִים [12] הַמַּלְאָכִים הַיּוֹדֵעִים  
 הַיּוֹדֵעִים וְהַמַּלְאָכִים הַיּוֹדֵעִים  
 הַיּוֹדֵעִים וְהַמַּלְאָכִים הַיּוֹדֵעִים

[4] When Satan saw Adam and Eve rejoicing in Paradise, the rebel was consumed and inflamed in his jealousy. [5] He entered and dwelt within the serpent. He carried it and flew through the air until the borders of Paradise. [6] For what reason did he enter the serpent and hide himself? [7] Because he knew that his appearance was unsightly, and if Eve had seen his true form, she would have immediately fled before him. [8] It is like how one who is teaching Greek conversation to a bird places a large mirror between himself and it, and thus he begins speaking with it. [9] Consequently, the bird who hears his voice turns to its side and sees its own form within the mirror, immediately reacts with joy, because it thinks that there is its companion speaking with it. [10] Thus it eagerly inclines its ear. [11] And it listens to the words of the one speaking with it, applying itself diligently so that it will learn to speak Greek. [12] Likewise, Satan also entered and dwelt within the serpent. He waited for an opportunity. When he saw Eve alone, he called her name.

Sammael was the great prince in heaven. The Seraphim had six wings, and the Hayyot had four wings, but Sammael had twelve wings. What did he do? He took his band and descended and saw all of the animals which the Holy One, Blessed be He, had created, but he did not find any among them as predisposed to evil as the serpent, as it is written, “The serpent was cunning” (Gen 3:1). The serpent was in the form of something like a camel. Sammael mounted and rode upon it. [. . .] To what can this thing be compared? It is like a man that has an evil spirit within him. All the actions which he does, does he do them from his own will? Or all the words which he speaks, does he speak them of his own will? Is it not the evil spirit that is upon him? Thus it was with the serpent—all the deeds which he did and all the words which he spoke were the will of Sammael.

The cited passage from PRE 13 constitutes the totality of references to Sammael in that work’s account of the fall of humanity. The rest of the chapter focuses exclusively on the serpent and is taken almost *verbatim* from *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan*, recension B (as discussed in chapter two). The sudden appearance and disappearance of Sammael is a redactional seam. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* has inserted Sammael between two blocks of traditional material: the animal-naming contest and the serpent’s jealousy of Adam. The transition from Sammael to the serpent occurs via a specious parable (“A possessed snake is like a possessed man”), perhaps the most noteworthy similarity between PRE and *Cav. Tr.*, which employs its own questionable comparison (“Tempting a woman is like teaching a parrot”) to explain the dynamic between Satan and the serpent.



The account of PRE reproduces the essential points of the narrative in *Cav. Tr.* The mere presence of the devil in PRE is already significant, although this is far from the only point of contact. The basis of Satan/Sammael's conspiracy against Adam is revenge motivated by jealousy. In both works, Satan's fall is directly tied to the creation of Adam. In *Cav. Tr.*, Satan refuses to worship Adam (*Cav. Tr.* 3:1–7); in PRE, Sammael refuses to accept Adam's superior wisdom. This tradition is at odds with the competing notion of a "War in Heaven," where Satan is cast down for his overweening pride before the creation of Adam (cf. Isa 14:12–14 and Ezek 28:11–19). Finally, Satan is formally distinct from the serpent, who is still just an animal. This last point is far from universal in Christian accounts.

There is no clear association between Satan and the serpent in Second Temple Jewish literature. The Christian tradition exists, in part, to explain how the serpent was able to speak. Second Temple Jewish sources such as *Jubilees* and Josephus had a different explanation. Prior to the Fall, all animals could talk, but Adam's sin stopped their mouths (*Jub.* 3:28; *Ant.* I.41, 50). Christians did piece together their tradition from Second Temple sources, but the prooftexts are ambiguous. Thus, Wisd 2:24 famously declares "through the envy of the devil death entered the world" (φθόνῳ δὲ διαβόλου θάνατος εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον), but this classic prooftext mentions neither Adam nor the serpent. Furthermore, the earliest Christians allusions to the verse seem to have understood it as a reference to Cain and Abel.<sup>11</sup> Hence, *1Clement* 3:4 laments "Each one walks according to the desires of his evil heart, which have aroused unrighteous and impious jealousy—through which also death entered the world" (δι' οὗ καὶ θάνατος εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον), before immediately citing the story of Cain and Abel as an example of how "jealousy and envy brought about the murder of a brother" (*1Clement* 4:7).<sup>12</sup>

Theophilus of Antioch (d. ca. 185) offered a similar interpretation in *Ad Autolycum* II.29:

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<sup>11</sup> Jan Dochhorn, "Mit Kain kam der Tod in die Welt. Zur Auslegung von SapSal 2,24 in 1 Clem 3,4; 4,1–7, Mit einem Seitenblick auf Polykarp, Phil. 7,1 und Theophilus, Ad Autol. II, 29,3–4," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und Kunde der älteren Kirche* 98 (2007): 150–59, makes a similar observation, though he comes to a startlingly different conclusion: that Wisdom refers to the notion that Cain was the son of the devil. I have a different understanding. Cain, called here a "devil," introduced death into the world by killing Abel, the first person to die. Similarly, I understand 1John 3:12 to mean that Cain is a "son of the evil one" by his evil actions (cf. 1John 3:8), not because he was a literal son of the devil as in later literature. This too differs from Dochhorn's interpretation. See his "Kain, der Sohn des Teufels," cited above.

<sup>12</sup> Bart D. Ehrman, ed. and trans., *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 1:40–43.

When Satan saw that Adam and his wife not only were alive but had produced offspring, he was overcome by envy because he was not strong enough to put them to death; and because he saw Abel pleasing God, he worked upon his brother called Cain and made him kill his brother Abel. And so the beginning of death came into the world (καὶ οὕτως ἀρχὴ θανάτου ἐγένετο εἰς τὸνδε τὸν κόσμον), to reach the whole race of men to this very day.<sup>13</sup>

These examples serve as a reminder that the Greek word διάβολός (which simply means “accuser”) is more flexible than its English derivative, “devil.” Epiphanius of Salamis, for example, believed that the occurrence of διάβολός in John 8:44 (“You are of your father, the devil”) was a reference to Judas and his spiritual father, the liar and murderer Cain (*Panarion* 38.4–5 and 40.5–6).<sup>14</sup>

Theophilus does, however, believe that the devil was present in the Garden of Eden, and he alludes to a second popular proof-text in the passage just before the one cited (*Ad Autolycum* II.28).

The maleficent demon, also called Satan, who then spoke to Eve through the serpent and is still at work in those men who are possessed by him, addressed her as “Eve” because she was at first deceived by the serpent and became the pioneer of sin. He is called “demon” (δαίμων) and “dragon” (δράκων) because he escaped (ἀποδεδρακέναι) from God; he was originally an angel. There is much to say about him, but for the present I am passing over the account of these matters; the statement about him has been given to us elsewhere.<sup>15</sup>

This passage alludes to Rev 12:9, “And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan” (RSV). The vision of the woman and the dragon, which occupies the twelfth chapter of Revelation, was commonly cited as a means of identifying the serpent of Eden with the devil. Other early examples are found in the works of Justin Martyr (*Dialogus cum Tryphone* CXXIV.3) and Irenaeus (*Adversus Haereses* III.23.7). John’s vision of the woman, however, has little to do with Genesis. Over a century ago, Hermann Gunkel indicated that the vision is rooted in Ancient Near East traditions (Babylonian and, unbeknownst to him, Ugaritic) about primordial chaos monsters. He dismissed the traditional association between Rev 12 and the “protevangelium” of Gen 3:15 (“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and hers”).

The greatest similarity is presented further by the Protevangelium (cited by [Daniel] Völter), Gen 3:14–16, where “the woman’s birth pains, increased by her offspring, but, in particular, by the serpent, and the deadly enmity which shall endure between it (the serpent) and the

<sup>13</sup> Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolycum*, ed. and trans. Robert M. Grant (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 72–73.

<sup>14</sup> Epiphanius of Salamis, *The Panarion: Book I (Sects 1–46)*, trans. Frank Williams, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 272–74 and 287–89.

<sup>15</sup> Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolycum*, 72–73.

woman (and her offspring)” is “the report.” But who might venture to assert that the author actually had the Genesis passage right before his eyes, especially since the differences are greater than the similarities?<sup>16</sup>

In a footnote, Gunkel proceeds to enumerate these differences.

*There* a heavenly woman, *here* the ancestress of humanity; *there* enmity of the dragon against the child; *here* a battle between the offspring of the serpent and the offspring of the woman; the dragon is a monster of the deep, the נחש [serpent], on the other hand, is the ancestor of the serpent species, etc. etc.<sup>17</sup>

The key difference, I think, is the last one. The infernal, multi-headed dragon is not a Garden-of-Eden-variety serpent.

All the other potential Second Temple references to the devil in Eden come from the “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.” The problem is that the date and provenance of many of the Pseudepigrapha are not known. They cannot be used to illuminate the development of Adam traditions without the risk of explaining the unknown by the unknown (*ignotum per aequae ignotum*). Rather, works whose authors and times of composition are securely known—such as most patristic and rabbinic literature—must be used to deduce the origin of the Pseudepigrapha. The problem is especially acute for works that are primarily or exclusively known in Slavonic transmission, where we are often denied the benefit of an outside reference. The *Apocalypse of Abraham* 23 (Slavonic only), *2 Enoch* 31 (Slavonic and possibly Coptic),<sup>18</sup> and *3 Baruch* 4 and 9 (Slavonic and Greek) all state that Satan or a satanic figure was responsible for the Fall of Adam, but we have few means of dating these texts.<sup>19</sup> Even *1 Enoch* 69:6, which names the otherwise unknown Watcher Gadre’el as the angel who led Eve astray, is not above suspicion. Multiple Aramaic manuscripts were recovered from Qumran, but this verse falls within the *Parables* (or

<sup>16</sup> Hermann Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton: A Religio-Historical Study of Genesis 1 and Revelation 12*, trans. K. William Whitney, Jr., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 155. He is referring to Daniel Völter, *Das Problem der Apokalypse nach seinem gegenwärtigen Stande* (Freiburg im Breisgau: J. C. B. Mohr, 1893), 150.

<sup>17</sup> Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos*, 334.

<sup>18</sup> Joost L. Hagen, “No Longer ‘Slavonic’ Only: 2 Enoch Attested in Coptic from Nubia,” in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only*, ed. A. Orlov, Gabriele Boccaccini, and Jason Zurauski (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 7–34, but see also Christfried Böttrich, “The Angel of Tartarus and the Supposed Coptic Fragments of 2 Enoch,” *Early Christianity* 4 (2013): 509–21.

<sup>19</sup> In Gavin McDowell, “What are the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha?,” in *Regards croisés sur la Pseudépigraphe dans l’Antiquité/ Perspectives on Pseudepigraphy in Antiquity*, ed. Anne-France Morand, Éric Créheux, and Gaëlle Rioual (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023), 65–88, I hesitantly offered obscure references in Origen, *De principiis* 1.3.3 and II.3.6 for, respectively, *2 Enoch* and *3 Baruch*, but neither passage is entirely satisfactory as an outside reference.

*Similitudes*) of *Enoch* (1*Enoch* 37–71), the one section of 1*Enoch* that was not found at Qumran and whose Second Temple provenance is, therefore, open to doubt.<sup>20</sup>

Origen, whose knowledge and use of apocryphal works is unparalleled in early Christianity, attributed the devil's manipulation of the serpent to a work called the *Ascension of Moses* that was allegedly cited in the Epistle of Jude.

First, a serpent is described in Genesis as having seduced Eve; and in regard to this serpent, in the *Ascension of Moses*, a book which the apostle Jude mentions in his epistle, Michael the archangel when disputing with the body of Moses says that the serpent was inspired by the devil and so became the cause of the transgression of Adam and Eve (*De principiis* III.2.1).<sup>21</sup>

The *Ascension of Moses* is, presumptively, the *Assumption of Moses* uniquely preserved in the fifth-century Latin palimpsest Biblioteca Ambrosiana C 73 inf.<sup>22</sup> However, the incomplete text preserved there has no reference to the odd story from Jude 9. Neither Jude nor the palimpsest mentions Adam, Eve, or the serpent. Johannes Tromp ventured that Origen intended to refer to the *Apocalypse of Moses*, that is, the Greek recension of the *Life of Adam and Eve*, but he retracted this position in a later publication.<sup>23</sup> Thus we are still left in the dark about Origen's reference as well as the intended reference of Jude.

The *Life of Adam and Eve* and its diverse versions (including the *Apocalypse of Moses*) provides a crystal-clear attestation of Satan and the serpent colluding to overthrow the First Parents, but, again, the question of date imposes itself. The *Life of Adam and Eve* only appears in history after several centuries of Christian reflection on Genesis 3. One could think of it as a natural outgrowth of the Christian tradition, particularly the later Eastern Christian tradition where Satan and the serpent are separate entities. For example, John Chrysostom (*Homiliae in Genesim* XVI.4)<sup>24</sup> and

20 J. T. Milik, ed., *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 89–107, believed that the *Parables* was a Christian composition of the second or third century. Although he won few followers, I think his position merits reevaluation. For other views on this book, see Gabriele Boccaccini, *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Book of Parables* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).

21 Origen, *On First Principles*, trans. G. W. Butterworth (Notre Dame: Christian Classics, 2013), 275.

22 Antonio Maria Ceriani, ed., “Fragmenta Parvae Genesis et Assumptionis Mosis ex veteri versione latina,” in *Monumenta sacra et profana ex codicibus praesertim bibliothecae Ambrosianae* (Milan: Typis et Impensis Bibliothecae Ambrosianae, 1861), 1:9–64 (55–64).

23 Johannes Tromp, ed. and trans., *The Assumption of Moses: A Critical Edition with Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 270–85; Johannes Tromp, “Origen on the Assumption of Moses,” in *Jerusalem, Alexandria, Rome: Studies in Ancient Cultural Interaction in Honour of A. Hilhorst*, ed. Florentino García Martínez and Gerard P. Luttikhuisen (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 323–40.

24 John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis 1–17*, trans. Robert C. Hill (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 209 (my emphasis): “Consider from this, dearly beloved, how in

Ephrem the Syrian (*Commentary on Genesis* II.16)<sup>25</sup> merely *associate* the serpent and Satan, whereas a Western author like Augustine (*De Genesi contra Manichaeos* II.14.20)<sup>26</sup> *identifies* them. The key difference may have been the acceptance of Revelation as a canonical book. Eusebius of Caesarea (*Historia ecclesiastica* III.25) indicated that it was still controversial in the fourth century; Eastern canon lists as late as the *Stichometry of Nicephorus* (ninth century) name Revelation as one of the *antilegomena*.<sup>27</sup> Exceptions to this rule are illustrative. Early Greek authors who accepted the authority of Revelation identified the serpent as the devil. Justin Martyr, who knew Revelation (*Dialogus* LXXXI.4), does this multiple times (*Dialogus* XLV.4; C.6; CIII.5; CXXIV.3).<sup>28</sup>

This approach to the *Life of Adam and Eve* differs sharply from others who have written on this text. Jan Dochhorn, who wrote a commentary on the Greek *Apocalypse of Moses*, maintains that it is a Palestinian Jewish text of the first or second

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the beginning none of the wild beasts then existing caused fear either to the man or to the woman; on the contrary, they recognized human direction and dominion, and as with tame animals these days, so then even the wild and savage ones proved to be subdued. But perhaps in this case some may raise a difficulty and seek to find out if the wild animals also shared the power of speech. Not so—perish the thought; rather, people, following Scripture, need to consider the fact that the words came from the devil, who was spurred on to this deception by his own ill-will, while *this wild animal he employed like some convenient instrument* so as to be able to set the bait for his own deception and thus upset the woman first of all, being ever more readily susceptible of deception, and then, through her, man the first-formed.”

25 Ephrem the Syrian, *Selected Prose Works*, trans. Edward G. Mathews and Joseph P. Amar (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 107–8 (emphasis original): “After he spoke of the cleverness of the serpent, Moses turned to write about how that deceitful one came to Eve, saying, *the serpent said to the woman, ‘Did God truly say, ‘You shall not eat of any of the trees of Paradise?’*” (Gen 3:1) As for the serpent’s speech, either Adam understood the serpent’s own mode of communication, or Satan spoke through it, or the serpent posed the question in his mind and speech was given to it, or Satan sought from God that speech be given to the serpent for a short time.”

26 Augustine, *On Genesis: Two Books on Genesis against the Manichees and On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis*, trans. Roland J. Teske (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 115–16: “The serpent signifies the devil who was certainly not simple. His cleverness is indicated by the fact that he is said to be wiser than all the beasts. The serpent was not said to be in paradise, though the serpent was among the beasts that God made. For paradise signifies the happy life, as I said above, and the serpent was not present there, because he was already the devil and had fallen from his happiness because ‘he did not stand in truth’ (John 8:44).”

27 Nicephorus of Constantinople, *Opuscula Historica*, ed. Carl de Boor (Leipzig: Teubner, 1880), 134.

28 See Jan Dochhorn, “Der Sturz des Teufels in der Urzeit: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Skizze zu einem Motiv frühjüdischer und frühchristlicher Theologie mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Luzifermythos,” *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 109 (2012): 3–47 (25), who also gives some exceptions (including Theophilus of Antioch, cited above), so it was not inevitable that accepting Revelation as canonical meant one identified the serpent and Satan.

century CE.<sup>29</sup> He argues, first of all, that the awkward Greek betrayed someone more familiar with the Hebrew than the Greek Bible. He also found rabbinic parallels in *Genesis Rabbah* (20:10 and 22:9), suggesting Jewish familiarity with the work. Elsewhere, he suggested that *Gen. Rab.* 8:10 was a parody of the angelic veneration of Adam found in most versions of the *Life of Adam and Eve* (but not the *Apocalypse of Moses*).<sup>30</sup> Finally, he offered that the *Apocalypse of Moses* drew inspiration from Jewish apocalypses such as *4Ezra* and *2Baruch*, written in the wake of the Second Temple's destruction. John R. Levison, in an admirably even-handed evaluation of the work's provenance, noted the essential weakness of these arguments: the supposed Hebraisms in the text could have been the work of a "biblicizing" Christian as much as a Jew; the text evinces little contact with rabbinic exegesis (I would add that any points of contact, such as the parodic account of angelic veneration, could be a rabbinic reaction to a Christian text); and the apocalypses, while addressing similar concerns about the origin of evil, speak to the universal human condition rather than specifically Jewish issues.<sup>31</sup> In other words, none of Dochhorn's evidence compels a Jewish provenance.

At the same time, Levison is critical of attempts to pinpoint a Christian provenance based on internal evidence, particularly in the work of Rivka Nir<sup>32</sup> as well as Marinus de Jonge and Johannes Tromp.<sup>33</sup> I am in agreement with Levison on the weaknesses of evaluating an apocryphal work's provenance based on internal evidence, which often devolves into essentialist discussion of what a Jew or a Christian can or cannot believe. If early Christian catalogues of heresies are any indication, Christians (and Jews) were apt to believe nearly anything. Although, in the end, Levison seems partial to a Jewish provenance for the work,<sup>34</sup> the "default position"

<sup>29</sup> Jan Dochhorn, *Die Apokalypse des Mose: Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 149–72.

<sup>30</sup> Jan Dochhorn, "The Motif of the Angels' Fall in Early Judaism," in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings—Origins, Development and Reception*, ed. Reiterer, Tobias Nicklas, and Karin Schöpflin, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), 477–95.

<sup>31</sup> Levison, *The Greek Life of Adam and Eve* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023), 123.

<sup>32</sup> Rivka Nir, "The Aromatic Fragrances of Paradise in the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve* and the Christian Origin of the Composition," *Novum Testamentum* 46 (2004): 20–45; Rivka Nir, "The Struggle between the 'Image of God' and Satan in the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 61 (2008): 327–39.

<sup>33</sup> Primarily Marinus de Jonge and Johannes Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve and Related Literature* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

<sup>34</sup> Levison, *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*, 140–50. He states that the *Apocalypse of Moses* could inform New Testament epistles like Romans and 1John while repeatedly denying direct literary dependence between the two. See also John R. Levison, "1 John 3.12, Early Judaism and the Greek Life of Adam and Eve," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 42 (2020): 453–71.

is to treat the *Life of Adam and Eve* in all its versions as a Christian text, for a simple reason: It is simply unknown outside of Christian transmission.<sup>35</sup> The first Jewish work to even engage traditions from the work is. . . *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer*.

The reason for this extended history is to show that the devil in the Garden is a Christian development. *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* is not merely the first rabbinic work to introduce the idea; it is the first *Jewish* work. *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer*'s source for this tradition—which is not at all evident from the text of the Hebrew Bible—could have been a Christian one, although not necessarily the *Life of Adam and Eve* or a related work (such as the *Cave of Treasures*) because the tradition was ubiquitous. Muslims, like Christians, knew of the partnership between Satan and the serpent, even though the serpent never appears in the Qur'ān. In Muslim retelling, the two characters are always distinct. In fact, Muslim writers were apt to add a new character to the drama: the peacock, who first introduces Iblis to the serpent, although the peacock's presence was not an essential element.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, PRE could have drawn from numerous sources for its rendition of the Fall, both Christian and Muslim—but not Jewish.

## 10.2 The Penitence of Adam

Remarkably, the book of Genesis never depicts Adam and Eve as ever showing contrition for their sin. The typically terse narrative progresses from their transgression to their punishment to the lives of their children Cain and Abel. Israel Lévi, in the first major study of Christian elements in PRE, pointed out that rabbinic literature affirms that Adam was offered the chance to repent but did not.<sup>37</sup> He drew attention to a passage from *Genesis Rabbah*.

ועתה פן ישלח ידו אמר ר' אבא בר כהנא מלמד שפתח לו הקב"ה פתח שלתשובה ועתה אין ועתה  
אלא תשובה היך את אמר ועתה ישראל מה י"י אלהיך שואל מעמך פן אין פן אלא לא

“And now, lest he send forth his hand” (Gen 3:22). R. Abba bar Kahana said: This teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, gave him an opportunity for repentance. “And now” is not “and

35 For the concept of the “default position,” see: Pierluigi Piovanelli, “In Praise of ‘The Default Position’, or Reassessing the Christian Reception of the Jewish Pseudepigraphic Heritage,” *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 61 (2007): 233–50.

36 Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Thaʿlabī, *ʿArāʾis al-Majālis fī Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyāʾ or Lives of the Prophets*, trans. William M. Brinner (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 50–54. For additional sources, see Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muṭarrif al-Ṭarafī, *The Stories of the Prophets*, ed. Roberto Tottoli (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2003), 25 (Tottoli's notes).

37 Israël Lévi, “Éléments chrétiens dans le Pirké Rabbi Eliézer,” *Revue des Études Juives* 18 (1889): 83–89 (87).

now” but “repentance,” as it is written, “And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you,” etc. (Deut 10:12). “Lest” is not “lest” but “no” (*Gen. Rab.* 21:6; cf. the parallel passage in *Num. Rab.* 13:3).<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, the Buber recension of *Midrash Tanhuma*—a much later midrashic work—records a variant of this tradition (*Tazria* 11). It deduces the tradition from Gen 3:19 instead of Gen 3:22, as in *Genesis Rabbah*.

וכשחזר אצל האדם לא חייבו אלא רמז לו לעשות תשובה מנין אמר ר' ברכיה בשם ר' לוי שאמר לו בזעת אפיד תאכל לחם עד שובך אין שובך אלא לשון תשובה שנאמר שובה ישראל כיון שלא עשה תשובה טרדו מגן עדן

When God returned to the man [for questioning], he did not yet hold him accountable but hinted that he should do penance. From where do we learn this? R. Berakiah said in the name of R. Levi: He said to him, “By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread *until your return*” (Gen 3:19). This does not mean “your return” but is the language of repentance, as it is written, “Return, O Israel!” (Hos 14:2). Because Adam did not do penance, God drove him from the Garden of Eden.<sup>39</sup>

Somewhat similarly, a passage from the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Avodah Zarah* 8a, cited in chapter seven), depicts Adam as initially penitent when the first night falls but desists when he realizes this is only the course of nature.

It is Cain, in fact, who first expresses regret for his actions after he learns the penalty for murdering his brother (Gen 4:13–14). According to *Genesis Rabbah*, Adam only understood the power of repentance from the example of his son.

ויצא קין וגו' מאיכן יצא ר' איבו אמר הפשיל דברים לאחוריו ויצא כגונב דעת העיליונים ר' ברכיה בשם ר' אלעזר יצא כמפריס כמרמא בבוראו ר' חננא בר יצחק אמר יצא שמח כמה דתימר יוצא לקראתך וראך ושמח בלבו פגע בו אדם אמר לו מה נעשה בדינך אמר לו עשיתי תשובה ופישרתי התחיל אדם מטפח על פניו כך היא כח התשובה ולא הייתי יודע מיד עמד ואמר מזמור שיר ליום השבת טוב להודות ליי

“Cain went out,” etc. (Gen 4:16). Where did he go? R. Aibu said: He cast the words behind him, and he went out like one who has stolen knowledge from the heavenly powers. R. Berakiah said in the name of R. Eleazar: He went out like a cloven-hooved animal, like one who deceives his creator. R. Hanina b. Isaac said: He went out in joy, as it is written, “He has gone out to meet you, and he will see you and rejoice in his heart” (Exod 4:14). He met Adam, who said to him, “What has been done about your judgment?” Cain said to him, “I have repented, and I have reconciled.” Adam began beating his face. “Thus is the power of repentance! And

<sup>38</sup> Translated from Julius Theodor and Hanoch Albeck, eds., *Bereschit Rabba mit kritischem Apparat und Kommentar*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Itzkowski, 1912–1936), 1:201.

<sup>39</sup> My translation from Salomon Buber, ed., *Midrasch Tanchuma: Ein agadischer Kommentar zum Pentateuch von Rabbi Tanchuma ben Rabbi Abba*, 3 vols. (Vilna: Widow and Brothers Romm, 1885), 3:39 [Hebrew].



I did not know it!" Immediately he stood up and recited the psalm, the song for the day of the Sabbath (Psalm 92): "It is good to confess to the LORD," etc. (*Gen. Rab.* 22:13; cf. *Tanhuma Buber, Bereshit* 25).<sup>40</sup>

When PRE speaks of the penance of Adam, it is diverging—probably consciously—from an established tradition within rabbinic literature. One clue is that PRE is aware of the attribution of Psalm 92 to Adam on the occasion of the first Sabbath. An entire chapter (PRE 18 in the manuscripts; PRE 19 in the printed edition) is dedicated to the exegesis of this Psalm. In this case, Adam composes the psalm after the personified Sabbath intercedes to prevent Adam's execution for his sin. The chapter precedes Adam's observance of the first Sabbath and his act of penance in the river, which finds no parallel in rabbinic literature.

The Christian parallel, in this case, does not come from the *Cave of Treasures*, which does not mention Adam's penance at all. The other Adam books, however, report that Adam immersed himself in a river for an extended period (at least forty days) to atone for his sin. Most versions of the *Life of Adam and Eve* (except the Greek) feature an episode where Adam and Eve perform separate penances in two different rivers: Adam in the Jordan and Eve in the Tigris. Satan, in the guise of an angel of light (cf. 2Cor 11:14), tricks Eve into pre-emptively abandoning her penance. Adam then demands from Satan the reason for his enmity against humanity, and he recounts his fall from heaven after he refused to venerate the newly-created Adam.

The story may not have found its way into the *Cave of Treasures*, but it does appear in the greater *Cave of Treasures* cycle as a part of the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*.

#### **Conflict 20 (Vatican, Arab. 129, ff. 57b–58a)<sup>41</sup>**

فلما كان الصباح اليوم الثامن قال آدم يا حوي نحن  
قد طلبنا أن يهبنا شي من الفردوس فأرسل ملائكته  
جاءوا لنا طلبتنا والآن قومي نمضي إلى البحر الماء  
الذي نظرناه أولاً نقف نصلي ونصوم ونحن فيه  
لعل الرب يتحنن علينا دفعة أخرى إما أن يردنا إلى  
الفردوس وإما أن يهبنا شي وإما يعزينا بأرض غير  
هذه الأرض التي نحن فيها فأنعمت له حوي وقاموا  
خرجوا من المغارة وجاءوا وقفوا على فافة البحر الذي  
كانوا يرموا أنفسهم فيه أولاً ثم قال آدم لحوي تعالي

#### **PRE 20 (JTS 3847, f. 105a–105b)**

באחד בשבת נכנס אדם למימי גיחון העליונים  
עד שהגיעו המים עד צוארו והיה מתענה שבע  
שבתות ימים עד שנעשה גופו כמין ירוקה ואמ'  
חטאתי וידעו כל הדורות שיש תשובה מיד עשה  
תשובה והק'ב'ה' פשט יד ימינו והעביר חטאתו  
מעליו שנ' חטאתי אודיעך ועוני לא כסיתי וגמ'  
סלה מן העולם הזה ומן העולם הבא

<sup>40</sup> My translation from Theodor and Albeck, *Bereschit Rabba*, 1:220.

<sup>41</sup> My translation from Antonio Battista and Bellarmino Bagatti, *Il Combattimento di Adamo: Testo arabo inedito con traduzione italiana e commento* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1982), 65–66 (chapter 20), who print the text of Vatican Arab 129. This corresponds to chapter 32 in Solomon Caesar Malan, trans., *The Book of Adam and Eve: Also Called the Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1882), 34.

انزلي في هذا المكان ولا تطلعي إلى تمام أربعين يوماً حتى آتني إلى عندك وأطلبني من الله بحرقه قلب حتى يغفر لنا وأنا أذهب إلى موضع آخر أنزل فيه وأعمل مثلك ثم إن حوي نزلت كما أمرها آدم وأدم أيضاً نزل إلى الماء ووقفوا يصلوا ويطلبوا من الله أن يغفر دنوبهم ويردهم إلى رتبته الأولى وهكذا قاموا يصلوا إلى تمام خمسة وتلتين يوماً

When it was morning on the eighth day, Adam said: "O Eve! Whenever we asked, [God] gave us anything from Paradise. He sent his angels who brought us what we asked. Now arise, let us go to the sea of water which we first saw [upon leaving Paradise].<sup>42</sup> Let us stand there and we will pray and fast in it. Perhaps the Lord will be gracious to us once again. Either He will return us to Paradise, or He will give us something, or He will comfort us with a land other than this, the land in which we now live." Eve agreed to this. They stood up and went out from the cave [of treasures] and went and stood on the shore of the sea where they had previously tried to throw themselves in.<sup>43</sup> Then Adam said to Eve, "Come, stay in this place and do not leave until forty days have passed, until I come to you. Entreat God with a fervent heart until he pardons us. I will go to another place and stay there and do likewise." Then Eve descended as Adam had commanded her, and Adam also went down to the water. They both stood, and they prayed and entreated God so he would pardon their trespasses and restore them to their original state. Thus, they stood praying until thirty-five days had passed.

On the first day after the Sabbath, Adam entered the waters of the upper Gihon until the water reached his neck. He was fasting there seven Sabbaths of days until his body became like a kind of seaweed (כמין ירוקה). He said, "I have sinned! But all generations will know that there is a possibility of repentance." And so he promptly did penance. The Holy One, Blessed be He, stretched forth his right hand and removed his sin from him, as it is written, "I have sinned! I have made it known to you," etc. (Ps 32:5). It ends: *Selah*, in this world and in the world to come.

<sup>42</sup> Malan, *The Book of Adam and Eve*, 1–2: "And to the north [of the garden] there is a sea of water, clear and pure to when a man washes himself in it, he becomes clean of the cleanness thereof, and white of its whiteness—even if he were dark. And God created that sea of His own good pleasure, for He knew what would come of the man He should make; so that after he had left the garden, on account of his transgression, men should be born in the earth, from among whom righteous ones should die, whose souls God would raise at the last day; when they should return to their flesh; should bathe in the water of that sea, and all of them repent of [their] sins."

<sup>43</sup> This is a reference to an earlier incident where Satan tried to kill the couple. Malan, *The Book of Adam and Eve*, 30: "Then Satan called to Adam and Eve, and said, 'Behold, we go to the sea of water,' and they began to go. And Adam and Eve followed them at some little distance. But when they came

The subsequent chapter describes Satan's deception of Eve in much the same manner as the *Life of Adam and Eve*. Since it has no parallel in PRE, I have not quoted it.

We do not know precisely when the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* was written, only that it existed sometime before the thirteenth century. I have noted in an earlier article the many differences between the *Life of Adam and Eve* and PRE, but there are a few ways that the penitential narrative in PRE 20 more closely resembles the *Life* than the *Conflict*.<sup>44</sup> First, when Adam enters the river (the Jordan in the *Life*; the Gihon in PRE), he is said to walk until the water came up to his neck (*Life* 7:2: *ad collum in aqua*).<sup>45</sup> Second, when Adam exits the water, he has become "like a species of seaweed" from the prolonged exposure to the cold water. The *Life* describes Eve's appearance this way when she comes out of the water (*Life* 10:1: *caro eius erat sicut herba de frigore aquae*).<sup>46</sup> The reason for quoting the *Conflict* instead of the *Life* is because of the conundrum it poses: How did the author of this Arabic text know the *Life of Adam and Eve*, which was never translated into Arabic? The answer to this question is also the answer to how PRE came to know the penitence narrative from the *Life of Adam and Eve*.

Even though the *Life of Adam and Eve* was not available in Arabic translation, Arabic writers were still cognizant of special traditions from this work. The second half of the *Life of Adam and Eve* recounts Seth's quest for the oil of life from the trees of Paradise, his dying father's last request.<sup>47</sup> A summary description of this legend appears in Muslim literature. Theodore Gluck, in a short study of the treatment of Seth in Islamic literature, mentions three works with the legend.<sup>48</sup> Two of them, Ibn Qutayba and Pseudo-Mas'ūdī were discussed in the last chapter on the transmission of the *Cave of Treasures*.

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to the mountain to the north of the garden, a very high mountain, without any steps to the top of it, the Devil drew near to Adam and Eve, and made them go up to the top in reality, and not in a vision; wishing, as he did, to throw them down and kill them, and to wipe off their name from the earth, so that this earth should remain to him and his hosts alone."

44 Gavin McDowell, "The *Life of Adam and Eve* in *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*," in *La Vie d'Adam et Ève et les traditions adamiques*, ed. Frédéric Amsler et al. (Prahins: Éditions du Zèbre, 2017), 161–70.

45 Jean-Pierre Pettorelli and Jean-Daniel Kaestli, *Vita Latina Adae et Evae*, 2 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 2:772 (from the synopsis at the end). See also Gary A. Anderson and Michael E. Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*, 2nd rev. ed. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 9.

46 Pettorelli and Kaestli, *Vita Latina Adae et Evae*, 2:776; Anderson and Stone, *Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*, 12.

47 For the variety of legends on this theme: Esther C. Quinn, *The Quest of Seth for the Oil of Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

48 Theodore Gluck, "The Arabic Legend of Seth, the Father of Mankind" (PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 1968), 70–77.

Here is how Ibn Qutayba tells the legend.

أَنَّ آدَمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ لَمَّا احْتَضَرَ اشْتَهَى قِطْفًا مِنْ قُطُوفِ الْجَنَّةِ فَانْطَلَقَ بَنُوهُ لِيَطْلُبُوهُ لَهُ فَلَقِيَتْهُمْ الْمَلَائِكَةُ فَقَالُوا إِلَى أَيْنَ تُرِيدُونَ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ فَقَالُوا إِنَّ أَبَانَا اشْتَهَى قِطْفًا مِنْ قُطُوفِ الْجَنَّةِ فَقَالُوا أَرْجِعُوا فَقَيِّمُوهُ فَانْتَهَوْا إِلَيْهِ فَقَبَضُوا رُوحَهُ وَغَسَلُوهُ وَخَنَطُوهُ وَكَفَّنُوهُ وَصَلَّى عَلَيْهِ جِبْرِيلُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ خَلْفَ جِبْرِيلَ وَبَنُوهُ خَلْفَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَدَفَنُوهُ وَقَالُوا هَذِهِ سُنَّتُكُمْ فِي مَوْتَاكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ

When Adam, peace be upon him, was dying, he craved fruit from the Garden, so his sons went to seek it for him. The angels met them and asked, "Where are you going, O sons of Adam?" They said, "Our father craves fruit from the Garden." The angels said, "Return, for you have done enough for him." The angels came to him, collected his soul, washed him, embalmed him, and wrapped him in a shroud. Gabriel prayed over him, and the other angels behind Gabriel, and Adam's sons behind the angels. They buried him and said: "This is your custom for the dead, O sons of Adam!"<sup>49</sup>

This statement, incidentally, immediately precedes Ibn Qutayba's citation of Wahb ibn Munabbih regarding Adam's burial in the cave of treasures until the time of the Flood.

An even shorter retelling is found in Gluck's second witness, the *Digest of Marvels* (*Mukhtasar al-Adjā'ib*) or *Akhbār al-Zamān* falsely attributed to al-Mas'ūdī.

ويقال إنه اشتهى قطفاً من عنب الجنة فوجه بعض ولده يسأل له ذلك ممن لقيه من الملائكة فلقبه جبريل عليه السلام فعزاه في أبيه وقال ارجع فإن أباك قد مات

Some say that Adam desired a cluster of grapes from Paradise, and he sent one of his children to ask for it from the first angel that he encountered. Then Gabriel, peace be upon him, met him, consoled him about his father, and said, "Return, for your father is already dead."<sup>50</sup>

Gluck's third witness, Mirkhvand, is a Persian historian of the fifteenth century, which shows, at least, that knowledge of the legend permeated the broader Islamic world and was not just restricted to Arabic letters.

The Muslim narratives, of course, are not exact transcriptions of the quest of Seth. The skeletal retelling of the basic plot suggests an oral transmission rather than a textual appropriation of the tale from the *Life of Adam and Eve*. The story has also been lightly "Islamicized" to provide the aetiology of Muslim burial practices.<sup>51</sup>

49 'Abd Allāh b. Muslim ibn Qutayba, *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif*, ed. Tharwat 'Ukāsha (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1960), 19. Older edition: 'Abd Allāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutayba, *Handbuch der Geschichte*, ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1850), 10.

50 Pseudo-Mas'ūdī, *Akhbār al-Zamān*, ed. Khālid 'Alī Nabhān (Giza: Maktabat al-Nāfidhah, 2013), 79. French translation: Bernard Carra de Vaux, trans., *L'Abrégé des Merveilles* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1898), 83. English translation: Gluck, "The Arabic Legend of Seth," 72–73.

51 See Loren Lybarger, "The Demise of Adam in the *Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā'*: The Symbolic Politics of Death and Re-Burial in the Islamic Stories of the Prophets," *Numen* 55 (2008): 497–535. He points out (510) that embalming is not an Islamic practice and might be a relic of the story that Adam's body was preserved temporarily on Noah's Ark.

The promise of a future Savior as a substitution for the loss of Paradise, which is the function of the episode in most versions of the *Life of Adam and Eve* (and also the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, which adapts the narrative),<sup>52</sup> is entirely—and expectedly—absent. Seth, the son of Adam in the image of God (Gen 5:3), is not even named.

Similarly, the account of Adam's penance in PRE has been "Judaized." The penance no longer takes place in the Jordan over a period of forty days, a combination of factors that recalls Jesus' baptism in the Jordan and his subsequent forty-day fast in the desert (Mark 1:9–13 and parallels). Instead, Adam submerges himself in the Gihon, a river of Paradise (Gen 2:13) which is also the water source of Jerusalem (1Kgs 1:1.33.38.45; 2Chr 32:30; 33:14), for a period of forty-nine days, like the forty-nine years of a jubilee. The story of Eve's failed penance is suppressed, with the result that Adam's penance is accepted by God, who pardons his fault. The consequences of Original Sin—and the need for a future redeemer—are no longer in evidence.

We can learn yet another lesson from the Muslim examples. Authors such as Ibn Qutayba and Pseudo-Mas'ūdī drew upon traditions from both the *Life of Adam and Eve* and the *Cave of Treasures*. The knowledge of traditionists was not restricted to only one Adam book, even if the Adam books in question could not be found in the same language. Even the books that were in the same language, such as the Arabic versions of the *Cave of Treasures* and the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*, could be found in the same manuscript. This is the case of Mingana Syr. 258, from the University of Birmingham (sixteenth century). Folios 1–87b contain the *Hexameron* of Pseudo-Epiphanius and the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* until the marriage of Cain.<sup>53</sup> Within this section would fall the failed penance of Adam and Eve. The manuscript then shifts to the Arabic *Cave of Treasures* (ff. 87b–146a), which continues the story until the time of Christ.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, there are oral and even written channels by which one could have become aware of traditions from several Adam books, providing multiple possible avenues for PRE's knowledge of these traditions.

52 Rémi Gounelle, "La Vie d'Adam et Ève et l'Évangile de Nicodème," in *La Vie d'Adam et Ève et les traditions adamiques*, ed. Frédéric Amsler et al. (Prahins: Éditions du Zèbre, 2017), 145–60, convincingly argues that the *Gospel of Nicodemus* took the episode from the Latin version.

53 This corresponds to Book One in the translation of Malan, *The Book of Adam and Eve*. Cain marries at the beginning of Book Two (104), following the death of Abel.

54 Alphonse Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1933–1936), 1:514–15.

### 10.3 The Burial of Adam

In its narrative of the postlapsarian life of Adam, PRE 20 mentions three different tiers of sacred space. First, there is the Garden of Eden. Second, Adam is expelled “outside the Garden of Eden” (חוץ לגן עדן) but continues to live “on Mount Moriah” (בהר המוריה), the place of his creation, which is “the gate of the Garden of Eden” (שער גן עדן). Third, as his death approaches, Adam decides to build a tomb for himself “outside Mount Moriah” (חוץ להר המוריה). The tomb is the Cave of Machpelah. In rabbinic tradition, this is indeed the grave of Adam (*Gen. Rab.* 58:4.8; *b. Eruvin* 53a), based on exegesis of Qiryat Arba (the “City of Four”), the ancient name of Hebron, where Machpelah is located (*Gen* 23:2). The implication is that Adam is the fourth person—with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—buried in this cave. *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* maintains the tradition regarding Qiryat Arba but does not mention Hebron at all. Its description of the location of Machpelah outside Mount Moriah has led more than one scholar to suggest that the cave is in Jerusalem rather than Hebron.<sup>55</sup> Either way, PRE has incorporated Machpelah into a new tripartite sacred geography of Eden—Moriah—Machpelah, which is like the triple-layered sacred space of Paradise—the Holy Mountain—Golgotha in the *Cave of Treasures*.

In contrast to PRE, earlier rabbinic texts state Adam was buried in Hebron without mentioning the Garden of Eden or the Temple Mount. For example, *Genesis Rabbah* offers numerous explanations for the name Qiryat Arba, only one of which is that Adam and Eve were buried there along with the three patriarchs and their spouses. The city is identified with Hebron.

ותמת שרה בקריית ארבע ארבעה שמות נקראו לה אשכול וממרא קריית ארבע וחברון ולמה קורא אותה קרית ארבע ארבע שררו בה ד' צדיקים ענר אשכול וממרא ואברהם שמלו בה ד' צדיקים ענר אשכול וממרא ואברהם שנקברו בה ארבעה צדיקים אדם הראשון אברהם יצחק ויעקב שנקברו בה ארבע אימהות חוה שרה ורבקה ולאה על שם בעליה שהן ארבעה ענק וג' בני

“Sarah died in Qiryat Arba” (*Gen.* 23:2). It was called by four names: Eshkol, Mamre, Qiryat Arba, and Hebron. Why did they call it Qiryat Arba? Because four righteous men lived there: Aner, Eshkol, Mamre, and Abraham. Because four righteous men were circumcised there: Aner, Eshkol, Mamre, and Abraham. Because four righteous men were buried there: the first Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Because the four matriarchs were buried there: Eve, Sarah,

<sup>55</sup> For example, Helen Spurling and Emmanouela Grypeou, *The Book of Genesis in Late Antiquity: Encounters between Jewish and Christian Exegesis* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 50–54. See also their earlier publication, Helen Spurling and Emmanouela Grypeou, “Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer and Eastern Christian Exegesis,” *Collectanea Christiana Orientalia* 4 (2007): 217–43 (232–38). Others will be noted in the discussion below.

Rebekah, and Leah. After the name of its owners, who were four: Anak and his three sons (*Gen. Rab.* 58:4).<sup>56</sup>

A similar tradition appears in the Babylonian Talmud where two rabbis dispute in what manner the Cave of Machpelah (מכפלה) was “doubled” (כפולה).

מערת המכפלה רב ושמואל חד אמר שני בתים זה לפניו מזה וחד אמר בית ועלייה על גביו בשלמא למאן דאמר זה על גב זה היינו מכפלה אלא למאן דאמר שני בתים זה לפניו מזה מאי מכפלה שכפולה בזוגות ממרא קרית ארבע אמר רבי יצחק קרית הארבע זוגות אדם וחווה אברהם ושרה יצחק ורבקה יעקב ולאה

Regarding the Cave of Machpelah, Rav and Samuel disagreed. One said: “Two chambers, one before the other.” The other said: “A house with a second story above it.” In the end, the one who said, “This is above this,” was correct about “Machpelah.” But the one who said, “Two houses, this one before this one”—how is that “doubled”? It was doubled with regard to couples: “Mamre, the City of Four” (*Gen* 35:27). Rabbi Isaac said: The City of Four Couples—Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah (*b. Eruvin* 53a).<sup>57</sup>

*Genesis Rabbah* has its own tradition about how the cave acquired its name: God had to fold Adam, a man of prodigious size, in half in order to bury him in the cave (*Gen. Rab.* 58:4).

None of these traditions explains the logic behind locating Adam’s grave at Hebron as opposed to anywhere else. For that, one must turn to the Church Father Jerome. He incorporated Adam’s burial at Hebron into the very text of the Vulgate in his translation of Josh 14:15: “Before, the name of Hebron was called Qiryat Arba. Adam, the most great, is interred here among the Anakim” (*Nomen Hebron antea vocabatur Cariat-arbe; Adam maximus ibi inter Enacim situs est*).<sup>58</sup> Jerome has interpreted “the great man” (האדם הגדול) as a reference to Adam, the first man.

Jerome referred to this tradition again several times in his writings. In his *Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim*, Jerome, commenting on Gen 23:2 (the verse cited in *Genesis Rabbah*), he explains that the city is called Qiryat Arba (קרית ארבע) because four (ארבע) people are buried there: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Adam, further indicating that this is stated clearly in the book of Joshua.<sup>59</sup> The same information is repeated in *Epistula* 108, his description of his friend Paula’s pilgrimage

<sup>56</sup> Translated from Theodor and Albeck, *Bereschit Rabbah*, 2:621–22.

<sup>57</sup> My translation from the Vilna Shas.

<sup>58</sup> Latin text quoted from Pieter W. van der Horst, “The Site of Adam’s Tomb,” in *Studies in Hebrew Language and Jewish Culture Presented to Albert van der Heide on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Martinus Ferdinand Jozef Baasten and Reinier Wybren Munk (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), 251–55 (252). The translation is my own.

<sup>59</sup> Jerome, *Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, trans. C. T. R. Hayward (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 56–57.

through the Holy Land, with the important addendum that it was a Jewish tradition: “as the Hebrews say.”<sup>60</sup> *Genesis Rabbah*, which is more or less contemporary with Jerome, demonstrates the veracity of his statement. It is a Jewish tradition rooted in a midrashic interpretation of the Hebrew text—even though the actual midrash has not been preserved.

*Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* is both continuous and discontinuous with rabbinic tradition. As in *Genesis Rabbah*, the Babylonian Talmud, and the outside attestation of Jerome, Adam is indeed buried in Qiryat Arba within the Cave of Machpelah. However, the cave is not in Hebron but “outside Mount Moriah,” that is, near the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. A later chapter, PRE 36, makes the change explicit and even calls attention to it. The context is Abraham’s reception of the three mysterious visitors (Gen 18). He wants to prepare a calf for them, but the animal runs off.

ורץ אחרי בן הבקר וברח מפניו ונכנס למערת המכפלה ונכנס אחריו וראה שם אדם ועזרו שוכבין על מטותיהן ונרות דולקין עליהן וריח טוב עליהן כריח ניחוח לפ"כ חמד מערת המכפלה לאחות קבר ואמ' לבני יבוס לקנות מהם מערת המכפלה בממכר זהב בכתב עולם לאחות עולם ולא קבלו האנשים עליהם וכי יבוסים היו והלא חתים היו אלא לשם העיר היבוס נקראו היבוסים

He ran after the calf, but it fled before him and entered the Cave of Machpelah. He entered after it and saw there Adam and his helpmate lying on their beds, with lamps burning over them and a sweet smell upon them like the smell of fragrance. Therefore, he desired the Cave of Machpelah as a burial plot. He spoke to the Jebusites about purchasing the Cave of Machpelah from them in exchange for gold and a perpetual deed to this portion of the world, but the people did not accept them. Were they Jebusites? Were they not Hittites? They were called Jebusites after the name of the city Jebus (PRE 36, JTS 3847, f. 127a).

Jebus is the ancient name of Jerusalem, as noted a couple times in the Hebrew Bible (Judg 19:10; 1Chr 11:4). The change is not incidental but intentional. The author of PRE seems to think that Adam was buried in Jerusalem, though not on the Temple Mount.

Before delving further into this topic, a point of clarification is necessary. Despite numerous statements to the contrary in secondary literature, no ancient Jewish tradition, rabbinic or otherwise, has ever claimed that Adam is buried on the Temple Mount. For example, Louis Ginzberg, in his monumental *Legends of the Jews* (first published between 1909 and 1938) states that the Greek recension of the *Life of Adam and Eve* (the *Apocalypse of Moses*), locates the grave of Adam at the place of his creation, which, in rabbinic sources, is unambiguously the Temple Mount.<sup>61</sup> The *Apocalypse of Moses*, however, does not mention the Temple. It says

<sup>60</sup> John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1977), 50.

<sup>61</sup> Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, trans. Henrietta Szold and Paul Radin, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003), 1:97–98, n. 137. See y. *Nazir* VII:2, 56b, *Gen. Rab.* 14:8, and PRE 11 and 12.



that Adam was buried in Paradise along with his son Abel (*Apoc. Moses* 40:6). Ginzberg believes this is an error—the scribe intended to write the Temple Mount. In the same work, Ginzberg refers to an oft-repeated tradition in the Palestinian Talmud (y. *Sotah* V:2, 20b; y. *Pesahim* IX:1, 36c; y. *Nedarim* VI:13, 39d–40a; y. *Sanhedrin* I:2, 18d) that at some point the skull of Araunah the Jebusite, from whom David purchased the future site of the Temple (2Sam 24; cf. 1Chr 21), was discovered under the altar. According to Ginzberg, the abbreviation for “Araunah the Jebusite” (אַרְאִי) is in fact a misreading of the abbreviation for “Adam the First” (אָדָם). The basis for this unwarranted emendation is “the widespread legend that Adam was buried in Jerusalem in the place upon which the altar was subsequently erected.”<sup>62</sup> Both cases require changing the text so that the evidence fits the conclusion.

Victor Aptowitz built upon the claims of Ginzberg. In his 1924 article “Les éléments juifs dans la légende du Golgotha,” he argued that the Christian tradition whereby Adam was created at Golgotha (the site of the crucifixion: Matt 27:33; Mark 15:22; John 19:17) and then buried there is, in fact, transplanted from a Jewish tradition that Adam was created from and then buried on the Temple Mount. The common theme is that Adam was created from the place where he was to be buried, based, ultimately, on exegesis of Gen 3:19.<sup>63</sup> Aptowitz cites *Jub.* 3:32 and 4:19, where Adam is expelled to the land of his creation—an otherwise unknown place called Elda—and eventually buried there. He also cites several rabbinic sources stating Adam was created on the Temple Mount. What he is unable to do is connect the two. The closest he comes is a citation of a “Melchizedek fragment” (2*Enoch* 71:35) prophesying that the priest-king will rule in “Ahuzan,” where Adam was created and where he was buried. The provenance of 2*Enoch* already poses a problem, but even if one were to grant it a Jewish origin, it would not prove that Adam was buried on the Temple Mount—only that he was buried in Jerusalem (if “Ahuzan” is indeed Jerusalem).

Joachim Jeremias, writing only two years after Aptowitz, accepts it as a fact that Jews once believed Adam was buried on the Temple Mount. According to him, the locale was transferred to Hebron after Jews were barred from Jerusalem following the Bar Kochba revolt.<sup>64</sup> He later cites the *Life of Adam and Eve*—not only the Greek *Apocalypse of Moses* but the common Latin version—as evidence for the earlier belief.<sup>65</sup> In the Latin *Life* (45:2), Adam says: “Bury me against the garden of God in the field of his habitation” (*sepelire me contra hortum dei in agro habi-*

<sup>62</sup> Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 2:1121, n. 32.

<sup>63</sup> Victor Aptowitz, “Les éléments juifs dans la légende du Golgotha,” *Revue des Études Juives* 79 (1924): 145–62.

<sup>64</sup> Joachim Jeremias, *Golgotha* (Leipzig: Verlag von Edward Pfeiffer, 1926), 2 and 21.

<sup>65</sup> Jeremias, *Golgotha*, 39.

*tationis illius*). That statement could be reasonably interpreted as referring to the Temple Mount. It is also a gloss. The most recent synopsis makes this thunderously obvious, where the text occurs in the common Latin recension but is absent from all the others, including the Greek, Armenian, Georgian, and the older Latin version discovered by Jean-Pierre Pettoirelli.<sup>66</sup> For good measure, it is also missing from the Slavonic.<sup>67</sup>

The basic claims of Ginzberg, Aptowitz, and Jeremias find their echoes in studies up to the present day.

Isaiah Gafni in 1987: “The midrash [PRE 20] here appears to echo those apocalyptic works that return Adam (and ultimately bury him) to the very spot of his creation, which was the Temple.”<sup>68</sup>

Joan Taylor in 1993: “It is extremely likely indeed that the Jewish source material in the *Cave of Treasures* would have placed Adam’s burial on Mount Moriah. This placement is well known in Jewish tradition, as L. Ginzberg has shown.”<sup>69</sup>

Pieter W. van der Horst in 2007: “In Judaism, the tradition that finally became dominant was that the place where Adam was buried was the Temple Mount.”<sup>70</sup>

Loren Lybarger in 2008: “According to the Haggadah, the dust for Adam’s formation was taken from the Jerusalem temple’s altar. It is in this place that Jewish legend says Adam was buried.”<sup>71</sup>

Alain Le Boulluec in 2011: “Louis Ginzberg has well established the Jewish origin of the tradition according to which Adam was buried at the center of the earth, at the place of the altar of the Jerusalem Temple.”<sup>72</sup>

Nikolai Lipatov-Chicherin in 2019: “Reflection on the possible resting place of the first man and common ancestor of the human race tended to look for the most holy site regarded as the centre of the world. The Temple in Jerusalem seemed to many Rabbinic authors to be an

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66 Pettoirelli and Kaestli, *Vita Latina Adae et Evae*, 2:874–75.

67 Anderson and Stone, *Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*, 74.

68 Isaiah M. Gafni, “Pre-Histories’ of Jerusalem in Hellenistic, Jewish and Christian Literature,” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 1 (1987): 5–22 (13).

69 Joan E. Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places: The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 129.

70 Van der Horst, “Adam’s Tomb,” 255.

71 Lybarger, “The Demise of Adam,” 517.

72 Alain Le Boulluec, “Regards antiques sur Adam au Golgotha,” in *Eukarpa: Études sur la Bible et ses Exégètes en hommage à Gilles Dorival*, ed. Mireille Loubet and Didier Pralon (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2011), 355–62 (355). The original French reads: “Louis Ginzberg a bien établi l’origine juive de la tradition selon laquelle Adam aurait été enterré au centre de la terre, à l’emplacement de l’autel du Temple de Jérusalem.”

obvious place, if holiness in the world has a single or major focus rather than being dispersed across many areas.”<sup>73</sup>

Jordan Ryan in 2021: “Other relatively late rabbinic sources locate the burial of Adam on Mount Moriah (*Midrash Psalms* 92:6; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 43:2; PRE 23:31).”<sup>74</sup>

The thread that connects these claims is a simple category error. Second Temple—and subsequently Christian—literature affirm that Adam returned to the place of his creation. No Second Temple or Christian source ever identifies Mount Moriah as that place. Rabbinic sources maintain that Adam was created on the Temple Mount but was buried elsewhere—and for good reason. Several rabbinic traditions touch upon anxiety over corpse impurity on the Temple Mount. The report of Araunah’s skull under the altar directly engages this fear. The Mishnah (*m. Eduyot* 8:5), the Tosefta (*t. Eduyot* 3:3), and the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Zevahim* 113a–113b) all mention a time when bones were discovered on the Temple Mount, prompting an emergency removal. Yael Fisch compares these passages with an episode recounted in Josephus where Samaritans maliciously scatter bones over the Temple courtyard. The priests were obliged to exclude everyone from the Temple and strengthen security measures (*Ant.* XVIII.29–30).<sup>75</sup> Such passages show why a tradition about Adam’s tomb on the Temple Mount would never have developed. It would have directly imputed the purity of the Temple.

This brings us—finally—to PRE and *Cav. Tr.* Both works have been marshalled to support the contention that Adam was buried on the Temple Mount. Aptowitzer cites *Cav. Tr.* as the prime example of his “legend of Golgotha,” a Christianized version of an originally Jewish legend.<sup>76</sup> He also cites PRE as a reflection of this original Jewish version, where Adam was initially buried on the Temple Mount and then later removed to Hebron.<sup>77</sup> Similarly, Jeremias cites both PRE and *Cav. Tr.* as witnesses to the supposedly ancient idea that Adam was buried on the Temple Mount.<sup>78</sup> The two works are connected, but not in the way imagined by these

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73 Nikolai Lipatov-Chicherin, “Early Christian Tradition about Adam’s Burial on Golgotha and Origen,” in *Origeniana Duodecima: Origen’s Legacy in the Holy Land – A Tale of Three Cities: Jerusalem, Caesarea and Bethlehem*, ed. Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony et al. (Leuven: Peeters, 2019), 151–78 (157).

74 Jordan Ryan, “Golgotha and the Burial of Adam between Jewish and Christian Tradition: Text and Monument,” *Scandinavian Jewish Studies* 32 (2021): 3–29. *Midrash Psalms* cites PRE 20 on Adam’s expulsion, while *Pesiqta Rabbati* alludes to PRE 23 (Noah used the altar built by Adam). Neither states that Adam was buried at Moriah.

75 Yael Fisch, “Appendix: Bones in the Temple,” in Tal Ilan and Vered Noam, *Josephus and the Rabbis*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2017), 1:485–92 [Hebrew].

76 Aptowitzer, “La légende du Golgotha,” 148–51.

77 Aptowitzer, “La légende du Golgotha,” 153–54.

78 Jeremias, *Golgotha*, 39.

authors. The *Cave of Treasures* does not merely state that Adam was created at Golgotha and then buried there. There is an intermediary step where Adam lives on a Holy Mountain adjacent to Paradise (see also *Cav. Tr.* 5:18.25; 7:18; 10:6.14; 11:11; 12:8.11.18.19.20; 13:3; 16:13; 17:7.18).

*Cav. Tr.* 5:14–17 (BL Add. 25875, f. 7b)

[14] סבד נפסא ארנב סעסא קא פיוסעס  
איהאעבד ויהאעבד ופיוסעס סמג חלמ, חוסיס  
בד קלח עסא נעיסא [15] סעסא ארנב סעסא  
ספלינסס וסוסא חל פיוסעס ופיוסעס  
[16] סעסא חוסיס בוס פיוסעס סחל  
לס סעסא חוסיס בוס [17] בד ארנבסס ארנב  
סעסא סעסא סבד בוס ארנב וסעסא לססא  
ארנבסס נפסא קא עפסל פיוסעס נוססא  
סעסא סלססא סמג בוס חוסיס  
סבדסס סססא נוססא ססא סלסא נוססא  
סוססא, סססא חוסיס קא

[14] When Adam and Eve left Paradise, its gate (ויהאעבד) was shut. The Cherub stood upon it, carrying a fiery sword. [15] Adam and Eve descended upon a bridge of wind onto the mountain of Paradise (פיוסעס). [16] They found a cave on the summit of the mountain and took shelter within it. [17] Adam and Eve were both virgins. When Adam sought to know Eve, his wife, he took from the borders of Paradise (עפסל פיוסעס) gold, myrrh, and frankincense, and he placed them within the cave. He blessed and sanctified it so that it would be a house of prayer (סלסא ססא) for him and for his children. He called it the cave of treasures (חוסיס).

PRE 20 (JTS 3847, f. 104b)

ויגרש את האדם נגרש ויצא אדם וישב לו חוץ  
לגן עדן בהר המוריה ששער גן עדן סמוך להר  
המוריה משם לקחו ולשם החזירו ממקו' שלקח  
שנ' לעבוד את האדמה אשר לוקח משם

“He drove forth the man” (Gen 3:24). Adam went forth and settled himself outside the Garden of Eden (חוץ לגן עדן), on Mount Moriah (בהר המוריה), which is the gate of the Garden of Eden (עדן), adjacent to Mount Moriah (ההר המוריה), as it is written, “To work the land from which he was taken” (Gen 3:23).

The cave of treasures, where Adam first lives after his expulsion, eventually becomes his tomb. Before that, however, it is a “house of prayer,” a term that invokes the Temple (Matt 21:13 and parallels; cf. Isa 56:7). The Holy Mountain, then, is comparable to Mount Moriah in Jewish tradition. Adam does not remain in the cave of treasures, however. His dying request is to be returned to Golgotha, the center of the earth, from which he was created, which is also comparable to the Temple.

*Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* has a parallel passage where Adam prepares his final resting place. His stated goal, however, is to keep his tomb separate from the Temple or any other kind of sacred space.

Cav. Tr. 6:11–13 (BL Add. 25875, f. 8b)

[11] אדם נשכב ופיתח את לבו ופיתח את  
 מעיו ופיתח את מעיו ופיתח את מעיו, לפי, כחיה  
 חיה [12] אדם נשכב ופיתח את לבו ופיתח את  
 מעיו ופיתח את מעיו ופיתח את מעיו, לפי, כחיה  
 חיה [13] אדם נשכב ופיתח את לבו ופיתח את  
 מעיו ופיתח את מעיו ופיתח את מעיו, לפי, כחיה  
 חיה

[11] [Adam said:] “Once I die, embalm me with myrrh, cassia, and stacte, and place my body in the cave of treasures. [12] Those from all your descendants who remain in that time when you will leave this place, the environs of Paradise (עֵדֶן, פֶּדֶן), will take my body with them and they carry it out and lay it in the center of the earth (בְּתוֹךְ הָאָרֶץ) [13] because there redemption will be effected for me and for all of my children.”

PRE 20 (JTS 3847, f. 105b)

ישב אדם דרש בלבו ואמר כי ידעתי מות תשיבוני  
 ובית מועד לכל חי עד שאני בעודי אבנה לי  
 בית מלון לרבעי וחצב ובנה לו בית מלון לרבעו  
 חוץ להר המריה אמ' אדם הלוחות שהן עתידין  
 להכתב באצבע עתידין מי הירדן לברוח מפניהם  
 גופו שגבלו שתי ידיו ורוח נשמת פיו שנפח באפי  
 ע"א כ"ו שלאח' כן יבואו כל הבריו' ויקחו כל  
 עצמותי ויעשו אותם ע"ז אלא הרי אני מעמיק  
 את ארוני שלמטה לארץ לפ"כ נקראת מערת  
 המכפלה שהיא כפולה מערה לפנין מן המערה  
 ושם הוא נתון אדם ועזרו אברהם ועזרו יצחק  
 ועזרו ויעקב ועזרו לפ"כ נקראת קרית ארבע זוגות  
 ועליהם הוא אומ' יבוא שלום ינוחו על משכבותם  
 הולך נבחוהו וגומ'

Adam sat down, searched his heart, and said, “I know you will bring me to death, to the house appointed for all the living (Job 30:23). While I am still in this world, I will build for myself a resting place for my repose.” So he carved out and built a resting place for his repose outside Mount Moriah (חוץ להר המריה). Adam said, “The Tablets [of the Law] that are destined to be written by the finger [of God]—in the future the waters of the Jordan will flee before them (Josh 3). How much greater, then, is the body that His two hands fashioned and the spirit of the breath of His mouth that He breathed into my nose! After my death, all of humanity will come, and they will take all my bones and render unto them idolatrous worship, unless I inter my coffin deep under the earth.” Therefore, it is called the Cave of Machpelah (מערת המכפלה), for it is double (כפולה), a cave before another cave. There was placed Adam and his helpmate, Abraham and his helpmate, Isaac and his helpmate, and Jacob and his helpmate. Therefore, it is called the City of the Four Couples (קרית ארבע זוגות). About them it is written, “He who walks uprightly shall achieve peace; they shall rest on their beds,” etc. (Isa 57:2).

The gradations of sacred space from both works can be illustrated with the following chart (Table 10.1).

**Table 10.1:** Levels of Sacred Space.

<i>Cave of Treasures</i>	<i>Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer</i>
Paradise	Garden of Eden
The Holy Mountain (Temple and tomb)	Mount Moriah (Temple)
Golgotha (Temple and tomb)	Machpelah (tomb)

*Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* neatly separates the Temple and tomb, but *Cav. Tr.* combines them. The cave of treasures is both a house of prayer and the tomb of Adam, as is Golgotha. It is clearly modeled on Christian shrines where the relics of saints might be kept, as described by Peter Brown.

One only had to enter any shrine which housed a relic of the saints to find oneself in “a fragment of Paradise.” Incessantly lit, at great expense, with oil lamps made fragrant with aromatic substances, the basilicas of the saints [. . .] stood out in a dark, violent, and malodorous world as places where Paradise could be found on earth.<sup>79</sup>

*Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* 20 is a thinly disguised critique of the cult of relics, as noted by Adiel Kadari, who even compares the narrative directly to *Cav. Tr.*<sup>80</sup> He then presses even further.

Nonetheless, in the *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer* narrative, Adam’s body remains inaccessible, buried far below in the depths of the earth. This inaccessibility reflects monotheistic sensitivity that negates any expression of rites directed to any other than God Himself, which it views as idolatrous. It would seem, therefore, that the story of Adam in *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer* is not only reflective of confronting Christian traditions and the rite of saints, a dimension which should not be rejected, it should also be viewed as a metonymy for *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer*’s attitude to myth and mythology as a whole. Along with its development of the mythical dimension while weaving short mythical motifs into a broad, developed myth, in *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer* we also see the mitigating and restraining of radical mythical aspects, which it subordinated to a monotheistic metanarrative.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000*, 10th Anniversary Rev. Ed., (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 162.

<sup>80</sup> Adiel Kadari, “Interreligious Aspects in the Narrative of the Burial of Adam in *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer*,” in *Religious Stories in Transformation: Conflict, Revision and Reception*, ed. Alberdina Houtman et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 82–103 (87).

<sup>81</sup> Kadari, “Interreligious Aspects,” 93–94.

In other words, PRE is not only critiquing the Christian tradition embodied by *Cav. Tr.* It is also constructing its own counter-narrative, one that imitates but contains perceived dangerous elements of the Christian narrative of the biblical past.

The *Cave of Treasures* did not invent Adam's burial at Golgotha. The concept has a long history, going back to Origen's commentary on Matthew.

For some such tradition has reached me that the body of Adam, the first man, was buried there where Christ was crucified so that "just as in Adam all die, so in Christ all are made alive" (1Cor 15:22) so that at that place, "which is called the place of Calvary, that is the place of the head" (Matt 27:33), the head of the human race found resurrection with all people through the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, who suffered there and arose (*Series Commentariorum* §126).<sup>82</sup>

In the Greek version of this quotation, preserved only in *catenae*, Origen ascribes this tradition to "the Hebrews."<sup>83</sup> Unlike the case of Jerome, there is no external support for this claim in Jewish sources. Origen's statement has sometimes been explained as a reference to Jewish-Christians.<sup>84</sup> A simpler explanation is that the purported Jewish origin is an invention designed to impute authority to a tradition, like the bogus assertion that the *Gospel of Nicodemus* and other apocryphal works were written in Hebrew. A more charitable reading is that Origen is referring to a Jewish belief that Adam was buried in Jerusalem (but not the Temple Mount), which is poorly documented but at least plausible. Julius Africanus, a contemporary and correspondent of Origen, makes this precise claim: "It is said that Adam was the first to be buried in the ground from which he was taken. And his tomb was in the ground of Jerusalem, according to what is reported in a Hebrew tradition."<sup>85</sup>

Origen's tradition had a long literary afterlife before it began manifesting itself in physical spaces. Lipatov-Chicherin outlines the tradition's influence on Basil of Caesarea, Pseudo-Athanasius, Jerome (who is critical), and Epiphanius.<sup>86</sup> They are all dependent in some way on Origen's initial report. In the seventh century,

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<sup>82</sup> Origen, *The Commentary of Origen on the Gospel of St Matthew*, trans. Ronald E. Heine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 2:740.

<sup>83</sup> Spurling and Grypeou *The Book of Genesis in Late Antiquity*, 72.

<sup>84</sup> For, example, Oskar Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2002), 185: "In Jewish tradition the tomb of Adam was placed under the rock upon which the second temple was built. The tradition recorded by Origen should therefore be seen as a Jewish 'temple' tradition transferred to Golgotha, which is now seen as the new temple rock. This tradition is attributed to 'Hebrews' (=Jews) by Origen; they could hardly be other than Jewish believers."

<sup>85</sup> Julius Africanus, *Chronographiae: The Extant Fragments*, ed. Martin Wallraff, trans. William Adler (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), 43, n. 1

<sup>86</sup> Lipatov-Chicherin, "Early Christian Tradition about Adam's Burial," 162–74.

however, an actual chapel of Adam was built under the site of Golgotha.<sup>87</sup> Only from this era onward do Christian pilgrims report seeing Adam's grave at Golgotha, such as Epiphanius the Monk in the eighth or ninth century.<sup>88</sup>

*Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* is therefore not harking back to an ancient tradition about Adam's burial on the Temple Mount. It is reacting to a contemporary Christian belief that first achieved popularity as an oral tradition and then became a pilgrimage site within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, a building that had long since become the Christian counterpart to the Jewish Temple.<sup>89</sup> Given that such sites could attract Jewish pilgrims as well as Christians,<sup>90</sup> it was necessary for PRE to delineate the true Temple Mount from the mere tomb of Adam.

## 10.4 The Sacrifice of Abel

In chapter seven, on PRE and *Jubilees*, I indicated that PRE distinguishes itself from earlier rabbinic literature by portraying Adam and his sons as observing Passover. One can now ask why PRE has decided to emphasize the celebration of Passover in the Antediluvian period in the first place. It is linked to the Christian portrayal of Abel and his role in the Christian liturgy, which is itself linked to Passover.

Rabbinic literature before PRE brings up the issue of Abel and Passover at least once. Victor Aptowitz finds in *Gen. Rab.* 22:4 a clue that Cain and Abel may

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<sup>87</sup> Georg Kretschmar, "Festkalender und Memorialstätten Jerusalems in altkirchlicher Zeit," in *Jerusalem Heiligtumstraditionen in Altkirchlicher und Frühislamischer Zeit*, ed. Heribert Busse and Georg Kretschmar (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1987), 29–111 (85–86). See further Ryan, "Golgotha and the Burial of Adam," 22–24.

<sup>88</sup> Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 117: "And in the middle of the Holy City is the holy Tomb of the Lord, and near the Tomb the place of the Skull. There Christ was crucified. Its height is thirty-two steps. And beneath the Crucifixion there is a church, the Tomb of Adam" (*The Holy City and the Holy Places* I).

<sup>89</sup> Hugh Nibley, "Christian Envy of the Temple," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 50 (1959): 97–123, 229–49.

<sup>90</sup> See especially the account of the Piacenza Pilgrim, in Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 85: "From Bethlehem it is twenty-four miles to the Oak of Mamre, the resting-place of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah and also of Joseph's bones. The basilica has four porticoes and no roof over the central court. Down the middle runs a screen. Christians come in on one side and Jews on the other, and they use much incense. On the day following Christ's Birthday, the people of this area celebrate the Deposition of Jacob and David with much devotion, and Jews from all over the country congregate for this, too great a crowd to count. They offer much incense and lights and give presents to those who minister there" (*Travels from Piacenza* 30).



have celebrated Passover, as they do in PRE.<sup>91</sup> The tradition there, however, is very different.

ויהי מקץ ימים ר' אליעזר ור' יהושע ר' אליעזר א' בתשרי נברא העולם ר' יהושע א' בניסן מאן דאמר בתשרי עשה הבל קיים מן התג ועד תנוכה מאן דאמר בניסן עשה הבל קיים מן הפסח ועד עצרת בין כדברי אילו ובין כדברי אילו הכל מודים שלא עשה הבל בעולם יותר מנ' יום

“And it was the end of days” (Gen 4:3). R. Eliezer and R. Joshua disagreed. R. Eliezer said: The world was created in Tishri. R. Joshua said: In Nisan. The one who says in Tishri maintains that Abel lived from Sukkot until Hanukkah. The one who says in Nisan maintains that Abel lived from Passover until Shavuot. Between the two, they agree that Abel was not in the world more than fifty days (*Gen. Rab.* 22:4).<sup>92</sup>

כרזבא חסדא דאדא כרזבא חסדא חסדא  
 ענא חסדא דאדא [18] חסדא דאדא  
 חסדא דאדא חסדא דאדא חסדא דאדא  
 חסדא דאדא חסדא דאדא חסדא דאדא

[14] [Adam said:] “And you, my son Seth, shall be the governor of your descendants. Guide them in purity and holiness and in all manner of piety and separate yourselves from the generations of Cain the murderer.” [15] When the word spread that Adam was dying, all the descendants of his son Seth gathered together and came before him: Enosh, Kenan, and Mahalalel, they and their wives and their sons and their daughters. [16] He blessed them and prayed over them. [17] The departure of Adam from this world happened in the nine hundred and thirtieth year according to the reckoning from the creation, on the fourteenth moon, on the sixth of the month of Nisan, at the ninth hour on the day of preparation [Friday]. [18] In the very hour the Son of Man delivered his soul to his Father on the cross, so too did our father Adam deliver his soul to his Maker and left this world.

The intersection of PRE and *Cav. Tr.* is not merely the prophecy of future events on the eve of Passover but the foundation of particular cults that anticipate these events. In both cases, Abel plays a paradigmatic role. In PRE, he offers the model Passover sacrifice. In *Cav. Tr.*, although it is not obvious in the above passage, the religion of Seth and his descendants is centered around the commemoration of Abel’s death at the hands of Cain, a different kind of model sacrifice after the manner of the common Christian interpretation of Abel as a type of Christ.<sup>93</sup>

Although Adam had already established the cave of treasures as a place of worship (*Cav. Tr.* 5:14, 25–27), his final directives become the basis for the religious practices of the Sethites. They observe two rites: 1) They venerate the *body* of Adam (ܦܪܩܐ ܕܐܕܡ) in the cave of treasures; and 2) They swear on the innocent *blood* of Abel (ܕܡܐ ܕܐܒܠ), an echo of the New Testament (Matt 27:4; cf. Matt 23:35), to avoid contact with the Cainites (*Cav. Tr.* 7:8–13).<sup>94</sup> The two practices are mentioned

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

<sup>93</sup> John Byron, *Cain and Abel in Text and Tradition: Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the First Sibling Rivalry* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 196–204.

<sup>94</sup> 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 argues that

repeatedly throughout the rest of the Antediluvian history (*Cav. Tr.* 7:18–20; 8:13–15; 9:5–7; 10:6–8; 12:11; 13:3–7). After the Flood, Melchizedek reestablishes the cult of Adam at Golgotha and offers bloodless sacrifices of bread and wine (*Cav. Tr.* 23:21; 28:11–12). The proto-Christian religion's emphasis on body, blood, bread, and wine evokes the Eucharist, a rite which is intimately tied to Passover (cf. *Cav. Tr.* 48:9).<sup>95</sup>

*Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* presents an inversion of a specifically Christian typology. In PRE, Adam establishes a proto-Jewish, rather than a proto-Christian, cult on 14 Nisan. In both PRE and *Cav. Tr.*, the cult is based on the sacrifice of Abel. Abel's *offering* establishes the precedent for the future celebration of Passover in PRE. By contrast, Abel's *death* becomes a central part of the proto-Christian religion in *Cav. Tr.* The *Cave of Treasures* does not explicitly connect Abel to Passover, but another Christian text does. The *Life of Abel* (4th–6th c.), a hagiographical Syriac work, is the only text before PRE to date the sacrifice of Cain and Abel to Nisan.

How symbols of our Lord were prefigured in the slain Abel! Abel rejoiced as he went with Cain—just as our Lord Jesus, when he said to the Jews: “I am he whom you seek” (John 18:5.8). The day that Abel died was in Nisan, for it is written that Cain offered up a sheaf, and Abel a lamb: Sheaves and lambs are seen at their best only in Nisan; maybe the day was Friday, too, for it was on a Friday in Nisan that his Lord died. And if the time also agreed, then he would resemble the Lord's Son in all things.<sup>96</sup>

In addition to homilies like this, evocation of Abel's acceptable sacrifice and his proto-martyrdom was a recurring feature in Christian liturgy,<sup>97</sup> including the Syriac

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the oath on the blood of Abel is presented as an alternative to the traditional Christian narrative of redemption. The argument is not convincing for two reasons. First, the oath has no connection to salvation in the sense of life after death. It is designed to maintain the sanctity of the community while preserving the memory of Abel. Second, Abel is an overt “type of Christ” in the Christian tradition, beginning with the New Testament (cf. Heb 12:24). The religion of the Sethites is not a divergence from Christianity but a convergence. He pursues this interpretation in Serge Ruzer and Aryeh Kofsky, *Syriac Idiosyncrasies: Theology and Hermeneutics in Early Syriac Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 87–120 (“Chapter Four: The *Cave of Treasures*: Calvary versus Earthly Paradise”), where he and his co-author add that Golgotha is intended as a place of exile and a poor man's imitation of the cave of treasures. I find this reading completely contrary to the message of *Cav. Tr.* 95 In the discussion of the Passion, the author of *Cav. Tr.* is insistent that the Passover is one of those gifts (along with kingship, priesthood, and prophecy) which had been taken away from the Jews (*Cav. Tr.* 50:18–19; 52:17–18; cf. *Cav. Tr.* 43:8–9). Since Jews do, in fact, continue to celebrate Passover, perhaps the author has in mind the Eucharistic practices of his proto-Christian cult.

96 Translation of Sebastian P. Brock, “A Syriac Life of Abel,” *Le Muséon* 87 (1974): 467–92 (473–74).

97 John Hennig, “Abel's Place in the Liturgy,” *Theological Studies* 7 (1946): 126–41.

liturgy,<sup>98</sup> where, again, it is linked to Passover via the celebration of the Eucharist. *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* therefore appropriates ideas which had only appeared before in Christian literature.<sup>99</sup>

## 10.5 The Twin Sisters

The idea that the children of Adam married their sisters is ancient, at least as old as *Jubilees*. In *Jubilees*, sexual jealousy plays no role in the death of Abel; he dies before he can marry. In rabbinic tradition, however, Cain's murderous rage against Abel is not merely motivated by the episode of the sacrifice but by a woman. *Genesis Rabbah* 22:7 knows this tradition.

ויאמר קין אל הבל אחיו וגו' על מה היו הדינין אמורים [...] יהודה בר' אמר על חוה הראשונה היו הדינין אמר ר' איבו חוה ראשונה חזרה לעפרה ועל מה היו הדינין אמר ר' הונא תאומה יתירה נולדה עם הבל זה א' אני נוטלה וזה אומר אני נוטלה זה א' אני נוטלה שאני בכור וזה א' אני נוטלה שנולדה עימי ויקם קין וגו'

"Then Cain said to his brother," etc. (Gen 4:8). What were they disputing about? [. . .] Judah b. Rabbi said: They were quarreling about the First Eve. R. Aibu said: The First Eve had returned to dust. Then what were they quarreling about? R. Huna said: An extra twin sister was born with Abel. This one said: "I will take her," and this one said, "I will take her." This one said, "I will take her because I am the firstborn!" This one said, "I will take her because she was born with me!" "Then Cain rose up," etc. (Gen 4:8) (*Gen. Rab.* 22:7).<sup>100</sup>

In this account, the brothers have already married two of these sisters. They quarrel over the third, "unclaimed" sister. This motif ties into the greater theme of the section, Cain and Abel's attempt to divide the world between themselves. In *Genesis Rabbah*, Cain and Abel have an equal claim to the third woman. In PRE, however, Cain is jealous of Abel and wishes to take something that is not rightfully his—his brother's wife.

In this regard, the story of the twin sisters of Cain and Abel in PRE is closer to the version found in *Cav. Tr.* than the earlier narrative about twins sisters from *Genesis Rabbah*.

<sup>98</sup> Sebastian P. Brock, "Fire from Heaven: From Abel's Sacrifice to the Eucharist: A Theme in Syriac Christianity," *Studia Patristica* 25 (1993): 229–43.

<sup>99</sup> *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* to Gen 4:3, in turn, follows PRE by presenting Cain and Abel as offering a Passover sacrifice (see chapter four).

<sup>100</sup> Translated from Theodor and Albeck, *Bereschit Rabbah*, 1:213–14.

***Cav. Tr. 5:18–27 (BL Add. 25875, f. 8a)***

18] ለእርሱ ስለ ጥላቻ ጋር ለመጣ ምላሽ ለሰጠው  
 ለእርሱ ስለ ጥላቻ ጋር ለመጣ ምላሽ ለሰጠው  
 19] ጥላቻው ለእርሱ ስለ ጥላቻ ጋር ለመጣ ምላሽ ለሰጠው  
 20] ጥላቻው ለእርሱ ስለ ጥላቻ ጋር ለመጣ ምላሽ ለሰጠው  
 21] ጥላቻው ለእርሱ ስለ ጥላቻ ጋር ለመጣ ምላሽ ለሰጠው  
 22] ጥላቻው ለእርሱ ስለ ጥላቻ ጋር ለመጣ ምላሽ ለሰጠው  
 23] ጥላቻው ለእርሱ ስለ ጥላቻ ጋር ለመጣ ምላሽ ለሰጠው  
 24] ጥላቻው ለእርሱ ስለ ጥላቻ ጋር ለመጣ ምላሽ ለሰጠው  
 25] ጥላቻው ለእርሱ ስለ ጥላቻ ጋር ለመጣ ምላሽ ለሰጠው  
 26] ጥላቻው ለእርሱ ስለ ጥላቻ ጋር ለመጣ ምላሽ ለሰጠው  
 27] ጥላቻው ለእርሱ ስለ ጥላቻ ጋር ለመጣ ምላሽ ለሰጠው

**[18]** Adam and Eve descended from the Holy Mountain to its foothills below. There Adam knew Eve, his wife. **[19]** She conceived and bore Cain and his sister Lebuda with him. **[20]** Again she conceived and bore Abel and his sister Qalimat with him. **[21]** When the children grew up, Adam said to Eve, "Cain should take Qalimat, she who was born with Abel. Abel should take Lebuda, she who was born with Cain." **[22]** Cain said to Eve, his mother, "I shall take my sister, and Abel shall take his sister" because Lebuda was beautiful. **[23]** When Adam heard these words, he became very angry at him and said, **[24]** "It is a transgression of the commandment that you marry your sister who was born with you. **[25]** But the two of you shall take the fruits of the trees and the offspring of the flock. Go to the summit of this Holy Mountain and enter the cave of treasures. Sacrifice there your offerings and pray before God. **[26]** Then you shall be united with your wives." **[27]** It happened that when Adam, the first priest, was ascending

**PRE 21 (JTS 3847, ff. 105b and 106a)**

[105b] ר' מיאשא אומ' נולד קין ותאומתו אשתו עמו ונולד הבל ותאומתו אשתו עמו

[106a] ר' צדוק אומ' נכנסה שנאה גדולה בלבו שלקין על הבל אחיו על שנתרצצת מנחתו ולא עוד אלא שהיתה תאומתו שלהבל יפה בשנים ותמד אותה בלבו ואמ' אהרונ א הבל אחי ואקח אתמאומתו ממנו זנ' ויהי בהיותם בשדה וינסו קין אינ שדה אלא זנא האשה שנמשלה בשדה

**[105b]** R. Miyasha said: Cain was born and his twin sister, his wife, with him. Abel was born and his twin sister, his wife, with him. . .

**[106a]** R. Zadok said: A great hatred entered the heart of Cain for Abel, his brother regarding his offering which was accepted. Not only this but the twin sister of Abel was the most beautiful of women, and he desired her in his heart. He said, "I shall kill Abel, my brother, and take his twin sister from him," as it is written, "While they were in the field, Cain rose up" (Gen 4:8). This is not a field but a woman who is being compared to a field.

the mountain summit with Cain and Abel, his sons, Satan entered into Cain (cf. John 13:27), in order that he might kill Abel, his brother, on account of Lebuda, and also because his sacrifice was rejected and not accepted before God, while the sacrifice of Abel was accepted.

Both passages link the story of the twin sisters with the story of the sacrifice. They also speak of the possession of Cain, when evil (abstract in PRE; personified in *Cav. Tr.*) enters his heart.<sup>101</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, the story of the sisters is one of the most frequently recurring motifs from *Cav. Tr.* in Syriac and Arabic literature. It is unsurprising to also find it in PRE, although it is surprising (and also frustrating) that PRE does not name the sisters, which would help identify the origin of its tradition.

The development of the twin sisters tradition from a fraternal spat to Abel as an innocent victim did not develop along religious boundaries but across temporal and geographical ones. Epiphanius of Salamis, writing in the fourth century, knew a story about the sisters like the one in *Genesis Rabbah* (emphasis mine).

People of their sort tell yet another myth, that the devil came to Eve, lay with her as a man with a woman, and sired Cain and Abel by her. That was why the one attacked the other—from their jealousy of each other and not, as the truth is, because Abel had somehow pleased God. Instead they concoct another story and say, “*Because they were both in love with their own sister, Cain attacked Abel and killed him for this reason.*” For as I mentioned they say that they were actually of the devil’s seed (*Panarion* 40.5.3–4).<sup>102</sup>

The germane section here is not the demonic parentage of Cain and Abel but their motive for fighting: a scarcity of resources—in this case, a woman. Abel, who bears the title “righteous” in Christian literature (derived from Matt 23:35), does not appear in the best light in this tradition. On the contrary, in Epiphanius’ version, he is a child of the devil.

The *Testament of Adam*, which existed by the fifth century, is the earliest known source to name one of the twins commonly found in Syriac and Arabic literature. Adam’s prophecy mentions Abel’s former wife, taken by Cain.

[Adam said]: “You have heard, my son Seth, that a Flood is coming and will wash the whole earth because of the daughters of Cain, your brother, who killed your brother Abel out of

<sup>101</sup> The same dichotomy can be observed in the discussion of the sexual perversions of the Cainites (see below, section 10.6). In PRE 22, the daughters of Cain are under the sway of the Evil Inclination. In *Cav. Tr.* 11–12, the daughters of Cain are possessed by demons, and Satan rules over them.

<sup>102</sup> Epiphanius of Salamis, *The Panarion: Book One*, 287.

passion for your sister Lebuda, since sins had been created through your mother, Eve. And after the Flood there will be six thousand years (left) to the form of the world, and then its end will come" (*T. Adam* 3:5).<sup>103</sup>

The incomplete nature of the reference suggests that it was a well-known narrative, at least in the East, before it became integrated into *Cav. Tr.* and, from there, all dependent works, of which the most significant is the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, which brought the names of the sisters to the West. In all renditions with the story that uses these names (or variants) for the sisters, Cain is manifestly in the wrong, and Abel is a Christlike protomartyr.

## 10.6 The Cainites and the Sethites

As noted in chapter seven, PRE 22 understands Gen 6:1–4 literally, where the “sons of God” are divine beings. However, PRE introduces another tradition which comes from the euhemeristic reading of Gen 6. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* 22 divides the Antediluvian world into the righteous children of Seth and the wicked children of Cain. The distinction between the Cainites and Sethites is not rabbinic. Julius Africanus (d. 240), in his chronicle, is credited with first proposing that the “sons of God” of Genesis were the “sons of Seth” rather than angels.<sup>104</sup> The tradition is widespread in late antique Christian literature, and it has a prominent place in *Cav. Tr.*

Rabbinic tradition also had a euhemeristic understanding of the Fallen Angels, but it differs substantially from the one proposed by Julius Africanus.

ויראו בני האלהים וגו' ר' שמעון בן יוחי קרי להון בני דייניא ר' שמעון בן יוחי מקלל לכל מן דקרי להון בני אלהיא [...] כי טובות הנה אמר יודן טבת כת' משהיו מטיבים אתה לבעלה היה גדול נכנס ובוועלה תחילה הה"ד כי טבת הנה אילו הבתולות ויקחו להם נשים אילו נשואות מכל אשר בחרו זה זכור ובהמה ר' הונא בשם ר' יוסף דור המבול לא נמחו מן העולם עד שכתבו נמומסיות לזכור ולבהמה

“The Sons of God saw,” etc. (Gen 6:2). R. Simeon b. Yohai said: Call them sons of judges. R. Simeon b. Yohai also said: A curse on anyone who calls them sons of the gods! [. . .] “Because they were beautiful” (Gen 6:2). R. Yudan said: “She is beautiful” is written. When they were beautifying a woman for her husband, a noble would enter and sleep with her first, as it is written, “because they were beautiful,” meaning virgins, “and they took for themselves wives,” meaning married women, “from whomever they chose,” meaning

<sup>103</sup> Stephen E. Robinson, “Testament of Adam: A New Translation and Introduction,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, 2 vols. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983–1985), 1:989–95 (994).

<sup>104</sup> Julius Africanus, *Chronographiae*, 48–51.

other men and beasts. R. Huna in the name of R. Joseph: The generation of the Flood was not wiped off the face of the earth until they wrote marriage contracts for men and beasts (*Gen. Rab.* 26:5).<sup>105</sup>

In the Christian tradition established by Africanus, the men (“sons of Seth”) are initially virtuous, but they become ensnared by the wiles of the wicked Cainite women. In *Genesis Rabbah*, it is rather the men who are wicked and the women who are their victims.

*Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* 22’s distinction between the children of Seth and the children of Cain is a break from rabbinic tradition and resembles the Christian one, as found in works like the *Cave of Treasures*.

*Cav. Tr.* 7:1–4 (BL Add. 25875, f. 9a)

[1] ויהי אדם שלשים (שנים) ומאת שנה מכאן אתה  
למד שלא היה קין לא מזרעו ולא מדמות ולא  
כצלמו שלאדם עד שנולד שת והוא היה מזרעו  
ומדמותו וכצלמו שלאדם אביו שנ' בדמותו  
כצלמו ר' שמעון אומ' משת עלו ונתיחסו כל  
דורות שלצדיקים ומקין עלו ונתיחסו כל דורות  
שלרשעים ופושעים ומורדים שמרדו ביוצרך  
שאמרו אין אנו צריכין לנטפי גשמידך ולא לדעת  
דרכיך שנ' ויאמר לאל סור ממנו

[1] Seth became the leader of his people and led them in purity and in holiness. [2] Because of their purity, they received this name which is above all other names, so that they would be called “Sons of God,” they and their wives and their children. [3] Thus they remained on the mountain in all purity and holiness and fear of God. [4] They ascended in place of the rank of demons who fell from heaven, and they were continually praising and worshiping on the foothills of Paradise.

PRE 22 (JTS 3847, f. 106b)

ויהי אדם שלשים (שנים) ומאת שנה מכאן אתה  
למד שלא היה קין לא מזרעו ולא מדמות ולא  
כצלמו שלאדם עד שנולד שת והוא היה מזרעו  
ומדמותו וכצלמו שלאדם אביו שנ' בדמותו  
כצלמו ר' שמעון אומ' משת עלו ונתיחסו כל  
דורות שלצדיקים ומקין עלו ונתיחסו כל דורות  
שלרשעים ופושעים ומורדים שמרדו ביוצרך  
שאמרו אין אנו צריכין לנטפי גשמידך ולא לדעת  
דרכיך שנ' ויאמר לאל סור ממנו

“Adam lived a hundred and thirty years,” etc. (*Gen* 5:3). From here, you learn that Cain was not of the descendance or the likeness or the image of Adam. When Seth was born, he was of the descendance and the likeness and the image of Adam. R. Simeon said: From Seth arose and were descended all the generations of the righteous, but from Cain arose and were descended all the generations of the wicked and criminals and rebels, who rebelled against their Creator when they said, “We have no need of the drops of your rain or the knowledge of your ways!” As it is written, “They said to God, ‘Depart from us!’” (*Job* 21:14).

A more specific parallel between PRE and *Cav. Tr.* can be found in the description of the exhibitionism of the daughters of Cain.

<sup>105</sup> Translated from Theodor and Albeck, *Bereschit Rabbah*, 1:247–48.





significant role in the story. The children of Seth remain unsullied by any contact with the Cainite women, yet they die in the Flood anyway.

This is not an innovation or a mistake on the part of PRE. Although *Cav. Tr.* 15 rails against the Watcher tradition, other Syriac writers harmonized the Second Temple and later Christian traditions without seeming perturbed by their content or the contradictions created by their harmonization. Such is the case with a *scholion* of Jacob of Edessa (emphasis mine).

From the tenth *scholion*, when he [Jacob of Edessa] comments about *those giants regarding whom it is written that they were born before the flood to the daughters of Cain*. Some tales about them are recorded and recounted which are fuller than those belonging to the Hebrews. (These relate) that since God wished to destroy them and their wickedness even prior to the total wrath (expressed) by means of the flood, he allowed them to perish through the evil machinations of their (own) minds: They fell upon each other as if waging war, exercising neither reason nor sense [. . .] Thus the destruction of those arrogant and insolent giants—the evil offspring of those who violated their covenant, being those who were *illicitly born from the daughters of Cain*—transgressed in such a manner that many stadia of the earth were rendered putrid by their blood and by the foul discharge from their (rotting) carcasses. Large and mighty heaps of their bones were compiled from the corpses. These things are in accordance with what the tale has said. It happened that the visible signs of this destruction remained evident until the flood (emphasis mine).<sup>106</sup>

Apparently, in the thought of Jacob of Edessa, only the Cainite women bore giants. The Sethites did not have this problem (unless they, and not the Watchers, are the fathers of the giants—the *scholion* does not say).

Jacob of Edessa was not alone in this analysis. Michael the Syrian has conserved a passage from Annianus of Alexandria that makes the same exegetical leap of combining the two traditions, though not exactly coherently (emphasis mine).

In that year [the 40th of Iared] the Benai Elohim came down from the mountain Hermon, being in number two hundred. For, seeing that they had not returned to paradise, they were discouraged and so abandoned their angelic way of life, and they were smitten (with a desire for marriage). And they set up a king for themselves, whose name was Semiazos. Concerning these Annianos relates that they came down from the mountain Hermon to their brethren, the children of Seth and Enosh, but these were unwilling to give them any wives, on the grounds that they had transgressed (their) promise. *And so they went to the children of Cain and took wives; and they gave birth to great giants*, that is, plunderers, mighty and renowned assassins, and audacious bandits.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Quoted from John C. Reeves, “Jacob of Edessa and the Manichaean *Book of Giants*?,” in *Ancient Tales of Giants from Qumran and Turfan: Contexts, Traditions, and Influences*, ed. Matthew J. Goff, Loren T. Stuckenbruck, and Enrico Morano (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 199–211 (201).

<sup>107</sup> Quoted from Sebastian P. Brock, “A Fragment of Enoch in Syriac,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 19 (1968): 626–31 (627), citing Book I, chapter 3 of Michael’s chronicle (discussed in chapter six).

Annianus lived in the fifth century and wrote in Greek, but Michael wrote in Syriac in the eleventh century. He and Jacob are apparently referring to the same tradition, though probably from different sources. The conflated tradition had a certain longevity beyond when one might expect to find such a tradition acceptable. In addition to *Cav. Tr.*, these two Syriac examples serve as potential model for PRE or, at least, demonstrate that traditions about the fallen angels and the Cainites/Sethites were well-known and sometimes harmonized.

## 10.7 Adam in the Ark

Although *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* does not recount the translation of Adam's body aboard Noah's Ark and its subsequent reburial—the core narrative of *Cav. Tr.*—it does know an obscure motif from the story of the Flood which is primarily found in works dependent on *Cav. Tr.* Genesis mentions three decks of Noah's Ark without further specification (Gen 6:16). Both rabbinic literature and Christian authors proposed different plans for the arrangement of the decks. Helen Spurling and Emmanouela Grypeou have shown that PRE differs from the schemes proposed in *Gen. Rab.* 31:11 and the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Sanhedrin* 108b).<sup>108</sup> *Genesis Rabbah* divides the three decks into 1) waste, 2) clean animals and humans, and 3) unclean animals, while the Talmud proposes 1) waste, 2) animals, and 3) people.

The plan of the Ark in PRE follows neither *Genesis Rabbah* nor the Talmud. Its division of the Ark is identical to the one found in *Cav. Tr.*

***Cav. Tr. 18:1–6* (BL Add. 25875, f. 17a)**

[illegible]

**PRE 23 (JTS 3847, f. 107b)**

ומדור כל בהמה וחיה ביציע התחתונה ומדור כל העופות במעלה שניה ומדור כל שקצים ורמשים במעלה שניה ובני אדם במעלה שלישית מכן אתה למד ששלוש מאות וששים וששה מיני בהמה וחיה בארץ וג' מאות וס' וש' מיני עופות בארץ וג' מאות וס' וששה מיני שקצים ורמשים בארץ הרי אלו ביציע התחתונה וכן במעלה שניה ובמעלה שלישית שנ' תחתיים שניים ושלישים תעשה

**108** Spurling and Grypeou, “Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer and Eastern Christian Exegesis,” 238–42.

אם כל מהלך נקל כלל חכמה  
 והכלל כלל חכמה [6] והכלל  
 חכמה שלל חכמה חכמה חכמה

[1] Noah's entrance into the Ark was on a Friday in the blessed month of Iyyar [2] on the seventeenth, on the day of preparation. In the morning, animals and cattle entered the into the lower deck. At noon, birds and all manner of reptiles entered into the middle deck. At dusk, Noah and his sons entered the eastern side of the Ark, while his wife and the wives of his sons entered the western side of the Ark. [3] The body of Adam was placed in the middle of the Ark so that all the mysteries of the Church would be depicted in it. [4] Thus, in a church, women are in the west, and men are in the east, so that the men cannot see the faces of the women, and the women cannot see the faces of the men. [5] Thus even in the Ark, the women were in the western side, and the men were in the eastern side. [6] Just as the *bema* [lectern] is in the middle, the body of Adam our father was placed [in the middle].

The dwelling of all the cattle and the other animals was in the lower gallery. The dwelling of all the birds was on the second level. The dwelling of all detestable (שקצים) and creeping things was in the second level, and human beings were on the third level. From here, you learn that 366 types of cattle and other animals were in the land, and 366 types of birds were in the land, and 366 types of detestable and creeping things were in the land. Thus, these were in the lower gallery and also on the second level and also on the third level, as it is written, "You shall make a lower, a second, and a third floor" (Gen 6:16).

In fact, PRE and *Cav. Tr.* have another commonality here that was not pointed out by Spurling and Grypeou. This manuscript of PRE has added "detestable" (שקצים) and "creeping" (רמשים) things to the middle deck, cognate to the reptiles in *Cav. Tr.* 18:2. In almost all other manuscripts of PRE, they (and, sometimes, just the שקצים) are found on the topmost level, with human beings! This is likely the original reading, as evidenced by the schematic division of 366 types of cattle/birds/detestable things right after. Is it possible the scribe of JTS 3847 altered the tradition to conform to the one from *Cav. Tr.*? Or does JTS 3847 preserve the original reading, and all other manuscripts have altered it? Or is there some other explanation?

A major difference between the two accounts is *Cav. Tr.*'s placement of Adam's body in the Ark, dividing the women from the men and turning the Ark into an image of a Syriac church. In fact, I would argue that PRE has replaced Adam's body and its liturgical function with the שקצים, which is not merely a designation for hateful living things but also a term for idols.<sup>109</sup> This is another possible polemic

<sup>109</sup> See Elliott Horowitz, *Reckless Rites: Purim and the Legacy of Jewish Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 157–58, who discusses this term in relation to the pectoral cross worn by Haman in PRE 50.

against the cult of saints. If so, it is a particularly clever polemic. The most famous biblical abomination is the “abomination of desolation” (שִׁקּוּץ מְשׁוּמָה) from the book of Daniel (Dan 11:31, 12:11; cf. Matt 24:15), which signifies the defilement of the Temple. The *Cave of Treasures* associates Adam’s body with sanctuaries, whether in the cave of treasures, within the Ark, or on Golgotha. The single word שקק could be an oblique reference to the cult of Adam in *Cav. Tr.* and, by extension, relics or even the Eucharist. The body of Adam is an abomination—a source of corpse impurity *and* an idol—which *Cav. Tr.* claims to be an object of adoration on its version of the Temple Mount.

Jews (and Muslims) considered veneration of the dead to be a particularly abhorrent aspect of Christianity. The Judeo-Arabic *Polemic of Nestor the Priest*, written about a century after PRE, provides a stark example.

You put your dead in your churches, then you anoint the dead bones and claim to cleanse them by so doing [ . . . ] You believe that such deeds will get you closer to Paradise, but upon my life! You are falling further away from Paradise, and it is Hell that you will enter, you and all your people! Shame on you, in this world and in the next! How, with such a law and such a creed, can you hold your heads high among the nations? Your obvious purpose is to exhibit your hatred of the Jews, so as to abolish the law of Moses, peace be on him.<sup>110</sup>

*Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* could be providing a polemic along the same lines, although in a much subtler key.

If this explanation does not convince, the similar design of the Ark remains a compelling parallel between PRE and *Cav. Tr.* As Spurling and Grypeou have indicated, this tripartite division ultimately derives from Ephrem the Syrian’s *Hymns on Paradise*, one of the sources of *Cav. Tr.*<sup>111</sup> The same tradition is transmitted in works based on *Cav. Tr.*, such as the Arabic *Catena* to Genesis.<sup>112</sup> However, other Syriac writers, including Theodore bar Koni and Isho’dad of Merv (both East Syrian), proposed completely different divisions for the three decks of the Ark, where reptiles are in the bottom compartment, wild animals in the middle, and humans, tame animals, and birds at the top.<sup>113</sup> This isolates *Cav. Tr.* and dependent sources as a specific stream within Syriac tradition—and *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* within that tradition.

<sup>110</sup> Translation of Lasker and Stroumsa, *The Polemic of Nestor the Priest*, 1:77.

<sup>111</sup> Spurling and Grypeou, “Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer and Eastern Christian Exegesis,” 242.

<sup>112</sup> Spurling and Grypeou, “Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer and Eastern Christian Exegesis,” 241. This work was discussed in the previous chapter.

<sup>113</sup> Spurling and Grypeou, “Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer and Eastern Christian Exegesis,” 242.

## 10.8 Abraham and Melchizedek

*Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* places an emphasis on Melchizedek not found in other rabbinic writings. In PRE 8, the author identifies Shem with Melchizedek, as commonly found in rabbinic literature. This identification is reinforced in PRE 27, which claims that Abraham met with Shem, rather than Melchizedek, following the war of the kings (cf. Gen 14:18–20). *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* 29 adds a new episode, not found in older rabbinic literature, where Shem/Melchizedek circumcises Abraham on Yom Kippur. This narrative is both unusual and an unambiguously positive portrayal of the priest-king, whose reception in rabbinic literature is often more reserved.

An example of rabbinic ambivalence towards Melchizedek appears in *Gen. Rab.* 44:7, which addresses the priest-king's encounter with Abraham in Gen 14:18–20. Interestingly, *Genesis Rabbah* presumes the identification of Shem with Melchizedek (see also *Gen. Rab.* 56:10). At no point does *Genesis Rabbah* attempt to explain or justify this identification.

אל תירא אברם ממי נתיירא ר' ברכיה אמר משם נתיירא הה"ד ראו איים וייראו מה איים הללו מסויימים בים כך היו אברהם ושם מסוומים בעולם וייראו זה נתיירא מזה וזה נתיירא מזה תאמר שיש בלבו עלי נתיירא מזה תאמר שיש בלבו עלי שהרגתי את בניו וזה נתיירא מזה תאמר שיש בלבו עלי שהעמדתי רשעים קצות הארץ זה שריו בקיצו שלעולם וזה שריו בקיצו שלעולם קרבו ויאתיון זה קרב אצל זה וזה קרב אצל זה איש את רעהו יעזרו זה עוזר את זה וזה עוזר את זה בברכות ויברכהו ויאמר ברוך אברם וגו' וזה עוזר את זה במתנות ויתן לו מעשר מכל ויחזק חרש זה שם שעשה את התיבה את צורף זה אברהם שצרפו הקב"ה בכבשן האש מחליק פטיש את הלם פעם שהחליק פטישו והלם כל באי העולם בפעם אחת ואומר לדבק טוב הוא אילו אומות העולם שאומרים מוטב לידבק באלוהו שלאברהם ולא בעבודה זרה שלנמרוד ויחזקהו במסמרים חזק אברהם את שם במצוות ובמעשים טובים לא ימוט אברהם

“Do not be afraid, Abram” (Gen 15:1). Of whom was he afraid? R. Berakiah said: He was afraid of Shem. As it is written, “The islands see and are afraid” (Isa 41:5). Just as these islands stand out in the sea, so Abraham and Shem stand out in the world. “And are afraid.” They were afraid of each other. Abraham was afraid of Shem, thinking, “He must harbor resentment against me because I killed his descendants.” Shem was afraid of Abraham, thinking, “He must harbor resentment against me because I brought up wicked descendants.” “The ends of the earth” (Isa 41:5). Each one was situated at the end of the earth. “They drew near and came together” (Isa 41:5). They drew near to each other. “A man and his neighbor will help each other” (Isa 41:6). They helped each other. Shem helped Abraham with blessings: “And he blessed him and said, ‘Blessed are you, Abram,’” etc. (Gen 14:19). Abraham helped Shem with gifts: “And he gave him a tenth of everything,” (Gen 14:20). “The craftsman”—this is Shem, who built the Ark—“strengthens the refiner” (Isa 41:7)—this Abraham, whom the Holy One, Blessed be He, refined in the fiery furnace. “The one who smooths with a hammer encourages the one who smites the anvil” (Isa 41:7), for his hammer smoothed and beat into one path all who come into the world, saying “Joining is good” (Isa 41:7). These are the nations of the world, who say, “It is good to be joined to the God of Abraham and not to the idolatry of Nimrod.” “And he strengthened it with nails” (Isa 41:7).

Abraham strengthened Shem in the commandments and in good deeds, and Abraham did not waver (Isa 41:7). (*Gen. Rab.* 44:7).<sup>114</sup>

This passage presents Melchizedek (or, rather, Shem) as aligned with the kings Abraham had just defeated to rescue his nephew Lot and other captives (Gen 14). They approach each other apprehensively, like Jacob and Esau later in Genesis (Gen 33), and the exchange of blessings and gifts is recast as a sort of peace treaty. In addition to this, Abraham appears to use the opportunity to draw people to his religion and away from the idolatry of Nimrod (cf. *Gen. Rab.* 38:13). The contrast between Abraham's God and idolatry is drawn out in the verses from Isaiah which *Genesis Rabbah* is interpreting throughout this passage (Abraham is mentioned in the very next verse, Isa 41:8). Shem/Melchizedek, who is consistently portrayed in the Midrash as a just man (cf. *Gen. Rab.* 56:10), also seems to benefit from this religious instruction. If he was good before, he is better now because of Abraham.

Shem/Melchizedek's subservience to Abraham is also found in *Leviticus Rabbah* (25:6) and eventually (and most famously) in the Babylonian Talmud—but with a twist. Shem is not only below Abraham, but he has committed a grievous fault by blessing Abraham before blessing God, an error that costs him the priesthood.

אמר רבי זכריה משום רבי ישמעאל ביקש הקב"ה להוציא כהונה משם שנאמר והוא כהן לאל עליון כיון שהקדים ברכת אברהם לברכת המקום הוציאה מאברהם שנאמר ויברכהו ויאמר ברוך אברם לאל עליון קונה שמים וארץ וברוך אל עליון אמר לו אברהם וכי מקדימין ברכת עבד לברכת קונו מיד נתנה לאברהם שנאמר נאם ה' לאדני שב לימיני עד אשית אויביך הדום לרגליך ובתריה כתיב נשבע ה' ולא ינחם אתה כהן לעולם על דברתי מלכי צדק על דיבורו של מלכי צדק והיינו דכתיב והוא כהן לאל עליון הוא כהן ואין זרעו כהן

R. Zechariah said in the name of R. Ishmael: The Holy One, Blessed be He, sought to bring forth the priesthood from Shem, as it is written, "He is the priest of God Most High" (Gen 14:18). When he [Shem] placed the blessing of Abraham before the blessing of God (המקום),<sup>115</sup> He brought forth the priesthood from Abraham instead. It is written, "He blessed him and said, 'Blessed be Abram before God Most High, the creator of heaven and earth. And blessed is God Most High'" (Gen 14:19–20). Abraham said to him, "Who are they that place the blessing of the servant before the blessing of his master?" Immediately, God gave the priesthood to Abraham, as it is written, "The LORD said to my lord, 'Sit at my right hand until I set your enemies as a footstool for your feet'" (Ps 110:1). After this, it is written, "The LORD has sworn, and he will not renounce: You are a priest forever according to the order (דברתי) of Melchizedek" (Ps 110:4). That is, because of the speech (דיבור) of Melchizedek. Thus, it is written, "He was priest of God Most High" (Gen 14:18). He was a priest, but his children were not priests (*b. Nedarim* 32b; cf. *Lev. Rab.* 25:6).<sup>116</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Translated from Theodor and Albeck, *Bereschit Rabbah*, 1:429–30.

<sup>115</sup> Literally "the place." This is an epithet for God derived from Esth 4:14: "Deliverance will come to the Jews from another place."

<sup>116</sup> My translation from the Vilna Shas.

The transfer of the priesthood from Shem to Abraham has less to do with explaining how Abraham's descendants, the Levites, obtained this special privilege than it is about neutralizing the Christian interpretation of Psalm 110, the most frequently quoted psalm in the New Testament. The Epistle to the Hebrews dedicates an entire chapter (Heb 7) to the exegesis of Ps 110:4, explaining how Jesus, though a scion of David from the tribe of Judah, nevertheless belonged to a priestly class anterior to and greater than the levitical priesthood. The argument is grounded in the detail that Abraham offered a tithe to Melchizedek, acknowledging the priest-king as his superior. The Talmud has turned this entire reasoning on its head.

In PRE 29, however, the ambivalence surrounding Shem/Melchizedek has vanished. The portrayal of Melchizedek is wholly positive, and he plays a new role as Abraham's *mohel*, a role not mandated by Scripture or Tradition. In this new capacity, he resembles the Melchizedek of *Cav. Tr.*, a Christian priest *avant la lettre* who initiates Abraham into the “holy mysteries” (קדוּשָׁה קְדִימָה).

*Cav. Tr. 28:8–13* (BL Add. 25875, f. 25a–25b)

[8] ከእነዚህ ጥያቄዎች መካከል አንዱም ሲሆን ሌላው ደግሞ የጥያቄው አጠቃላይ ማረጋገጫ ማቅረብ ነው።  
 [9] ይህም ማረጋገጫ በጥቅምት 1998 ዓ.ም. የፍትሕ ሚኒስቴር በደብዳቤ ቁጥር 10/1998  
 ዓ.ም. ለፍትሕ ሚኒስቴር የቀረበው የጥያቄው አጠቃላይ ማረጋገጫ ነው።  
 [10] ይህም ማረጋገጫ በጥቅምት 1998 ዓ.ም. የፍትሕ ሚኒስቴር በደብዳቤ ቁጥር 10/1998  
 ዓ.ም. ለፍትሕ ሚኒስቴር የቀረበው የጥያቄው አጠቃላይ ማረጋገጫ ነው።  
 [11] ይህም ማረጋገጫ በጥቅምት 1998 ዓ.ም. የፍትሕ ሚኒስቴር በደብዳቤ ቁጥር 10/1998  
 ዓ.ም. ለፍትሕ ሚኒስቴር የቀረበው የጥያቄው አጠቃላይ ማረጋገጫ ነው።  
 [12] ይህም ማረጋገጫ በጥቅምት 1998 ዓ.ም. የፍትሕ ሚኒስቴር በደብዳቤ ቁጥር 10/1998  
 ዓ.ም. ለፍትሕ ሚኒስቴር የቀረበው የጥያቄው አጠቃላይ ማረጋገጫ ነው።  
 [13] ይህም ማረጋገጫ በጥቅምት 1998 ዓ.ም. የፍትሕ ሚኒስቴር በደብዳቤ ቁጥር 10/1998  
 ዓ.ም. ለፍትሕ ሚኒስቴር የቀረበው የጥያቄው አጠቃላይ ማረጋገጫ ነው።

**[8]** When he returned from the war of the kings, God's providence summoned him [Abraham], and he crossed the mountain of Jebus. **[9]** Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, came out to meet him. **[10]** When he saw Melchizedek, Abraham hurried and fell on his face, prostrating to him. Then he from the ground, embraced him, and kissed him. He was blessed by him. **[11]** Melchizedek blessed Abraham so that he would share in the holy mysteries, the bread of offering and the wine of salvation. After Melchizedek blessed him and shared the holy mysteries with him,

**PRE 29 (JTS 3847, f. 114b)**

רבן גמליאל אומ' שלח אברהם אבינו וקרא לשם בן נוח ומל בשר ערלתו שלאבינו אברהם ואת ערלת ישמעאל בנו שנ' בעצם היום הזה נמול אברהם וישמעאל בנו מה הוא בעצם היום הזה בגבורת השמש ובחצי היום ולא עוד אלא בעשור לחדש וביום הכפורים ביום הכפורים כת' כל מלאכה לא תעשו בעצם היום הזה ובאברהם כתיו' בעצם היום הזה הוא אומ' ביום הכפורים נמול אברהם ר' תחנא אומ' ובכל שנה ושנה הק' ע"ה רואה דס ברייתו שלאבינו אברהם ומכפר על עונותיהן של ישראל שנ' כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם וג'

Rabban Gamaliel said: Abraham our father sent and called for Shem the son of Noah. He circumcised the flesh of the foreskin of our father Abraham and the foreskin of Ishmael his son, as it is written, “On the very day (בַּעֲצֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה) Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised” (Gen 17:26). What does “On the very day” mean? During the strength of the sun, in the middle of the day. Not only this but in the tenth month on the Day of Atonement (יּוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים). About the Day of Atonement, it is written, “You shall not do any work on that very day (בַּעֲצֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה) (Lev 23:28). About Abraham, it is written, “On that very



[12] then God spoke with Abraham and said to him, [13] “Your reward is very great because Melchizedek blessed you and shared with you the bread and the wine. I myself will also bless you and greatly increase your posterity.”

day” (Gen 17:23.26). Therefore, he says Abraham was circumcised on the Day of Atonement. R. Tachanah said: Every year the Holy One, Blessed be He, sees the blood of his covenant (דם בריתו) of our father Abraham and pardons the transgressions of Israel, as it is written, “On that day he will pardon you,” etc. (Lev 16:30).

The tradition in PRE stands out for a few reasons. First, it is gratuitous. There is no reason why Shem/Melchizedek should circumcise Abraham. Circumcision is not a priestly prerogative. *Genesis Rabbah*, for example, presumes that Abraham circumcised himself (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 46:5). Second, circumcision is more frequently associated with Passover than the Day of Atonement. The two are already linked in the Torah: One must be circumcised to eat the Passover meal (cf. Exod 12:43–44). Even more astounding, the prooftext PRE uses to link circumcision to the Day of Atonement, the not especially common phrase “on that very day” (בעצם היום הזה), appears no fewer than three times in the chapter outlining the instructions for the first Passover (Exod 12:17.41.51). While the same phrase appears four times in the prescriptions for the Day of Atonement (Lev 23:21.28.29.30), the exact same argument PRE uses to justify Abraham’s circumcision on Yom Kippur could be made to say that Abraham was circumcised on Passover.

Depicting Shem/Melchizedek as a priest on the Day of Atonement invites immediate comparison to the presentation of Melchizedek in Hebrews who prefigures Christ as a new high priest offering a new sacrifice of atonement. Furthermore, Melchizedek serves as a model for Christian priesthood, especially since his offering of bread and wine (Gen 14:18) was widely interpreted as a prefiguration of the Eucharist. According to Spurling and Grypeou, the first Christian author to make this argument is Clement of Alexandria (d. 215), who simply calls the consecrated food a “type of the Eucharist” (*Stromata* IV.25).<sup>117</sup> Similar sentiments are echoed throughout patristic literature in the works of Eusebius, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Jerome, Cyril of Alexandria, and John of Damascus. By means of this typology, the Christian Melchizedek was linked not only to the Day of Atonement but also to Passover, when the rite of the Eucharist was instituted.

The *Cave of Treasures* goes far beyond typological arguments. Melchizedek is not merely a figure of Christian priesthood, he is a literal Christian priest who gives Abraham the Eucharist, effectively making him a Christian as well. This is part of *Cav. Tr.*’s overall argument that the original religion of humanity was a kind of proto-Christianity, which first manifests itself as the Antediluvian cult centered around the veneration of the body of Adam and the blood of Abel. Melchizedek

117 Spurling and Grypeou, *The Book of Genesis in Late Antiquity*, 225.

continues this proto-Christianity through his monastic existence and his offering of bloodless sacrifices, made explicit in Shem's instructions to him in *Cav. Tr.* 23:20–21 (BL Add. 25875, f. 21a–21b): “Dwell here faithfully and do not abandon this place all the days of your life. A wife you shall not take, and your hair you shall not cut. Blood you will not spill in this place, and you will not sacrifice here animals or birds, but bread and wine will be your faithful offering.” (אֵת הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה תִּשְׁכַּח בְּאֵת הַיּוֹם וְלֹא תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ. אִשָּׁה לֹא תִּקַּח וְשֵׁעַר לֹא תִּקַּח וְדָם לֹא תִּשְׁפֹּךְ בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְחַיָּוִת לֹא תִּזְבֹּחַ וְעוֹלִים לֹא תִּזְבֹּחַ. כֶּלֶם וְיַיִן יִהְיוּ לְעוֹלָתְךָ הַנֶּאֱמָרָה בְּאֵת הַיּוֹם.)

Marcel Simon, in an article on the Christian portrait of Melchizedek, draws attention to the way that works like *Cav. Tr.* and the Pseudo-Athanasian *Story of Melchizedek*<sup>118</sup> radically alter patristic exegesis by interpreting Christian typologies as historical realities.

To consider Pseudo-Athanasius and the *Cave of Treasures* more closely, we recognize here a completely new, and very curious, aspect of Christian exegesis of the Old Testament. Until now—and patristic tradition will remain largely faithful to this method—Christians conceived the relationship between the Old and New Testaments as a parallelism. The Hebrew Bible was interpreted in light of the Gospel as its prefiguration; they recognized in each of its episodes and its institutions a symbolic and provisional sketch of Christian fulfillments: Baptism was prefigured by circumcision; the Paschal Lamb announced the Eucharist; and, in the Bronze Serpent constructed by Moses, they perceived the image of the crucified Christ. *Novum Testamentum in Vetere latet, Vetus Testamentum in Novo patet* [The New Testament is concealed in the Old; the Old Testament is revealed in the New]. There is here something like the two faces of a diptych, the one a rough outline, full of shadow, the other brilliant from all the radiance of a definitive light. Israel therefore represents, in the economy of the divine plan, the past, a past that is completely obsolete, but which nevertheless remains (provided that it agrees to stay in the past) venerable and holy. But the authors of our two texts do not stop there. It is not sufficient for them to confine the Jews to the prehistory of redeemed humanity. Rather, they must banish them completely even from this prehistory: The role which they play, that which is universally recognized, is usurped; there is no longer a place for them in the Bible. It now only describes, for those who know how to read it, one sole history, that of the Church Eternal. The diptych gives way to a unique, continuous fresco. Christianity is not merely prefigured in the Old Testament; it is there in its totality with its institutions and its rites.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>118</sup> For an introduction and translation, see Pierluigi Piovanelli, “The Story of Melchizedek with the Melchizedek Legend from the Chronicon Paschale,” in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, ed. Richard Bauckham, James R. Davila, and Alexander Panayotov (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 64–84.

<sup>119</sup> Marcel Simon, “Melchisédech dans la polémique entre juifs et chrétiens et dans la légende,” *Revue d'histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 17 (1937): 58–93 (84–85). The French original reads: “À considérer de plus près le Pseudo-Athanase et la *Caverne des Trésors*, on y reconnaît un aspect totalement nouveau, et fort curieux, de l'exégèse chrétienne de l'Ancien Testament. Jusqu'alors—et la tradition patristique restera dans l'ensemble fidèle à cette méthode—on concevait la relation entre Ancienne et Nouvelle Alliance comme un parallélisme. La Bible était interprétée, à la lumière

*Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* is reacting against this shift in Christian exegesis, rewriting the scriptural story to make Melchizedek emphatically, though anachronistically, Jewish.

In both PRE and *Cav. Tr.*, Shem/Melchizedek pours out the “blood of the covenant” (דם הברית, cf. Matt 26:28) in what can be described as a sacrament of initiation. Nor is this the only point of contact between the two works. The printed edition and several European manuscripts of PRE (3א, 4א, 5א, 6א, 7א) add that in the same place where Abraham was circumcised, “there the altar was built” (שם נבנה (מזבח), that is, Shem/Melchizedek circumcised Abraham on the Temple Mount. This is another gratuitous detail that has its counterpart in *Cav. Tr.* In the Christian work, Melchizedek resides at Golgotha, envisioned as the Temple Mount (*Cav. Tr.* 29:3–8). Therefore, in both works, 1) Melchizedek 2) performs a rite associated with both Passover and the Day of Atonement 3) on the Temple Mount.

The tradition of *Cav. Tr.* is unusual, but it builds on established traditions about Melchizedek which date back to the earliest Christian centuries. In PRE, however, there is no particular reason why Shem/Melchizedek should circumcise Abraham (instead of Abraham circumcising himself), why the circumcision should occur on the Day of Atonement (instead of Passover), or why the circumcision should take place on the Temple Mount. The entire episode, which departs so radically from rabbinic tradition, is explicable in light of its Christian model. In this case, PRE is reclaiming the figure of Melchizedek for Judaism.

## 10.9 The Navel of the Earth

One of the recurring themes in PRE is the centrality of the sanctuary on Mount Moriah, which is identified as the “navel of the earth” (טבור הארץ). *Pirque de-Rabbi*

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de l'Évangile, comme sa préfiguration; on reconnaissait, dans chacun de ses épisodes et de ses institutions, une esquisse symbolique et provisoire des réalisations chrétiennes: le baptême était en figure dans la circoncision; l'agneau pascal annonçait l'eucharistie; et dans le serpent d'airain érigé par Moïse on voyait l'image du Christ crucifié. *Novum Testamentum in Vetere Latet, Vetus Testamentum in Novo patet*: il y avait là comme les deux faces d'un diptyque, l'une ébauchée et pleine d'ombre, l'autre brillante de tout l'éclat d'une lumière définitive. Israël représentait ainsi, dans l'économie du plan divin, le passé, un passé définitivement révolu, mais qui restait cependant, pourvu qu'il consentît à ne pas se survivre, vénérable et saint. Mais les auteurs de nos deux écrits ne s'en tiennent pas là. Il ne leur suffit pas de confiner les Juifs dans la préhistoire de l'humanité rachetée. Bien plutôt faut-il les bannir de cette préhistoire même: le rôle qu'ils y jouent, et qu'on leur reconnaît communément, est usurpé; il n'y a plus, dans la Bible, de place pour eux. Elle ne retrace, pour qui sait la lire, qu'une seule histoire, celle de l'Église éternelle. Le diptyque fait place à une fresque unique et continue. Le christianisme n'est pas seulement préfiguré dans l'Ancien Testament, il y est avec toute la réalité de ses institutions et de ses rites.”

*Eliezer* 11–12 claim that Adam was created at the Temple Mount. According to PRE 31, Abraham bound Isaac at Mount Moriah (cf. Gen 22:2) on an altar that had previously been used by Noah (PRE 23) and Abel (PRE 21). Finally, PRE 35 states that Jacob's vision of the ladder (cf. Gen 28) occurred at Mount Moriah. All of these traditions appear *in nuce* in earlier rabbinic tradition (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 14:8; 34:9 55:7; 69:7). Curiously, neither *Genesis Rabbah* nor the Babylonian Talmud nor any other early rabbinic source identifies the Temple Mount as the “navel of the earth.” It is, however, a prominent feature of the depiction of the Temple Mount within *Cav. Tr.*, where it is identified with Golgotha.

At the outset, it should be stated that the idea of the Temple Mount as the center of the world dates to the Second Temple period. Philip Alexander shows that *Jubilees* conceives of Mount Zion (*Jubilees*' designation for the Temple Mount) as the “navel of the earth.”<sup>120</sup>

ידע כי גן עדן קודש קודשים ומשכן אלוהים הוא והר סיני באמצע המדבר והר ציון באמצע טבור הארץ שלושתם זה נגד זה לקדושה נבראו

[Noah] knew that the Garden of Eden is the Holy of Holies and the dwelling place of God. And Mount Sinai is in the midst of the wilderness, and Mount Zion is in the middle of the navel of the earth. The three of them were created one against the other as holy places (*Jub.* 8:19).<sup>121</sup>

Alexander goes on to cite *Tanhuma Buber*, *Qedoshim* 10 as the *locus classicus* of the idea's resurgence within rabbinic literature.

כשם שהטיבור הזה נתון באמצע האיש כך ארץ ישראל טיבורה של עולם שנאמר יושבי על טבור הארץ ארץ ישראל יושבת באמצעיתו של עולם וירושלים באמצע ארץ ישראל ובית המקדש באמצע ירושלים וההיכל באמצע בית המקדש והארון באמצע ההיכל והאבן שתיה לפני ההיכל שממנה הושתת העולם

Just as this navel is placed in the center of a man, so is the Land of Israel the navel of the world, as it is written, “Dwellers of the navel of the earth” (Ezek 38:12). The Land of Israel sits in the middle of the world, and Jerusalem is in the center of the Land of Israel, and the Temple is in the center of Jerusalem, and the sanctuary is in the middle of the Temple, and the Ark is in the center of the sanctuary, and the Foundation Stone, from which the world was founded, is before the sanctuary.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>120</sup> Philip S. Alexander, “Jerusalem as the Omphalos of the World: On the History of a Geographical Concept,” in *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (New York: Continuum, 1999), 104–19 (104). Alexander's translation.

<sup>121</sup> Cana Werman, *The Book of Jubilees: Introduction, Translation, and Interpretation* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, 2015), 244; James C. VanderKam, ed., *The Book of Jubilees: A Critical Text* (Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 54.

<sup>122</sup> My translation from Buber, *Midrasch Tanchuma*, 3:78.

The attestation of the idea is unequivocal. The problem is the date of *Midrash Tanhuma*. The printed recension of *Midrash Tanhuma* incorporates text *verbatim* from PRE. The Buber recension, from which Alexander quotes, is a European reworking of earlier *Tanhuma* material.<sup>123</sup> The *Tanhuma* literature consists of more than these two collections. It was a dynamic genre that reached its height at the turn of the millennium. Some *Tanhuma* material could be older than PRE, although all the *Tanhuma* collections now in existence (the printed and Buber recensions, *Pesiqta Rabbati*, *Exodus Rabbah* II, *Numbers Rabbah* II, *Deuteronomy Rabbah*, *Midrash Hadash al ha-Torah*, among others) postdate PRE.

In Tannaitic and Amoraic literature, however, the motif is distinguished by its absence. The Foundation Stone (אבן שתייה) mentioned at the culmination of the *Tanhuma* passage first appears in rabbinic literature beginning with the Mishnah (*m. Yoma* 5:2), but the reference to the stone there, as the place marking the former location of the Ark of the Covenant, is, in the words of Alexei Sivertsev, “purely technical and antiquarian.”<sup>124</sup> The Tosefta adds the important proviso that the Foundation Stone was so-called because the whole world was founded upon it (*t. Yoma* 2:14). The idea is further developed in both Talmuds (*y. Yoma* V:3, 42c; *b. Yoma* 54b). None of these texts, however, equates the Foundation Stone with the navel of the world—not merely the starting point for the world’s creation but its actual center. The identification of the two only becomes explicit in the *Tanhuma* passage.<sup>125</sup>

On the subject of talmudic literature, the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Sanhedrin* 37a), interpreting Song 7:3, states that the “navel” spoken of in this verse is the Sanhedrin, who convened “in the navel of the world” (בטיבור של עולם). The statement is ambiguous. Does the navel refer to the Temple, Jerusalem, or the whole land of Israel? It certainly does not refer to the Holy of Holies where the Foundation Stone was located, which was exclusively reserved for the high priest on Yom Kippur.

<sup>123</sup> See Marc Bregman, *The Tanhuma-Yelammedenu Literature: Studies in the Evolution of the Versions* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2003), 4\* (English summary): “The mention of the Ticinus river in the reworking of the messianic peroration indicates that the Buber version of the *Tanhuma* was edited during the early Middle Ages in the Western Roman Empire, most likely in Northern Italy, and subsequently circulated almost exclusively in Ashkenaz.” See also Arnon Atzmon and Ronit Nikolsky, “Let Our Rabbi Teach Us: An Introduction to *Tanhuma-Yelammedenu Literature*,” in *Studies in the Tanhuma-Yelammedenu Literature*, ed. Arnon Atzmon and Ronit Nikolsky (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 1–17 (4): “[*Tanhuma Buber*] probably reflects the reality of Lombard Italy.”

<sup>124</sup> Alexei M. Sivertsev, *Judaism and Imperial Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 66.

<sup>125</sup> Sivertsev, *Judaism and Imperial Ideology*, 65–74; Felix Böhl, “Über das Verhältnis von Sheti-ja-Stein und Nabel der Welt in der Kosmogonie der Rabbinen,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 124 (1974): 253–70.

Even more striking is *Genesis Rabbah*, which shares several traditions with PRE regarding the Temple Mount but never once refers to the navel of the earth or the Foundation Stone. The best way to illustrate their differences is to quote the relevant passages side by side. In the first place, there is the matter of Adam's creation. Both *Genesis Rabbah* and PRE affirm that Adam was created at the Temple Mount (also called the "pure place" or the "place of his atonement"), but it is only in PRE that this place is also the navel of the earth (טבור הארץ).

**Genesis Rabbah 14:8<sup>126</sup>**

מִן הָאֲדָמָה ר' בְּרִיָּה ור' הֶלְבֹּי בִּשְׁם ר' שְׁמוּאֵל  
הֶזְקִין מִמָּקוֹם כִּפְּרָתוֹ נִבְרָא הָיִךְ מֵה דָּאֵת אִמֵּר  
מִזְבַּח אֲדָמָה תַּעֲשֶׂה לִּי אִמֵּר הַקֵּב"ה הִרִינִי בֹרְאוֹ  
מִמָּקוֹם כִּפְּרָתוֹ וְהִלּוּי יַעֲמֹד

"From the earth" (Gen 2:7). R. Berekiah and R. Helbo in the name of R. Samuel the Elder: He was created from the place of his atonement, as one reads in Scripture: "You will make for me an altar of earth" (Exod 20:24). The Holy One, Blessed be He, said, "Behold! I shall create him from the place of his atonement (מִמָּקוֹם) —may it help him to endure!"

**PRE 11 and 12 (JTS 3847, ff. 93a and 94a)**

[PRE 11] גָּבַל וּלְשׁ עֶפְרוֹ שְׁלֹאֲדָם הָרֵאשׁוֹן בְּמָקוֹם  
טְהוֹר וּבִטְבוֹר הָאֶרֶץ רָקְמוּ וְתִכְנֶנוּ וְלֹא הִיָּתָה בּוֹ  
נִשְׁמָה שֶׁנ' וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפִּיו נִשְׁמַת רוּחַ חַיִּים

[PRE 12] בְּרָאוֹ בְּמָקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ בְּמָקוֹם בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ

[PRE 11] He formed and kneaded the dust of the First Adam in a pure place, in the navel of the earth (בְּמָקוֹם טְהוֹר וּבִטְבוֹר הָאֶרֶץ). He stood him up and set him straight, but breath was not yet in him, so it is written, "He breathed into his nose the breath of the spirit of life" (Gen. 2:7).

[PRE 12] He created him in the holy place, in the place of the Temple.

Additionally, both *Genesis Rabbah* and PRE establish that there was a continuity of cult from the earliest times. That is, Adam was not only created on the Temple Mount, but he sacrificed there. *Genesis Rabbah* only mentions the sacrifice of Adam in the course of describing the sacrifice of Noah. *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* offers a similar recapitulation of earlier sacrifices (cf. PRE 21).

**Genesis Rabbah 34:9<sup>127</sup>**

וַיַּעַל עֹלֹת בְּמִזְבֵּחַ ר' אֱלִיעֶזֶר בֶּן יַעֲקֹב א' עַל  
מִזְבַּח הַגְּדוֹל שֶׁבִּירוּשָׁלַם שֶׁשֶּׁם הַקָּרִיב אָדָם הָרֵאֶה  
שׁוֹן וְתִיטֵב לִי"י מִשׁוֹר פֶּר מִקְרִין מִפְּרִישׁ

"And he offered a burnt offering on the altar" (Gen 8:20). R. Eliezer b. Jacob said: On the great altar in Jerusalem where the First Adam sacrificed. "And it shall please the LORD more than a horned bull with divided hooves" (Ps 69:32).

**PRE 23 (JTS 10484, f. 28a)**

וּבִנָּה אֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ הָרֵאשׁוֹן שֶׁהִקְרִיבוּ עָלָיו קַיִן וְהָבֶל  
וְהִקְרִיב עֹלֹת אַרְבַּע שָׁנ' וַיִּבֶן נֹחַ מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה

He [Noah] rebuilt the first altar, upon which Cain and Abel sacrificed, and he himself offered up four burnt offerings, as it is written, "And Noah built an altar to the LORD" (Gen 8:20).

<sup>126</sup> Translated from Theodor and Albeck, *Bereschit Rabba*, 1:132.

<sup>127</sup> Translated from Theodor and Albeck, *Bereschit Rabba*, 1:317.

For PRE, I have quoted from JTS10485 (Friedlander's manuscript; Eleazar Treitl's 5א) instead of JTS 3847, which simply reads "He built an altar and sacrificed four burnt offerings" (ובנה מזבח והקריב עולות ארבע). It is possible that this shorter reading is the original one.

Whatever the case, all versions of PRE 31 identify Abraham's altar as the same used by Adam, Cain, Abel, and, yes, Noah, marking the Temple Mount as the place of Abraham's sacrifice. Similarly, *Genesis Rabbah*, following a tradition that goes back to the Hebrew Bible, identifies the mountain in "the land of Moriah" (Gen 22:2) with Mount Moriah—the Temple Mount—in Jerusalem (2Chr 3:1) through playful associations between the toponym "Moriah" and other words associated with Temple worship.

*Genesis Rabbah* 55:7<sup>128</sup>

לך אל ארץ המורייה ר' חייא רבה ור' ינאי  
חד אמר למקום שהורייה יוצאה לעולם וחרנה  
אמר למקום שיראה יוצאה לעולם דכוותה ארון  
ר' חייא רבה ור' ינאי חד אמר למקום שאורה  
יוצאה לעולם וחרנה אמר למקום שהמורא יוצא  
לעולם דכוותה דביר ר' חייא ור' ינאי חד אמר  
למקום שהדיבר יוצא לעולם וחרנה אמר למקום  
שהדבר יוצא לעולם אמר ר' יהושע בן לוי שמשם  
הקב"ה מורה על אומות העולם ומורידם לגיהנם  
ר' שמעון בן יוחי א' למקום ראוי כנגד בית המק-  
דש ר' יודן בן פלייא אמר למקום שהיה מראה לך  
ר' מנחם אמר לאתר מרותא דעלמא רבנין אמ'  
למקום שהקטרת קריבה היך דאת אמר אלך לי  
אל הר המור

PRE 31 (JTS 3847, f. 118b)

ויבן שם אברהם את המזבח הוא המזבח שהקריב  
בו אדם הראשון הוא המזבח שהקריב בו קין והבל  
הוא המזבח שהקריב בו נח

"Go to the land of Moriah" (מורייה) (Gen 22:2). R. Hiyya the Great and R. Yannai disagreed. One said: To the place where instruction (הורייה) goes out to the whole world. The other said: To the place where pious fear (יראה) goes out to the whole world. Concerning the Ark (ארון), R. Hiyya the Great and R. Yannai also disagreed. One said: To the place where light (אורה) goes out to the world. The other said: To the place where holy awe (מורא) goes out to the world. Concerning the inner sanctuary (דביר), R. Hiyya the Great and R. Yannai again disagreed. One said: To the place where the Divine Word (דיבר) goes out to the world.

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

128 Translated from Theodor and Albeck, *Bereschit Rabba*, 2:590–92.

The other said: To the place where plague (דבר) goes out to the world. R. Joshua b. Levi said: From there, the Holy One, Blessed be He, shoots forth (מורה) the nations of the world and makes them descend into Gehenna. R. Simeon b. Yohai said: To the place that corresponds (ראוי) to the Temple. R. Judan b. Palya said: "To the place where he was appearing (מראה) to you." R. Pinhas said (in Aramaic): To the place of universal dominion (מרותא). The rabbis collectively said: To the place where incense is offered, as it is written, "I will go myself to the mountain of myrrh (מור)" (Song 4:6)

The next tradition is only approximative and serves to illustrate the differences between the two texts. When Rebekah is pregnant with Jacob and Esau, she is said to have gone somewhere "to inquire of the LORD" (Gen 25:22). Both sources are circumspect about where, exactly, she went.

**Genesis Rabbah 63:6<sup>129</sup>**

ותלך לדרש את י"י וכי בתי כנסיות ובתי מדרשות היו באותן הימים והלא לא הלכה אלא למדרש של [שם ו] עבר אלא ללמדך שכל מי שהוא מקביל פני זקן כאילו מקביל פני שכינה

"She went to inquire of the LORD" (Gen 25:22). Were there synagogues (בתי כנסיות) and schools (בתי מדרשות) in those days?! Rather, she did not go anywhere except to the school of [Shem and] Eber. This teaches you that anyone who receives the presence of an elder is like one who receives the presence of the Shekhinah (פני שכינה).

**PRE 32 (JTS 3847, f. 120a)**

ר' יהודה אומ' עשרים שנה היתה רבקה עקרה ולאחר עשרים שנה לקח את רבקה והלך לו להר המוריה שנעקד והתפלל עליה ונעתר לו שנ' ויעתר יצחק ליי' לנכח אשתו והיו הבנים מתגברים במי' עיה כגבורי כוח בקרבה שנ' ויתרוצצו הבנים בקר' בה והגיעה נפשה למות והלכה לה להתפלל במקום שהרת שנ' ותלך לדרוש את יי'

R. Judah said: Rebekah was barren for twenty years. After twenty years, he [Isaac] took her and went to Mount Moriah, where he had been bound (להר המוריה שנעקד), and he prayed over her. God hearkened to him, as it is written, "And Isaac entreated the LORD concerning his wife" (Gen 25:21) And the children were fighting in her womb like two fierce warriors within her, as it is written, "The children were quarrelling within her" (Gen 25:22). Her soul was near unto death. Therefore, she went to pray in the place where she had become pregnant (שהרת והלכה לה שהרת במקום), as it is written, "She went to inquire of the LORD" (Gen 25:22).

<sup>129</sup> Translated from Theodor and Albeck, *Bereschit Rabba*, 2:684.



In *Genesis Rabbah*, Rebekah goes to the academy of Shem and Eber, a rabbinic conceit designating the first *Beit Midrash*, where Isaac and Jacob studied. It is never mentioned in PRE.<sup>130</sup> Its location is undisclosed. Shem, who is identified with Melchizedek, presumably lived in Jerusalem, but it does not follow that the academy was located here. For example, a modern tradition locates the ancient site of the academy within the “Cave of Shem and Eber” in Safed.<sup>131</sup>

In PRE, however, Rebekah goes back to pray “in the place where she had become pregnant” (במקום שהרת), which, contextually, if surprisingly, is the Temple Mount. Other manuscripts retain this meaning without implying that Rebekah and Isaac had sex in the sacred precinct. The printed edition states that Rebekah went to pray “in a pure place” (במקום טהור), language that is used of the Temple in PRE 11. Most manuscripts in the *s* family emend the text less egregiously to “in the place where she went,” (במקום שהלכה) meaning Mount Moriah, where she had prayed with Isaac.

Finally, both *Genesis Rabbah* and PRE place Jacob’s vision (Gen 28) on the Temple Mount.

***Genesis Rabbah* 69:7<sup>132</sup>**

ויירא ויאמר מה נורא המקום הזה ר' לעזר בשם ר' יוסי בן זמרא הסולם הזה עומד בבאר שבע ושיפיעו מגיע עד בית המקדש מה טעם ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע וגו' ויירא ויאמר מה נורא המ' קום אמר ר' יהודה בר סימון הסולם הזה עומד במקדש ושיפיעו מגיע עד ביתאל מה טעם ויירא ויאמר וגו' ויקרא שם המקום ההוא ביתאל

**PRE 35 (JTS 3847, f. 125a–125b)**

בן שבעים שנה היה יעקב בלכתו להר המוריה והיתה הבאר מהלכת עמו מבאר שבע ועד הר המוריה מהלך שני ימים והגיע לשם בחצי היום

לקח יעק' שתים עשרה אבנים מאבני המזבח שנ' עקד יצח' אביו עליו ולן שם ושם אותן מראשותיו באותו המקום להודיעו שעת' לעמוד ממנו שנים עשר שבטים ונעשו כולן אבן אחת להודיעו שע' תידין להיות כולן גוי אחד בארץ שנ' מי כעמד ישראל גוי אחד בארץ

שב יעקב ללקוט את האבנים ומצא אותן אבן אחת שנ' ויקח את האבן אשר שם מראשוֹ תיו וישם אותה מצבה באותו המקום מה עשה הק' ב'ה' נטה רגל ימינו וטבע את האבן עד עמקי תהומות ועשה אותה סניף לתהומות כאדם שהוא עושה סניף לכופח לפ"כ נקראת אבן שתיה ששם טבור הארץ ומשם נמתחה כל הארץ ועליה היכל יי' שנ' והאבן הזאת אשר שמת יי' וגו'

<sup>130</sup> For other references, see *Gen. Rab.* 45:10 and 56:11 and the Palestinian Targumim (*Fragment, Neofiti, Pseudo-Jonathan*) to Gen 24:62 and 25:27. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* has an additional reference in Gen 22:19.

<sup>131</sup> Linda Kay Davidson and David Martin Gitlitz, eds., *Pilgrimage: An Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2002), 548–49.

<sup>132</sup> Translated from Theodor and Albeck, *Bereschit Rabba*, 2:796.

“Jacob was afraid and said: ‘How awesome is this place!’” (Gen 28:17). R. Lazar in the name of R. Yosi b. Zimra said: This ladder stood in Beer Sheba, but its slope reached until the Temple (בית המקדש). What is the proof? The verse “And Jacob went out from Beer Sheba,” etc. (Gen 28:10) is followed by the verse “And he was afraid and said, ‘How awesome is this place!’” (Gen 28:17). R. Judah bar Simon said: This ladder stood on the Temple Mount (מקדש), and its slope reached until Bethel. What is the proof? The verse “And he was afraid and said,” etc. (Gen 28:17) is followed by the verse, “He called the name of that place Bethel” (Gen 28:19).

Jacob was seventy years old when he went to Mount Moriah, and the well went with him from Beer Sheba. He walked two days until Mount Moriah and arrived in the middle of the day. . . .

Jacob took twelve stones from among the stones of the altar where his father Isaac was bound, and he spent the night there. He placed them at his head in the same place to make it known that in the future twelve tribes would come from him. And they were made one stone to make known that in the future all of them would be one nation in the land, as it is written, “Who is like your people, O Israel? One people in the land” (1Chr. 17:21). . . .

Jacob returned to collect the stones and found that they had become one stone, as it is written, “And he took the stone from his head, and he established a pillar there on the very spot” (Gen 28:18). What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, do? He planted his right foot, and the stone sank until the depths of the abyss. He made it the base of the abyss, just as a man makes a base for a stove. Therefore, it was called the “Foundation Stone” (אבן שתיה), for there is the navel of the earth (טבור הארץ), and from there was drawn out the whole world, and upon it is the Temple (היכל) of the LORD, as it is written, “This stone which I set up,” etc. (Gen 28:22).

*Genesis Rabbah* attempts to harmonize the geographical references in the biblical text (the cities of Beer Sheba and Bethel) with a tradition that associates Jacob’s vision with the Temple (see also *b. Sanhedrin* 95b and *b. Hullin* 91b). The ladder of ascending and descending angels was slanted, and it either began or ended at the Temple Mount, without contradicting the biblical data that Jacob began his journey in Beer Sheba and spent the night in Bethel. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* dispenses with the tension between text and tradition and simply moves the entire vision to Mount Moriah, apparently understanding “Bethel,” literally “house of God” (בית אל), as a designation for the Temple Mount rather than the name of a city.

*Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* uses the term “navel of the earth” (טבור הארץ) for the second time here, acting as an *inclusio* encompassing all the traditions about the Temple Mount and its altar beginning with PRE 11. The Foundation Stone also

makes an appearance.<sup>133</sup> In fact, PRE 35 is recounting the very origin of the Foundation Stone, formerly the ancient altar on the Temple Mount, which Jacob consecrates in what Steven Daniel Sacks called an act of co-creation with the deity—the world was not truly complete until this moment.<sup>134</sup> While *Genesis Rabbah* gathers an assortment of traditions attesting a continuity of cult on the Temple Mount, PRE tells a cosmogonic myth where the original altar sits on the navel of the earth, is sanctified through its use by the patriarchs across generations, and eventually becomes the pillar of all creation.

This new valorization of Mount Moriah in PRE is directly comparable to the depiction of Golgotha in *Cav. Tr.* The *Cave of Treasures* explicitly identifies Golgotha as the “center of the earth” (כְּחֵץ הָאֲרֶץ). This occurs in the very first allusion to Golgotha, at the moment of Adam’s creation. The passage is analogous to PRE 11 and 12.

*Cav. Tr.* 2:15–18 (BL Add. 25875, f. 5a)

[15] סבד פלג נפסח סמך כחץ חלח  
 גאירא [16] סמך ויהינסח יאלסח, כח,  
 גסחלח גאיראספסכ כח וספסח נפסח סמך  
 גכאיראלח אהב, אגנ [17] סחלח לב  
 לחסח גחלחסח אהבספסכ כחסח חלח  
 גהסכסחסח [18] סחלח אהבכ חלח  
 סמכסח סמכסח

[15] He stretched himself and rose at the center of the earth (כְּחֵץ הָאֲרֶץ) [16] and placed his two feet on the very place where the cross of our Redeemer was set (because Adam was created in Jerusalem). [17] There he put on the garments of royalty, and a crown of glory was placed upon his head. [18] There he was made king, priest, and prophet.

PRE 11 and 12 (JTS 3847, ff. 93a and 94a)

[PRE 11] גבל ולש עפרו שלאדם הראשון במקום  
 טהור ובטבור הארץ רקמו ותיכנו ולא היתה בו  
 נשמה שנ' ויפח באפיו נשמת רוח חיים  
 [PRE 12] בראו במקום קדוש במקום בית המקדש

[PRE 11] He formed and kneaded the dust of the First Adam in a pure place, in the navel of the earth (במקום טהור ובטבור הארץ). He stood him up and set him straight, but breath was not yet in him, so it is written, “He breathed into his nose the breath of the spirit of life” (Gen. 2:7)

[PRE 12] He created him in the holy place, in the place of the Temple.

In both works, Adam is created in Jerusalem, at the earth’s center—in one case the Temple Mount, in the other Golgotha.

<sup>133</sup> The Foundation Stone first appears in PRE 10—the story of Jonah—who sees it below the Temple while traveling the depths of the abyss.

<sup>134</sup> Steven D. Sacks, “The Foundation Stone: Reflections on the Adoption and Transformation of ‘Primordial Myth’ in Rabbinic Literature,” in *Interpretation, Religion and Culture in Midrash and Beyond: Proceedings of the 2006 and 2007 SBL Midrash Sections*, ed. Rivka Ulmer and Lieve M. Teugels (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2008), 25–37. See also Rachel Adelman, “Midrash, Myth, and Bakhtin’s Chronotope: The Itinerant Well and the Foundation Stone in *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*,” *Journal of Jewish Thought & Philosophy* 17 (2009): 143–76.



A seemingly minor parallel is that Rebekkah, in both works, consults God about her pregnancy by going to the Temple Mount, whether that is Golgotha (the abode of Melchizedek) or Mount Moriah.

*Cav. Tr.* 31:5–6 (BL Add. 25875, f. 27a–27b)

[5] סבד סמ"ס רבסמס כ" עמ"ס ענ"ס חל"ס  
זמ"ס לזמ"ס סלמסס [6] סבד סמ"ס לז  
סול"ס לס"ס סלמסס ס"ס לז חל"ס סמ"ס לז  
זמ"ס סמ"ס סמ"ס סמ"ס סמ"ס סמ"ס  
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[5] When Isaac was sixty years, old Rebekah conceived Esau and Jacob. [6] She was in anguish, so she went before Melchizedek, who prayed over her and said to her: "Two peoples are in your womb, and two nations will emerge from your womb, that is to say, they will go forth from your belly. One nation shall prevail over the other; and the older will be subjected to the younger; that is, Esau will be subjected to Jacob (cf. Gen 25:23).

PRE 32 (JTS 3847, f. 120a)

ר' יהודה אומ' עשרים שנה היתה רבקה עקרה  
ולאחר עשרים שנה לקח את רבקה והלך לו להר  
המוריה שנעקד והתפלל עליה ונעתר לו שנ' ויעתר  
יצחק ליי' לנכח אשתו והיו הבנים מתגברים במי'  
עיה כגבורי כוח בקרבה שנ' ויתרוצצו הבנים בקר'  
בה והגיעה נפשה למות והלכה לה להתפלל במקום  
שהרת שנ' ותלך לדרוש את יי'

R. Judah said: Rebekah was barren for twenty years. After twenty years, he [Isaac] took her and went to Mount Moriah, where he had been bound (להר המוריה שנעקד), and he prayed over her. God hearkened to him, as it is written, "And Isaac entreated the LORD concerning his wife" (Gen 25:21) And the children were fighting in her womb like two fierce warriors within her, as it is written, "The children were quarrelling within her" (Gen 25:22). Her soul was near unto death. Therefore, she went to pray in the place where she had become pregnant (והלכה), as it is written, "She went to inquire of the LORD" (Gen 25:22).

The *Cave of Treasures* shares with *Genesis Rabbah* the idea that Rebekkah went to an intermediary and did not contact God directly. In *Genesis Rabbah*, however, it is not clear that Rebekkah went to the Temple Mount, while this is the only option in *Cav. Tr.* and PRE. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* states it flatly, while in *Cav. Tr.* Shem instructs Melchizedek never to leave Golgotha (*Cav. Tr.* 23:20), and Melchizedek refuses to do so when invited by other kings (*Cav. Tr.* 30:5). Even Abraham only meets Melchizedek when God summons him to his mountain habitation (*Cav. Tr.* 28:8). When Rebekkah goes to Melchizedek in *Cav. Tr.*, she is going to Golgotha, that work's equivalent of the Temple Mount.

The last point of comparison is the vision of Jacob's ladder.

*Cav. Tr.* 31:11–19 (BL Add. 25875, ff. 27b–28a)

[11] סבד סמ"ס רבסמס כ" עמ"ס ענ"ס חל"ס  
זמ"ס לזמ"ס סלמסס [12] סבד סמ"ס לז  
סול"ס לס"ס סלמסס ס"ס לז חל"ס סמ"ס לז  
זמ"ס סמ"ס סמ"ס סמ"ס סמ"ס סמ"ס  
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סמ"ס סמ"ס סמ"ס סמ"ס סמ"ס סמ"ס

PRE 35 (JTS 3847, f. 125a–125b)

בן שבעים שנה היה יעקב בלכתו להר המוריה  
והיתה הבאר מהלכת עמו מבאר שבע ועד הר  
המוריה מהלך שני ימים והגיע לשם בחצי היום

[illegible]

**[11]** In the one hundred and third year in the life of Isaac, he blessed Jacob when he was forty years old. **[12]** When he received the blessing of his father, he went down to the East. **[13]** When he had walked a day's journey in the wilderness of Beer Sheba, he rested there. When he rested, he took a stone and used it as his headrest. **[14]** He saw in his dream, behold, a ladder placed on earth and its top in heaven. The angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the Lord was standing above it. **[15]** When Jacob was awakened from his sleep, he said, "Behold! This is truly the house of God" (cf. Gen 28:17). **[16]** He took the stone from his headrest and made it into an altar. He anointed it with oil and made a vow. He said, "Everything that shall come to me, I will indeed tithe to this stone" (cf. Gen 28:22). **[17]** It is revealed to those who possess understanding that the ladder which Jacob saw was signifying the cross of our redeemer (صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم). The angels who were ascending and descending

לקח יעקב' שנים עשרה אבנים מאבני המזבח שנ-  
עקד יצח' אביו עליו ולן שם ושם אותן מראשותיו  
באותו המקום להודיעו שעת' לעמוד ממנו שנים  
עשר שבטים ונעשו כולן אבן אחת להודיעו שע-  
תידן להיות כולן וגו' אחד בארץ שנ' מי כעמך  
ישראל וגו' אחד בארץ

שב יעקב ללקוט את האבנים ומצא אותן אבן אחת שנ' ויקח את האבן אשר שם מראשו- תיו וישם אותה מצבה באותו המקום מה עשה הקב"ה? נטה רגל ימינו וטבע את האבן עד עמקי תהומות ועשה אותה סניף לתהומות כאדם שהוא עושה סניף לכופס לפ"כ נקראת אבן שתיה ששם טבור הארץ ומשם מתנחת כל הארץ ועליה היכל יי' שנ' והארץ הזאת אשר שמינו וג'

Jacob was seventy years old when he went to Mount Moriah, and the well went with him from Beer Sheba. He walked two days until Mount Moriah and arrived in the middle of the day. . . .

Jacob took twelve stones from among the stones of the altar where his father Isaac was bound, and he spent the night there. He placed them at his head in the same place to make it known that in the future twelve tribes would come from him. And they were made one stone to make known that in the future all of them would be one nation in the land, as it is written, "Who is like your people, O Israel? One people in the land" (1Chr 17:21). . .

Jacob returned to collect the stones and found that they had become one stone, as it is written, "And he took the stone from his head, and he established a pillar there on the very spot" (Gen 28:18). What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, do? He planted his right foot, and the stone sank until the depths of the abyss. He made it

on it were the ministers unto Zechariah, Mary, the Magi, and the shepherds. [18] The Lord who was standing on the top of the ladder was he who would stand on the head of the cross (כעצמ גי לכה) and descend into Sheol to save us. [19] When God showed to blessed Jacob the cross of Christ through the ladder (ומפני ומעטל כה שכלל), the angels, the descent of the Messiah for our salvation, the Church [by] the house of God, and the altar by the stone, and the offerings by the tithes, and anointing by the oil, Jacob descended again to the East, where God would show him baptism.

the base of the abyss, just as a man makes a base for a stove. Therefore, it was called the “Foundation Stone” (אבן שתיה), for there is the navel of the earth (טבור הארץ) and from there was drawn out the whole world, and upon it is the Temple (היכל) of the LORD, as it is written, “This stone which I set up,” etc. (Gen 28:22).

Unlike the earlier passages, *Cav. Tr.* fails to specify where, exactly, Jacob is spending the night. The appearance of the cross is not merely a typological interpretation of the ladder but something God showed to Jacob, a possible hint that Jacob is dreaming where the future cross was to stand—and that the “altar” (מזבח) is the altar of Melchizedek on Golgotha. This is how the Georgian version has interpreted the passage (emphasis mine).

When the cross of Christ appeared to blessed Jacob, the angel announced to him the Good News of the coming from highest heaven of our God, Jesus Christ. The house of God, this is the Church. The stone which he had for a pillow, *this is the holy Golgotha* and the anointing of oil, and Jacob’s descent to the East was so that God could show him baptism there.<sup>135</sup>

This interpretation, unfortunately, does not appear in the extant Arabic versions. The *Book of the Rolls* follows the Syriac text.<sup>136</sup> Likewise, Mingana Syr. 258 (f. 118) reflects the Syriac, where the stone signifies “the altar.” Neither Mingana Syr. 32 (f. 120a) nor Borgia Arab. 135 (f. 249b) have the dream or its interpretation. In both cases, the narrative skips from Jacob’s departure to his arrival at Laban’s abode, as in the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*.<sup>137</sup> The Georgian version, however, is drawing out something implicit in the original, that *Cav. Tr.*’s Jacob is anointing the altar on Golgotha, much as PRE’s Jacob consecrates the Foundation Stone.

<sup>135</sup> Translated from the French of Jean-Pierre Mahé, trans., *La Caverne des Trésors: Version Géorgienne* (Leuven: Peeters, 1993), 56: “Et quand la croix du Christ apparut au bienheureux Iak’ob, l’ange lui annonça aussi la bonne nouvelle de la venue du haut du ciel de notre Dieu, Jésus-Christ. Et la maison de Dieu, c’est l’église, et la pierre (qu’il avait pour) chevet, c’est le saint Golgota et l’onction d’huile; et la descente de Iak’ob vers l’orient, c’est pour que Dieu lui montrât là-bas le baptême.”

<sup>136</sup> Margaret Dunlop Gibson, *Apocrypha Arabica*, \*41 (translation: 42). See also Bezold, *Die Schatzhöhle*, 2:161.

<sup>137</sup> Malan, *The Book of Adam and Eve*, 184.

Therefore, in every place where Golgotha or the cross is mentioned or alluded to in *Cav. Tr.*, there is a corresponding reference to Mount Moriah in PRE. As we will see below, this is true even in the case of Golgotha's primary function: as the site of Jesus' crucifixion. Even in the case of the one apparent exception, the story of Adam's reburial, PRE describes the location of Adam's tomb in relation to Mount Moriah—in defiance of earlier traditions—even if the text does not place his final resting place on the Temple Mount.

The gradual transfer of aspects of the Temple to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—a complex that included Golgotha—is well-documented.<sup>138</sup> The secondary literature draws upon the same selection of primary sources. Eusebius, in the *Life of Constantine*, calls the newly uncovered tomb the “holy of holies” (*Vita Constantini* III.28).<sup>139</sup> In his *Praise of Constantine*, he even calls the edifice a temple: “In the Palestinian nation, in the heart of the Hebrew kingdom, on the very site of the evidence for salvation, he outfitted with many and abundant distinctions an enormous house of prayer and temple sacred to the Saving Sign, and he honored a memorial full of eternal significance and the Great Savior's own trophies over death with ornaments beyond all description” (*De laudibus Constantini* IX.16).<sup>140</sup>

Egeria, the late fourth-century Spanish pilgrim, describes the yearly festival of the dedication of the church, the Encaenia, and directly compares it to the ded-

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<sup>138</sup> In addition to Hugh Nibley, “Christian Envy of the Temple,” cited above, see: John Wilkinson, “Jewish Influences on the Early Christian Rite of Jerusalem,” *Le Muséon* 92 (1979): 347–59, reprinted in John Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels to the Holy Land*, rev. ed. (Jerusalem: Ariel Publishing House, 1981), 298–310, as “Jewish Influences on the Jerusalem Liturgy;” Georg Kretschmar, “Festkalender und Memorialstätten Jerusalems in altkirchlicher Zeit,” in *Jerusalem Heiligtumstraditionen in altkirchlicher und frühislamischer Zeit*, ed. Heribert Busse and Georg Kretschmar (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1987), 81–111 (“Exkurs: Tempel und Golgotha”); Joshua Schwartz, “The Encaenia of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Temple of Solomon and the Jews,” *Theologische Zeitschrift* 43 (1987): 265–81; Bianca Kühnel, *From the Earthly to the Heavenly Jerusalem: Representations of the Holy City in Christian Art of the First Millennium* (Freiburg: Herder, 1987), 83–84; Robert Ousterhout, “The Temple, the Sepulchre, and the Martyrion of the Savior,” *Gesta* 29 (1990): 44–53; Robert Louis Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 93–99; Joshua Prawer, “Christian Attitudes towards Jerusalem in the Early Middle Ages,” in *The History of Jerusalem: The Early Muslim Period, 638–1099*, ed. Joshua Prawer and Haggai Ben-Shammai (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, 1996), 311–47; Rivka Gonen, *Contested Holiness: Jewish, Muslim, and Christian Perspectives on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem* (Jersey City: KTAV Publishing House, 2003), 123; Yaron Z. Eliav, *God's Mountain: The Temple Mount in Time, Place, and Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 180–86.

<sup>139</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, *Life of Constantine*, trans. Averil Cameron and Stuart George Hall, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 133.

<sup>140</sup> Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius' Tricennial Orations*, trans. H. A. Drake (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 101.



ication of Solomon's Temple in the book of Chronicles (*Itinerarium* 48.2): "And this is found in the holy Scriptures that this day of the Encaenia is when holy Solomon also, having completed the house of God that he had built, stood before the altar of God and prayed, as it is written in the books of Chronicles (2Chr 5:1–7:9)."<sup>141</sup> Earlier, she witnessed the presentation of two relics related to ancient Israelite kingship—the horn of anointing and the ring of Solomon—on Good Friday, alongside the true cross (*Itinerarium* 37.3).<sup>142</sup> The ring, in particular, could refer to legends about Solomon's employment of spirits to construct the Temple.<sup>143</sup>

The testimony of later pilgrims shows the continued transfer of effects from the Temple to Golgotha. The sacrifice of Isaac—which, unlike the burial of Adam, is clearly attested in numerous Jewish sources to have occurred on the Temple Mount<sup>144</sup>—was now said to have transpired at Golgotha, as attested by the *Breviarius* (a short guidebook for Latin pilgrims),<sup>145</sup> Theodosius,<sup>146</sup> the Piacenza Pilgrim,<sup>147</sup> and Adomnan of Iona's account of Arculf's pilgrimage.<sup>148</sup> Similarly, Adam's creation, said to have occurred on the Temple Mount in the fifth-century *Genesis Rabbah*, now

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**141** Egeria, *Journey to the Holy Land*, ed. and trans. Paul Frederick Bradshaw (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), 97.

**142** Egeria, *Journey to the Holy Land*, 81.

**143** Ousterhout, "The Temple, the Sepulchre, and the Martyrion of the Savior," 47. Sources recounting Solomon's mastery over demons are legion. See, for example, the *Testament of Solomon* and *b. Gittin* 68a–68b. The Bordeaux Pilgrim also alludes to this legend. See Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 156.

**144** In addition to 2Chr 3:1 and *Gen. Rab.* 55:7, see *Jub.* 18:13 and Josephus, *Ant.* I.224. Even the Targumim (*Onqelos*, *Pseudo-Jonathan*) to Gen 22:2 translate the Hebrew "land of Moriah" as the "land of worship." *Neofiti* and the *Fragment Targum* explicitly identify the location of the sacrifice as the Temple Mount (Gen 22:14).

**145** John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1977), 60: "There Abraham offered Isaac his son as a sacrifice in the very place where the Lord was crucified" (*Breviarius*, Recension A, 2).

**146** Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades*, 65: "In the city of Jerusalem by the Sepulchre of the Lord is the Place of a Skull. There Abraham offered his son as a sacrifice, and because it is a hill of rock, it was on the hill itself—at its foot, to be exact—that Abraham made the altar. Above the altar rises the hill; one climbs to the top of it by steps. There the Lord was crucified" (*Topography of the Holy Land*, 7).

**147** Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades*, 83: "From the Tomb it is eighty paces to Golgotha; you go up on one side of it by the very steps up which our Lord went to be crucified. You can see the place where he was crucified, and on the actual rock there is a bloodstain. Beside this is the altar of Abraham, which is where he intended to offer Isaac, and where Melchizedek offered sacrifice" (*Travels from Piacenza*, 19).

**148** Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades*, 97: "And between these two churches [the Church of Calvary and the Basilica of Constantine] comes that renowned place where the patriarch Abraham set up an altar, and arranged a pile of wood on it, and took up his drawn sword to sacrifice Isaac his son" (*The Holy Places*, I.6.2).

occurs on Golgotha in the sixth-century *Breviarius*.<sup>149</sup> In one case, we can observe the transfer occur across two different pilgrimage accounts separated by centuries. The Bordeaux Pilgrim, the first person to have left us an account of their travels to the Holy Land (ca. 333), mentions seeing the blood of Zechariah who had been killed within the Temple precincts (2Chr 24:20–22; cf. Matt 23:35),<sup>150</sup> but in the *Breviarius* the blood of Zechariah has moved to Golgotha.<sup>151</sup> The *Breviarius*, like *Cav. Tr.*, is astoundingly naïve in terms of geography. It directs pilgrims' attention to the place where Jesus drove the money changers from their tables—right outside the Holy Sepulchre!<sup>152</sup>

Christians also referred to the Holy Sepulchre and Golgotha specifically as the “center” or “navel” of the world, appropriating a title that had once been used of the Temple Mount in the Second Temple period. Cyril of Jerusalem, the bishop of the city from 350–386 CE—approximately the time between the death of Eusebius and the arrival of Egeria—makes such a reference in his catechetical lectures (*Catecheses* XIII.28).

He stretched out His hands on the Cross to encompass the ends of the world; for this Golgotha is the very center of the earth. This is not my saying; it is a prophet who has said: “You wrought salvation in the midst of the earth” (Ps 74:12).<sup>153</sup>

Similarly, Sophronius, the patriarch of Jerusalem at the time of the Arab conquest of Jerusalem, specifies Golgotha as the navel of the earth in one of his poems.

And prostrate, I will venerate  
The Navel-point of the earth,  
That divine Rock in which was fixed the wood  
Which undid the curse of the tree (*Anacreontica* 20.29).<sup>154</sup>

<sup>149</sup> Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades*, 59–60: “And going from there into Golgotha there is a great court where the Lord was crucified [. . .] There Adam was formed” (*Breviarius*, 2). The sentence is in both recensions.

<sup>150</sup> Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 156–57: “And in the sanctuary itself, where the Temple stood which Solomon built, there is marble in front of the altar which has on it the blood of Zacharias—you would think it had only been shed today.”

<sup>151</sup> Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades*, 60: “In front of this Tomb [of Jesus] is the altar where Holy Zacharias was killed, and his blood dried there” (*Breviarius*, Recension A, 3).

<sup>152</sup> Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades*, 60: “From there [the Basilica of St. Constantine within the Holy Sepulchre] you go to the basilica where Jesus found people buying and selling doves and drove them out” (*Breviarius*, Recension A, 3).

<sup>153</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, Volume 2*, trans. Leo P. MacCauley (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1970), 22.

<sup>154</sup> Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades*, 91.

Not every Christian identified Golgotha itself as the navel of the earth. Adomnan, citing the same psalm as Cyril of Jerusalem, instead identified the midpoint as a column north of the Holy Sepulchre, where the true cross had once restored a dead man to life.<sup>155</sup> He is still, however, identifying the center of the earth with reference to Christian holy sites and not the Temple Mount.

The latest of these sources are contemporary with *Cav. Tr.* and constitute a dominant Christian tradition that persisted until the time PRE was written. As in *Cav. Tr.*, the “increase” of Golgotha meant the corresponding “decrease” of the Temple Mount. Typical of this attitude is the sixth-century Madaba Map, where Jerusalem is the center of the world, and the Holy Sepulchre is the center of Jerusalem—but there is no Temple Mount at all.<sup>156</sup> Mount Moriah is no longer in competition with the Christian holy sites. It has disappeared.

Sivertsev has pointed out that, in response to this erasure, the Ark of the Covenant/Foundation Stone acquired the same political and cosmological significance as the Cross/Golgotha.<sup>157</sup> He cites as an example one version of the Hebrew apocalypse (in fact, several apocalypses) known as the *Signs of the Messiah*. In the version called the *Signs of Simeon bar Yohai* (not to be confused with the *Secrets of Simeon bar Yohai*), the seventh and eighth signs recount how the king of Edom (the Roman emperor) brought his crown to the Temple Mount, placing it on the Foundation Stone. It is then taken by the Messiah b. Joseph.

וישב מלך אדום פעם שנייה לירושלים ויבוא בהיכל ויקח את עטרת הזהב אשר על ראשו וישם אותה על אבן שתייה ואומר רבונו של עולם כבר החזרתי מה שלקחו אבותי ויהיה בימיו צרה האות השמיני מוציא נחמיה בן חושיל ומשיח בן יוסף את העטרה שהשיב מלך אדום לירושלים ויצא שם נחמיה בכל העולם

[The Seventh Sign.] The king of Edom will return to Jerusalem a second time and will come to the Temple. He will take the crown of gold which is on his head, and he will place it on the Foundation Stone, saying, “Master of the World! I have now returned what my ancestors took.” Thus it will be in the days of distress.

The Eighth Sign. Nehemiah b. Hushiel and the Messiah b. Joseph will take out the crown which the king of Edom returned Jerusalem. The fame of Nehemiah will go out into the whole world.<sup>158</sup>

155 Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades*, 99.

156 On this map, see Herbert Donner, *The Mosaic Map of Madaba: An Introductory Guide* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1992).

157 Sivertsev, *Judaism and Imperial Ideology*, 74–77.

158 My translation from Michael Higger, *Halachot ve-Haggadot* (New York: Debei Rabbanan, 1933), 115–23 (121) [Hebrew]. Compare the translation of John C. Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic: A Postrabbinic Jewish Apocalypse Reader* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005),

Sivertsev notes that this is an imitation of an episode in the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*. In chapter fourteen, the Last World Emperor, having defeated all of Christendom's earthly enemies, places his crown on the cross at Golgotha, where it is assumed into heaven. The episode signifies the return of imperial authority to God (who had bestowed it upon Rome in the first place) and immediately precedes the birth of Antichrist and the end of the world. In the Jewish narrative, the Messiah b. Joseph is reclaiming the rightful kingship that Rome had usurped.

The *Signs of Simeon bar Yohai* was written at about the same time as *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* and already shows a Jewish reaction to Christian narratives about the centrality of Golgotha. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* can be conceived along similar lines. The entirety of PRE glorifies the site of the Temple to the exclusion of competing cult sites. The immediate target appears to be Christianity, which had appropriated traditions related to the Jewish Temple and applied them to Golgotha. Two other competing traditions should be kept in mind. First, Islam also employed Temple traditions for its central shrine. The most notable example is the sacrifice of Ishmael, which occurs immediately after Abraham and Ishmael build the Ka'ba.<sup>159</sup>

Second, the Samaritans emphasize Mount Gerizim (their Temple Mount) as the site of important events from the age of the patriarchs. The collection of hymns known as *Memar* (or *Tibat*) *Marqah*, compiled from the fourth century onwards, maintains that Abraham offered Isaac on Mount Gerizim and that all the patriarchs worshiped there. The hymnist says of the altar on Gerizim: "The great prophet Moses arranged it, Adam laid its foundations, and Noah completed its building, Abraham sat there, Isaac honored it, and Jacob strengthened it, and Joseph the king guarded it with faith" (IV.77).<sup>160</sup> *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* is Judaism's contribution to a discourse in which the central cult site is the locus of all the major events in sacred history. Still, Christianity seems to hold pride of place as the primary target of PRE's counter-history, as the final example will show.

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113–14, from a different source: Arthur Marmorstein, "Les Signes du Messie," *Revue des Études Juives* 52 (1906): 176–86.

159 Reuven Firestone, *Journeys in Holy Lands: The Evolution of the Abraham-Ishmael Legends in Islamic Exegesis* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990), 105–51. He also notes competing traditions within Islam where Abraham sacrifices Isaac in Jerusalem. The location of the sacrifice, in fact, determines which son was sacrificed. He quotes al-Mas'ūdī as stating: "If the sacrifice occurred in the Hijāz, it was Ishmael, because Isaac never entered the Hijāz. If the sacrifice took place in Syria, then it was Isaac, because Ishmael did not enter Syria after he was taken from there" (137).

160 Abraham Tal, ed., *Tibāt Mārqa, The Ark of Marqah: Edition, Translation, Commentary* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 429. For earlier editions see Zeev Ben-Hayyim, ed., *Tibat Marqah: A Collection of Samaritan Midrashim* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1988) [Hebrew], and John Macdonald, *Memar Marqah: The Teachings of Marqah*, 2 vols. (Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1963).

## 10.10 The Wood of the Cross

The *Cave of Treasures* ends with a life of Christ, covering his birth and his death. Curiously, even this section of the document has a parallel in PRE. In later Jewish tradition, Haman, the villain of the story of Esther, is a cipher for Jesus. Chapters 49–50 of PRE, occupying a climactic position in the overall arc of the book's sacred history, retells Esther with a focus on Haman. *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* 49 begins with the genealogy of Haman. Esther and Mordechai do not enter the story until PRE 50, which recounts Haman's downfall. The nature of Haman's death is very different from the biblical book. He is hanged on a beam drawn from his own house—a beam, PRE clarifies, that came from the Holy of Holies. In *Cav. Tr.*, Jesus is likewise crucified on wood from the Temple, the very poles that once carried the Ark of the Covenant.

There are three respects in which Haman resembles Jesus. The first is the manner of their deaths. According to Esth 7:10, the king's servants “hanged Haman on the wood he had prepared for Mordechai” (וַיִּתְּלוּ אֶת־הָמָן עַל־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־הֵכִין לְמֹרְדֵּכַי). Greek sources already identify this vague form of execution and its instrument with the cross and crucifixion. In the Septuagint (Esth 7:9), the king orders that Haman be crucified (σταυρωθήτω), while Josephus' rendition of Esth 7:10 reads: “And the king immediately ordered that Haman be hanged on that very cross (ἐξ ἐκείνου τοῦ σταυροῦ) to die” (*Ant.* XI.267).<sup>161</sup> The semantic range of the Hebrew word תלה includes crucifixion. For example, Deut 21:23, “The hanged one (תלוי) is cursed by God,” made famous by Paul's application of the verse to Jesus (Gal 3:13), is translated in *Targum Onqelos* as “the one who has been crucified” (אֲצִטְלִיב). The other Targumim (*Neofiti*, *Pseudo-Jonathan*) offer similar translations using the root צלב, “to crucify.” The word תלה is routinely used to describe the manner of Jesus' death in Hebrew literature, such as in the many versions of *Toledot Yeshu*.<sup>162</sup>

Nowhere is this connection more evident than in an Aramaic Byzantine *piyyut* for Purim (seventh century?) where Haman interrogates several biblical villains: Nimrod, Pharaoh, Amalek, Sisera, Goliath, Zerah the Ethiopian (2Chr 14:8–14), Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar. Between Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar, Haman interviews an anonymous individual whose identity is nevertheless clear.

<sup>161</sup> Flavius Josephus, *Josephus in Nine Volumes*, trans. Henry St. John Thackeray et al., 9 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926–1965), 6:422.

<sup>162</sup> See Sarit Kattan Gribetz, “Hanged and Crucified: The Book of Esther and *Toledot Yeshu*,” in *Toledot Yeshu (“The Life Story of Jesus”) Revisited: A Princeton Conference*, ed. Peter Schäfer, Michael Meerson, and Yaacov Deutsch (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 159–80, and Gavin McDowell, “The Alternative Chronology: Dating the Events of the Wagenseil Version of *Toledot Yeshu*,” in “*Toledot Yeshu*” in *Context: The Jewish “Life of Jesus” in Ancient, Medieval, and Modern History*, ed. Daniel Barbu and Yaacov Deutsch (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 59–80.

סבר את בגרמך דאת צלב לגרמך ואנא שותף עימך  
 סמיר על קיס ודמותי במרקוליס מצייר על קיס  
 סמרי על קיס ובשרי לטופח נקיס ובר נגיד בקיס  
 סכיף באיסקוטוס מן אתא זיניטוס וקרן יתי כריסטוס

You think yourself/That you were crucified (צלב) alone/Yet I shared it with you.  
 Nailed to a beam/As my image, for idolatry/Is painted on wood.  
 They nailed me to a tree /My flesh lacerated by blows/The son of a carpenter  
 Afflicted by the scourge/Born of a woman/They called me Christ (כריסטוס)! (ll. 85–88)<sup>163</sup>

The contents of the *piyyut* help contextualize the imperial prohibition of burning Haman in effigy on the grounds that the image too closely resembles a crucifix (*Codex Theodosianus* 16.8.18). The resemblance was apparently intentional.

The second point of resemblance is the time of their deaths. The book of Esther explains the origin of the festival of Purim in the month of Adar, but most of the story takes place eleventh months earlier, in Nisan, at the time of Passover. This is already a subtext of the biblical book. Haman casts the lots on 13 Nisan (Esth 3:12), and the central portion of the book (Esth 3–7) takes place over the next five days, when Esther calls for a three-day fast (Esth 4:6) and then invites the king and Haman to dinner on two successive nights (Esth 5:4–8). The biblical book never calls attention to this fact, but rabbinic literature does, including the Babylonian Talmud, which, with PRE, observes that Esther's fast would interfere with the observance of Passover.

**b. Megillah 15a<sup>165</sup>**

ויעבור מרדכי אמר רב שהעביר יום ראשון של  
 פסח בתענית ושמואל אמר דעבר ערקומא דמיא.

**PRE 50 (JTS 3847, f. 148b)**

ולא מצאת איש אחד נאמן לשלוח אל מרדכי  
 ואמרה היא בעצמה לבוא אל מרדכי שנ' ותאמ'  
 אסתר להשיב אל מרדכי אמרה לו לך כנס את  
 כל היהודים וצומו עלי ואל תאכלו ואל תשתו  
 שלשת ימים לילה ויום אמ' לה מרדכי והלא יום  
 השלישי יום הפסח הוא אמרה לו זקן שביהודים  
 אם אין ישר' למי הוא הפסח שמע מרדכי ועשה  
 ככל אשר צוה אסתר שנ' ויעבר מרדכי מה לשון  
 ויעבר מרדכי שעבר על מצות הפסח

<sup>163</sup> My translation from Michael Sokoloff and Joseph Yahalom, eds., *Jewish Palestinian Aramaic Poetry from Late Antiquity: Critical Edition with Introduction and Commentary* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1999), 216 [Hebrew]. For another translation of this passage with analysis, see Ophir Münz-Manor, "Carnavalesque Ambivalence and the Christian Other in Aramaic Poems from Byzantine Palestine," in *Jews in Byzantium: Dialectics of Minority and Majority Cultures*, ed. Robert Bonfil et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 829–43.

<sup>164</sup> My translation from the Vilna Shas.

“And Mordechai traversed” (ויעבר). Rav said: Rather, he *transferred* (העביר) the first day of Passover to a fast day. Samuel said that he crossed a stream of water.

She could not find anyone trustworthy to send to Mordechai, so she convinced herself to go to Mordechai, as it is written, “Esther spoke and replied to Mordechai, she said to him, ‘Go, gather all the Jews and fast on my behalf. Neither eat nor drink for three days and nights’” (Esth 4: 15–16). Mordechai said to her: “Isn’t the third day the day of Passover?!” She said to him, “Elder of the Jews, if there is no Israel, for whom is Passover?” Mordechai understood and did everything that Esther commanded. It is written, “And Mordechai traversed” (Esth 4:17). What is the meaning of “And Mordechai traversed” (ויעבר)? Rather, he *transgressed* (עבר) the commandments of Passover.

*Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* goes so far as to document on what specific date each event occurs. Esther’s first banquet occurs on the eve of 15 Nisan, meaning that the fast transpired from 13–15 Nisan. The second banquet, when Esther unmasks Haman and he is hanged, occurs on 16 Nisan.<sup>165</sup> These dates concord with chapter 29 of *Seder Olam Rabbah*, the rabbinic account of biblical chronology: “On 13 Nisan, Haman wrote letters to destroy and to kill and to exterminate all the Jews. On 16 Nisan, they hanged Haman on the tree” (בשלישה עשר בניסן כתב המן ספרים להשמיד) (להרוג ולאבד את כל היודים בששה עשר בניסן חלו את המן על העץ).<sup>166</sup>

The sixteenth of Nisan is not the Jewish Passover, but it is the Christian one—Easter—if one follows (like *Cav. Tr.*) the Johannine calendar, where Jesus is condemned and crucified on the day of preparation, 14 Nisan, and not a day later as in the Synoptic Gospels. The resurrection therefore takes place on 16 Nisan. Clemens Leonhard cites Eutychius of Constantinople (d. 582 CE), who writes in his *Sermo de Paschate et de Sacrosancta Eucharistia*: “Therefore, Christ’s church also celebrates his holy resurrection, which happened when the sixteenth (day) began. Having driven out the fourteenth of the moon, she (the church) also does not any more celebrate together with the Jews.”<sup>167</sup> The date of Haman’s death is not incidental but has elements of anti-Christian polemic.

<sup>165</sup> The printed edition says 17 Nisan. This is an error (*zayin* for *waw*), since it dates the previous banquet to 15 Nisan.

<sup>166</sup> Translated from Chaim Milikowsky, ed., *Seder Olam: Critical Edition, Commentary, and Introduction*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi Press, 2013), 1:319 [Hebrew].

<sup>167</sup> Clemens Leonhard, *The Jewish Pesach and the Origins of the Christian Easter* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006), 153.

The third point of resemblance is a connection to “Edom.” Haman is genealogically related to Edom, that is, Esau (Gen 36:1). Haman is an “Agagite” (Esth 3:1), commonly interpreted as a descendant of the Amalekite king Agag, killed by the Israelite king Saul (with some reluctance) in 1Sam 15. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* tells Agag’s story twice, first in PRE 44, in conjunction with Amalek’s attack on Israel in Exod 17, and again at the beginning of PRE 49, to introduce Haman. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* directly ties Haman to Amalek, the grandson of Esau (Gen 36:12).

In fact, PRE goes even further and connects Haman to Rome, commonly designated in rabbinic literature with the cipher “Edom.”<sup>168</sup> According to PRE 49, the prophet Samuel issued a prayer that protected Israel from the attacks of the “children of Agag.” It is then followed by the story of the Roman emperor Titus, the destroyer of the Second Temple, who was brought low by a single gnat (cf. *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan-B* 7; *b. Gittin* 56b). It is one of the very few times that PRE introduces narrative material that does not originate from the Hebrew Bible, the only other examples being the prologue (PRE 1–2) and the story of Resh Laqish in PRE 43. The implication by association is that Haman anticipates the tribulations of Israel under Rome.

“Edom” does not merely designate pagan Rome but also the Christian empire. According to PRE 50, Haman has an “embroidered image” (צלם מרוקם) stitched onto his clothes, forcing everyone who bows before him, as per the biblical story (Esth 3:2), to commit idolatry (עבודה זרה). For this reason, Mordechai refuses to honor Haman. Elliott Horowitz speculates that this image is none other than the cross: “The author of this late midrash transforms Haman into a Christian bishop who proudly wears upon his chest the sign of the cross [ . . . ] And, although the midrashic author apparently resided in Umayyad Palestine, he nonetheless felt the need to link the ancient enemy of the Jewish people with the central symbol of Christianity.”<sup>169</sup> I would go further and argue that Haman is not merely a Christian bishop but a type of Christ.<sup>170</sup>

168 The classic essay on this subject is Gerson Cohen, “Esau as Symbol in Early Medieval Thought,” in *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, ed. Alexander Altmann (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 19–48. See also Helen Spurling, “The Biblical Symbol of Edom in Jewish Eschatological and Apocalyptic Imagery,” in *Sacred Text: Explorations in Lexicography*, ed. Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala and Angel Urbán (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009), 271–98.

169 Horowitz, *Reckless Rites*, 157–58.

170 Previous scholarship identified the portrait of Jonah in PRE 10 as a parodic “type of Christ.” See Rachel Adelman, “Jonah through the Looking Glass: *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*’s Portrait of an Apocalyptic Prophet,” *Arc: The Journal of the School of Religious Studies* 39 (2011): 79–92, recapitulating ideas she first introduced in *The Return of the Repressed: Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer and the Pseudepigrapha* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 211–58. See also Katharina E. Keim, *Pirquei deRabbi Eliezer: Structure, Coherence, Intertextuality*, (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 184–90.



Jesus is not connected to Edom through any inherent quality but because of events that transpired centuries after his death: the conversion of the Roman emperor to Christianity. For this reason, the Babylonian Talmud says that Jesus is “close to the government” (*b. Sanhedrin* 43a).<sup>171</sup>

והתניא בערב הפסח תלאוהו לישו והכרוז יוצא לפניו מ' יום קודם שהוא יוצא ליסקל על שכישי  
והסית והדיח את ישראל כל מי שיודע לו זכות יבא וילמד עליו ולא מצאו לו זכות ותלאוהו בערב  
הפסח אמר עולא ותסברא בר הפוכי זכות הוא מסית הוא ורחמנא אמר לא תחמול ולא תכסה עליו  
אלא שאני ישו דקרוב למלכות הוה

It was taught: On the eve of Passover, they hanged Jesus. The crier went out before him forty days prior [saying], “He is going to be stoned because of witchcraft, incitement, and leading Israel astray. Anyone who knows a reason to acquit him should come forward and make it known on his behalf.” But they did not find a reason to acquit him and hanged him on the eve of Passover. Ulla said: How could you even consider that this son of perversion was innocent? He was an inciter! The Merciful One states: “You shall not pity and you shall not protect him” (Deut 13:9). But Jesus was different because he was close to the government.

Note that this one talmudic passage combines all three commonalities between Jesus and Haman: the manner of their deaths, the timing, and a connection to Rome.

The one respect in which PRE departs from previous depictions of Haman is the origin of his gallows. In fact, it contradicts Scripture. Instead of Haman being hanged on gallows he has already prepared for Mordechai, a new beam is pulled out of his own house, in accordance with a law recorded in the book of Ezra. It is this novelty which brings PRE into contact with *Cav. Tr.*

*Cav. Tr.* 50:20 and 53:6.13 (BL Add. 25875, ff. 46a–46b, 49a, and 49b)

[50:20] וצוה המלך לתלותו על העץ באותה השעה מה  
עשה אליהו ז"ל נדמה לחרבונה אחד מסריסי  
המלך אמ' לו אדוני המלך יש עץ אחד בביתו  
שלהמן מביית קדש הקדשים גבהו חמשים אמה  
מנ' שהוא מבית קדש הקדשים שנ' ויבן את בית  
יער הלבנון מאה אמה ארכו ועשרים אמה רחבו  
ושלשים אמה קומתו וצוה המלך לתלותו עליו  
לקיים מה שנ' התנסב אעא מן וזקף יתרמי עלוהי  
ולקח המלך את כל אשר להמן ונתן למרדכי ואס-  
תר לקיים מה שנ' עלי יתעביד על דנא

PRE 50 (JTS 3847, ff. 149b–150a)

והתניא בערב הפסח תלאוהו לישו והכרוז יוצא לפניו מ' יום קודם שהוא יוצא ליסקל על שכישי  
והסית והדיח את ישראל כל מי שיודע לו זכות יבא וילמד עליו ולא מצאו לו זכות ותלאוהו בערב  
הפסח אמר עולא ותסברא בר הפוכי זכות הוא מסית הוא ורחמנא אמר לא תחמול ולא תכסה עליו  
אלא שאני ישו דקרוב למלכות הוה

<sup>171</sup> See Thierry Murcia, *Jésus dans le Talmud et la littérature rabbinique ancienne*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 435–42.

[53:6] ܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ  
ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ  
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ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ

[53:13] ܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ

[50:20] When the sentence was handed down by Pilate concerning the death of our Lord, they [the Jews] hurried and entered the Temple (ܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ) and brought out from there those wooden beams of the Ark (ܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ). They constructed the cross of Christ (ܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ) from them. In truth, it was fitting for them that those beams that once carried the Covenant should now carry the Lord of the Covenant.

[53:6] When he [Nicodemus] brought down the body of our Lord from the cross (ܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ), the Jews ran and took the cross (ܡܕܢܐ) and introduced it back into the Temple because it was the wooden beams of the Ark.

[53:13] His cross was [made from] wood from the Temple.

The king ordered to hang him on the gallows at that very instant. What did Elijah, of blessed memory, do? He changed his appearance into Harbonah, one of the king's servants. He said to him, "My lord, the king, there is a particular tree in the house of Haman from the house of the Holy of Holies (בית קדש הקדשים), fifty cubits tall." From where do we learn it was from the house of the Holy of Holies? It is written, "He built the house of the Forest of Lebanon, a hundred cubits long and [fifty] cubits wide and thirty cubits high" (1Kgs 7:2).<sup>172</sup> The king ordered to hang him upon it, in order to fulfill what has been written, "A beam shall be taken from [his house], and he shall be hanged (זקף) upon it" (Ezra 6:11). The king took all that belonged to Haman and gave it to Esther and Mordechai to fulfill what has been written, "For my sake it shall be done for this" (Ezra 6:11).

*Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* justifies its strange tradition through a prooftext referring to house of the Forest of Lebanon, "Lebanon" often being a shorthand for the Temple.<sup>173</sup> A second prooftext comes from the Aramaic portion of Ezra (the decree of Darius), which uses the word זקף ("to raise up") to describe the punishment for anyone who would interfere with the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. This word is rare in the Bible. Apart from Ezra, it only appears in a pair of Psalms (145:14; 146:8). In Aramaic, including Syriac, it is a common word that not only means "to elevate or lift up" but "to crucify." It is directly cognate to the word used for the cross (ܡܕܢܐ) in the *Cav. Tr.* passage cited above. The introduction of the prooftext is also unusual. Instead of a standard introduction such as שְׁנֵאמַר, literally "as it is said" (but often translated "as it is written"), PRE states that the king wanted to "fulfill" (לְקַיֵּם) the

<sup>172</sup> The text erroneously reads "twenty," against the biblical text and—more importantly—the very sense of the passage!

<sup>173</sup> Geza Vermes, "Lebanon – The Historical Development of an Exegetical Tradition," in *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 26–40.

decree of his predecessor, after the fashion of the Scripture fulfillment passages throughout the Passion narratives (e.g., John 19:24.28.36).

Turning to the *Cave of Treasures*, it is important to note that the key verse, *Cav. Tr.* 50:20, is not found in every version. In Arabic versions, it is not in the *Book of the Rolls* or the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*, although the Ark is present in all three Garshuni manuscripts (Mingana Syr. 32, ff. 142b–143a; Mingana Syr. 258, f. 139a–139b; Borgia Arab. 135, f. 271b). The scribe of Mingana Syr. 258, f. 138b has even written the word “Ark” (ܐܪܚܐ) in large letters across the top margin, signifying its importance. The Ark tradition is also missing from the Georgian version, which I discussed in chapter eight, concluding that references to the Ark were, for some reason, removed. Given the popularity of a work like the *Book of the Rolls*, this means a large percentage of manuscripts do not mention the tradition. However, manuscripts such as Mingana Syr. 258 could have more than one work from the *Cav. Tr.* cycle, in this case the *Conflict* and an Arabic translation of the primary version of *Cav. Tr.*

As for its meaning, the Ark tradition underlines the connection between Jesus and the Temple, recalling Paul’s comparison of Christ to the “mercy seat” (Rom 3:25). It does not make much sense from a historical perspective, but from the perspective of *Cav. Tr.*’s “historicized typology,” it is perfectly coherent. Following the Epistle to the Hebrews, *Cav. Tr.* understands the death of Jesus in sacerdotal terms. Hebrews argues that Jesus, though not a levitical priest, is nevertheless a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek who brings his own blood into the heavenly sanctuary as an offering (Heb 9:11–12). In *Cav. Tr.*, Jesus stands in continuity with a literal order of Melchizedek, who maintained the proto-Christian cult of Adam at Golgotha. Jesus’ blood is even physically transported into the earthly sanctuary, emphasizing the connection between the death of Jesus and the sacrifice for the Day of Atonement. The identification of the cross of Christ with the Ark of the Covenant underscores the continuity between the Old and the New Covenants as well as the continuity between the Jewish Temple and the Church of the Anastasis that, in the Christian *imaginaire*, replaced it. The cross is, functionally, the Ark of this new, Christian Temple.

In Christian typology, the Ark of the Covenant was most often a symbol of Christ’s human nature or of Mary, the mother of Jesus—both, like the Ark, vessels housing the divine presence.<sup>174</sup> Comparison between the Ark and the cross was

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174 For patristic examples of this typology, see Luigi Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought*, trans. Thomas Buffer (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999), 102 (Athanasius), 114 (Ephrem the Syrian), 163–64 (Gregory of Nazianzus), 174 (John Chrysostom), 207 (Jerome), 247–48 (Cyril of Alexandria), 374 (Isidore of Seville), and 408 (John of Damascus). I have omitted less familiar authors from this list.

rare, although there is a certain resemblance between them. Both, for instance adorned the rock believed to be the “navel of the earth,” making the two objects extensions of the polemical discourse surrounding Mount Moriah and Golgotha. They both also harbored the mystical presence of God, serving as his “footstool,” either as a divine throne in the inner sanctum of the Temple or as the support of a dying body. As portable property, they could also serve as battle standards, and it is this aspect which inspired George of Pisidia, a poet in the court of Heraclius (r. 610–641), to draw a polemical comparison between them. On the occasion of the Byzantine emperor Heraclius’ restoration of the true cross to Jerusalem in 629, following a lengthy war with Persia in which the cross was captured, George wrote a poem in celebration, including the line, “The cross above you [i.e., standing on Golgotha] appeared to your enemies as a new Ark, yet more powerful than the Ark” (*In restitutionem S. Crucis*, ll. 73–74).<sup>175</sup>

On the whole, though, the identification of the Ark and the cross in *Cav. Tr.* is the germ of a new myth rather than part of an ongoing tradition. A medieval legend of the wood of the cross, extremely popular in Latin and translated into several European vernaculars, connects the wood of the cross to numerous events in the history of Israel. The most developed version, called *Post peccatum Adae* (“After the sin of Adam,” the first words) is a direct sequel to the *Life of Adam and Eve*, where Seth brings the seeds of the tree out of Paradise instead of the oil of life.<sup>176</sup> The tree subsequently becomes the rod of Moses and part of the Temple before it serves its ultimate purpose as the cross of Christ. Different accounts in different languages (Latin, Slavonic, Greek, Arabic, Ethiopic, and Armenian, in addition to European vernaculars) subtract or add episodes, but they all feature the wood of the cross as part of the Temple.<sup>177</sup>

The proliferation of legends about the wood of the cross provoked its own Jewish response independently of *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*. In *Toledot Yeshu*, the notorious Jewish parody of the Gospel literature, Jesus is hanged on a cabbage stalk.<sup>178</sup> Christian polemical literature about *Toledot Yeshu* will sometimes specify that this

175 My translation from George of Pisidia, *Poemi I. Panegirici Epici*, ed. and trans. Agostino Pertusi (Ettal: Buch-Kunstverlag, 1959), 228.

176 For a recent translation, see Stephen C. E. Hopkins, “The Legend of the Holy Rood Tree,” in *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures, Volume 2*, ed. Tony Burke (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 145–59.

177 See Gavin McDowell, “La Gloire du Liban viendra chez toi (Is 60,13) : À l’origine de la légende du bois de la croix,” *Apocrypha* 29 (2018): 183–201, and the bibliography cited there.

178 Michael Meerson and Peter Schäfer, eds., *Toledot Yeshu: The Life Story of Jesus*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 1:96–100.

cabbage grew in the Temple.<sup>179</sup> The inner logic of the cabbage tradition has long puzzled scholars, but it could be tied to the Christian belief that the wood of Jesus' cross was once part of the Temple. The Hebrew word for cabbage (כרוב) is identical to the word for Cherub (כרוב), as in the figures adorning the Ark of the Covenant.<sup>180</sup> Dating the various versions of *Toledot Yeshu* and its traditions is a particular challenge, but it seems clear that PRE and *Toledot Yeshu* spring from the same impulse: to provide a counter-narrative to Christian beliefs about the wood of the cross.

If the *Cave of Treasures* places the wood of the cross in the Holy of Holies, then *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* takes it back out. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*'s modification of earlier Jewish tradition can be understood as a polemic against Christian triumphalism. The *Cave of Treasures* is representative of the Christian perspective: It presents the death of Jesus as the moment of the abolition of Jewish ordinances and the transfer of priesthood, kingship, prophecy, and even Passover (i.e., the Eucharist) to Christianity (e.g., *Cav. Tr.* 52:14–19; 54:3). The very Ark of the Covenant is appropriated as the central Christian symbol, an object of both Jewish fascination and revulsion.<sup>181</sup> In PRE 50, the beam from the Holy of Holies is removed from the “House of Haman.” Presumably, it returns to its rightful place. The very next chapter, PRE 51, describes a new heaven and a new earth but also the construction of the eschatological Temple and the restoration of those observances that the death of Christ allegedly abolished.

In fact, the placement of Esther in the overall design of PRE reflects the function of the Passion in *Cav. Tr.* Both stories occupy the climactic positions of their respective works and represent the anticipated culmination of sacred history.<sup>182</sup> In *Cav. Tr.*, the story of Christ is principally anticipated by the story of Adam, including his burial at Golgotha. In PRE, the story of Esther unites two recurring themes, the dual significance of Passover and the Temple Mount throughout sacred history. According to PRE, the celebration of Passover dates to the time of Adam and was

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179 See, for example, Raymond Martini's rendition of *Toledot Yeshu* in Meerson and Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, 1:177: “And this is not a miracle because every year one such cabbage springs up in the Sanctuary, and one hundred pounds of seed fall from it.”

180 See Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, “On Some Early Traditions in *Toledot Yeshu* and the Antiquity of the ‘Helena’ Recension,” in “*Toledot Yeshu*” in *Context: The Jewish “Life of Jesus” in Ancient, Medieval, and Modern History*, ed. Daniel Barbu and Yaacov Deutsch (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 43–58 (54–57), who devises an additional pun involving the Hebrew and Aramaic words for lettuce and the Syriac term for “mercy seat.”

181 For other examples of Jewish attitudes to the cross from PRE until the end of the Middle Ages, see Horowitz, *Reckless Rites*, 149–85.

182 Although the final chapter of PRE returns to the story of Moses, it is less a continuation of the earlier chapters than an independent homily on slander.

practiced by the patriarchs until the time of Moses. Likewise, Adam worshiped on the Temple Mount, and his example was followed by Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The death of Haman on a beam from the Holy of Holies in the wake of Passover is not just an incidental polemic against Christianity but a summary of the work's major themes. Ironically, Haman's death, like the death of Jesus, is also a moment of redemption. It might not be too much to call the story of Esther the "Jewish Gospel."

## 10.11 Conclusion

The foregoing examples demonstrate *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer's* broad knowledge of traditions found in the *Cave of Treasures*. Some of these traditions, such as the introduction of Satan into the Garden of Eden, were widespread and found in numerous Christian and Muslim works written in Greek, Syriac, or Arabic. Others, however, were restricted to *Cav. Tr.* and dependent works, such as the specific tripartite division of Noah's Ark. In either case, *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* demonstrates the fluidity with which such traditions crossed religious boundaries. It also illustrates how people living within a given region could understand the history of Israel in a similar way, regardless of religion. The same phenomenon was observed in the second part of this study, where the Jews of Europe adopted the same traditions from *Jubilees* as their Christian neighbors.

Although many of these traditions are also found in Muslim literature, they often take the form of an anti-Christian counter-narrative in PRE. In the *Life of Adam and Eve* and the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*, Adam's (failed) penance is the prelude to the promise of a future redeemer; in PRE, Adam's penance succeeds, and his sin is forgiven. In *Cav. Tr.*, the burial of Adam becomes the establishment of a proto-Christian cult based on the veneration of his remains; in PRE, Adam plans his burial specifically to avoid such a cult. In *Cav. Tr.*, Abel is a type of Christ, whose blood acquires religious significance; in PRE, he is a pious Jew who observes Passover. In *Cav. Tr.*, Adam is placed in the center of Noah's Ark; in PRE, the Ark does not contain the body of Adam but rather "abominations." In *Cav. Tr.*, Melchizedek gives Abraham the Eucharist; in PRE, he circumcises the patriarch. In *Cav. Tr.*, Golgotha is the navel of the earth; in PRE, it is Mount Moriah. In *Cav. Tr.*, Jesus is hanged on wood from the Temple; in PRE, it is Haman. For every thesis, there is an antithesis. Only the widespread traditions about Satan, the twin sisters, and the Cainites and Sethites do not fit into this schema.

This examination not only reveals that *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* knew traditions from the *Cave of Treasures* but also the reason why PRE would adopt so many non-rabbinic traditions: They served a polemical and an apologetic purpose. The

reformulated traditions strengthened the author's own religious identity while denigrating the religion of his opponents. Although PRE frequently departs from established rabbinic tradition, the traditions of PRE favor important markers of Jewish identity, e.g., the centrality of the Temple, circumcision, Passover, and aniconism. The new traditions subsequently became widespread in rabbinic writing of the Middle Ages. *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* is an example of the construction of Jewish identity against Christianity and Islam. *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, rather than marking an invasion of foreign traditions, represents the invention of rabbinic tradition.





## Conclusion

The present study has shown that *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer* knows many traditions from the *Cave of Treasures* but few from *Jubilees*. This division is a product of the author's historical circumstances. The author lived within the 'Abbāsid Caliphate, where numerous versions of *Cav. Tr.* circulated in Syriac, Arabic, and other languages. *Jubilees*, whether in its full form or as a constellation of motifs, was known primarily in the Byzantine Empire. Consequently, Jews from the Byzantine Empire and surrounding Christian territories cite traditions from *Jubilees*, as evidenced by *Midash Tadshe* and *Midrash Aggadah*. *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*, however, was geographically and culturally remote from Byzantium. The author may never have heard of *Jubilees*. His work is the product of the environment in which he worked, where the dominant religious cultures were Syriac Christianity and Islam. Region, rather than religion, was the determinative factor.

The course of the study did reveal that PRE knows a few ancient traditions which date to the Second Temple period. The transmission of these traditions might even depend on ancient Jewish sources, although not *Jubilees*. The first of these is the idea that demons are the shades of the generation of the Flood (PRE 34). This tradition, found in *Jubilees*, is as old as the *Book of the Watchers* (1*Enoch* 15) from the third century BCE. It survived not only in PRE but in *Sefer Asaph*, a work whose gradual composition spans the seventh to the tenth centuries, overlapping with the redaction of PRE. It is possibly based on a work related to—but older than—*Jubilees*. The basic conception also survives in the Solomonic magic tradition, such as in the *Testament of Solomon* (T. Solomon 5:3 and 17:1). The Christian transmission of this work may have helped keep the idea alive.

The other example of an ancient tradition in PRE is the election and ascension of Levi. Although Byzantine writers report the election of Levi as it appears in *Jubilees*, PRE knows a very different story about the election, one closer to rabbinic sources. It adds the narrative of Levi's ascension, which appears in neither *Jubilees* nor the Byzantine chronicles. The ascension does appear in the *Testament of Levi* (well-known in Christian transmission) as well as the *Aramaic Levi Document*, one of the Second Temple works found in the Cairo Genizah. How such an ancient work survived while leaving few traces of its existence (apart from a few Greek and Syriac fragments) remains a mystery. We can only state that it happened. Therefore, while Muslim and Christian material account for a great deal of the non-rabbinic material in PRE, a small number of Second Temple traditions did find their way into the work. In both cases, Jewish documentary evidence survives apart from PRE.

These examples, however, are the exception rather than the rule. As Anna Urowitz-Freudenstein has indicated, most of the "Second Temple" traditions in PRE

come directly from earlier rabbinic literature or even the Hebrew Bible.<sup>1</sup> Some of these examples, although they may appear in Second Temple sources, are so widespread in Christian and Muslim literature that the hypothesis that PRE knew them specifically from Second Temple sources is superfluous. This is the case with the faint echo of the Diamerismos tradition that one finds in PRE. This tradition, first attested in the *Genesis Apocryphon* and *Jubilees*, was one of the most popular in Christian and Muslim historiography. The same can be said about the prophecy of Moses' birth implied in *Jubilees* and found in Josephus. In addition to the Talmud (*b. Sotah* 13a), it was known in Christian, Muslim, and even Samaritan sources.

Most of the non-rabbinic traditions in PRE, however, are neither Second Temple nor even Jewish at all. In fact, all the traditions shared between PRE and *Cav. Tr.* are of Christian origin. The *Cave of Treasures* did not invent most of these traditions. They are, therefore, still ancient, but they date to the third or fourth century CE rather than the second or third century BCE. The association between Satan and the serpent in the Garden of Eden, for example, does not have a clear attestation before the second century, and then only in Christian sources. The identification of the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men" with the sons of Seth and the daughters of Cain is a Christian tradition originating in the chronicle of Julius Africanus (d. 240). The division of the Ark into beasts, birds, and humans appears in Christian literature from Ephrem (d. 373) onwards.

The Christian influence on PRE encourages us to rethink traditional assumptions about the relationship between Judaism on the one hand and Christianity and Islam on the other. For example, Syriac literature is believed to be particularly indebted to ancient Jewish tradition. Among Syriac works, the *Cave of Treasures* has been singled out as "the richest source for Jewish traditions."<sup>2</sup> Frequently, however, PRE is the earliest Jewish source recording these Syriac traditions. Rather than asserting that PRE contains otherwise undocumented "ancient Jewish traditions," one should consider that Syriac Christianity influenced Judaism. This conclusion was already anticipated at the end of Tryggve Kronholm's monograph *Motifs from Genesis 1–11 in the Genuine Hymns of Ephrem the Syrian: With Particular Reference to the Influence of Jewish Exegetical Tradition*. The subtitle indicates the orientation of the study, yet Kronholm concluded that the Jewish sources closest to

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

2 Sebastian P. Brock, "Jewish Traditions in Syriac Sources," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 30 (1979): 212–32 (227).

Ephrem were *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*.<sup>3</sup> It is impossible that Ephrem could have been influenced by these later Jewish writings. Ephrem, however, could have influenced PRE and the Targum through the medium of the *Cave of Treasures*, which was pseudepigraphically attributed to him.

The influence of the Syriac *tradition*, however, does not mean the influence of the Syriac *language*. Indeed, one can suspect that the Arabic language is the primary channel by which PRE obtained non-rabbinic material. The author of PRE probably knew Arabic, and *Cav. Tr.* had a wide currency in Arabic literature. Furthermore, transmission through Arabic channels is sometimes necessary to explain the otherwise inexplicable. The penitence of Adam in PRE 20, for example, is an adaptation of a well-known episode from the *Life of Adam and Eve*, a work that was never translated into Arabic. The *Cave of Treasures* skips the episode, but it reappears in the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*, an Arabic work, and episodes from the *Life of Adam and Eve* (though not the penitence) were known to Muslim authors. The penitence episode could have become known to the author of PRE from oral or literary channels, most likely in Arabic. It would be much harder to explain how PRE could have known the episode from, say, Greek (especially when most Greek manuscripts omit the episode).

Arabic language and literature can account for the circulation of other non-rabbinic traditions in PRE that were only discussed briefly in the main body of this study. *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* 21, for example, narrates how a raven assisted Adam and Eve with the burial of Abel. The earliest securely datable work to report this tradition is the Qur'ān (5:27–32). It is repeated in Arabic sources *ad nauseam*.<sup>4</sup> It is so common that it even has its own entry in Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* (A 2223.7: "Ravens show Adam how to bury the dead").<sup>5</sup> In other words, it is hardly surprising that PRE has a variant of a story that first appears in the Qur'ān. Given the popularity of such a tradition, it might have been harder to explain its absence.

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3 Trygve Kronholm, *Motifs from Genesis 1–11 in the Genuine Hymns of Ephrem the Syrian: With Particular Reference to the Influence of Jewish Exegetical Tradition* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1978), 224: "It becomes immediately apparent that the closest connexion between the exegesis of the genuine hymns of Ephrem and that of the various Targumim is discernible in T. PsJon [*Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*]. This fits well with the previously expressed conviction of a considerable affinity between the Haggadic traditions collected in PRE and those unveiling themselves in the hymns of Ephrem."

4 Christfried Böttrich, "Die Vögel des Himmels haben ihn begraben": *Überlieferungen zu Abels Bestattung und zur Ätiologie des Grabes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1995), 65–78.

5 Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature: New Enlarged and Revised Edition*, 6 vols. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955), 1:270. I owe this reference to Haim Schwarzbau, *Biblical and Extra-biblical Legends in Islamic Folk-Literature* (Walldorf-Hessen: Verlag für Orientkunde Dr. H. Vorndran, 1982), 48.

*Pirque de-Rabbi* 21 (again) states that Cain is the son of a malevolent divine being, an idea which is well-attested in the Nag Hammadi codices.<sup>6</sup> However, the tradition is also reported by Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 385AH/995 CE) in his *Kitāb al-Fihrist*. He attributes this belief to the Manichaeans, who were still active in the early centuries of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate.<sup>7</sup> Before Ibn al-Nadīm, the East Syrian theologian Theodore bar Koni (d. ca. 792) cited the books of a heretical group called the Audians on this same theme (*Liber scholiorum* XI.63).<sup>8</sup> Even later ecclesiastics, such as Agapius of Manbij (d. 942) and Gregory Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286), complain about the Audians.<sup>9</sup> The belief knew no geographical limits. It was also one of the doctrines of the Bogomils, the dualist heretics who preceded the Cathars in medieval Europe.<sup>10</sup>

The idea that one was influenced by their surrounding culture is not a radical conclusion. To cite one of many possible examples, Rina Drory has dedicated an entire monograph to “models and contacts” between Arabic and Hebrew literature, most after the time of PRE.<sup>11</sup> More recently, Jack Tannous has written a long and detailed study of Christian and Muslim “simple believers” in the Middle East before and after the Arab conquests.<sup>12</sup> Both studies can help us understand how a work like PRE came into being.

In the last chapter of her book, Drory observes that Jews did not adopt Arabic literary models (whether writing in Arabic or Hebrew) without reason.<sup>13</sup> There was always some underlying purpose behind the adoption. In the case of PRE, the work filled a vacuum. Both Christians and Muslims had their versions of “History Bibles,”

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6 See especially *the Secret Book of John* (NHC II 1:11), *the Nature of the Rulers* (II 4:87, 89, 94), and *On the Origin of the World* (II 5:103).

7 See the long passage quoted in John C. Reeves, *Prolegomena to a History of Islamicate Manichaeism* (Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, 2013), 194–97.

8 Theodore bar Koni, *Liber scholiorum*, ed. Addai Scher, 2 vols. (Paris: E Typographeo Reipublicae, 1910–1912), 2:320. I have translated this passage in Gavin McDowell, “Rabbinization of Non-Rabbinic Material in *Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer*,” in *Diversity and Rabbinization: Jewish Texts and Societies between 400 and 1000 CE*, ed. Gavin McDowell, Ron Naiweld, and Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra (Cambridge: OpenBook Publishers, 2021), 381–412 (398).

9 Cited in Henri-Charles Puech, “Fragments retrouvés de l’Apocalypse d’Allogène,” in *En Quête de la Gnose*, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), 271–300 (275–76).

10 Janet Hamilton, Bernard Hamilton, and Yuri Stoyanov, *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World, c. 650–c. 1450: Selected Sources* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 185.

11 Rina Drory, *Models and Contacts: Arabic Literature and Its Impact on Medieval Jewish Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2000). She cites PRE only once (150) as an example of a work in the “classicist” model, adhering to a literary paradigm established by earlier rabbinic literature. While true, this is not the whole story.

12 Jack Tannous, *The Making of the Medieval Middle East: Religion, Society, and Simple Believers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

13 Drory, *Models and Contacts*, 208–32.

which, I have argued, often had a catechetical intent. The *Cave of Treasures* could be found in every Christian language of the Middle East except Greek: not only Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic but also Coptic, Georgian, and (in a slightly adapted form) Armenian. Similarly, Muslims had their own “History Bibles” in the form of the *Stories of the Prophets*, often influenced by *Cav. Tr.* but recast in Islamic terms. Jews no longer had their own “sectarian” version of sacred history, adapting the biblical story to Jewish beliefs of the time. Ancient works like *Jubilees* were both out of date and “out of print” (so to speak): Jews living in Muslim Palestine would have been hard-pressed to obtain a copy of *Jubilees*, much less a work like Josephus’ *Antiquities* (practically non-existent in Syriac and Arabic) or the *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* (which survives only in Latin). *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* provided a rabbinic counterpart to the History Bibles that already existed among Christians and Muslims.

Drory’s examples consist of dense philosophical works and *belles lettres*. *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* sits on the other end of the literary spectrum. It is not a sophisticated intellectual endeavor or an imperishable work of great literature. This is where Tannous’ study steps in. He observes that most believers, whether Christian or Muslim, were agrarian, illiterate, and indifferent to the theological niceties of their professed confession’s *élites*, such as the Christological controversies animating the Council of Chalcedon (451) and its aftermath. In this realm of “simple belief,” confessional boundaries could be exceptionally porous. *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* is not, in my estimation, a product of this simple belief, but it is targeting simple believers. I would like to underline, once again, the catechetical intentions of the “History Bible.” *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer*’s version of biblical history resembles *Cav. Tr.*, but its own confessional outlook is entirely rabbinic and focuses on such basic issues such as the essential prayers (the Shema, the Amidah), various local customs (*minhagim*), and foundational myths such as the origins of Passover or the Temple altar.

Similar examples can be found elsewhere in medieval Jewish literature. The tenth-century *Sefer Yosippon*, for example, is a Hebrew adaptation of Josephus’ *Jewish War*, but its primary source is not the lost Aramaic original of the *Jewish War* or even the Greek version preserved by Christians but a Latin Christian adaptation of the Middle Ages, *De excidio Hierosolymitano*.<sup>14</sup> *Sefer Yosippon*, however, has completely changed the orientation of this anti-Jewish work. Instead of presenting the

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<sup>14</sup> See Saskia Dönitz, “Historiography among Byzantine Jews: The Case of *Sefer Yosippon*,” in *Jews in Byzantium: Dialectics of Minority and Majority Cultures*, ed. Robert Bonfil et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 951–68, as well as her monograph: Saskia Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption des “Sefer Yosippon”*: Eine Studie zur Historiographie und zum Geschichtsbewusstsein des Judentums im Mittelalter (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013). The work has recently been translated into English: Steven

destruction of the Temple as a punishment for the crucifixion of Jesus, *Sefer Yosippon* celebrates Jewish heroism in the face of adversity. In this way, an originally anti-Jewish polemic became the “Jewish Josephus.”

The example of *Sefer Yosippon* is instructive for understanding PRE. While *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* does not revive Second Temple sources, it does introduce the traditions of the Adam books into rabbinic literature. The Adam books, which include the *Cave of Treasures*, had an enormous impact on both Christianity and Islam. The Qurʾān even enshrines traditions from the Adam books as canonical elements of the story of Adam and Eve. It is a small wonder that a Jewish work would eventually adopt (and adapt) the Adam literature, much the way that *Sefer Yosippon* adapts Josephus. In sum, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* is not the attestation of an ancient, lost Hebrew Adam book. *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* itself is the Hebrew Adam book.

A final word might be said about the relationship of this study to what might be called the “Boyarin School” or, more generally, the “Ways that Never Parted” school. Daniel Boyarin, in his pioneering studies *Dying for God*<sup>15</sup> and *Border Lines*,<sup>16</sup> not to mention many subsequent studies,<sup>17</sup> argued that early Judaism and Christianity existed on a spectrum, with Marcionites on one end (who exceeded proto-Orthodox Christians in their rejection of the Jewish Law) and, on the other, Jews for whom the person of Jesus meant nothing. The metaphor he uses is the gradual geographical transition from one dialect of a language to another, as a traveler from medieval Paris to Rome might encounter multiple Romance languages that are neither French nor Italian but something in between. Similarly, between the two poles of a purely Gentile Christianity and rabbinic Judaism existed a multitude of positions well into Late Antiquity. Adam Becker and Annette Reed, the editors of the collection of essays *The Ways that Never Parted* (which includes a contribution by Boyarin) chose the deliberately provocative title to suggest that “Judaism” and “Christianity” never became completely separate but always impinged on each other even

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B. Bowman, trans., *Sefer Yosippon: A Tenth-Century History of Ancient Israel*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2023).

<sup>15</sup> Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1999).

<sup>16</sup> Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> This is not the place to give an extensive bibliography of Boyarin’s work, but the following come immediately to mind: “Justin Martyr Invents Judaism,” *Church History* 70 (2001): 427–61; “The Christian Invention of Judaism: The Theodosian Empire and the Rabbinic Refusal of Religion,” *Representations* 85 (2004): 21–57; “Rethinking Jewish Christianity: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 99 (2009): 7–36; *Judaism: The Genealogy of a Modern Notion* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2019).

beyond Late Antiquity.<sup>18</sup> When the question of identity is stated this way, then certainly the ways of Judaism and Christianity never parted. *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* is no exception in this regard.

Aaron Hughes has recently attempted to apply Boyarin's approach to Judaism and Islam in the early Islamic period in his monographs *Shared Identities*<sup>19</sup> and *Muslim and Jew*.<sup>20</sup> I have read both studies, though not before reading Michael Pregill's trenchant criticism of them.<sup>21</sup> Hughes views early Islam and late antique Judaism as religions in flux, without clearly articulated identities. This is the same argument Boyarin made for early Judaism and Christianity. However, the world of early Islam was significantly different from the world of the nascent Roman Empire. What had once been a dialogue between Jews and Christians (and sometimes "pagans") was now a trialogue among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. This is myself speaking rather than Pregill, but it seems like a mistake from the outset to exclude one of the interlocutors.

Furthermore—and Pregill does make this point—the Qur'ān exhibits a strong sectarian consciousness not found in earlier Scriptures.<sup>22</sup> When the Qur'ān declares Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian but a *muslim* (Q 3:67), it is not necessarily portraying him as the adherent of a third, fully formed religion, but it is differentiating him from two other concrete identities. Scholars who might identify themselves as part of a "Boyarin School" are apt to proclaim Judaism and Christianity as fourth-century religions, meaning that normative orthodoxies were only established then. The end of Late Antiquity (itself an entity in flux, but usually ca. 750 CE) is a common cut-off date for the exploration (and criticism) of a "Parting of the Ways" between Judaism and Christianity.<sup>23</sup> This is not necessarily correct (as Pregill indicates, and Hughes apparently concurs, rabbinic normativity in Late Antiquity is exaggerated), but I think it requires some argumentation to explain why Judaism, after a millennium or more of existence, is still a blurry category. Muḥammad may have even been trying to dissolve identities that had already crys-

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18 Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, eds., *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 22.

19 Aaron William Hughes, *Shared Identities: Medieval and Modern Imaginings of Judeo-Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

20 Aaron W. Hughes, *Muslim and Jew: Origins, Growth, Resentment* (London: Routledge, 2019).

21 Michael E. Pregill, "Blurred Boundaries and Novel Normativities: The Jews of Arabia, the Quranic Milieu, and the 'Islamic Judaism' of the Middle Ages," *Al-'Usur al-Wusta* 29 (2021): 256–302.

22 Pregill, "Blurred Boundaries and Novel Normativities," 273.

23 For a recent example: Karin Hedner Zetterholm et al., eds., *Negotiating Identities: Conflict, Conversion, and Consolidation in Early Judaism and Christianity (200 BCE–600 CE)* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2022).

tallized by creating a *via media* between Judaism and Christianity, finding common cause with all monotheistic believers.<sup>24</sup>

The formation of orthodox Christianity and rabbinic Judaism did not dispense with religious diversity. If anything, the construction of orthodoxy created diversity by giving non-conformists a position to act against. This was notoriously the case for Judaism. The Karaite movement, consisting of not one but several groups or even individuals, coalesced some two centuries after the *floruit* of the putative founder, Anan b. David (d. ca. 795). Although Karaite identity is not merely defined by a rejection of the teachings of the Sages, it could not exist as a movement without having a rabbinic Judaism to reject.<sup>25</sup> The existence of diversity, however, does not negate the existence of concrete religious identity. This is the versatility of Boyarin's image of the religious spectrum. The ways parted because there are poles, but they did not part because different iterations (what the orthodox on both sides would call heresy) can exist concurrently along the same sliding scale.

What does this have to do with *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*? I had initially drafted a brief section on the author's religious identity but eventually cut it because it seemed like the answer to a question no one was asking. The author was a rabbinic Jew. Nevertheless, what initially prompted this section was scholarship tying PRE to the ʿĪsāwīyya, a Jewish group of the Umayyad period that recognized the prophethood of both Jesus and Muḥammad (but maintained, to the displeasure of everyone else, that they were only sent to their own communities).<sup>26</sup> A related scholarly endeavor involved tying the early Karaites to Second Temple literature, especially literature from Qumran (with PRE as a separate witness to the phenomenon).<sup>27</sup> The

24 This is how I understand the argument of Fred M. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010).

25 One could say the same of Protestantism, to which the Karaites are often compared. One could also say the same of Catholicism. "Catholicism" and "Orthodoxy" did not really exist until they had split from each other.

26 The primary sources are few: Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, *Livre des Religions et des Sectes*, trans. Daniel Gimaret, Jean Jolivet, and Guy Monnot (Leuven: Peeters UNESCO, 1986), 604–5, and Leon Nemoy, "Al-Qirḡisānī's Account of the Jewish Sects and Christianity," *Herew Union College Annual* 7 (1930): 317–97 (328, 370–372, 382–83, 391). Gordon D. Newby, "Text and Territory: Jewish-Muslim Relations 632–750 CE," in *Judaism and Islam: Boundaries, Communication, and Interaction: Essays in Honor of William M. Brinner*, ed. Benjamin H. Hary, John L. Hayes, and Fred Astren, (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 83–96 (93–95) connected PRE to this group. Rachel Adelman, *The Return of the Repressed: Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer and the Pseudepigrapha* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 264, mentioned the possibility of a relationship.

27 The classic work on this subject is Naphtali Wieder, *The Judean Scrolls and Karaism* (London: East and West Library, 1962). See also the more recent work of John C. Reeves, "Exploring the After-life of Jewish Pseudepigrapha in Medieval Near Eastern Religious Traditions: Some Initial Soundings," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 30 (1999): 148–77, and Yoram Erder, *The Karaite Mourners*



connections are very tenuous, and they boil down to the received notion that PRE had access to apocryphal literature. The hidden premise is that sectarian groups promulgate apocrypha.

In the case of the ʿĪsāwiyya, the assumption is completely gratuitous. We do not possess a single book produced by this movement. Its connection to PRE is via the *Secrets of Simeon bar Yohai*, which has been attributed to the ʿĪsāwiyya on the grounds that some versions of the work (but not others!) have a positive evaluation of Muḥammad and the early Muslim empire.<sup>28</sup> The case of the Karaites is slightly different. While Karaites have some halakhah in common with Qumran, this has never been a point of interest in the studies of PRE and Second Temple literature. The material of interest there is purely aggadic, dealing with the Adam and Enoch books. Eliezer Treitl did find some points of halakhah shared with the later Karaites (but not Qumran), although he is at pains to clarify this does not mean that PRE was a Karaite work.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, no Karaite work remotely resembles PRE. According to Leon Nemoy, who based his opinion on Anan's own writings, Anan b. David was no separatist but a rabbinic Jew in good standing who was only later grandfathered into the Karaite movement due to his halakhic disagreements with his contemporaries.<sup>30</sup> Correspondingly, the halakhic divergence in PRE means little.

If there is a general conclusion to be applied to the present study, rather than one that is specific to PRE, it is that “apocryphal” works are rarely apocryphal in the literal sense. The Pseudepigrapha, in particular, are not like the Dead Sea Scrolls or the Nag Hammadi codices, secreted away in jars in caves to be discovered generations later, if at all. The Pseudepigrapha, by and large, come down to us because they were continually copied by those who wanted to read them. They were, in fact, quite popular and influential, guiding popular perception of the biblical history. The portraits of *Jubilees* and the *Cave of Treasures* are not works that were obscure or forgotten. *Jubilees* did fall out of favor, and its Greek version was eventually lost. I would argue that this was not because it was “apocryphal” but because something else had replaced it, namely the *Palaea* literature which became the new standard bearer for the Christian reading of sacred history in the Byzantine and especially the Slavic world.

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*of Zion and the Qumran Scrolls: On the History of an Alternative to Rabbinic Judaism* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017).

<sup>28</sup> Steven M. Wasserstrom, “The ʿĪsāwiyya Revisited,” *Studia Islamica* (1992): 57–80. Pregill, “Blurred Boundaries and Novel Normativities,” 280–81, criticizes this position, repeated by Hughes.

<sup>29</sup> Eliezer Treitl, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer: Text, Redaction and a Sample Synopsis* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, 2012), 238–55 [Hebrew].

<sup>30</sup> Leon Nemoy, trans., *Karaite Anthology: Excerpts from the Early Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), 3–11. See also Moshe Gil, “The Origins of the Karaites,” in *Karaite Judaism: A Guide to Its History and Literary Sources*, ed. Meira Polliack (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 71–118.

In his criticism of Hughes, Pregill employs another linguistic metaphor which I think is very apt here. He refers to a “messianic-apocalyptic *koine*” which all the religious communities of the early Islamic period could draw from to write eschatological works like the *Secrets of Simeon bar Yohai*.<sup>31</sup> The *Cave of Treasures*, PRE, and *Islamic Stories of the Prophets* all make similar (extrabiblical) assumptions about biblical history. They are also unapologetically chauvinistic in their portrayal of the early religious history of humanity. In every case, the Antediluvian patriarchs all happened to be practitioners of the exact same religion as the author of the work. That is, all three religious groups used a common sacred history to write blatantly sectarian works.

The linguistic metaphor of a shared *koine* also informs literal linguistic barriers. The Jews and Christians of Western Europe had a different biblical *koine* than the Jews and Christians of the Middle East. Some of PRE’s literary descendants provide an excellent illustration of this barrier, which I have repeatedly described as region trumping religion. The two works I have in mind are *Sefer ha-Yashar* and the *Chronicles of Jerahmeel*. *Sefer ha-Yashar* was written in an Islamicate milieu. It is no longer attempting to imitate classical rabbinic models (like PRE’s pseudo-midrashic structure) but is a pure narrative in biblical Hebrew. Its scope is the Pentateuch, the only portion of the Hebrew Bible of especial interest to the Qur’ān (everyone between Moses and Jesus gets short shrift). As Shari Lowin has demonstrated, it draws upon the *Stories of the Prophets* for its portrait of Abraham.<sup>32</sup> It does the same for its portrait of Joseph.<sup>33</sup> Not only this, but there are possible allusions to the rules of legendary Persian kings. Its portrait of Kenan, which I cited in chapter six, is reminiscent of the rule of Jamshid, made famous in works like the *Shahnameh*.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, *Yashar*’s eccentric story of Enoch is nearly identical to the *Shahnameh*’s account of the occultation of Kay Khosrow.<sup>35</sup> The rule of the Persian kings was

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31 Pregill, “Blurred Boundaries and Novel Normativities,” 280. Similarly: John C. Reeves, “Jewish Apocalyptic Lore in Early Islam: Reconsidering Ka’b al-Aḥbār,” in *Revealed Wisdom: Studies in Apocalyptic in Honour of Christopher Rowland*, ed. John Ashton (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 200–216 (201), who, taking inspiration from Boyarin, speaks of an “Abrahamic lexicon.”

32 Shari L. Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather: Abraham in Islamic and Jewish Exegetical Narratives* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 55–59.

33 James Kugel, *In Potiphar’s House: The Interpretive Life of Biblical Texts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 31–32.

34 Firdawsī, *Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings*, trans. Dick Davis (New York: Penguin Books, 2016), 5–8.

35 Firdawsī, *Shahnameh*, 454–76, and Moses Samuel, trans., *The Book of Jasher Referred to in Joshua and Second Samuel Faithfully Translated from the Original Hebrew into English* (New York: M. M. Noah and A. S. Gould, 1840), 6–8.

an integral part of Muslim chronicles, such as the work of Ṭabarī. Mythology and legends, as much as the biblical history, could be another type of *koine*.

This brings us to the *Chronicles of Jerahmeel*, written in twelfth-century Europe by Jerahmeel b. Solomon. It is nearly contemporaneous with *Sefer ha-Yashar* and employs many of the same Jewish sources, among them PRE. Its structure and scope are very different, however. Its account of sacred history goes beyond the Pentateuch and all the way down to the destruction of the Second Temple, as recounted in *Sefer Yosippon*. *Sefer ha-Yashar* also used *Yosippon*, but only where it concerns matters from the Torah. The *Chronicles of Jerahmeel*'s history is, then, coterminous with Christian sacred history. Not only that, but *Jerahmeel* uses Christian sources and sources conserved by Christians, chief among them Pseudo-Philo's *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* (exclusively preserved in Latin)<sup>36</sup> and Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica*.<sup>37</sup> Like *Yashar*, it too has mythological references but—*mirabile dictu*—they are only from classical mythology. *Sefer ha-Yashar* and the *Chronicles of Jerahmeel*, though written in the same language and utilizing many of the same sources, are nevertheless quite distinct because of the regional *koine* they employ.

Therefore, when I speak of PRE as a Jewish work closely related to Christian and Muslim works, it is not an attempt to “silo off” religious texts and traditions from one another. *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* has a concrete religious identity as a work of rabbinic Judaism, but this did not impede the author from incorporating aspects of his cultural orbit into the work. The question is not whether such a thing could be possible for a work of rabbinic literature. The question should be why rabbinic works were ever treated as hermetically sealed from their cultural context in the first place.

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36 Daniel J. Harrington, *The Hebrew Fragments of Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum Preserved in the Chronicles of Jerahmeel* (Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature, 1974).

37 David Satran, *Biblical Prophets in Byzantine Palestine: Reassessing the Lives of the Prophets* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 16, n. 34 : “The version of Yerahmeel is clearly a Hebrew translation of a Latin form of the text virtually identical with that found in the *Historia Scholastica* of Peter Comestor.”



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