

# FOUNTAINS OF WISDOM

*In Conversation with  
James H. Charlesworth*

Edited by Gerbern S. Oegema,  
Henry W. Morisada Rietz, and  
Loren T. Stuckenbruck



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LONDON • NEW YORK • OXFORD • NEW DELHI • SYDNEY

T&T CLARK  
Bloomsbury Publishing Plc  
50 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3DP, UK  
1385 Broadway, New York, NY 10018, USA  
29 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, Ireland

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First published in Great Britain 2022

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Cover design: Charlotte James  
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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Oegema, Gerbern S., 1958– editor. | Rietz, Henry W. Morisada (Henry Wolfgang Morisada), 1967– editor. | Stuckenbruck, Loren T., editor. | Charlesworth, James H., honouree.

Title: Fountains of wisdom : in conversation with James H. Charlesworth / edited by Gerbern S. Oegema, Henry Rietz, and Loren T. Stuckenbruck.

Description: London ; New York : T&T Clark, 2022. |

Includes bibliographical references and index. | Summary: “Essays on biblical texts including the New Testament and the Dead Sea Scrolls, with a focus on the history of interpretation and the work of James H. Charlesworth”– Provided by publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 2021033474 (print) | LCCN 2021033475 (ebook) |

ISBN 9780567701275 (hb) | ISBN 9780567701312 (paperback) | ISBN 9780567701282 (pdf) | ISBN 9780567701305 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Bible–Criticism, interpretation, etc. | Apocryphal books–Criticism, interpretation, etc. | Bible. Apocrypha–Criticism, interpretation, etc. | Dead Sea scrolls–Criticism, interpretation, etc.

Classification: LCC BS511.3 .F68 2022 (print) |

LCC BS511.3 (ebook) | DDC 229/.04–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021033474>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021033475>

ISBN: HB: 978-0-5677-0127-5

ePDF: 978-0-5677-0128-2

ePUB: 978-0-5677-0130-5

Typeset by Newgen KnowledgeWorks Pvt. Ltd., Chennai, India

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## PREFACE

Dear Jim,

It is a great honor and a personal pleasure to present this “Festschrift” to you on the occasion of your eightieth birthday and the retirement from your professorship at Princeton Theological Seminary both as the George L. Collord Professor of New Testament Language and Literature and as the director of the Dead Sea Scrolls Project. We have decided to call the Festschrift a “Conversation” as we want to highlight a central aspect of your scholarship and personality, namely that you have always placed the academic exchange and dialogue with other scholars, whether junior or senior, from past, present, and future generations in the center of all your work. More so, you have put the dialogue between the very subdisciplines in Biblical Studies, whether New Testament Studies, Qumran Studies, Pseudepigrapha Research, Archeology, Hermeneutics, and indeed also the global Church, in the center of your life and work.

In everything you have done, you have always encouraged other colleagues, whether senior professors or young and aspiring graduate students, in their own work and have offered them multiple opportunities to join in a conversation and to contribute to a seminar, a conference, or a publication. Allow us to give some examples from our own lives, which you have touched in so many ways. After you had edited and published the two-volume *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, as such already a monument of cooperation with over fifty colleagues from many different fields and a lasting contribution to Biblical Studies that would change the discipline in so many ways, you would promote the work and attend many international conferences.

On one of them, a Jewish Studies conference in 1987 in Berlin organized by Peter Schäfer, you not only gave one of the main papers but also engaged and curiously asked about the research of young graduate students, of which I was one, showing your interest in the work of scholars not only from North America but also from East and West Europe and Israel. When I told you that I was working on the “messianic expectations” during the Second Temple Period, you immediately sent me the papers of a conference you had organized on the topic “The Messiah” before they were even published, so that you could help me with my research.

Another example of your trailblazing research were your early efforts to fruitfully engage in research into the Dead Sea Scrolls with New Testament Studies. Whereas you were not the first one, as a previous generation of scholars had already started with it, you were one of the most successful ones. You were not only successful in editing and translating the Dead Sea Scrolls in the multivolume *Princeton Theological Seminary Dead Sea Scrolls Project* for many years but also, for example, you have cochaired, together with Hermann Lichtenberger of the University of Tübingen, the *Societas Novi Testamenti Studiorum* Seminar on “Qumran and Christian Origins” for many years. By doing this you have initiated and invited many young scholars to find new paths in research and engage in international exchange at the highest level.

Equally successful were your contributions to the SNTS Seminar on “The Pseudepigrapha and Christian Origins” and other venues of motivating and supporting exchange between Pseudepigrapha Research and New Testament Studies, such as *the Society of Biblical Literature* and the *Enoch Seminar*, since several decades. On top of that you would organize your own very successful conferences, such as the *Princeton–Prague Symposium on Jesus* and *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible*.

A further example of your lasting contributions is found in your successful efforts to place the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Pseudepigrapha, and the New Testament in the broader context of the study of Early Judaism and Christian Origins, a field that has radically changed from seeing “Late Judaism” as only contributing to the Christian New Testament to being an independent area of research that was crucial for the development of later Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism, the post-Holocaust Jewish-Christian dialogue, indeed modern-day church and society. One outcome of this approach was the 2003 conference on “The Changing Face of Judaism, Christianity and Other Greco-Roman Religions” that was inspired by and dedicated to your contributions.

You have helped revolutionize the study of the Historical Jesus and the Gospel of John: in the first case by offering a view on the Jewishness of Jesus firmly based on your vast expertise of the archeology of the Land of Israel, and in the second case by offering an interpretation of the Gospel of John that is informed by your study of the Qumran writings and the life and thought in first-century Palestine. It was therefore only natural to invite you to give the opening address at a 2014 conference on “New Vistas on Early Judaism and Christianity,” where fifty young scholars were invited to present their ideas for future research. Finally, you have also always communicated the latest research to a church and lay audience, whether on the BBC or on tours to Israel and the Middle East. And we could go on and on like this.

But let us now briefly introduce this collection of chapters honoring you. The Festschrift and Conversation consist of many intertwined “axes” of research that have all benefited from the research on the Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Historical Jesus initiated and supported by our Jubilee.

## PART 1 HEBREW BIBLE AND NEW TESTAMENT

The (re)discovery and the subsequent study of the Pseudepigrapha and the discovery and publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls have revolutionized Biblical Studies and led to a new field, that of Early Judaism, as distinct from the religion of ancient Israel and early Christianity. From serving as the “Jewish background” of the New Testament, Early Judaism is now front and center of every scholar and student of the Bible. The importance of an ongoing and creative process of biblical interpretation is one aspect of this tidal change initiated by the research and publications of Jim Charlesworth. In honor and recognition of this the following contributions show examples of this mutually fruitful process starting with a whole new perspective of biblical interpretation, if one includes the early Jewish witnesses. John R. Levison in his chapter “The Interpretation of Genesis 4:10 in Early Jewish Literature” shows the various early Jewish interpretations of Cain killing Abel. Simon C. Mimouni in his chapter “Abraham et l’abrahamisme: Mythe ou réalité?” shows aspects of the growing importance of the figure of Abraham in Early Judaism and beyond. C. D. Elledge in his chapter “Hebrews, the *Aqedah*, and Early Scriptural Interpretation” shows the many often differing interpretations of Abraham binding his son Isaac. And Brent A. Strawn in his chapter



“The Etymology of בליעל Once Again: A Case of Tabooistic Deformation?” analyzes the loaded term “Belial.”

Moving on to the New Testament, we witness the lasting influence of taking the early Jewish world into account, in which the Jesus movement started, a world in which there was so much interaction and creativity going on that nowadays one cannot understand the New Testament anymore without it, as every established or aspiring scholar agrees with. This has led to many new linguistic observations, tradition-historical connections, as well as questions about text, canon, and theology challenging past views. We find telling examples of this new perspective in John B. F. Miller’s chapter on “Just What We Need: Another Allusion in Luke 1?,” and in Kindalee Pfremmer De Long’s reflections on “Repentance and Turning as a Unified Motif in Luke-Acts.” Loren L. Johns offers a fresh look at a much debated topic in his “Do Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11 Belong in Our Bibles? A Case Study in the Intersection of Textual Criticism and Canonical Considerations,” whereas Johan Ferreira offers a new translation of Matt 5:3 in his “Reconsidering the Poor: A Fresh Translation of Matthew 5:3.” These radical changes in research do not come without equally radical changes in our theology and self-perception, when we look at the old text with a fresh look. Michael A. Daise raises important issues in his chapter “Christology in John’s Crucifixion Quotations”; Lidija Novakovic does the same in her chapter “Touching the Risen Jesus: Did Jesus Allow Thomas to Do What He Refused to Mary?,” whereas Claire Pfann gives us an in-depth look into the term “brother” in her chapter, “Who Is My brother? A Study of the Term ἀδελφός in the Acts of the Apostles,” followed by Stephen J. Pfann offering an equally refreshing look at Romans 9–11 in his “How Much of Israel Will Be Saved—A Remnant or All of Israel? A Fresh Look at Romans 9–11,” which is completed by a far-reaching text-critical and theological study by canon-expert Lee Martin McDonald in his chapter “Jesus Tradition, Christian Creeds, and the New Testament Canon.”

## PART 2 GRECO-ROMAN AND JEWISH WORLD

Because of the interaction between early Judaism and the Greco-Roman world since Alexander the Great, the whole matrix of early Christianity has changed, not only because of the many new discoveries but also because of the new awareness of the full extent of the social and cultural exchange that took place. We cannot read the New Testament anymore as a collection of books following the Old Testament. Instead we have to look at every aspect of the complex world of antiquity with great care and much attention for detail, as Jim has emphasized again and again in his own research. Gregory E. Sterling does this in his chapter “When Ontology Meets Eschatology: A Platonized Reading of Deuteronomy 28:1–14.” Shimon Gibson highlights another important aspect of this world, namely that of archeology, in his chapter “On John the Baptist at the Jordan River: Geohistorical and Archaeological Considerations.” Darrell L. Bock looks at different modes of writing history in his chapter “Greco-Roman and Jewish Historiography as Backdrop for the Gospels.” Jonathan E. Soyars looks at different connections between geography, architecture, and narrative in his chapter “From, To, In, and Through Caesarea: Herod’s Imperial City as Significant Narrative Setting and Literary Linking Device in the Acts of the Apostles.” Konstantinos Th. Zarras does something similar with two intriguing terms in his chapter “Metatron and Naar: Combining Titles and Revelation 3:21 as a Probable Riddle-Solver.” Finally Gerbern S. Oegema tries to find red threads and some major trends in ethical reasoning from Early Judaism to the New Testament in his chapter “Some Considerations on Ethics in Early Jewish Theologies and the New Testament.”

### PART 3 APOCRYPHA AND PSEUDEPIGRAPHA

In order to honor one of the early and lasting research contributions of the Jubilee to the field of Pseudepigrapha research, John J. Collins makes some sweeping observations and stimulating reflections in his chapter “The Pseudepigrapha and Second Temple Judaism” whereas Loren T. Stuckenbruck excels with his *1 Enoch* and Ge’ez expertise in his chapter, “Enoch’s Prayer for Rescue from the Flood: 1 Enoch 83–84, with a New Translation and Notes.” Further detailed studies on aspects of the Pseudepigrapha are found in Christfried Böttrich’s chapter “Cain and the Example of the Birds,” in Jan Doehorn’s chapter, “Die Bedeutung der *Assumptio Mosis* für die Erforschung des frühen Christentums,” and in Patrick Pouchelle’s chapter, “Neither Deuteronomic nor Priestly: The *Psalms of Solomon* as the Original Answer of Learned Scribes to the Wickedness of High Priest.”

### PART 4 DEAD SEA SCROLLS

No research in Biblical Studies can ever be done again without knowledge of the Dead Sea Scrolls, both in terms of its importance for the study of Bible manuscripts and in terms of the access the scrolls give us to the conceptual world of Early Judaism and one of its main spiritual movements. The former aspect is discussed in four chapters. One by E. Parry on “Textual Errors in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>: How the Scribe Was Impacted by His Textual Environment,” one by Hermann Lichtenberger titled “Psalmhandschriften in den Qumrantexten,” one by Emanuel Tov on “‘Luxury Scrolls’ from the Judean Desert,” and one by Corrado Martone titled “Qumran Readings in Agreement with the Septuagint against the Masoretic Text. Part Four: 2 Samuel.” The latter aspect is discussed in detail by James D. Tabor in his chapter “When Prophecy Fails: Apocalyptic Schemes for Dating the ‘Appointed Time of the End’ in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Jesus Movement,” as well as in the original contribution of Helen R. Jacobus titled “Science Fiction in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Case of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and the Nephilim,” which marks the way into the later reception history of the Scrolls.

### PART 5 HISTORY OF SCHOLARSHIP

The Festschrift is then completed by three chapters on the history of scholarship and reception of different aspects of early Judaism, which throughout history have always played an important role in Western culture but have especially done so during the past centuries. David Calabro discusses important links between an ancient Pseudepigraphon and a modern author in his “Of Moses, Mountains, and Models: Joseph Smith’s Book of Moses in Dialogue with the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*.” Craig A. Evans analyzes two modern scholars in his chapter “Paul Fiebig’s Reply to Arthur Drews on the Miracles of Jesus and Apollonius of Tyana,” whereas Enoch Seminar founder Gabriele Boccaccini talks about the important Italian connection to Pseudepigrapha research in his “The Contribution of Italian Scholarship on Second Temple Judaism and Christian Origins, from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century.”

# A SELECTION OF MAJOR WORKS BY JAMES H. CHARLESWORTH

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PART ONE

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# Hebrew Bible and New Testament



## CHAPTER ONE

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# The Interpretation of Genesis 4:10 in Early Jewish Literature

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Literary corpora from the Second Temple Period reveal a tendency to vilify Cain and to burnish Abel.<sup>1</sup> They become, as Judith Lieu has noted, the representatives of two seeds—two mutually exclusive races. The impetus for this transformation of the primeval brothers, we shall see, stems in part from an interpretation of Gen 4:10, in which Abel’s blood cries from the ground. The purpose of this study, in honor of a scholar who brought so many ancient corpora into the compass of our scope of knowledge, is to review early Jewish interpretations of Gen 4:10, as well as to pay particular attention to the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve (GLAE)*, which contains an especially imaginative and gruesome iteration of Abel’s demise at the hand of his demagogic brother.

### 1. GEN 4:10 IN EARLY JEWISH INTERPRETATION

While the Old Greek translation of Genesis 4, as Joel Lohr has shown, tends to underscore Cain’s wickedness and Abel’s righteousness, its interpretation of Gen 4:10 is unremarkable.<sup>2</sup> None of the more inventive elements intended to resolve difficulties in the text is present in Gen 4:10.

One of the earliest extant iterations of Gen 4:10 occurs in *1 En. 22:5–7*:

There I [Enoch] saw the spirit of a dead man making suit, and his lamentation went up to heaven and cried and made suit. Then I asked Raphael, the watcher and holy one who was with me,

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I wrote this chapter with the support of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation while on research leave from Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University. My gracious host at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München was my friend and colleague, Loren Stuckenbruck.

<sup>1</sup>The most important studies include: V. Aptowitzer, *Kain und Abel in der Agada, den Apokryphen, der hellenistischen, christlichen und muhammedanischen Literature* (Wien: R. Löwit, 1922); J. Byron, *Cain and Abel: Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the First Sibling Rivalry*, TBN 14 (Leiden: Brill, 2011); and E. Grypeou and H. Spurling, *The Book of Genesis in Late Antiquity: Encounters Between Jewish and Christian Exegesis*, JCP 24 (Leiden: Brill, 2013). J. Byron, “Cain and Abel in Second Temple Literature and Beyond,” in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, ed. C. Evans, J. Lohr, and D. Petersen, VTSup 152 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 331–51, offers a summary, of sorts, of his monograph, though without reference to the *GLAE*. In “Slaughter, Fratricide, and Sacrilege: Cain and Abel Traditions in 1 John 3,” *Biblica* 88 (2007): 526–35, Byron looks more closely at *Brudermord*, and its ritual nuances, which he discerns in the word, ἀνθρωποκτόνος, in 1 John 3:15.

<sup>2</sup>See the excellent discussion by J. Lohr, “Righteous Abel, Wicked Cain: Genesis 4:1–16 in the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint, and the New Testament,” *CBQ* 71 (2009): 485–96. See also T. Thatcher, “Cain and Abel in Early Christian Memory: A Case Study in ‘The Use of the Old Testament in the New’,” *CBQ* 72 (2010): 732–51.

and said to him, “This spirit that makes suit—whose is it—that thus his lamentation goes up and makes suit unto heaven?” And he answered me and said, “This is the spirit that went forth from Abel, whom Cain his brother murdered. And Abel makes accusation against him until his seed perishes from the face of the earth, and his seed is obliterated from the seed of men.”<sup>3</sup>

In this metamorphosis, the crying of Abel’s blood has been replaced by the crying of Abel’s soul or spirit. George Nickelsburg explains:

In this exegetical elaboration of Gen 4:10, Abel’s blood—in Genesis, inanimate but personified—is understood as the seat of נפש (“life” or “soul;” cf. Gen 9:4), which in this author’s anthropology is identified with רוח (“spirit”). This spirit is in turn an active being, portrayed in terms familiar to the Hellenistic world. It is like the restless spirit of the murdered Clytemnestra (Aeschylus *Eumenides* 98), who cries out for revenge on the murderer.<sup>4</sup>

Abel is actually the representative of a larger ideology in which the spirits of those unjustly killed appeal to God for vindication. In the next scene, the spirits are said to be separated, with the spirits of sinners separated from “the spirits of them that make suit” (22:12). The vocabulary of 22:5–6 is similar to that of *1 En.* 9:10, in which “the spirits of the souls of the men who have died make suit; and their groan has come up to the gates of heaven; and it does not cease to come forth from before the iniquities that have come upon the earth.”

Nickelsburg notes:

Both here and in *1 Enoch* 6–11, the cry of the dead (and of the earth that has soaked up the blood of the dead, 7:6; 9:2, 9; cf. Gen 4:11) continues to bring accusation until divine judgment is executed against the murderer(s). Although *1 Enoch* 22 was composed after chapters 6–11, both may contain primitive elements of a common, earlier exegetical tradition on Gen 4:10.<sup>5</sup>

What divides *1 Enoch* 6–11 from *1 Enoch* 22 is not ideology but number; the former deals with many souls, the latter with the soul exclusively of Abel.

Nickelsburg is wary of the view that Abel is here a “prototype of the martyred righteous.” This may have been true in Christian texts, he cautions, but not in early pre-Christian Jewish texts, which “emphasize not the righteousness of those who have been murdered, but the violence of their murderers and the certain judgment that will befall them.”<sup>6</sup>

In another of the earliest iterations of Gen 4:10, *Jub.* 4:3 narrates, “When he killed him in a field, his blood cried out from the ground to heaven—crying because he had been killed.” A few elements are distinctive in this account. First, Abel’s death takes place in a field, presumably because Cain earlier had told Abel to join him in the field (Gen 4:8); implicit in Genesis, this element is explicit in Jubilees. Second, as James VanderKam notes, these words do not occur in a quotation of God; Jubilees “entirely eliminates the quoted conversations between the Lord and Cain and settles

<sup>3</sup> Translation from G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1-36; 81-108*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 300.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 305.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 305–6. We should add that there may be in *1 En.* 22:5–7 an anticipation of a more developed view, in which not just Abel but Abel’s seed died with the murder. Abel brings accusation until Cain’s seed is exterminated since Cain had brought an end to Abel’s seed.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 306.

for a third-person summary.”<sup>7</sup> As a result, a third element emerges: the blood does not cry out to God, “to me,” but “to heaven.” Fourth, Jubilees offers a rather redundant rationale for the blood’s crying out: because Abel has been killed. Finally, later in the narrative, the author explains that Cain died when “his house fell on him ... He was killed by its stones for with a stone he had killed Abel and, by a just punishment, he was killed with a stone” (*Jub.* 4.31). The surfeit of blood that cried out, by implication, was due to Cain’s murdering Abel with stones.

Philo Judaeus offers his own take on Gen 4:10. In *Det.* 48–49, he paraphrases Gen 4:10 in order to demonstrate that Abel, though dead, lived on—in the crying of his voice—so that “the wise man, when seeming to die to the corruptible life, is alive to the incorruptible; but the worthless man, while alive to the life of wickedness, is dead to the life happy.”<sup>8</sup> Later, he cites the Old Greek of Gen 4:10 verbatim and interprets it on a more literal level, when he states that the words “What have you done?” “express as well indignation at an unrighteous act, as mockery of the man who thought that his treachery had accomplished his brother’s death” (*Det.* 69). This brings him to the point he made earlier, that Cain dies the death of the soul while Abel, whose voice cries out, lives on. Cain is, like Balaam, one of the sophists, whom Philo vilifies (*Det.* 71–77). When Philo returns to Gen 4:10, it is to the crying out of the blood, words which he considers a lovely interpretation (*Det.* 79); “the loftiness of the phrasing,” muses Philo, “is patent to all who are conversant with literature.”

Though he lauds it for its beauty of expression, Gen 4:10 poses a problem for Philo. Blood, which represents the vital or physical part of a human being, should not be the portion that cries out because the mind is the seat of reason and speech. After an extended encomium on the human mind, Philo turns to his key heuristic point:

In the vital faculty, then, whose essence is blood, a portion has obtained, as a special prize, voice and speech; I do not mean the stream flowing through the mouth and over the tongue, but the fountain-head from which, by nature’s ordering, the cisterns of uttered speech are filled. This fountain-head is the mind, through which, partly voluntarily, partly involuntarily, we utter aloud entreaties and outcries to Him that IS. (*Det.* 92)

Philo sees the problem in having the blood cry out from the ground, but it is a problem easily resolved by positing that speech resides in the realm of reason. Philo’s resolution, while inventive with respect to the blood of Gen 4:10, is rooted in a common theme in Philo’s writings, in which human beings are creatures composed of mind and body, reason and irrationality—though with overlap between them. As is so often the case with Philo’s writings, his solution offers only modest insight into the Greek text of Torah and much more into his own interests—in this case, the allegedly vulgar culture of sophists and the elevated nature of the human mind. These digressions give his interpretation of Gen 4:10 its peculiar Philonic hues.

Josephus takes up Gen 4:10 in *Ant.* 1.55–56 but fails to mention the crying of blood altogether. Cain, he notes, tried to hide Abel’s corpse, “thinking to escape detection.” Not long after, “God, aware of the deed, came to Cain, and asked him whither his brother had gone, since for many days

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<sup>7</sup>J. C. VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Commentary on the Book of Jubilees*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2018), 242. Translations of *Jubilees* are from this volume.

<sup>8</sup>Philo makes a similar statement in *QG* 1.70. All translations of the works of Philo Judaeus and Flavius Josephus are from the Loeb Classical Library.

He had not seen him, whom he had constantly before beheld in Cain's company." It is not, then, the cry of blood that piques God's curiosity but the noticeable absence of Abel from Cain's side.

Later Jewish interpreters, unlike Josephus, would pay particular attention to the presence of blood, especially the fact that the word *blood*, in the construct  $\text{דָּמַי אֲחִיךָ}$ , occurs in the plural rather than singular. Though the plural in the biblical text, *bloods*, rather than *blood*, may simply underscore the spilling of blood (e.g., 1 Kgs 2:5, 31; Isa 1:15), translators, in fact, tended to understand this simply as blood (Old Greek, Peshitta, Samaritan Pentateuch). In a discussion of murder, by contrast, *m. Sanh.* 4:5 preserves two interpretations of the plural construct noun: a witness is answerable for the blood of a victim and his or her posterity; and the plural communicates the splattering of blood over trees and stones. In the first, the difference between false witnesses in a property case and a capital case is at issue. In a property case, a false witness can return money; in a capital case, the blood of all those destined to be born from the accused cry out until the end of time. The text cited to support this is Gen 4:10, with the following explanation: "It does not say, 'The blood of your brother,' but, 'The bloods of your brother'—his blood and the blood of all those who were destined to be born from him."<sup>9</sup> The second explanation of the plural,  $\text{דָּמַי}$ , is complementary rather than contradictory; the plural is an indication that Abel's blood was splattered on trees and stones.<sup>10</sup> Targums Onqelos and Neofiti also understand this as a reference to Abel's descendants—specifically righteous descendants in Neofiti—who would have, barring Abel's premature death, been born from him. Onqelos, for example, reads, *blood*, in the singular, but in an expanded form,  $\text{קָל דָּם וְרֵצֵן דְּעֵתִינָן לְמַפְקָא מִן אָחִיךָ}$ . The voice of those who would have come from Abel died when Cain murdered him. Not just Abel but Abel's seed was also lost on that fateful day of the first murder.<sup>11</sup> This emphasis upon Abel's seed occurs as well in several rabbinic sayings in *Gen. Rab.* 22:9.

## 2. GENESIS 4:10 IN THE GREEK LIFE OF ADAM AND EVE

This brief analysis reveals how the crying of blood from the ground in Gen 4:10 took strikingly different tacks in early Jewish imagination. In *1 Enoch*, blood, the seat of life, is replaced by vitality, by life, by spirit. In *Jubilees*, awareness that the blood cries out is not ascribed to God; it is simply part of the narrative. Philo resolved the conundrum of why blood, in particular, cries out, through an appeal to the two natures of humankind. Josephus ignored blood altogether, while the authors of the Mishnah, Targum Onqelos, and Targum Neofiti focused upon the plural when they wrote that Abel's seed, his progeny, died on that day, along with Abel.

An alternative tack—arguably the most attentive and inventive in Antiquity—occurs in the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*, which preserves a horrific reinvention of Cain's deed. In this scene, Cain's

<sup>9</sup>Translations of the Mishnah are from J. Neusner, *The Mishnah: A New Translation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988).

<sup>10</sup>For further discussion, see *Gen. Rab.* 22.9, where it is argued that Abel's blood cried out because it had nowhere else to go; Abel's soul had not descended, and his body had not yet been buried, so the blood was splattered on trees and stones.

<sup>11</sup>This, argues Judith Lieu, "What Was from the Beginning: Scripture and Tradition in the Johannine Epistles," *NTS* 39 (1993): 458–77 at 469, is a pivotal point. The combination of the plural  $\text{דָּמַי אֲחִיךָ}$  in Gen 4:10 with Eve's own claim that God had given her "another seed" (my translation) in Gen 4:25, when understood in light of the woman's and the serpent's seeds in Gen 3:15, "'invited' a continuing contrast and hostility between the seed of Cain or of the devil, and the seed stemming from God's creation of Adam which continues through Seth." This perspective came to flower, claims Lieu, in Judaism—already in Josephus (*Ant.* 65–69) but later, too, in *Pirqe R. El.* 21–22—and in Gnosticism, as well.

rising up against Abel becomes, through an inventive transformation of the crying of blood from the earth, an instance of anthropophagy. Before discussing this riveting vignette, it is inevitable that we discuss, even briefly, the date and composition of the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*.

Given the difficult questions that attend the issue of the Jewish origin of *GLAE*, it may seem injudicious to posit the possibility that it contains an early Jewish interpretation of Genesis 4. Yet, even apart from the detailed study of Jan Doehhorn, which posits a first- or second-century date for *GLAE* as a Jewish composition, other considerations point to the significance of *GLAE*.<sup>12</sup> In terms of length, *GLAE* is the earliest extended narrative of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and Seth, outside of Genesis 1–5. This in itself is noteworthy. Further, the depth of reflection represented in *GLAE* clusters around enduring theological foci, including the character of sin (15–30), the nature of greed (1–2, 10–12), and immortality and resurrection (31–42). Alongside these matters of significance may be included its profound engagement with gritty human realities, such as pain and disease (6–8), and death and burial (38–43). It is no surprise that *GLAE* exercised an extensive and expansive cultural influence, with related versions extant in Latin, Ethiopian, Armenian, and Georgian.<sup>13</sup> More to the point, as Doehhorn has amply demonstrated, details in *GLAE* often arise from the Hebrew Bible, frequently as ways of resolving difficulties; this draws Doehhorn to the likelihood of an early Jewish origin for *GLAE*.<sup>14</sup> Finally, I have argued elsewhere that *GLAE* preserves an interpretation of Adam and Eve that more satisfactorily illuminates Rom 1:18–25 than the text of Genesis 1–5 itself; this too suggests a relatively early date and Jewish origin for *GLAE*—at least for the traditions it preserves.<sup>15</sup> In light of these considerations, it may be injudicious *not* to include *GLAE* among relatively early Jewish interpretations of Gen 4:10.

Still, a great deal distinguishes *GLAE* from other ancient interpretations of the Cain and Abel story. The *aporia* in Genesis that spurred conversation, the issues that prompted dialogue, have gone missing from *GLAE*. There is no interest in the relative ages of the brothers; it is not clear in *GLAE* whether they were thought to be twins or brothers. There is certainly no interest in knowing how old Abel was when he died, though this fired the imagination of many Jewish thinkers.<sup>16</sup> There is no interest in whether Abel was married<sup>17</sup> or why God accepted Abel's offering but not Cain's;<sup>18</sup> these questions, too, ancient Jewish thinkers raised. Not even their respective occupations and the related nature of their offerings was of interest to the author of *GLAE*; there is no offering whatsoever, in point of fact.<sup>19</sup> *GLAE* does not expand upon the few words Cain said in Gen 4:8.<sup>20</sup> *GLAE* does not proffer a motivation for murder, such as a heated discussion in the field over who

<sup>12</sup> Jan Doehhorn, *Apokalypse des Mose: Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar*, TSAJ 106 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 149–72.

<sup>13</sup> See M. E. Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve*, SBLEJL 3 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992), 6–41 and 84–123.

<sup>14</sup> Doehhorn, *Apokalypse des Mose*, 149–72.

<sup>15</sup> J. R. Levison, "Adam and Eve in Romans 1.18–25 and the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*," *NTS* 50 (2004): 519–34.

<sup>16</sup> See Aptowitzer, *Kain und Abel*, 1–6.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 7–10.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 28–43. Lohr, "Righteous Abel, Wicked Cain," argues that Old Greek translators understood the inadequacy in Cain's offering to be ritual in nature. His article explains, in general terms, how the New Testament contrast of a wicked Cain and righteous Abel is reliant upon the Greek translation rather than the Hebrew.

<sup>19</sup> See Byron, *Cain and Abel*, 33–6, on their occupations, and 39–62 on their offerings.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 63–72.



should inherit what, property or accouterments (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 22:7), or who should possess the land on which the offerings were given or whether there would be judgment (Targums Neofiti and Ps-Jonathan on Gen 4:8). Other motivations, too, are left unexplored in GLAE: Cain's desire for Abel's twin sister (e.g., *Pirqe R. El.* 21; see *Gen. Rab.* 22:7);<sup>21</sup> or Cain's desire to inherit the whole world (e.g., *Abot R. Nat.* 45 [B]). Nor is there any interest in where the murder took place<sup>22</sup> or the belief that Abel threw Cain down first but was tricked into feeling pity (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 22:8). Absent as well is speculation about how Cain killed Abel, whether, as in Jewish discussion, with a stone (e.g., *Jub* 4:31-32; *Pirqe R. El.* 21) or a rod (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 22:8) or by slitting his throat, as a sacrificial victim of sorts (*Gen. Rab.* 22:8).<sup>23</sup> Nor is there interest in the so-called mark of Cain, despite how alluring and elusive its meaning may have been to other ancient interpreters.<sup>24</sup>

All of the other elements that caught the attention of other ancient interpreters fall by the wayside in the face of this gruesome scenario, which rises to the surface via a dream—a *nightmare*—that Eve has one night:

Now after these things, Adam and Eve lived with one another. And while they were sleeping, Eve said to her master, Adam, "My master, I—yes I—saw in a dream this very night the blood of Abel, my son, being poured into the mouth of Cain his brother—and he drank it mercilessly! And he kept on urging him to let up from it, on his behalf, if but for a moment. But he would not listen to him. Instead he drank it whole! Yet it did not remain in his stomach but came out of his mouth." And Adam said, "Let's get up to go and see what it is that has happened to them, for fear that the enemy is waging some sort of battle against them. And as both went, they found Abel murdered by the hand of Cain his brother." (*GLAE* 2:1–3:1)<sup>25</sup>

In *GLAE*, Abel's blood does not rest upon the ground; it enters Cain's mouth and descends to his stomach, from where it rises again. The descent and ascent of Abel's blood in Gen 4:10, downward onto the ground and then upward to God's ears, is transformed in *GLAE* into a grisly instance of anthropophagy.

The presence of blood is communicated by the participle βαλλόμενον. M.D. Johnson translates this participle with "being thrust into,"<sup>26</sup> Daniel Bertrand with "gicler dans,"<sup>27</sup> Otto Merk and Martin Meiser with "sich ergießen."<sup>28</sup> The simple translation, *being poured*, may be the most appropriate. In LXX Judg 6:19, Gideon poured (ἔβαλεν) broth into a pot. In the gospels, new wine

<sup>21</sup> See Aptowitz, *Kain und Abel*, 10–28; and Byron, *Cain and Abel*, 28–9. *Pirqe R. El.* 21 explains Cain's desire for Abel's twin sister: "in the field" refers to a woman, perhaps in reference to Deut 22:25. Aptowitz points out differences between Jewish and Christian speculation. For Jews, on the whole (there were exceptions, of course), Abel was married; for Christians, he died a virgin. Christians tended to idealize Abel; Jews tended, contends Aptowitz, to treat him with indifference.

<sup>22</sup> See Aptowitz, *Kain und Abel*, 43–4.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 44–52. The use of a rod or staff is based upon Lamech's words in Gen 4:23; Lamech's words allowed interpreters to interject that mode of death into Cain's story.

<sup>24</sup> See Byron, *Cain and Abel*, 93–122, on the punishment of Cain.

<sup>25</sup> Translations of *GLAE* are mine, based upon J. Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve in Greek: A Critical Edition*, PVTG 6 (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

<sup>26</sup> M. D. Johnson, "Life of Adam and Eve," in *Expansions of the "Old Testament" and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*, vol. 2 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 2:267.

<sup>27</sup> D. Bertrand, *La vie grecque d'Adam et Ève: introduction, texte, traduction et commentaire* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1987), 71.

<sup>28</sup> O. Merk and M. Meiser, *Das Leben Adams und Evas*, JSRZ 2.5 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlag), 803.

is not to be poured into old wineskins (βάλλουσιν in Matt 9:17; βάλλει in Mark 2:22 and Luke 5:37; Matt 26:9–12 and parallels, in which the woman allegedly pours ointment on Jesus' head, is more ambiguous, as this could entail sprinkling). In John 13:5, Jesus pours water into a basin in advance of washing his disciples' feet. In Rev 12:15–16,

then from his mouth the serpent poured [ἔβαλεν] water like a river after the woman, to sweep her away with the flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman; it opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured [ἔβαλεν] from his mouth.

When the material that is cast is a fluid—broth or water or wine or, in *GLAE*, blood—then the translation *pour* is appropriate.<sup>29</sup> This is not, in short, a trickle of blood.

The overall treachery of combined anthropophagy and *Brudermord* finds its accent in the shape of the narrative, which contains several elements that intensify the repugnance of Cain's action. First is the presence of relational terms, which provide an apt contrast to the hideousness of *Brudermord*. Eve describes Abel as *her* son, according to manuscripts *ds he al r v*; manuscripts *ni b qz c m* read *our*. In either case, Abel is depicted relationally.<sup>30</sup> Throughout these initial narrative frames of the Greek *Life*, in fact, there exists an emphasis upon kinship understood specifically as sonship. What renders this emphasis upon sonship so significant is its narrative superfluity. The reader has already been introduced to the family tree in the first opening scene. After Adam and Eve left paradise, the couple remained together for eighteen years and two months, at which time Eve became pregnant “and gave birth to two sons, Cain ... and Abel” (*GLAE* 1:3). Nonetheless, the narrator continues to adopt relational terms, such as “my son,” “your son,” and “their son.” Eve recounts a dream in which she saw “the blood of my son, Abel, being poured into the mouth of Cain his brother” (2:2). After Adam and Eve discover Abel dead, the archangel, Michael, instructs Adam not to tell Cain, “your son,” the mystery Adam knows because Cain is a “son of wrath” (3:2). Michael then promises Adam “another son instead of” Abel (3:2). Nevertheless, Adam and Eve continue to grieve over “Abel, their son” (3:3). In the subsequent narrative frame, with no apparent lapse of narrative time, apart from the formulaic *waw consecutive*, “and after these things,” Adam says to Eve, “Look, we have produced a son in place of Abel, whom Cain killed” (4:2). This emphasis upon sonship provides a narrative cradle for a particular emphasis upon the brotherly relationship between Cain

<sup>29</sup> Bertrand, *La vie grecque*, 113, thinks that the gnostic *Hypostasis of the Archons* 22.4 preserves a similar interpretation, in which Abel's blood cries out because Cain sinned with his mouth. It is possible that the sin of Cain's mouth in the *Hypostasis* has to do with swallowing Abel's blood, but it is hardly the sole explanation. This may refer to his rejoinder to God about not being his brother's keeper in Gen 4:9. It may refer to the debate Cain has with Abel, in which Cain denies the reality of judgment, according to Targums Pseudo-Jonathan and Neofiti. Farther afield, in Psalm 59, the sin of the mouth has to do with the arrogant words of the nations. The psalmist prays, “For the sin of their mouths, the words of their lips, let them be trapped in their pride” (Ps 59:12). For Job, the sin of the mouth is cursing one's enemies. Job claims, “If I have rejoiced at the ruin of those who hated me, or exulted when evil overtook them—I have not let my mouth sin by asking for their lives with a curse” (Job 31:29–30). The point of this brief survey is to argue that the *Hypostasis*, at least with respect to the sin of the mouth, need not be regarded as opting for the same interpretation of anthropophagy as in *GLAE*. Aptowitzer (*Kain und Abel*, 5; 154, nn. 219, 219a.) identifies a tradition in the Zohar, according to which Cain did not know how he would kill Abel, so he bit him. This, of course, is a much later tradition, but it is worth noting because it may provide a relatively close parallel to *GLAE*.

<sup>30</sup>In addition to the weight of various manuscripts to support the reading, *her*, it seems likely that scribes would have changed *her* to the more natural reading, *our*, in this context.

and Abel.<sup>31</sup> This accent is especially evident in the scenes and narrative expressions that have to do with *Brudermord*. In the following narrative frame of the Greek *Life*, Adam and Eve set out to find their sons. The fraternal relationship between Cain and Abel is once again underscored by the relational epithet, “his brother,” in an otherwise laconic narrative depiction: “they went and found Abel murdered by the hand of Cain *his brother*” (3:1). We are left with no doubt that a measure of the horror of the first narrated act of human evil, according to the Greek *Life*, has specifically to do with *Brudermord*, which robs the first couple of their son.

The second element that accentuates the horrific dimension of *GLAE* is the detail that Cain drank Abel’s blood *mercilessly*. A cognate of this word occurs in Wis 12:5, in which Israel’s predecessors in Palestine were the merciless murderers of children, whose entrails they ate in ceremonial feasts. In *GLAE*, the word receives an actual embodiment in a primordial figure. In Rom 1:31, the cognate adjective occurs in a list of vices.

Third, Abel “kept on urging him to let up from it, on his behalf, if but for a moment.” The occurrence of the imperfect tense *παρεκάλει* underscores Abel’s insistence and Cain’s resistance. What Abel begs for is expressed by the verb *συγχωρήσαι*, the cognate noun of which occurs later in *GLAE*. After the body of Adam is washed in the Acherusian Lake and left to lie for three hours, God commands the archangel Michael, “Take him up into paradise, as far as the third heaven, and leave him there until that intensely frightful day of cosmic ordering, which I will accomplish in the world.” Michael, therefore, “took Adam up and left him where God had said to him and all the angels were praising with an angelic hymn, marveling at the forgiving [*τῆ συγχωρήσει*] of Adam” (*GLAE* 37:6). This marks the climax of an entire scene, in which a sinful Adam is pardoned. In the context of Abel’s death, in contrast, the verb may mean little more than “to let up,” to keep from doing something, but it may connote more, as if Abel had done something to prompt Cain’s murderous onslaught. Abel, in short, begged Cain for forgiveness. More than this, however, cannot be said, and I have chosen to translate the verb without the connotation of pardoning.<sup>32</sup> That is how I have taken it here, since Abel seems to be pleading with Cain to relent rather than forgive.

The fourth element that underscores the horror of this scene is straightforward: Cain “would not listen to him.” Abel’s insistent pleading for respite fell on deaf ears.

In fact, here is the fifth element of this brief scene that underscores its horrific character: “Instead he drank it whole!” Earlier, *GLAE* narrated how Cain had drunk (*ἔπιεν*) Abel’s blood mercilessly. The simple verb *ἔπιεν* has now become *κατέπιεν*, which tends to connote not just drinking (*ἔπιεν*) but devouring and destroying. This is the case in the Old Greek, both for *καταπίνειν* and the Hebrew verb *בלע*, which it typically translates. For example, the seven scrawny ears of corn swallowed up the seven good ears in Joseph’s dream (Gen 41:7, 24), the earth swallowed the Egyptians at the exodus (Exod 15:12), the earth opened to swallow the family of Korah (Num 16:30, 32, 34;

<sup>31</sup> This point is made poignantly and pointedly already in the original Hebrew version. In the brief birth scene, it is said that, after Eve bore Cain, she bore “his brother Abel” (Gen 4:2). The murder scene, too, is punctuated twice by the same phrase, “his brother Abel” (4:8, 9). When God subsequently raises the specter of Abel’s whereabouts with the words, “Where is your brother?” Cain retorts, in the infamous words, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (4:9). These words elicit a further divine response, “Your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground” (4:10). Finally, in divine reprisal, God says, “And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand” (4:11).

<sup>32</sup> It occurs in the sense of assent or allow, rather than forgiveness, in its occurrences in the Old Greek, in which a king grants permission (2 Macc 11:15, 18, 24, 35; Bel 26). See also Josephus, *Ant.* 11.6.

26:10; see also Deut 11:6), and the psalmist prays, “Do not let a tempest of water overwhelm me or a deep swallow me up or a cistern close its mouth over me” (LXX Ps 68:16). The image in *GLAE* is not about merely Cain’s drinking Abel’s blood but his *devouring* it, his swallowing it up, his gulping it down and, consequently, destroying Abel in the process.<sup>33</sup>

The sixth element underscoring Cain’s treachery is that Abel’s blood “did not remain in his stomach but came out of his mouth.” In short, Cain vomited Abel’s blood. The biblical underpinning of this detail may be, “And the Lord said, ‘What have you done? Listen; your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground! And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand’” (Gen 4:10–11). *GLAE* is a far cry from its *Vorlage*. Cain’s stomach receives Abel’s blood but—in a strained extension, if an extension at all, of the earth’s crying out—the blood in *GLAE* leaves Cain’s stomach.<sup>34</sup>

The use of the preposition ἐπί, *upon*, is odd—the blood did not stay “upon the stomach,” but was vomited. One would expect the preposition *in*—the blood did not stay in his stomach. In the Old Greek, the phrase “upon the stomach” occurs frequently to describe the sacrificial fat surrounding the stomach that is to be burned (e.g., Exod 29:13; Lev 3:3; 8:25; 9:19). This use of the prepositional phrase undoubtedly bears no relationship to *GLAE* 2. However, the phrase is used in Leviticus to describe forbidden food, including any animal that moves “upon [its] stomach” (11:42). An allusion to Lev 11:42 in *GLAE* 2, of course, is unlikely. A more likely allusion is to the curse of the serpent in Gen 3:14: ἐπὶ τῷ στήθει σου καὶ τῇ κοιλίᾳ πορεύσῃ. The phrasing of this allusion may establish a correlation between Cain’s treachery and the curse of the serpent.

In summary, *GLAE* preserves what appears to be a unique and considered interpretation of Abel’s blood, which, in Gen 4:10, cries from the ground. In *GLAE*, Abel’s blood sinks, not into the ground but onto Cain’s stomach. Cain then vomits it. The transformation is striking, the metamorphosis macabre. This is no ordinary murder. This is *Brudermord*. Nor is this a stoning or sacrificial slicing of a victim’s neck. This is anthropophagy, pure and simple.

### 3. CONCLUSION

No single trajectory connects a variety of early Jewish interpretations of the crying out of Abel’s blood in Gen 4:10. *Jubilees* preserves the element of blood—Cain had stoned Abel, after all—but without emphasizing its horror. Philo was especially concerned with how the blood of a

<sup>33</sup> Any effort to discover the headwaters of an interpretation is plagued by uncertainty. Still, one possible explanation of the source of Cain’s drinking down Abel’s blood may lie in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Gen 4:10, which reads, “What have you done? The voice of the blood of the killing of your brother, which was swallowed up in red clay, cries out to Me from the earth.” The Aramaic verb *swallowed up*, אִתְּבַלַע, recalls the Hebrew root בלע, which is often translated by the verb καταπίνεν in the Old Greek. Perhaps the swallowing up of Abel’s blood in red clay has been transposed in *GLAE* to Cain’s swallowing up of Abel’s blood. This is by no means certain, but it may provide an intermediate step between the Hebrew of Gen 4:10 and *GLAE*. Translation of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan is from E. Clem, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* (OakTree Software, 2015).

<sup>34</sup> The word κοιλία, which I have translated as *stomach*, actually denotes any cavity in the body. In the Old Greek, it frequently refers to the womb or uterus (e.g., LXX Gen 25:23; Num 5:21–22; Deut 7:13; 28:4; Judg 13:5; 16:17; and Job 1:21; 38:8), yet the word can be used for men’s bodies as well as the source from which a child or heir comes (e.g., LXX 2 Kgs [MT 2 Sam] 7:12). It can apparently refer to the contents of the stomach or intestines, such as when Joab’s “stomach poured out upon the earth,” after he was stabbed (LXX 2 Kgs [MT 2 Sam] 20:10). In *GLAE*, the reference to drinking makes clear that the cavity being referred to is the portion into which food enters.

dead man could be said to cry out; he answers the question by positing two natures in human beings, rational and irrational, and locating the crying of blood, which belongs typically to the vital or irrational portion of a human being, in the sphere of the rational. Josephus evinced far less interest in Gen 4:10, from which he excised blood altogether. Later rabbinic authors of the Mishnah and *Bereshith Rabbah*, as well as the authors of Targum Onqelos and Targum Neofiti, found themselves preoccupied with the plural *bloods*, rather than *blood*, in Gen 4:10, from which they spun various interpretations, most notably, that Abel's seed or progeny died when he died. Cain had murdered not just a brother but an entire race of potentially righteous people. The author of the early lines in the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve* shows no less interest in Gen 4:10, which became, in his or her purview, a revolting example of primeval *Brudermord* and anthropophagy.

Other ancient authors referred to the Cain and Abel tragedy, though with less intensity of detail. Wis 10:3 brushes lightly against the story with the summary, "but when an unrighteous man departed from her in his anger, he perished because in rage he killed his brother." Surprisingly, perhaps, Cain is the cause of the flood in the Wisdom of Solomon: "When the earth was flooded because of him, wisdom again saved it, steering the righteous man by a paltry piece of wood" (Wis 10:3-4).

The mother of seven martyred sons recounts how their father, "while he was still with you, he taught you the law and the prophets. He read to you about Abel slain by Cain, and Isaac who was offered as a burnt offering, and about Joseph in prison" (4 Macc 18:10-11).

The author of the slender letter, Jude, portrays those who have snuck in to mislead the church as "grumblers and malcontents," who "indulge their own lusts" and are "bombastic in speech, flattering people to their own advantage" (Jude 16). They have snuck in presumably through some form of slander or blasphemy (9-10). These agitators the author compares to the watchers of Gen 6:1-4 (Jude 6), the people of Sodom and Gomorrah (7-8), and, finally, to Cain, Balaam, and Korah, who led a rebellion against Moses (Num 16). His letter crescendos,

Woe to them! For they go the way of Cain, and abandon themselves to Balaam's error for the sake of gain, and perish in Korah's rebellion. These are blemishes on your love-feasts, while they feast with you without fear, feeding themselves. They are waterless clouds carried along by the winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the deepest darkness has been reserved forever. (11-13)

There is little in this letter to identify precisely what is meant by "the way of Cain," given the sweeping invectives it contains.

In 1 John 3:12, the pastor urges those who have not left the church, "We must not be like Cain who was from the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous." There is precious little here that defines how or why Cain killed Abel, other than the patent observation that his deeds were evil and his brother's good. The pastor goes on to characterize all who hate as ἀνθρωποκτόνοι: "All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them" (1 John 3:15).

Abel—though not Cain—appears in three further New Testament texts, two of them representing the same saying of Jesus. In his critique of the Pharisees, Jesus says,

Therefore I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town, so that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. (Matt 23:34–35)

This indictment covers the entire sweep of Israelite history, from its first so-called martyr, Abel, to its last, Zechariah—from Genesis 4 to 2 Chronicles 24.<sup>35</sup>

Finally, two references in the letter to the Hebrews appear to allude to Gen 4:10. In his or her litany of Israel's heroes, the author begins with Abel: "By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain's. Through this he received approval as righteous, God himself giving approval to his gifts; he died, but through his faith he still speaks." The author claims that Abel still speaks, not through the crying out of his blood from the ground but through faith, though the notion that Abel *still speaks* certainly suggests rather evocatively that Abel, like his blood from the ground, speaks even after his death (Heb 11:4). This is so, it would seem, in light of Heb 12:24, in which the author refers to Jesus as "the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel." Once again, lying in the background of this ancient text is the story of Abel, whose blood cried out from the ground after his death. Yet the preacher offers precious little insight except to say that Jesus' sprinkled blood speaks a better word than Abel's blood.

For that elusive insight none of the New Testament texts or the brief glimpses in the Wisdom of Solomon or 4 Maccabees will do. To gain a richer vision of a treacherous Cain and an innocent Abel, to garner a more nuanced portrait of the world's first homicide, to gather insight into primeval murder and martyrdom, the attentive gaze of an array of early Jewish interpreters proves indispensable.

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<sup>35</sup>Zechariah in 2 Chr 24:20–21 is said to be the son of Jehoida rather than Barachiah, though, either way, it makes good sense for him to be the prophet to whom Jesus refers, as he is the last one mentioned in the Jewish scriptures, and he is stoned in the temple precincts. Luke 11:51 contains a version of the same saying without the reference to Barachiah.



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# Abraham et l'abrahamisme: Mythe ou réalité?

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La figure d'Abraham est celle des prosélytes dans le judaïsme synagogaal et dans le mouvement chrétien, mais pas, du moins à ses débuts, dans le mouvement rabbinique. Cela semble expliquer son utilisation interprétative dans le *Targum Neofiti*, relevant du judaïsme synagogaal, et chez Paul de Tarse, appartenant au mouvement chrétien.

On développe ici de manière succincte une problématique portant exclusivement sur cette figure dans le judaïsme synagogaal et dans le mouvement chrétien,<sup>1</sup> non sans rapport avec le prosélytisme judéen dont l'existence dans l'Antiquité gréco-romaine est supposée contrairement à l'avis de certains critiques.<sup>2</sup>

En revanche, il ne va pas être question ici de la figure d'Abraham dans la mouvement rabbinique.<sup>3</sup> Signalons cependant qu'on rencontre aussi cette éminente figure dans la littérature rabbinique, mais seulement pour celle originaire de Babylonie, apparemment jamais pour celle originaire de Palestine: en effet, la doctrine selon laquelle Abraham a été le premier des prosélytes paraît avoir été formulée pour la première fois par Raba, un sage amoraïte du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle (voir TB *Hagigah* 3a et TB *Souccah* 49b) – ce qui ne signifie pas pour autant que cette figure ne soit pas originaire de Palestine, pour ensuite migrer en Babylonie.

On donne aussi dans un préliminaire quelques points de repère de la figure d'Abraham dans le judaïsme en général.

Partant de la figure d'Abraham, comme prototype emblématique des prosélytes, a été créée, pour diverses raisons idéologiques, par la recherche moderne un phénomène religieux que l'on appelle "abrahamisme": on examine aussi cette question extrêmement controversée dans un excursus.

D'emblée, observons que la figure d'Abraham n'est pas nécessairement, comme on le pense souvent, d'origine judéenne, raison pour laquelle sans doute c'est la figure par excellence qui représente symboliquement celui qui devient judéen. Cette figure semblerait provenir du Sud de la Palestine et du Nord de l'Arabie, et ne serait arrivée que tardivement à Jérusalem – pas avant la période perse ou la période grecque.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pour une première approche, voir R. Hayward, "Abraham as Proselytiser," *JJS* 49 (1998): 24–37.

<sup>2</sup> Voir par exemple E. Will et C. Orrieux, "Prosélytisme juif"? *Histoire d'une erreur* (Paris, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> À ce sujet, voir M. Lavee, "Converting the Missionary Image of Abraham: Rabbinic Traditions Migrating from the Land of Israël to Babylon," dans M. Goodman, G. H. van Kooten, et J. T. A. G. M. van Ruiten, éd., *Abraham, the Nations, dans the Hagarites. Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Perspectives on Kingship with Abraham* (Leyde/Boston, 2010), 201–22.

<sup>4</sup> À ce sujet, voir S. C. Mimouni, *La circoncision dans le monde judéen aux époques grecque et romaine. Histoire d'un conflit interne au judaïsme* (Paris/Louvain, 2007), 13–45.

Albert de Pury, dans une ligne de pensée assez similaire, estime qu'Abraham a probablement été "une figure à la fois folklorique et tutélaire, sorte de *genius loci* d'Hébron" que les populations fréquentant le sanctuaire et le marché d'Hébron connaissent par les traditions orales de ce lieu.<sup>5</sup> C'est ainsi que les récits aux sources du texte du *Livre de la Genèse* en ont ensuite fait l'ancêtre des Judéens (par Isaac) et des Arabes (par Ismaël).

## 1. PRÉLIMINAIRE: LA FIGURE D'ABRAHAM DANS LE JUDAÏSME EN GÉNÉRAL

L'introduction des traditions abrahamiques est attribuée par les biblistes à l'école deutéronomiste qui pourrait dater selon la plupart d'entre eux de l'époque perse.<sup>6</sup> La question est discutée et il semblerait que la récupération de ces traditions ne soient pas antérieures à l'époque hasmonéenne.

On attribue à Abraham l'introduction de la circoncision dans le culte judéen, laquelle est mise en relation avec l'abandon des idoles pour une divinité unique: autrement dit, pour le dieu Yahweh. Cependant, dans la Bible judéenne, rien n'est dit des raisons pour lesquelles Abraham a rejeté les idoles pour servir la divinité unique, ni pourquoi cette décision (alliance) est marquée (scellée) par la circoncision.

Dans le *Livre des Jubilés*, qui date du milieu du II<sup>e</sup> siècle avant notre ère, il est précisé, en *Jub.* 11:4–17 et en 12:1–14, qu'Abraham a adhéré à la divinité unique par raisonnement, après avoir compris avec l'expérience l'inanité des idoles qui se laissent détruire sans se défendre.

On retrouve cette même idée dans l'*Apocalypse d'Abraham* (ou *Testament d'Abraham*), qui date de la fin du I<sup>er</sup> siècle de notre ère (du moins pour sa première partie), où, en I-VI, Abraham, fabricant d'idoles, est pris de doutes intérieurs, et devient alors destructeur de ces mêmes idoles.

Dans les *L.A.B. (Liber antiquitatum biblicarum)* du Pseudo-Philon, qui datent du I<sup>er</sup> siècle de notre ère, Abraham reçoit gratuitement en récompense du dieu d'Israël aux termes de la promesse ce que ses contemporains idolâtres veulent conquérir sur la divinité.<sup>7</sup> Pour l'auteur de ce commentaire de la Genèse, le contraste entre Abraham et les idolâtres se manifeste essentiellement de deux points de vue: (1) la migration, suivant l'échec de la Tour de Babel, qui est le début de l'élection pour Abraham et les siens, et une dispersion pour les autres (*L.A.B.* 7:4–5; 32:1); (2) Abraham, refusant de fuir le jugement par le feu que ses adversaires lui préparent, en appelle au jugement divin qui le fait échapper à la fournaise, contrairement au sort attendant les idolâtres. Le contraste se manifeste aussi, dans cette perspective, par un mélange de ressemblances et de différences, il concerne encore le culte des astres, les sacrifices d'enfants, les pierres inscrites, la construction de la tour et de la cité. Bref, dans les *L.A.B.*, l'opposition entre Abraham et les idolâtres correspond à celle entre les prosélytes dont Abraham est la figure emblématique et les idolâtres, entre ceux qui quittent les idoles et ceux qui les conservent.

<sup>5</sup> A. de Pury, "Genèse 12-36." dans T. Römer et C. Nihan, éd., *Introduction à l'Ancien Testament* (Genève, 2009), 232–34.

<sup>6</sup> Voir l'ouvrage récent de M. Warner, *Re-Imagining Abraham. A Re-Assessment of the Influence of Deuteronomism in Genesis* (Leyde-Boston, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> À ce sujet, voir P.-M. Bogaert, "La figure d'Abraham dans les *Antiquités bibliques* du Pseudo-Philon," dans P.-M. Bogaert, éd., *Abraham dans la Bible et dans la tradition juive* (Bruxelles, 1977), 40–61.

Philon et Josèphe commentent cette prise de conscience avec certaines subtilités d'ordre philosophique qu'ils essaient d'appliquer à la figure d'Abraham. Leurs discours paraissent s'adresser présentement à des Gréco-Romains.<sup>8</sup>

Philon, originaire de la Diaspora, pense, de manière intéressante, qu'Abraham n'a été le disciple de personne et n'a donc pas eu besoin d'observer la Loi de Moïse, étant lui-même la loi vivante (*Abr.* 69) et qu'il a été celui qui, remontant les degrés de l'échelle des êtres, est parvenu au niveau du créateur les dominant tous parce qu'il les a tous créés (*Virt.* 2.212–215).<sup>9</sup>

Josèphe, originaire de la Palestine, estime qu'Abraham, à l'instar du fondateur d'une école philosophique, ayant fui la Chaldée en raison de l'opposition à ses idées sur la divinité unique (*Ant.* 7.157 et 281), est descendu chez les Égyptiens pour écouter ce que leurs prêtres disent des dieux et, n'apprenant rien de nouveau (*Ant.* 7.161–162), c'est lui qui a entrepris de leur enseigner en revanche l'arithmétique et l'astronomie (*Ant.* 7.167).<sup>10</sup>

Josèphe a introduit l'idée selon laquelle la philosophie grecque comme la connaissance reflétée par la Bible ont l'une et l'autre pour origine un savoir acquis par Abraham au temps où il a séjourné en Égypte. Cette idée, souvent désignée sous le nom de *translatio studiorum* (ou *transfert des études*),<sup>11</sup> a été transmise aux auteurs médiévaux non seulement par les textes de Flavius Josèphe, mais aussi par ceux d'Isidore de Séville, qui a considéré, pour sa part, que le latin, le grec et l'hébreu ont la même origine puisque ces langues sont censées émanées d'Abraham.

Observons aussi que dans la Bible judéenne (notamment en Gen 14 et en Ps 110) mais aussi ensuite, la figure d'Abraham est associée à celle de Melchisédech tant dans le judaïsme que dans le christianisme.<sup>12</sup> La figure de Melchisédech tout comme celle d'Abraham se retrouve dans l'islam, vraisemblablement au contact du christianisme de langue syriaque.<sup>13</sup>

Il est aussi question de la figure d'Abraham, comme d'ailleurs aussi de celle de Melchisédech, dans les manuscrits découverts près du Khirbet Qumrân.<sup>14</sup>

Bref, au I<sup>er</sup> siècle de notre ère, Abraham, figure complexe, est compris d'une part, comme le premier à avoir cru en une divinité unique, d'autre part, comme le premier à obéir à la Loi avant que Moïse ne la donne à Israël.<sup>15</sup> Il s'agit d'un indice important qui pourrait signifier une

<sup>8</sup> A. Y. Reed, "The Construction and Subversion of Patriarchal Perfection: Abraham and Exemplarity in Philo, Josephus, and the *Testament of Abraham*," *JSJ* 40 (2009): 185–212.

<sup>9</sup> S. Sandmel, "Philo's Place in Judaism: A Study of Conceptions of Abraham in Jewish Literature II," *HUCA* 26 (1955): 151–332, spécialement 197–98.

<sup>10</sup> L. H. Feldman, "Abraham the Greek Philosopher in Josephus," *TAPhA* 99 (1968): 143–56.

<sup>11</sup> Il s'agit du fameux phénomène du déplacement de la connaissance des textes grecs de l'Antiquité [particulièrement la philosophie] du monde grec vers le Proche-Orient perse et syriaque, puis arabe oriental [Bagdad], enfin arabe occidental [Cordoue, Tolède], jusqu'à la renaissance intellectuelle du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle qui marque sa redécouverte par l'Europe latine – il s'agit d'un long phénomène de déplacements successifs des textes (principalement ceux de Platon et d'Aristote) et des centres d'études, occupant tout le Moyen Âge sur près de six siècles [de 529 avec la fermeture de l'école philosophique d'Athènes à 1100 avec la renaissance du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle et l'apparition des écoles de dialectique aristotélicienne à Paris].

<sup>12</sup> G. Granerod, *Abraham dans Melchizedek Scribal Activity of Second Temple Times in Genesis 14 and Psalm 110* (Berlin, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> J. M. F. Van Reeth, "Melchisédech le Prophète éternel selon Jean d'Apamée et le monarchianisme musulman," *Oriens Christianus* 96 (2012): 8–46.

<sup>14</sup> C. A. Craig, "Abraham in the Dead Sea Scrolls," dans P. W. Flint, éd., *The Bible at Qumrân* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 149–58.

<sup>15</sup> Reed, "Construction and Subversion."

préséance d'Abraham sur la Loi de Moïse et orienter vers un judaïsme plutôt synagogaal et non pas rabbinique.<sup>16</sup>

On va maintenant examiner deux questions spécifiques en relation avec le prosélytisme: celle d'Abraham dans le Targum qui relève du judaïsme synagogaal et celle d'Abraham chez Paul qui appartient au mouvement chrétien.

## 2. ABRAHAM DANS LE TARGUM

Abraham tient une place importante dans le Targum qui est, comme on le sait, un commentaire paraphrastique de la Bible, notamment dans le *Neofiti*, l'un des plus anciens connus (de la fin du I<sup>er</sup> siècle ou du début du II<sup>e</sup> siècle).<sup>17</sup>

Il convient, en effet, de préciser que ce Targum paraît, selon toute probabilité, antérieur à la Mishnah, car il propose une Halakhah relativement différente, comme le montrent quelques rares études sur la question.<sup>18</sup> De fait, Targum et Mishnah pourraient bien renvoyer à deux traditions différentes et relativement opposées, la synagogaale et la rabbinique, qui ne sont pas à percevoir dans un rapport diachronique, mais dans un rapport synchronique.

Le *Targum Neofiti* reflèterait une tradition synagogaale en accord avec une autre tradition que l'on trouve dans la Bible judéenne de langue hébraïque.

Il va être question ici du sens de גר et de גור dans le Targum<sup>19</sup> afin de montrer qu'il est plus proche de celui de la Bible que de celui de la Mishnah.<sup>20</sup> Disons déjà que dans la Bible et dans le Targum cette terminologie renvoie au sens d'«étranger» par rapport à la terre alors que dans la Mishnah elle renvoie au sens de «prosélyte» par rapport au peuple – dans la Bible et le Targum, elle suppose la possession de la terre, dans la Mishnah, ce n'est pas le cas: autrement dit, le גר n'adhère apparemment pas à une terre, mais à un peuple.<sup>21</sup>

Dans la Bible, il y a un rapport qui est établi entre deux catégories de personnes: celle du גר (*ger*) et celle du אֲזָרָה (*ezrah*) – le premier terme peut être traduit par «étranger» et le second par «indigène», des traductions qui ne sont pas sans poser de problèmes, car elles ne donnent pas nécessairement un sens précis.

Il s'agit d'une question importante, car elle touche à la situation de la Palestine après le retour de la déportation en Babylonie à l'époque perse. Deux groupes de Judéens sont présents en Palestine: ceux qui sont restés au pays et ceux qui ont été déportés et sont revenus. On peut alors se demander si, dans les textes bibliques où il en est fait mention, les premiers ne sont pas qualifiés d'אֲזָרָהִים et les second de גֵרִים.

<sup>16</sup> À ce sujet, voir S. C. Mimouni, «Le 'judaïsme sacerdotal et synagogaal' en Palestine et en Diaspora entre le II<sup>e</sup> et le VI<sup>e</sup> siècle: propositions pour un nouveau concept», *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres* 159 (2015): 113–47.

<sup>17</sup> Pour une datation ancienne de ce targum, voir G. Boccaccini, «Targum Neofiti as a Proto-Rabbinic Document: A Systemic Analysis», dans D. R. G. Beattie et M. McNamara, éd., *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in Their Historical Context* (Sheffield, 1994), 260–69.

<sup>18</sup> M. Ohana, «Agneau pascal et circoncision: le problème de la Halakha prémishnaïque dans le Targum palestinien», *VT* 23 (1973): 385–99.

<sup>19</sup> Cette étude complète et développe celle publiée dans Mimouni, *La circoncision dans le monde judéen*, 353–58.

<sup>20</sup> M. Ohana, «Prosélytisme et targum palestinien: données nouvelles pour la datation de Néofiti 1», *Biblica* 55 (1974): 317–32.

<sup>21</sup> À ce sujet, voir A. Diez-Macho, *El Targum* (Barcelone, 1972), 54–60.

En Ezra 1:4, le גר est le Judéen déporté qui vit en Babylonie et souhaite revenir dans son pays d'origine.

Pour אֲזָרָה, c'est plus compliqué, mais sa présence dans le Ps 37:35 en parallèle avec רַע (ra`), qui signifie “méchant,” montre qu'il s'agit aussi de Judéens comme l'a montré Henri Cazelles.<sup>22</sup>

Ces deux termes apparaissent ensemble en Exod 12:19 et en Num 9:14, et aussi de nombreuses fois ailleurs. Ces deux péripécies appartiennent à un ensemble législatif ayant pour but d'unifier le statut de deux catégories de personnes composant l'assemblée du peuple d'Israël, en même temps que d'établir des droits et devoirs de Judéens de la Diaspora, que les Judéens de la Palestine doivent traiter comme des compatriotes (Lev 19:34). Le passage de Num 9:14 montre que les גרים et les אֲזָרָהים ont un droit égal à la terre d'Israël et Exod 12:19 indique qu'ils participent à la même alliance.

À partir du “papyrus pascal” d'Éléphantine, qui est de 419 avant notre ère, Pierre Grelot a montré que Exod 12:19 et Num 9:14 sont deux textes postérieurs à cette date.<sup>23</sup>

Il a été question d'Henri Cazelles et de Pierre Grelot, deux grands exégètes français, mais il n'a pas été question de retenir leurs hypothèses trop conditionnées par les théories historico-critiques de leur époque et notamment le document “P” et le Code Sacerdotal: le premier voyant dans les גרים des Judéens de retour de la déportation babylonienne et dans les אֲזָרָהים des Samaritains ; le second estimant que les אֲזָרָהים représenteraient aussi bien des rapatriés judéens que les “gens du pays” de vieille souche tandis que les גרים renverraient à des pèlerins judéens se rendant à Jérusalem pour participer aux festivités religieuses.

Le *Targum Neofiti* est le seul à reprendre le sens du terme גר (*ger*) de la Bible, contrairement aux autres targumim (notamment Onqelos ou Jonathan) qui suivent plutôt celui de la Mishnah et du Midrash. Autrement dit, dans le *Targum Neofiti*, l'hébreu גר (*ger*) est traduit par l'araméen גיורא (*gywra*) (pour le substantif) et l'hébreu גור (*gur*) par l'araméen יתגייר (*ytygyr*) (pour le verbe). Comme dans la Bible, dans le *Targum Neofiti*, il doit prendre le sens d’“étranger” et non celui de “proselyte” comme c'est le cas dans la Mishnah, le Midrash et les autres targumim.

La notion de גר תושב (*ger tošab*) est absente du *Targum Neofiti*. Dans la Mishnah et le Midrash, ce terme désigne l'étranger résidant au sein du peuple judéen en Palestine – à la différence du גר צדק (*ger sedeq*), le גר תושב (*ger tošab*) ne s'est pas converti, mais a seulement accepté d'observer les lois noachiques permettant la convivialité entre lui et les Judéens.<sup>24</sup> Les targumim, à l'exception du *Neofiti*, traduisent le גר תושב (*ger tošab*) comme étant celui qui est resté incirconcis, appelé aussi גר ארל (*ger `arel*). Le *Targum Neofiti* ne semble donc pas connaître de distinction entre les différentes catégories d'étrangers résidant au sein du peuple judéen, sans faire mention pour autant d'incirconcision.

Le *Targum Neofiti*, sur ce point mais aussi sur bien d'autres, renvoie à une tradition différente de celle figurant dans la Mishnah. On peut la qualifier de pré-mishnaïque comme le fait Moïse Ohana, mais on peut aussi l'identifier comme synagogale, d'autant que les targumim ont été composés pour servir à la lecture dans les lieux de culte pour des Judéens ne sachant plus l'hébreu, car parlant désormais l'araméen – ce qui n'est pas le cas des rabbins, qui eux ont continué l'usage de l'hébreu.

<sup>22</sup> H. Cazelles, “La mission d'Esdras,” *VT* 4 (1954): 113–40, spécialement 128–29.

<sup>23</sup> P. Grelot, “La dernière étape de la rédaction sacerdotale,” *VT* 6 (1956): 174–89.

<sup>24</sup> Au sujet des lois noachiques, voir S. C. Mimouni, “Le conflit inter-judéen (halakhique) entre Paul, Jacques et Pierre dans la réception des *Actes des Apôtres*,” *Judaïsme ancien / Ancient Judaism* 7 (2019): 153–86.

Dans la Bible comme dans le *Targum Neofiti* (c'est aussi le cas dans le Targum Jonathan), Abraham est un גר תושב (*ger tošab*), c'est-à-dire un étranger résidant parmi les Judéens (voir Gen 23:4).

Dans le *Targum Neofiti* sur Gen 24:3, Abraham fait jurer son serviteur en l'obligeant de mettre sa main sous sa cuisse, alors que dans le Targum Jonathan sur Gen 24:3, il est fait mention de la coupure de la circoncision du patriarche.

La thématique de la « descendance d'Abraham » a permis de donner une certaine légitimité à ceux qui sont considérés comme des גרים (*gerim*) sur le territoire qu'ils occupent.

La figure d'Abraham est celle par excellence de celui qui devient judéen. Le personnage a une fonction médiatrice en fonction de tous les étrangers au peuple judéen.

Dans le cas du גר, le *Targum Neofiti* est le témoin d'une différence de perception entre ceux qui font reposer leur Halakhah sur la Bible et ceux qui la font reposer aussi sur la Mishnah. En partant de ce cas, on peut estimer que le *Targum Neofiti* pourrait être issu du judaïsme synagogal se fondant sur la Bible et non pas du mouvement rabbinique se fondant aussi sur la Mishnah.

Les targumim reflètent des traditions de communautés particulières, ceci étant dit ils ne sont pas si faciles à contextualiser historiquement.

### 3. ABRAHAM CHEZ PAUL

Dans le Nouveau Testament, Abraham est nommé 73 fois contre 80 pour Moïse et 59 pour David. Abraham est une figure majeure dans le mouvement chrétien qui la reprend abondamment avec des fonctions relativement diverses.<sup>25</sup>

Paul de Tarse, pour sa part, consacre deux longs développements dans lesquels il fait intervenir la figure d'Abraham: l'un dans l'*Épître aux Galates*, l'autre dans l'*Épître aux Romains*. L'un et l'autre s'appuient sur Gen 15:6 ("Il crut en Yahweh qui le considéra comme juste").

Abraham tient donc une place importante dans les argumentations de Paul, surtout quand il s'agit de l'intégration des non Judéens dans les communautés chrétiennes<sup>26</sup> – autrement exprimé, l'intégration des prosélytes sans soumission totale aux observances de la Loi de Moïse et notamment la circoncision et les pratiques alimentaires.

#### 3.1. Gal 3:6–29

C'est le cas dans les argumentations de Paul en faveur de la justification moyennant la croyance que l'on trouve en Gal 3:6–29.<sup>27</sup> Dans cette péricope, il sollicite Abraham comme preuve scripturaire, pour aboutir à la conclusion qui fait des chrétiens, quelle que soit leur appartenance ethnique, la descendance du patriarche – ce qui peut paraître contraire aux règles de l'appartenance ethnique en cours à son époque, sauf si on les envisage d'un point de vue spirituel.

<sup>25</sup> M. Quesnel, "Visages d'Abraham dans le Nouveau Testament," *Le Monde de la Bible* 140 (2002): 32–36.

<sup>26</sup> J. Lambrecht, "Abraham notre Père à tous." La figure d'Abraham dans les écrits pauliniens," dans P.M. Bogaert, éd., *Abraham dans la Bible et dans la tradition juive* (Bruxelles, 1977), 118–59.

<sup>27</sup> A. Gignac, "L'interprétation du récit d'Abraham en Galates 3, 6-4, 7, tour de force ou coup de force? Le travail narratif du lecteur face à l'énonciation et à l'intertextualité pauliniennes," dans R. Burnet, D. Luciani, et G. Van Oyen, éd., *Le lecteur. VI<sup>e</sup> Colloque international du RRENAB, Louvain-la-Neuve, 24-26 mai 2012* (Leuven, 2014), 309–30.

Paul ne retient aucun des deux aspects de la figure d'Abraham qui circulent à son époque, mais en proposent deux autres qui sont connexes.

Le premier consiste à voir en Abraham la preuve que la divinité unique justifie l'homme en raison de sa croyance, à l'exclusion de l'observance de la Loi de Moïse.

Le second consiste à voir que les chrétiens, à cause de leur croyance en la divinité unique qui justifie et sauve dans le Messie Jésus, représentent la seule authentique descendance du patriarche.

Ces deux aspects sont exploités dans l'argumentation de Gal 4:21–31, où Paul, pour souligner la liberté de la nouvelle descendance d'Abraham à l'égard de la Torah utilise l'épisode biblique qui met en scène Sara, l'épouse "libre," la Judéenne, et Agar, l'"esclave," l'Égyptienne, ainsi que leur descendance respective, Isaac et Ismaël – les deux descendance symbolisant l'ensemble des chrétiens, les Judéens comme les Grecs.<sup>28</sup>

Mais c'est en Gal 3:6–29 que l'argumentation paulinienne faisant appel à Abraham entre vraiment en action pour déterminer le rapport entre le Messie et la Torah (entre la foi et la loi) et son lien avec les promesses pour les temps à venir. Paul dans sa longue argumentation montre à ses interlocuteurs qu'il est inutile, voire coupable, de se laisser convaincre par les propagandistes judéens, peut-être de la tendance se rattachant à Jacques le Justes, qui veulent soumettre les chrétiens galates d'origine non judéenne aux observances judéennes et, en premier lieu, la circoncision. Pour ce faire, dans sa démonstration, il fait appel à Abraham qui est la figure emblématique de la circoncision, mais aussi celui qui a cru avant la Loi de Moïse, donc avant la mise en place de cette dernière avec ses prescriptions.

Pour Jan Lambrecht, Paul a acquis sur le chemin de Damas la conviction que la divinité unique justifie l'homme dans le Messie en dehors de la Torah, et que tout homme qui croit appartient à la postérité d'Abraham. Aussi, selon ce critique, Paul s'est construit d'Abraham une image qui lui est personnelle et qui lui permet de déterminer son herméneutique avec des règles spécifiques d'interprétation.<sup>29</sup>

### 3.2. Rom 4:1–16

C'est le cas aussi en Rom 4:1–16, où Paul considère que, nonobstant la circoncision, le dieu d'Israël a justifié Abraham sans l'observance préalable de la Torah: Abraham a cru en la divinité et cela lui a été compté comme justice, bien avant d'être circoncis.<sup>30</sup>

Pour Paul, la figure d'Abraham est assez différente de celle des Judéens de la Palestine, notamment en fonction de ces trois notions que sont la promesse, la croyance et la descendance. Sa vision d'Abraham a dû sans doute scandaliser les Judéens de Palestine, peut-être pas tous ceux de Diaspora: les œuvres sont absentes et le patriarche est reconnu comme le père des chrétiens d'origine grecque, mais aussi des chrétiens d'origine judéenne.

Paul justifie l'incirconcision des chrétiens d'origine grecque en considérant que ce rite n'est pas imposé à tous les prosélytes au judaïsme, pour ce faire il renvoie souvent à Abraham dont la

<sup>28</sup> É. Cothenet, "À l'arrière-plan de l'allégorie d'Agar et de Sara (Ga 4, 21-31)," dans *De la Torah au Messie. Études d'exégèse et d'herméneutique bibliques offertes à Henri Cazelles pour ses 25 années d'enseignement à l'Institut catholique de Paris (octobre 1979)* (Paris, 1981), 457–65; et G. Wagner, "Les enfants d'Abraham ou les chemins de la promesse et de la liberté. Exégèse de Galates 4, 21-21," *RHPR* 71 (1991): 285–95.

<sup>29</sup> Lambrecht, "Abraham notre Père à tous," 140–41.

<sup>30</sup> À ce sujet, voir Mimouni, *La circoncision dans le monde*, 237–41.



circconcision a été tardive. Ce n'est pas l'observance de la Loi qui a fait de lui un croyant, mais c'est la croyance qui a fait de lui un observant de la Loi.

### 3.3. Récapitulatif

Dans *Galates* comme dans *Romains*, Paul tient compte de l'enchaînement chronologique des événements: la Loi est venue après la promesse; la justice est déclarée avant que ne soit prescrite la circoncision. Premières dans le temps, la promesse et la justice, toutes deux nées de la "foi," commandent les autres moments de l'économie du salut.

Au II<sup>e</sup> siècle avant notre ère, Abraham est considéré comme un modèle de justice qui lui est comptée parce qu'il a été fidèle dans l'épreuve (1 Macc 2:51–52). L'épreuve en question est la scène d'Abraham sacrifiant, autrement dit la ligature (*aqedah*) d'Isaac rapportée en Gen 22. Une tradition qui est reprise dans l'*Épître de Jacques* (Jas 3:21–23) et dans l'*Épître aux Hébreux* (Heb 11:17), des œuvres d'avant 70 de notre ère et non pas d'après comme on le pense souvent, dont les auteurs estiment que si Abraham a été justifié c'est par ses œuvres (l'*aqedah* d'Isaac) et non par sa "foi" – comme le pense Paul.

Ces deux exégèses semblent renvoyer à la Palestine pour la première et à la Diaspora pour la seconde – ce serait une hypothèse à explorer plus avant.

Ajoutons, comme on le va le voir plus loin, que la figure d'Abraham est perçue de manière positive dans les milieux intellectuels gréco-romains, notamment dans les milieux philosophiques. On comprend donc pourquoi Paul la reprend dans son argumentation pour le ralliement des Gréco-Romains au mouvement chrétien, d'autant qu'elle semble déjà avoir été utilisée dans la Diaspora romaine pour la diffusion des idées judéennes parmi ces mêmes Gréco-Romains devenant alors sympathisants à défaut de prosélytes.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Les traditions autour de la figure d'Abraham paraissent pouvoir illustrer la conduite à tenir envers les prosélytes, de par son rôle fédérateur.<sup>31</sup>

Comme le rapporte *Gen. Rab.* 48:8–9 sur Gen 18:1, un texte difficile à contextualiser mais vraisemblablement du V<sup>e</sup> ou du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle, Abraham est celui qui accueille les étrangers avec largesse, celui qui ouvre des portes sur les deux côtés de sa tente – autrement dit, il pratique l'hospitalité à l'égard de tous, Judéens ou non.

La figure d'Abraham récapitule symboliquement les termes des rapports entre les prosélytes et les Judéens, elle devient même le prototype du prédicateur en mission chez les non Judéens.

Abraham est diversement utilisé par les traditions judéennes. Sa figure, interprétée différemment, permet de construire un rapport à la Loi et à son observance qui est fonction des pratiques pouvant varier d'un groupe à un autre.

Si Abraham a joué un rôle dans l'adhésion au judaïsme, cela a été aussi le cas dans la conversion au christianisme et même dans la conversion à l'islam – une figure amphibologique qui a permis aux musulmans d'attirer en leur sein les croyants du judaïsme et du christianisme, notamment en

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<sup>31</sup> Will et Orrieux, "Prosélytisme juif," 144–47.

leur montrant qu'ils adorent le même ancêtre et donc le même dieu.<sup>32</sup> L'œcuménisme de la figure d'Abraham et la proclamation de son universalité a servi plus l'islam que le christianisme ou le judaïsme, notamment en utilisant le concept occidental qu'est celui de monothéisme.<sup>33</sup> D'autant qu'Abraham est bien connu des Arabes, non seulement à cause de son fils Ismaël et de sa mère Agar, mais surtout parce qu'elle leur est familière et ce à une époque antérieure à l'islam.

Quoi qu'il en soit, la figure d'Abraham est celle qui accueille le prosélyte ou le sympathisant, l'invitant avec empressement à entrer pour prendre sa place dans la communauté d'Israël, ceci étant il ne part pas selon toute apparence à sa recherche et ne s'organise pas pour cela.

Précisons que deux textes du *Targum Neofiti* – sur Gen 12:5 et Gen 21:33 – sont à comprendre dans ce sens. C'est particulièrement exact pour *Targum Neofiti* sur Gen 21:33 qui relève le fait d'adhésion au judaïsme à l'occasion d'une célébration de l'hospitalité d'Abraham. Ainsi cette tradition de l'hospitalité d'Abraham pourrait être parfois comprise comme une expression missionnaire.<sup>34</sup> Comme l'affirme Robert Martin-Achard (1919–1999), théologien protestant, “selon certaines traditions, Abraham aurait été le premier converti avant de devenir missionnaire.”<sup>35</sup>

## 5. EXCURSUS: LE CONCEPT DE “RELIGION ABRAHAMIQUE”: MYTHE OU RÉALITÉ ?

À partir d'un article de Michel Tardieu, qui est un rapide résumé d'un cours donné en 2006 au Collège de France,<sup>36</sup> il paraît possible de “prendre contact” avec ce qui pourrait être le concept de “religion abrahamique” que l'on rencontre occasionnellement, surtout pour expliquer les origines de l'islam par rapport au judaïsme et au christianisme. Pour ce critique, “L'idée de l'abrahamisme, comme on l'appelle parfois, relève de la théologie naturelle, rationnelle, antérieure à la théologie révélée des religions positives et d'une plus grande extension qu'elles.” Toujours selon ce même critique, “Elle est récurrente dans la littérature classique et patristique.”

Ainsi, si Celse, le philosophe païen, dans les fragments subsistants de son *Alethes Logos* que l'on connaît par Origène dans son *Contre Celse*, ne dit rien de la religion abrahamique, c'est probablement qu'il en a été un adepte. En revanche, s'il concentre ses attaques sur la religion mosaïque qui, à ses yeux, est une tromperie de gens incultes, c'est que pour lui, Moïse le magicien serait l'antithèse d'Abraham le savant, l'observateur des astres, dont la narration biblique ne comporte ni récits de miracles ni tours de sorcellerie.

Cette forme de pensée se retrouverait aussi dans le *Contre les Galiléens* de Julien qui “évite de s'associer aux fêtes des Judéens,” mais qui “ne cesse de vénérer le dieu d'Abraham, d'Isaac et de

<sup>32</sup>J. D. Levenson, “The Conversion of Abraham to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam,” dans H. Najman et J. H. Newman, éd., *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation. Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel* (Leyde/Boston, 2004), 3–40.

<sup>33</sup>Au sujet du monothéisme, voir S. C. Mimouni, “Il Monoteismo: Una forma di totalitarismo attraverso i secoli,” *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 37 (2018): 7–22 (= S. C. Mimouni, *Origines du christianisme. Recherche et enseignement à la Section des sciences religieuses de l'École pratique des Hautes études, 1991–2017*, Préface de P.-H. Poirier, membre de l'Institut, Turnhout, 2018, 307–23).

<sup>34</sup>Sandmel, “Philo's Place in Judaism,” 197–98.

<sup>35</sup>R. Martin-Achard, *Actualité d'Abraham* (Neuchâtel-Paris, 1969), 123.

<sup>36</sup>M. Tardieu, “Le concept de religion abrahamique,” *Annuaire du Collège de France 2005–2006* (Paris, 2007): 435–40.

Jacob, qui sont des Chaldéens, race sainte et théurgique” (voir Fragment 52 B-C, Fragment 69 B-D et Fragment 354 B).

Une déclaration analogue se retrouve encore chez Marinus de Néapolis de la seconde moitié du V<sup>e</sup> siècle (Damascius, *Vie d'Isidore*, Test. 141) qui donne la description d'un processus de conversion allant d'une forme déviante de mosaïsme (apparemment le samaritanisme) à un universalisme de théologie naturelle (apparemment l'hellénisme).

On sait que les fouilles archéologiques ont mis au jour sur le Mont Garizim deux temples: un premier (bâtiment B), samaritain, et un second (bâtiment A), consacré à Zeus Hysistos (datant des années 130)<sup>37</sup> – ce dernier commémorant Abraham comme prêtre du dieu unique et supérieur de la théologie naturelle.

Allant dans le même sens, une tradition herméneutique chez Héraclion considère la montagne du Garizim comme “la création que vénèrent les Grecs” par opposition à la montagne de Jérusalem comme “le démiurge à qui les Judéens rendent un culte” (Fragment 20).

Pour Michel Tardieu, “L'hénothéisme universalisant qui s'exprime dans les professions de foi abrahamites du paganisme grec trouve son aboutissement dans les représentations coraniques de la *millat Ibrahim* comme *hanifiyya*.”<sup>38</sup>

À ce sujet, observons qu'il est courant de parler des « religions d'Abraham » au pluriel. Il s'agit d'un usage particulièrement chrétien qui vise à inclure le judaïsme à l'islam et à les associer au christianisme au sein d'une vague fraternité, celle d'un ancêtre et d'une histoire qu'ils auraient en commun, représentée par la figure du patriarche Abraham – les expressions “les trois monothéismes” ou “les trois religions du Livre” jouent un rôle comparable et bien souvent tout aussi confus.<sup>39</sup>

Or l'expression “religion d'Abraham” (*millat Ibrâhim*), au singulier, se trouve cinq fois dans le Qur'an (Q 2:130.135; 4:125; 6:161; 16:123). Dans ce cas, l'idée principale correspondant à cette expression n'est pas d'inclure, mais d'exclure le judaïsme et le christianisme, afin de s'en différencier.

C'est ainsi qu'apparaît l'idée que l'islam est déjà la religion d'Abraham. Une religion d'Abraham, qui est antérieure au judaïsme et au christianisme, tout en étant aussi celle de Noé, Moïse et Jésus, comme cela est spécifié dans le Qur'an (Q 4:163).

Ce n'est donc pas sans raison que le philosophe Rémi Brague relève: “grâce à l'invocation de la figure d'Abraham, l'islam effectue de la sorte une opération paradoxale qui le fait se présenter tout à la fois comme la dernière des religions et comme la première de toutes.”<sup>40</sup>

Conséquence: puisque le judaïsme et le christianisme ont reçu la même révélation que l'islam, et que leurs disciples ne lui ont pas été fidèles, les véritables croyants du judaïsme et du christianisme, les authentiques disciples de Moïse et de Jésus, ce ne sont pas ceux qui se disent issus du judaïsme et du christianisme, ce sont les musulmans (Q 30:30).

<sup>37</sup>Y. Magen, “Gerizim, Mount.” dans *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land II* (1993), 484–92; V (2008), 1742–48; et Y. Magen, “Mount Gerizim and the Samaritans,” dans F. Manns et E. Alliata, éd., *Early Christianity in Context. Monuments and Documents* (Jérusalem, 1993), 91–147.

<sup>38</sup>À ce sujet, voir U. Rubin, “Hanifiyya and Ka'aba: An Inquiry into the Arabian Pre-Islamic Background of *din Ibrahim*,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 13 (1990): 85–112.

<sup>39</sup>R. Brague, *Du Dieu des chrétiens, et d'un ou deux autres* (Paris, 2006<sup>1</sup>, 2008<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 33.

L'islam se présente donc comme la première de toutes les religions monothéistes, suivant une thématique chrétienne bien connue sur l'antériorité foncière de la vraie religion, du monothéisme sur le polythéisme. Autrement dit, l'islam prétend être la religion naturelle de toute l'humanité (Q 7:172–173).

La présence de cette religion d'Abraham dans le Coran pourrait provenir d'une influence des Judéens, du moins de ceux qui rattachent leur Torah non pas seulement à Moïse, mais aussi à Abraham, à cause de son antériorité et de sa priorité qui sont supposées. On sait que ce sont les Judéens synagogaux et non pas les Judéens rabbiniques qui ont exercé une certaine influence sur les débuts de l'islam – c'est ce que montrent de plus en plus les recherches récentes.

Pour en revenir à l'article de Michel Tardieu, soulignons qu'en se fondant sur les importants matériaux rassemblés par Christian J. Robin,<sup>41</sup> son auteur estime pouvoir penser que le passage du "polythéisme" au "monothéisme" dans une Arabie du Sud unifiée par la dynastie régnante pourrait se situer vers 370 de notre ère. De la sorte, selon ce critique, "l'emploi d'une phraséologie judaïsante dans les inscriptions du V<sup>e</sup> siècle n'y est pas traduisible en termes de religion positive, ainsi que le montrent par comparaison les professions de foi de Julien et de Marinus," estimant que ce n'est que de la théologie naturelle. Michel Tardieu s'appuie principalement sur le témoignage de Procope qui distingue dans la société himyarite les "Judéens" proprement dits de "l'ancienne croyance que les hommes de maintenant appellent hellénique": ce qui lui permet de conclure que cette « ancienne croyance » pourrait être ce que Marinus et Damascius appellent la religion d'Abraham ou hellénisme – autrement dit, un paganisme hénothésisant qui est attesté sous sa forme savante dans la philosophie grecque. Il est particulièrement difficile de suivre Michel Tardieu sur ce point qui apparaît comme relativement confus, d'autant que parler de "polythéisme" et de "monothéisme," même avec des guillemets, n'est pas sans source de difficultés: les inscriptions qui emploient une "phraséologie judaïsante" sont tout simplement judéennes, mais relevant d'un judaïsme synagogal et non d'un judaïsme rabbinique, sans besoin de passer par une religion abrahamique dont le caractère artificiel n'est que trop évident.<sup>42</sup>

On peut être, en effet, relativement sceptique dans une démarche générale consistant à concevoir une religion abrahamique qui serait universalisante et engloberait des intellectuels (des philosophes en l'occurrence) de toutes les ethnicités. On a l'impression qu'on veut y voir une sorte d'internationale abrahamique comme le seront plus tard, à partir des XVII<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles, le déisme et la maçonnerie.

On peut penser qu'il y a une autre manière de comprendre la figure d'Abraham qui semble avoir été une entité tutélaire originaire de l'Arabie septentrionale (y compris l'Idumée), comme on l'a déjà laissé entendre, ayant été reprise par les Judéens au II<sup>e</sup> siècle avant notre ère (les Hasmonéens),

<sup>41</sup>C. J. Robin, "Le judaïsme de Himyar," *Arabia* 1 (2003): 97–172; C. J. Robin, "Himyar et Israël," dans *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 148 (2004): 831–908; C. J. Robin, "Joseph, dernier roi de Himyar (de 522 à 525, ou une des années suivantes)," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 32 (2008): 1–124; C. J. Robin, "Les religions pratiquées par les membres de la tribu de Kinda (Arabie) à la veille de l'Islam," *Judaïsme ancien / Ancient Judaism* 1 (2013): 203–61; C. J. Robin, "Le roi himyarite Tha'ran Yuhan'im (v. 342-v. 375). Stabilisation politique et réforme religieuse," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 41 (2014): 1–96; et C. J. Robin, "Quel judaïsme en Arabie ?," dans C. J. Robin, éd., *Le judaïsme de l'Arabie antique. Colloque de Jérusalem (février 2006)* (Turnhout, 2015), 15–296.

<sup>42</sup>Voir C. A. Segovia, "The Jews and Christians of Pre-Islamic Yemen (Himyar) and the Elusive Matrix of the Qur'an's Christology," dans F. del Río Sánchez, éd., *Jewish-Christianity and the Origins of Islam. Papers presented at the Colloquium held in Washington DC, October 29-31, 2015 (8th ASMEA Conference)* (Turnhout, 2018), 91–104.

puis par les Samaritains lorsqu'ils se sont séparés, emportant avec eux le Pentateuque. Il n'y aurait alors rien d'étonnant que Marinus de Néapolis, un philosophe néoplatonicien, ayant appartenu au culte samaritain du Mont Garizim, ait développé une forme d'hellénisme universalisant attesté par le temple de Zeus Hypsistos, réalisant alors un syncrétisme en lui associant la figure d'Abraham bien connue des Samaritains.

De même, il paraît difficile de comprendre en quoi Celse, le philosophe païen, aurait été un adepte de cette pseudo religion abrahamique, même s'il oppose Abraham et Moïse – Abraham étant une figure partagée par les Judéens et les Arabes, souvent utilisées on l'a vu par les apologies judéennes à destination des Gréco-Romains.

Le concept de religion abrahamique devrait soulever de nombreuses réserves, d'autant qu'il paraît être le résultat d'une idéologie issue de la Modernité, relativement proche de la maçonnerie, qui veut se donner des lettres de noblesse comme semble le montrer le philosophe allemand Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) dans son *Discours sur la théologie naturelle des Chinois*, 1716. En effet, aux XVII<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles, on discute de la question de savoir si le temps des patriarches n'aurait pas été l'époque durant laquelle se seraient communiqué d'un bout à l'autre du monde une connaissance naturelle du divin telle que celle d'Abraham: il s'agit là d'une idée selon laquelle la religion abrahamique est une forme de connaissance naturelle ou philosophique du divin, qui émerge en Abraham par son rapport au monde et non pas grâce à une révélation, et sans que cela ne se traduise encore par des prescriptions rituelles bien déterminées.

Si jamais, cette idée remontait à l'Antiquité tardive, elle serait à rattacher à l'un des thèmes du prosélytisme judéen à destination de la population gréco-romaine, hellénisée et cultivée de l'Empire. Cette religion abrahamique serait alors une préparation à l'accueil de la révélation de la Loi par Moïse: il s'agirait de faire valoir qu'une connaissance philosophique du divin, telle que celle des Grecs, pourrait préparer à la conversion ou à l'accueil de la révélation comme est comprise la "foi" d'Abraham dans la Bible.

Il conviendrait alors de rattacher cette idée au groupe syncrétiste pagano-judéen comme celui des hypsistariens, attesté en Anatolie dans l'Antiquité classique et tardive.<sup>43</sup>

Ce même thème prosélyte est employé par Paul de Tarse lorsqu'il prêche aux Athéniens sur l'Aréopage (voir Acts 17:16–34).

La figure d'Abraham a été recomposée de diverses manières par Philon d'Alexandrie et par Paul de Tarse, devenant des motifs intellectuels de la propagande missionnaire judéenne aux époques grecque et romaine et permettant une adhésion plus facilitée dans le judaïsme d'abord, dans le christianisme ensuite.

Ces dernières années, on a assisté à la création d'un nouveau concept, comme celui de "religions abrahamiques," afin d'englober de manière positive les trois religions dites monothéistes (judaïsme, christianisme et islam) autour de la figure d'Abraham.<sup>44</sup> Ce concept ouvrirait les voies à un consensus mutuel, afin en principe d'éviter les conflits ou du moins de les arbitrer.

<sup>43</sup> À ce sujet, pour une première approche, voir S. C. Mimouni, *Le judaïsme ancien du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle avant notre ère au III<sup>e</sup> siècle de notre ère: des prêtres aux rabbins* (Paris, 2012), 680–81.

<sup>44</sup> G. G. Stroumsa, *The Making of the Abrahamic Religions in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2015). Voir aussi A. Silverstein et G. G. Stroumsa, éd., *The Oxford Handbook of the Abrahamic Religions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), et voir encore G. G. Stroumsa, *Religions d'Abraham. Histoires croisées* (Genève, 2017).

Quoi qu'il en soit de ces tentatives qui toutes partent d'un excellent sentiment, l'historien doit se garder de concevoir ou de cautionner des religions reposant sur des concepts erronés qui ne peuvent que conduire à des confusions, même si une religion abrahamique globalisant les trois religions dites monothéistes et qui leur serait même antérieure est une idée séduisante pour des esprits pacifiques et œcuméniques...

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## CHAPTER THREE

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# Hebrews, the *Aqedah*, and Early Scriptural Interpretation

C. D. ELLEDGE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Among the contributions of the study of the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo, and Josephus has been an ever-deepening understanding of the underlying hermeneutical cultures that shaped scriptural interpretation within the era of Christian origins. Jim Charlesworth and colleagues recognized this contribution in their voluminous editing of the Pseudepigrapha.<sup>1</sup> For Charlesworth, exegetical practices formed “the crucible of the Pseudepigrapha,” as scriptural interpretation fused together a vast range of ancient knowledges to produce new scripturally inspired literary works.<sup>2</sup> This recognition lives on within his extensive editorial work on the Dead Sea Scrolls, which even more fully illuminate the variety and complexity of ancient interpretive practices. An important implication of Charlesworth’s efforts remains that the New Testament authors did not view scripture within a vacuum but through the rich interpretive culture of their own time.

The value of these writings for understanding even a single instance of scriptural interpretation in the New Testament is well-illustrated in Hebrews’ rendition of the trial of Abraham:

By faith, Abraham, when he was tested, brought forth Isaac. And he who received the promises was bringing forth his only son, of whom it was said, “In Isaac shall your seed be called” [Gen 21:12], having reasoned that God was powerful to raise him even from the dead, whence he also received him back in a parable. (Heb 11:17–19)

Hebrews’ brief rendition transpires within the book’s exhortation on faith (11:1–12:13), which episodically reviews *exempla* of faithfulness from the creation of the world to the activities of Israel’s kings, prophets, and martyrs. The exhortation serves as a positive counterpart to the negative admonitions against unbelief, illustrated among the wilderness ancestors (Heb 3:7–4:14; cf. 10:19–39).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>J. H. Charlesworth, ed., *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, vol. 1 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983); J. H. Charlesworth, ed., *Expansions of the “Old Testament” and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*, vol. 2 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985).

<sup>2</sup>J. H. Charlesworth, “In the Crucible: The Pseudepigrapha as Biblical Interpretation,” in *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth and C. A. Evans, JSPSup 14 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 20–43.

<sup>3</sup>R. E. Clements, “The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews,” *SJT* 28 (1985): 42–4.

Here, however, the faithfulness of the ancestors is repeatedly praised. The literary style and exegetical assumptions of these hortatory *exempla* have been compared with analogous compositions, in which renditions of the trial also repeatedly feature.

The exhortation has been assessed among rhetorical “example lists”<sup>4</sup> or “hero lists,”<sup>5</sup> in which a selective rendition of episodes from the past offers a model for the present. In the Wisdom of Solomon, an enlightened poem enumerates the activities of “Wisdom” from creation to the exodus (Wis 10:1–11:20), as she delivers the righteous and punishes the wicked. In the trial of Abraham, it was “Wisdom,” who “preserved him strong against his compassion for his son” (Wis 10:5). Hebrews’ exhortation offers a comparable historical review, one in which “faith” (and supportive motifs, such as martyrdom and resurrection) now provides the unifying strand that runs through the ancestors’ experience. Yet Hebrews focuses its exhortation not upon the divine operations of transcendent Wisdom but rather upon the human faithfulness that should even now inspire the author’s own generation.

In this regard, the exhortation may more fully resemble Ben Sira’s “Praise of the Ancestors” (Sir 44–50), a poetic unit that extols the righteousness of earlier generations, from the primeval ancestors to the priesthood of Simon, son of Onias, in his own time. If Hebrews accentuated “faith” and Pseudo-Solomon “Wisdom,” Ben Sira’s poem exemplifies kinship, the priesthood, and God’s mercy throughout the ages. The review coalesces with present circumstances, which are powerfully framed by the heritage of the past. In the estimation of Skehan and Dilella, the poem “is meant to reinforce the conviction and courage of Ben Sira’s contemporaries.”<sup>6</sup> Mattathias’ testamentary speech in 1 Maccabees (2:49–70) offers another counterpart that teaches future ages to “be courageous and grow strong in the law, for by it you will gain honor” (2:64; cf. 4 Macc 16:16–23). Judith likewise exhorts her contemporaries to defend the sanctuary, knowing that God “tests us, even as he tested our ancestors” (8:25–27). In Ben Sira, 1 Maccabees, and Judith, the review of the past converges with the circumstances of the present, a rhetorical dynamic that Hebrews skillfully executes by calling its own generation to “run the race that is set before us,” fully inspired by the witnesses of the past (12:1).<sup>7</sup>

The exhortation operates primarily by retelling scriptural episodes.<sup>8</sup> Hebrews, thus, utilizes on a much smaller, concentrated scale the implicit interpretive techniques of compositions that “rewrite” earlier scriptures. While their methods differ, *Jubilees*, *Pseudo-Jubilees*<sup>a</sup> (4Q225), the *LAB*, and Josephus’s *Jewish Antiquities* offer their own retellings of the story of Genesis 22. These works rewrite scriptural passages, while also abbreviating, conflating, harmonizing, and rearranging materials.<sup>9</sup> They further interweave new interpretive elements, as they address perceived exegetical problems and advance their own conceptual agendas.

<sup>4</sup>M. Cosby, *The Rhetorical Composition and Function of Hebrews 11: In Light of Example Lists in Antiquity* (Macon, GA: Mercer, 1988).

<sup>5</sup>P. Eisenbaum, *The Jewish Heroes of Christian History: Hebrews 11 in Literary Context*, SBLDS 156 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997); cf. H. Windisch, *Hebräerbrief*, 2nd ed., HNT 14 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1931), 98.

<sup>6</sup>P. W. Skehan and A. A. Dilella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, AB 39 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1987), 500.

<sup>7</sup>H. W. Attridge further compares Philo, *Praem.* 11–15, which offers a series of *exempla* on “hope” and concludes with a flourish of athletic imagery; *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989), 306; cf. also Windisch, *Hebräerbrief*, 98.

<sup>8</sup>Eisenbaum, *Jewish Heroes*, 104.

<sup>9</sup>S. Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).

Finally, the study of the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls, and Josephus has shown that many interpretive traditions of early Judaism continued to flourish within the targums and midrashim.<sup>10</sup> Interpretations of the trial abound among these works. Such representations of the *Aqedah* (the “binding” of Isaac), as well as their earlier formation in the Second Temple era, constitute an area of intense inquiry and dispute. While scholars such as Davies and Chilton have insisted that the fullest formation of the *Aqedah* as an atoning sacrifice occurred only in later antiquity,<sup>11</sup> others have argued that such an interpretation of the story was already underway within the first century and may even have influenced the Christologies of the early church.<sup>12</sup> Hebrews appears to occupy its own distinct position within this larger development, as interpretive traditions of the Second Temple era lived on within the nascent church. In Hebrews’ version of the story, one finds interpretive maneuvers that continued to develop more fully among the targums and aggadic midrashim.<sup>13</sup>

Understanding Hebrews’ treatment of the trial benefits from contextual comparisons within each of these domains, offering a fuller appreciation for the author’s own distinct “crucible” of interpretation. The brevity of the passage does not minimize its complexity. The rhetoric of the exhortation heavily condenses the author’s sweeping judgments about scriptural narratives into a proliferation of concise epitomes. As a result, the chapter draws a vast range of scriptural tradition into a very narrow compass, thus creating “the impression of an overwhelming body of evidence.”<sup>14</sup> The structure of the passage offers two parallel claims that surround a brief citation of the promise found in Gen 21:12, one of the few explicit scriptural citations within the exhortation. The first set of parallel claims describes Abraham himself as one whose faith in the divine promises is tested (11:17); the second psychologizes his internal hope that God would even raise Isaac from the dead, in order to keep the promise (11:19).

## 2. PROMISE

Hebrews’ incorporation of the promise from Gen 21:12 into the trial addresses a problem that is handled in different ways among ancient interpreters. The Genesis story suddenly begins “After these things” or “After these words” (22:1; MT: *dbrym*, LXX: *rhēmata*). After what things or what words? The attempt to answer this question, and thus to reconcile the sudden, shocking demand of the deity (Philo, *Abr.* 169) with the larger context of Genesis, takes different forms.<sup>15</sup> *Jubilees*

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<sup>10</sup>G. Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 3–10.

<sup>11</sup>P. R. Davies and B. D. Chilton, “The Akedah: A Revised Tradition History,” *CBQ* 40 (1978): 514–46.

<sup>12</sup>Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*, 193–227; J. Swetnam, *Jesus and Isaac: A Study of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the Light of the Aqedah*, AnBib 94 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981); A. F. Segal, “‘He Who Did Not Spare His Own Son ...’ Jesus, Paul, and the Akedah,” in *From Jesus to Paul: Studies in Honour of Francis Wright Beare*, ed. P. Richardson and J. Hurd (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984), 169–84; and L. A. Huizenga, “The Aqedah at the End of the First Century of the Common Era: *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 4 *Maccabees*, Josephus’ *Antiquities*, 1 *Clement*,” *JSP* 20 (2010): 105–33.

<sup>13</sup>O. Michel, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, Meyers Kommentar 13 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 422.

<sup>14</sup>A. D. Bulley, “Death and Rhetoric in the Hebrews ‘Hymn to Faith,’” *Studies in Religion* 25 (1996): 409–23 at 412.

<sup>15</sup>M. Kister, “Observations on Aspects of Exegesis, Tradition, and Theology in Midrash, Pseudepigrapha, and Other Jewish Writings,” in *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. Reeves, SBLJL 6 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1994), 7–15.

retells the story with a dualistic preface concerning the “words in heaven” that transpired between God and Prince Mastema, leading to the Job-like test of Abraham (*Jub.* 17:15–18; cf. *4QPseudo-Jubilees*<sup>a</sup> [4Q225] frag 2 i 9–10; *LAB* 32:1–2; *b. Sanh.* 89b; *Gen. Rab.* 56:4; *Num. Rab.* 17:2, *Midr. Tanḥ. Shelah* 4:27, *Mattot* 9:1). Other interpreters drew upon an implied conflict (Gen 21:9), in which Ishmael and Isaac disputed over who should become Abraham’s heir (*Tg. Ps.-J.* 22), a matter resolved by Isaac’s obedience during the trial.

For Hebrews, however, the link between the trial and its larger scriptural context is to be found in the promise of Gen 21:12, which is “spoken”<sup>16</sup> directly to Abraham. The incorporation of this specific promise as background to the trial is also attested among select midrashim (*Gen. Rab.* 56:8; *Lev. Rab.* 29:10; *Tanḥ. Vayera* 4:39, 46).<sup>17</sup> In Hebrews, too, it is after these very words that the faith of Abraham—“*he who had received the promises*”—is tested (Heb 11:17). Other ancient interpreters preface the events with a variety of promises from Genesis that nevertheless also deal with Abraham’s offspring.

*4QPseudo-Jubilees*<sup>a</sup> prefers Gen 15:2, 4–6 (frag. 2 i 3–7).<sup>18</sup> The selection of these promises is prompted by the reiteration of comparable phraseology at the conclusion of the trial story (Gen 22:17–18). Thus, *4QPseudo-Jubilees*<sup>a</sup> associates the two versions of the promise (Gen 15:2, 4–6; 22:17–18), combining them into a fuller preface to the trial.<sup>19</sup> All these passages concern Abraham’s offspring, the very point with which *4QPseudo-Jubilees*<sup>a</sup> also concludes the account, as Isaac’s descendants are enumerated (frag. 2 ii 10–12).<sup>20</sup> In reading the promise of offspring directly into the context of the trial, *4QPseudo-Jubilees*<sup>a</sup> exhibits an interpretive tendency that anticipates Hebrews.

Among the retellings of the story that echo through the *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, Gen 15:1–6 also presents immediate background (*LAB* 18:5). *LAB* reads Gen 15:1 (“in a vision”) as a virtual cosmic apocalypse in which Abraham is taken up into the heavenly world and commanded to sacrifice his son. Through the author’s daring recontextualization of the story, God’s own first-person perspective of the trial is then revealed. The brief allusion to Abraham in 1 Maccabees also recalls Gen 15:6, as his “faithful[ness] in trial” becomes the very moment in which “it was accounted to him as righteousness” (1 Macc 2:52).

The explicit relationship between the promise of offspring and the arduous trial was, therefore, shared in varying forms among contemporary interpreters. Hebrews reflects the tendency to associate the story with the more immediate context of Genesis 21, even as other writings prefer 15:1–6. Yet the author of Hebrews joins other ancient interpreters by emphasizing the direct association between the promise and the trial. The tension between promise and trial perfectly suits Hebrews’ rhetorical purposes, encapsulating a major theme of the exhortation and of the book as

<sup>16</sup>M. Barth, “The Old Testament in Hebrews: An Essay in Biblical Hermeneutics,” in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation: Essays in Honour of Otto A. Piper*, ed. W. Klassen and G. Snyder (London: SCM, 1962), 58–61.

<sup>17</sup>S. Buber, *Midrash Tanḥuma*, trans. J. Townsend (Jersey City, NJ: Ktav, 2003), 123.

<sup>18</sup>J. T. Milik and J. C. VanderKam, *Qumran Cave 4.VIII: Parabiblical Texts, Part I*, DJD 13 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 141–55.

<sup>19</sup>F. García Martínez further identifies the incorporation of Gen 13:16; “The Sacrifice of Isaac in 4Q225,” in *The Sacrifice of Isaac: The Aqedah (Genesis 22) and Its Interpretations*, ed. E. Noort and E. J. C. Tigchelaar, TBN 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 47–8.

<sup>20</sup>J. C. VanderKam, “The Aqedah, Jubilees, and Pseudo-Jubilees,” in *The Quest for Context and Meaning: Studies in Biblical Intertextuality in Honor of James A. Sanders*, ed. C. A. Evans and S. Talmon (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 241–61 at 253; on Levi as a descendant, see also *DJD* 13:153.

a whole: Faith in the divine promises will demand patient endurance, obedience, and hope during times of testing—even the possibility of “dying in faith” prior to their fulfillment (Heb 11:13) or suffering martyrdom (Heb 11:35–39).

### 3. FAITH

What was the characteristic that defined Abraham in the trial? Ancient interpreters differ on this question.<sup>21</sup> The scriptural narrative emphasizes that Abraham “fears God,” since he has not spared even his “own beloved son on account of me” (LXX Gen 22:12); moreover, the austere plotline of the story describes Abraham’s active, practical obedience in carrying out even the smallest details of the divine command (Gen 22:3–10).

For Hebrews, it was “by faith” that Abraham did these things. Since Hebrews applies “faith” across the gamut of scriptural history, it may initially appear that the author has artificially superimposed this quality upon the story. Indeed, “faith” is nowhere mentioned within Genesis 22. As Harold W. Attridge observes,

One peculiarity of all these examples is that none of the original stories from which they are drawn explicitly highlights faith. Conversely, biblical accounts where faith does play a role are ignored. In some cases our author may have been inspired by haggadic traditions to ascribe faith to the biblical heroes, but such traditions do not explain all the elements of the chapter. It is clear that “faith” has not been chosen as an organizing rubric for these exempla on any inductive principle. It is imposed on or read into a list of biblical heroes.<sup>22</sup>

Other scholars conclude that “having faith is not in and of itself a foundational principle of selection”<sup>23</sup> among these episodes at all. One may compare Wisdom, where the presence of transcendent Wisdom is likewise interpreted into scriptural episodes where it is not literally apparent. Hebrews and Wisdom may even encourage a distinctive consciousness for interpreting scriptural episodes precisely by emphasizing what is not literally there. Yet I would like to develop a point that is acknowledged, if not fully exemplified, in Attridge’s assessment: The tradition of Abraham’s “faith” had precedent within the larger context of Genesis (15:6); and other ancient interpreters insisted, together with Hebrews, that “faith” was specifically demonstrated within the trial.

In *Jubilees*’ rendition of the story, Abraham was “faithful” (Eth., *mə’əman*) throughout the earlier trials he experienced: “And in everything in which [God] tested him, he was found faithful. And his soul was not impatient. And he was not slow to act because he was faithful and a lover of the Lord” (17:18; trans. *OTP*). In the conclusion to the episode, *Jubilees* reiterates faithfulness by interweaving this quality into the divine word to Abraham (Gen 22:15–18), even where it was not explicitly found: “And I have made known to all that you are faithful to me in everything which I say to you” (*Jub.* 18:16). *Jubilees* rewrites Gen 22:12, so that God *already* knows of Abraham’s faithfulness before the outcome (*Jub.* 18:9–10). Such faithfulness consists of his obedience to

<sup>21</sup> Beyond Abraham’s “faithfulness,” a wider range of attributes is explored. See Philo, *Abr.* 169; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.225; Wis 10:5; m. ’Abot 5:3; *Pirqe R. El.* 31.

<sup>22</sup> Attridge, *Hebrews*, 306.

<sup>23</sup> Eisenbaum, *Jewish Heroes*, 140–1.

sacrifice and to keep the laws of the heavenly tablets, even when faced with affliction by Mastema. Within *Jubilees'* schema of ten trials, Abraham is repeatedly “found faithful” (19:9).<sup>24</sup>

The version of the story in *Pseudo-Jubilees*<sup>a</sup> likewise accentuates Abraham’s “faith.” By immediately prefacing the episode with a version of Gen 15:2–6, *Pseudo-Jubilees*<sup>a</sup> emphasizes that Abraham “believed” (*wy*’[*myn*]) God (Gen 15:6; cf. 1 Macc 2:52). With the outcome hanging in the balance, the trial fundamentally concerns “[whether] he would be found false (or weak) and whether he would not be found faithful (*n’mn*)” (4Q225 frag. 2 ii 7–8; cf. 4Q226 frag. 7 line 1).<sup>25</sup> Yet again, “faithfulness” stands at the uttermost core of the trial.

Other writings briefly accentuate Abraham’s faithfulness, as though this characteristic had become synonymous with the trial. Mattathias’ testament glorifies Abraham’s faith: “Was not Abraham found faithful in trial?” (1 Macc 2:52). Ben Sira likewise remarks, “in trial, he was found faithful” (Sir 44:20; cf. Neh 9:8).<sup>26</sup> In these brief cases, it is as though Abraham’s “faith” has become a virtually subliminal association with the trial (or trials), even though this quality is mentioned nowhere within Genesis 22.

The letter to the Hebrews appears to share this interpretive stance. In this sense, Hebrews does not arbitrarily superimpose “faith” externally upon the scriptural episode so much as it views the story through interpretive preconceptions of its own time. Given the prominence of Abraham, Sarah, and their immediate descendants within the exhortation (11:8–22), it is conceivable that Abraham’s “faith,” so repeatedly praised among ancient interpreters, constituted a central core for the larger exhortation, a lens through which the author reads the greater expanse of scriptural history. This appears to be the case in 11:12, where the reiteration of the divine promises concluding the trial (Gen 22:17) has been sequentially retrojected back into the very moment of Isaac’s birth, as though Hebrews is already looking ahead to Abraham’s faithfulness in the trial. Earlier within the book, the author even interprets this promise (Gen 22:17) as the clearest possible demonstration of the deity’s “own immutable counsel to those who would inherit the promise” (Heb 6:17). Rather than superimposition, Hebrews appears to work from the contemporary assumption that “faith” was demonstrated in the trial of the paradigmatic ancestor, a faith that is exemplified throughout the generations and remains a compelling model for the author’s own community.

#### 4. AFTERLIFE

The psychologizing of Abraham (and Isaac) is a repeated technique among ancient interpreters of the trial. The grim storyline of Genesis leaves behind only hints of Abraham’s obedient state of mind (“Here am I”), his attentiveness to his son (“Here am I”), Isaac’s own innocence (“But where is the lamb?”), and the hope of return (“We shall return”).<sup>27</sup> Ancient interpreters remained only further intrigued, psychologizing Abraham, Isaac, and even the deity. Such psychologizations took

<sup>24</sup> On the passage, see further J. L. Kugel, *A Walk through Jubilees: Studies in the Book of Jubilees and the World of Its Creation*, JSJSup 156 (Leiden: Brill, 2012); M. Segal, *The Book of Jubilees: Rewritten Bible, Redaction, Ideology and Theology*, JSJSup 117 (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

<sup>25</sup> F. García Martínez reads this specific line as a possible reference to Isaac’s faithfulness; “The Sacrifice of Isaac in 4Q225,” 55. Yet the witness preserved in 4Q226 frag. 7 line 1 makes Abraham’s faithfulness explicit.

<sup>26</sup> Michel, *Hebräerbrief*, 401.

<sup>27</sup> E. Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, fiftieth-anniversary ed., trans. W. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 7–12.



a variety of forms. The LXX redundantly highlights Abraham's love for Isaac: "Take your *beloved* son, whom you *love*, Isaac" (LXX Gen 22:2). On this basis, Philo psychologizes Abraham's internal triumph over natural-familial love (*Abr.* 169; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 2.228, 231). Such love is often expressed as sorrow regarding the sacrifice. *Midrash Tanḥuma* utilizes a secondary citation from Ps 126:6 to explain how Abraham went forth to sacrifice, "weeping, bearing precious seed," indeed his very "seed" Isaac (Gen 21:12; *Vayera* 4:39). Perhaps most dramatically, *Genesis Rabbah* recounts that as Abraham took the knife, "the tears streamed from his eyes, and these tears, prompted by a father's compassion, dropped into Isaac's eyes" (56:8).<sup>28</sup>

Hebrews, too, psychologizes the interior dimension of Abraham's "faith." Abraham approaches the great trial, having reasoned within himself (*logisamenos*). In this case, however, Hebrews highlights neither love nor sorrow, but Abraham's faith in God's power to resurrect the dead. Abraham had reasoned that God would ultimately keep the promise—even if only by the extreme measure of raising Isaac from the dead. Such faith simultaneously encompasses trust in the promises already given, present obedience to the divine command, and hope in the deity's power to raise the dead.

Hebrews reiterates that "in a similitude," "in a parable," "in a manner of speaking" (*en parabolē*), Abraham did, in fact, "receive" Isaac back (*ekomisato*) from the dead, as the trial relented. This "figurative" reading of the trial operates on multiple levels that span Isaac's conception, the present trial, and the eschatological future. In the most immediate sense, Isaac's own conception from Abraham's "mortified" body (*nenekrōmenou*) already presented a triumph over death (11:12; cf. Rom 4:19). Through the use of literary double entendre (*ekomisato*), Abraham had both "acquired" a son from death at his birth and yet also "received him back again"<sup>29</sup> from death at the resolution of the trial. The language of "receiving" the dead back again, in fact, is an idiom for afterlife in a variety of contemporary sources. Josephus's Essenes release their souls cheerfully in martyrdom, "as though expecting to receive them back again" (*palin komioumenoi*) in an afterlife (*J.W.* 2.153–154; cf. *Ag. Ap.* 2.218). In 2 Maccabees the martyrs expect to "receive" their mutilated bodies "back again" (*komisasthai*) from the creator through resurrection (2 Macc 7:11; cf. 2 Bar. 50:2–3, 51:3; Pseudo-Ps.-Phoc. 108; Justin, *1 Apol.* 311).<sup>30</sup> Later the exhortation itself will describe how women "received their dead (back again) through a resurrection" (2 Macc 11:35). In Hebrews, the trial itself, thus, comes to constitute a journey from death to resurrection, as Isaac is *figuratively* restored to life.

At least "in a parable," Hebrews shares with some ancient sources that it was *as though* death had been encountered in the trial.<sup>31</sup> *LAB* insists that God regarded the mutual obedience of Abraham and Isaac, as though it were a genuine sacrifice, going so far as to claim, "for his blood did I choose them [e.g., Israel]" (*LAB* 18:5; cf. *Num. Rab.* 17:2, Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael 7:78–82).<sup>32</sup> While literal

<sup>28</sup> Trans. Freedman, in *Midrash Rabbah*, ed. H. Freedman and M. Simon, 10 vols. (London: Soncino, 1961).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Euripides, *Suppl.* 273; *Bacch.* 1225; Philo, *Ios.* 210, 231.

<sup>30</sup> C. D. Elledge, *Resurrection of the Dead in Early Judaism, 200 BCE–CE 200* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 258–61.

<sup>31</sup> See further Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*, 204–6; and S. Spiegel, *The Last Trial* (New York: Schocken, 1969), 4.

<sup>32</sup> On the passage, see also Huizenga, "The Aqedah at the End of the First Century," 113–15; R. A. Clements, "Parallel Lives of Early Jewish and Christian Texts and Art: The Case of Isaac the Martyr," in *New Approaches to the Study of Biblical Interpretation in Judaism of the Second Temple Period and in Early Christianity: Proceedings of the Eleventh International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, Jointly Sponsored by the Hebrew University Center for the Study of Christianity, 9–11 January, 2007*, ed. G. Anderson, R. Clements, and D. Satran,



death did not occur, it was as though obedience in the offering had shed blood. Even as Abraham had fully intended to give Isaac “into the hands that gave you to me” (32:3), God recounts, “I gave him back to his father” (*LAB* 18:5; *ego autem reddidi eum patri suo*). In Hebrews, too, Abraham receives his son back again, as though it were from death itself, a “parable” of resurrection.

Faith to keep the promises, even across the chasm of death, resonates throughout the exhortation.<sup>33</sup> Interpreters have emphasized the importance of the trial story within Jewish and Christian martyrology.<sup>34</sup> While martyrdom is not explicitly featured in Hebrews 11:17–19, the broader exhortation repeatedly demonstrates how faith encounters and transcends the powers of death. Through his own faithful sacrifice, Abel, though dead, “still speaks” (11:4). Enoch is “translated, so that he did not see death” (11:5). Isaac’s conception transpired through Abraham’s “mortified” body (11:12; cf. Rom 4:19). Moses endures the threat of death, “for he looked ahead unto (his) reward” (11:26).<sup>35</sup> Through the activity of the prophets, “women received their dead (back again) through a resurrection,” even as the martyrs reject immediate deliverance, “in hope of a better resurrection” (11:35). Summarizing the faith of the ancestors, the author emphasizes that “these all died” without literally receiving the fulfilment of all the promises (11:13; cf. 11:21–22), the very point at which the review of scriptural history converges with the author’s present (11:39–40).

Thus, Abraham’s faith that God will keep the divine promises even beyond death is an important secondary theme that resonates throughout the historical review. The vivid *exempla* will, indeed, demonstrate that the righteous “shall live by faith” (Heb 10:38; Hab 2:4), the very “faith” that preserves one’s “life”/“soul” from destruction (10:39). Such an exhortation is deeply relevant to the implied audience of Hebrews, which suffers present opposition and fearfully considers the prospect of martyrdom, even if it has “not yet resisted to the point of blood in contending against sin” (12:3–4). By trusting in resurrection beyond the agony of trial, Abraham provides a compelling example to the Hebrews community amid its own present fears and endangerments.

Other ancient interpreters found faith in the afterlife exemplified in the trial, although their logic for identifying it within Genesis 22 ranges broadly. As Josephus recasts the episode, Abraham reveals directly to Isaac that his sacrifice will guarantee an everlasting divine favor.<sup>36</sup> Psychologically, Abraham anticipates how God will receive Isaac as an acceptable sacrifice into immortality within the divine presence: “Amid prayers and sacrifice, he shall favorably accept (*prosdechesthai*) your soul and hold it fast unto himself” (*Ant.* 1.231).<sup>37</sup> Josephus’s language for Isaac’s soul or life as a sacrifice is also reflected in *LAB* (32:2–3; cf. 18:5, 40:3),<sup>38</sup> where Isaac expresses wonder that “the Lord has made the soul of a man worthy to be a sacrifice” (32:3). Jacobson and Swetnam

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STDJ 106 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 207–40 at 212–14; and B. N. Fisk, “Offering Isaac Again and Again: Pseudo-Philo’s Use of the Aqedah as an Intertext,” *CBQ* 62 (2000): 481–507.

<sup>33</sup> Bulley, “Death and Rhetoric.”

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*, 198–204; Segal, “Jesus, Paul, and the Aqedah,” 169–84; Clements, “Parallel Lives,” 212–14; and Windisch, *Hebräerbrief*, 98.

<sup>35</sup> M. R. D’Angelo, *Moses in the Letter to the Hebrews*, SBLDS 42 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), 17–64.

<sup>36</sup> On the passage, see further, L. H. Feldman, “Josephus’ Version of the Binding of Isaac,” in *SBL 1982 Seminar Papers*, ed. K. Richards (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1982), 113; and *Judaeen Antiquities 1-4*, ed. S. Mason, Flavius Josephus Translation and Commentary 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 88–95.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. *prosdechesthai* in *Ant.* 1.98, 181; 3.191; 4.54; 6.25; 7.334; and 8.118.

<sup>38</sup> Feldman, *Judaeen Antiquities 1-4*, 91.

are persuaded that *LAB* implies a hypothetical afterlife for Isaac, as the sacrifice will become his entrance into “life without limit and time without measure” (32:3; *securam vitam et inmensurabile tempus*).<sup>39</sup> For Josephus, Isaac’s soul will secure divine favor upon Abraham as an exchange for his own life. While God relents, this psychologization certainly accentuates Abraham’s hope in the afterlife, a feature of Jewish piety recurrently emphasized among Josephus’s works (*Ag. Ap.* 2.218–219; *J.W.* 1.650; 2.153–158, 163, 165; 3.372–376; 6.46–49; 7.343–349, 351–357; *Ant.* 17.354; 18.14, 16, 18). Hebrews takes an analogous approach to psychologizing Abraham, who faces the agony of the trial through hope in resurrection.

What was the exegetical rationale for expanding the Genesis story with hope in the afterlife? In Hebrews and Josephus, the answer is not immediately clear. At the very least, Hebrews and Josephus operate with the assumption that hope in the afterlife was to be found within the Torah (cf. *b. Sanh.* 90a).<sup>40</sup> In *Against Apion*, Josephus implies that hope in the afterlife was taught by “the lawgiver” Moses himself (*Ag. Ap.* 2.218; cf. *J.W.* 7.343).<sup>41</sup> Nor would Hebrews have needed to be original in this assumption, as the presence of resurrection within the Torah is also implicitly assumed in both Pauline (Rom 4:16–17) and Synoptic (Mark 12:26–27 and par.) traditions.

The correspondence between Isaac’s miraculous birth “from one as good as dead” (Heb 11:12) may provide some warrant for resurrection.<sup>42</sup> The God who miraculously formed Isaac was also able to resurrect him, a logic found throughout 2 Maccabees’ treatment of resurrection and especially attested by the mother of the martyrs (7:22–29).<sup>43</sup> Abraham, too, like the matriarch of the martyrs, reasons his way toward hope in resurrection on the basis of Isaac’s conception. The entire exhortation, in fact, begins by extoling “the divine word” (*rhēmati theou*), which miraculously frames the entire creation “from things that are not visible” (11:3). This same creative word has “spoken” to Abraham the undying promise of Gen 21:12, perhaps forming a correspondence between creation and resurrection, a path well-traveled in 2 Maccabees (7:9, 11, 22–29), as well as other early Jewish attestations to resurrection.<sup>44</sup>

Faith in the resurrection remained strong in aggadic reflection upon the *Aqedah*.<sup>45</sup> The portrait of the soul of Isaac literally ascending to God appears in a saying attributed to *Pirqe Rabbi Eliezer*. While Josephus and *LAB* portray the heavenly ascent of Isaac’s soul as psychological aspiration, the saying in *Pirqe R. El.* casts the possibility as an actual occurrence:

When the blade touched his neck, the soul of Isaac fled and departed, (but) when he heard His voice from between the two Cherubim, saying (to Abraham), “Lay not your hand upon the lad,”

<sup>39</sup>H. Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum, with Latin Text and English Translation*, 2 vols., AGJU 31 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 2:864; and Swetnam, on the basis of *LAB* 18:3; *Jesus and Isaac*, 51–5, 83. Yet certainty in this case is more difficult than in Josephus’s account. On the difficulties of the passage, see Fisk, “Pseudo-Philo’s Use of the Aqedah,” 494–7; and Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*, 199–201.

<sup>40</sup>See further J. F. A. Sawyer, “Hebrew Words for Resurrection of the Dead,” *VT* 23 (1973): 218–34 at 227–8; and H. Sysling, *Teḥiyat Ha-Metim: The Resurrection of the Dead in the Palestinian Targums of the Pentateuch and Parallel Traditions in Classical Rabbinic Literature*, TSAJ 57 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996).

<sup>41</sup>N. T. Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 176–7.

<sup>42</sup>Swetnam, *Jesus and Isaac*, 120–1.

<sup>43</sup>On the relationship between the mother of the martyrs and Abraham, see further Spiegel, *Last Trial*, 13–16; Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*, 203–4.

<sup>44</sup>Elledge, *Resurrection*, 114–20.

<sup>45</sup>Spiegel, *Last Trial*, 30. In addition to these examples, see W. G. Braude and I. J. Kapstein, trans., *Pesiḳta dē-Raḅ Kahāna* (Philadelphia, PA: JPS, 1975), Sup. I., 20, 459.

his soul returned to his body, and (Abraham) set him free, and Isaac stood upon his feet. And Isaac knew that in this manner the dead in the future will be quickened. He opened (his mouth), and said: “Blessed art thou, O Lord, who makes the dead alive.” (31)<sup>46</sup>

Something of an actual resurrection occurs, as the departed soul of Isaac returns to his body upon hearing the divine word (cf. *b. Ber.* 60b). He then “stood upon his feet” as a living witness to the hope of resurrection and uttered the words of the *Second Benediction* of the *Amidah*. The exegesis further emphasizes this through allusion to Ezek 37:1–14, a text frequently associated with resurrection and afterlife among ancient interpreters.<sup>47</sup> Even as the reconstituted host of Ezekiel’s vision “stood upon their feet” (*wy’mdw ‘l rglyhm*), the rejuvenated Isaac, too, “stood upon his feet” (*w’md yšbq ‘l rglyw*) to bless the Lord. Isaac himself has learned through the *Aqedah* of God’s power to resurrect the dead.

Some midrashim are more conscientious about linking resurrection with a clearer textual warrant in Genesis 22. *Pesiqta de Rab Kahana* links Isaac’s own willingness to be sacrificed with Ps 102:21, where God looks down “from heaven” (Ps 102:20, cf. Gen 22:11) “to hear to hear the groaning of the one bound (‘syr; cf. Ps 79:11, Gen 22:9), to set loose those appointed unto death”; thus, through the merit of Isaac, “God will one day enliven the dead.”<sup>48</sup> *Genesis Rabbah* 56:1–2 focuses upon the language of the “third day” (Gen 22:4), when Abraham saw the mountain. Through this phrase, secondary citations enhance the possible meanings of the story (Hos 6:2; Gen 42:18; Exod 19:16; Josh 2:16; Jonah 2:1; Ezra 8:32; Esther 5:1). The “third day” of the trial anticipates resurrection, as it is written in Hos 6:2, “After two days He will revive us, on the third he shall raise us up, that we may live in his presence.” On the “third day,” Joseph “tested”/“proved” (Gen 42:16, 18) his brothers, commanding them, “Do this *and live*” (42:18). Jonah’s emergence from the fish after “three days and three nights” (Jonah 2:1) was also a popular metaphor for resurrection among ancient interpreters (see esp. 2:7). The “third day,” thus, invites associations between the *Aqedah*, Israel’s subsequent history, and resurrection.

Elsewhere, *Genesis Rabbah* develops the recurrent pattern of “worship and return” (Gen 22:5). In the midrash attributed to Rabbi Isaac, “Everything happened as a reward for worship” (*Gen. Rab.* 56:2)—Abraham and Isaac “returned”; Israel was redeemed from Egypt (Exod 4:31) and given the Torah (24:1); Hannah’s prayer was heard (1 Sam 1:19); the exiles were reassembled (Isa 27:13) and the temple was rebuilt (Ps 99:9): “The dead will come to life again only as a reward for worshipping: ‘O come, let us worship and bend the knee; let us kneel before the Lord our maker’” (Ps 95:6).<sup>49</sup> Worshipping before “our maker” in the Psalm further anticipates the resurrected existence that the creator will give. By applying the structural pattern of “worship and return” (Gen 22:5), the midrash works its way throughout Israel’s entire history even unto the resurrection of the dead. Thus, indeed, “*everything*” happened as a reward for worship.

From more dramatic psychological projections, to more textually based correlations, ancient interpreters did find resurrection/afterlife within the trial. By psychologizing Abraham’s faith in

<sup>46</sup> G. Friedlander, trans., *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* (London: Kegan Paul, 1916). Cf. *Midr. Ha-Gadol* on Gen 22:19; see also Spiegel, *Last Trial*, 5–7.

<sup>47</sup> Elledge, *Resurrection*, 74–6, 80–4, and 164–9.

<sup>48</sup> Braude and Kapstein, *PRK*, Sup. I:20, 459; also found as Piska 31/32 among other editions.

<sup>49</sup> Trans. Freedman, in *Midrash Rabbah*.

the resurrection, Hebrews joins Josephus as two first-century witnesses that found hope in the afterlife in the agony of the trial, a relationship more elaborately developed among later sources. As Abraham faithfully endured the trial, he looked to the resurrection with trust in God's power, both to keep the immutable divine promise and even to raise the dead if necessary. Amid the grievous test of faith, as any hope of deliverance perished amid the knife, the wood, and the fire, it was as though Isaac had indeed died; yet Abraham's faith endured to "receive" his son back, as though translated from death to life.

Perhaps Hebrews' rationale for associating the trial with resurrection is not to be found in a specific textual trigger in Genesis 22, but rather in the author's more general approach to interpretation. Abraham had received Isaac back from the dead as though in "a parable," "type,"<sup>50</sup> or "symbol"<sup>51</sup> of something greater. Fundamental to the author's exegetical assumptions is the conviction that even as God had spoken to the ancestors in times past through prophets, the divine word was now revealed "in these last days" by the Son (1:1–2).<sup>52</sup> At virtually every turn, this hermeneutical assumption invites comparisons between the divine word spoken in the past and its culmination in the Christ now revealed "in these last days" (1:5–2:9, 3:1–6, 4:1–11, 5:1–10, 6:13–8:13, 9:1–28). Scholars continue to explore the complex possibilities for understanding these arts of hermeneutical correspondence, in which "the Holy Spirit testifies unto us" through the utterances and examples of the past (10:15; cf. 3:7).<sup>53</sup>

Indeed, *parabolē* expresses an exegetical awareness elsewhere in Hebrews.<sup>54</sup> The tabernacle Moses built in the wilderness was the "pattern," "shadow," "type," or "correspondence" of the heavenly sanctuary which he was shown at Mount Sinai (8:5, 9:23, 24; cf. 10:1, 12:18–24). The tabernacle served as a "parable for the present age" (9:8), the very term that describes the "figurative" resurrection that transpired in the trial. Within the exegetical methods of Hebrews, then, there remains the possibility that the trial "in a parable" foreshadowed future realities, namely the eschatological resurrection, a hope earlier designated as one of the "first" teachings of faith (6:1). Readers disagree over how far this "parable" stretches: whether it simply exemplifies faith in resurrection or whether Hebrews actually found Christ's own death and resurrection prefigured within the story (Rom 8:32; John 3:16; Barn. 7:3; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.5.4; Tertullian, *Pat.* 6; *Adv. Jud.* 10).<sup>55</sup> The question is further interrelated with the underlying historical problem of how fully developed the martyrdom theology of the *Aqedah* had become by the first century.<sup>56</sup>

At least in the present case, Hebrews emphasizes Abraham's own faith in the promise and God's power to keep it by raising the dead, a hope that was doubly confirmed in the original birth of

<sup>50</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 302; and G. L. Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 557.

<sup>51</sup>Attridge, *Hebrews*, 333; cf. Michel, "ein geheimnisvolles Sinnbild"; *Hebräerbrief*, 402.

<sup>52</sup>Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 52–7; and S. E. Docherty, *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews*, WUNT II/260 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

<sup>53</sup>Swetnam, *Jesus and Isaac*, 90–118; G. H. Guthrie, "Hebrews' Use of the Old Testament: Recent Trends in Research," *CBR* 1 (2003): 271–94; Bruce, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 304–5; Attridge, *Hebrews*, 335; Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 557–8; Clements, "Parallel Lives," 214–17; Eisenbaum, *Jewish Heroes*, 162–3; and Barth, "Old Testament in Hebrews," 53–78.

<sup>54</sup>Michel, *Hebräerbrief*, 402–3.

<sup>55</sup>Bruce, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 304–5; Attridge, *Hebrews*, 335; Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 557–8; Clements, "Parallel Lives," 214–17; Eisenbaum, *Jewish Heroes*, 162–3; and Swetnam, *Jesus and Isaac*; Michel, *Hebräerbrief*, 401–3.

<sup>56</sup>On this problem, see Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*; Davies and Chilton, "The Akedah," 514–46; Segal, "Jesus, Paul, and the Akedah," 169–84; and Huizenga, "The Akedah at the End of the First Century," 114–17.

Isaac (11:12) and in receiving him back again through the trial (11:19). There are, however, no explicitly Christological elements within the passage, even if the author encourages one to seek out the underlying “parable” hidden within scripture. The author of Hebrews, thus, leaves the matter at a liminal point that is at once highly suggestive, yet unresolved. And that is precisely where Abraham’s faith should rest, if indeed the ancestors died in faith, trusting in the promises, yet only having seen them “from a distance” (Heb 11:13), if indeed faith is a “substance of things hoped for” (11:1). In this sense, Abraham’s faith in the resurrection operates in a sequentially intermediate domain, after the initial utterance of the immutable divine promise, yet prior to its realization in Christ’s own triumph beyond death (12:2).

By reading the trial as a “parable” of future realities, however, Hebrews yet again reflects the exegetical tendencies of its age. *Jubilees* takes pains to associate the trial calendrically with the future Passover sacrifice (and the Festival of Unleavened Bread), as well as the exodus, in which the blood of the Passover sacrifice will drive away Prince Mastema from Israel.<sup>57</sup> *Jubilees* also joins Josephus in identifying “the mountain of the Lord” (Gen 22:14) as Mount Zion in Jerusalem (*Jub.* 18:13), where “King David later built the temple” (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.226; 7.333).<sup>58</sup> In an interpretation attributed to Hanina ben Dosa, the ram of the sacrifice (Gen 22:13), created upon the first Sabbath eve of creation, left behind nothing useless. Its ashes would form the base of the temple altar; its sinews, the harp of David; its skin, the girdle of Elijah; its left horn would be blown at Mount Sinai; its right horn, blasted at the dawn of the world to come (Isa 27:13; *Pirqe R. El.* 31; cf. *Lev. Rab.* 29:10). Elsewhere, even the donkey of the *Aqedah* (Gen 22:3) was the same that Moses would ride into Egypt (Exod 4:20) and that the Son of David would ride in the messianic era (Zech 9:9; *Pirqe R. El.* 31). For these interpreters, history itself, in all its glory and suffering, could be prefigured in the trial. The author of Hebrews, too, interprets the trial proleptically, as he recasts the story into a “parable” of his own community’s present suffering and future hope.

Interpretation was, and remains, a “crucible” within which faith is continually refined from age to age. We remain indebted to Charlesworth for instructing his generation in the riches that are continually burning within it.

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<sup>57</sup> Cf. *Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael*, *Pišḥa* 7:79–82, 11:96, *Beshallah* 2:173, 4:30–35; and Clements, “Parallel Lives,” 217.

<sup>58</sup> Feldman, “Josephus’ Version,” 119. Cf. *Fragment Targum*, Gen 22:14; and Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*, 197.



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## CHAPTER FOUR

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# The Etymology of בליעל Once Again: A Case of Tabooistic Deformation?

BRENT A. STRAWN

The word (and figure of) בליעל/*bēliya'al*, “Belial,” features prominently in the Qumran literature and beyond.<sup>1</sup> This point is well known and uncontroversial. What is much less clear and far from certain, however, is the precise etymology of the term.<sup>2</sup> The present study returns to this issue so as to offer a new possibility that has not, to my knowledge, been considered in prior publications: namely, that

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I wish to say that it is a true pleasure to offer this study to one of my greatest teachers and friends, the Rev. Dr. James Hamilton Charlesworth, George L. Collord Professor of New Testament Language and Literature Emeritus at Princeton Theological Seminary. I first learned of Belial in his class on the Dead Sea Scrolls—and that was just one item from the vast treasure trove of Second Temple Judaism that he opened up to me in a way that changed my life forever. The present essay is thus a very small token of my gratitude for his kindness to, and influence upon, me for more than twenty-five years. I am grateful to Justin Pannkuk and Collin Cornell for their comments on an earlier draft, and also thank Carl Holladay for his assistance and the editors for their support. I thank John Huehnergard for first introducing me to tabooistic deformation many years ago in an entirely different context and thank him once again for bibliographic assistance in the case of the present study.

<sup>1</sup>For Qumran, see the earlier treatments by H. W. Huppenbauer, “Belial in den Qumrantexten,” *ThZ* 15 (1959): 81–9; H. Kosmala, “The Three Nets of Belial (A Study in the Terminology of Qumran and the New Testament),” *ASTI* 4 (1965): 90–113; and P. von der Osten-Sacken, *Gott und Belial: Traditionsgeschichtlich Untersuchungen zum Dualismus in den Texten aus Qumran*, SUNT 6 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969). For more recent treatments, see S. Thomas, “בליעל *b'lijja'al* קלע III *bāla*,” *ThWQ* 1:452–7; M. Mach, “Demons,” in *EDSS* 1:189–92; C. Martone, “Evil or Devil? Belial between the Bible and Qumran,” *Hen* 26 (2004): 115–27; D. Dimant, “Between Qumran Sectarian and Non-Sectarian Texts: The Case of Belial and Mastema,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Contemporary Culture: Proceedings of the International Conference Held in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem (July 6–8, 2008)*, ed. A. D. Roitman, L. H. Schiffman, and S. Tzoref, STDJ 93 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 235–56; A. Steudel, “God and Belial,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Fifty Years after Their Discovery*, ed. L. H. Schiffman, E. Tov, and J. C. VanderKam (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 2000), 332–40; A. Steudel, “Der Teufel in den Texten aus Qumran,” in *Apokalyptic und Qumran*, ed. J. Frey and M. Becker, Einblicke 10 (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2007), 191–200; and M. T. Brand, *Evil Within and Without: The Source of Sin and Its Nature as Portrayed in Second Temple Literature*, JAJSup 9 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), esp. 218–56. For the OTP, see, e.g., *T. Reu.* 4:7, 11; 6:3; *T. Sim.* 5:3; *T. Levi* 3:3; 18:12; 19:1; *T. Jud.* 25:3; *T. Iss.* 6:1; 7:7; *T. Zeb.* 9:8; *T. Dan* 1:7; 4:7; 5:1, 10–11; *T. Naph.* 2:6; 3:1; *T. Ash.* 1:8; 3:2; 6:4; *T. Jos.* 7:4; 20:2; *T. Benj.* 3:3–4, 8; 6:1, 7; 7:1–2; *Mart. Ascen. Isa.* 1:8–9; 2:4; 3:11, 13; 4:2, 4, 16, 18; 5:1, 15; *Liv. Pro.* 4:6, 20 (Daniel); 17:2 (Nathan); *Jub.* 1:20; 15:33; *Sib. Or.* 3:63–4. For the NT, see 2 Cor 6:15 (βελιάφ). For still later periods, see N. H. Ott, *Rechtspraxis und Heilsgeschichte: Zu Überlieferung, Ikonographie und Gebrauchssituation des deutschen “Belial”* (München: Artemis Verlag, 1983).

<sup>2</sup>See, e.g., *HALOT* 1:133: “etym[ology] un[c]ertain”; Steudel, “God and Belial,” 332 n.3: “The etymological origin of the name Belial is still obscure”; and *TDOT* 2:131: “etymology ... uncertain and debated.”

*bēliya'al*—whatever its specific derivation(s)—is the result of the linguistic phenomenon known as *tabooistic deformation*. After a review of the main etymologies that have been offered in previous literature (Section 1), I provide a brief overview of tabooistic deformation (Section 2). I then entertain *bēliya'al* as a possible instance of such (Section 3) before considering, in conclusion, what this explanation of *bēliya'al* might mean more generally for its various occurrences (Section 4).

## 1. PREVIOUS ETYMOLOGIES OF *BĒLĪYA'AL*

In his article on *bēliya'al* for the *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, S. David Sperling has reviewed the main options for understanding the word's etymology.<sup>3</sup> The present discussion depends heavily on Sperling's treatment, though I round out some bits of his work here and there and abbreviate still others.

We may begin with what is probably the first etymology of *bēliya'al* ever offered: that of the rabbis in *b. Sanh.* 111b, who considered *bēliya'al* to be the equivalent of *bēli 'ol*, “without a yoke.” More specifically, then, *bēliya'al* referred to “children who have thrown off the Yoke of Heaven from their necks.” Regardless of the wordplay or pun, it is quite common to see in *bēliya'al* some form of the negative particle *bal/bēli* conjoined with some other term. This makes *bēliya'al* a compound word—an otherwise rare phenomenon.<sup>4</sup> Examples of this interpretation include that of the medieval philosopher and poet Judah Halevi, who took *bēliya'al* to be *bēli* with the third-person imperfect jussive of  $\sqrt{lh}$  so as to understand the word as “a wish or prayer that malevolence should not prosper.”<sup>5</sup> Much later, in the twentieth century, Johannes Pedersen argued that the term combined *bēli* with the root  $\sqrt{yl}$ , “one of the denominations of positive action: to carry through a good, normal action,” which in this particular case, with the negative particle, would be denied.<sup>6</sup> A few decades later, a duo of noted Hebrew Bible scholars, Frank Moore Cross and David Noel Freedman, advocated a similar idea for the instance of *bēliya'al* that appears in 2 Sam 22:5 // Ps 18:5: namely, that the wicked are those that “do not ascend” (negation + an apocopated form of the prefix-conjugation of  $\sqrt{lh}$ )—which is to say, in the literary context (as Cross and Freedman understood it), the wicked “do not ascend” from the underworld (מות).<sup>7</sup> But in J. A. Emerton's

<sup>3</sup>S. D. Sperling, “Belial,” in *DDD*<sup>2</sup>, 169–71. See also *HALOT* 1:133–4; T. J. Lewis, “Belial,” in *ABD* 1.654–6; and Steudel, “God and Belial,” 332 n.3. For other studies, some quite thorough, see, e.g., W. Baudissin, “The Original Meaning of ‘Belial,’” *ExpT* 9/1 (1897): 40–5; T. Stenhouse, “Baal and Belial,” *ZAW* 33 (1913): 295–305; and esp. D. W. Thomas, “בְּלִיעַל in the Old Testament,” in *Biblical and Patristic Studies: In Memory of Robert Pierce Casey*, ed. J. N. Birdsall and R. W. Thomson (Freiburg: Herder, 1963), 11–19.

<sup>4</sup>J. Blau, *Phonology and Morphology of Biblical Hebrew*, LSAWS 2 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 158: the only “real exceptions in the Semitic languages are proper nouns ... and pronouns.” Blau does, however, mention בְּלִיעַל, “‘worthlessness,’ presumably composed of בְּלִי ‘without’ and יַעַל ‘worth’” (*ibid.*). Most recent commentators do not believe צְלִמּוֹת in Ps 23:4 is a compound, though Ugaritic *blmt* (“immortality”) is still often understood as such. Baudissin argues that “the negative *bēli* was really present from the first, and was not ... first found there as the consequence of the understanding of a later age” (“Original Meaning,” 44).

<sup>5</sup>Sperling, “Belial,” 169.

<sup>6</sup>J. Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture*, vols. I–II, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 430; see also the associated note on *ibid.*, 539 where he writes: “there is no reason to look for other explanations.” Cf. *HALOT* 1:133: “(b) בְּלִי + יַעַל\* (עלה) ‘without growth, without success.’”

<sup>7</sup>F. M. Cross Jr. and D. N. Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (1975; repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997 [the idea was first published in *JBL* 72 (1953): 15–34, here 22 n.6]), 97 n.6: \**bal(i) ya'ḏ(ē)* = “(place from which) none arises.” A variant is the theory that would take the verb as Hiphil with *bēliya'al* meaning “he who does not allow coming up (from

opinion, no one rises from the underworld in ancient Israelite conceptions, including the righteous; hence, such an interpretation of *bēliyaʿal* isn't very helpful and is likely wrong.<sup>8</sup> Recent scholarship on notions of death and the afterlife, however, suggests that Emerton's strong judgment may require nuancing;<sup>9</sup> perhaps Cross and Freedman's idea is not without merit.

If one avoids the idea that *bēliyaʿal* combines *bal/bēli* with a verb, whether from  $\sqrt{bl}$  or  $\sqrt{yl}$ ,<sup>10</sup> there are still other options for taking the term as a compound, just with a noun instead of a verb. So, for example, N. H. Tur-Sinai thought *bēliyaʿal* meant “wickedness,” and was the negative particle coupled with a noun cognate of Arabic *waʿala*, “honor.”<sup>11</sup> Sperling states that “this ingenious solution does not carry conviction because ... *waʿala* ... is not the common Arabic word for ‘honour.’”<sup>12</sup> Sperling himself sides with Pedersen, believing that the “most likely explanation of the term derives it from the negation *bēli* followed by a noun *\*yaʿal*, related to the root YʿL ‘to be worthy, to be of value.’”<sup>13</sup> Sperling notes constructions such as *bal-yōʿilū*, “they do no good,” and *lēbilti hōʿil*, “it does no good,” which are used of idols in Isa 44:9–10. Sperling also observes that “forms of the verb YʿL preceded by the negation *lōʿ* synonymous with *bal*, are used regularly to characterize foreign gods (1 Sam 12:21; Isa 44:9; Jer 2:8, 11; 16:19) as well as idol manufacturers (Isa 44:10; cf. Hab 2:18) and false prophets (Jer 23:32).”<sup>14</sup> While insightful, one problem that obtains for this interpretation (and other nominal options) is that it must posit an otherwise unattested noun: the hypothetical *\*yaʿal* meaning “worth, use, profit.”<sup>15</sup>

There are still other explanations of *bēliyaʿal*, such as those that do not understand the term as a compound, but derive it from one word only: typically  $\sqrt{bl}$ , “to swallow,” with the specific morphology explained by appeal to the occasional use of affirmative-*lamed* in words like *karmel* (“Carmel,” from  $\sqrt{krm}$ ), *gibʿol* (“bud,” from  $\sqrt{gb}$ ), and *ʿārāpel* (“deep darkness,” from  $\sqrt{rp}$ ).<sup>16</sup>

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the dead)—presumably referring to a deity of some sort. So it is that some have argued for a relationship between *bēliyaʿal* and “the Babylonian Bililu [or Belili], goddess of the underworld.” These two theories are rather incommensurate, of course, since the verbal form (*if it is that*) is masculine and thus not applicable to a goddess. For a rebuttal of the goddess possibility, see Baudissin, “Original Meaning,” 40–1.

<sup>8</sup> J. A. Emerton, “Sheol and the Sons of Belial,” in *Studies on the Language and Literature of the Bible: Selected Works of J. A. Emerton*, ed. G. Davies and R. Gordon; VTSup 165 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 97–100 (originally published in *VT* 37 [1987]: 214–17). Cf. already and earlier, Thomas, “בְּלִיעַל,” 16 (citing still earlier literature).

<sup>9</sup> J. D. Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); and C. B. Hays, *Death in the Iron Age II and in First Isaiah*, FAT 1/79 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> In Thomas's opinion, “the use of *bʿli* as a negation of a verb is rare” (“בְּלִיעַל,” 16). See also G. R. Driver, “Hebrew Notes,” *ZAW* 52 (1934): 51–6, esp. 52–3.

<sup>11</sup> N. H. Tur-Sinai, “בְּלִיעַל,” in *EncMiqr* 2.132–3; cited in Sperling, “Belial,” 170.

<sup>12</sup> Sperling, “Belial,” 170. Another unlikely derivation links *bēliyaʿal* with Arabic *balaḡa*, “denounce,” for which see Lewis, “Belial,” 655.

<sup>13</sup> Sperling, “Belial,” 170. So also Steudel, “God and Belial,” 332 n.3 and *HALOT* 1:133: “בְּלִיעַל + יָעַל ... ‘useless.’” Cf. *BDB* 116.

<sup>14</sup> Sperling, “Belial,” 170.

<sup>15</sup> No such term is attested in Hebrew “nor any other Semitic language” according to Thomas, “בְּלִיעַל,” 16. The comparable nouns *yaʿel* and *yaʿalāh/yaʿālāʾ/yaʿlāh* all mean “mountain goat,” which has led some to offer “lord of goats” (עַל + בְּעַל) as a possible etymology (see *ibid.*).

<sup>16</sup> See *HALOT* 1:133–4: “swallow, abyss,” citing Thomas, “בְּלִיעַל,” esp. 18–19. But, this time citing Driver, “Hebrew Notes,” 52–3, *HALOT* 1:133 also offers “בְּלִיעַל (III בלע) + affirmative ל ‘disorder.’” Stenhouse, “Baal and Belial,” 299, posits that *bēliyaʿal* might be based on a diminutive form *\*buliʿ*, to which a ל was added: *\*buliʿal* then went through vowel reduction to arrive at *bēliyaʿal*. He believes this vocalization dates to the sixth or seventh century AD, and entertains “an intentional metathesis” from בְּעַל to בְּלִיעַל (300).

Sperling rejects any relationship with  $\sqrt{bl}^c$  because *bēliyaʿal* has consistently negative connotations while some passages in the Hebrew Bible indicate that Yhwh himself can be a “swallower” (see Ps 55:10; Job 2:3).<sup>17</sup> Swallowing, in and of itself, that is, may not have negative connotations. Regardless of that, a larger problem with this understanding—beyond the use of affirmative *lamed*, a not particularly common morpheme—is that the vocalization in the Masoretic Text (MT) is odd, with doubled *yod*, indicating a long vowel and the presence of a consonant. The presumed nominal pattern, \**qēṭiyal-al* (?), is highly unusual and (again) otherwise unattested.<sup>18</sup>

These, then, are the main options for the etymology of *bēliyaʿal*. Before concluding this section, it should be recalled that postbiblical literature often uses Belial as the proper name of the Devil though the spelling can be varied.<sup>19</sup> In the *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, for example, the specific form is usually Beliar or, once, Belior. The latter spelling may be a pun itself, this time *bēli* + *ʿor*, “lacking light,” because “Belial’s is the way of darkness.”<sup>20</sup> The former spelling is found in the one instance of the term in the New Testament, in 2 Cor 6:15 (Βελιάρ)<sup>21</sup> and in the Harklensian Syriac version of the same verse. The usual explanation of either spelling with *r* as opposed to *bēliyaʿal*, with *l*, is to appeal to the phonetic relationship between these two liquid consonants.<sup>22</sup> There is, however, another explanation: that the Greek and Syriac spellings are both possible cases of tabooistic deformation of *bēliyaʿal*, which takes us directly to the topic of the next section.

But first to conclude the present one: there is no consensus as to the etymological derivation of *bēliyaʿal* though there is some general agreement on at least the following two points:

- (1) *bēliyaʿal* is likely a compound, the first part of which is the negative particle (בלי) and
- (2) *bēliyaʿal* may be a pun of some sort or, at least, seems to be used in punning ways.

To be sure, these two points do not always and need not necessarily go together. For example, one may hold to the second and believe that the first is wrong, positing another (third) explanation altogether:

- (3) *bēliyaʿal* is not a compound term at all, but is instead derived from  $\sqrt{bl}^c$  with affirmative *l*.

It is clear that (1) and (3) are mutually exclusive, though (2) is somewhat independent and could be associated with either (1) or (3), or with neither. There is, however, another possible explanation—not a new etymological derivation per se, so much as a kind of meta-explanation that might be able

<sup>17</sup> Sperling, “Belial,” 170.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. J. Fox, *Semitic Noun Patterns*, HSM 52 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003); and J. L. Sagarin, *Hebrew Noun Patterns (Mishqalim): Morphology, Semantics, and Lexicon* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1987). The closest things get is Sagarin’s last *mishqal* (no. 196):  $\sqrt{qṭl}^c$ , *qēṭiyāl*, which he defines as “a *mishqal* of quinquiliterals and diminutive nouns” (147; cf. note 16 above for Stenhouse’s opinion that *bēliyaʿal* is a diminutive). Hence:  $\sqrt{bn}^c$ , “small tail”;  $\sqrt{br}^c$ , “small beard”; and  $\sqrt{p}^c$ , “puppy” (ibid.). Still, the internal *-iy-* in *bēliyaʿal* remains unexplained (but see further Section 3). For his part, Driver, “Hebrew Notes,” 53, affirms a morphology with affirmative *lamed*, and thinks the original vocalization might have been *bʿlāʿal* (*qʿtāl*) or *bʿlīʿal* (*qʿtīl*). Cf. Thomas, “לעל,” 17–18; Emerton, “Sheol,” 97.

<sup>19</sup> Sperling, “Belial,” 170; and Lewis, “Belial,” 655.

<sup>20</sup> Sperling, “Belial,” 170. For a recent study on Beliar in the *Pseudepigrapha*, see M. Kusio, “The Origin of Beliar in *Sibylline Oracle* 3.63: A New Proposal,” *JSP* 29 (2020): 168–83.

<sup>21</sup> But note the variants listed in NA<sup>28</sup>: Βελιαν, Βελιαβ, and Βελιαλ.

<sup>22</sup> For the Greek, see *BDAG* 139. For the Syriac, note *HALOT* 1:133, which says it is “dissimilated,” citing C. Brockelmann, *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen*, 2 vols. (repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1961), 1.229.

to account for all three of the above and yet still others. This fourth (4) meta-explanation is to see in *bēliya'al* a case of tabooistic deformation.

## 2. TABOOISTIC DEFORMATION

Taboo words are a well-documented linguistic phenomenon wherein, for various social reasons, a linguistic community stops uttering a particular word. P. H. Matthews defines a taboo term as one “known to speakers but avoided in some, most, or all forms or contexts of speech, for reasons of religion, decorum, politeness, etc.” Such words are “accordingly replaced ... by a metaphor, euphemism, or some other figurative or roundabout expression.”<sup>23</sup> R. L. Trask lines out a list of tabooed items: “terms pertaining to sex, excretion, death or parts of the body, names of divinities and religious figures, names of deceased persons, names of animals regarded as sacred or awe-inspiring, and indeed almost anything which a particular society comes to object to.”<sup>24</sup>

The taboo nature of the word in question means that it either disappears altogether (tabooistic avoidance) or is changed—distorted somehow—so as to avoid pronouncing it (tabooistic deformation).<sup>25</sup> Trask describes the latter strategy as “an arbitrary alteration in the form of an offensive word ... [which is called] *taboo deformation* or *hlonipha*; examples are *sheesh* for ‘shit,’ *gosh* for ‘God’ and *heck* for ‘hell.’”<sup>26</sup> Hans Heinrich Hock notes that this kind of change is not just arbitrary, it is quite *deliberate*; in his terms, “a deliberate alteration of the segmental structure of a tabooed word.”<sup>27</sup> Not surprisingly, the changes that are made to the word’s structure “may considerably alter the phonetic shape of tabooed lexical items.”<sup>28</sup> And so, Hock continues, “since this type of distortion is dependent on the nonphonetic, semantic notion of taboo, it cannot possibly apply with the regularity of purely phonetically conditioned sound change.”<sup>29</sup> That is to say that, unlike most other types of linguistic change (phonological or otherwise), tabooistic change of whatever kind is neither regular nor predictable. This fact is important as it complicates, if not precludes, linguistic reconstruction of taboo terms—particularly of their possible or putative non-tabooed originals.<sup>30</sup>

Even this very brief overview of tabooistic deformation is suggestive for *bēliya'al*, but before describing some of the major points of contact (Section 3), it should be noted that tabooistic deformation is attested in ancient and modern Semitic languages, from Akkadian to Ethiopic to Arabic to Hebrew, as M. M. Bravmann, among others, has shown.<sup>31</sup> As but one example from Classical

<sup>23</sup> P. H. Matthews, *The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Linguistics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 399.

<sup>24</sup> R. L. Trask, *The Dictionary of Historical and Comparative Linguistics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 338; he mentions English euphemisms like *pass away* for “die” and *make love* for “copulate.”

<sup>25</sup> See A. Arlotto, *Introduction to Historical Linguistics* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), 200–4, for the twin processes of disappearance and distortion.

<sup>26</sup> Trask, *Dictionary*, 338 (his emphases). For *hlonipha*, see *ibid.*, 152.

<sup>27</sup> H. H. Hock, *Principles of Historical Linguistics*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Gruyter, 1991), 50–1.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 303.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 303: “Since linguistic reconstruction crucially depends on the establishment of lexical cognates, such tabooistic replacement or distortion may considerably or even severely limit our ability to reconstruct.” See further *ibid.*, 303–5, for tabooistic distortion being the likely cause that prohibits a proper reconstruction of the Proto-Indo-European word for “tongue.”

<sup>31</sup> M. M. Bravmann, “Semitic Instances of ‘Linguistic Taboo,’” in M. M. Bravmann, *Studies in Semitic Philology*, SSSL 6 (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 465–82. Many of the instances of taboo formulations Bravmann discusses have to do with serving

Hebrew, tabooistic deformation may be at work in some of the names used for “lion” (*panthera leo* or *panthera leo persicus*) found in the Hebrew Bible, especially in the unexplained alteration between *ʾaryēh* and *ʾārī*.<sup>32</sup> One might compare more proximately, beyond Semitic, the German (*Bär*) and Slavic (*medvedi*) terms for “bear,” which meant, respectively, “the brown one” and “the honey-eater.” Both words appear to be the result of tabooistic deformation, presumably out of hunters’ respect or fear of the animal, since the Proto-Indo-European term was probably originally something like *\*arktos*.<sup>33</sup> Obviously related to tabooistic deformation, therefore—if not simply alternative terms for the same phenomenon—are euphemism and dysphemism, also well documented in the Bible.<sup>34</sup> Whatever the language and whichever the subject, the practice of tabooistic deformation is “extremely interesting because it reflects the values of a particular speech community.”<sup>35</sup>

### 3. BĒLĪYA‘AL AS A CASE OF TABOOISTIC DEFORMATION

In light of the linguistic data pertaining to taboo, we may return to the particular problem of *bēlīya‘al* in order to reexamine it as a possible case of tabooistic deformation.

1. We might begin with the point made earlier that tabooistic deformation greatly complicates reconstructing the original term. This observation could nicely explain the considerable number of different (and conflicting) etymologies that have been offered by scholars heretofore. I will return to this matter below.

2. Next, it should be emphasized that religious topics are among those most frequently subjected to tabooistic deformation. Linguists like Hock mention taboos against “taking the LORD’s name in vain,” per the Third Commandment (in Christian numeration), noting deformational examples like: “Goodness gracious! Doggone it! What in tarnation?!”—even “Good-bye (for older (*may*) *God be with you*).”<sup>36</sup> Marvin Pope puts the matter succinctly: “To nullify threats, oaths or

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food or the sudden appearance of unexpected agents in a narrative description and thus they are somewhat different than the other examples discussed above. I do not find them all equally compelling, at least with regard to Bravmann’s “psychological” explanation for several of them (see, esp. 466, 471, 473, 475, 477, and 480). Still, it is enough to note his documentation of linguistic taboo in multiple Semitic languages from early to late. The nearest example Bravmann cites to the material at hand in the present essay is his discussion of intransitive verbal use in Num 6:5; 8:7; 19:2; Judg 16:17; and 1 Sam 6:7 (ibid., 474–6). For Modern Hebrew, see M. Muchnik, “Taboos,” in *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, ed. G. Khan (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 3.723–4.

<sup>32</sup>See B. A. Strawn, *What Is Stronger Than a Lion? Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, OBO 212 (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2005), 294–304, esp. 294–5. Note that the vocalic pattern for *ʾaryēh* is attested in the Hebrew Bible only with *ʾabnēṭ* (Exod 28:4; 29:9; etc.) and *ʾabrēk* (Gen 41:43), both usually thought to be Egyptian loanwords (cf. also *ʾesrēh*). See also ibid., 311–19 for *lābīʾ* and *lēbīyāʾ*. The latter, apparently feminine singular form, is attested only once (Ezek 19:2; cf. the plural construction *lēlibʾōtāyūw* in Nah 2:13) and highly unusual. One expects, instead, *\*lēbīʾāh* (from *\*lebeʾ* < *\*labʾu*). The fact that the form in MT is different internally may suggest deformation (see above). Note that the internal doubling of *yod* in *lēbīyāʾ* is comparable to *bēlīyaʾal*.

<sup>33</sup>Arlotto, *Historical Linguistics*, 201, also 203. Cf. Trask, *Dictionary*, 338, who thinks the original name for *bear* “has been completely lost.”

<sup>34</sup>See, e.g., M. H. Pope, “Euphemism and Dysphemism in the Bible,” in M. H. Pope, *Probative Pontificating in Ugaritic and Biblical Literature*, ed. M. S. Smith, UBL 10 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1994), 279–91. In Pope’s terms deformation is a case of “cacophemism or dysphemism, the use of grossly disparaging terms rather than normal or neutral designations (esp. with reference to enemies or despised activities)” (280, his emphases).

<sup>35</sup>Arlotto, *Historical Linguistics*, 212.

<sup>36</sup>Hock, *Principles*, 295–6; see also L. Campbell, *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 5, 229–31; additionally 435 and 455–6; cf. 472.



self-imprecations, and blasphemy various alterations and substitutions were made in wording.”<sup>37</sup> Such changes were to avoid affront to God, on the one hand, but, on the other hand, intentional deformations of outsider terminology could function to disparage foreign entities such as the false gods of the nations.<sup>38</sup> These latter slurs, or to use Pope’s term *cacophemisms*, “were applied especially to items and aspects of foreign worship.”<sup>39</sup> Pope explicitly notes the word *ʿlil*, which is “applied disdainfully to foreign gods,” but which “may be related to the common Semitic generic term for deity, *ʿil(u)* > *ʿel*, as suggested by the reduplicated forms of Old South Arabic *ʿlht* and North Arabic *ʿalāʿila-t* applied to deity.”<sup>40</sup> Another example that Pope mentions is the apparently intentional and strategic deployment of *bōšet*, “shame”: “a common biblical dysphemism pronounced in place of proper names of pagan deities, as in the names Ishbaal, Meribaal, Jerubbaal, featuring the theophoron *Baʿal* ... but pronounced *bōšet*.”<sup>41</sup> Many scholars believe this same kind of dysphemism is at work with other words beyond only those that mention Baal: for example, עשתרת > *ʿštōret*; מלכּם > *milkom*; and מלך > *mōlek*.<sup>42</sup>

3. Such examples demonstrate a third point of contact—namely, that tabooistic deformation often results in changes to “the segmental structure” (Hock) and internal phonology of the word in question. This point is not unrelated to the first one above, but is a bit more specific with regard to the phonological or morphological matters at hand. It is worth recalling here that G. R. Driver, among others, supposed that “the present vocalization of the word [*bēliyaʿal*] is secondary.”<sup>43</sup>

4. A fourth point: tabooistically deformed words are often subjected to subsequent deformation. Hock explains:

The new expression, in turn, tends to become taboo, since it is likewise felt to be too closely linked with the tabooed point of reference. The consequence may be a chain of ever-changing replacements, a constant turnover in vocabulary.<sup>44</sup>

Alternative spellings of *bēliyaʿal*, in this light, may not be alternative spellings at all, but evidence of still further deformation, which in turn may demonstrate the deformation of the term *bēliyaʿal* itself farther back up the chain. Hence, the Greek form in 2 Cor 6:15 (βελιάρ) and other instances with *r* rather than *l*, or those spellings that employ a final *o* vowel rather than an *a* vowel in the word, may well be secondary (if not tertiary)—proof, that is, of subsequent tabooistic deformation. Perhaps one could include at this point the Ethiopic variants *Belchor*

<sup>37</sup> Pope, “Euphemism and Dysphemism,” 287.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 288–90.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 289.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 290. For discussion of this phenomenon with Baalistic personal names (PNs), see P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary*, AB 9 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 85–7, who posits that the “lord” (*baʿal*) in question may have originally been a reference to Yhwh. Cf. the PN *bēʿalyā* (< *baʿalyāh*?) in 1 Chr 12:6, which may mean “Yhwh is Lord.” For a different view on the meaning of *bšt* in these names, see G. J. Hamilton, “New Evidence for the Authenticity of *bšt* in Hebrew Personal Names and for Its Use as a Divine Epithet in Biblical Texts,” *CBQ* 60 (1998): 228–50; and, earlier, M. Tsevat, “Ishboshet and Congeners: The Names and Their Study,” *HUCA* 46 (1975): 71–87.

<sup>42</sup> See, e.g., 1 Kgs 11:5, 7, and 33; and, inter alia, Pope, “Euphemism and Dysphemism,” 290.

<sup>43</sup> So Emerton, “Sheol,” 100; see Driver, “Hebrew Notes,” 53.

<sup>44</sup> Hock, *Principles*, 293. As examples he cites numerous English alternatives for “toilet”: “bathroom, john, ladies’/men’s room, lavatory, loo, powder room, toilet, W.C., washroom.” See further *ibid.*, 294–5.



vs. *Belear/Biliar* in *Jub.* 1:20 and 15:33, respectively.<sup>45</sup> To be sure, all such instances might also be understood through various processes of linguistic change or realization of a Hebrew term in non-Hebrew languages. Furthermore, there is an admittedly great deal of flexibility when it comes to terminology referring to evil entities, or *the* evil entity *par excellence*,<sup>46</sup> but, in its own way, this is just further proof of the taboo nature of the topic and the “chain of ever-changing replacements, a constant turnover in vocabulary” that Hock speaks of. So it is that one finds use of both “Satan” and “the Devil”—sometimes in the same verse (Rev 12:9)! Still further, these two terms can occur sometimes with and sometimes without the article, indicating a certain uncertainty about their precise grammatical function or part of speech. There are also numerous titles (euphemisms of a sort) like “the tempter,” “the evil one,” “the enemy,” “the ruler of the demons,” not to mention a collection of proper names (or titles) like “Beelzebub” (see 2 Kgs 1:2; common in Vulgate and KJV).<sup>47</sup> The latter is almost certainly “a corruption of Beelzebul, i.e., ‘Baal (the) Prince,’ ”<sup>48</sup> but whether this latter form is correctly preserved in the Gospels (see Matt 10:25; 12:24, and 27; Mark 3:22; and Luke 11:15, and 18–19), as Pope would have it, may be doubted since, as Pope himself notes, “in postbiblical Hebrew ... the root *zbl* also relates to excrement, and thus there would be no need to change the spelling to *zēbūb* in order to derogate a deity whose ancient title could also be taken to mean ‘Lord (of) Excrement.’ ”<sup>49</sup> Still more proof of the general point at hand (i.e., subsequent deformation) may be found in the fact that the constant turnover of vocabulary means that Belial has a limited shelf life: it disappears in Talmudic literature.<sup>50</sup>

These points of contact are suggestive; in their light *bēliyaʿal* does indeed appear to be a likely instance of tabooistic deformation. But deformation *from what*? It is, alas, hard to say. That is, of course, the nature of deformation: it complicates if not precludes accurate reconstruction of the (presumably lost) original (see above). Once again, this may be exactly why it has proven so hard for scholars to reverse engineer *bēliyaʿal*. But rather than reside in a counsel of despair, perhaps a few ideas may be offered in the quest for *bēliyaʿal*’s origin.

To begin with, it is noteworthy how many studies have connected *bēliyaʿal* to supernatural powers of one sort or another (which in many instances must be done, obviously, on the basis of the literary context alone), and that many scholars have referenced the divine name (DN) “Baal”

<sup>45</sup> See Dimant, “Between,” 248 n.66; citing W. Leslau, *Falasha Anthology* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1951), 160–1 n.20.

<sup>46</sup> For flexibility in the terminology for the evil one, see P. C. Almond, *The Devil: A New Biography* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 23.

<sup>47</sup> J. E. Hogg, “‘Belial’ in the Old Testament,” *AJSL* 44 (1927): 56–8, believes the (erroneous) rendering of *bēliyaʿal* as a PN or DN (divine name) in the Old Testament is entirely due to the influence of the Vulgate. Hogg’s own position, however, unfortunately begs the question (in the technical sense) with regard to the meaning of *bēliyaʿal*. Contrast the earlier study by P. Joüon, “בְּלִיָּאֵל Bēliāl,” *Bib* 5 (1924): 178–83, who argues that Jerome’s translation is exactly right.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Ugaritic *bʿl zbl*, /*baʿlu zabūlu*/. See Pope, “Euphemism and Dysphemism,” 286; and, further, W. Herrmann, “Baal Zebub,” in *DDD*<sup>2</sup>, 154–6; K. van der Toorn, “Baal-Zebub,” in *NIDB* 1:373–4; G. H. Twelftree, “Beelzebul,” in *NIDB* 1:417–8; and H. Gese, “Die Religionen Altsyriens,” in *Die Religionen Altsyriens, Altarabians und der Mandäer*, by H. Gese, M. Höfner, and K. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1970), 122.

<sup>49</sup> Pope, “Euphemism and Dysphemism,” 286, who also notes that “the rabbis ridiculed the cult of Baal Peor by connecting *pʿr* with ritual defecation.”

<sup>50</sup> See Hogg, “Belial,” 57; and cf. the standard dictionaries by M. Sokoloff and M. Jastrow (the latter lists only *b. Sanh.* 111b, cited above). See also *DSSC* 1.2.927 for the singular (!) instance of בְּלִיָּאֵל in the non-biblical scrolls (4Q213a i 17).

(בעל) specifically.<sup>51</sup> There is, obviously, a good bit of similarity—graphically and phonologically—between בעל and בליעל,<sup>52</sup> and when one considers the internal phonetic change and alteration of word structure that is common in tabooistic deformation, it is not hard to imagine how *bʿl*, *baʿal* became something like *blyʿl*, *bēliyaʿal*.<sup>53</sup> There is precedent, moreover, in tinkering with (deforming) or replacing (avoiding) the word Baal in the Hebrew Bible, as attested in the *bāšet* phenomenon.<sup>54</sup> We might also return to those etymologies that connect *bēliyaʿal* to *ʾblʿ* and note that these, too, could be accounted for via tabooistic deformation, even if the deformation in this case may have something to do with distinguishing *bēliyaʿal* from the “swallowing” that Yhwh occasionally does in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Ps 21:10; Isa 25:8; Lam 2:2, 5, and 8; Job 2:3; 10:8; etc.).<sup>55</sup> Alternatively, the deformation may have less to do with Yhwh and more to do with Baal via “an intentional metathesis”: *bʿl* → *blʿ*.<sup>56</sup>

In my judgment, the above considerations suggest not only that *bēliyaʿal* is a case of tabooistic deformation but also that the deformation in question is likely related in some way to the DN *Baʿal*.<sup>57</sup> As one final datum to support this opinion we might note the low frequency of בעל in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The masculine noun is found only twenty-seven times in the non-biblical scrolls.<sup>58</sup> But even this low total is misleading since *only one* of these instances seems to invoke the DN Baal, and even here it does so *in the plural*. The text is 4Q460 9 i 9: [יכה חוק] ילקח באפרים ילקח חוק [יכה], “[...] ° and Baalim because no one in Ephraim takes [your] precept[s...].” The broken context inevitably raises problems for a fully accurate assessment. Be that as it may, this truly modest—even singular—instance of the DN בעל (again, in the plural) may be contrasted with no less than eighty-eight occurrences of *bēliyaʿal* in the non-biblical scrolls.<sup>59</sup> This variation in use between בעל and בליעל is itself indicative of tabooistic deformation. Anthony Arlotto notes that “when there are two homonyms, or near homonyms, in a language, and one of them becomes tabued, the tabued word will often live on in popular speech while the innocent homonym is distorted or dropped from the language, at least in certain situations.”<sup>60</sup> So, in terms of a possible deformation of *Baʿal*

<sup>51</sup> See, e.g., HALOT 1:134 for a possible derivation from Ugaritic *bʿl-ym*, “Baal of the sea.” Cf. V. Maag, “Belijaʿal im Alten Testament,” TZ 21 (1965): 287–99. Pertinent here is J. A. Thompson’s opinion that *belōʾ yōʿil* in Jer 2:11 is “evidently a play on the name Baal”; *The Book of Jeremiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 170.

<sup>52</sup> The assonance between *baʿal* and *-yaʿal* is particularly noteworthy.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Driver’s passing remark, on the vocalization of *bēliyaʿal*, when he wonders if “a tendentious *yōd* [has been] inserted subsequently in accordance with a Massoretic (?) interpretation” (“Hebrew Notes,” 53). Unfortunately, he does not specify the nature of this Masoretic “interpretation.”

<sup>54</sup> See above and also note 15 for assonance between Baal and various terms for “goat,” perhaps further proof of dysphemism.

<sup>55</sup> Lewis, “Belial,” 654 has noted how “swallower” fits with descriptions of Sheol and Mot.

<sup>56</sup> Stenhouse, “Baal and Belial,” 300; cf. TDOT 2.132.

<sup>57</sup> Note already Stenhouse (writing in 1913): “Are the two words בעל and בליעל connected? Or is the latter a fragment of a contemptuous phrase current in later times?” (“Baal and Belial,” 295). In my judgment *both* options are likely at work. Cf. Stenhouse’s conclusion: “the old name of the supreme deity was in part dropped, in part turned into a name of contempt to denote all that was opposed to God, and in this form was used as one of the designations for the principle of evil, continually at war for the possession of the soul of man” (305). It is intriguing, as Collin Cornell has noted (personal communication), that tabooistic deformation of Baal suggests that the DN Yhwh *and* the name of his chief rival were both avoided.

<sup>58</sup> For the statistics and instances, see DSSC 1.1.155.

<sup>59</sup> See DSSC 1.1.146–7. For the biblical scrolls, see DSSC 3.1.150–1: the masculine noun בעל occurs only thirteen times; only two of these refer explicitly to the DN Baal (Hos 2:15, 19).

<sup>60</sup> Arlotto, *Historical Linguistics*, 202–3. Arlotto’s example is *arse* and *ass*: the former came to be pronounced as /ass/ with the latter, a by-form of *donkey*, falling out of general use.

→ *bēliya'al*—the specifics of which remain elusive<sup>61</sup>—the result is that the distorted term was used widely (at least for a period of time, prior to subsequent deformation and lexical turnover), with the not-so-innocent original dying out quickly. This left the truly innocent, theologically denuded בעל behind, with the innocuous meanings “owner, master, husband.” And so it is that these are the meanings of בעל that predominate at Qumran.<sup>62</sup>

#### 4. CONCLUSION: *BĒLĪYA'AL* IN CONTEXT(S)

In conclusion, we might take a step back and wonder about what this understanding of *bēliya'al* could mean for its various uses in the Hebrew Bible, Dead Sea Scrolls, and elsewhere. On the one hand, one can say very little about the precise significance of the tabooistic deformation of *bēliya'al* for particular instances of the term. Its use is varied, after all, as previous scholars have pointed out—a point further underscored by how the versions variously interpreted the term whenever they encountered it in their *Vorlagen*. On the other hand, understanding *bēliya'al* as a case of tabooistic deformation nevertheless still says quite a lot about its meaning and use, at least at a general level. For one thing, (again) the situation indicates that one need not find only one clever etymology for *bēliya'al* since reconstructing said etymology may well be impossible—such is the nature of the case when it comes to tabooistic deformation. All that one might be able to say is that *bēliya'al* is likely some sort of deformation of the DN *Ba'al*.<sup>63</sup> That deformation and its possible motivations properly lie *antecedent* to—and long before—the instances of *bēliya'al* we encounter in the Bible and beyond. For this reason, some sort of connection to the DN Baal need not be found for each instance of *bēliya'al*, though in certain cases such a connection might make some degree of sense.<sup>64</sup> Instead, it would be enough to say that, at some point long ago, for reasons that are not entirely clear, through a process that is still uncertain, *bēliya'al* was created through a process of tabooistic deformation.<sup>65</sup> The rest is history, as the old saying goes ... but it is also language and literature!

<sup>61</sup> Cf. *TDOT* 2.133: “This much can be said ...: it is based on some mythological term whose meaning we are no longer able to recover or on some name, which has been ‘interpreted’ by popular etymology as a negative with the prefix *beli*.”

<sup>62</sup> These meanings are, of course, also operative in Classical Hebrew בעל, but even here the use in the scrolls is quite attenuated vis-à-vis the use of בעל.

<sup>63</sup> Perhaps even by punning with the negative particle בלי so as to achieve something like “Not Lord, Un-Lord, Anti-Lord.” Such an understanding could also be reached, with even closer correspondence to MT’s vocalization, if *bēliya'al* were a compound of *bēli* + *'al* and if the latter is taken to mean “Sublime One” or “Almighty,” whether as an independent DN or as an apocopated form of עליון (see *HALOT* 2:824–5; B. Schmidt, “Al,” in *DDD*<sup>2</sup>, 14–17).

<sup>64</sup> Here one thinks of Belial as the personification of evil in the Scrolls—a point that takes on even more weight, perhaps, if that term goes back to Baal, the archrival of Yhwh in the Old Testament. Note the opinion of R. Rosenberg, “The Concept of Biblical ‘Belial,’” in *The Period of the Bible*, vol. A of *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1981), 35–40, who argued that *bēliya'al* designates “a transgression of a basic behavioural norm which in Israel is seen in terms of the violation of the covenantal relationship between the individual, community and God” (38). Such an interpretation nicely fits a context where other gods, too, might somehow be involved or invoked.

<sup>65</sup> Contrast Emerton, “Sheol,” 99: “A theory that postulated a meaning directly, rather than indirectly, involving wickedness of character would be preferable.” Perhaps so, but such “direction” is often not to be had. See, more generally, R. D. Janda and B. D. Joseph, “On Language, Change, and Language Change—Or, Of History, Linguistics, and Historical Linguistics,” in *The Handbook of Historical Linguistics*, ed. B. D. Joseph and R. D. Janda (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 3–180, who note that, “despite all the philological care in the world, even something as seemingly fixed as date of first attestation is not always a reliable indication of age” and so there is always the possibility of “accidental gap[s] in attestation,” though “oral transmission ... can preserve archaic forms” (15). While they make these remarks with reference to gaps in the historical

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record, they observe that "a similar issue arises with lexical items that have special affective or emotive value," such as taboo words, including expletives (16). At this point, they speak not of gaps in attestation but "delays in attestation," despite the fact that "there appears to be a panchronic and thoroughly human proclivity to employ lexical items with such meanings for affective purposes" (16).

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## CHAPTER FIVE

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# Just What We Need: Another Allusion in Luke 1?

JOHN B. F. MILLER

Luke's infancy narrative is replete with allusions to Jewish Scripture. In his discussion of Luke 1–2 as “a kind of echo chamber for the interplay of ‘the old stories’ with Luke’s own story,” Joel Green summarizes the challenges inherent in identifying and interpreting these allusions: “we have much less need to certify to the exclusion of other probable candidates the precise source of an allusion in this Lukan material (which in any case is not always possible) than to appreciate the many voices from the past given a fresh hearing, and thus to reflect on the significance of their interplay in this new context.”<sup>1</sup> In this study, I will look at an underexplored allusion in Luke 1 with the hope of teasing out its “interplay” within the narrative of Luke-Acts.

At the end of her dialogue with the angel Gabriel, Mary declares: “Behold, I am the slave of the Lord” (Luke 1:38).<sup>2</sup> This statement has been interpreted in a variety of ways.<sup>3</sup> Sitting at the remote margins of more widely accepted and repeated interpretations is Richard Nelson’s suggestion that v. 38 is part of a broader set of allusions connecting Mary with David.<sup>4</sup> Resistance to this suggestion seems to stem from larger questions about the way allusions function within Luke’s story. After examining points of connection between Mary and David in Luke 1, I will discuss the problematic issue of the way allusions function in this passage and then proceed to explore a way of understanding this allusion to David that works organically within the narrative. I will argue

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<sup>1</sup>This narrative-critical study will focus on literary questions. Bound up with these questions, however, are historical issues attending the complex and sometimes conflicting expectations of a Messiah within first-century Judaism. Those expectations, like so many other aspects of early Jewish and Christian thought, have been illumined in the work of James Hamilton Charlesworth (see, e.g., *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* and *Qumran-Messianism: Studies on the Messianic Expectations in the Dead Sea Scrolls*). It is an honor to dedicate this essay to Jim, perhaps especially because of the subjective nature of the present discussion. As a biblical scholar, Charlesworth has embodied what it means to be rooted in texts and their history. Indeed, some of his significant contributions include groundbreaking critical editions (e.g., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, along with the continuing work of the Princeton Theological Seminary Dead Sea Scrolls Project). Alongside these works, however, stand monuments to Jim’s exegetical curiosity and creativity (e.g., *The Beloved Disciple* and *The Good & Evil Serpent*). Those fortunate enough to have been his students will perhaps remember these studies more because of Jim’s excitement while working on them—an excitement he brought both to his own work and ours. I have lost count of the times I left a meeting with Jim more passionate about my own project than I was when the meeting began. Jim’s work as a teacher and mentor has been marked by a special gift of inspiration—a gift for which I will be forever grateful.

J. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 57.

<sup>2</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this study are my own.

<sup>3</sup>See the discussion of 1:38 in the following section and nn.10 and 11 below.

<sup>4</sup>R. Nelson, “David: A Model for Mary in Luke?” *BTB* 18 (1988): 138–42.



that Mary's identification of herself as "the slave of the Lord" fits within the broader scope of the way Luke describes first-century expectations of a messianic deliverer and then reshapes those expectations in the course of Luke-Acts.

## 1. ALLUSIONS TO DAVID IN LUKE'S PRESENTATION OF MARY

Reading Mary's declaration "I am the slave of the Lord" (ἡ δούλη κυρίου) as an allusion to David brings one immediately into the challenges that surround interpreting allusions in this or any text. I will address these challenges in the next section. For now, it is important to sketch the connections between the portrayal of Mary in Luke 1 and that of David in 2 Samuel 7.<sup>5</sup> The explicit connection between the two emerges in Luke 1:31–32, where Luke describes both Mary and David as "parents" of Jesus. Mary "will conceive in her womb and bear a son" to whom God will give the "throne of David, his father." Clearly, the paternal description of David has an ancestral sense. Nevertheless, the explicit link between Mary and David in these verses encourages readers not only to think about David in relation to Mary and Jesus but also to think specifically of the scene in which God promises David's descendant a "throne" that "will be restored forever" (θρόνος ... ἔσται ἀνωρθωμένος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα [LXX 2 Sam 7:16]).<sup>6</sup> The explicit connection between Luke 1:32 and 2 Sam 7:16 invites the reader to consider other possible connections between the two passages.

Gabriel's initial greeting to Mary in Luke 1:28 ends with the phrase "the Lord is with you" (κύριος μετὰ σοῦ). At first glance, one might presume this to be a common expression,<sup>7</sup> one not worthy of a second look for allusive possibilities. It is interesting to note, however, that the exact phrase κύριος μετὰ σοῦ occurs in the LXX only at Gen 26:28, Judg 6:12,<sup>8</sup> and in Nathan's assertion to David in 2 Sam 7:3. Having already seen explicit references to David (Luke 1:27, 32) and a clear verbal allusion<sup>9</sup> to 2 Samuel 7 (Luke 1:32), it does not seem too great a stretch to see in v. 28 an allusion to 2 Sam 7:3.

The next point of contact between Mary and David is found not in an allusion to Jewish Scripture but in Luke's own characterization of the two. Gabriel's next words to Mary tell her that she should not be afraid, for she "has found favor with God" (εὗρες γὰρ χάριν παρὰ τῷ θεῷ). In the entire

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<sup>5</sup> What follows is not a summary of Nelson's argument in "A Model for Mary" but my own study of Luke's allusions to David in the story of Mary. I became aware of Nelson's work relatively late in the course of my own investigation, finding a single reference to it within a footnote in another text. Although we adduce some of the same connections between Luke 1 and 2 Samuel 7, our emphases are very different and our conclusions are even more so. Nelson's discussion of David and Mary describing themselves as "slave of the Lord," for example, comprises only two sentences.

<sup>6</sup> See also 2 Sam 7:13.

<sup>7</sup> See Nelson, "A Model for Mary," 139.

<sup>8</sup> K. Stock emphasizes a connection between Luke 1:28 and Judg 6:12 in his argument that Luke 1:26–38 is a commissioning scene, as opposed to an annunciation scene; "Die Berufung Marias [Lk 1, 26-38]," *Bib* 61 (1980): 461–2). For a summary of scholarship on this issue, see R. E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, rev. ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1993), 629–30.

<sup>9</sup> Defining a spectrum of allusion is beyond the scope of the present examination. Peter Mallen has provided a concise discussion of "explicit quotation," "verbal allusion," "conceptual allusion," and "narrative pattern" in *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts*, LNTS 367 (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 24. I will use his definition of verbal allusion ("an informal reference to an earlier text that repeats a distinctive word or phrase but without using an introductory formula") and conceptual allusion (which "evokes an earlier text through a distinctive similarity in the event or character being described although expressed in different words") in this study.



narrative of Luke-Acts, only one other figure is described with these words. In Acts 7:45–46, it is “David, who found favor before God” (Δαυίδ, ὃς εὗρεν χάριν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ).

It is not until Luke 1:38, however, that one finds the most intriguing possible allusion to the story of David. Following Gabriel’s final words in the narrative, Mary concludes their conversation: “Behold, I am the slave of the Lord; may it be for me according to your word” (ἰδοὺ ἡ δούλη κυρίου· γένοιτό μοι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου). Interpreters routinely find in Mary’s identification as a “slave of the Lord” both humility and a sense of obedience to Gabriel’s expression of God’s plan.<sup>10</sup> Others have used Mary’s words as the basis for more far-reaching theological conclusions.<sup>11</sup> Few, however, have explored their allusive possibilities.<sup>12</sup> The expression δούλη/δούλος κυρίου is applied to several figures in the Septuagint, though usually only once or twice. Moses is mentioned as “slave of the Lord” three times (LXX 1 Kgs 8:53, 56; LXX 2 Kgs 18:12). Joshua is called “slave of the Lord” twice (LXX Josh 24:30; LXX Judg 2:8). Samuel and Saul each refer to themselves once as “slave of the Lord” (LXX 1 Sam 3:9–10 and 14:41, respectively). It is David, however, who both claims and receives this appellation far more than any other.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, it is only slightly hyperbolic to say that David is described as “slave of the Lord” more than all of the other figures in Jewish Scripture combined. Notably, David is referred to as “slave of the Lord” eight times in LXX 2 Samuel 7, and in one of those references one finds yet another possible connection to Mary.

Mary’s final response to Gabriel’s description of how God will act in the birth of Jesus is to say “may it be for me according to your word” (γένοιτό μοι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου [Luke 1:38]). After hearing God’s promise in the oracle of Nathan, David offers a lengthy prayer in which he entreats God to “confirm the word that you spoke concerning your slave and his house” (τὸ ῥῆμα ὃ ἐλάλησας περὶ τοῦ δούλου σου καὶ τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ πίστωσον [LXX 2 Sam 7:25]). Although Luke 1:38b could

<sup>10</sup>C. Talbert’s concise summary is representative: “Her belief led to an *absolute self-surrender* to the divine purpose;” *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 23 (emphasis added). For F. Bovon, “Mary places herself at God’s behest . . . she does not merely submit herself but demonstrates her agreement;” *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50*, trans. C. Thomas, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 53. She not only “demonstrates her agreement,” but as Sharon Ringe points out: “Mary becomes the first to participate knowingly and willingly in God’s future that has been announced to her;” *Luke* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 32.

<sup>11</sup>Green, for example, has explored the implications of Mary’s declaration in light of first-century conceptions of slavery. By declaring herself “slave of the Lord,” Mary “claims a place in God’s household,” thereby deriving her own status directly from God; “The Social Status of Mary in Luke 1,5-2,52: A Plea for Methodological Integration,” *Bib* 73 (1992): 468. On this understanding of ancient slavery, see also S. Bartchy, “Slavery (Greco-Roman),” *ABD* 6:70. However, that slavery in antiquity was a more complex and complicated matter—especially for female slaves—is made clear in Jane Schaberg’s interpretation of Mary’s declaration as a statement of consent by which Luke “aimed to defuse the inherited tradition of [Jesus’s] illegitimacy;” *The Illegitimacy of Jesus: A Feminist Theological Interpretation of the Infancy Narratives*, expanded twentieth anniversary ed. (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), 127; see also pp. 122–5. For an extensive summary of scholars engaging Luke 1:38 from perspectives of feminist theology and feminist Mariology, see K. McDonnell, “Feminist Mariologies: Heteronomy/Subordination and the Scandal of Christology,” *TS* 66 (2005): 527–67.

<sup>12</sup>Nelson observes that ἡ δούλη κυρίου (Luke 1:38) connects Mary to David (2 Sam 7:19) but does not focus on the language of δούλη/δούλος in the rest of his argument; “A Model for Mary,” 139. Although he disagrees with Nelson’s conclusions, Y. Miura refers to Nelson’s article in his assertion that Luke’s portrayal of Mary fits within conceptions of a Davidic ideal: “Thus the story of David in the past, the function of Jesus as the Davidic Messiah in the future, and the role of Mary in the present seem to be fused in [Luke] 1:51-55;” *David in Luke-Acts: His Portrayal in Light of Early Judaism*, WUNT 232 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 207 n.38; cf. 127–8.

<sup>13</sup>LXX 1 Sam 23:10–11; 25:39; LXX 2 Sam 3:18; 7:5, 8, 19, 20, 25, 27–29; 24:10; LXX 1 Kgs 8:25, 66; 11:13; LXX 2 Kgs 8:19; LXX 1 Chr 17:7, 26; and LXX Pss 35:1; 85:4.

be conceived as a verbal allusion to 2 Sam 7:25, it is at least a conceptual allusion:<sup>14</sup> both passages contain the term *ῥῆμα* and offer nearly identical sentiments.

To these connections between Mary and David, one can also add allusions in Mary's Magnificat to the Psalms—texts Luke associated with David.<sup>15</sup> Mary's description of her soul "magnifying the Lord" (Luke 1:46) has been read as an allusion to LXX Ps 33:4. Likewise, the statement that her spirit "rejoices in God [her] savior" (1:47) is a likely allusion to LXX Ps 34:9.<sup>16</sup> There are a number of other connections one might adduce between the Magnificat and the Psalms.<sup>17</sup> For the purposes of this discussion, however, it is necessary to focus more attention on what these connections *do* within the framework of Luke's narrative. It is to that subject that we now turn.

## 2. THE CHALLENGES OF LUKAN ALLUSIONS

Why is it so common for scholars to tread with caution around Luke's allusions? One might argue it is because they vary so widely in terms of how they function in the narrative. The complexity of Luke's allusions is apparent in Brown's attempt to untangle the threads of Hannah's and Samuel's stories woven into the background of the presentation of Jesus at the Temple (Luke 2:22–24):

I would contend that the Samuel background is drawn upon by Luke for the whole infancy narrative .... the Magnificat of Mary is patterned on the canticle of Hannah .... while the conception of JBap was patterned on the conception of Samuel, Luke now shifts the Samuel imagery over to Jesus and patterns Joseph and Mary on Elkanah and Hannah, even as he earlier patterned Zechariah and Elizabeth on the two parents of Samuel.<sup>18</sup>

It is in this context that Brown offered his often-quoted conclusion: "Luke's method is not one of identifying figures in the infancy narrative with OT characters; rather he uses pigments taken from OT narratives to color in the infancy narrative."<sup>19</sup> Following in this vein, more recent commentators have maintained the necessity of embracing a very fluid reading of Lukan allusions. C. Kavin Rowe, for example, suggests: "For those who have ears to hear, the stories of Abraham and Sarah ... Hannah and Samuel ... [and] King David ... echo throughout the birth-infancy narrative, thereby rendering direct citation of the LXX superfluous. The hallowed past extends into the hallowed present even as this present reaches backward into the past."<sup>20</sup> Such conclusions may be tempting when looking at the allusions in Luke's infancy narrative as a whole. When looking at a specific allusion, however, one has to give up that wide-angled lens and work with the ways in which the allusion plays out—or fails to play out—within the framework of the Lukan narrative. One must

<sup>14</sup> See n. 9 above.

<sup>15</sup> That Luke understands the Psalms as a whole to be the writings of David is suggested by Acts 2:25–35. In this passage, Peter draws liberally from the Psalms (e.g., LXX Ps 15, 109, and 131), using language like "David says" (Δαυιδ γὰρ λέγει [2:25]) whether the individual Psalm is ascribed to David or not.

<sup>16</sup> Both of these connections are noted in the marginal references of Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th ed.

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., Fitzmyer's treatment of τῷ θεῷ τῷ σωτηρὶ μου (1:47, cf. LXX Ps 24:5), ὁ δυνατός (1:49, cf. LXX Ps 88:9), ἁγίον τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ (1:49, cf. LXX Ps 110:9), etc.; *The Gospel According to Luke: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, 2 vols., AB 28–28A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981–5), 1.367–8.

<sup>18</sup> Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, 451.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> C. Kavin Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology: The Lord in the Gospel of Luke*, BZNW 139 (Berlin: Gruyter, 2006), 33–4.

examine “the interplay of ‘the old stories’ with Luke’s own story” even when it is impossible “to certify to the exclusion of other probable candidates the precise source of an allusion.”<sup>21</sup> Sometimes that “interplay” seems fairly straightforward, enriching a character’s language and action. At other times, though, it may leave even the most dedicated readers wondering how a particular reference works within the flow of Luke’s story. A quick look at three of the allusions in Luke 1 illustrates the problem nicely.

In 1:18, Zechariah begins his response to Gabriel with the awkward expression “according to what will I know this?” (κατὰ τί γνώσομαι τοῦτο;). This phrase is an uncontested allusion to LXX Gen 15:8,<sup>22</sup> in which Abram uses the same expression to respond to God’s promise that Abram’s descendants will be like the stars of heaven. Although Brown was correct that Luke has not “identified” Zechariah with Abram on any grand scale, this allusion fits easily within the narrative and helps to clarify it. As Coleridge has observed, Zechariah’s use of Abram’s language reinforces the supposition that he, as a “righteous” priest who “walk[s] blameless[ly] in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord” (1:5) should know better than to doubt the divine promise of a child.<sup>23</sup> Luke uses this allusion to guide the audience’s response to Zechariah’s incredulity, and to prepare the audience for Gabriel’s frustration and punishment of Zechariah.<sup>24</sup> Not all of Luke’s allusions, however, are this straightforward.

Although I have argued that Luke 1:38 connects Mary to David, one can also read it as part of a broader allusion to the story of Hannah in 1 Sam 1–2.<sup>25</sup> As Hannah prays outside the sanctuary, she entreats the Lord: “If you will look with concern upon the humiliation of your slave, remember me, and give to your slave a son, I will give him back as an offering before you until the day of his death” (ἐὰν ἐπιβλέπων ἐπιβλέψῃς ἐπὶ τὴν ταπείνωσιν τῆς δούλης σου καὶ μνησθῆς μου καὶ δῶς τῇ δούλῃ σου σπέρμα ἀνδρῶν, καὶ δώσω αὐτὸν ἐνώπιόν σου δοτὸν ἕως ἡμέρας θανάτου αὐτοῦ [LXX 1 Sam 1:11]). Mary’s identification as ἡ δούλη κυρίου may evoke Hannah’s words in this verse, but the third line of Mary’s Magnificat most certainly does: “because he has looked with care upon the humiliation of his slave” (ὅτι ἐπέβλεψεν ἐπὶ τὴν ταπείνωσιν τῆς δούλης αὐτοῦ [Luke 1:48]). This direct verbal allusion leads the reader to seek connections between Mary and Hannah—to understand how Hannah’s story might deepen one’s appreciation for the scene in Luke 1. It is at this point that things become a bit complicated. From a broad perspective, one can certainly find loose connections between the two figures. Both women bear a child who is viewed as a blessing and as evidence of God’s care for God’s people.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, both interpret the coming of their sons as evidence of God reversing misfortunes suffered by the mother—and, by extension, by

<sup>21</sup> Green, *Luke*, 57 (quoted in full above).

<sup>22</sup> The wording of the question, κατὰ τί γνώσομαι, is stylistically poor. This language, however, provides excellent evidence for Luke’s use of a Greek translation of Genesis; see also Brown, *Birth*, 279. A search of the *TLG* indicates that this phrase is found only in LXX Gen 15:8, Luke 1:18, and patristic quotations of these passages. There can be no question that Luke is alluding here to Gen 15:8.

<sup>23</sup> M. Coleridge, *Birth of the Lukan Narrative: Narrative as Christology in Luke 1-2*, JSNTSup 88 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 38–40.

<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of Zechariah’s inability to speak as a punishment in Luke 1, see John Miller, *Convinced that God had Called Us: Dreams, Visions, and the Perception of God’s Will in Luke-Acts*, BINS 85 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 116 n.15.

<sup>25</sup> Fitzmyer, for example, sees Hannah as the focal point for Mary’s declaration that she is the “slave of the Lord;” *Gospel According to Luke*, 1:352. However, as noted in the quotation from Joel Green above (*Luke*, 57), arguing for one “precise” source of an allusion, to the exclusion of another possibility, can be a futile enterprise in Lukan studies.

<sup>26</sup> 1 Sam 1:20, 27–28, and 2:3; Luke 1:48–50.

Israel.<sup>27</sup> Both of these sons are dedicated to the service of the Lord, and both are at the center of what their respective texts regard as watershed moments in the history of God's people.<sup>28</sup> To get to these deeper narrative connections, however, the reader has to get beyond the confusion that lies much closer to the surface of the story. Specifically, Hannah's plight of childlessness (1 Sam 1:2–8) couldn't be further from Mary's situation (Luke 1:34) but instead mirrors the experience of Elizabeth (Luke 1:7). Likewise, Samuel is much closer to John as a precursor to God's "anointed" than he is to Jesus.<sup>29</sup> Thus, while this allusion connecting Mary with Hannah and Jesus with Samuel invites the reader to consider Jesus' birth within the wider scope of Israel's plight and experience of oppression, it can do so only for readers willing to look past the initial confusion caused by the dissimilarity of Mary's and Hannah's circumstances. Some other allusions in Luke's infancy narrative create even more confusion.

In the previous section, I argued that several aspects of Luke's description of Mary harken back to David. The connections described, however, have not found widespread acknowledgment—or even narrow acknowledgment<sup>30</sup>—in the work of scholars. Although it would be unwise to speculate as to why scholars have been largely silent about possible allusions to David in the Lukan passages noted above, it seems fair to suggest that one reason for this omission may be the jarring nature of the allusion itself. *That* Luke may be alluding to David in his descriptions of Mary in 1:28, 30, and 38 is less problematic than trying to explain *how* the allusion works in the narrative. Whereas one has to look past superficial problems to find deeper connections in the stories of Mary and Hannah, one searches in vain for ways to connect Mary with David. This allusion does not clarify anything immediate in the story, nor does it plumb a deeper resonance between these two figures. Certainly, Nelson's suggestion that Luke presents Mary as the "new David"—a new model of ideal faith—has not been received favorably.<sup>31</sup> As we will see below, the problem only becomes more complicated when we look closely at what it meant for David and Mary to call themselves "slave of the Lord." Rather than identifying Mary with David in ways that are not consonant with the text of Luke's Gospel, I would like to look at this allusion from a different perspective: the way Luke uses language.

### 3. LUKE'S USE OF LANGUAGE TO RESHAPE UNDERSTANDING AND EXPECTATION

In another study, I have engaged some of the challenges of expectation and fulfillment that arise in Luke 1, especially relating to the language in Mary's Magnificat and Zechariah's Benedictus.<sup>32</sup> In short, both Mary and Zechariah understand the birth of their respective children as an indication of the fulfillment of particular promises within Jewish Scripture—promises that focus on salvation from oppression and God's rescue of Israel from its enemies (e.g., 1:52–54 and 1:68–71, 74). The narrative expectations created by the Magnificat and Benedictus, however, do not find fulfillment in

<sup>27</sup> 1 Sam 2:5; Luke 1:51–55.

<sup>28</sup> Samuel is dedicated to the service of the Lord in 1 Sam 1:28, and 1 Samuel portrays him as the pivotal figure who unwillingly ushers in a new era of kingship in Israel (8:22), and who anoints both Saul (9:16 and 10:1) and David (16:13). Jesus' dedication is found in Luke 2:22–32, in which Simeon describes Jesus as God's "salvation" (2:30).

<sup>29</sup> 1 Sam 8:10–18, cf. Luke 3:2–17.

<sup>30</sup> As an anecdotal example, Brown's supplemental bibliography in the revised version of *Birth of the Messiah*, which includes works published as late as 1992, does not include Nelson's "A Model for Mary" (1988). See also n. 12 above.

<sup>31</sup> Nelson, "A Model for Mary," 140–2.

<sup>32</sup> See Miller, *Convinced*, 133–46.

the story of Luke-Acts, at least not the fulfillment envisioned in these songs. A full rehearsal of my argument is beyond the scope of the present discussion, but a summary will provide the necessary foundation for the way I propose to read Luke's description of Mary as ἡ δούλη κυρίου.

In the cited study, I explored how some of the language from the Magnificat and Benedictus is used later in Luke-Acts in ways that help to reshape those narrative expectations. Luke uses words like ἐπιβλέπω, ὑπόω, ταπεινωσις (along with ταπεινός and ταπεινώω), ἔλεος, and ἐπισκέπτομαι both to describe first-century messianic expectations in Luke 1 and to reshape those expectations in light of the actual ministry of Jesus and his disciples as the narrative progresses. Terms like ἐπιβλέπω and ἐπισκέπτομαι, used to describe God "looking with care" in terms of grand scale reversals of human power and authority in the Magnificat (1:48) and Benedictus (1:68, 78), are used later in the narrative to describe God's care in terms of Jesus' raising of the widow's son (7:14–16), Jesus' healing of an afflicted child (Luke 9:38, 42–43), and God receiving "a people for his name" from among the Gentiles (Acts 15:14). The language of exaltation (Luke 1:52) and humiliation (Luke 1:48, 52) describing spheres of political power<sup>33</sup> in Luke 1 is reappropriated by the Lukan Jesus to depict the way his followers should treat one another (Luke 14:11 and 18:14). The covenantal mercy of God described in terms of deliverance from human oppression in the Magnificat (1:50, 54) and Benedictus (1:72, 78) is reshaped in a description of deliverance from spiritual oppression and the attainment of eternal life by loving God with all one's heart, soul, and strength, and by loving one's neighbor (Luke 10:27, 37; cf. Luke 10:17–24).<sup>34</sup> In light of the way Luke uses key terms to reshape other expectations expressed in Luke 1, I would like to explore how Luke's allusion to David in Mary's claim to be "the slave of the Lord" (1:38) may establish expectations that are subsequently reshaped in Luke-Acts.

### 3.1. "Slave of the Lord" in 1–2 Samuel

David first refers to *himself* as "slave of the Lord" when he inquires of the Lord at Keilah regarding Saul's intentions (LXX 1 Sam 23:10–11; see also LXX 1 Sam 25:39). The first time *God* is said to refer to David in this way comes in the proclamation of Abner:

Abner spoke to the elders of Israel, saying, "in the past, you were seeking to make David king over you. Do so now, because the Lord has spoken about David, saying, 'by the hand of my slave David I will save Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all its enemies.'" (LXX 2 Sam 3:17–18)

All further references to David as "slave of the Lord" come after he is recognized as king of Israel and Judah in 2 Sam 5.<sup>35</sup> In terms of understanding Luke's allusion to David, it is important to notice the ironic role that David plays as "slave of the Lord": David is "slave"<sup>36</sup> to the Lord and no one else.<sup>37</sup> God calls David the one who will be the ruler over God's people Israel (LXX 2 Sam

<sup>33</sup> Luke 1:52 describes God "casting down rulers from thrones" (καθεῖλεν δυνάστας ἀπὸ θρόνων).

<sup>34</sup> Miller, *Convinced*, 138–45.

<sup>35</sup> The phrase "slave of the Lord" is not found in the description of Samuel anointing David in 1 Samuel 16.

<sup>36</sup> As Nelson observes, David uses "the humble courtly language" of a slave to describe his relationship to the Lord; "A Model for Mary," 139.

<sup>37</sup> This distinction is important, especially since David has referred to himself as the "slave" of both Saul (e.g., LXX 1 Sam 17:32, 34, 36) and Achish (e.g., LXX 1 Sam 27:5) earlier in the narrative of 1 Samuel; Miura, *David in Luke-Acts*, 168 n.126.

7:8). God will make David's name like that of the greatest people on earth (7:9). God will make a "house" for David (7:11); David's "house" and kingdom will be secured before God forever, and David's throne will be restored forever (7:16). David, the "slave of the Lord," is a powerful ruler who will become more powerful, the anointed king by whose hand God "will save Israel ... from the hand of all its enemies."

### 3.2. "Slave of the Lord" in the Gospel of Luke

Mary's declaration of herself as "slave of the Lord" takes on a different flavor when viewed as an allusion to David. Images of the self-effacing, obedient servant often assigned to Mary in commentaries on this passage fade into the background, replaced by an image of Mary as one who will play a powerful role in the unfolding of God's plan. Noting that slaves in antiquity derived status from that of their masters, Joel Green has argued that Mary's understanding of herself as "slave of the Lord" is an indication that she has aligned herself with the household of God.<sup>38</sup> Looking at Mary's statement in Luke 1:38 as an allusion to David pushes the point further. Mary portrays herself as an important instrument of God's deliverance—a picture quite consonant with the language of the Magnificat: "from now on all generations will bless *me*" (Luke 1:48, emphasis added). Like David before her, Mary claims to be a "slave" to the Lord and no one else.<sup>39</sup> However difficult it may be to find further connections between Mary and David, this allusion draws the reader back to a time when Israel was victorious over its enemies, when its leader was a "slave" to no one but the Lord. As such, it helps the reader understand the expectations of a messianic deliverer described in the first two chapters of the Gospel. Because that kind of military, political deliverance from oppression did not come to pass, Luke had to reshape those expectations as his narrative continued. The question is whether Luke's specific use of δούλη/δούλος κυρίου is reshaped later in the narrative. I would argue that it is.

The very next δούλος in the Gospel provides a proleptic hint of what it will mean eventually in Luke's narrative to be a "slave of the Lord." Simeon becomes the first human in the narrative to proclaim Jesus as God's "salvation": "Now you are dismissing your slave in peace, Master, according to your word, because my eyes have seen your salvation" (νῦν ἀπολύεις τὸν δούλόν σου, δέσποτα, κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου ἐν εἰρήνῃ· ὅτι εἶδον οἱ ὀφθαλμοί μου τὸ σωτήριόν σου [Luke 2:29–30]). For the remainder of the Gospel, references to δούλοι are generic (i.e., there are no specific references to "slave(s) of the Lord") and focus primarily on the proper *disposition* of slaves, rather than on the *role* "slaves of the Lord" will play in God's kingdom.<sup>40</sup> It is not until the Acts of the Apostles that one finds Luke reshaping the use of δούλαι/δούλοι κυρίου and highlighting the role these are to play.

<sup>38</sup> Green, "Social Status of Mary," 468.

<sup>39</sup> B. Gaventa makes a similar point for the purpose of refuting misinterpretations of "generations of Christians [who] have seen Mary as a model or example for all women and have distorted her slavery to the Lord to mean the subjection of women in general to men in general;" *Mary: Glimpses of the Mother of Jesus* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 54.

<sup>40</sup> See, e.g., Luke 17:7–10.



### 3.3. “Slave of the Lord” in the Acts of the Apostles

Luke uses δούλη/δούλος in only three passages within the narrative of Acts, but all three are references to “slaves of the Lord,” and all three portray “slaves of the Lord” in a consistent role. That Luke is highlighting the role that God’s δούλαι/δούλοι will play in the unfolding of God’s will is suggested in the subtle alteration Luke makes to a quotation of Jewish Scripture in the first passage.

In Acts 2, Peter explains to those gathered how they are able to “hear [the disciples] declaring in [the listeners’] own languages the great things of God” (2:11). “This,” Peter explains, “is that which has been spoken through the prophet Joel” about the outpouring of God’s Spirit (2:16). In LXX Joel 3:2, one finds the phrase “even upon male slaves and female slaves will I pour out my Spirit in those days” (καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς δούλας ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου). Luke has Peter altering the prophetic reference by adding the possessive pronoun μου to both the δούλοι and δούλαι, and by adding a description of what God’s slaves will do in response to the outpouring of God’s Spirit: “Indeed, in those days I will pour out my Spirit upon *my* male slaves and upon *my* female slaves *and they will prophesy*” (καὶ γὰρ ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους μου καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς δούλας μου ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου, καὶ προφητεύσουσιν [2:18, emphasis added]). By adding μου to δούλοι and δούλαι Luke transforms what seems in Joel to be an emphasis on inclusion<sup>41</sup> into a statement of identification: the passage portrays God saying, “These are *my* slaves upon whom I have poured out my Spirit, and they are *prophesying* to you.” Luke’s addition of μου reminds the reader of the first δούλη κυρίου mentioned in the narrative. The addition of προφητεύω and the repeated emphasis on God’s Spirit reminds the reader of the next δούλος in Luke, Simeon. That the disciples come to understand themselves as δούλαι/δούλοι of the Lord, charged specifically with proclaiming God’s word, becomes clear in the final two references to δούλοι in Luke-Acts.

Following their imprisonment and trial (Acts 4:1–22), Peter and John report to the other believers what has happened. The group responds by praying: “And now, behold their threats, Lord, and allow your slaves to speak your word with boldness” (καὶ τὰ νῦν, κύριε, ἔπιθε ἐπὶ τὰς ἀπειλὰς αὐτῶν καὶ δὸς τοῖς δούλοις σου μετὰ παρρησίας πάσης λαλεῖν τὸν λόγον σου [Acts 4:29]). The connection drawn to the “prophesying” δούλοι/δούλαι of the Pentecost scene is abundantly clear from the two verses that follow. Their prayer concludes: “while you stretch out your hand with healing, and signs and wonders come about through the name of your holy servant, Jesus” (ἐν τῷ τὴν χεῖρά [σου] ἐκτείνειν σε εἰς ἴασιν καὶ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα γίνεσθαι διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ ἁγίου παιδός σου Ἰησοῦ [Acts 4:30]). The reference to signs (σημεῖα) and wonders (τέρατα) reminds the reader of the quotation of Joel in Acts 2:19. Verse 31 then recalls the entire scene depicted in Acts 2:1–4: “And while they were praying, the place where they had gathered was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak (λαλέω) the word of God with boldness (μετὰ παρρησίας)” (4:31). The use of λαλέω and μετὰ παρρησίας ties this description back to the believers’ prayer in v. 29 and highlights a shift in what it means to be called δούλη/δούλος κυρίου. The allusion to David in Luke 1:38 evokes images of human power and authority. Roughly halfway through Luke’s narrative, those images are transformed. Now, the role of the δούλαι/δούλοι κυρίου is very specific: empowered by the Spirit, they are to proclaim God’s word, a point confirmed by the final reference to δούλοι in Luke-Acts.

<sup>41</sup>That is, God is pouring out the Spirit on everyone, free and slave alike. As noted above, the text of Joel does not specify any outcome of the pouring out of God’s Spirit on the slaves.

In Acts 16:16–17, a female slave possessed of a “spirit of divination” (πνεῦμα πύθωνα) follows Paul and his companions around Philippi, screaming, “These people are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation” (οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι δοῦλοι τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου εἰσίν, οἷτινες καταγγέλλουσιν ὑμῖν ὁδὸν σωτηρίας [16:17]). Much in the same way that Jesus was identified as the Son of God by demons (e.g., Luke 4:41), this “Pythian spirit” acknowledges a higher God<sup>42</sup> and underscores what it means to be a “slave of the Lord”—it means to proclaim God’s salvation.

Luke’s allusion to David in Mary’s declaration as “slave of the Lord” reveals some of the specific expectations of the coming messiah in the time of Jesus. It helps Luke depict what people were anticipating in terms of a leader whose rule would see Israel freed from its enemies. Luke’s challenge was to portray both those expectations and the messianic reality of Jesus. Just as specific expectations about God’s care, mercy, and deliverance would need to be reshaped in light of this new reality, so also the image of the “slave of the Lord” would need to be recast. For David, and briefly for Mary, this appellation could be understood as a position of personal power. In the course of Luke’s narrative, “slave of the Lord” is transformed to highlight those who are called to proclaim God’s power, even when that power is manifested in ways that elude expectations.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Alongside the explicit references to David in Luke 1 stand a number of allusions to David in Luke’s presentation of Mary. The explicit references have long been the subject of scholarly commentary. The allusions have been largely ignored. In part, this silence may reflect the relative obscurity of the references themselves. A more pressing reason, I have argued, is the difficulty readers have connecting two figures that seem so unconnected. Far from being the only problematic allusions in Luke’s infancy narrative, these references to David fall into a complex array of allusions that run the gamut from challenging to downright puzzling. Some scholars are content to keep Luke’s allusions at arm’s length, viewing them as a collective by which Luke connects the story of Jesus to the story of Israel. I have been more intrigued by the suggestion that each of these allusions creates an interplay to be explored within the narrative.

Luke’s allusion to David in the description of Mary as “slave of the Lord” underscores first-century expectations of a messianic deliverer by whose hand God would “save Israel ... from the hand of all its enemies” (LXX 2 Sam 3:18). This allusion works, not by contriving a deeper connection between the figures of David and Mary, but by evoking images of a longed-for, victorious past—a past in which the faithful are envisioned as slaves to the Lord alone. The allusions in Luke 1 do connect the story of Jesus to the story of Israel. They do so, however, in a manner that is complex and nuanced. Luke’s are not allusions that merely remind the reader whose history is at stake, recalling a promise to David and then claiming its fulfillment. Rather, Luke’s allusions remind the reader just how complicated the story is. They show the reader how people hoped certain promises would be fulfilled in the coming of the Messiah. Then Luke uses the language of those hopeful descriptions to explain the actual unfolding of God’s plan. Within this framework, the position of

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<sup>42</sup>L. T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, SP 5 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 294.

power Mary claims as ἡ δούλη κυρίου—a “slave” to the Lord and no one else—is transformed. As the narrative progresses, the δοῦλαι/δοῦλοι κυρίου become those who proclaim the power of God.

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## CHAPTER SIX

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# Repentance and Turning as a Unified Motif in Luke-Acts

KINDALEE PFREMMER DE LONG

Multiple scholars have investigated the concept of repentance (μετανοέω) in the New Testament and early Christianity, often in comparison with repentance in Hebrew, Hellenistic Jewish, Rabbinic, and Greco-Roman traditions. Only a handful of studies have focused specifically on Luke's understanding of repentance, despite the fact that his two-volume narrative prominently features repentance.<sup>1</sup> Others have explored conversion in early Christianity, often focusing on the verb "to turn" (ἐπιστρέφω).<sup>2</sup> In much of this work, scholars have assumed that the Hebrew word for turn (שׁוּב) lies behind both repentance and conversion. By contrast, the only monograph on repentance in Luke-Acts disputes this view, arguing that repentance does not derive its meaning from "turn" in the Jewish scriptures. While contributing much, this previous work has not fully appreciated the extent to which Luke-Acts *unites* the two concepts of turning and repentance by drawing upon a fixed word pair in Jewish scripture. In fact, the narrative of Luke-Acts so closely aligns these concepts that they ought to be understood together as a unified narrative motif.<sup>3</sup> To make this case, the current study revisits the use of נָחַם and שׁוּב in the MT and μετανοέω and στρέφω (with various

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<sup>1</sup>I am pleased to contribute this chapter in honor of James H. Charlesworth, whose prolific work has had an immeasurable impact on historians' understanding of second-temple Judaism and Christian origins. A version of this study was presented in the Gospel of Luke session at the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Boston, MA.

D. P. Moessner, "Paul in Acts: Preacher of Eschatological Repentance to Israel," *NTS* 34 (1988): 96–104; J. N. Bailey, "Repentance in Luke-Acts" (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 1994); G. D. Nave, *The Role and Function of Repentance in Luke-Acts* (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2002); and J. D. Chatraw, "Balancing out (W)Right: Jesus' Theology of Individual and Corporate Repentance and Forgiveness in the Gospel of Luke," *JETS* 55 (2012): 299–321.

<sup>2</sup>A. D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933); P. Aubin, *Le Problème de la "conversion": Étude sur un terme commun à l'hellénisme et au christianisme des trois premiers siècles*, TH 1 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1963); B. R. Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light: Aspects of Conversion in the New Testament* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1986); R. D. Witherup, *Conversion in the New Testament*, Zacchaeus Studies. New Testament (Collegetown, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994); R. V. Peace, *Conversion in the New Testament: Paul and the Twelve*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001); Z. A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean*, BZNW 130 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2004); and G. E. Sterling, "Turning to God: Conversion in Greek-Speaking Judaism and Early Christianity," in *Scripture and Traditions: Essays on Early Judaism and Christianity in Honor of Carl R. Holladay*, edited by Patrick Gray and Gail R. O'Day, *NTS* 129 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 69–95. Only a few studies have focused on conversion in Luke or Luke-Acts, e.g., F. Méndez-Moratalla, *The Paradigm of Conversion in Luke*, *JSNTSup* 252 (New York: T&T Clark, 2004).

<sup>3</sup>The intent of the current study is to provide a foundation for a full narrative analysis of the motif of turning-and-repentance, to be published subsequently.

prefixes) in the LXX and Hellenistic Jewish literature; investigates Luke's distinctive use of στρέφω vocabulary; and considers three passages in Luke-Acts that set turning and repentance in parallel.

## 1. SCHOLARSHIP ON REPENTANCE IN LUKE AND ACTS

Research on repentance has largely understood that the use of the word μετανοέω in the New Testament derives not from its wider use in non-Jewish Greek literature but from the Jewish scriptures, specifically the word “turn” (שוב).<sup>4</sup> In the New Testament and other Christian texts repentance describes a comprehensive sort of change, such as a change of orientation or behavior. By contrast, in traditional Greek, the word μετανοέω means “to change one’s mind,” in a more intellectual sense. Thus, scholars conclude that its meaning comes from the Jewish concept of שׁוּב.

However, Guy Nave, in the only narrative analysis of repentance in Luke-Acts, contests this commonly accepted line of thinking.<sup>5</sup> His argument has two primary foundations. First, disputing the idea that μετανοέω means primarily a change of mind in Greek texts, he reexamines this vocabulary (both the verb and noun) in a wide array of literature, offering evidence that μετανοέω has a broader meaning, including a change of heart; feelings of regret and remorse; expressions of lament; guilt in response to inappropriate actions (ἁμαρτία); a cure to those who are sick in soul; and a means of reconciliation between people. He concludes that μετανοέω in the Christian tradition corresponds closely with the Greek use of the word.<sup>6</sup>

Second, to argue against the assumed link between μετανοέω and שׁוּב, Nave analyzes the translation of שׁוּב in the Septuagint. He asserts that the Christian concept of μετανοέω cannot derive from depictions of שׁוּב in the Jewish scriptures because the LXX always translates שׁוּב with στρέφω (with various prefixes) and never with μετανοέω (or perhaps only once, depending upon how Isa 46:8 is understood).<sup>7</sup> This pattern holds even though שׁוּב frequently describes what would be called repentance in English: actions such as turning back to God, turning from sin to a right path, or turning one’s heart. Instead, in the Septuagint, μετανοέω translates נַחַם, which means to comfort or show compassion and in some cases to convey a “genuine sense of remorse ... regarding sin and wrongdoing.”<sup>8</sup>

Based on these two points, Nave concludes that נַחַם not שׁוּב serves as the primary source for the Christian concept of repentance and that studies of repentance in the early Christian period ought to bring μετανοέω/μετάνοια out from behind the shadow of שׁוּב to be studied in its own light.<sup>9</sup> From these conclusions, he contends that Luke’s understanding of repentance relies on the Greco-Roman concept of μετάνοια/μετανοέω (informed by the Jewish semantic field of נַחַם) and so brackets out consideration of στρέφω in his subsequent narrative study of repentance in Luke-Acts.

<sup>4</sup>Nave, *Role and Function*, 70–4.

<sup>5</sup>Nave’s overall goal in the volume is to examine “how the theme of repentance functions in both the narrative structure of Luke-Acts and in the social reality of the narrative world created by Luke-Acts” (*ibid.*, 6).

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 70–1.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 112. Nave acknowledges that the two words may have a symbiotic relationship in Jewish scriptures, but he does not pursue this line of thought. My argument is that the two words comprise a fixed pair in Jewish scriptures and are so used in Luke-Acts.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 118. In later Jewish texts in Greek, the emphasis shifts to a change in thinking and behavior.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 119.



Nave’s work offers an important corrective to assumptions about the link between μετανοέω and שׁוּב. However, it goes too far, as correctives often do, and overlooks a significant aspect of Luke’s narrative depiction of repentance: in the narrative, the words στρέφω and μετανοέω depict turning-and-repentance as a parallel word pair, as will be demonstrated below.

## 2. שׁוּב AND נָחַם IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

In response to Nave’s argument, it is necessary to revisit the concepts of turning and repentance in the Hebrew Bible and Septuagint. While Nave’s observation about translation is accurate, the picture is more complicated than he claims, particularly because when נָחַם describes what might be called repentance, it primarily refers to divine activity, rather than human activity, and it is often paired with שׁוּב.

The word שׁוּב occurs frequently in the Jewish scriptures, describing both physical and metaphorical turns. In about 900 hundred examples, the word portrays physical turns to go somewhere, as well as the physical turning of one’s attention.<sup>10</sup> In 164 instances, שׁוּב depicts metaphorical turning, all in the context of the divine covenant with Israel.

This covenantal turning can be positive or negative. In twenty-one instances, God does the turning, either toward the people in mercy or away from them in punishment. Far more often, 123 times, people in Israel do the turning.<sup>11</sup> Negatively, humans turn away from God, often in idolatry, and toward sin or evil. Positively, humans turn back toward God or the path of righteousness.<sup>12</sup> These turns at times involve not only a change of outward attention or behavior but also an internal change of mind or heart.<sup>13</sup> Human and divine behaviors often mirror each other. When humans turn away from God, God turns away, a metaphor for punishment or discipline. When humans turn back to God, God turns to them or turns away from divine punishment, metaphors for restoration and blessing.<sup>14</sup>

By comparison, the word נָחַם occurs in the Jewish scriptures far less frequently, 102 times. About half the time, it means “to comfort,” never translated by μετανοέω.<sup>15</sup> There are thirty-seven instances in which the root נָחַם means to change one’s mind, attitude, or actions.<sup>16</sup> God is the most frequent subject of the verb in this sense. Only four of the thirty-seven cases depict human activity

<sup>10</sup>A comprehensive analysis of the 1,064 instances of שׁוּב in Jewish scripture defines the most basic, physical sense as movement “in an opposite direction in which one was going with the assumption that one will arrive again at the initial point of departure”; W. L. Holladay, *The Root ŠūBH in the Old Testament with Particular Reference to Its Usages in Covenantal Contexts* (Leiden: Brill, 1958), 53. To put this another way, it means “to return.” The word can also describe the physical turning of attention, especially through the idiom of turning one’s face.

<sup>11</sup>Most of the examples of Israel turning away or toward God occur in Deuteronomy and Jeremiah.

<sup>12</sup>E.g., Ps 85:8; Jer 15:7.

<sup>13</sup>For example, in Isa 6:10, the people’s שׁוּב involves changed attention and understanding, as well as healing/restoration. See also 1 Kgs 8:48.

<sup>14</sup>In exilic texts, turning back to God is also associated with return to the land.

<sup>15</sup>In such cases, נָחַם depicts comfort experienced by humans or less frequently by God, particularly in *piel* but also in other forms. It is most often—but not always—translated by παρακαλέω.

<sup>16</sup>This second most common usage, to depict a change of mind or relenting about a direction one has taken, occurs almost entirely in the *niphāl*, with the exceptions of Num 23:19 and Deut 32:36. God repents/relents about creation (Gen 6:6–7) or having made Saul king (1 Sam 15:11, 35). Most often, God relents about covenantal punishment/disaster (Exod 32:12, 14; Deut 32:36; Judg 2:18; 2 Sam 24:16; 1 Chron 21:15; Jer 18:8; 26:3, 13, 19 [LXX 33:3, 13, 19]; 42:10 [LXX 49:10]; Joel 2:13 and 14; Amos 7:3 and 6; and Jonah 3:9, 10 and 4:2) or does not do so (Num 23:19; 1 Sam 15:29; Ps 110:4 [LXX 109:4]; Jer 4:28; 15:6; and 20:16; Ezek 24:14; and Zech 8:14). God’s relenting about punishment is closely associated with the word’s use in depicting God’s compassion (Pss 90:13 [LXX 89:13] and 106:45 [LXX 105:45]). One verse presents the

in relationship with God: what could be called human repentance.<sup>17</sup> The LXX uses μετανοέω to translate נחם in only fifteen of the thirty-seven instances (in a total of fourteen verses).<sup>18</sup>

Table 6.1 provides data about these fourteen verses. Most often, נחם describes God relenting, changing the divine mind, or refusing to do so (lines 1–12). In only two instances does μετανοέω describe human repentance (lines 13–14). As the table also shows, ten of these fourteen verses set נחם/μετανοέω in parallel with שׁוּב and/or στρέφω (line 1 and lines 7–14) or do so in near context (line 6). In one case, the LXX contains a μετανοέω/στρέφω parallelism that is not present in Hebrew (line 1).<sup>19</sup> Conversely, in two cases, the MT’s שׁוּב נחם pairing is not reflected in the LXX (lines 13–14).<sup>20</sup>

The ten examples of repent/turn pairing contain three types of parallelism. First, with God as the subject of both verbs, the pairing depicts complimentary action in the same direction: God relents and turns toward humans (lines 8–9) or refuses to do so (line 7). Second, with two subjects, the pairing portrays complimentary action toward each other: humans turn and so God relents (lines 10–12).<sup>21</sup> Jonah 3:9–10 (lines 9 and 11) well illustrates both single-subject and two-subject complimentary parallels:

מִי־יֹדַע יָשׁוּב וְנָחַם הָאֱלֹהִים  
וְשָׁב מִחֲרוֹן אָפוּ וְלֹא נֶאֱבַד<sup>10</sup>  
וִירֵא הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם כִּי־שָׁבוּ מִדַּרְכֵּם הָרָעָה  
וַיִּנְחַם הָאֱלֹהִים עַל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר לַעֲשׂוֹת־לָהֶם  
לֹא עָשָׂה

τίς οἶδεν εἰ μετανοήσει ὁ θεός<sup>22</sup>

καὶ ἀποστρέψει ἐξ ὀργῆς θυμοῦ αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐ μὴ ἀπολώμεθα

<sup>10</sup>καὶ εἶδεν ὁ θεός τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν ὅτι ἀπέστρεψαν ἀπὸ τῶν ὁδῶν αὐτῶν τῶν πονηρῶν

καὶ μετενόησεν ὁ θεός ἐπὶ τῇ κακίᾳ ἣ ἔλάλησεν τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτοῖς

καὶ οὐκ ἐποίησεν

Who knows? God may turn and change his mind;<sup>23</sup>

he may turn from his fierce anger, so that we do not perish.

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways,

God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them;

and he did not do it.

possibility that God may relent about blessing (Jer 18:10). When referring to a change of plan, the LXX translates נחם most often with μετανοέω or μεταμέλω/μεταμέλομαι, but also with παύω (with prefixes), παρακαλέω, and ἐλεέω.

<sup>17</sup>The four instances of human changes of mind/repentance will be examined in more detail below. The LXX translates by μεταμέλω (Exod 13:17), μετανοέω (Jer 8:6; 38:19), and, in one case, in a freer way (Job 42:6). There are two additional cases in which נחם describes a change of mind about extending human compassion toward other humans (Judg 21:6, 15).

<sup>18</sup>In 1 Sam 15:29, μετανοέω translates נחם twice.

<sup>19</sup>In 1 Sam 15:29, the LXX uses the word pair ἀποστρέφω and μετανοέω to translate “the Glory of Israel will not lie (שָׁקַר) nor repent (נָחַם)” (line 1). Translation is JPS.

<sup>20</sup>An additional נחם/שׁוּב parallel occurs in Exod 13:17. God thinks, “If the people face war, they may change their minds (נחם) and return (שׁוּב) to Egypt.” The LXX translates the word pair with ἀποστρέφω and μεταμέλω.

<sup>21</sup>In Jer 18:8, if humans turn (שׁוּב) God will relent (נחם). In Jonah 3:10, humans turned (שׁוּב), and God relented (נחם). In Joel 2:13, humans are called to turn (שׁוּב) for God will relent (נחם).

<sup>22</sup>The LXX eliminates the repetition of שׁוּב in the MT, translating the first שׁוּב/נחם pair with μετανοέω only.

<sup>23</sup>Translation adapted from NRSV, which has “relent” for שׁוּב.

TABLE 6.1 LXX Instances of נחם Translated with μετανοέω

	<i>Verse</i>	<i>Subject of נחם</i>	<i>Presence of שׁוּב (MT)</i>	<i>Type of נחם/שׁוּב Parallelism</i>	<i>Presence of στρέφω in LXX</i>	<i>Relationship to MT</i>
1	1 Sam 15:29	God	None		ἀποστρέφω	Translates שׁקַר
2	Amos 7:3	God	None			
3	Amos 7:6	God	None			
4	Jonah 4:2	God	None			
5	Zech 8:14	God	None			
6	Jer 18:10	God	See Jer 18:8	Near context	See Jer 18:8	
7	Jer 4:28	God	Parallels נחם	Complimentary, same subject	ἀποστρέφω	Translates שׁוּב
8	Joel 2:14	God	Parallels נחם	Complimentary, same subject	ἐπιστρέφω	Translates שׁוּב
9	Jonah 3:9	God	Parallels נחם	Complimentary, same subject	ἀποστρέφω	Translates שׁוּב
10	Jer 18:8	God	Parallels נחם	Complimentary, divine/human subjects	ἐπιστρέφω	Translates שׁוּב
11	Jonah 3:10	God	Parallels נחם	Complimentary, divine/human subjects	ἀποστρέφω	Translates שׁוּב
12	Joel 2:13	God	Parallels נחם	Complimentary, divine/human subjects	ἐπιστρέφω	Translates שׁוּב
13	Jer 8:6	Humans	Parallels נחם	Oppositional, same subject	None	
14	Jer 31:19 [LXX 38:19]	Human	Parallels נחם	Oppositional, same subject	None	

In the first two lines in the MT, God's turning (from his anger) and relenting are essentially the same action of averting calamity for the people. The third and fourth lines describe both sides of the relationship. Because the people turn from evil, God relents from the calamity planned. The parallelism of the poetry creates a sense of balanced action: the people turn, and God turns/relents.

Third, with humans as the subject of נָחַם, turn/repent pairings in the MT describe oppositional parallels (lines 13–14): the action of humans in opposite directions. In Jer 8:6, humans refuse to repent (toward God) and instead turn to their own course (away from God) (line 13). In Jer 31:19 [LXX 38:19], the speaker looks back on a turn (away from God) followed later by repentance (coming back to God) (line 14). However, the LXX does not retain these pairings. In Jer 8:6, the LXX has “the runner discontinues (διαλείπω) his course” for the MT’s “all turn (שׁוּב) to their own course.” In Jer 31:19 [LXX 38:19], the LXX translates the MT’s “after I turned away (שׁוּב)” as “after my captivity (αἰχμαλωσία).” The MT contains one additional example in which נָחַם connotes human repentance before God, when Job repents in dust and ashes at the end of the book (42:6), but the LXX does not retain the connotation of repentance; in Greek, Job considers (ἡγέομαι) himself dust and ashes.

Nave has argued that נָחַם provides the primary thought foundation for human repentance (μετανοέω) in the Christian tradition. But the analysis above shows that (1) in the LXX, there are only two instances of human repentance described with the word μετανοέω; (2) in both of these cases, the MT sets נָחַם and שׁוּב in parallel; and (3) eight of the other twelve verses in which μετανοέω appears *pair* this word with a στρέφω verb (or do so in near context).

Rather than showing that נָחַם provides the sole foundation for human μετανοέω, this evidence suggests that in the Jewish scriptural tradition, repenting/relenting (נָחַם/μετανοέω) becomes associated with covenantal turning (שׁוּב/στρέφω) through parallelism—both in the MT (rows 6–14) and LXX (rows 1, 6–12)—so that the two words become nearly synonymous in such contexts. God changes the divine mind about punishment, turning toward humans in mercy (or refuses to do so). So, too, do humans change their plan/path and turn back toward God, receiving mercy (or they refuse to do so).

Expanding beyond the fifteen instances in which μετανοέω translates נָחַם, there are eight additional biblical texts that also feature this turn/repent parallelism, in the MT, LXX, or both, as depicted in Table 6.2.

These examples have turn/repent parallels similar to those in Table 6.1, but with a higher percentage of human repentance (rows 5–8). With regard to the use of μετανοέω, this word twice describes human repentance, paired with a στρέφω verb in both cases (lines 7–8).

The evidence above argues against Nave's assertion that נָחַם alone lies behind μετανοέω in Christian texts. Rather, it shows that “repent and turn” constitute a word pair: what scholars of Hebrew poetry have called “fixed pairs” or “parallel pairs.”<sup>24</sup> Word pairs appear together frequently, in parallel lines or in the same line, often joined by “and.”<sup>25</sup> They can be similar, such as hand and palm, or opposite, such as day and night. In synonymous fixed pairs, the words need not be precisely synonymous but are in “some sense equivalent.”<sup>26</sup> Fixed pairs, writes James Kugel, “strongly establish the feeling of correspondence between A and B ... [W]ith the most frequently

<sup>24</sup>A. Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 65–80; J. L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), 27–35.

<sup>25</sup>Kugel, *Idea*, 28.

<sup>26</sup>Berlin, *Dynamics*, 71.

TABLE 6.2 Additional Turn/Repent Parallels in the MT or LXX

<i>Verse</i>	<i>Turn: Vocabulary and Subject</i>	<i>Repent: Vocabulary and Subject</i>	<i>Type of Turn/Repent Parallelism</i>	<i>Content</i>
1Exod 32:12	שוב παύω ὀργῆς	נחם γίνομαι ἰλεως	Complimentary, same subject	Moses asks God to turn from fierce wrath and relent from bringing disaster.
21 Sam 15:11	God שוב ἀποστρέφω	God נחם παρακαλέω	Complimentary, divine/human subjects	Saul has turned from God, so God regrets having made Saul king
3Ps 90:13 [LXX 89:13]	Human שוב ἐπιστρέφω	God נחם παρακαλέω	Complimentary, same subject	The speaker calls God to turn and have compassion.
4Isa 12:1	God שוב ἀποστρέφω	God נחם ἐλεέω	Complimentary, same subject	God was angry but turned God's face [toward me], and comforted me.
5Exod 13:17	God שוב ἀποστρέφω	God נחם μεταμέλω	Complimentary, same subject	God thinks that the people may change their minds and return to Egypt.
6Jer 26:3 [LXX 33:3]	Humans שוב ἀποστρέφω	Humans נחם παύω	Complimentary, divine/human subjects	Humans may turn from their evil ways, and God may relent about punishment.
7Isa 46:8	Humans שוב μετανοέω	God No Hebrew parallel ἀποστρέφω	Complimentary, same subject	“Recall (שוב) it to mind, you transgressors.” (MT) “Repent, you wanderers. Turn in your heart.” (LXX)
8Sir 17:24–25	No Hebrew שוב ἐπιστρέφω Humans	No Hebrew שוב μετανοέω Humans	Complimentary, same subject	Those who repent will be comforted, so turn to the Lord and pray.

used pairs, the appearance of the first in itself creates the anticipation of its fellow, and when the latter comes it creates a harmonious feeling of completion and satisfaction.”<sup>27</sup> Fixed pairs may be identified, in part, by frequency of occurrence. Adele Berlin, drawing upon psycholinguistic research, describes two types of word pairs in the Hebrew Bible: common pairs created through easily produced word associations and less common pairs that are the “product of more careful thought.”<sup>28</sup>

In total, combining the data in Tables 6.1 and 6.2, the MT contains fourteen examples of the words שׁוּב and נָחַם occurring together.<sup>29</sup> The LXX includes nine instances of the word pair στρέφω and μετανοέω, including two verses in which the Greek translators introduce the word pair when it is not present in Hebrew (1 Sam 15:29; Isa 46:8) and one case in which the Hebrew is not extant (Sir 17:24–25).<sup>30</sup> In all cases, these word pairs are joined by “and” or appear in single- or multiline parallelism. This evidence suggests that they are a word pair of Berlin’s second type: not an extremely common, traditional pair (such as voice and words), frequent throughout Hebrew poetry, but a pair that emerges later, in the prophets, perhaps influenced by Exodus and 1 Samuel. Over time, the more common concept of שׁוּב, in its metaphorical sense of covenantal turning toward (or away) from God, becomes associated with נָחַם (and thus μετανοέω) in the sense of a change of mind, plan, or behavior that results in a compassionate (on the part of God) or repentant (on the part of humans) return to positive relationship.

### 3. TURN AND REPENT PARALLELS IN OTHER EARLY JEWISH LITERATURE IN GREEK

In later Jewish literature in Greek, this word pair is infrequent, but it does appear. I have found five examples. In *J.W.* 5.415–416, Josephus speaks to people in besieged Jerusalem, seeking to convince them to surrender. He exhorts that God will be reconciled to those who confess their faults and repent of them (μετανοέω). His next sentence urges them to turn (ἐπιστρέφω) from their wicked ways.

In *Ios.* 1.87, Philo, describing Joseph’s time in prison, from the Genesis story, asserts that the cruelty and inhumanity of jailors is well known. Even so, the virtue of Joseph transforms his jailor, who gives over the running of the prison to Joseph. Instead of torturing the inmates, Joseph teaches them philosophy. Joseph’s interventions turn (ἐπιστρέφω) even those who seemed morally incurable, so that they repent (μετανοέω) of what they have previously done.

In other literature, two passages evidence complimentary, single-subject parallelism. In the fragmentary *Apocryphon of Ezekiel*, God calls the house of Israel to repent (μετανοέω). Even if their sins reach heaven, if they turn (ἐπιστρέφω) and say in their heart, “Father,” God will listen.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Kugel, *Idea*, 29.

<sup>28</sup> Berlin, *Dynamics*, 69.

<sup>29</sup> Lam 1:16 could be added as a fifteenth example. In this verse, the speaker weeps because of the distance of a comforter (נָחַם) who could return (שׁוּב) his soul. I have not counted it because נָחַם in *piel* in this verse means comfort, rather than a changed plan, and “return my soul” is a Hebrew idiom meaning something along the same lines. LXX translates with παρακαλέω/ἐπιστρέφω.

<sup>30</sup> However, there are also nine instances in which the LXX does not translate שׁוּב/נָחַם with στρέφω/μετανοέω, if Lam 1:16 is included.

<sup>31</sup> *Apocr. Ezek.* 2:1, *OTP* 1:494.



Similarly, in the *Testament of Abraham*, God describes divine compassion on sinners in the hope that they may “turn (ἐπιστρέφω) and live, repent (μετανοέω) of their sins and be saved.”<sup>32</sup> In the *Testament of Zebulun*, the word pair appears in complimentary, divine-human parallelism. Israel will repent (μετανοέω), and the Lord will return (ἐπιστρέφω) to the people, for God is merciful and compassionate (9:7).<sup>33</sup> Such examples show that the word pair remained in use during the late Second Temple period.

#### 4. LUKE’S EMPHASIS ON TURNING

Before exploring how Luke uses the turn/repent word pair, it is useful to explore Luke’s overall emphasis on turning, depicted through στρέφω with a variety of prefixes. Luke-Acts portrays both literal and metaphorical turns in distinctive ways.

With regard to emphasis, μετάνοια and μετανοέω appear twenty-three times in Luke and Acts. Verbs related to στρέφω (and on one occasion a noun) appear three times more often: sixty-nine times across the two volumes, with a bit more emphasis in the Gospel.<sup>34</sup> By comparison, στρέφω verbs for turn appear only forty times in the rest of the New Testament. In other words, Luke’s work contains 63 percent of the NT’s στρέφω-related vocabulary.

Many instances of this vocabulary (forty-six) describe physical turns.<sup>35</sup> Characters’ movements are of two sorts: they either turn to face another character or they turn toward a location in order to relocate there, often returning to home or a place of familiarity, as depicted in Table 6.3.

Many interpreters have seen these physical uses of στρέφω as simple narrative technique, perhaps modeled on the Septuagint. While style may comprise part of the explanation for Luke’s frequent depictions of physical turning, it is not the whole story. Luke’s language of physical turning is distinctive in other ways, both in the narrative’s use of the word ὑποστρέφω and its scenes in which characters turn toward other characters.

Luke uses the word ὑποστρέφω almost exclusively to describe characters’ physical turns to return to a previous location.<sup>36</sup> By comparison, in the LXX, physical turns to go appear frequently, but not typically with the word ὑποστρέφω, which occurs only sixteen times in the LXX and translates שׁוּב only nine times.<sup>37</sup> Thus, even though Luke’s use of ὑποστρέφω may reflect the MT’s use of שׁוּב

<sup>32</sup>T. Ab. B 12:13; OTP 1:901.

<sup>33</sup>T. Zeb. 9:7; OTP 1:807.

<sup>34</sup>στρέφω verbs for turn and one noun appear thirty-nine times in Luke and thirty times in Acts. Luke is the only NT writer to use the noun ἐπιστροφή (Acts 15:3).

<sup>35</sup>In a few instances, στρέφω verbs have meanings other than “turn.”

<sup>36</sup>The single exception is Acts 13:34, where Paul describes the resurrection as Jesus not returning to decay. In every other case, the word ὑποστρέφω means a physical return to a physical place, accounting for thirty-two of thirty-six such turns in Luke-Acts. At the beginning of the Gospel, Mary returns home after visiting Elizabeth (Luke 1:56). At the end of Acts, soldiers return to Jerusalem after taking Paul to Antipatris (Acts 23:31). In between, a variety of characters return places, often home (Luke 2:20, 43; 7:10; 8:39; 11:24; 19:12; and 23:48; Acts 8:28 and 21:6) or a place from which they have recently departed (Luke 2:45; 4:1, 14; 8:40; 9:10; 10:17; 17:15, 18; 23:56; and 24:9, 33, and 52; Acts 1:12; 8:25; 12:25; 20:3; and 22:17). There are four other “returns” in Luke’s narrative. Three are narrated with ἐπιστρέφω: Jesus’ family returns to Galilee (Luke 2:39), the spirit of Jairus’s daughter returns (Luke 8:55), and Paul and Barnabas return to cities they have visited previously (Acts 15:36). In the fourth instance, Luke uses ἀναστρέφω to describe the temple police returning to the council with a report (Acts 5:22).

<sup>37</sup>Nor is ὑποστρέφω common in the NT, occurring only three times outside of Luke-Acts. It describes Paul’s return to Damascus (Gal 1:17), the return of Abraham from defeating enemies (Heb 7:1), and the metaphorical turning back of apostate followers of Christ (2 Pet 2:21).

TABLE 6.3 στρέφω and Physical Movement in Luke-Acts

<i>Vocabulary</i>	<i>Gospel of Luke</i>	<i>Book of Acts</i>	<i>Count</i>
Turning to go or go back ἀναστρέφω, ἐπιστρέφω, ὑποστρέφω	25 times 1:56; 2:20, 39, 43, 45; 4:1, 14; 7:10; 8:37, 39, 40, 55; 9:10; 10:17; 11:24; 17:15, 18, 31; 19:12, 15; 23:48, 56; 24:9, 33; 24:52	12 times 1:12; 5:22; 8:25, 28; 11:30; 12:25; 13:13; 14:21; 20:3; 21:6; 22:17; 23:32	37
Turning toward someone ἐπιστρέφω, στρέφω	7 times 7:9, 44; 9:55; 10:23; 14:25; 22:61; 23:2	2 times 9:40; 16:18	9

for physical turning to go somewhere, the difference in Greek vocabulary suggests that it is not a simple reflection of Septuagint-style narration.

Luke's narration of one character turning attention to another is also idiosyncratic. In the Gospel, the narrator describes only Jesus turning his attention to other characters. Jesus does so seven times—always with the verb στρέφω, without a prefix—once to look (Luke 22:61) and six times to speak (Luke 7:9, 44; 9:55; 10:23; 14:25; 23:28). This way of telling Jesus' story stands out by comparison with the other Gospels.<sup>38</sup> Five of the seven scenes of Jesus' turns in Luke can be compared with Synoptic parallels. In all five cases, Luke's Gospel includes this turning by Jesus when the other Gospels do not. While in Luke, only Jesus turns his attention to other characters, in Matthew and John, a variety of characters other than Jesus turn their attention.<sup>39</sup>

The distinctive consistency and frequency in Luke's Gospel of Jesus as the one who turns to look or speak suggests that these turns by Jesus are not simple descriptions of physical action. Rather, the narrator is directing the attention of the audience to these moments of Jesus's attention.<sup>40</sup> In Acts, Peter and Paul, like Jesus, each turn to speak to other characters, before a resurrection and an exorcism.<sup>41</sup> This brief survey suggests that physical turns may be a meaningful part of Luke's motif of turning and deserve more exploration.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup>In Mark and Matthew, Jesus turns only twice. In the scene of the hemorrhaging woman in Mark, Jesus turns about (ἐπιστρέφω) in the crowd, to see who touched him (5:30), while in Matthew, he turns (στρέφω) directly to the woman and speaks to her (9:22). Luke does not depict this turning. In the scene of Jesus' rebuke of Peter, which Luke does not include, Jesus turns (ἐπιστρέφω) to the disciples in Mark (8:33) and in Matthew, he turns (στρέφω) to Peter (16:23). John presents Jesus turning (στρέφω) toward someone only one time (John 1:38).

<sup>39</sup>In Matthew, people turn their cheeks (5:39) and pigs turn their attention to attack (7:6). In John, characters besides Jesus turn their attention three times (1:38; 20:14, 16; and 21:20). In Mark, Jesus alone turns his attention in the two scenes described in the previous footnote.

<sup>40</sup>Jesus declares to a crowd the faith of a centurion (Luke 7:9); forgives the sins of the woman who has washed his feet (7:44); rebukes James and John for wanting to destroy a Samaritan village (9:55); blesses the disciples because they see and hear (10:23); calls his followers to carry the cross and give up their possessions (14:25); looks at Peter after his betrayal, causing Peter to remember his words about the rooster's crow (22:61); and warns the weeping daughters of Jerusalem about coming travails (23:28).

<sup>41</sup>In Acts, Peter and Paul also each turn to speak before miraculous interventions. Peter turns to the body of Tabitha and says, "Tabitha, get up" (Acts 9:40). In Acts 16:18, Paul, annoyed by a young enslaved woman with a Pythian spirit, turns to her and says to the Spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her."

<sup>42</sup>This feature of Luke's narrative has been observed by a few scholars, e.g., J. B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NIC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 788.

TABLE 6.4 στρέφω and Metaphorical Turns in Luke-Acts

<i>Vocabulary</i>	<i>Gospel of Luke</i>	<i>Book of Acts</i>	<i>Count</i>
Positive turning	4 times 1:16, 17; 17:4; 22:32	12 times 3:19, 26; 7:39; 9:35; 11:21; 13:34; 14:15; 15:3, 19; 26:18, 20; 28:27	16
ἀποστρέφω, ἐπιστρέφω, ἐπιστροφή, ὑποστρέφω Negative turning	3 times 9:41; 23:2, 14	4 times 7:39; 13:8, 10; 20:30	7
ἀποστρέφω, διαστρέφω, ἐπιστρέφω, στρέφω			

Luke’s depiction of metaphorical turns is also unique. The narrative describes twenty-three instances of metaphorical turning by humans: seven times in the Gospel and sixteen in Acts, as depicted in Table 6.4.

These moments in the story depict people turning themselves to or away from God, truth, forgiveness, or the correct path, or having this effect on others. Sixteen of these examples of metaphorical turning are positive; seven are negative. One instance combines physical and metaphorical turning (Acts 7:39). Metaphorical turning appears with almost the same frequency as μετάνοια/μετανοέω: twenty-three instances compared with twenty-four. While metaphorical turning includes negative turns, repentance is a consistently positive action. Even so, if one asserts that Luke emphasizes repentance, one ought to recognize concurrently that the narrative focuses on metaphorical turning to the same degree.

An audience familiar with the Septuagint, hearing Luke’s emphasis on both repentance and turning, would naturally view these sixteen positive turns as roughly equivalent, if not synonymous with, repentance (and the seven negative turns as the opposite). Characters in Luke-Acts turn toward and away from God, and their turning toward God can also be called μετάνοια. To state this differently, in Luke-Acts, the vocabulary of turning and repentance comprises a single narrative motif: in order to appreciate fully Luke’s picture of repentance, we must also consider his portrayal of turning.

### 5. THREE TURN AND REPENT PARALLELS IN LUKE-ACTS

While a reader familiar with the Septuagint would likely recognize turning and repentance as equivalent, Luke does not leave it to his audience to make this connection themselves. Rather, he explicitly connects the words “turn” and “repent.” In other words, his narration reflects the turn/repent word pair evident in the Jewish scriptures and a handful of other early Jewish texts. Luke does this three times, and he is the only New Testament writer to link these words.<sup>43</sup>

Luke 17:3–4 includes turning and repentance together, in the context of relationships among humans, when Jesus urges his disciples to offer generous forgiveness to a brother or sister who repents. The parallelism of this saying can be presented in an ABAB pattern:<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Joseph Fitzmyer is the only commentator I have found who notes the pairing of turning and repentance in these three passages, in his *Gospel According to Luke*, 2 vols., ABC 28a–28b (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981–5), 238.

<sup>44</sup> John Jebb’s book-length treatment of parallelism in the New Testament identifies numerous examples, including many from Luke’s writing; see J. Jebb, *Sacred Literature: Comprising a Review of the Principles of Composition Laid Down by the*

- A<sup>1</sup> Ἐὰν ἀμάρτη ὁ ἀδελφός σου ἐπιτίμησον αὐτῷ,  
 B<sup>1</sup> καὶ ἐὰν μετανοήσῃ ἄφες αὐτῷ.  
 A<sup>2</sup> καὶ ἐὰν ἐπτάκις τῆς ἡμέρας ἀμαρτήσῃ εἰς σέ  
 B<sup>2</sup> καὶ ἐπτάκις ἐπιστρέψῃ πρὸς σέ λέγων· μετανοῶ, ἀφήσεις αὐτῷ.  
 A<sup>1</sup> If your brother against you sins, rebuke him,  
 B<sup>1</sup> and if he repents, forgive him.  
 A<sup>2</sup> If seven times in a day he sins against you,  
 B<sup>2</sup> and seven times turns to you saying “I repent,” you will forgive him.

Lines A<sup>2</sup> and B<sup>2</sup> repeat the imagery of lines A<sup>1</sup> and B<sup>1</sup> but also expand and deepen it. Line A<sup>2</sup> augments the picture of the offender’s sin (ἀμαρτία) by a factor of seven, while dropping the victim’s rebuke. In the same way, B<sup>2</sup> depicts a corresponding sevenfold amplification of the offender’s repentance (μετανοέω), adding the word picture of the offender turning (ἐπιστρέφω) to the victim with direct speech of repentance.<sup>45</sup> The phrase “he repents” is in parallel construction with “turns to you saying ‘I repent.’”<sup>46</sup> The metaphorical turn by the offender corresponds with his repentance.<sup>47</sup> This turn/repent pairing is unique to Luke; the parallel logion in Matthew includes only sin, forgiveness, and the factor of seven.<sup>48</sup>

In Acts 3:19, turning and repentance occur together in the context of the divine–human relationship. Peter addresses a crowd in Jerusalem, following the healing of a man at the temple gate. After explaining that the Jewish scriptures anticipate the necessity of the Messiah’s suffering, Peter tells his audience to “repent (μετανοέω) therefore and turn (ἐπιστρέφω),” with the result that their sins may be wiped out. The speech goes on to describe the audience as the recipients of Abraham’s blessing to all the families of the earth (3:25). It concludes with a description of Jesus as a servant-prophet who will bless them first by turning (ἀποστρέφω) them from their wicked ways. The word first (πρῶτος) here indicates that the blessing of turning comes first to Israel, resulting in

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*Late Robert Lowth in His Praelections and Isaiah; and an Application of the Principles So Reviewed, to the Illustration of the New Testament; in a Series of Critical Observations on the Style and Structure of That Sacred Volume* (London: J. Duncan, 1831). In 1975, K. Bailey, perhaps unaware of this earlier work, called for a “new Bishop Lowth” to study parallelism in the New Testament, beyond quotations from the Jewish Bible, K. E. Bailey, “Parallelism in the New Testament—Needed: A New Bishop Lowth,” *BT* 26 (1975): 333–8. His own short study identified parallelism in eight New Testament passages, six of them in the Gospel of Luke. Tyson looks at parallelism in the Synoptic Gospels, J. B. Tyson, “Sequential Parallelism in the Synoptic Gospels,” *NTS* 22 (1976): 276–308. Although one might wish to question individual instances of parallelism identified by these scholars, together their work lays a foundation for recognizing that parallelism infuses the thinking and writing of Luke, especially in the direct speech of characters. Recently, Plisch has argued, vis-à-vis a similar saying in the Gospel of Thomas, for chiasmic parallelism (ABBA) in Matt 7:6. When this parallelism is recognized, in his view the meaning of this difficult saying becomes clear, Uwe-Karsten Plisch, “‘Perlen vor die Säue’– Mt 7,6 im Licht von EvThom 93,” *ZAC* 13 (2009): 55–61.

<sup>45</sup> In B<sup>2</sup>, the victim’s forgiveness is anticipated not commanded, as in B<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> Berlin describes this kind of complex equivalency: “the second line substitutes something grammatically different, but equivalent, for a grammatical feature in the first line” (*Dynamics*, 32).

<sup>47</sup> One might object that the word “turn” in this logion depicts rather a simple physical turning to speak. However, both the context and the parallelism indicate that this turn represents the offender’s intent to return to a relationship that has been damaged.

<sup>48</sup> Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1139.

their turn from sin. As Carl Holladay notes, “Israel’s obedience is seen as the means through which God’s promise will be extended to all the peoples of the earth.”<sup>49</sup>

Peter’s speech in Acts 3 parallels Luke 17:3–4 in two additional ways. First, the sinner is challenged to change what is evil or defective: in Luke 17, this is the victim’s rebuke, and in Acts 3, it is the call to turn from wickedness in Acts 3:26. Second, the turn/repent actions result in sins being forgiven (ἀφίημι) or wiped out (ἐξαλείφω). By my count, the link between turning and God’s forgiveness, wiping out, or not remembering sin appears ten times in Jewish scriptural texts.<sup>50</sup> For example, LXX Isa 55:7 exhorts:

let the impious forsake his ways,  
and the lawless man his plans,  
and let him return to the Lord, and [the Lord] will have mercy  
because [God] will abundantly forgive your sins<sup>51</sup>

ἀπολιπέτω ὁ ἀσεβῆς τὰς ὁδοὺς αὐτοῦ  
καὶ ἄνθρωπος ἄνομος τὰς βουλὰς αὐτοῦ  
καὶ ἐπιστραφήτω ἐπὶ κύριον καὶ ἐλεηθήσεται  
ὅτι ἐπὶ πολὺ ἀφήσει τὰς ἁμαρτίας ὑμῶν

By contrast, divine forgiveness (ἄφεσις or ἀφίημι) does not proceed from human repentance in Jewish texts in Greek.<sup>52</sup> Repentance for forgiveness of sins is, of course, a key theme in Luke-Acts, appearing in the ministry of John (Luke 3:3); Jesus’ commission to the disciples (Luke 24:47) and preaching to the people in Jerusalem (Acts 2:38; 5:31); and Peter’s dialogue with the magician Simon (Acts 8:22). Do such scenes evoke the exhortations of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel to *turn* and receive forgiveness? Luke’s narrative suggests that they do. By connecting forgiveness with the word pair “turn and repent,” Peter’s speech signals to the audience that the multiple exhortations to repent in the narrative are akin to the prophetic call to turn for forgiveness. In other words, Peter’s speech indicates that the narrative’s important theme of repentance for forgiveness of sins ought to be understood through the biblical imagery of turning to God.

Luke links turning and repentance a third time in Acts 26:20. There, Paul, speaking to Agrippa II, describes how, in obedience to the Damascus road vision, he has traveled around declaring to both Jews and Gentiles that they should “repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance.” As in the Acts 3 passage, the pairing of turn and repent results in moral reform. This call for changed behavior also echoes that of John the Baptist who, in Luke 3, exhorts his audience to “bear fruits worthy of repentance” (v. 8).

<sup>49</sup>C. R. Holladay, *Acts: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), 121.

<sup>50</sup>1 Kgs 8:33–36, 46–50; 2 Chr 6:24–27, 36–39; 7:14; Isa 44:22; 55:7; Jer 36:3 [LXX 43:3]; Ezek 33:14–16; and Pr Man 1:7–11. In Isa 44:22, divine forgiveness precedes the people’s turn. Isa 55:7 contains the word “forgive” but not “sin.”

<sup>51</sup>Translation is NETS.

<sup>52</sup>While I have found no example of human repentance followed by divine forgiveness in Jewish literature in Greek, there are four examples that come close. Wis 11:23 portrays God as overlooking sin so that people will repent. Similarly, Wis 12:18–19 depicts God’s forbearance, which fills people with hope, because God gives repentance for sins. Sir 17:24–26 asserts that for those who repent, God will grant a return, going on to call the audience to turn back to God and forsake sins, praying that God will lessen human offense. Referring to the time after Elisha, Sir 48:15 describes how the people neither repented nor forsook their sins.

Immediately before making this statement, Paul recalls the words of Jesus in his vision; Jesus has sent Paul to the Gentiles so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, receiving forgiveness of sins (Acts 26:18). In Acts 3, Peter's words focused on the preparation of the people of Israel to extend Abraham's blessing to the nations. Now, Paul recollects Jesus' words to describe the same turning and repentance for forgiveness as the goal for the Gentiles. The word pair functions to connect two images from the prophets: the call to Israel to turn to God and the "light to nations" passages.

The overall picture is that first, people within Israel receive the prophetic (and eschatological) call to turn away from wicked actions to God in repentance and then that the Gentiles receive a similar call to turn away from darkness and Satan (and by implication wicked actions) to God in repentance. Both turnings result in moral reform: deeds worthy of or consistent with repentance.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Distinctively, Luke-Acts sets turning and repentance in parallel three times while evoking the prophetic call to turn to God. These parallels continue a tradition in Jewish literature of pairing the vocabulary of turning and repentance. As a result, these exhortations to "turn" call to mind for the audience appeals to repent and vice versa. This picture challenges Nave's assertion that turning ought to be bracketed out when investigating repentance in Luke-Acts. Rather, because turning and repentance comprise a unified narrative motif, interpreters should consider the narrative's focus on and distinctive depiction of turning when investigating the theme of repentance in Luke's work.

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# Do Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11 Belong in Our Bibles? A Case Study in the Intersection of Textual Criticism and Canonical Considerations

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## 1. STATING THE QUESTION

The focal question in the title of this essay is both simple and straightforward. From a textual-critical perspective, the answer, if not simple, *is* clear: Neither of these readings belongs to the best text of the gospels. From a canonical perspective, the answer is similarly clear: Both texts have a long history in the life of the church and therefore deserve a place in the text. The problem before us is what to do when the results of solid textual criticism conflict with those of canonical considerations, as they do here.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the practical and pressing necessity of doing *something* with these texts every time a Bible translation comes out or is revised, there is surprisingly little literature discussing the problem at the theoretical level. The canonical boundaries of any community of faith cannot limit anyone doing serious historical work. But since historical and theological inquiry can never be fully separated, even *theological* work on canonical texts needs to take into consideration *noncanonical* texts.<sup>2</sup> Dr. James H. Charlesworth has done significant work throughout his career in both “canonical” and “noncanonical” texts, arguing that even apart from the substantial inherent value in studying noncanonical literature, any serious Jesus Research or New Testament studies requires advanced

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<sup>1</sup>Canonical criticism focuses on the function of biblical texts in communities of faith. In the present essay, I use the phrase “canonical considerations” to refer to the interrelated role of *Wirkungsgeschichte* (the history of a text’s effects) and canonical criticism, broadly considered, in valuing any passage, based on the authority attributed to it by communities of faith over a long period of time.

<sup>2</sup>For a compelling argument to this effect, see G. W. E. Nickelsburg, “Why Study the Extra-Canonical Literature? A Historical and Theological Essay,” *Neotestamentica* 28 (1994): 181–204.

knowledge in the history and literature of late Second Temple Judaism—a knowledge best acquired through dedicated study of the primary documents.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. MARK 16:9–20: THE EVIDENCE

So what is the evidence with regard to Mark 16:9–20? It is a matter of strong consensus among New Testament scholars that Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11 were not original to those gospels. Because this ground has been plowed at length, in what follows I am simply summarizing the results of scholarship.<sup>4</sup>

I will admit here at the outset of a niggling misgiving about how textual criticism is normally practiced in the field of New Testament. In general, scholars tend to treat textual transmission as a linear phenomenon confined within the realm of “textualism” as distinct from oral tradition. Today an increasing number of scholars are emphasizing the fluidity between textual and oral cultures in the ancient world in ways that complicate the field of textual criticism as it is normally practiced.<sup>5</sup> I expect that we will see in the coming years a rethinking of how orality/textuality studies can add perspective to the traditional practice of textual criticism.

The last twelve verses of Mark are missing from the two oldest Greek manuscripts that we have for this part of Mark, *Codex Vaticanus* (B) and *Codex Sinaiticus* (Ⲱ), both of which date from the fourth century CE. They are missing from the fourth or fifth-century Old Latin Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae.<sup>6</sup> They are missing from the old Syriac Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae. About one hundred early Armenian manuscripts and the two oldest Georgian manuscripts<sup>7</sup> do not have them. Neither Clement of Alexandria (*ca.* 150–*ca.* 215 CE) nor Origen (*ca.* 185–254) shows any awareness of these verses. A century or so later, Eusebius (*ca.* 260–340) and Jerome (*ca.* 345–420) are aware of these verses, but they both note that almost all of the Greek manuscripts available to them—including the most accurate ones—do not have the passage.<sup>8</sup> These verses were not included in the earliest known versification system, dating from the early third century.<sup>9</sup> Most of the Greek manuscripts that come

<sup>3</sup> Charlesworth and Lee McDonald rightly note that even the terminology of “canonical” and “noncanonical” is problematic, since the definitions of the terms themselves depend on a given community of faith in a given time and setting that postdates Second Temple Judaism. As a result, the terms are often used anachronistically when referring to the Scriptures of the Jewish and “Christian” communities of the first century CE. For a helpful consideration of the issues, see L. M. McDonald and J. H. Charlesworth, “Introduction: ‘Non-Canonical’ Religious Texts in Early Judaism and Early Christianity,” in *Non-Canonical Religious Texts in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. L. M. McDonald and J. H. Charlesworth, Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies 14 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2012), 1–8.

<sup>4</sup> See esp. B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament*, 3rd ed. (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), on behalf of and in cooperation with the Editorial Committee of the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament.

<sup>5</sup> For probative examples of this approach, see H. E. Hearon, “The Implications of ‘Orality’ for Studies of the Biblical Text,” *Oral Tradition* 19 (2004): 96–107. See esp. her section on “Transmission of the Text,” 100–2. For a poignant illustration of how these considerations impact our consideration of John 7:53–8:11, see C. Keith, “A Performance of the Text: The Adulteress’s Entrance into John’s Gospel,” in *The Fourth Gospel in First-Century Media Culture*, ed. A. Le Donne and T. Thatcher, LNTS (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 49–69. See also R. F. Person, Jr. “Formulas and Scribal Memory: A Case Study of Text-Critical Variants as Examples of Category-Triggering,” in *Weathered Words: Formulaic Language and Verbal Art*, ed. Frog and William Lamb (Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, forthcoming).

<sup>6</sup> Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae does, however, contain the “shorter ending” of Mark.

<sup>7</sup> 897 and 913 CE.

<sup>8</sup> For Jerome, see his epistle to Lady Hedibia, *Jer. Ep.* 120, 3; cf. *PL* 23, cols. 980–1006.

<sup>9</sup> The “Eusebian canons,” drawn up by Ammonius Saccas (*ca.* 175–242 CE).

after the fourth century do contain these verses, although some of them contain the special *obeli* that scribes used to indicate verses that are of dubious origin.

The earliest witness for the longer ending comes in Irenaeus's *Against Heresies* 3.10.6 and possibly also in Tatian's harmony of the four gospels, the *Diatesseron*, as attested in a few manuscripts,<sup>10</sup> including the Arabic version.<sup>11</sup> Irenaeus says, "Toward the conclusion of his Gospel, Mark says: 'So then, after the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was received up into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God,'" which is a direct quotation from what we know as Mark 16:19.

This is all considered "external evidence"—cataloguing manuscripts in terms of age and quality, and weighing the evidence.

Internal evidence is a matter of analyzing the vocabulary and style of the passage to compare them with those of the rest of Mark. It also asks about the flow of the passage and how natural or unnatural is the connection between vv. 8 and 9 with a view to determining which variants are more likely the product of the author, given his vocabulary and style.

Here the evidence is even more overwhelming against the originality of these twelve verses. In fact, Mark 16:9–20 is the best example in the entire New Testament of how internal evidence can clarify the inauthenticity of a textual variant. About a dozen words or phrasings in these verses appear nowhere else in Mark.<sup>12</sup> The change of subject between vv. 8 and 9 is abrupt and awkward. In v. 9 Mary Magdalene is reintroduced, as if she were not already part of the narrative in vv. 1–8. As Metzger puts it, "The internal evidence for the shorter ending is decidedly against its being genuine. Besides containing a high percentage of non-Markan words, its rhetorical tone differs totally from the simple style of Mark's Gospel."<sup>13</sup>

Thus there are three primary possibilities regarding the ending of Mark:

- (1) Verses 9–20 are original, so Mark ends with Mark 16:20.
- (2) Verses 9–20 are *not* original:
  - (a) either the author intended to finish his Gospel, but never did, or
  - (b) the gospel had another ending that is now lost.<sup>14</sup>
- (3) Verses 9–20 are *not* original; the Gospel originally ended with Mark 16:8.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Notably Codex Fuldensis.

<sup>11</sup>Justin Martyr's witness is ambiguous, not clearly dependent upon Mark 16:9–20. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 103–4.

<sup>12</sup>These include ἀπιστέω, βλέπω, βεβαίω, ἐπακολουθέω, θεάομαι, μετὰ ταῦτα, πορεύομαι, συνεργέω, and ὅστερον. In addition, distinct terminology used of the disciples appears only here in the New Testament. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 104.

<sup>13</sup>Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 105. Metzger's conclusion stands despite repeated feeble attempts by some to buttress the pericope's originality. An example of the latter is D. P. Kuskein, "Textual Criticism Brief: Mark 16:9-20," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 102 (2005): 58–9. Sometimes the textual-critical argument takes on a desperate quality. For instance, S. M. Zwemer says that the conclusion that the last twelve verses of Mark are inauthentic would, if accurate, "rob us of the Great Commission"; "The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel of Mark," *EvQ* 17 (January 1945): 13–23. Zwemer takes comfort in the scores of translations and hundreds of languages that treat Mark 16:9–20 no differently than the rest of Mark. I am admittedly more dismissive of these attempts than is Chris Keith, "Recent and Previous Research on the Pericope Adulterae (John 7.53–8.11)," *CBR* 6 (2008): 377–404, see 379. I agree with G. W. Trompf in his agreement with Metzger: "No amount of ratiocinative over-straining can convincingly explain away the non-Markan characteristics of either" the shorter ending or the longer ending of Mark; "The Markusschluss in Recent Research," *Australian Biblical Review* 21 (1973): 15–16. Trompf is among those scholars who are convinced that the original ending of Mark was somehow lost. He argues that the original ending is largely preserved, however, in Matt 28:9–10.

<sup>14</sup>The distinction between these two subpossibilities might be significant logically, but in practical terms is insignificant, since pursuing it would require speculation about the meaning of a *lack of evidence*: an argument from silence.

<sup>15</sup>A few further remote possibilities are not worth serious consideration, even though many scholars note them for the sake of being comprehensive: (1) The Freer Logion:

Sixty years ago, the strong consensus among New Testament scholars was that Mark could not have intended to end his gospel with Mark 16:8, since that is so obviously such an inadequate ending, and also that none of the endings we currently have available to us was original. That left possibilities (2) and (3): either Mark never finished his gospel or his ending was lost.

In the past sixty years or so, commentators have continued to agree that vv. 9–20 were not originally part of the gospel but are a later edition.<sup>16</sup> However, an increasing number have challenged the idea that Mark could not have meant to end his gospel with “So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.”<sup>17</sup>

Despite the inherent value of Mark 16:9–20 in itself,<sup>18</sup> treating it as part of the Gospel of Mark reflects an insufficient appreciation for what Mark was doing in ending the Gospel as he did.<sup>19</sup>

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And they excused themselves, saying, “This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and power of God to prevail over the unclean things of the spirits [or, does not allow what lies under the unclean spirits to understand the truth and power of God]. Therefore reveal your righteousness now”—thus they spoke to Christ. And Christ replied to them, “The term of years of Satan’s power has been fulfilled, but other terrible things draw near. And for those who have sinned I was handed over to death, that they may return to the truth and sin no more, in order that they may inherit the spiritual and incorruptible glory of righteousness that is in heaven.” (Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 104)

This variant appears in only one manuscript: Codex Washingtonianus, kept in the Freer Museum in Washington, DC, though Jerome seems to have known about this logion (see his *Dialogue against the Pelagians* 2.15). (2) The unversed “shorter ending” between vv. 8 and 9 in the King James Version by itself, without vv. 9–20. However, the Old Latin Codex Bobiensis (it<sup>b</sup>) has *only* this shorter ending. (3) A final solution has slightly more support: the “shorter ending” mentioned above and the “longer ending,” equivalent to vv. 9–20 in the King James Version. This form of the text appears in several of the Coptic manuscripts, many of the Ethiopic manuscripts, and four Greek manuscripts from the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries (i.e., L, Y, 099, and 0112).

<sup>16</sup>Important exceptions include W. R. Farmer, *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*, SNTSMS 25 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

<sup>17</sup>For a good summary of this shift in scholarly opinion, see N. C. Croy, “A Sea Change in Scholarly Opinion,” in *The Mutilation of Mark’s Gospel* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2003). Croy himself proceeds to argue that this shift is mistaken and that the theory that the original ending has been lost has the most to commend it. For a good example of the argument that some ancient manuscripts can and did end with  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$ , see J. L. Magness, *Sense and Absence: Structure and Suspension in the Ending of Mark’s Gospel* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1986). Defense of the appropriateness of ending a narrative with  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$  is, however, at least as old as Wellhausen, Bousset, and Lightfoot. See F. F. Bruce, “The End of the Second Gospel,” *EvQ* 17 (1945): 170 n.2. See also W. S. Vorster, “The Reader in the Text: Narrative Material,” in *Reader Perspectives on the New Testament*, ed. E. V. McKnight (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 1989), 32–3. Among the many writings on this topic, I especially appreciate the thoughtful and provocative challenge in D. Juel, “A Disquieting Silence: The Matter of the Ending,” in *The Ending of Mark and the Ends of God: Essays in Memory of Donald Harrisville Juel*, ed. B. R. Gaventa and P. D. Miller (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 1–13; and D. Rhoads, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 142–4.

<sup>18</sup>In addition to the theological/canonical value of the text, which is the main focus of the present essay, there is also the historical evidence these pericopes may offer for the second-century context in which the Long Ending was appended to the gospel. For a good example of this kind of historical pursuit, see J. A. Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission: The Authentication of Missionaries and Their Message in the Longer Ending of Mark*, WUNT II/112 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

<sup>19</sup>The same is true of the “shorter ending,” the “Freer Logion,” and any combination of the above.

### 3. JOHN 7:53–8:11: THE EVIDENCE

So what is the evidence with regard to John?<sup>20</sup> Here we must be even briefer. Here too, in Metzger's words, "the evidence for the non-Johannine origin of the pericope of the adulteress is overwhelming."<sup>21</sup> Neither Codex Vaticanus nor Codex Sinaiticus has these verses. In the case of John, we also have two earlier papyrus manuscripts—one that dates from *ca.* 200 (p. 66) and one that dates from the mid-third century (p. 75). Neither manuscript has these verses. None of the Greek<sup>22</sup> church "fathers" prior to the twelfth century comments on this passage, and the twelfth-century father who *does* comment on it says "that the accurate copies of the gospel do not contain it."<sup>23</sup>

The modifier *Greek* here is significant, since the Western church became familiar with this pericope much earlier than did the Eastern church. Although St. Augustine did not consider it part of the original Gospel of John, he knew about it and commented on it. The fifth-century Western manuscript, Codex Bezae—known for its distinctive, even maverick variant readings—is the first to contain this pericope.<sup>24</sup>

"The oldest and most important Greek, Syriac, Armenian, Georgian, Coptic and Latin witness[es] to the new Testament text unanimously concur in not knowing the pericope of the adulteress."<sup>25</sup> Even when the text did make its way into manuscripts of the New Testament, it did so at different places. One group of manuscripts has it after Luke 21:38.<sup>26</sup> Another manuscript has it after 7:36 (minuscule 225) and yet another family of manuscripts has it after John 21:24.<sup>27</sup> By one count, the pericope shows up in at least twelve different places (after John 7:52, its traditional place; at the end of John; at the end of Luke; after Luke 21:38; after John 7:36;

<sup>20</sup>One of the more exhaustive presentations of the textual data with regard to 7:53–8:11 is that of U. Becker, *Jesus und die Ehebrecherin: Untersuchungen zur Text- und Überlieferungsgeschichte von Joh. 7:53–8:11*, BZNW (Berlin: Adolf Töpelmann, 1963); cf. K. Aland, *Studien zur Überlieferung des Neuen Testaments und seines Textes* (Berlin: Gruyter, 1967), 39–46.

<sup>21</sup>Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 187. Like Metzger, B. Ehrman also calls the evidence "overwhelming"; "Jesus and the Adulteress," *NTA* 34 (1988): 24, as does P. Comfort, "The Pericope of the Adulteress," *Bible Translator* 40 (January 1989): 145.

<sup>22</sup>See J. M. C. Scott, "On the Trail of a Good Story: John 7.53–8.11 in the Gospel Tradition," in *Ciphers in the Sand: Interpretations of the Woman Taken in Adultery (John 7.53–8.11)*, ed. L. J. Kreitzer and D. Rooke (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 53–82, esp. 56.

<sup>23</sup>This person is Euthymius Zigabenus. The quotation is from Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 188. As Ehrman has pointed out, Didymus the Blind (313–98) knew and commented on this story. However, it is not at all clear that Didymus connected it with the Gospel of John. He says we find it "in some gospels" (see Ehrman). The quotation is from page 25. As both Ehrman and Knust have pointed out (see the following footnote), ἐν τισιν εὐαγγελίοις could mean either "certain manuscripts of John" or "certain [apocryphal] gospels."

<sup>24</sup>J. W. Knust suggests that Bezae's tendency toward Christian anti-Judaism may account for both its inclusion in the Codex and the ways in which it was read in the early and medieval church. See "Early Christian Re-Writing and the History of the *Pericope Adulterae*," *J ECS* 14 (2006): 485–536. Her essay is an excellent survey of the interpretation of this pericope in the early church and the early medieval church.

<sup>25</sup>U. Becker, *Jesus und die Ehebrecherin*, as translated in Scott, "On the Trail of a Good Story," 55.

<sup>26</sup>This is the "Ferrar Group," also known as "Family 13," consisting of several manuscripts from the eleventh to fifteenth centuries.

<sup>27</sup>Family 1 of the Gospel minuscule manuscripts, consisting of 1, 118, 131, 209, 1582, et al., cf. K. Lake, *Codex 1 of the Gospels and Its Allies*, Texts and Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), originally published in 1902. These are mostly ninth- and tenth-century manuscripts.

7:44; 8:12; 8:12a; 8:13; 8:14a; 8:20; or after 10:36).<sup>28</sup> Numerous commentators have wondered whether its appearance in these varied locations indicates that this was a piece of authentic gospel tradition in search of a canonical location. Even when it appears in its traditional location after John 7:52, few sections of the New Testament display as wide a variety of variant readings as this one.

Evidence of knowledge of this story in the early church must be carefully separated from evidence of knowledge that this story was part of John's Gospel. For instance, Papias (*ca.* 60–130 CE) seems to know the story, but it is not clear that he knew it as part of the Gospel of John.<sup>29</sup>

Most of the advocates for the authenticity of John 7:53–8:11 pay little attention to the internal evidence, with its criteria of style, vocabulary, and literary flow. One important exception to this generalization is John Paul Heil, who argues on the basis of internal evidence that John 7:53–8:11 is authentic.<sup>30</sup> However, Daniel B. Wallace of Dallas Theological Seminary has convincingly shown that Heil's arguments are flawed and that the "overwhelming scholarly consensus" regarding its inauthenticity is justified.<sup>31</sup>

The story recounted in "John 7:53–8:11" appears to be an early Jesus tradition that was valued early. Even though it clearly does not belong in the middle of John's gospel, there are no obvious alternative locations if we are to retain it in our Bibles.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup>C. Keith, *The Pericope Adulterae, the Gospel of John, and the Literacy of Jesus* (Leiden: Brill, 2009) 120–1. See also C. Keith, "The Initial Location of the *Pericope Adulterae* in Fourfold Tradition," *NovT* 51 (2009): 209–31, a slightly modified version of one chapter of the above.

<sup>29</sup>See E. Haenchen, *John 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of John, Chapters 1-6*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 13. J. Rius-Camps attempts to argue that the pericope was originally included in Mark's gospel, from which it made its way into Luke's Gospel. However, "because of the moral strictness that prevailed at the end of the first century," the pericope was expunged from both Gospels and lived a nomadic existence for the next several decades until it finally found a place in the Gospel of John. See "The Pericope of the Adulteress Reconsidered: The Nomadic Misfortunes of a Bold Pericope," *NTS* 53 (2007): 379–405.

<sup>30</sup>See J. P. Heil, "The Story of Jesus and the Adulteress (John 7,53-8,11) Reconsidered," *Biblica* 72 (1991): 182–91; and J. P. Heil, "A Rejoinder to 'Reconsidering 'The Story of Jesus and the Adulteress Reconsidered' (John 7:53-8:11)," *Église et théologie* 25 (1994): 361–6.

<sup>31</sup>D. B. Wallace, "Reconsidering 'The Story of Jesus and the Adulteress Reconsidered,'" *NTS* 39 (1993): 290–6. Similarly Keith, who concludes, "Some issues, such as the thesis that PA [the *Pericope Adulterae*] was not originally in the Gospel of John, appear settled" ("Recent and Previous Research"). For explorations about the potential relationship between patriarchy and the exclusion or inclusion of this pericope in the text, see Scott, "On the Trail of a Good Story," 77–80, and E. E. Green, "Making Her Case and Reading It Too: Feminist Readings of the Story of the Woman Taken in Adultery," in *Ciphers in the Sand: Interpretations of the Woman Taken in Adultery (John 7.53–8.11)*, ed. L. J. Kreitzer and D. Rooke (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 240–67. Green's article is a fascinating survey of the relatively few feminist readings of this pericope. Scott asks why almost all male commentators assume that the woman is, in fact, guilty of the adultery with which she is charged. Whether or not she was guilty, Green notes that commentators' emphasis on the woman and on the charge of adultery is "emblematic of the cornerstone of patriarchy: male control of female sexuality" (261). By refusing to comply with the insistence of the scribes and Pharisees that the woman be stoned, Jesus "withdraws loyalty from the social and symbolic dictates of patriarchy and invites his fellows to do likewise" (264). See also G. O'Day, "John 7:53-8:11: A Study in Misreading," *JBL* 111 (1992): 631–40.

<sup>32</sup>According to E. McMillan, "the passage is neither Johannine nor should it be considered part of the original text. However, because of its tradition, it needs to be retained somewhere. This place is as good as any, if one is familiar with the problem involved"; "Textual Authority for John 7:53-8:11," *Restoration Quarterly* 3 (1959): 22. Worth noting, however, is the warning of P. Comfort that retaining the pericope in its traditional (dis)location makes it more difficult to see how John 8:12 "provides a reproof to the Pharisees' declaration in John 7.52"; "The Pericope of the Adulteress," 147.



#### 4 PRECEDENT IN RESTORING THE TEXT

Canonical considerations do not typically carry any weight with regard to individual verses or phrases. Eugene Ulrich says, “*The textual form* of most books of scripture was pluriform in antiquity. ... It is the book, not the textual form of the book, that is canonical.”<sup>33</sup> So far as I know, no early church leader ever commented on which *form* of Mark or which *form* of John is considered canonical. There were discussions in the third century and later about whether these passages are authentic, but the canonizing of biblical books was never linked to textual *form* of those books. It has sometimes been claimed that the Council of Trent, which took place from 1545 to 1563, declared these two passages canonical. However, the Council never addressed directly the canonical status of these passages. The Fourth Session, April 1546, declared that of all the versions and translations available, the Latin Vulgate is the only authentic version. Because these passages are included in the Vulgate, we may have an *indirect* imprimatur on these passages as canonical, but not a direct one.

As an example of how it is that canonical considerations simply do not factor into the work of modern translators, the centuries of tradition with regard to John 1:34 did not stop the translators of the New International Version from concluding that the manuscript evidence for ὁ ἐκλεκτός τοῦ θεοῦ is stronger than the evidence for ὁ υἱός τοῦ θεοῦ, and should therefore be translated “God’s Chosen One”—and rightly so, in my opinion—despite the fact that most other translations have “Son of God” at this point, based on their preference for the reading ὁ υἱός τοῦ θεοῦ.<sup>34</sup> Bible translators hold that the traditional canonical weight of “Son of God” plays no role in the textual-critical consideration in John 1:34 and therefore ignore that tradition. What matters is simply the textual evidence, both external and internal, not the weight of tradition.

Treating the Bible with respect and honor does not mean simply accepting the Bible in whatever form it was handed down to us. If tradition and “canonical considerations” in this sense were allowed to play a significant role in the consideration of *every* variant reading, we would be forced to capitulate to the Byzantine text tradition, or perhaps revert to the Latin Vulgate. The exclusion of verses not found in the best manuscripts is not an isolated phenomenon in the New Testament. For the most part, modern translations of the Bible do not include these verses, since the probability is that all of these verses were added later and were not penned by the authors of the biblical books in which they appear (in some later manuscripts).

Scholars serve the church through textual criticism by weighing the evidence of multiple variant readings. As a result, they often “take verses out of the Bible” when they recognize that they were not written by the author of the book in question but were actually *added* to the text by later scribes. Some well-meaning Christians are understandably appalled, horrified, and deeply offended when “people take verses out of the Bible!” After all, when a particular verse is taken out, it is obvious

<sup>33</sup>L. M. McDonald and J. A. Sanders, eds., *The Canon Debate* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 30.

<sup>34</sup>Siding with the 2011 NIV in this textual decision is the New English Translation, the New Living Translation, the New Jerusalem Bible, the Lexham English Bible, the Revised English Bible, and the SBL edition of the Greek New Testament. Siding with the traditional “Son of God” are the King James Version, the New King James Version, the New International Version of 1984, the English Standard Version, the Holman Christian Standard Bible, the Christian Standard Bible, the New American Bible, the Revised Standard Version, the New American Standard Bible, the Message, the New Revised Standard Version, and all other modern editions of the Greek New Testament other than the SBL. My point here is not which of these readings is correct. Rather, translation choices are rightly made on the basis of the best text available, based solely on textual criticism and not on traditional texts or translations.

from the verse numbering that something is missing. And the curses at the end of Revelation leveled against anyone who adds to or takes away anything from the words of the prophecy of this scroll surely suggest that we should avoid that practice!<sup>35</sup>

The issue, of course, is that we know that some things were *added* to the Bible between 100 and 1600 CE. Verse numbers were added to the New Testament in the sixteenth century, using a Greek text that was based on late, inferior manuscripts. Therefore, when modern textual critics “take out” verses that are clearly “there” in the King James Version, they are actually recognizing that these verses were wrongly *added* by someone decades or even centuries after the book was written.

The New International Version is the best-selling translation in North America at present and is often associated with conservative Evangelicalism. Even the theologically conservative translators of the NIV “took out” Matt 17:21 because of their conviction that this verse was not original to the book’s author but was added later on in the scribal process. If it weren’t for the “missing” verse number, and perhaps the explanatory footnote, one would not realize anything was amiss. A similar phenomenon occurs with Matt 18:11; 23:14; Mark 7:16; 9:44, 46; 11:26; 15:28; Luke 17:36; 23:17; John 5:3b–4; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7–8a; 28:29; Rom 16:24; and 1 John 5:7b–8a. None of these verses appears in the text of the conservative New International Version (2011 edition).

One of the more famous “omissions” is the Trinitarian formulation of 1 John 5:7b–8a, where the King James Version reads, “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.” The NIV reads simply, “For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.” Notice the additional words in the King James. The NIV footnote points out that only late manuscripts of the Vulgate add these words, which are not found in *any* Greek manuscript before the sixteenth century! Those charged with establishing the text for the NIV translators rightly determined that these verses were wrongly added at a later time.

The 1946 edition of the RSV removed about forty verses that appear in the King James Version for the same reason—including the twelve verses of Mark 16:9–20 and the twelve of John 7:53–8:11. And this does not include the more than one hundred other places where *portions* of a verse are removed. Thus, the work of textual criticism and its conclusions are valued highly by most Christian traditions today, even the more conservative ones, and even when the result is the excising of texts with centuries of tradition behind them.

## 5 THE CURIOUS STORY OF THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION

The story of the place of Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11 in published Bibles today is most fascinating with regard to the Revised Standard Version.<sup>36</sup> Significant advances in the textual criticism of the New Testament had occurred between 1850 and 1950. These advances found expression in the 1946 first edition of the RSV New Testament, which relegated both Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11 to the footnotes, along with a few explanatory comments. Some of the

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Rev 22:18–19.

<sup>36</sup> For the story of the RSV, see the delightful and indispensable book by P. J. Thuesen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures: American Protestant Battles over Translating the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). Thuesen’s narrative focuses on the reception of the RSV in American Protestantism as a window on the history of religion in America.

protestations to the removal of the resurrection voiced by readers of the RSV were vitriolic. The ongoing “Standard Bible Committee” received and studied them all.

From the beginning, the RSV had been an ecumenical project of the National Council of Churches.<sup>37</sup> When the Apocrypha was added in 1957, increasing numbers of Roman Catholics began to use the RSV. Already in 1953, Catholic Bernard Orchard had contacted an editor at Thomas Nelson about the possibility of developing a Catholic edition of the RSV. The overture was unusual, since no previous Protestant translation of the Bible had ever been formally approved by the Roman Catholic Church and “the 1917 code of canon law still technically forbade the general use of non-Catholic Bibles.”<sup>38</sup> But the Catholic encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* of 1943 and the further sweeping reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962–5) were opening the way for a level of cooperation not previously possible.<sup>39</sup> In 1954 representatives from Thomas Nelson, the publisher, and from the National Council of Churches met with a subcommittee of the Catholic Biblical Association of Great Britain to explore the possibilities.

In June 1955 [Luther] Weigle distributed the Catholics’ list of New Testament preferences, edited by Orchard and his colleague, Reginald C. Fuller, to the members of the RSV committee. Most of the proposed changes involved terminology: “brethren” for “brothers” in more than a dozen places; “full of grace” instead of “favored one” in Luke’s annunciation account; and “send her away” instead of “divorce her” in Matthew’s narrative of Joseph and Mary. The major changes requested were the restoration of three disputed passages to the main body of the text: (1) the “Longer Ending” of Mark 16:9–20; (2) the *pericope adulterae* of John 7:53–8:11; and (3) a group of less than a dozen verses, mostly in Luke, that the RSV had omitted or replaced with shorter readings.<sup>40</sup>

The committee’s response to these requests is interesting. Some of the most overtly doctrinal requests were received with some distaste. However, they reasoned that the requested changes were, after all, less than fifty in number, and Weigle noted that the Catholics were “making a much greater and more venturesome step than we.” With the approval of the Standard Bible Committee, the Catholic edition of the New Testament appeared in 1965 and the complete RSV–Catholic Edition appeared in 1966. Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11 were both restored to their traditional places in the text, along with footnotes that explain that “other ancient authorities” omit these passages. After the publication of the Catholic edition, six Roman Catholic scholars were added to the RSV committee in 1969 and later an Eastern Orthodox scholar was added.<sup>41</sup> Professor Harry Orlinsky, a Jewish scholar, had already been invited to join the committee in 1945.

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<sup>37</sup>Technically, it was a project of the International Council of Religious Education, the predecessor of the National Council of Churches, which was formed in 1950.

<sup>38</sup>Thuesen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures*, 138–9.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 80, 138–9. Thuesen notes that *Divino Afflante Spiritu* had a significant role in paving the way for Catholic–Protestant cooperation by allowing translations from the original Greek and Hebrew (not just from the Latin Vulgate).

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 139. These verses included Luke 22:19–20; 24:5, 12, 36, 40, and 51–2.

<sup>41</sup>For documentation on the addition of these Roman Catholic scholars to the Standard Bible Committee, see the Minutes of the Standard Bible Committee, held at Yale Divinity School June 22–27, 1970. Archives of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, filed under National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ.

After the initial publication of the New Testament in 1946, numerous “proposals for modification had been submitted to the committee by individuals and [two by] denominational committees.”<sup>42</sup> One such request came from the secretary of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union chapter in California, which implored the committee to change “use a little wine for your stomach’s sake” in 1 Tim 5:23 to “use a little grape juice for your stomach’s sake.” After all, “St. Paul was the forerunner of modern health enthusiasts who endorse the use of fresh juices.”<sup>43</sup>

The decision to restore our passages to the text for the Roman Catholic Church probably made it easier for the Standard Bible Committee to concede to Protestant appeals to restore our passages to the text in the second major edition of the RSV, published in 1971.<sup>44</sup> All RSV Bibles published between 1946 and 1971, apart from the Catholic edition, have Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11 in the footnotes, while all Roman Catholic edition RSV Bibles, and all RSV Bibles published *after* 1971, have these passages restored to the text. Despite the explanation in the preface that the second edition of 1971 “profits from textual and linguistic studies” published since the first RSV New Testament of 1946, the decision to restore Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11 to the text is clearly an accommodation to tradition. Speaking of Mark 16:9–20: “If there was anything in the first edition of the RSV that can be called a substantial improvement over past English versions in the presentation of textual scholarship, it was the omission of this passage.”<sup>45</sup> Philip Comfort agrees:

The RSV translators made the daring move to relegate this pericope to a marginal note, but then due to outside pressures they were forced to print the passage as part of the text in the second edition. No other English translators have dared to follow the RSV’s original move.<sup>46</sup>

The decision of the RSV translation committee in 1946 to excise these passages from the biblical text and relegate them to the footnotes was, as far as I am aware, unprecedented for a modern translation of the New Testament. Twenty-three years later, one problem the Standard Bible Committee faced in 1969 was what to do with these two 12-verse pericopes in the major revision to be published in 1971. Should they continue to be excluded, as the RSV had done for twenty-five years? Or should they be brought back into the text, as the Roman Catholic RSV New Testament had done in 1965?

One of the Roman Catholic scholars proposed a solution that seemed like a good compromise to the rest of the committee: Include the passages, but put brackets around them and mark them with footnotes that indicate that the oldest manuscripts lack these passages. By 1988, as the next major revision of both testaments was about to be released as the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), Bruce Manning Metzger had served for more than thirty-five years on the RSV/NRSV translation committee, with responsibility for textual-critical issues. He wrote:

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<sup>42</sup> See B. M. Metzger, *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 82.

<sup>43</sup> Thuesen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures*, 82.

<sup>44</sup> *Major* is an important qualifier here, since minor changes were made every few years with most of the new editions, starting with several dozen changes in the New Testament when the whole Bible was published in 1952.

<sup>45</sup> See “Bible Research: Internet Resources for Students of Scripture,” <http://www.bible-researcher.com/tsv.html>, accessed December 13, 2018.

<sup>46</sup> Comfort, “The Pericope of the Adulteress,” 147.

There seems to be good reason ... to conclude that, though external and internal evidence is conclusive against the authenticity of the last twelve verses as coming from the same pen as the rest of the Gospel, the passage ought to be accepted as part of the canonical text of Mark.

What that “reason” is, and why it is “good,” Metzger does not specify. The implication is that the passage had enjoyed such a long history in the church that taking it out at this point would not be considered wise. Similarly, F. F. Bruce concluded that “while we cannot regard [these twelve verses] as an integral part of the gospel to which they are now attached, no Christian need have any hesitation in reading them as Holy Scripture.”<sup>47</sup> Why this should be the case, Bruce does not say. He simply insists that in denying the authenticity of these verses, he is “not necessarily calling in question either their antiquity or their truth or their divine inspiration.”<sup>48</sup>

Earlier, Bruce Metzger had participated in the delegation that presented a specially bound edition of the RSV Common Bible to Pope Paul VI in 1973. Also present was the Greek Orthodox archbishop Athenagoras of Thyateira, who had endorsed the Common Bible. After the presentation, Archbishop Athenagoras mentioned that the Common Bible, though worthy, did not quite live up to its name, since a few of the books in the Greek Orthodox canon still were not represented. These consisted of 3 and 4 Maccabees and Psalm 151. Finally in 1977, “*The New Oxford Annotated Bible, with the Apocrypha, Expanded Edition*” appeared, including those scriptures, and a presentation of the Bible was made to his All Holiness, Demetrios I, the ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople. Metzger reports his response:

In accepting the gift, the ecumenical patriarch expressed his satisfaction at the availability of an edition of the sacred / Scriptures that English readers belonging to all of the main branches of the Christian church could use.<sup>49</sup>

Metzger continues in his own words:

The story of the making of the Revised Standard Version ... is an account of the slow but steady triumph of ecumenical concern over more limited sectarian interest. For the first time since the Reformation, one edition of the Bible received the blessings of leaders of the Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox churches alike.<sup>50</sup>

Perhaps the small number of English-speaking and -reading Coptic Orthodox Christians will prevent publishers from publishing a truly ecumenical Bible that includes their even-further-expanded canon.

These ecumenical considerations are not a detour. Canons can never be separated from the communities that hold them canonical. Even today, the seemingly simple question, “Which books belong to the biblical canon?” requires that one specify whether one is speaking for the Protestant Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, or the Ethiopian Coptic Church.

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<sup>47</sup> Bruce, “The End of the Second Gospel,” 181.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>49</sup> Metzger, *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian*, 85–6.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 86.

Furthermore, given the hard work of reaching out to brothers and sisters around the world to develop a Bible that could be accepted by all of the major Christian traditions in the English-speaking world, it would be unwise to ignore the global Christian community in making text-critical decisions about our texts.

## 6. THOMAS AND ALEXANDER

One exception to the relative silence about how to weigh textual criticism against canonical considerations is the 2003 article by John Christopher Thomas and Kimberly Ervin Alexander on Mark 16:9–20 in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*.<sup>51</sup> In part, the article is a reconsideration of the earlier 1983 article by Thomas published in the *Journal for the Evangelical Theological Society*. In the earlier article, Thomas had argued why Mark 16:9–20 was a later addition to the gospel and should therefore be excluded. Twenty years later, Thomas’s conclusion regarding the Long Ending had not changed with regard to the textual-critical issue. Nevertheless, Thomas and Alexander now argue that the text can and should be retained in Mark as an authoritatively canonical text.<sup>52</sup>

The most common way that scholars who serve the church have dealt with the tension between textual criticism and canonical considerations has been to argue against the overwhelming textual evidence. The reason for this misguided response is clear: no criteria have been available for scholars to include or exclude texts from published Bibles other than textual-critical criteria.<sup>53</sup> As a result, scholars who intuitively value these texts have gone to extreme lengths to argue against overwhelming evidence that our passages were indeed part of the best texts of Mark and John. It is at this point that Thomas and Alexander attempt to offer a new and valuable word.

Thomas and Alexander begin by noting how central to the foundational documents of the Pentecostal tradition is the language of “signs following,” which draws directly from Mark 16:17, which reads in the King James Version, “These signs shall follow them that believe.”<sup>54</sup> In fact, so central to the Pentecostal tradition is the Long Ending of Mark that, along with the book of Acts, it virtually serves as a “canon within a canon.”<sup>55</sup> “Though often observed that the Acts narrative is the

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<sup>51</sup>J. C. Thomas and K. E. Alexander, “‘And the Signs Are Following’: Mark 16.9–20—A Journey into Pentecostal Hermeneutics,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11 (2003): 147–70. Even the promising D. A. Black, ed., *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark: 4 Views* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2008), is ultimately disappointing in that it offers no real methodological alternative to the textual-critical (only) approach. See also K. M. Franco, “A Fitting End? The Text-Critical Problems of Mark 16” (Lombard, IL: Northern Theological Seminary, 2009).

<sup>52</sup>See also R. W. Wall, “A Response to Thomas/Alexander, ‘And the Signs Are Following’ (Mark 16.9–20),” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11 (2003): 171–83; and C. B. Bridges, “The Canonical Status of the Longer Ending of Mark,” *Stone-Campbell Journal* 9 (2006): 231–42.

<sup>53</sup>I have seen two exceptions to this rule. One is that numerous scholars have suggested that John 7:53–8:11 should be considered canonical on the basis that it is historical—that this incident actually happened in the ministry of Jesus. However, despite the fact that this story seems almost universally to be *liked* by modern readers of the New Testament, few of these scholars have explained why, exactly, this story should be accepted as historical (apart from its general believability) or why other stories with a claim to historicity should not similarly be included in the Bible. A second exception is that some scholars accept its canonicity based on its presumed inherent value. For instance, Michael Holmes apparently argues that John 7:53–8:11 should be included in our Bibles because it offers us “deep insight into how Jesus dealt with questions such as this, and in that sense is a great illustration to live by,” quoted by S. E. Zylstra, “Is ‘Go and Sin No More’ Biblical?” *Christianity Today* (June 2008): 46. Neither of these exceptions stands up to scrutiny.

<sup>54</sup>Cf. also Mark 16:20, which reads in the KJV: “And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word *with signs following*” (emphasis added).

<sup>55</sup>Thomas and Alexander, “And the Signs Are Following,” 149.



defining paradigm for Pentecostal doctrine and practice, in point of fact Mark 16.9–20 functions as the ‘litmus test’ of the early Pentecostal Movement’s fulfilling of the apostolic mandates given by Jesus and carried out by the church.”<sup>56</sup> Early Pentecostal writers clearly favored Mark’s version of the Great Commission over Matthew’s or John’s. Some of these Pentecostal writers were aware of the textual problems of the Long Ending, but they dealt with those problems in the same way that scholars from outside the Pentecostal tradition did so: by arguing against or minimizing the overwhelming textual-critical evidence.

A similar argument could be made with regard to the function of Mark’s Long Ending in sixteenth-century Anabaptism. In 1969 Eldon T. Yoder and Monroe D. Hochstetler published an index of references to the Bible by Dutch Anabaptists in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This 399-page index is a comprehensive index to biblical references in the writings of Menno Simons, Dirk Philips, and Thieleman J. van Braght (in the *Martyrs Mirror*), a credible trio of witnesses to the foundational documents of Dutch Anabaptism. In this index, nearly one-third of all the references to the book of Mark are actually to the Long Ending of Mark—verses with little claim to authenticity!<sup>57</sup> The primary reason for this early Anabaptist appreciation of Mark’s Long Ending appears to be that unlike Matthew’s version of the Great Commission, which was also extensively quoted, Mark’s version has Jesus saying, “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.” These Anabaptists perceived a sequence in this verse that suggested that believing comes before baptism, thus providing a biblical basis for their convictions about believers (adult) baptism.

Unfortunately, Thomas and Alexander do not say how or why the centuries-long tradition in the church of attributing authority to the Long Ending of Mark—or its special authoritative status in the founding documents of the Pentecostal tradition—should give the Long Ending canonical authority today in contrast to the dozens of other verses excised from the New Testament on the basis of sound textual criticism. That is, why should their argument about how dear the Long Ending of Mark is to Pentecostals not also apply to some person or group that finds dear the Trinitarian formula of 1 John 5:7b–8a, a passage that notwithstanding its long history in the church in Latin appears in no Greek manuscript prior to 1500?

## 7 PRESENTING THE TEXT IN PUBLISHED ENGLISH BIBLES

In 1946, the choice was considered a binary one. That is, these passages should either be put in the text or they should be excluded—or at least relegated to the footnotes. Some scholars today continue to insist that the choice must be binary. For instance, Ben Witherington argues that “text determines canon.” That is, it is the original text that is inspired, and not later additions. And, since Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11 were added later, Witherington thinks they are not inspired by the Holy Spirit and therefore Witherington himself should not preach on them. Today’s New International Version has a warning right *in the text* that says “The earliest manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have John 7:53–8:11,”<sup>58</sup> Witherington thinks the translators should simply

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>57</sup> Apparently none of these sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors, or the martyred Anabaptists they were quoting, was aware of the textual-critical problems with Mark’s Long Ending.

<sup>58</sup> Writing this article in 2008, Witherington naturally quotes the 2001 TNIV. The more recent 2011 edition of the NIV handles the textual-critical issue similarly by inserting within brackets, right in the text of Mark, “[The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have verses 9-20].”



have relegated these verses to the margin or footnote, as the RSV had done from 1946 to 1971.<sup>59</sup> In other words, if Mark did not write these verses, they should not be presented in modern Bibles as part of Mark. Introducing textual-critical comments within the biblical text itself just confuses categories!

This argument appears to me to be based on a prior *theological* commitment to a certain view of biblical inspiration. That is, if God “inspired” certain writers to write what we now consider canonical, that means that what is *not* canonical is neither inspired nor canonical. However, it seems clear that views of Scripture in the early church were not so binary. Even the modern categories of “canonical” and “noncanonical,” which we all so easily use and accept, are extremely rare in the literature of the first four centuries CE.

In 2012, François Bovon complained about the modern insistence that biblical books are either “canonical” or “apocryphal.”<sup>60</sup> This was not true of the early church, which seemed content for centuries to have three categories: the accepted (which some today call canonical), the rejected (which some today call apocryphal), and the disputed (Bovon seems to prefer a subset of the disputed, which he calls “books useful for the soul”). For centuries the early and medieval church held that although texts in the “rejected” category should not be read, “the text of books in the third category, having their own destiny, was to be preserved, copied, and adapted to serve for the soul’s benefit.”<sup>61</sup>

Although Bovon does not extend his proposed “third category” to disputed texts *within* the accepted canon, it seems to me that his argument lends itself well to that application. Bovon concludes his article with an intriguing example about how the Epistle to the Laodiceans was presented in Elias Hutter’s 1599 polyglot Bible: Hutter includes the questionable epistle after Colossians, but does not number the pages until 1 Thessalonians begins, thus demonstrating the existence of a *via media* between the canonical and noncanonical.<sup>62</sup>

This leads naturally to the question about how disputed variant readings can and ought to be *presented* in modern editions of the Bible. Not only can the presentation vary; the wording of the footnotes admits to a great deal of variety. In 1971 the Standard Bible Committee restored the Long Ending of Mark to the text, but they added a blank line between vv. 8 and 9, indicating some kind of a break.<sup>63</sup> In addition, they added a footnote after the Amen of v. 20, which reads:

Some of the most ancient authorities bring the book to a close at the end of verse 8. One authority concludes the book by adding after verse 8 the following: [the short ending is then cited]. Other authorities include the preceding passage and continue with verses 9–20. In most authorities verses 9–20 follow immediately after verse 8; a few authorities insert additional material after verse 14.

<sup>59</sup> B. Witherington III, “A Text without a Home,” *BAR* 34.4 (July/August 2008): 28.

<sup>60</sup> Bovon notes that the words *apocrypha* and *apocryphal* denote, for Roman Catholics, books that should be avoided, not the (accepted) Deuterocanonical books; see “Beyond the Canonical and the Apocryphal Books, the Presence of a Third Category: The Books Useful for the Soul,” *HTR* 105 (2012): 127–35 at 136.

<sup>61</sup> Bovon, “Beyond the Canonical,” 134.

<sup>62</sup> Bovon adds in a footnote that in the first edition of his German translation, Martin Luther left unnumbered the pages of the letter of James, whose canonicity Luther would like to have challenged (“Beyond the Canonical,” 137).

<sup>63</sup> This solution seems to have been offered by R. C. Fuller in a letter to the Standard Bible Committee. See “Suggested Changes in the Revised Standard Version,” by Fuller in the RSV archives, Princeton Theological Seminary.

In 1989 the New Revised Version handled the textual-critical issue by adding a footnote after Mark 16:8 that reads:

Some of the most ancient authorities bring the book to a close at the end of verse 8. One authority concludes the book with the shorter ending; others include the shorter ending and then continue with verses 9–20. In most authorities verses 9–20 follow immediately after verse 8, though in some of these authorities the passage is marked as being doubtful.

The primary difference in the NRSV compared to the 1971 RSV is that the NRSV inexplicably includes the shorter ending in the text itself, despite the fact that its claim to authenticity is among the thinnest of any textual variants in the whole New Testament! Both endings are, as the RSV did with the Long Ending, enclosed within double brackets [[@ ω]], which are easily missed.

In 2001 both the English Standard Version and the Today’s New International Version took a further step forward by inserting a textual-critical note of warning within the text itself. Between Mark 16:8 and 16:9 we read in the ESV “[Some of the earliest manuscripts do not include 16:9–20]” while in the TNIV we read “[The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9–20].” In 2011 the Common English Bible took yet another step in adding large gray brackets around the Long Ending, appearing in some additions above and below the ending and in some in the left and right margins of the text. In addition, the CEB adds the subhead, “Endings Added Later.”

That same year the newly revised New International Version took yet another step by adding the textual-critical warning in the text itself, “[The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9–20]” while at the same time putting the Long Ending itself in italics.

We thus have several emerging practices with regard to how these two passages are presented, some of which are mutually exclusive and some of which can be used in combination:

1. Present the Long Ending as part of the canon without break or explanation, as in the King James Version.
2. Add vertical spacing and/or a horizontal line above and/or below the text, separating it from the rest of the biblical text.
3. Present the Long Ending within brackets (either single or double), which are easily read over and missed—and certainly not easily interpreted!
4. Include a textual-critical comment or warning in the text itself that cannot easily be missed or read over.
5. Include a textual-critical comment in a footnote that attempts to explain the issues.
6. Add a large graphic bracket or some other obvious graphic to the text in question.
7. Present the Long Ending in some visually distinct way, whether in a different font or italicized or in a different size.
8. Relocate the passage to an appendix.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>This solution does not make much sense with regard to Mark 16:9–20, since it is already at the end of the book. With regard to John 7:53–8:11, P. Comfort would likely prefer this option, since he insists that the story about the adulteress

In other words, the creative options facing modern publishers of the Bible are many. Among the better practices are those of the NIV, which (a) adds a long solid horizontal line between Mark 16:8 and the Long Ending, (b) adds within the text itself the line “[The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9–20.],” and (c) prints the Long Ending in italics.

In combination, this presentation clearly sets it off from the rest of Mark without excluding it from the printed biblical text. Also helpful is the clear subhead of the Common English Bible, “Endings Added Later,” in combination with their large graphic gray brackets. Less helpful, especially for the average untrained Bible reader, are comments like “Some manuscripts do not include ...” or “Many manuscripts do not include ...” or presentations of the biblical text that imply that these passages are authentically part of Mark or John.

## 8 CONCLUSION

My conclusion has two parts: the theoretical/methodological and the practical. At the theoretical level, I argue for the inclusion of these texts in our Bibles, even though they were clearly not part of the best texts of Mark and John. The basis for doing so is my argument that these two texts are inherently distinct from all other textual variants in the New Testament by virtue of being pericopes in their own right and thus having their own independent histories in the life of the church. As a result, they are eligible for the application of *Wirkungsgeschichte* in a way that the others are not. Neither *Wirkungsgeschichte* nor appeals to tradition have any place in considerations of variant readings *apart from these two texts*. Even though generations of scholars who knew that these texts were added later continued to affirm their canonical authority,<sup>65</sup> to my knowledge none have attempted to explain *why* these two passages should be treated any differently from other variant readings of the New Testament.

On the practical level, I believe that Bovon’s argument and his appeal to Hutter’s example leads naturally to the proposal of a solution with regard to whether and how Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11 should be presented in modern Bibles. In fact, this solution is already being demonstrated in multiple ways by modern editions of the Bible. That is, in including these two passages in the printed text, they should be presented in ways that clearly mark them as having been added later, not authentically part of Mark and John. It is for this reason that I applaud the efforts of the (2011) New International Version and the Contemporary English Bible to be faithful to both textual-critical and canonical considerations in service to the church.

Other practical questions like “Should we be preaching from and teaching about these passages?” can be answered in the affirmative. The more significant questions are *how* they should be preached on and whether we can faithfully preach and teach these passages without mentioning their dubious authenticity, although the wisdom of addressing textual-critical issues in the pulpit is dubious if parishioners have not been introduced to even the basics of historical-critical scholarship.<sup>66</sup> Certainly

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unnecessarily and misleadingly interrupts the flow of John’s narrative, making it difficult to appreciate the connection between John 7:40–52 and 8:12–20 (“The Pericope of the Adulteress,” 147). No amount of horizontal lines, font changes, or explanatory footnotes can make up for the disruption if the story continues to appear between John 7:53 and 8:11.

<sup>65</sup> For examples, see my comments above with regard to B. M. Metzger and F. F. Bruce.

<sup>66</sup> C. E. Blair argues that the “lack of lay training [in historical-critical tools among the average Protestant believer in North America] has undermined the foundational tenet of the Protestant Reformation, which insists on the right and duty of

in teaching, textual-critical issues are appropriate and necessary. I would suggest that persons with responsibility for the care of believers in communities of faith have been “protecting” the average Christian from historical-critical issues for far too long.

Finally, if theological commitments force scholars to treat the question of the Long Ending of Mark and John 7:53–8:11 as a binary question—either in or out—answered on the basis of textual criticism, then the answer is clear: neither the short ending nor the Long Ending of Mark should be included in modern editions of the Bible, nor should there be comments in the footnotes about them, nor should the verses appear in the text itself. However, if the church today can abide by a slightly more ambiguous or flexible view of Scripture—one more akin to the views reflected in the Early Church—then these texts can and should be included in modern editions of the Bible along with explanatory and visual solutions that clearly mark these passages as added later, essentially independent from the books in which they traditionally find their place.

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every Christian to read and interpret the Bible”; *The Art of Teaching the Bible: A Practical Guide for Adults* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press), 91.

APPENDIX 7.1 Presentations of Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11 in Recent English Translations

	Mark 16:9–20		John 7:53–8:11	
1984 New International Version	In the text <i>Extra space and horizontal line; 16:9–20 included in the text</i>	In the footnotes “The earliest manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9–20.”	In the text 7:53–8:11 <i>included in the text with extra space and a horizontal line before and after</i>	In the footnotes “The earliest manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have John 7:53–8:11.”
2001 Today’s New International Version	16:9–20 is included, separated with extra vertical spacing and horizontal lines. The text is italicized. The subhead reads, “[The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9–20.]”	No additional comment appears in the footnotes.	7:53–8:11 is included, separated with extra vertical spacing and horizontal lines. The text is italicized. The subhead reads: “[The earliest manuscripts and many other ancient witnesses do not have John 7:53–8:11.]”	No comment
2011 New International Version	<i>Extra space and horizontal line, with the explanation, “[The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have vv. 9–20.]” The text of vv. 9–20 is then presented in italics.</i>	“Some manuscripts have the following ending between vv. 8 and 9, and one manuscript has it after v. 8 (omitting vv. 9–20): <i>Then they quickly reported all these instructions to those around Peter. After this, Jesus himself also sent out through them from east to west the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation. Amen.</i> ”	<i>Extra space and horizontal line, with the explanation, “[The earliest manuscripts and many other ancient witnesses do not have John 7:53–8:11. A few manuscripts include these verses, wholly</i>	No comment

King James Version	16:9–20 included in the text with no special treatment	No comment	or in part, after John 7:36, John 21:25, Luke 21:38 or Luke 24:53].” The text of John 7:53–8:11 is then presented in italics. 7:53–8:11 included in the text with no special treatment	No comment
New King James Version	16:9–20 included in the text with no special treatment	No comment	7:53–8:11 Included in the text with no special treatment	No comment
New Living Translation	Adds subhead: “[Shorter Ending of Mark]” along with the text of the shorter ending; and then another subhead: “[Longer Ending of Mark]” along with traditional text of vv. 9–20.	The most reliable early manuscripts of the Gospel of Mark end at v. 8. Other manuscripts include various endings to the Gospel. A few include both the ‘shorter ending’ and the ‘longer ending.’ The majority of manuscripts include the ‘longer ending’ immediately after v. 8.”	7:53–8:11 included in the text with space added and a subhead: “[The most ancient Greek manuscripts do not include 7:53–8:11.]”	No comment
English Standard Version	Adds space and subhead: “[Some of the earliest manuscripts do not include 16:9–20.]” 16:9–20 included in the text.	“Some manuscripts end the book with 16:8; others include vv. 9–20 immediately after v. 8. A few manuscripts insert additional material after v. 14; one Latin manuscript adds after v. 8 the following: <i>But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this, Jesus himself sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.</i> Other manuscripts include this same wording after v. 8, then continue with vv. 9–20.”	7:53–8:11 included in the text with space added and a subhead: “[The earliest manuscripts do not include 7:53–8:11.]”	“Some manuscripts do not include 7:53–8:11; others add the passage here or after 7:36 or after 21:25 or after Luke 21:38, with variations in the text”

(continued)

APPENDIX 7.1 Presentations of Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11 in Recent English Translations (continued)

	Mark 16:9–20		John 7:53–8:11	
Reina Valera	<i>16:9–20 included in the text with no special treatment</i>	<i>No comment</i>	<i>7:53–8:11 included in the text with no special treatment</i>	<i>No comment</i>
The Message	<i>16:9–20 included in the text but placed in brackets</i>	“Mark 16:9–20 [the portion in brackets] is contained only in later manuscripts.”	<i>7:53–8:11 included in the text with no special treatment</i>	<i>No comment</i>
New American Standard Bible	<i>16:9–20 included in the text but placed in brackets</i>	“Some of the oldest mss. do not contain vv. 9–20.”	<i>7:53–8:11 included in the text, placed in brackets</i>	“John 7:53–8:11 is not found in most of the old mss.”
Holman Christian Standard	<i>16:9–20 included in the text but placed in brackets</i>	“16:9–20 Other mss omit bracketed text.”	<i>7:53–8:11 included in the text, placed in brackets</i>	“8:11 Other mss omit bracketed text”
2016 Christian Standard Bible	<i>Extra vertical spacing with the note “[Some of the earliest mss conclude with 16:8.]” The text of 16:9–20 then appears within brackets.</i>	“Other mss. include vv. 9–20 as a longer ending. The following shorter ending is found in some mss between vv. 8 and 9 and in one ms after v. 8 (each of which omits vv. 9–20): <i>And all that had been commanded to them they quickly reported to those around Peter. After these things, Jesus himself sent out through them from east to west, the holy and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation. Amen.</i> ”	<i>Extra vertical spacing with the note “[The earliest mss do not include 7:53–8:11.]”</i>	“Other mss include all or some of the passage after Jn 7:36,44,52; 21:25; or Lk 21:38.”
2011 Common English Bible	<i>16:9–20 is included with extra vertical spacing, a gray bar, and small left and right indents. A subhead, “Endings added Later,” is followed by the shorter ending in single brackets and the longer ending in double brackets.</i>	“In most critical editions of the Gk New Testament, the Gospel of Mark ends at 16:8.”	<i>7:53–8:11 is included after extra vertical spacing, along with a gray bar and small left and right indents. (No special subhead.)</i>	“Critical editions of the Gk New Testament do not contain 7:53–8:11.”



1946 (Pre-1971) Revised Standard Version	<i>vv. 9–20 are not printed in the text</i>	“Other texts and versions add as 16.9–20 the following passage: <i>9 Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom.</i> ”	<i>7:53–8:11 are not printed in the text</i>	“Other ancient authorities add 7:53–8:11 either here or at the end of this gospel or after Luke 21.38, with variations of the text:  <i><sup>53</sup> They went each to his own house, <sup>8</sup>but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.</i> ”
1965 Catholic Revised Standard Version	<i>16:9–20 included in the text with no special treatment</i>	“Other ancient authorities omit vv. 9–20. Some ancient authorities conclude Mark instead with the following: <i>But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this, Jesus himself sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation</i> ”	<i>7:53–8:11 included in the text with no special treatment</i>	“Some ancient authorities insert 7:53–8:11 either at the end of this gospel or after Luke 21.38, with variations of the text. Others omit it altogether.”
1971 Revised Standard Version	<i>16:9–20 included with an extra line of spacing above the passage</i>	“Some of the most ancient authorities bring the book to a close at the end of v. 8. One authority concludes the book by adding after v. 8 the following: <i>But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this, Jesus himself sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.</i> Other authorities include the preceding passage and continue with vv. 9–20. In most authorities vv. 9–20 follow immediately after v. 8; a few authorities insert additional material after v. 14.”	<i>7:53–8:11 included with an extra line of spacing above and below the passage</i>	“The most ancient authorities omit 7.53–8.11; other authorities add the passage here or after 7.36 or after 21.25 or after Luke 21.38, with variations of text.”
New Revised Standard Version	<i>Adds subhead: “The Shorter Ending of Mark” along with the text of the shorter ending; and then another subhead: “The Longer Ending of Mark” along with vv. 9–20. In addition, both endings are placed in double brackets.</i>	“Some of the most ancient authorities bring the book to a close at the end of v. 8. One authority concludes the book with the shorter ending; others include the shorter ending and then continue with vv. 9–20. In most authorities vv. 9–20 follow immediately after v. 8, though in some of these authorities the passage is marked as being doubtful.”	<i>7:53–8:11 placed in double brackets</i>	“The most ancient authorities lack 7:53–8:11; other authorities add the passage here or after 7:36 or after 21:25 or after Luke 21:38, with variations of text; some mark the passage as doubtful.”

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

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# Reconsidering the Poor: A Fresh Translation of Matthew 5:3

JOHAN FERREIRA

After a brief introduction of Jesus' message about the imminent arrival of the kingdom of heaven in the Gospel of Matthew (4:17, 23), the beatitudes open the Sermon on the Mount, which is the first detailed account of Jesus' teaching.<sup>1</sup> The Sermon describes the transformation that will take place in the lives of those affected by the power of the coming kingdom and thus defines the character of those belonging to the heavenly kingdom. In the later history of Christianity, the beatitudes have determined, perhaps more than any other section of the New Testament, the tone of Christian ethics and behavior. The beatitudes also raise several scholarly questions and exegetical challenges. To what extent do the beatitudes reflect the *ipsissima verba Jesu*? How do they relate to Jewish tradition and first-century Jewish thought? How do the beatitudes convey the message of the Gospel of the kingdom? And how do we account for the similarities and the dissimilarities of the beatitudes in Matthew and Luke? These are just a few of the issues presented to us by the beatitudes.

Notwithstanding these larger questions, the aim of this short study is ambitious. It wants to offer a new translation of the first beatitude in Matt 5:3, reflect on the authenticity of the text, and then briefly comment on the social context of the early Jesus movement. The study will argue that the meaning of Matt 5:3 has been obscured by the standard translations and that as a result the significance of this text for understanding Jesus and the early Jesus movement's attitude toward wealth and poverty has been overlooked. Based on an analysis of the Greek grammar, the meaning of key terms, the theology of Matthew, the early versions, and the context of the historical Jesus, I want to argue that the usual translation of Matt 5:3 needs revision.

### 1. TRANSLATING MATTHEW 5:3

A review of the major English versions demonstrates a consistent rendering of the Greek text. We may note the following examples from popular translations:

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It is a pleasure to contribute this study to the Festschrift of an extraordinary scholar and gracious benefactor, James Charlesworth, who taught a new generation of scholars not just to read the texts of early Christianity and Judaism but to cherish them.

<sup>1</sup>The Sermon on the Mount is the first of five major educational discourses within the Gospel of Matthew. These discourses are the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7), the Mission of the Twelve (Matthew 10), the Parables of the Kingdom (Matthew 13), the New Community of the Church (Matthew 18), and the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 23–25).

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (King James Version)

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (New Revised Standard Version)

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (New American Standard Bible)

How blessed are the poor in spirit: the kingdom of Heaven is theirs. (New Jerusalem Bible)

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (New International Version)

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (English Standard Version)

After reading these highly regarded and widely circulated translations, one would think that there are no issues in our understanding of the underlying Greek text; they all agree. However, on closer scrutiny one realizes that this is not the case and that the typical translation of Matt 5:3 is in fact a theological reinterpretation or spiritualization of the Greek.<sup>2</sup> The Greek text reads:

Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.<sup>3</sup>

A fairly literal translation reads as follows:

Blessed [are] the poor [by/in] the Spirit/spirit, because theirs is the kingdom of (the) heaven(s).

Syntactically, the beatitude consists of two clauses. The main clause pronounces the blessing whereas the second subordinate clause explains the reason for the blessing. The omission of the verb in the first clause follows the standard formulaic structure of the beatitude genre and highlights the certainty of the pronouncement. The predicate adjective (μακάριοι; *beati* in Latin) is followed by an articulated substantivized adjective (οἱ πτωχοί), which enjoys the emphasis. The predicate adjective is placed in the first position for emphasis. In the subordinate causal clause, introduced by ὅτι, the pronoun (αὐτῶν), which refers back to “the poor,” is placed before the verb since the author is inclined to accentuate the subject of the complement sentence, the kingdom of heaven (ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν), it being also the main theme of the Sermon on the Mount. In terms of grammar and semantics, the second clause of the beatitude does not cause any difficulty. The plural ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν is a Hebraism (מַלְכוּת הַשָּׁמַיִם) and is best translated with the singular in English, the kingdom of heaven. The poor are blessed because they are in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>4</sup> The present tense ἐστὶν of the first beatitude and the last beatitude (v. 10) indicates that the kingdom has already become present in the experience of the disciples.<sup>5</sup>

The first clause, however, raises several interpretive questions. There are at least three questions that the translator must answer, which are all critical for our understanding of this text. Who are “the poor”? What is meant by “spirit”? And how does one interpret the use of the dative case

<sup>2</sup> Every translation is of course an interpretation of the source text. However, translations often demand interpretive decisions that may obfuscate ambiguity or may result in either a semantic expansion or reduction in the target language.

<sup>3</sup> There are no significant textual variants.

<sup>4</sup> It is debated whether or not the kingdom belongs to the poor or are made up of the poor. The pronoun αὐτῶν is probably a partitive genitive, meaning the people of the kingdom are of such a kind. Also see William F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew*, AB 26 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 46, who state, “the best sense here is ‘the Kingdom will consist of such as these.’” The background is probably the eschatological vision in Dan 7:18, 22 where the holy ones gain possession of the kingdom.

<sup>5</sup> I understand v. 11 to be a further explication or expansion of the eighth beatitude that deals with persecution.

(τῷ πνεύματι)? In classical Greek literature the adjective πτωχός, used substantively, is a strong word and describes those who are destitute and who need to beg for food and clothing.<sup>6</sup> In the New Testament, however, the term, influenced by the Hebrew Bible and early Judaism, has acquired a wider semantic range and is sometimes used in the broader sense of being in need of financial resources, health, support, protection, and so on (cf. Luke 6:20; 2 Cor 6:10; Rev 3:17). In the Septuagint, πτωχός is used to translate a range of Hebrew terms, including עָנִי, דָל, שָׂרָף (participle of שָׂרַף), and מְבַרֵךְ. These Hebrew terms cover a wide semantic range and are often used to describe those who are in special need of God's help and protection.<sup>7</sup> This background serves to widen the semantic range and softens the harshness of πτωχός in the Gospels. Consequently, many interpreters have understood οἱ πτωχοί as referring to spiritual poverty rather than material poverty.<sup>8</sup> However, it is questionable whether any of these words used for the poor in the Hebrew Bible ever refer to spiritual poverty or humility. They refer to those who are in need of physical or concrete assistance. In any case, an interpretation in terms of spiritual poverty does not accord with the general meaning of πτωχός in the New Testament.<sup>9</sup>

The term πτωχός occurs thirty-four times in the New Testament, five times in Matthew (5:3; 11:5; 19:21; 26:9, 11), five times in Mark (10:21; 12:42, 43; 14:5, 7), ten times in Luke (4:18; 6:20; 7:22; 14:13, 21; 16:20, 22; 18:22; 19:8; 21:3), four times in John (12:5, 6, 8; 13:29), four times in Paul (Rom 15:26; 2 Cor 6:10; Gal 2:10; 4:9), four times in James (2:2, 3, 5, 6), and twice in Revelation (3:17; 13:16). Apart from the metaphorical use of the term in Rev 3:17, in all other occurrences the term refers to material poverty, describing those who experience lack in terms of finances, clothing, health, protection, status, honor, and so on. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus' message is particularly geared toward the poor, to bring them restoration and blessing (Luke 4:18–21). Hence, Luke singles out a range of people in this category and shows that Jesus is very concerned about them, for example, the sick, the handicapped, slaves, lepers, shepherds, prostitutes, the oppressed, Samaritans, Gentiles, widows, and women.

Although this concern or special focus on the poor is not so pronounced in the Gospel of Matthew, in all instances πτωχός refers to those who are materially poor. In answer to John's question, whether he was the one foretold by the Scriptures, Jesus answers that "the blind receive

<sup>6</sup> See I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 249: "The Gk. word means 'one who is so poor as to have to beg', i.e. one who is completely destitute."

<sup>7</sup> For example, see 1 Sam 18:23; Job 36:15; Pss 34:6; 40:7; 70:5. In these texts, the poor person is not destitute needing food and clothing for survival but stands in need of God's help. Also see the comment by Rabbi Joseph in the Talmud: "Rav Yosef said: We hold that a Torah scholar will not become poor. The Gemara challenges this statement: But we see that they do become poor. The Gemara answers: Even so, if there is a Torah scholar who becomes poor, he will still never have to go around asking for charity at people's doors"; *The William Davidson Talmud*, b. *Šabb.* 151b.

<sup>8</sup> For example, see Leon Morris, "The poor in spirit in the sense of this beatitude are those who recognize that they are completely and utterly destitute in the realm of the spirit", *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 95; and R. T. France, "Poor in spirit warns us immediately that the thought here is not (as it is in Luke 6:20) of material poverty"; *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 109.

<sup>9</sup> We may also note here that "The Poor" is used as a technical term to describe the Qumran community in the sectarian documents of the Dead Sea Scrolls (e.g., 1QpHab xii 3, 6a, 10a; 1QM xi 9, 3; xiii 14). The main idea is not that the members of the community were destitute but that they stood in need of God's help and protection amidst persecution. Several scholars have seen a connection between Matthew's beatitude and the Qumran community. For example, see David Flusser, "Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit . . .," *IEJ* 10 (1960): 1–13; and John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 199–201.



their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them” (Matt 11:5). Here, the poor belong to the same category of people as the blind, the lame, and the sick. When the rich young man asked what he lacked, Jesus says, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me” (Matt 19:21). The young man went away sad because he could not sell his possessions to generate funds for the poor. And when the woman anointed Jesus in Bethany, there was animosity among the disciples because the ointment could have been sold and the money given to the poor (Matt 26:6–13). In all these instances, material poverty is in view. The poor are those who have limited means or who are restricted in terms of finances, health, freedom, opportunities, power, and status. The poor are sociologically and economically defined. They stand over against those who are not restricted in terms of finances, health, freedom, opportunities, power, and status.

Therefore, it is questionable whether we should understand the first beatitude as referring to those who are spiritually poor or to those who are humble. This interpretation goes against the general meaning of the term as used in the New Testament and in the Gospel of Matthew. In addition, those who understand οἱ πτωχοί as referring to the spiritually poor or the humble find it difficult to explain the distinction between being spiritually poor and the third beatitude referring to the meek. So, Meier surmises that they “might almost be considered functional equivalents.”<sup>10</sup> Hence, the third beatitude becomes redundant. There are other terms that could have been used to indicate that the blessed ones are those who are humble before God, if the author wanted to express that meaning. The Septuagint and the New Testament mostly use the adjectives ταπεινός or πραῦς to refer to humility and meekness. In fact, it is hard to imagine that the author of Matthew or Jesus would have commended those who are spiritually poor. One problem with the world is that many are materially rich but spiritually poor, rather it is more blessed to be materially poor but spiritually rich (cf. Luke 12:21; 2 Cor 6:3–10; Rev 3:17–18). Strictly speaking, to be spiritually poor is the opposite of being humble and contrite before God. From a biblical perspective, those who are remorseful for their shortcomings and are full of reverence for God are the spiritually rich (cf. Rev 2:9; 3:17–18). If the common translation and understanding of the first beatitude in English are correct, one would have expected the Greek to read, μακάριοι οἱ ταπεινοὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, or μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς τῇ καρδίᾳ. The meaning of these readings is unambiguous.

The second question that we need to address relates to the meaning of πνεῦμα. All our modern translations take the Greek πνεῦμα as referring to the human spirit and understand the dative as a dative of reference or respect, hence the translation of “spirit” with lowercase “s.” However, in light of Matthew’s use it is more likely that πνεῦμα refers to the Holy Spirit rather than the human spirit. The term πνεῦμα occurs nineteen times in the Gospel of Matthew. It refers four times to an evil spirit or evil spirits (8:16; 10:1; 12:43, 45), once to Jesus’ spirit (27:50), and once to the human spirit (26:41), whereas it refers twelve times to the Holy Spirit (1:18, 20; 3:11, 16; 4:1; 10: 20; 12:18, 28, 31, 32; 22:43; 28:19).<sup>11</sup> Within the context of the beatitudes, πνεῦμα certainly

<sup>10</sup> John P. Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, vol. 2 of *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1994), 334.

<sup>11</sup> See Roland Deines, “The Holy Spirit in the Gospel of Matthew,” in *The Earliest Perceptions of Jesus in Context: Essays in Honor of John Nolland*, ed. Aaron White, Craig A. Evans, and David Wenham (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018), 214–15.

does not refer to an evil spirit, nor can it refer to Jesus' spirit (i.e., his human spirit) since the adjective is plural, so it either must refer to the human spirit or to the Holy Spirit. Since the term refers in most instances to the Holy Spirit and only once to the human spirit, it is more likely than not, all things being equal, that in the first beatitude the term also refers to the Holy Spirit.<sup>12</sup>

Consequently, with respect to our third question, we may well argue that it is more natural to understand the dative τῷ πνεύματι as an instrumental dative or as expressing agent (*dativus auctoris*), rather than as a dative of reference.<sup>13</sup> There are many examples of the expression τῷ πνεύματι used with instrumental meaning in the New Testament (cf. Matt 22:43; Mark 12:36; Luke 2:27; 4:1; 10:21; Acts 6:10; 1 Cor 6:11; 14:15; Eph 1:13; 2 Thess 2:8). The instrumental use of spirit (קְרִינָה) is also common in the Hebrew Bible (cf. Exod 14:21; Job 15:30; Ps 48:8; Isa 4:4; Ezek 11:24; 37:1). As we have observed above, it would be odd to understand that those who are poor with respect to their spirit are blessed. One would expect the opposite, in the kingdom of heaven the blessed ones must be those who are rich with respect to their spirit (cf. Luke 12:21). This sentiment is amply illustrated in the Epistle of Barnabas, which exhorts Christians to “be simple in heart, and rich in spirit” (ἔση ἀπλοῦς τῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ πλούσιος τῷ πνεύματι (Barn. 19:2). In other words, I want to propose that one should translate πνεῦμα with an uppercase “S” in English to indicate the Holy Spirit.<sup>14</sup>

Blessed are the poor by the Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

This translation not only adheres perfectly well with the grammar of the original Greek and the Matthean meaning of key terms, it is also consistent with the theology of Matthew.<sup>15</sup> In the Gospel of Matthew the Holy Spirit empowers the coming of the kingdom and brings the power of the kingdom to bear upon the lives of those entering the kingdom. Mary is found to be with child

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<sup>12</sup>It is also interesting for our discussion to note the use of the *nomen sacrum* in a number of early New Testament Greek manuscripts. The practice of abbreviating divine names—especially for Jesus, Christ, Lord, and God—with the addition of a line above the abbreviation probably stems from the second century or perhaps even earlier. It was employed as an act of reverence based on the Jewish practice of respect for the divine name in the Hebrew Bible. The contraction of πνεύματι to πνι in Matt 5:3 in many New Testament manuscripts (e.g., א, C, D) may indicate that the copyists believed that the reference is to the Holy Spirit. However, copyists were not consistent in their use of the *nomen sacrum* for the term πνεῦμα, sometimes the contraction was used, at other times πνεῦμα was written out in full, and often all references to πνεῦμα including evil spirits are written as a contraction. See Joel D. Estes, “Reading for the Spirit of the Text: Nomina Sacra and πνεῦμα Language in P<sup>46</sup>,” *NTS* 61 (2015): 566–94.

<sup>13</sup>Grammarians usually prefer to interpret the dative with respect to πνεῦμα as a dative of instrument rather than of agency since it involves theological questions regarding the personality of the Spirit. See Daniel B. Wallace's discussion in *Greek beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 165–6. With the dative of agency one usually expects the presence of a verb (cf. Matt 9:34, 12:24).

<sup>14</sup>Our interpretation goes against almost all commentators who rarely consider the instrumental dative. The handful of commentators who do consider it dismiss this possibility too prematurely. For example, Hans Dieter Betz states, “The dative τῷ πνεύματι (‘in [the] spirit’) is almost certainly referential, not instrumental; the referential dative is not uncommon elsewhere in the SM and in the New Testament as a whole. Although grammatically possible in Greek, the expression may be a rendering of a corresponding Hebrew notion.” See his *The Sermon on the Mount: A Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, Including the Sermon on the Plain (Matthew 5:3–7:27 and Luke 6:20–49)* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 112.

<sup>15</sup>Ulrich Luz does not explain why he thinks that understanding πνεῦμα to refer to the Holy Spirit is “philologically impossible.” See his *Matthew 1–7: A Commentary on Matthew 1–7*, rev. ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 232. So too Nolland discards this possibility without an explanation, “But a reference to God's Spirit here seems quite unlikely; the context supports reference rather to the human spirit”; *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 199.

through the agency of the Holy Spirit (εὐρέθη ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου ... τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν ἐκ πνεύματός ἐστιν ἁγίου, Matt 1:18, 20). Here the preposition ἐκ denotes the cause of Mary's pregnancy. The Spirit enables the coming of the Messiah who will inaugurate the kingdom of heaven. John the Baptist proclaims that the one after him will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire (αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ, Matt 3:11). After Jesus' baptism and receipt of the Spirit, he is led up into the wilderness by the Spirit (τότε ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνήχθη εἰς τὴν ἔρημον ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος, Matt 4:1). Here the preposition ὑπὸ describes the efficient cause of Jesus' entrance into the wilderness for spiritual battle. In the discourse in Matthew 10, Jesus states that the Spirit will provide the wisdom and words in apologetic contexts (τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν τὸ λαλοῦν ἐν ὑμῖν, Matt 10:20).

Perhaps the most obvious passage in Matthew's Gospel describing the role of the Spirit is the parable of the strong man. Jesus interprets his power over demons as a demonstration that the kingdom of God has become present in Galilee (εἰ δὲ ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ ἐγὼ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, ἄρα ἔφθασεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, Matt 12:28). This passage is placed in the context of the quote from the first Servant Song in Second Isaiah, which describes the anointing of the servant by the Spirit in order to proclaim justice to the poor and the Gentiles (Isa 42:1–4). It is through the Spirit that the kingdom becomes a present reality. The kingdom and the Spirit are correlative concepts and are inseparably linked. The working of the Spirit does not just indicate that the kingdom is present but also that the Spirit is the power behind the coming of the kingdom.<sup>16</sup> In his dispute with the Pharisees in Matt 22:45, Jesus attributes the words of Ps 110:1 to David speaking by the Spirit (πῶς οὖν Δαυὶδ ἐν πνεύματι καλεῖ αὐτὸν κύριον λέγων, 22:43). The prepositional phrase ἐν πνεύματι is one of manner with ἐν used instrumentally. All these instances have to do with empowerment through the Spirit and in the Gospel of Matthew that empowerment enables the advancement of the kingdom.

Therefore, consistent with the portrayal of the work of the Spirit in the Gospel of Matthew, we may interpret the expression “the poor by the Spirit” (οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι) as referring to those who have become poor through the power of the Spirit for the sake of the kingdom or for the sake of Jesus. We have many instances of that happening in Matthew. For the sake of the kingdom, Joseph took Mary as his wife (Matt 1:24), despite the potential stigma. In order to protect the child, Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt (2:13–14), exposing themselves to hardship and isolation. In order to prepare the way for Jesus, John the Baptist lived an austere life of wandering in the wilderness (3:1–4). When the disciples heard Jesus' call, they left their occupations and homes and followed him (5:18–22). For Matthew, the ability to repent and to believe is an indication that the strong man of this world has been bound and that his house is now being plundered (12:29). This power comes from the Spirit and is an indication of the Spirit baptism that John announced (3:11). Theoretically, the dative τῷ πνεύματι may refer to the human spirit, that is, those who follow Jesus became poor through their own voluntary decision, but this interpretation is strained and unnecessary.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Note the use of the aorist ἔφθασεν (Matt 12:28), stressing that the kingdom is an accomplished reality.

<sup>17</sup>This is the interpretation of Adolf Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Matthäus: Seine Sprache, sein Ziel, seine Selbständigkeit* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1929), 133; Ernst Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Matthäus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 83; and Kurt Schubert, “The Sermon on the Mount and the Qumran Texts,” in *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, ed. Krister Stendahl with James H. Charlesworth (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 122.

Our interpretation does not spiritualize the meaning of οἱ πτωχοί; it is still material or social poverty that is in view, but broadly understood. Many sociologists have pointed out that poverty is a social construction with multidimensional connections, with aspects of economics, culture, religion, status, identity, and politics.<sup>18</sup> The poor in Matthew's beatitude are not necessarily those who for the sake of the kingdom have become destitute or beggars. We understand the poor as those who have suffered physical or social loss for the sake of the kingdom, those who have left their occupations and homes, those who are now dishonored because they follow Jesus, those who are now oppressed or persecuted for the sake of the Gospel. In this way the first beatitude corresponds to the final beatitude (Matt 5:10–11), which pronounces a blessing on those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. The subordinate clause ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν of the final beatitude, which is exactly the same as the subordinate clause in the first beatitude, supports this interpretation. This is also the interpretation that we find in Polycarp's *Epistle to the Philippians*. Polycarp summarizes Jesus' beatitudes by combining the first and the last beatitude, "Blessed are the poor, and those that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God" (μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ καὶ οἱ διωκόμενοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, *Pol. Phil.* 2:3). Or, perhaps a better understanding of Polycarp is that he interprets the first beatitude by means of the last beatitude.

Therefore, a careful consideration of the terms οἱ πτωχοί and πνεῦμα and the use of the dative in the Gospel of Matthew support a new understanding of the first beatitude and justify a revised translation of Matt 5:3.

## 2. LUKE 6:20 AND THE EARLY VERSIONS OF MATTHEW 5:3

In support of this new translation and interpretation of Matt 5:3, we now add several arguments external to the Gospel of Matthew that may remove all doubt. First, if we adopt this new reading, we solve the riddle with respect to the apparent contradiction or difference between Matthew and Luke's rendering of the first beatitude.<sup>19</sup> In Luke's version the beatitude reads as follows:

Blessed are *you who* are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. (Luke 6:20)

Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοί, ὅτι ὑμετέρα ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.

Here the meaning of οἱ πτωχοί is unambiguous, it is not qualified with any prepositional phrase or relative clause. As many commentators have pointed out, "the poor" refers to those who suffer material poverty, and there is no hint of a spiritualization of poverty in the Gospel of Luke.

<sup>18</sup>For example, see Sakari Häkkinen, "Poverty in the First-Century Galilee," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 72 (2016): 1–9 at 4–5.

<sup>19</sup>The logion in the Coptic *Gospel of Thomas*, "Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven" (54), is almost certainly a conflation of Matthew and Luke. It is very unlikely that the historical Jesus would have said these words, since the poor are not blessed. Note the words of Ahiqar, "there is nothing more bitter than poverty" (Ahiqar 105:22), and Syriac Menander, "Hateful and dark is poverty, When accompanied by disease and loss, Riches are merely a step to honor, Riches that will not reduce to poverty are a strong power, Wretched poverty means illness and disease, Health means joy and rejoicing" (*Sentences of the Syriac Menander*, 427–33). We disagree with Funk and Hoover who wrote that Jesus "announced that God's domain belonged to the poor, not because they were righteous, but because they were poor," in *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus*, ed. Robert W. Funk, Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 504.

However, it is important to observe that the pronouncement is not a blanket statement about the poor in general. Luke's introduction to the Sermon on the Plain, "and he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said," is crucial for a more nuanced understanding of the poor. Jesus' declaration that the poor are blessed is not an indiscriminate statement addressed to the poor in general, rather the statement describes his disciples. Within the Lukan context they have left their homes and occupations (cf. Luke 5:11, 28); they have become poor in order to follow Jesus. So, when the rich ruler went away sad after Jesus commanded him to sell what he owned, Peter responded with the testimony, "See, we have left our homes and followed you" (18:28). Peter is an example of those who have become poor in order to follow Jesus. In other words, although expressed differently, there is no contradiction between Luke's version and Matthew's version of the first beatitude. Jesus is saying the same thing in Luke and Matthew, those who have accused Matthew of spiritualizing Jesus' beatitude in Luke have failed to understand Matthew's version correctly.<sup>20</sup> Matthew and Luke are saying the same thing but in slightly different words.

The translations in our earliest versions of Matthew's Gospel may also support our interpretation. The earliest translations of the New Testament are always of interest to the exegete since they often provide valuable insights into how the early translators understood the text. Of course, their interpretation of the text is not an infallible guide to the intended meaning of the authors, but they stood closer to the early Jesus movement and were more familiar with the original languages of that movement than we are today. The earliest translations of the New Testament are represented by the Syriac, Latin, and Coptic versions. It is hard to determine which translation was the earliest and when they were translated, but at least we know that already by the end of the second century all three translations were in circulation.

According to our current knowledge, the first Syriac translation of the New Testament was Tatian's *Diatessaron*, the *Mixed Gospel*, which was made ca. 170 CE in Rome. The full text is extant in two Arabic manuscripts, dating to the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, and in a Latin version. On the basis of Ephrem's Syriac commentary on the *Diatessaron* (Dublin, Chester Beatty Library Syriac 709) and other fragments, about 80 percent of the Syriac text has been recovered.<sup>21</sup> Tatian's *Diatessaron* was very popular in the Syriac church until it was replaced around the fifth century by the well-known Peshitta version. Its role in Syriac Christianity is similar to that of the Vulgate in the West. The Syriac text of Matt 5:3 reads:<sup>22</sup>

ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ

James Murdock renders the Syriac as follows:<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Most commentators fall into this category. For example, according to Floyd V. Filson, Matthew added "in spirit"; see *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 2nd ed. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1977), 77. William D. Davies and Dale C. Allison thought that "in spirit" is probably redactional"; *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 442. Joseph A. Fitzmyer inferred that, "By adding 'in spirit,' Matthew has adapted the original beatitude to the *ʾanāwīm* among the early Jewish Christians"; *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AB 28 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 632.

<sup>21</sup>See Carmel McCarthy, *Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron: An English Translation of Chester Beatty Syriac MS 709 with Introduction and Notes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>22</sup>We may note here the curious translation in the Curetonian Gospels and the Sinaiticus Palimpsest, known as the *Separated Gospels* in the Syriac Orthodox Church. "Blessed are the poor by their spirit, because theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ ⲛⲁⲃⲧⲁ).

<sup>23</sup>James Murdock, *A Literal Translation from the Syriac Peshito Version* (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1852).

Blessed are the poor in spirit for the kingdom of heaven is theirs!

The Syriac text does not cause any difficulties. The term ܐܘܪܘܫܐܝܢܐ (ܐܘܪܘܫܐܝܢܐ) is the common Syriac word for “poor.” The prepositional phrase ܕܒܫܘܚܐ, which occurs frequently in the Hebrew Bible (בְּרוּחַ), is a direct translation of the Greek.<sup>24</sup> The preposition in Syriac (ܕ), like Hebrew (בְּ), is commonly used to express instrument or agent. Hence, the Syriac may also be translated as:

Blessed are the poor by the Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The earliest known Latin versions consist of a number of fragmentary translations known as the *Vetus Latina* or *Itala*. There appear to be traces of Latin translations in the references of Tertullian who wrote at the end of the second century and beginning of the third century.<sup>25</sup> In Cyprian, who wrote during the middle of the third century, the evidence for Latin translations is ample.<sup>26</sup> Jerome’s Vulgate, whose initial assignment by Pope Damasus I in 382 was to revise the Gospel translations of the *Vetus Latina* based on the best Greek manuscripts, became the standard Bible of the West for the next thousand years. The modern printed Vulgate renders Matt 5:3 as follows:

Beati pauperes spiritu quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum.

This reading follows the text of the *Vetus Latina* exactly:<sup>27</sup>

Beati pauperes spū quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum.

Among other possibilities, the ablative *spiritu* expresses the instrumental case (or agent) in Latin, hence we may translate the Latin as “Blessed are the poor by the Spirit.” Of course, the ablative may also be used in a locative sense, meaning “in” or as an ablative of respect (corresponding to the dative of reference in Greek) but as we have argued above the instrumental meaning expressing agency may be preferred.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, it is acceptable to translate the Latin in the same way as our suggested translation of the Greek text, “Blessed are the poor by the Spirit, because theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Finally, I may refer briefly to the Coptic Bible. The first translation of the New Testament into Coptic appears to be around the latter half of the second century in Upper Egypt in the Sahidic dialect. The more literal Bohairic version followed shortly after the Sahidic (in it the order of the Gospels is: John, Matthew, Mark, Luke). In the Sahidic version, Matt 5:3 reads as follows:

<sup>24</sup>The modern Hebrew translation of the text is: אֲשֶׁרֵי עֲנֵי הַרוּחַ כִּי לָהֶם מַלְכוּת הַשָּׁמַיִם. Literally, “Blessed are the poor of spirit, because theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.”

<sup>25</sup>H. A. G. Houghton, *The Latin New Testament: A Guide to Its Early History, Texts, and Manuscripts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 5–8.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>27</sup>Codex Bezae (D), which provides a bilingual text with Greek on the left and Latin on the right, dating from the fifth century, follows the same convention by rendering spirit as a *nominem sacrum*. Our oldest complete manuscript of the Vulgate, Codex Amiatinus, which was produced ca. 700 CE, follows this early tradition. We may also note the fourth-century Codex Vercellensis, our oldest extant copy of the *Vetus Latina*, in which the copyist made use of the *nomina sacra* convention by rendering “spiritu” as “spū.” But as in the Greek manuscripts, the use of the contraction is indiscriminate. See Tomas Bokedal, “The Nomina Sacra: Highlighting the Sacred Figures of the Text,” in *The Formation and Significance of the Christian Biblical Canon* (New York: T&T Clark, 2014), 83–124.

<sup>28</sup>There are many examples of the ablative *spiritu* expressing instrument or agency in the Vulgate with and without the preposition “ab” or “in.” For example, see Mark 1:8, Luke 10:21; Acts 1:5; 2:4; 4:8, 25; 10:38; 11:16; 20:22; Rom 8:13–14; 1 Cor 14:15; 2 Cor 3:3; 12:18; Gal 5:5, 16, 18, 25; Eph 1:13.



ΧΕ ΝΑΙΑΤΟΥ ΝΗΖΗΚΕ ΖΜ ΠΕΠΝΑ ΧΕ ΤΩΟΥ ΤΕ ΤΜΗΤΡΡΟ ΝΜΠΗΥΕ.

Horner translates the Coptic as follows:<sup>29</sup>

Blessed are the poor in the spirit, because theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

The Bohairic version is different:

ΦΟΥΝΙΑΤΟΥ ΝΗΖΗΚΗ ΜΠΠΝΑ ΧΕ ΘΩΟΥ ΤΕ ΉΜΕΤΟΥΡΟ ΝΤΕ ΝΙΦΗΟΥΙ.

Again, Horner's translation is as follows:<sup>30</sup>

Blessed are the poor of spirit, because theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

Like the Syriac and Latin translations above, it is natural to translate the first clause of the beatitude as "Blessed are the poor by the Spirit." The Sahidic preposition ζμ is also used to express agent (e.g., "with," "by," "through"). In the Bohairic version the "spirit" (ΜΠΠΝΑ) is in the genitive case, in combination with the strong form of the article (η), we may translate literally as "Blessed are the poor of the Spirit." Therefore, to conclude our observations on the early versions, there is no attempt in the early translations to interpret the beatitude as referring to spiritual poverty or humility; at least the ambiguity of the Greek text remains ambiguous in the early versions. These early versions do not destabilize our translation and understanding of the Greek text.

How, then, do we explain the current translation and understanding of the text as referring to spiritual poverty, since, as I have argued, that is not the most natural translation of the text within the context of the Gospel of Matthew? By way of explanation I may make two observations. First, the early Christian movement gained rapid success during the first centuries of our current era, not only among the lower classes of Roman society but also among the upper classes of the populace. Many prominent thinkers were drawn to the Christian faith and by the early fourth century even the emperor of the Roman empire, Constantine, became a Christian. Christianity became very popular and being a Christian became a mark of honor instead of shame as in earlier times. As a result of this radical shift in the status and clientele of Christianity, the Gospels' apparent disparagement of wealth became problematic. Jesus' command to many people in the Gospels to leave their occupations, homes, and possessions—not to gather treasure on earth but in heaven—would not have sat well with the affluent and wealthy church. In other words, in order to lessen the somewhat radical and countercultural teaching of Jesus with respect to wealth, texts dealing with the dangers of riches and the embrace of poverty were spiritualized to circumvent offense. Therefore, despite the corollary of Luke 6:20, the prepositional phrase τῷ πνεύματι came to be interpreted as poverty of soul or contrition before God, that is, Matt 5:3 was spiritualized.

For example, John Chrysostom (*ca.* 349–407), who was the bishop of Constantinople, comments on the text as follows: "What is meant by the poor in spirit? The humble and contrite in mind. For by spirit He has here designated the soul, and the faculty of choice" (*Homily 15* on Matthew).<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> George William Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Southern Dialect Otherwise Called Sahidic and Thebaic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), 31.

<sup>30</sup> George William Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Northern Dialect* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), 25.

<sup>31</sup> Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew 15* (NPNF<sup>1</sup> 10:92).



Likewise Augustine (*ca.* 354–430) explains: “And the poor in spirit are rightly understood here, as meaning the humble and God-fearing, i.e. those who have not the spirit which puffs up” (*On the Sermon on the Mount*, Book 1).<sup>32</sup> Although Leo the Great (*ca.* 400–461) spiritualizes the text, he cannot avoid bringing out the material implications of the beatitude. He surmised:

It would perhaps be doubtful what poor He was speaking of, if in saying blessed are the poor He had added nothing which would explain the sort of poor: and then that poverty by itself would appear sufficient to win the kingdom of heaven which many suffer from hard and heavy necessity. But when He says blessed are the poor *in spirit*, He shows that the kingdom of heaven must be assigned to those who are recommended by the humility of their spirits rather than by the smallness of their means. Yet it cannot be doubted that this possession of humility is more easily acquired by the poor than the rich: for submissiveness is the companion of those that want, while loftiness of mind dwells with riches. Notwithstanding, even in many of the rich is found that spirit which uses its abundance not for the increasing of its pride but on works of kindness, and counts that for the greatest gain which it expends in the relief of others’ hardships. It is given to every kind and rank of men to share in this virtue, because men may be equal in will, though unequal in fortune: and it does not matter how different they are in earthly means, who are found equal in spiritual possessions. Blessed, therefore, is poverty which is not possessed with a love of temporal things, and does not seek to be increased with the riches of the world, but is eager to amass heavenly possessions. (*Sermon 95*)<sup>33</sup>

We notice the same ambivalence in Calvin as he struggled to combine the medieval tradition of spiritual poverty and the palpable meaning of the text:

The metaphor in Luke is unadorned, but, as for many, poverty is accursed and to no good, Matthew expresses Christ’s mind with more clarity. As many are caught up in troubles, but do not cease their inward passion of pride and temper, Christ pronounces blessed those who are humbled and subdued by their woes, to prostrate themselves at God’s feet, and with interior submission to commend themselves to His protection. Others interpret poor in spirit as those who claim nothing for themselves, with all confidence in the flesh dispelled, confess their own lack of resource. But as the words of Luke and Matthew must have the same sense, there is no doubt that poor describes those who are afflicted and brought low by adversity. The only point is that Matthew, by adding the epithet, restricts blessedness to those who have learned humility in the school of the cross.<sup>34</sup>

Second, we may observe the impact of Luther’s German translation of the New Testament upon subsequent translations of the New Testament into European languages. When in 1522 Luther was hiding in the Wartburg Castle he spent eleven weeks translating the New Testament from Erasmus’ edition of the Greek New Testament into German.<sup>35</sup> It was received with great enthusiasm and

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<sup>32</sup> Augustine, *On the Sermon on the Mount*, Book 1 (NPNF<sup>1</sup> 6:4).

<sup>33</sup> Leo the Great, *Sermon 95* (NPNF<sup>2</sup> 12:203).

<sup>34</sup> John Calvin, *A Harmony of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke. Volume 1*, trans. A. W. Morrison (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), 169–70.

<sup>35</sup> The translation went through eighty-five editions over the next decade.

inspired new efforts to translate the Bible into vernacular languages all across Europe. Luther's Bible renders Matt 5:3 as follows:

Selig sind, die da geistlich arm sind; denn das Himmelreich ist ihr.

In Luther's translation the spiritualization of the text has become complete with changing the prepositional phrase into an adjective. Luther appears to have been influenced by the interpretation of the Church Fathers. Not only is the text spiritualized but the ambiguity of the Greek has also been removed. Luther's Bible exerted a great influence upon subsequent translators as can be seen in the early Dutch translations. The *Liesveltbijbel* of 1542 (the sixth and final edition; first published in 1526) translated Matt 5:3 as:

Salich sijn die ghene die gheestelijcken arm sijn, wandt dat rijck der hemelen hoort hen toe.

The *Statenbijbel* of 1637 translated the text as:

Zalig sijn de armen van geest; want hunner is het Koninkrijk der hemelen.

William Tyndale's English translation in 1526, which was extensively consulted by the translators of the King James Version of 1611, was also probably influenced by Luther's version.<sup>36</sup> Note the rendering of these versions below:

Blessed are the povre in sprete: for theirs is the kyngdome of heven. (Tyndale New Testament)

Blessed are the poore in spirit: for theirs is the kingdome of heauen. (KJV)

Hence, these translations, influenced by the traditional interpretation of Matt 5:3 and Luther's translation, serve to support the prevailing opinion: the wealthy, as long as they do not love their wealth and are humble, may still be in possession of heaven.

### 3. THE AUTHENTICITY OF MATTHEW 5:3

Based on the analysis above, there is reason to believe that Matthew's first beatitude is not a spiritualization of Luke's first beatitude. Although the contexts and the wording are different in the two Gospels, the meaning of the beatitude is the same, which suggests that both authors are transmitting an established saying within the early Jesus movement. This raises the question whether we can trace the saying to the historical Jesus.<sup>37</sup> Upon further investigation, using criteria for assessing historical authenticity, I am confident that the teaching of the first beatitude may be traced back to Jesus himself.

During the last two or three decades, scholars have developed rigorous methodologies and a number of historical criteria by which the authenticity of the traditions and sayings in the Gospels may be judged. By authenticity we mean whether or not events or *logoi* can be attributed to the historical Jesus. According to John P. Meier, scholars may use five criteria to assess the historical reliability of traditions: (1) the criterion of embarrassment (matters that create difficulties for the

<sup>36</sup> Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples produced a French translation (1530), a Czech translation appeared in 1549, a Polish translation appeared in 1563, and Casiodoro de Reina translated the Bible into Spanish in 1569.

<sup>37</sup> We will not attempt to reconstruct the original Aramaic or Hebrew—the *ipsissima verba Jesu*—that Jesus might have used but rather try to discern to what extent we may be confident that the teaching of the beatitude stems from Jesus.

church); (2) the criterion of discontinuity (or dissimilarity, teachings of Jesus that do not derive from Judaism); (3) the criterion of multiple attestation; (4) the criterion of coherence (matters that are consistent with other aspects of Jesus' teachings and life); (5) the criterion of rejection and execution (teachings or deeds that create offence and may contribute to antagonize the religious and political leaders).<sup>38</sup> Charlesworth rearticulated these criteria but substituted Meier's fifth criterion with the criterion of a Palestinian Jewish setting.<sup>39</sup> On the bases of these criteria, we may argue for the authenticity of the *logion*.

The first criterion is that of embarrassment. If an action or saying of Jesus would have caused embarrassment to the early Christians and to the evangelist it is unlikely that they would have created it, more probably it would have originated with the historical Jesus. Being poor or becoming poor for the sake of the Gospel is surely an uncomfortable and inconvenient teaching. It would have created difficulties for the early church and individual Christians. In terms of Jewish tradition, wealth had always been positively regarded as a blessing of the Lord.<sup>40</sup> The idea that "becoming poor" should entail blessing goes against traditional Jewish beliefs as well as the prevalent Greco-Roman culture in which the display of wealth was associated with virtue, status, and power. According to Jeffers, "The concept of the poor as 'blessed' (Matt 5:3; Luke 6:20) would have been incomprehensible to Greek and Roman aristocrats."<sup>41</sup> In fact, the first beatitude has been problematic for the church throughout its history, resulting in a reinterpretation of Jesus' original words, and thus burying the authentic voice of Jesus in forms of Christianity that veil the *scandalon* of cross-bearing. Therefore, since it is unlikely that the disciples in the context of their wealth affirming social milieu would have related poverty with blessing, and since this idea would have caused all sorts of problems with respect to the propagation of the Gospel and the recruitment of more followers, we may conclude that the *logion* goes back to Jesus himself. Jesus' genius of linking poverty with blessing is of course determined by his conviction of the imminent arrival of universal transformation through the kingdom of heaven.

The second criterion is that of discontinuity or dissimilarity. According to Charlesworth, "This method assumes that what cannot be attributed to Jesus from Judaism or from Jesus' followers is most likely authentic to him."<sup>42</sup> With respect to the first beatitude, we may observe that the beatitude genre was common in early Judaism.<sup>43</sup> There was also much reflection on the plight

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<sup>38</sup> John P. Meier, *The Roots of the Problem and the Person*, vol. 1 of *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1991), 168–77; John P. Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, vol. 2 of *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1994), 6. Also see Stanley E. Porter, "How Do We Know What We Think We Know? Methodological Reflections on Jesus Research," in *Jesus Research: New Methodologies and Perceptions: The Second Princeton-Prague Symposium on Jesus Research, Princeton 2007*, ed. James H. Charlesworth with Brian Rhea (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 82–99.

<sup>39</sup> James H. Charlesworth, *The Historical Jesus: An Essential Guide* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008), 20–7.

<sup>40</sup> See, e.g., Eric J. Gilchrist's nuanced discussion of Jewish attitudes toward wealth in *Revelation 21-22 in Light of Jewish and Greco-Roman Utopianism* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 134–7.

<sup>41</sup> James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 189.

<sup>42</sup> Charlesworth, *The Historical Jesus: An Essential Guide*, 22.

<sup>43</sup> Apart from the blessings in the Hebrew Bible, a vast number of beatitudes are preserved in the Pseudepigrapha and the Talmud. Evidence from documents such as *1 Enoch*, *2 Enoch*, Ben Sira, and the Mishnah shows that the beatitude was a popular form of teaching that Rabbis employed in pre-70 CE Israel. See W. Zimmerli, "Die Seligpreisungen der Bergpredigt und das Alte Testament," in *Donum gentilicium: New Testament Studies in Honour of David Daube*, ed. C. K. Barrett, E. Bammel, and W. D. Davies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 8–26; James H. Charlesworth, "The Qumran Beatitudes

of the poor and God's concern for the poor, as well as an expectation among some circles that the kingdom of heaven was imminent. However, it is only with the first beatitude of Jesus in the Gospels that poverty and blessing are linked together. This is something new within the Judaism of the first century. The pronouncement of blessing and God's concern for the poor are frequently found in the Hebrew Bible and Jewish sources but never together.<sup>44</sup> Those who show benevolence to the poor are blessed, not those who are poor (cf. Ps 41:1). According to Jewish tradition, to be poor is not a blessing, and we would agree. However, Jesus combines blessing and poverty in a unique way. The poor are not blessed, but those who are poor (or better, those who have become poor) through the compulsion of the Spirit for the sake of the Gospel are blessed. As Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, so too those of the kingdom experience the impulse of the Spirit to forgo material or temporary advantages for the sake of the Gospel. Thus, Jesus asks, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?" (Matt 16:26). The yearnings and prayers of those who deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Jesus will be more than compensated with the arrival of the kingdom of heaven. We cannot explain the connection of blessing with poverty on the basis of our extant Jewish sources, therefore the beatitude most probably originated with Jesus.

Under the criterion of multiple attestation, the evidence for authenticity appears to be weak. Assuming that the sayings preserved in the Sermon of the Mount in Matthew (Matt 5:3–12) and the Sermon on the Plain in Luke (Luke 6:20–22) come from Q and that the *logion* preserved in the Gospel of Thomas is a conflation of Matthew and Luke, we have only one source for this saying of Jesus.<sup>45</sup> Yet, even though we may not be able to confirm more than one source for the first beatitude, we may reflect on a similar mindset evident in the teaching and practice of early Christianity. For example, Paul does not quote the first beatitude, but his words and lifestyle reflect a similar sentiment (cf. 2 Cor 6:10; 8:9; Phil 3:7–8). So too, the Epistle of James asserts, "Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?" (Jas 2:5). In Revelation those who suffer persecution will inherit the new heavens and earth and will be blessed (Rev 6:9–11; 7:14).

Although we cannot identify multiple sources, we do note that the concept of the poor being blessed is transmitted in two different forms, which relates to the secondary criterion of multiple forms. According to Charlesworth, "A tradition appearing in multiple literary forms most likely derives from Jesus ultimately."<sup>46</sup> As we have observed above, although the wording of the first

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(4Q525) and the New Testament (Mt 5:3–11, Lk 6:20–26)," *RHPR* 80 (2000): 13–35; and Oliver O. Nwachukwu, *Beyond Vengeance and Protest: A Reflection on the Macarisms in Revelation* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 25–37.

<sup>44</sup> Here we may note the reading in the eschatological hymn of praise in the *War Scroll* (1QM xiv 7) as translated by Géza Vermes, "Among the poor in spirit ..."; *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 3rd ed. (London: Penguin, 1990), 120. However, the word reconstructed as "spirit" (רוח)—the word immediately before the lacuna where the scroll has deteriorated—is questionable. Just the first two consonants are clear, it is debatable whether or not the third letter is a *heth* (ה) and we do not know if it was followed by additional letters (רַחַם וְרַחֲמֵי). The reading in the *Messianic Apocalypse* (4Q521 6) may provide a better basis for reconstructing the missing word: "Over the poor his spirit will hover" (יעל עניים רוחו תרחף).

<sup>45</sup> Of course, although most scholars affirm the existence of Q, some scholars still have reservations with the hypothesis. See Austin M. Farrer, "On Dispensing with Q," *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot*, ed. Dennis Eric Nineham (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), 55–88; Michael Goulder, "Is Q a Juggernaut?," *JBL* 115 (1996): 667–81; and Mark Goodacre, *The Case against Q: Studies in Marcan Priority and the Synoptic Problem* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002).

<sup>46</sup> Charlesworth, *The Historical Jesus: An Essential Guide*, 24.

beatitude in the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke differs, the meaning is the same. The poor in Matthew are the ones who are so through the Spirit, like Jesus they are led by the Spirit to forsake worldly honor and endure suffering for the sake of the Gospel. The poor in Luke, whom Jesus identifies with his gaze, are his disciples who have left everything to follow him. Of course, it is conceivable, like most preachers, that Jesus would have preached numerous versions of the sermon on several occasions with different wording yet expressing the same idea.

The fourth criterion is that of coherence. Charlesworth argues that if one can show that a saying supported by the first three criteria of authenticity adheres with what we know about what is most likely to be true of the historical Jesus, the probability that the saying is authentic is increased.<sup>47</sup> The connection of poverty with blessing through the lenses of the coming kingdom adheres with what we know about Jesus' general teaching and about his lifestyle. Jesus frequently exhorted people not to trust in wealth but to be rich toward God. Even the ultra-critical members of The Jesus Seminar traced the austere ethics in the Gospels back to Jesus himself (e.g., Mark 10:25; Matt 5:39, 40, 42; 8:20; 19:12; Luke 6:21, 29,30; 9:58; 12:6–7, 22–28) and, interestingly, they included in their list of authentic sayings the Lukan version of the first beatitude.<sup>48</sup> In the synoptic Gospels Jesus often commands certain individuals to sell their possessions and give to the poor or leave their occupations and follow him (e.g., Mark 8:34–38;10:21; Luke 9:57–61; 12:15, 33–34; Matt 19:16–22). Most scholars agree that Jesus himself left his native village of Nazareth and became an itinerant preacher. Jesus also remained celibate throughout his life, which was not unheard of but quite rare in pre-70 CE Judaism.

Finally, we may consider Meier's fifth criterion of authenticity, the criterion of rejection and execution. Under this criterion Meier reflects on the reasons why Jesus was arrested and crucified. There must have been things in Jesus' teaching and behavior that threatened the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem. According to Meier, "A Jesus whose words and deeds would not alienate people, especially powerful people, is not the historical Jesus."<sup>49</sup> Jesus' pronouncement of blessing upon the poor, those who forgo temporal advantage to join the Jesus movement, would have offended the elite, especially the affluent and powerful priestly class, and hence contributed toward their antagonism, which eventually led to Jesus' murder. The Gospels portray the high priest Joseph ben Caiaphas (14 BCE–46 CE) as one of the figures involved in Jesus' arrest. Caiaphas and the priests (the Sadducees) would have had several reasons to silence Jesus. One reason would have been to mitigate the risk of a Jewish insurrection during Passover, which would have incurred the fury of the Romans (cf. John 11:45–50). However, Jesus' cleansing of the temple, denouncing the commercialization of religion and thereby threatening the prosperity of the priests, would have increased the ire of the priestly class. Hence, Jesus' action censuring the temple's commercial practices is consistent with his teaching on becoming poor for the sake of the kingdom and contributed to the events that led to his arrest and death.

Charlesworth's fifth criterion, which is about discerning a Palestinian Jewish setting for Jesus' ministry and teaching, also leads us to deduce that Matthew's first beatitude is an authentic saying of Jesus. On the one hand, sayings or practices that do not find a precedent in early Judaism may

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Robert W. Funk, Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, eds., *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1993).

<sup>49</sup> John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 1.177.

be a unique insight or practice initiated by Jesus, yet on the other hand, the historical Jesus must be identifiable against the backdrop of early Judaism. The historical Jesus must fit within his social context, he must be *historically plausible*. The first beatitude, as I have interpreted it, does make sense within Jesus' Palestinian Jewish setting. The beatitude was a common form of teaching among the Rabbis of Galilee. Also, poverty was a major issue within pre-70 CE Galilee. In particular the idea that the poor would be vindicated with the coming of the kingdom of God is also prominent in the *Parables of Enoch*. The persecution and exclusion that the righteous would experience would be rewarded in heaven.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, it is evident that the first beatitude does fit with first-century Jewish rabbinic teaching.

#### 4. EARLY CHRISTIANITY AND POVERTY

Our final reflections for this study concern the role of wealth and poverty in the early Jesus movement. This is a complex issue and involves many questions on which scholars have expressed a range of opinions. What did first-century Galilean society look like? To what extent are we able to reconstruct an image of Israelite or Galilean society during the time of Jesus and the early Jesus movement (pre-70 CE)? Where does Jesus and his followers fit in this picture? What were Jesus and the early Jesus movement's attitude with respect to class, wealth, and poverty? And so on. With the rise of social-scientific criticism in the 1960s and 1970s, many scholars have used the methodologies of the social sciences to construct a picture of first-century Galilee.<sup>51</sup>

Some scholars have painted a very bleak picture. Poverty was rampant, and most people lived just above sustainability levels. There was a big divide between the elites and the peasants and slaves. Education and literacy levels were low; only the elites could read and write. Society was very tense and rebellion always simmered below the surface. Many Jesus Research scholars have assumed this reconstruction for their assessment of Jesus and his early followers.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>See Leslie Walck, "The Parables of Enoch and the Synoptic Gospels," in *Parables of Enoch: A Paradigm Shift*, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Darrell L. Bock (New York: T&T Clark, 2013), 231–68 at 258–60. Also note the connection between the poor and the coming resurrection in the second-century BCE document, the *Testament of Twelve Patriarchs*: "And those who died in sorrow shall be raised in joy; And those who died in poverty for the Lord's sake shall be made rich; Those who died on account of the Lord shall be awakened to life" (25:4); see H. C. Kee, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," in *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, vol. 1 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 775–828 at 802.

<sup>51</sup>The bibliography on this topic has become immense. See Séan Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus and the Gospels: Literary Approaches and Historical Investigations* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1988); Richard A. Horsley, *Archaeology, History, and Society in Galilee: The Social Context of Jesus and the Rabbis* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996); Eric M. Meyers, "Jesus in His Galilean Context," in *Archaeology and the Galilee: Texts and Contexts in the Greco-Roman and Byzantine Periods*, ed. Douglas R. Edwards and C. Thomas McCullough (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997), 57–66; Jonathan L. Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus: A Re-examination of the Evidence* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 93–6; Bradley W. Root, *First Century Galilee: A Fresh Examination of the Sources* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); and Häkkinen, "Poverty in the First-Century Galilee."

<sup>52</sup>According to Gerhard Lenski and Steven Friesen, the majority of the people living in the Roman Empire struggled to make ends meet. For Lenski, society was marked by inequality, 80 percent of the population struggled to survive. For Friesen, 90 percent of the population had issues with sustenance and more than two-thirds suffered extreme poverty. See Gerhard E. Lenski, *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1984); and Steven J. Friesen, "Injustice or God's Will? Early Christian Explanations of Poverty," in *Wealth and Poverty in Early Church and Society*, ed. Susan R. Holman (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 17–36. Bruce Longenecker



Other scholars, however, have questioned this bleak picture. Although poverty was an issue, most people lived relatively comfortable lives. Education and literacy were not just confined to the elite.<sup>53</sup>

Our interpretation of Matt 5:3 would support this more positive picture of first-century Galilee and Jesus. We have argued that the first beatitude does not teach that the poor are blessed but rather that those who have become poor for the sake of the Gospel are blessed. In other words, it assumes that the audience of Jesus' sermons or the readers of the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain would have had some measure of wealth or status before they became followers of Jesus. So too, the frequent injunction by Jesus to some people to sell their possessions assumes that they have possessions to sell. The general picture that we get of the disciples and those among whom Jesus moved is not one of abject poverty. They had boats and houses and were able to host dinners and guests. These details argue that many people in first-century CE Galilee did not live in poverty, or at least that Jesus did not move in those circles. In fact, three general truths about the development, nature, and growth of early Christianity suggest that the early Jesus movement was, to use our modern terminology, by and large middle class.

First, we have already observed above that Christianity did not gain adherents only from the lower classes or slaves but was popular also among the upper classes who were mobile and influential. Perhaps the most influential follower of Jesus in the first century was Paul. He was a Roman citizen, educated, a person of rank, and one able to hold his own in debate with opponents. He was followed by a number of eminent thinkers over the next two centuries, including Papias, Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, and so on.

Second, the remarkable collection of literature that came to be known as the New Testament demonstrates that the leading teachers and evangelists of the early Jesus movement were not illiterate and untrained but highly educated.<sup>54</sup> The twenty-seven documents of the New Testament represent at least twelve different authors, not counting redactors, editors, amanuenses, and copyists. Although the quality of the individual documents varies from author to author, and the New Testament was not written in refined literary Greek, its authors had complete mastery of Greek and could communicate sophisticated ideas very well. In addition to their complete mastery of Koine Greek, the New Testament authors excelled in their subject matter reflecting in-depth knowledge of the Hebrew Bible, Jewish traditions, and Greek culture.

Third, the remarkable speed at which early Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire and beyond in the first and second century assumes the existence of elaborate social networks that were exploited for the propagation of the Gospel. It is evident that the early Christian movement

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contends that only 1 percent of the population in the Roman Empire was well-off, the rest endured poverty; see Bruce W. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 43.

<sup>53</sup> See Edwin Judge, *The Social Pattern of the Christian Groups in the First Century: Some Prolegomena to the Study of New Testament Ideas of Social Obligation* (London: Tyndale Press, 1960); John C. H. Laughlin, "Capernaum: From Jesus' Time and After," *BAR* 19.5 (September/October 1993), 54–61, 90; Séan Freyne, *The Jesus Movement and Its Expansion: Meaning and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014); and Lynn H. Cohick, "Poverty and Its Causes in the Early Church," in *Poverty in the Early Church and Today: A Conversation*, ed. Steve Walton and Hannah Swithinbank (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2019), 16–27. Also note Bradley W. Root, "there is no indication that the gospel's authors considered poverty to be an unusually severe problem in Jesus' environment"; *First Century Galilee: A Fresh Examination of the Sources* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 62.

<sup>54</sup> The comment of the Pharisees that the disciples were illiterate and untrained (cf. ὅτι ἄνθρωποι ἀγράμματοί εἰσιν καὶ ἰδιῶται, Acts 4:13) must of course be taken with a grain of salt.



had many well-to-do patrons who served as benefactors across the Mediterranean world and Mesopotamia. Therefore, our detailed study of Matt 5:3 and general observations on the context and growth of early Christianity would support the observations of James H. Charlesworth and Mordecai Aviam, speaking about Jesus and his disciples in Galilee:

Their houses in the city were simple, but not poor. Many Galileans were farmers. Most of them owned land, and some could read portions of the Torah ... One should thus cease talking about Galilean peasants. It would also follow that Jesus should not be portrayed as a Galilean peasant. He was a carpenter, according to Mark (6:3). He may never have lifted a plow to work a farm. He was certainly not uneducated or enslaved by laboring in the fields, as the definition of *peasant* demands or at least implies. The Evangelists indeed report that the crowds were amazed at the high level of Jesus' knowledge (wisdom) and skills with language and communication.<sup>55</sup>

To conclude, according to our analysis of the Greek grammar, key terms, the literary context, the early versions, and the milieu of the historical Jesus, the traditional translation of Matt 5:3 requires adjustment. The beatitude does not speak about spiritual poverty but about material poverty experienced by the early followers of Jesus in terms of economic loss, physical hardship, social derision, and persecution they suffered for the sake of the Gospel. However, by becoming poor they gained the richer treasure of the kingdom of heaven.

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<sup>55</sup>James H. Charlesworth and Mordechai Aviam, "Reconstructing First-Century Galilee: Reflections on Ten Major Problems," in *Jesus Research: New Methodologies and Perceptions: The Second Princeton-Prague Symposium on Jesus Research, Princeton 2007*, ed. James H. Charlesworth with Brian Rhea (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 103–37 at 128–9.

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# Christology in John's Crucifixion Quotations

MICHAEL A. DAISE

## 1. THE CRUCIFIXION QUOTATIONS, APOLOGETIC OR THEOLOGICAL?

A key question in the Fourth Gospel's crucifixion quotations concerns the role they play in the passion narrative, specifically, the degree to which they serve a distinctively Johannine christology. The quotations, themselves, consist in four references to scripture being "fulfilled" or "completed" as Jesus hangs on the cross.<sup>1</sup> The first appears as the crucifixion begins. Upon placing Jesus on the cross, the soldiers performing the execution begin dividing his garments among themselves. Discovering one of those garments to be a "seamless tunic," they cast lots to determine whose it will be; and all this activity, we are told, "fulfilled" Ps 22(21):19.

Therefore, the soldiers, when they crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, a part to each soldier, and the tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven throughout from the top. Therefore they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but let us cast lots as to whose it will be," in order that the scripture might be fulfilled (ἵνα ἡ γραφή πληρωθῆ), which says, "They divided my garments among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." Therefore, the soldiers did these things.<sup>2</sup>

The second reference occurs as Jesus speaks his last words and dies. Aware that all had now been "finished," and either because the scripture had been "completed" or in order that it might be so (depending on the syntax), Jesus says "I thirst." In response, those beneath the cross<sup>3</sup> lift a sponge

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It is my privilege and delight to contribute to this volume in honor of my *Doktorvater*, James H. Charlesworth. His seminar on the Fourth Gospel launched my research life into the rich world of Johannine studies, and his deep commitment to students has accompanied me over all the years since.

<sup>1</sup>John 19:23–37.

<sup>2</sup>John 19:23–24. The *Vorlagen* from which John drew his quotations are not primarily in view in this piece. For this quotation, however, it can be noted that John follows LXX Ps 21:19 verbatim and his rendering will be treated as drawn from that version below—this, notwithstanding that the correspondence between LXX and MT Ps 22(21):19 has, for some, left the question open; see C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press, 1978), 28; Bruce G. Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture: The Interrelationship of Form and Function in the Explicit Old Testament Citations in the Gospel of John*, SBLDS 133 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992), 126–7.

<sup>3</sup>Those who give Jesus the sour wine in this quotation may have been assumed by the evangelist to be the soldiers who divided and cast lots for his clothing in the previous one; see R. H. Lightfoot, *St. John's Gospel: A Commentary*, ed. C. F.

filled with sour wine to his mouth on hyssop; and after he has received it, Jesus declares, “It is finished,” bows his head, and “gives over the spirit.”

After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been finished[,] in order that the scripture might be completed (ἵνα τελειωθῇ ἡ γραφή), said, “I thirst.” A jar was lying there, full of sour wine. Therefore, wrapping a sponge full of sour wine around hyssop, they brought it to his mouth. When, therefore, he received the sour wine, Jesus said, “It is finished”; and bowing the head, he gave over the spirit.<sup>4</sup>

The final two references, for their part, are made in the immediate aftermath of Jesus’ death. To facilitate the removal of the crucified men before Sabbath, the soldiers begin *crurifragium*, presumably to induce a quick death by asphyxiation.<sup>5</sup> When they find that Jesus has already expired, they refrain, and instead pierce his side—if not to confirm, then to ensure<sup>6</sup> or denigrate<sup>7</sup> his passing; and these actions, we are told once again, “fulfilled” two more sets of biblical verses. For the check on *crurifragium*, it is any one or several verses that (a) require keeping the bones of the paschal lamb intact (Exod 12:10, 46; Num 9:12) or (b) promise the same from God for the *passio iusti* (Pss 22:18; 34:21);<sup>8</sup> for the piercing of his side, it is Zech 12:10.

Therefore the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other man being crucified with him. And coming upon Jesus, as they saw him already dead, they did not break his legs; but one of the soldiers pricked his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came forth. ... For these things occurred in order that the scripture might be fulfilled (ἵνα ἡ γραφή πληρωθῇ), “His bone shall not be broken.” And again, another scripture says, “They will look unto him whom they pierced.”<sup>9</sup>

The question at issue stems from the connection these references have to a larger sequence of similar “fulfillment quotations.” Beginning at John 12:38, and without peer elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel, these quotations are likewise introduced with formulae that claim they are

Evans (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 318. The more generic term “those beneath the cross,” however, allows (a) that they are not called such here and (b) that in Matt 27:47 and Mark 15:35 they are identified as “those standing there” or “by the side.”

<sup>4</sup> John 19:28–30.

<sup>5</sup> John 19:31–32.

<sup>6</sup> George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 2nd ed., WBC 36 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 354.

<sup>7</sup> Suggested by Barrett, *Gospel According to St. John*, 556.

<sup>8</sup> The first of these has been suggested by Edwin D. Freed, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John*, NovTSup 11 (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 109.

<sup>9</sup> John 19:32–37. The portion of Zech 12:10 cited by John (v. 10b) varies significantly between its Hebrew and LXX versions: “and they will look upon me/the one whom they pierced” (MT); “and they will look to me opposite those over whom they danced in triumph” (LXX). John’s rendering differs from both; but amid an array of hypotheses on the tradition history by which it came to him, it is widely recognized to be closer to the Hebrew than to the Greek. Recent reviews of the debate can particularly be found in Adam Kubiś, *The Book of Zechariah in the Gospel of John*, EBib, new series 64 (Pendé, France: J. Gabalda, 2012), 171–81; and William Randolph Bynum, *The Fourth Gospel and the Scriptures: Illuminating the Form and Meaning of Scriptural Citation in John 19:37*, NovTSup 144 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 1–5, 139–68; but also in William Randolph Bynum, “The Quotations of Zechariah in the Fourth Gospel,” in *Abiding Words: The Use of Scripture in the Gospel of John*, ed. Alicia D. Myers and Bruce G. Schuchard, RBS 81 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2015), 66–9; and Maarten J. J. Menken, “The Minor Prophets in John’s Gospel,” in *The Minor Prophets in the New Testament*, ed. Maarten J. J. Menken and Steve Moyise, LNTS 377 (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 86–7.



“realized” (πληρωθῆ/τελειωθῆ) by the events to which they are attached: besides those noted above (which close the sequence), Isa 53:1 (and perhaps Isa 6:10), by the Jews’ wholesale rejection of Jesus;<sup>10</sup> Ps 41:10, by Judas’ betrayal;<sup>11</sup> and Pss 35:19; 69:5; or *Pss. Sol.* 7:1, by the Jews’ hatred of Jesus and the Father.<sup>12</sup> Since such references only appear as Jesus is rejected, betrayed, and crucified—and since early tradition among Jesus’ followers was keen to defend such events as having occurred “according to the scriptures”<sup>13</sup>—it has been surmised that these “fulfillment quotations” (the crucifixion quotations included) reflect a pre-Johannine apologetic tradition that was adopted by the evangelist;<sup>14</sup> and this, in turn, has raised a query about the degree to which they may also have been assimilated into the evangelist’s own *Tendenz*. That is, for the matter at issue here, do John’s crucifixion quotations simply defend a wider Christian claim that a dying messiah was foretold in scripture? Or do they also convey a distinctly Johannine “take” on who

<sup>10</sup> John 12:38, 40.

<sup>11</sup> John 13:18.

<sup>12</sup> John 15:25. On this sequence of quotations, for instance, see Wolfgang Kraus, “Die Vollendung der Schrift nach Joh 19,28: Überlegungen zum Umgang mit der Schrift im Johannesevangelium,” in *The Scriptures in the Gospels*, ed. C. M. Tuckett, BETL 131 (Leuven: Leuven University Press/Uitgeverij Peeters, 1997), 629–30. Missing or debated among these references are John 12:40/Isa 6:10; John 17:12; and John 19:37/Zech 12:10. John 17:12 is routinely omitted because, though its “fulfillment” formula may link the epithet “son of perdition” to LXX Prov 24:22a, LXX Isa 34:5, or LXX Isa 57:4, it may rather refer back to the quotation of Ps 41:10 at John 13:18 or to Jesus’ own words at John 6:39, 70–71; see Wendy E. Sproston, “‘The Scripture’ in John 17:12,” in *Scripture: Meaning and Method. Essays Presented to Anthony Tyrrell Hanson for his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Barry P. Thompson (Hull: Hull University Press, 1987), 24–5; Freed, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John*, 96–8; John J. O’Rourke, “John’s Fulfillment Texts,” *ScEcll* 19 (1967): 434 n.4. As for John 12:40/Isa 6:10 and John 19:37/Zech 12:10, though they are immediately preceded by quotations which do have “fulfillment” formulae (John 12:38; 19:36), they, themselves, are introduced differently: respectively, “for again Isaiah said” (John 12:39); “and again, another scripture says” (John 19:37). Some read the preceding formulae to carry over into these two and, so, include them: Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (London: SCM Press, 1961), 267–9, for instance; and Craig A. Evans, “On the Quotation Formulas in the Fourth Gospel,” *BZ* 26 (1982): 80 n.2. Others do not; so Alexander Faure, “Die alttestamentlichen Zitate im 4. Evangelium und die Quellenscheidungshypothese,” *ZNW* 21 (1922): 99–100, 103–5 (who ascribed them to a later editor); and D. Moody Smith, “The Setting and Shape of a Johannine Narrative Source,” *JBL* 95 (1976): 237 n.25.

<sup>13</sup> 1 Cor 15:3. The relevance of the early confession at 1 Cor 15:3–8 for the “fulfillment quotations” has been noted by Roland Bergmeier, “ΤΕΤΕΛΕΣΤΑΙ Joh 19<sub>30</sub>,” *ZNW* 79 (1988): 284–5. Along a different line, C. H. Dodd saw the tradition from which these quotations emerged in the “apostolic *kerygma*” reflected at Acts 2:23, where Jesus is preached as being “given up by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God”; *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 31, 46–7.

<sup>14</sup> See, for instance, Anton Dauer, *Die Passionsgeschichte im Johannesevangelium: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche und theologische Untersuchung zu Joh. 18, 1-19, 30*, SANT 30 (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1972), 295, 297–300. The apologetic character of these quotations seems to have been first suggested by Friedrich Smend, in his rebuttal of Alexander Faure (who had brought them to the attention of exegetes). Faure had noticed that these references carried “a different conception” (*eine verschiedene Auffassung*) or “orientation” (*eine stimmungsmäßige Verschiedenheit*) to the Old Testament than those in the first half of the Gospel; from this, however, he simply inferred a second authorial hand in the writing of the work; “Die alttestamentlichen Zitate im 4. Evangelium und die Quellenscheidungshypothese,” 99–101, 105. In refuting Faure, Smend observed further that these quotations, in fact, appear at junctures of Jesus’ suffering and failure that could offend Christian faith; and, in his deliberations, he mused that they perhaps cite the Old Testament “solely for apologetic purposes” (*ausschließlich zu apologetischen Zwecken*); “Die Behandlung alttestamentlicher Zitate als Ausgangspunkt der Quellenscheidung im 4. Evangelium,” *ZNW* 24 (1925): 149. Smend did not subscribe to this thesis: he read the purpose clause at John 19:28c, for instance, as an anomaly to the other formulae, which (for him) undermined such a view. He did, however, raise the prospect that these quotations were designed to “defend” Jesus’ messiahship in the face of his suffering and death, and so, anticipated the understanding that has been widely held since. For Wilhelm Rothfuchs, in fact (who argues to the contrary), Smend is the progenitor of such a view; *Die Erfüllungszitate des Matthäus-Evangeliums: Eine biblisch-theologische Untersuchung*, BWANT, fifth series 8 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1969), 167–8, 170.

Jesus is? For C. K. Barrett, as an example, there has been no such assimilation: they (and all the “fulfillment quotations”) “seem to have no close relation with specifically Johannine theology” and “therefore give a distinctly primitive air to the story.”<sup>15</sup> For Barnabas Lindars, by contrast, revision is significant, being manifest in the sacerdotal symbolism of Jesus’ “seamless tunic” (first quotation),<sup>16</sup> the gift of living water (John 4:14) suggested by Jesus’ thirst (second quotation), the paschal soteriology signaled by the restraint from breaking Jesus’ bones (third quotation), and the sacrificial/sacramental connotations of blood and water flowing from Jesus’ side (fourth quotation).<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Anthony Hanson goes so far as to suggest that the last two crucifixion quotations, themselves, represent the evangelist’s “own discoveries,” added to the earlier, original sequence.<sup>18</sup>

This chapter supports the latter view, the assimilation of the crucifixion quotations into the Fourth Gospel’s *Tendenz*. It will propose that a pattern of fulfillment operating within these quotations shows each to be serving the very christological motif that drives John’s passion narrative, that Jesus “lays down” his own life by engineering the forces that kill him. The hinge on which this turns is a modification to a premise put forward for a more detailed issue among them: the discussion of the “scripture” being referenced in the second quotation, at John 19:28–30. To support the case for Ps 69:22 (enacted in John 19:29), it has been noticed that the passages cited in the crucifixion quotations are fulfilled, not knowingly by Jesus but unwittingly by those beneath the cross. Upon closer examination this pattern can be found to include a further facet—that these passages are also fulfilled in response to (a) unanticipated conditions (b) prompted by Jesus as he hangs on the cross; and when this is seen to be at work in all the crucifixion quotations, it shows Jesus to be engineering the “fulfillment” of scripture during his crucifixion in the same way he had been engineering his betrayal, arrest, and trial up till that point. Put another way, it shows that in the crucifixion quotations the original (apologetic) purpose of justifying a crucified messiah has been absorbed into the (theological) Johannine *Tendenz* of Jesus’ self-determined death.

The full exegetical work required for such a thesis exceeds the limits of this piece. As a start toward that end, however, the proposal here will sketch rather than argue the point, with exegetical choices along the way being assumed rather than worked out. Discussion will proceed in three steps: first, the pattern of fulfillment that serves as the point of departure will be set out in light of

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<sup>15</sup>C. K. Barrett, “The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel,” *JTS* 48 (1947): 168. Similar to Barrett is Moody Smith, “Setting and Shape of a Johannine Narrative Source,” 237–8; followed by Evans, “On the Quotation Formulas in the Fourth Gospel,” 80–3.

<sup>16</sup>By this Lindars speaks of the christological implication drawn from the observation by Josephus that the high priest’s robe was woven as a single piece (*Ant.* 3.161); noticed as early as B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John: The Authorized Version with Introduction and Notes* (1882; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 275 (albeit citing the wrong chapter in Josephus); and F. C. Conybeare, “New Testament Notes,” *Expositor* (fourth series) 9 (1894): 458–60.

<sup>17</sup>Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, 267–9; and similarly, Douglas J. Moo, *The Old Testament in the Gospel Passion Narratives* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983), 361–2.

<sup>18</sup>Anthony Tyrrell Hanson, *The Prophetic Gospel: A Study on John and the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 251–2. More extreme still is the contention of Rothfuchs that John’s “fulfillment quotations” carry no apologetic function at all: John’s Jesus, he argues, is not a suffering messiah who needs justification but a prescient Christ who goes to his death deliberately (*bewußt*); moreover, the fulfillment of these quotations by Jesus’ unbelieving enemies (rather than by Jesus, himself, or the Father) suggests they are better classified as “a polemic against the ‘world’”; *Die Erfüllungszitate des Matthäus-Evangeliums*, 170–2.



the issue it addresses; second, further dynamics in that pattern will be identified and traced through all the crucifixion quotations; and last, the christological implications of those dynamics will be brought to bear on the issue set out above, the role of the crucifixion quotations in the Fourth Gospel's narrative. It will be concluded that, by virtue of the manner in which they are fulfilled, the crucifixion quotations embody a merger of broad "catholic" apologetics with a more refined Johannine christology.

## 2. A PATTERN OF FULFILLMENT

The starting point is an observation made in discussion on the "scripture" being cited at John 19:28–30; and that issue, for its part, turns on two questions raised by the clause "in order that the scripture might be completed" (ἵνα τελειωθῇ ἡ γραφή) at v. 28c: What precisely is meant by "scripture" (ἡ γραφή)? And to what portion of John 19:28–29 is this clause syntactically linked? It is possible that ἡ γραφή refers to the Bible in general (not to a specific verse in it) and that, as such, the clause modifies the noun clause before it at v. 28b.<sup>19</sup> It may rather, however, introduce a specific passage, and this could be along three lines, the last two of which are compatible with each other: it may refer back in the narrative to the biblical passage cited at John 7:37–39;<sup>20</sup> it may be any one or more of some six passages intimated in Jesus' cry "I thirst" at v. 28d (in which case the clause modifies the verb "[he] said" immediately after it);<sup>21</sup> or it may be Ps 69:22 (perhaps including Jesus' cry),<sup>22</sup> enacted by those beneath the cross at v. 29 (in which case, again, the clause modifies the verb "[he] said" immediately after it). The giving of sour wine (ὄξος) in v. 29 (especially with the "thirst" of Jesus' cry) is reminiscent of Ps 69:22, and this allows for the "scripture" in question to be that verse, realized as the action beneath the cross unfolds.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> "Jesus, knowing that (ὅτι) all things had already been finished in order that the scripture might be completed (ἵνα τελειωθῇ ἡ γραφή) ...." Significant for this reading has been the observation by Bergmeier that the same construct appears also at John 6:15 and 13:1, that is, a purpose clause (introduced with ἵνα) modifying an immediately preceding noun clause (introduced with ὅτι); "ΤΕΤΕΛΕΕΣΤΑΙ Joh 19<sub>30</sub>," 285–6.

<sup>20</sup> G. Bampfyld, "John xix.28: A Case for a Different Translation," *NovT* 11 (1969): 250–7, 260; anticipated by Edwyn Clement Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, ed. Francis Noel Davey, 2nd ed. (London: Faber & Faber, 1947), 532. Though the reference made at John 7:37–39 is open to debate, Bampfyld identifies it as Zech 14:8.

<sup>21</sup> Primary candidates have been psalms in which the psalmist's "thirst" (literal or metaphorical) is stated or implied (Pss 22:16; 42:2–3; 63:2; 69:4), with a pointed case for the second (Ps 42:2–3) made by Johannes Beutler, "Psalm 42/43 im Johannesevangelium," *NTS* 25 (1978–9): 54–6. Added to these have been Exod 17:3, where, in accord with John's exodus typology, the Israelites "thirsted" for water at Rephidim; and 2 Sam 17:29; 23:13–17, where, with a possible biographical connection to Ps 63:2, David is described as "thirsting" (or at least craving water). On Exod 17:3, Edwin D. Freed, "Psalm 42/43 in John's Gospel," *NTS* 29 (1983): 71; on 2 Sam 17:29; 23:13–17, Margaret Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel: The Johannine Reception of the Psalms*, AGJU 47 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 225–7; cf. Hans-Josef Klauck, "Geschrieben, erfüllt, vollendet: Die Schriftzitate in der Johannespassion," in *Israel und seine Heilstraditionen im Johannesevangelium: Festgabe für Johannes Beutler S.J. zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Michael Labahn, Klaus Scholtissek, and Angelika Strotmann (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004), 153 n.45; and on the debate between Freed and Beutler, Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave. A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*, 2 vols., ABRL (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1994), 2:1453 n.25.

<sup>22</sup> See U. P. McCaffrey, "Psalm Quotations in the Passion Narratives of the Gospels," *Neot* 14 (1980): 86.

<sup>23</sup> These choices are complicated further by the suggestion of Raymond Brown that the purpose clause at issue here (v. 28c) might modify both the noun clause at v. 28b and the verb introducing direct speech at v. 28d; *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols., AB 29–29A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966/1970), 2:908.

Ps 69(68):22

They put poison in my food;

and for my thirst (אמצלו/εἰς τὴν δίψαν μου)

they gave me sour wine (רמח/ὄξος) to drink.<sup>24</sup> (ὄξος).

John 19:28–29

After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been finished, in order that the scripture might be completed, said, “I thirst (διψῶ).” A jar was lying there, full of sour wine (τοῦ ὄξους) around hyssop, they brought it to his mouth.

Among arguments for the last of these options leverage has been sought from the way “the scripture” is realized in the other three crucifixion quotations. It has been noticed by L. Theodor Witkamp that the biblical passages cited in each of the other crucifixion scenes are fulfilled (a) unwittingly (b) by the soldiers beneath the cross: LXX Ps 21:19, by their dividing of and gambling for Jesus’ clothing; Exod 12:10, 46; Num 9:12; Ps 22:18; or Ps 34:21, by their restraint from breaking Jesus’ bones; and Zech 12:10, by their piercing of Jesus’ side. If the same is expected for John 19:28–30, he argues, the scripture being “completed” must be Ps 69:22 at v. 29 and the purpose clause at v. 28c must function as an introductory formula having that verse in view. This is the only option for John 19:28–30 in which those beneath the cross likewise act unwittingly in accord with a biblical passage; and so this, rather than the other three alternatives, must reflect the mind of the evangelist.<sup>25</sup>

After a manner, this same pattern was earlier distilled by Robert Brawley, as he perceived a more elaborate, narrative-critical dynamic at work in the quotations. In all the crucifixion scenes, he notes, the “matrix” that “senselessness becomes significant” is worked out in a fourfold dynamic (1) trivia (“petty detail”) is rendered significant; (2) that significance thereafter drives the story; (3) the absurdity and profundity of the cross are mirrored in the imagery that attends each act going on beneath it; and (4) the scriptures in each case are as resonant with “what the soldiers who crucify (Jesus) do” as they are with the words Jesus speaks.<sup>26</sup> The second and third of these do not coincide directly with Witkamp’s pattern. But if those two may be bracketed here, the first and fourth do: in Witkamp’s schema (1) significance is certainly vested in “petty detail”—the allocation of Jesus’ garments, the giving of sour wine, the restraint from breaking his legs, and the piercing of his side; and (4) it is this trivia, not Jesus’ *logion* (“I thirst”), that realizes the biblical texts being cited.

### 3. THREE CHRISTOLOGICAL PROMPTS

This observation is incisive but could be expanded. Those beneath the cross do, indeed, “fulfill” these passages unawares. But further, their actions do so under conditions (a) that are unexpected or would not otherwise have occurred in the narrative, which, in turn, (b) have in some way been prompted by Jesus.

<sup>24</sup> It is recognized that the drink described as רמח/ὄξος in Ps 69(68):22 may not have been the same as the ὄξος which those beneath the cross would have given Jesus in John 19:29 (often speculated to be the *posca* drunk by Roman soldiers). Since that difference is not at issue here, however, the term “sour wine” is used for both *loci*.

<sup>25</sup> “Jesus’ Thirst in John 19:28–30: Literal or Figurative?” *JBL* 115 (1996): 503—this, over against Urban C. von Wahlde, that “the fulfillment resides in the words of Jesus rather than in the action of offering wine”; *The Gospel and Letters of John*, 3 vols., ECC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 3:314.

<sup>26</sup> Robert L. Brawley, “An Absent Complement and Intertextuality in John 19:28–29,” *JBL* 112 (1993): 434–5.

This is most salient in the final two quotations, at John 19:36-37. The actions of the soldiers unwittingly coincide with (and, therefore, “fulfill”) Exod 12:10, 46; Num 9:12; Ps 22:18; or Ps 34:21 as they refrain from breaking Jesus’ bones; and those actions do the same with Zech 12:10 as they pierce Jesus’ side to confirm, ensure, or degrade his death. Neither of these deeds, however, would have been done under the natural conditions anticipated in the narrative. The soldiers engage in *crurifragium* because, according to the assumption of the Jews (not to mention what is known about crucifixion), the men being crucified were expected to live at least into the following day’s Sabbath.<sup>27</sup> The only reason the soldiers act the way they do toward Jesus (and thereby match the biblical passages being cited) is because, by deciding to “give over” his “spirit” prematurely at v. 30, Jesus created a(n unnatural and unexpected) set of conditions that made such actions possible. The soldiers “fulfill” scripture unawares, but do so under circumstances (a) prompted by Jesus (b) which are unanticipated and would not have occurred otherwise in the story.<sup>28</sup>

The same occurs in the first two crucifixion quotations, and it especially comes into view when those scenes are set against their Synoptic counterparts. In the second, at John 19:28-30 (read with Ps 69:22 as the scripture being introduced), the actions of those beneath the cross similarly coincide with (and, therefore, “complete”) Ps 69:22—this time, by giving Jesus sour wine to drink. As the incident is told, however, they only do so because they are prompted by Jesus’ cry “I thirst.” As commentators have noticed, this differs sharply from the Synoptics, where those beneath the cross give the sour wine on their own initiative: in Luke, it is the soldiers who do so, as part of their mockery;<sup>29</sup> in Matthew and Mark, it is an unnamed individual, who (along with others) does so

<sup>27</sup> John 19:31–32. Supporting the peculiarity of Jesus’ quick death has been Mark 15:44a, where, if θαυμάζειν is read to mean “marvel,” Pilate is surprised to hear he has passed: “And Pilate marveled (ἐθαύμασεν) that he had already died”; see, for instance, J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*, 2 vols., ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1928), 2:643; Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, NCB (Greenwood, SC: Attic Press, 1972), 585–6.

<sup>28</sup> The peculiarity of this dynamic in John is brought into further relief by cognate and Synoptic parallel accounts of the acts performed in these third and fourth quotations. For the third, the *Gospel of Peter* likewise casts those crucifying Jesus (be they soldiers or the Jewish populace in general [*Gos. Pet.* §5]) as being prompted to refrain from *crurifragium*, but not by Jesus—and for overtly malicious motives. They are provoked to anger at Jesus through an accusation of injustice issued by one of the criminals being crucified alongside him (similar to Luke 23:40–41); and in response they hold back from breaking his legs so as to exacerbate his pain: “But a certain one of those criminals reproached them, saying, ‘We have suffered thus for the evil things we did; but this one, being the savior of the people, what wrong did he do you?’ And being angry with him (Jesus), they commanded that his legs not be broken, so that he might die tortured” (*Gos. Pet.* §§ 13–14). Text for the *Gospel of Peter*, Bart D. Ehrman and Zlatko Pleše, *The Apocryphal Gospels: Texts and Translations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

As for the fourth quotation, the most textually viable reference to Zech 12:10 in Synoptic crucifixion scenes appears at Luke 23:27 and furnishes a relatively remote point of comparison: an allusion to the clause following the one cited by John (Zech 12:10c) in the description of women “mourning” Jesus in procession to the place of crucifixion: “and they will mourn (ἰδοὺ/κόψονται) over him a mourning (ἰδοὺ/κόπετόν) as over a beloved” (Zech 12:10c); “and a great throng was following him, and of women who were mourning (ἐκόπτοντο) and wailing over him” (Luke 23:27). More apt is the attestation in several manuscripts at Matt 27:49 that casts one of those standing beneath the cross as piercing Jesus’ side while he is still alive, just after (and over against) the bid of others to pause from giving him sour wine, so as to see if Elijah would answer his “cry of dereliction”: “but another, taking a spear, pricked his side, and water and blood (or blood and water [Γ]) came forth” (⋈ B C L Γ). The reading is likely “an early intrusion derived” from John 19:34 (Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/United Bible Societies, 1994], 59), but if taken as a peer witness nonetheless, it differs from John by depicting this act as the cause of Jesus’ death, rather than an effect prompted by it.

<sup>29</sup> Luke 23:36.

out of a mistaken notion that Jesus’ “cry of dereliction” is a call for Elijah.<sup>30</sup> Here, however, the narrative seems to assume that those beneath the cross would not have so acted had Jesus not first articulated his thirst; and so, again, those figures “complete” scripture unwittingly, and do so as they are (a) prompted by Jesus (b) into a circumstance (the need to answer his cry of “thirst”) that would not otherwise have occurred in the story.<sup>31</sup>

As for the first quotation, at John 19:23-24, the differential between John’s reading of the cited scripture (LXX Ps 21:19) and that of the Synoptics has, in fact, been central to exegetical discussion. The variance turns on two factors: the clothing Jesus is described to have and the rendering of the verbs in the two cola of the psalm verse. In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus’ clothing is only identified with one term, “his garments” (τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ); and, except for the third-person genitive pronoun (αὐτοῦ for μου), this term matches the one used for clothing in LXX Ps 21:19a. Moreover, the first three words of the first colon of the psalm are conflated with the last two words of the second colon, with either the finite verb from the second colon (Matthew, Mark) or the finite verb from the first colon (Luke) being changed to a participle. If, then, those participles are taken with instrumental or final force, the action from one colon is cast as the means or purpose for doing the action of the other colon; and this has (rightly) been understood to reflect Synoptic sensitivity to Semitic *parallelismus membrorum*:

LXX Psalm 21:19

διεμερίσαντο τὰ ἱματία μου ἑαυτοῖς  
καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ἱματισμὸν μου ἔβαλον κλῆρον.

They divided my garments among themselves,  
and for my clothing they cast lots.

Matthew 27:35

And having crucified him,

“they divided his garments by casting lots ... (διεμερίσαντο τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ βάλλοντες κλῆρον)”

Mark 15:24

And they were crucifying him and “were dividing his garments by casting lots for them (διαμερίζονται τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ βάλλοντες κλῆρον ἐπ’ αὐτά),” as to who would take what.

Luke 23:34

And “to divide his garments they cast lots (διαμεριζόμενοι δὲ τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ ἔβαλον κλήρους).”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup>Matt 27:46–48; Mark 15:34–36; cf. the “cry of dereliction” (Ps 22:2).

<sup>31</sup>In the *Gospel of Peter*, as with some variants to John 19:29 [Θ f<sup>13</sup> 892], this action is conflated with the giving of wine (οἶνος) with gall (χολή) in Matt 27:34 (even as in some variants to Matt 27:34 [A N W Γ Δ 0281 565 579 700 892 1241 1424 and the Majority text] the giving of wine and gall is conflated with the giving of “sour wine” [ὄξος] in John 19:29). Moreover, the act is performed before Jesus’ “cry of dereliction” (not after, as in Matthew and Mark) and is said to have both “fulfilled all things” and “completed the sins” of the people “upon their head” (*Gos. Pet.* §§ 16–17, 19); see Bernard, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*, 2:639–40; Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2:909. As in Matthew and Mark, however, this deed is done at the urging of one of those crucifying Jesus (not by any prompt issued by Jesus) and, as such, casts the Johannine pattern being observed here further into relief: “And a certain one among them said, ‘Give him gall with sour wine (χολὴν μετὰ ὄξους) to drink.’ And mixing them, they gave him to drink.”

<sup>32</sup>Sensitivity to the parallelism in LXX Ps 21:19 obtains even if the extended variant at Matt 27:35 is taken into account. In it the modified rendering of the verse (set out above) is immediately followed by (a) a Matthean-like fulfillment formula and, with some variation among the witnesses, (b) a verbatim quotation of the entirety of the LXX verse: “they divided his garments by casting lots, in order that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, ‘They divided my garments among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots’” (Δ Θ 0250 f<sup>1</sup> f<sup>13</sup> 1424 lectionary 844; see Schuchard, *Scripture*

In John, by contrast, are three differences. First, Jesus' clothing is twofold: "his garments" (τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ) and the "seamless tunic" (ὁ χιτῶν ἄραφος). Second, those two parts are allocated by the soldiers in two distinct ways: for "his garments" they "made four parts" (ἐποίησαν τέσσαρα μέρη); for the tunic they pause to deliberate, then decide not to "tear" it but to "cast lots (λάχουμεν) as to whose it will be." And third, the psalm is cited in full and verbatim (not conflated or modified), with the "fulfillment" of the verbs in each colon corresponding to the two methods the soldiers use to allocate each piece of Jesus' clothing: the "dividing" (διεμερίσαντο) of LXX Ps 21:19a with their making four piles of his garments; the "casting lots" (ἔβαλον κλῆρον) of v. 19b with their casting lots for his tunic.<sup>33</sup>

LXX Ps 21:19

They divided my garments among  
themselves,  
and for my clothing they cast lots.

John 19:23–24

Making four parts of his garments.  
  
Casting lots for his seamless tunic.

In exegetical discussion on this passage these distinctive features have been explored along two major avenues: the "seamless tunic," for the symbolism it may carry;<sup>34</sup> the correlation between the soldiers' allocation of Jesus' clothes and the psalm's cola, for its hermeneutical legitimacy at the

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*within Scripture*, 126 n.3). The UBSGNT committee deems this a copyist's insertion, influenced by John 19:24; Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 57. Even if it is original, however—omitted in other manuscripts by homoeoteleuton from the repeated κλῆρον (as the committee also allows)—or if it is considered a legitimate witness in itself (regardless of its editorial provenance), it does not change the Matthean interpretation of the psalm, due to the conflated paraphrase that precedes it. By identifying all of Jesus' clothes with one term (τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ) and by changing the second verb into a participle (βάλλοντες), it indicates that both cola of the verse are taken to describe a single process.

<sup>33</sup> John's reading of the verse is routinely compared with Matthew's attempt to account for the parallelism in Zech 9:9ef by having Jesus secure both a donkey and a foal for his ride into Jerusalem (Matt 21:1–7); Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray, R. W. N. Hoare and J. K. Riches (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press, 1971), 670 n.8; trans. of *Das Evangelium des Johannes: Ergänzungsheft*, KEK 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964); Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St John*, trans. Kevin Smyth, Cecily Hastings, Francis McDonagh, David Smith, Richard Foley, and G.A. Kon, 3 vols. (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 3:273–74; trans. of *Das Johannesevangelium*, HThKNT 4 (Freiburg: Herder, 1965–75); Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 2:920; von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters of John*, 2:804. Pertinent here perhaps is the observation that John's addition of a singular "tunic" (ὁ χιτῶν) to his plural "garments" (τὰ ἱμάτια) was likely facilitated by LXX Ps 21:19 itself: where the first colon describes the psalmist's clothing with the plural "garments" (τὰ ἱμάτια), the second does so with the singular "clothing" (τὸν ἱματισμόν); see Hoskyns, *Fourth Gospel*, 529; cf. Selva Rathinam, SJ, "The Old Testament in John's Passion Narrative," *Vid 66* (2002): 410. Inasmuch as the second term was likely "intended as collective," however, this does not exonerate the evangelist from artificially applying the verse to his pericope; see Lindars, *Gospel of John*, 578.

<sup>34</sup> The search for symbolism in the tunic has garnered an array of hypotheses, among them the (untorn) curtain in the new sanctuary of Jesus' body (John 2:19–21; cf. Mark 15:38); divine protection amid degradation; Adam or Moses typology; and the garment made by Jacob for Joseph (Gen 37:3, 23). Foremost, however, have been its connotations for the high priesthood of Jesus and for the unity of believers—among themselves and with Christ, as articulated, for instance, in John 10:15–16; 11:51–52; 17:20–23. Key for the first has been the aforementioned note by Josephus on the "seamlessness" of the high priest's garment (see note 16); key for the second have been the ecclesiastical reading of Jesus' tunic by Cyprian (*Unit. eccl.* 7) and the cosmological significance given the high priest's garment by Philo Judaeus (*Fug.* 110–12; *Spec.* 1.84–96; *Mos.* 2.117–35; cf. Lev 21:10)—see Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 671 n.2; Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 2:920–22; Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to St John*, 3:274; and the review by David E. Garland, "The Fulfillment Quotations in John's Account of the Crucifixion," in *Perspectives on John: Method and Interpretation in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Robert B. Sloan and Mikeal C. Parsons, National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion Special Studies Series 11 (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1993), 236–9.

time of writing,<sup>35</sup> as well as for the window it may furnish into the Fourth Gospel's composition history.<sup>36</sup> Without disparaging either, it is proposed here that also at work is the dynamic just traced in the other three crucifixion quotations: that the soldiers "fulfill" LXX Ps 21:19 under otherwise unexpected conditions that have been prompted by Jesus. If looked at on the assumption of John's (wooden) reading of the psalm (in which "dividing" and "casting lots" are two different processes), the soldiers initially would only have "fulfilled" its first colon. They would have "divided his garments" (LXX Ps 21:19a) by "making four piles" but would not otherwise have had occasion to "cast lots for his clothing" (v. 19b). The only reason they do fulfill that second colon is that an item of Jesus' apparel effects unanticipated conditions for acting in accord with it: whether due to its "seamlessness"<sup>37</sup> or its number (as a fifth item for a quaternion),<sup>38</sup> Jesus' tunic creates a(n otherwise unforeseen) need to "cast lots" for his clothing alongside the process of "dividing" them. Indeed, the unexpected nature of the circumstance caused by the tunic is underscored by the narrative pause in which the soldiers stop to deliberate over it. Whereas with the rest of Jesus' garments the soldiers make four piles as a matter of course (with no need to organize their actions), with the tunic they come across something for which they had no protocol and, therefore, must devise one ad hoc: "But the tunic was seamless, woven throughout from the top. Therefore they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but let us cast lots as to whose it will be,' in order that the scripture might be fulfilled."<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> On this matter, for instance, Barrett speculated that "Hebrew parallelism was little if at all understood at this time," while Menken has sought to show that taking parallel cola to indicate different referents "was considered as legitimate in early Judaism and early Christianity" and employed elsewhere by John (e.g., John 12:38–40/Isa 53:1; 6:10) when such discrete referents "suited his narrative"; Barrett, *Gospel According to St. John*, 550–1; Maarten J. J. Menken, "The Use of the Septuagint in Three Quotations in John: Jn 10,34; 12,38; 19,24," in *The Scriptures in the Gospels*, ed. C. M. Tuckett, BETL 131 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), 386–92; cf. 382–3.

<sup>36</sup> Dodd and Schnackenburg, for instance, took the verbatim rendering of LXX Ps 21:19 (Dodd) and the stilted interpretation it is given (Schnackenburg) to reflect the tradition from which John drew; Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, 40–1, 122–3; Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to St John*, 3:272. Brown ascribed the greater detail in John's story to his source, while Bernard saw it (along with its meticulous correlation to the psalm's cola) as signaling "the fuller testimony of an eye-witness"; Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 2:920; Bernard, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*, 2:629. And, together with a similar "flawed understanding" elsewhere in the narrative (John 4:44; 12:3–8), von Wahlde considers the misconstrued parallelism to betray a third hand in the gospel's writing; *Gospel and Letters of John*, 2:804, 809–10; cf. 202–3, 532–6.

<sup>37</sup> Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to St John*, 3:273; von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters of John*, 2:804.

<sup>38</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 808 n.53.

<sup>39</sup> In the *Gospel of Peter* the language for this incident at once resembles and differs from both John and the Synoptics. Like the Synoptics (but unlike John), Jesus' clothing is only identified with one term, "the garments" (τὰ ἐνδύματα); like John (but unlike the Synoptics), however, the verbs from each of the psalm's cola are retained in their finite forms: "divided" (διεμερίσαντο) and "cast" (ἔβαλον) lots." As for the way it reads the psalm, its syntax allows two procedures by which the soldiers allocate these garments, depending on the grammatical role of the καὶ that divides the two verbs. If it is exegetic, the two verbs (as in the Synoptics) represent two ways of speaking about a single action—that is, as in the Synoptics, the psalm's parallelism is carried over: "and laying the garments (τὰ ἐνδύματα) in front of him (Jesus), they divided (διεμερίσαντο), that is (καὶ), they cast (ἔβαλον) lots for them" (for the καὶ as exegetic, see Menken, "Use of the Septuagint in Three Quotations in John," 388, 388 n.65). If the καὶ is conjunctive, however, the two verbs represent two discrete steps in a twofold process—and, like John, the parallelism is taken woodenly: "and laying the garments (τὰ ἐνδύματα) in front of him (Jesus), they divided (διεμερίσαντο) and (καὶ) cast (ἔβαλον) lots for them" (*Gos. Pet.* §12). For the point at issue here, in both cases the soldiers enact Ps 69:22 on their own initiative and so, as in the Synoptics, furnish a foil to the prompt of Jesus' tunic in John.



In short, as the soldiers would soon do again by giving Jesus sour wine, refraining from breaking his legs and piercing his side, so here: they unwittingly take actions that coincide with the scripture being cited, and they do so under conditions (a) prompted by (something associated with) Jesus on the cross (b) that are otherwise unexpected (or would not have occurred) in the course of the story. Indeed, the perception of such christocentric prompting in the crucifixion quotations seems to have been latent in the thoughts of Rudolf Schnackenburg on the source behind the third one (at John 19:36):

Taking account of the content, its object is to describe special features connected with the person of Jesus. If, in the case of the sharing of the garments, it was Jesus' seamless tunic which the soldiers did not want to tear, so now it is that he is already dead, which keeps them from breaking his legs.<sup>40</sup>

#### 4. THE CRUCIFIXION QUOTATIONS AND JOHN'S PASSION CHRISTOLOGY

At the very least, such a pattern reinforces the case for Ps 69:22 as the "scripture" being "completed" in John 19:28-30. When applied to the role of all John's crucifixion quotations, however, it also suggests that their original apologetic purpose has been co-opted into John's christology, particularly, the christological motif that perhaps most drives his passion narrative: that Jesus controls the very forces that bring about his death. That idea is epitomized in Jesus' Good Shepherd assertion that "no one takes" his life, but that he "lays it down of (his) own accord."<sup>41</sup> And it is worked out in John's farewell discourse and passion narrative as Jesus declares he will "drink the cup" his Father had given him<sup>42</sup> and acts to facilitate each step of his demise. Having chosen Judas to begin with,<sup>43</sup> he initiates his betrayal,<sup>44</sup> commands him to proceed "quickly,"<sup>45</sup> then deliberately locates himself in the garden with which he (Judas) was familiar.<sup>46</sup> When arrested, he interrogates the detachment that

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<sup>40</sup>Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to St John*, 3:288-89. Drawing on the possible symbolism attached to various elements in the crucifixion scenes, Garland proffers a similar pattern, in which the soldiers' actions create irony by evoking "a revelatory scene." If the seamless tunic connotes a high priestly status, if Jesus' thirst is taken against his earlier offers to furnish "living water" (John 4:7-14; 7:37-39), and if the blood and water which flow from Jesus' side signal "the fountain of water and blood that gives life to believers," then in each case, Garland suggests, Jesus' "humanity and degradation" serve as a counterpoint to his salvific mission; "Fulfillment Quotations in John's Account of the Crucifixion," 250 n.73. The proposal here does not deny such a dynamic, but contends that christological import for these passages attends the literal meaning of these elements—as advocated strongly, for instance, by Bernard, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*, 2:630, 639, 647-8. And this also entails reading the "giving over" of Jesus' "spirit" at John 19:30 as referring to his physical death, regardless of whether it may also have the "giving" of the "Holy Spirit" in view: the beginnings of this latter idea are traced to Hoskyns, *Fourth Gospel*, 532; for reviews of the discussion (together with their own theses), see David Crump, "Who Gets What?: God or Disciples, Human Spirit or Holy Spirit in John 19:30," *NovT* 51 (2009): 78-89; and Peter-Ben Smit, "The Gift of the Spirit in John 19:30? A Reconsideration of παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα," *CBQ* 78 (2016): 447-62.

<sup>41</sup>John 10:18.

<sup>42</sup>John 18:11.

<sup>43</sup>John 13:18; cf. 6:70-71.

<sup>44</sup>John 13:26-27.

<sup>45</sup>John 13:27.

<sup>46</sup>John 18:1-2.



has come to take him,<sup>47</sup> sends them to the ground when he identifies himself,<sup>48</sup> commands them to let his disciples go free,<sup>49</sup> then exposes the illegitimacy of his trial before Annas.<sup>50</sup> And upon being convicted, he carries his own cross to Golgotha,<sup>51</sup> assigns the care of his mother to his beloved disciple,<sup>52</sup> declares, “It is finished,” and finally, by his own decision, “gives over the spirit” and dies.<sup>53</sup>

At first blush this motif appears to run alongside (but independently of) the sequence of “fulfillment quotations”; that is, in chs. 13–19 John’s portrayal of Jesus as “sovereign of his fate”<sup>54</sup> seems to unfold concurrently with (but separate from) the quotations’ “defense” of that fate as having occurred “according to the scriptures.” If, while he hangs on the cross, however, Jesus’ “seamless tunic,” his cry of “thirst,” and his “giving over” of the “spirit” serve as prompts to manipulate his handlers beneath him into realizing those “scriptures,” these christological and apologetic threads seem to relate more intimately. At this juncture, in fact, they appear to be interwoven. The “fulfillment” of the passages cited in the crucifixion scenes is now, itself, an effect of Jesus’ self-engineered death; and this, in turn, suggests that any apologetic purpose those passages once had in prior tradition has been absorbed into the evangelist’s own *Tendenz*. Such a fusion does not eclipse the apologetic aspect of these quotations: they still speak of a man stripped naked, begging for drink, whose bones and flesh (when his body becomes a corpse) lie under the control of indifferent sentries; and, as such, they labor to reconcile such humiliation with a claim that this man is “Christ.” The melding does, however, add a theologically Johannine dimension to these *loci*. They now not only defend a messiah who must suffer. They proclaim one who did so at his own behest.

## 5. CONCLUSION

As noted above, this proposal is no more than that. It rests on exegetical choices within highly contested issues that, in turn, require more detailed attention than could be given here.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> John 18:4.

<sup>48</sup> John 18:5–6.

<sup>49</sup> John 18:7–9.

<sup>50</sup> John 18:19–24.

<sup>51</sup> John 19:17—this, over against the Synoptics (Matt 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26), where the cross is carried for him.

<sup>52</sup> John 19:25–27.

<sup>53</sup> John 19:30. Most recently this motif has been framed by Jörg Frey within a conception of Jesus’ passion as a “noble death”; *The Glory of the Crucified One: Christology and Theology in the Gospel of John*, trans. Wayne Coppins and Christoph Heilig, Baylor-Mohr Siebeck Studies in Early Christianity (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018), 179–80; trans. of *Die Herrlichkeit des Gekreuzigten: Studien zu den Johanneischen Schriften I*, ed. Juliane Schlegel, WUNT 307 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).

<sup>54</sup> Frey, *Glory of the Crucified One*, 179.

<sup>55</sup> One issue requiring further exploration is the degree to which Jesus was aware of any prompting from the cross. Such awareness certainly marks his maneuvering through the passion narrative. As his suffering unfolds, he is altogether cognizant of the metaphysical and social currents at work: that he had come from the Father, and that the hour had come for him to pass from this world back to that Father (John 13:1, 3; 17:1, 11, 13); that he was about to prepare a place for his disciples (John 14:2), and that, as such, he would only be with them a little while longer and they would not be able to follow (John 13:33, 36; 14:19; 16:16, 19–22); that among those disciples was his betrayer and that, by acting the way he did toward Jesus, that figure had already perished (John 13:10–11, 18, 21; 17:12); that “the ruler of this world” was coming for him and that, like his betrayer, that figure, too, had already been judged (John 14:30; 16:11); that his arrest, trial, and execution were “coming upon him” (John 18:4) but that the Father had given all things into his hands (John 13:3); that Peter would deny him, and his disciples abandon him (John 13:38 [cf. 18:15–18, 25–27]; 16:31–32); and, finally, that his kingdom was “not of this world” (John 18:36), that Pilate’s power over him had been delegated from above (John 19:11), and that, upon

To the extent it can be further established, however, it reinforces Ps 69:22 as the scripture “completed” before Jesus’ last words and, more importantly, shows the apologetic purpose of the crucifixion quotations to have been integrated into the kerygmatic purpose of the Fourth Gospel’s christology.

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putting his mother under the care of the beloved disciple, “all things” had been “finished” (John 19:28–30). Can the same be said, however, for his knowledge of the effects that his “prompts” would be having on those beneath the cross during his crucifixion?

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# Touching the Risen Jesus: Did Jesus Allow Thomas to Do What He Refused to Mary?

LIDIJA NOVAKOVIC

Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18) is frequently contrasted with his appearance to Thomas (John 20:24-29) because, as Sandra Schneiders puts it, "the risen Jesus prohibits Mary Magdalene from touching him," whereas "he invites, even commands, Thomas the Twin to touch him."<sup>1</sup> To use a contemporary analogy from the coronavirus pandemic, the risen Jesus seems to practice social distancing from Mary but not from Thomas. This contrast is especially pronounced in the Latin translation of Jesus' prohibition to Mary, "*Noli me tangere*," and its reception in Christian literature and the visual arts.<sup>2</sup> For example, Ambrose reasons that Jesus did not allow Mary to touch him because she was less perfect than Jesus' male disciples; hence, Jesus invited her to make spiritual progress by learning from the brothers, who had been given the privilege of experiencing the resurrection.<sup>3</sup> In medieval art, Jesus is frequently portrayed as either withdrawing from Mary's touch or preventing her from touching him. By the same token, women were not allowed to touch the body of the Lord through the administration of the sacraments, the reading of the gospels, or the handling of sacred objects.<sup>4</sup>

The most common objection to this view is that in the Greek text, Jesus' command to Mary, μή μου ἅπτου, which involves the negated present imperative of ἅπτω, prohibits the continuation of an action that has already started.<sup>5</sup> In that case, the difference between Mary and Thomas is not

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<sup>1</sup>In this essay, I wish to honor James H. Charlesworth's legacy in Johannine studies by revisiting the roles of Mary Magdalene and Thomas in the Johannine resurrection narrative.

Sandra M. Schneiders, "Touching the Risen Jesus: Mary Magdalene and Thomas the Twin in John 20," in *The Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of John*, ed. Craig R. Koester and Reimund Bieringer, WUNT 222 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 154.

<sup>2</sup>See various essays on this subject in Reimund Bieringer, Karlijn Demasure, and Barbara Baert, eds., *To Touch or Not to Touch? Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Noli me tangere*, ANL 67 (Leuven: Peeters, 2013).

<sup>3</sup>Ambrose, *Exp. Luc.* 10.164–65.

<sup>4</sup>Esther A. de Boer, "The Interpretation of John 20:17 in Early Christian Writings: Why Is *Noli me tangere* Absent in 'Apocryphal' Literature?" in *To Touch or Not to Touch? Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Noli me tangere*, ed. Reimund Bieringer, Karlijn Demasure, and Barbara Baert, ANL 67 (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 99.

<sup>5</sup>Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols., AB 29–29A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966–70), 2:992; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press, 1978), 565–6; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, trans. Kevin Smyth et al., 3 vols. (New York: Crossroad, 1968, 1980, 1982), 3:318; Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: A*



that the physical touch was forbidden to Mary and permitted to Thomas. Rather, as I will argue in this essay, the difference between Mary and Thomas lies in the distinctive theological functions of their respective actions. Jesus interrupts Mary's physical contact, however defined, because her act interferes with his movement toward the Father. The invitation to Thomas to touch the marks of Jesus' crucifixion, conversely, serves to establish the identity of the Risen One as the Crucified One, with the focus on those who have come to this conviction without having seen Jesus. Within the literary context of John 20, each act serves as a didactic tool, teaching the audience how to respond to Jesus' resurrection in the time of Jesus' bodily absence.

## 1. MARY MAGDALENE'S ENCOUNTER WITH THE RISEN JESUS

In the Fourth Gospel, the risen Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene after her brief conversation with two angels, whom she saw sitting in the tomb from which Jesus' body disappeared (John 20:11-13). Unlike the angelic figures in the synoptic Gospels (Mark 16:1-8; Matt 28:1-7; Luke 24:1-12), the angels in John do not remove the ambiguity of the empty tomb. They only inquire about the cause of Mary's weeping, providing no information about the whereabouts of Jesus' body, a problem that so occupied Mary's mind since her discovery of the bodiless tomb (John 20:2) that she had to repeat it to the angels: "They have taken my Lord, and I do not know where they have put him" (John 20:13b).<sup>6</sup> She even expresses the same supposition to Jesus, whom she mistakes for the gardener: "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will take him away" (John 20:15b). Her confusion regarding Jesus' identity comes to an end when Jesus addresses her by her name: Μαριάμ (John 20:16), which functions as a "token"—an unambiguous sign that proves a person's true identity to someone who is acquainted with that particular identity trait.<sup>7</sup> The Johannine narrative sequence clearly suggests that Mary did not recognize the risen Jesus by sight but by a familiar voice, epitomizing the sheep who follow the good shepherd because he calls them by name and they know his voice (John 10:2-4).<sup>8</sup> In that sense, she functions as a model for John's audience, downplaying the significance of sight, which is no longer available to them, and showing to them "that in the spoken word of Jesus they have the means of recognizing his presence."<sup>9</sup>

Mary's recognition of Jesus is expressed by a single word, ραββουμι, an indeclinable Aramaic loanword with a first-person suffix. Its literal meaning, "my lord, my master," could be taken as an equivalent to the Greek expression κύριε μου. However, the evangelist's translation of the vocative ραββουμι with διδάσκαλε ("teacher"), the same one that he gives for ραββί in John 1:38, indicates that he wants to show that Mary identifies Jesus through a role he had in his pre-Easter ministry.<sup>10</sup>

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*Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles*, rev. ed. (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), 260. For a different opinion, see Frank Schleritt, *Der vorjohanneische Passionsbericht: Eine historisch-kritische und theologische Untersuchung zu Joh 2,13-22; 11,47-14,31 und 18,1-20,29*, BZNW 154 (Berlin: Gruyter, 2007), 491-2.

<sup>6</sup> All translations of the Greek text are mine.

<sup>7</sup> Alicia D. Myers, *Reading John and 1, 2, 3 John: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2019), 200.

<sup>8</sup> Harold W. Attridge, "'Don't Be Touching Me': Recent Feminist Scholarship on Mary Magdalene," in *A Feminist Companion to John: Volume II*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, FCNT 5 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 141.

<sup>9</sup> Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2:1009.

<sup>10</sup> In addition to John 1:38, Jesus is called ραββί in John 1:49; 3:2; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8.

Mary's application of this "old" title to the risen Jesus could therefore be interpreted as her failure to perceive Jesus' exalted state. Raymond Brown, for example, suggests that "the Johannine Magdalene is showing her misunderstanding of the resurrection by thinking that she can now resume following Jesus in the same manner as she had followed him during his earthly ministry."<sup>11</sup> But the use of this "old" title could also be interpreted as a necessary link between the pre-Easter and post-Easter Jesus, an indication of continuity within discontinuity so enthrallingly conveyed through Mary's failure to recognize the risen Jesus at first. Addressing him with the title that was used in his earthly ministry conveys to the reader that the one standing before Mary is indeed the same person whom she knew in the past.

Jesus' reply to Mary's recognition consists of three imperatival clauses, the first of which represents the *crux interpretum* of this episode:

- (1) μή μου ἄπτου, οὐπω γὰρ ἀναβέβηκα πρὸς τὸν πατέρα
- (2) πορεύου δὲ πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφούς μου
- (3) εἰπὲ αὐτοῖς· ἀναβαίνω πρὸς τὸν πατέρα μου καὶ πατέρα ὑμῶν καὶ θεὸν μου καὶ θεὸν ὑμῶν

Whether the negated present imperative μή μου ἄπτου in the first imperatival clause refers to the cessation of an action that is already in progress or to the prohibition of an action that has not yet started depends not only on the specific meaning of the verb ἄπτω in this context but also on the relationship of Jesus' request to the γάρ clause that follows. The imperfective aspect of the present imperative ἄπτου indicates that the prohibited action is portrayed as a process without regard for its beginning and end. The *Aktionsart*, that is, the kind of action expressed by the verb, depends on the semantic range of ἄπτω, which includes "touch," "take hold of," "hold on to," "fasten oneself to," and "cling to."<sup>12</sup> The specific meaning of the verb in John 20:17 is determined to a large extent by one's understanding of the type of contact this verb could express. If one shares Sandra Schneiders's view that ἄπτω is "an apt metonymy for the physically mediated historical experience of two people relating 'in the flesh,' that is, as mortal human beings,"<sup>13</sup> then μή μου ἄπτου prohibits an action that is categorically impossible because Jesus is no longer "in the flesh" that characterizes mortal human beings; hence, his risen body is not tangible.<sup>14</sup> In that case, the prohibited action has only been attempted but not really performed because this type of physical contact is not possible

<sup>11</sup>Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2:1010. Schneiders, "Touching the Risen Jesus," 171, concludes that Mary Magdalene "erroneously thinks that the past dispensation has been reinstated. Things will be as they had always been." Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 565, says that "she is trying to recapture the past." Francis Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, SP 4 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 526, speaks of Mary's "attempt to reestablish the relationship she once had with him."

<sup>12</sup>According to C. H. Dodd, *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 443 n.2, the aorist tense of this verb means "touch," while the present tense means "hold," "grasp," or "cling."

<sup>13</sup>Schneiders, "Touching the Risen Jesus," 172.

<sup>14</sup>To this group of scholars belong also those who think that ἄπτω refers to an embrace or to sexual consummation; on the former, see Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. George R. Beasley-Murray (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press, 1971), 687; on the latter, see Adele Reinhartz, *Befriending the Beloved Disciple: A Jewish Reading of the Gospel of John* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 111; Susanne Ruschmann, *Maria von Magdala im Johannesevangelium*, NTAbh 40 (Münster: Aschendorf, 2002), 201–5. A different interpretation is proposed by Mary Rose D'Angelo, "A Critical Note: John 20:18 and Apocalypse of Moses 31," *JTS* 41 (1990): 529–36, who finds a parallel in the *Apoc. Mos.* 31:3–4, on the basis of which she concludes that Mary is prohibited to touch Jesus' resurrected body in order to avoid ritual impurity.

in Jesus' exalted state.<sup>15</sup> On this reading, however, the explanatory clause that follows, "for I have not yet ascended to the Father," is not intelligible because the adverb οὐπω, along with the stative aspect of the perfect tense ἀναβέβηκα, indicates that Jesus has not yet attained an exalted state in which he could not be touched.<sup>16</sup>

A more compelling view, which takes into account the imperfective aspect of the present imperative ἄπτου, is to understand the verb as a reference to an unfolding action that inhibits Jesus' ascension, such as holding him back or clinging on to him, and thus preventing in some way his transition to the Father.<sup>17</sup> In that case, the explanatory clause that follows, οὐπω γὰρ ἀναβέβηκα πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, indicates that the issue is not that Jesus' resurrected body is intangible but that holding or clinging on to him while he was ascending to the Father is objectionable because it interferes with his upward movement.<sup>18</sup> The chronological and spatial differentiation presumed by the text, however, does not mean that the Fourth Evangelist makes a conceptual distinction between Jesus' resurrection and ascension. As Brown aptly explains, "'ascension' is merely the use of spatial language to describe exaltation and glorification."<sup>19</sup> The risen Jesus conveys to Mary that his ascension is in progress when he appears to her, while his subsequent appearances to his disciples presume that his ascension has been completed, that is, that he appears from heaven. It would be nonetheless erroneous to surmise that Jesus' appearance to Mary was somehow inferior to the appearances to the disciples because John makes no distinction between these experiences. Mary uses the same language to describe her encounter with the risen Jesus, ἐώρακα τὸν κύριον ("I

<sup>15</sup> Pace Schneiders, "Touching the Risen Jesus," 171, who erroneously parses ἄπτου as "the imperative verb ... in the imperfect tense" and alleges that it reflects "an ongoing or continuous activity."

<sup>16</sup> Reimund Bieringer, "Touching Jesus? The Meaning of μή μου ἄπτου in Its Johannine Context," in *To Touch or Not to Touch? Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Noli me tangere*, ed. Reimund Bieringer, Karlijn Demasure, and Barbara Baert, ANL 67 (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 65; Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood*, SBG 1 (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 356. Sandra Schneiders, "John 20.11-18: The Encounter of the Easter Jesus with Mary Magdalene—A Transformative Feminist Reading," in vol. 1 of "What Is John?" *Readers and Readings of the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia, 2 vols., SBLSymS (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996), 1:165, proposes to translate οὐπω γὰρ ἀναβέβηκα πρὸς τὸν πατέρα not as a declarative sentence, "I am not yet ascended to my Father," as if this supplied some reason why she should not or could not touch him, but as a rhetorical question expecting a negative reply, that is, "Am I as yet (or still) not ascended?" The proper answer to the question is, "No, you are indeed ascended, that is, glorified." However, the interpretation of οὐπω as an interrogative particle is not sustainable because this adverb normally means "not yet" and cannot be construed as a two-word term (οὐ πω) that is presumed by Schneiders's hypothesis.

<sup>17</sup> Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2:992, 1011; Frank J. Matera, "John 20:1-18," *Int* 43 (1989): 405; Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 565; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 3:318; Talbert, *Reading John*, 260; Myers, *Reading John and 1, 2, 3 John*, 201. This interpretation is frequently based on a hypothesis of John's dependence on Matthew's account about Jesus' appearance to two Marys as they were departing from the place of Jesus' burial; cf. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2:992; D. Moody Smith, *John*, ANTC (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 376. For a detailed comparison of John 20:14-17 and Matt 28:9-10, see Reimund Bieringer, "'I Am Ascending to My Father and Your Father, to My God and Your God' (John 20:17): Resurrection and Ascension in the Gospel of John," in *The Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of John*, ed. Craig R. Koester and Reimund Bieringer, WUNT 222 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 222-32. Bieringer interprets μή μου ἄπτου in John 20:17 as a redactional reworking of Matthew's αἰεὶ προσελθοῦσαι ἐκράτηεν αὐτοῦ τοὺς πόδας καὶ προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ and concludes that the Fourth Evangelist corrects Matthew by stating "that even the risen Christ is not someone to be worshipped. The γὰρ clause that follows in 20:17c is then saying that by ascending to God, Jesus will prepare the access to the Father, the one to be worshipped (together with the Son and the Holy Spirit)" (*ibid.*, 232).

<sup>18</sup> Jörg Frey, *The Glory of the Crucified One: Christology and Theology in the Gospel of John*, trans. Wayne Coppins and Christoph Heilig, BMSEC (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018), 226.

<sup>19</sup> Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2:1013.

have seen the Lord”; John 20:18), that the disciples use to describe theirs, ἑώρακαμεν τὸν κύριον (“We have seen the Lord”; John 20:25).

The understanding of ascension in the Fourth Gospel is clearly different from the one in Luke-Acts, where the ascension concludes the period of Jesus’ resurrection appearances (Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:1-11). John’s fusion of Jesus’ resurrection and ascension is consonant with other New Testament passages that associate these two events. For example, in the Christ hymn (Phil 2:6-11), an early Christian composition that describes Christ’s transition from being in the form of God to becoming a human being, Jesus’ resurrection and exaltation are portrayed as an undifferentiated event: “An when he was found in appearance as a human being, he humiliated himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, that is, death on a cross. For this reason also God exalted him and granted him the name that is above every name” (Phil 2:7b-9). Jesus’ resurrection, which is here “tacitly assumed,” is “passed over in favor of a full emphasis upon the victory of Christ and His installation in the seat of power in might.”<sup>20</sup> In Matt 28:16-20, the risen Jesus, who appears to his disciples on an unspecified mountain in Galilee several days after appearing to two Marys in the vicinity of the empty tomb, declares that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him.

If, then, Jesus’ appearances in the Fourth Gospel and his ascension to the Father cannot be conceptually differentiated, Jesus’ command to Mary Magdalene to stop holding him should not be restricted to just the period of his transition to the Father’s presence. Rather, it serves to explain to Mary, and to the audience, that Jesus’ resurrection is just one aspect of Jesus’ “hour,” which involves his being lifted up on the cross, being raised from the dead, and returning to the Father.<sup>21</sup> In John, in contrast to the synoptic Gospels, the emphasis falls not on Jesus’ presence with his followers through his post-resurrection appearances but on his absence.<sup>22</sup> Jesus is brought back to life only to return from whence he came. It could therefore be said that “Jesus’ mode of existence as the risen one is only provisional and transitional.”<sup>23</sup> His resurrection is thereby de-emphasized, as was the case in his farewell discourse, in which Jesus repeatedly talked about his going to the Father (John 14:12, 28; 16:5, 10, 28) without ever predicting that he would be raised from the dead. Raymond Brown suggests that “in telling [Mary] not to hold on to him, Jesus indicates that his permanent presence is not by way of appearance, but by way of the gift of the Spirit that can come only after he has ascended to the Father.”<sup>24</sup> Narratively, this interpretation is quite compelling because the next scene (John 21:19-23) describes the giving of the Holy Spirit, who will from now on function as Jesus’ substitute on earth. This sequence corresponds to Jesus’ earlier explanation that only after he has gone to the Father, he can send the Spirit of truth to his followers (John 14:15-21). But, in the account itself about Mary’s encounter with the risen Jesus, the gift of the Holy Spirit, even if implied, is not mentioned. Rather, Jesus tells Mary not to hold on to him because he is on his way

<sup>20</sup> Ralph P. Martin, *Carmen Christi: Philippians ii.5–11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship*, SNTSMS 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 239.

<sup>21</sup> Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2:1014; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 3:319.

<sup>22</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 1000.

<sup>23</sup> Bieringer, “‘I Am Ascending to My Father and Your Father, to My God and Your God’ (John 20:17),” 210; Michael Theobald, “Der johanneische Osterglaube und die Grenzen seiner narrative Vermittlung (Joh 20),” in *Von Jesus zum Christus: Christologische Studien. Festgabe für Paul Hoffmann zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Rudolf Hoppe and Ulrich Busse, BZNW 93 (Berlin: Gruyter, 1998), 111–12.

<sup>24</sup> Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2:1012. Cf. Dorothy A. Lee, “Partnership in Easter Faith: The Role of Mary Magdalene and Thomas in John 20,” *JSNT* 58 (1995): 42; Smith, *John*, 378.

to the Father, and he asks her to inform his disciples that he is ascending to his and their Father. Strictly speaking, this is not a message about Jesus' permanent presence but about Jesus' permanent absence. In the Johannine theological scheme, this absence is a necessary condition for the giving of the Spirit: "For if I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7b). Hence, if μή μου ἄπτου, οὐπω γὰρ ἀναβέβηκα πρὸς τὸν πατέρα suggests that Mary could not hold Jesus just yet but may be able to do so after he has ascended to God, this "holding" will be of a different kind, the one that no longer involves physical contact with the risen Jesus but is mediated through the Spirit.<sup>25</sup>

Mary Magdalene prefaces her report to the disciples about Jesus' message to them by proclaiming, "I have seen the Lord" (ἑώρακα τὸν κύριον). The stative aspect of the perfect tense of ὀράω gives prominence to Mary's status as a witness of the resurrection—the "apostle of the apostles" as she would be later called by Hippolytus of Rome<sup>26</sup>—whose vision of the risen Jesus remains enduringly before her eyes. In this way, Jesus' departure to the Father, implied in the terse clause, καὶ ταῦτα εἶπεν αὐτῇ ("and that he had said these things to her"), is assimilated into Mary's memory of Jesus' appearance, which she now shares with other disciples. Through her, the Fourth Evangelist teaches the audience that Jesus' permanent resurrected state is with his Father in heaven and not among his followers on earth.

## 2. THOMAS'S ENCOUNTER WITH THE RISEN JESUS

The Fourth Evangelist portrays Thomas as one of the twelve who refused to believe the report of other disciples that they had seen the risen Jesus until he verified Jesus' identity by touching the marks of his crucifixion (John 20:24-29). His request, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe" (John 20:25), is not the result of his misunderstanding of the nature of Jesus' presence, as some scholars suggest,<sup>27</sup> but of his earnest desire to validate the testimony of others. When one week later Jesus appeared to his disciples for the second time, he invited Thomas to act upon his request. Whether Thomas actually touched Jesus' hands and side is not reported. Rather, the narrator immediately relates Thomas's acknowledgment of Jesus' identity, which he expresses in the most profound terms, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus' reply, "Because you have seen me, have you believed?," presumes that Thomas has come to faith as a result of having seen the risen Jesus rather than having touched the marks of his crucifixion. The climax of the entire scene is Jesus' declaration of blessing upon future believers who will not have the opportunity, like Thomas, to verify Jesus' identity by sight: "Blessed [are] those who have not seen and yet have believed!"

Known as "doubting Thomas," Thomas the Twin is usually seen as a person whose faith demands empirical verification. For Rudolf Bultmann, "the doubt of Thomas is representative of the common

<sup>25</sup> De Boer, "The Interpretation of John 20:17 in Early Christian Writings," 105, suggests that "through Mary Magdalene the readers can find the way from the earthly relationship with Jesus towards the spiritual relationship with the risen one." Frey, *The Glory of the Crucified One*, 226, speaks about Mary's "consent to his departure, which leads to a fundamentally new, post-Easter relation of the female and male disciples to Jesus himself and to God."

<sup>26</sup> Hippolytus, *In Cant.* 67.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Lee, "Partnership in Easter Faith," 43.

attitude of men, who cannot believe without seeing miracles.”<sup>28</sup> Ernst Haenchen states, “Thomas receives what was only accessible to the second generation and the generations to follow and what, in the view of the Evangelist, was the only thing Jesus gave to the first disciples: the word. For, there is not verifying experience (miracle!) by which we can be convinced of God’s reality with objective certainty.”<sup>29</sup> According to Rudolf Schnackenburg, “he is not a type of the unbeliever as such but of one blind to faith and of one with a weak faith to whom belief in its wholeness will be granted as a gift only by Jesus himself, and that, after the resurrection.”<sup>30</sup>

These characterizations of Thomas should be revisited by taking a closer look at the narrational and theological functions of his desire to put his finger into the marks of the crucifixion on Jesus’ body. To start with, Thomas’s request is reasonable within the plot of John’s narrative and calls attention to the unexpected character of Jesus’ resurrection. In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus does not make clear predictions that he will be raised from the dead. Instead, he makes cryptic statements, such as inviting the Jews to destroy “this temple” and then prophesying that he will raise it up in three days, which his adversaries completely misunderstand and his disciples do not truly understand (John 2:18-22). In the Johannine resurrection narrative, the angels at the tomb, unlike their Synoptic counterparts, provide no clarity. According to John 20:9, Jesus’ disciples did not yet possess the proper understanding of Scripture that could help them understand the Easter events. Given these circumstances, Thomas’s request is not unreasonable. Mary recognized Jesus only after he called her name. The disciples rejoiced only after Jesus “showed his hands and his side to them” (John 20:20). Even the beloved disciple, who did not see Jesus himself, came to faith after having seen the burial wrappings in the empty tomb (John 20:8). Thomas’s behavior fits this pattern by stretching its boundaries. It is true that he “is asking more than was offered to the other disciples,” as Brown alleges,<sup>31</sup> but he has also been asked to base his faith on less. It seems therefore fair to say with James Charlesworth that “Thomas ... is the *realist* who stands firmly against *wishful* believing.”<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, when Jesus says to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands, and put your hand and place [it] into my side. And do not be unbelieving but believing” (John 20:27), he invites Thomas to establish the continuity between the Crucified and the Risen One, which is, like in the previous scene with Mary Magdalene, a necessary step of validating Jesus’ identity.<sup>33</sup> He, too, needs a “token”—an unequivocal sign that proves to him, and to the audience, that the person in front of him is really Jesus. For Thomas, this sign presumes his knowledge that Jesus has been nailed to the

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<sup>28</sup> Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 696.

<sup>29</sup> Ernst Haenchen, *John 2*, trans. Robert W. Funk, Hermeneia (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 211.

<sup>30</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 3:329.

<sup>31</sup> Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2:1045.

<sup>32</sup> James H. Charlesworth, *The Beloved Disciple: Whose Witness Validates the Gospel of John?* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995), 312 (original emphasis).

<sup>33</sup> Stan Harstine, “Un-Doubting Thomas: Recognition Scenes in the Ancient World,” *PRSt* 33 (2006): 445–7, compares the recognition of Jesus by Thomas to the recognition of Odysseus by Penelope in Homer’s *Odyssey*. Penelope becomes fully convinced about her husband’s identity only upon receiving the proof known only to Odysseus and herself. Harstine emphasizes that Penelope is not castigated as one who doubts Odysseus’s identity; rather, she is presented as the wise and trustworthy wife (*Od.* 19.135–6). He concludes that “it is probable that Thomas’s presentation in the Fourth Gospel would be understood by a first-century reader as that of a loyal and faithful servant, a servant who is waiting for a sign of recognition that only his true master can provide” (*ibid.*, 447).



cross and that his side has been pierced (John 19:31-37).<sup>34</sup> Candida Moss argues that the presentation of the marks of the crucifixion is a more powerful proof of Jesus' identity than a recognition of his voice.<sup>35</sup> The marks of the nails as scars also prove that Jesus is alive because only living bodies could heal.<sup>36</sup> It is therefore slightly misleading to say that "Thomas is interested in probing the miraculous as such."<sup>37</sup> Thomas is primarily interested in probing Jesus' embodied identity, which involves two senses—the sense of touch and the sense of sight. Both senses are mentioned in Thomas's request as well as in Jesus' invitation to act upon this request, but in a reversed order. In Thomas's request, the sense of sight comes before the sense of touch ("Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side"), while in Jesus' invitation, the sense of touch comes first ("Put your finger here and see my hands, and put your hand and place [it] into my side").<sup>38</sup> The actual touch—putting a finger into the mark of the nails and placing a hand into Jesus' side—is not narrated; rather, the emphasis falls on Thomas's visual experience, as Jesus' response indicates (ὄτι ἑώρακάς με πεπίστευκας),<sup>39</sup> prompting him to confess that Jesus is his Lord and his God. The entire scene shows to the audience that the testimony of the first generation of Jesus' followers is trustworthy because they declare what they have heard, what they have seen with their eyes, and what they have looked at and touched with their hands (1 John 1:1). This account does not involve an opposition between seeing and believing. Rather, it shows that seeing and believing are mutually interdependent. "Although seeing is not believing, there is no believing without seeing, that is, without somebody's having seen."<sup>40</sup>

Finally, the concluding beatitude, "Blessed [are] those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29), functions not as a reproach of "doubting Thomas" but as a promise to the future believers who will have to rely on the testimony of the first generation of Jesus' followers. They are thereby brought into the scene and compared to those who have been privileged to see and touch Jesus. By pronouncing them blessed, Jesus declares, as Jörg Frey puts it, that "their situation in the subsequent post-Easter period is by no means less favorable than the situation of the first witnesses,

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<sup>34</sup> According to the Johannine narrative, the beloved disciple is the only male disciple that witnessed the piercing of Jesus' side. Thus, within the narrative plot, he is the only person for whom the pierced side could function as a sign of Jesus' identity. Charlesworth, *The Beloved Disciple*, 231, perceptively asks, "How does he [Thomas] know about the wound in Jesus' side? Is it not odd that Thomas never meets and talks with the Beloved Disciple who alone could have informed him. ... The most viable explanation is to assume that Thomas had witnessed this aspect of the crucifixion, which is described in chapter 19." From these observations Charlesworth draws the conclusion that "Thomas could have been present as the Beloved Disciple" (*ibid.*, 232). Smith, *John*, 383, notes that "the specificity of the request to examine the side as well as the hands of Jesus is actually the strongest link in Charlesworth's argument (1995) that Thomas is the Beloved Disciple, that is, if one takes the integrity of the narrative seriously."

<sup>35</sup> Candida R. Moss, "The Marks of the Nails: Scars, Wounds and the Resurrection of Jesus in John," *EC* 8 (2017): 58.

<sup>36</sup> Moss, "The Marks of the Nails," 63–5.

<sup>37</sup> Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2:1045.

<sup>38</sup> Pace Schneiders, "Touching the Risen Jesus," 168, who alleges that ἴδε functions as a revelatory formula, as elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel, and then concludes that Jesus' "invitation is to see physically but to grasp what cannot be seen with the eyes of flesh." In John 20:27, ἴδε does not function as an interjection, that is, "revelatory formula," that is used elsewhere in John when that which is observed/revealed is in the nominative, but as a second-person singular imperative that requires the direct object in the accusative; cf. Lidija Novakovic, *John 11-21: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, BHGNT (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2020), 307.

<sup>39</sup> The Greek clause in John 20:29a could be understood either as a question ("Because you have seen me, have you believed?") or as a statement ("Because you have seen me, you have believed"); cf. Novakovic, *John 11-21*, 308.

<sup>40</sup> Smith, *John*, 384.



even though Christ can no longer be directly seen (16.10, 17) and physically touched by them.”<sup>41</sup> In this way, the scene that started with Thomas’s request for Jesus’ bodily presence ends with the acknowledgment of Jesus’ permanent absence, which is portrayed as a blessed state because it involves faith that is not based on seeing.

### 3. MARY AND THOMAS: A COMPARISON

Does the Fourth Evangelist invite a comparison between Mary Magdalene and Thomas? According to Raymond Brown, he does not.

The basis of much of the difficulty lies in the comparison that many commentators have made between Jesus’ instruction to Magdalene (often translated, “Don’t touch me”) and his later invitation to Thomas to touch him. It is our conviction that the two attitudes of Jesus have nothing to do with one another and that the evangelist intended no comparison between them, as if Thomas were being invited to do what had been refused to Magdalene. It is the commentators who have created the contrast by speaking as if Thomas was invited to “touch” Jesus; the verb “to touch” used in the instruction to Magdalene does not appear in the Thomas episode. Jesus told Magdalene not to cling to him; he invited Thomas to probe his wounds—what is there in common between the two actions?<sup>42</sup>

Brown’s critique of contrived comparisons between Mary Magdalene and Thomas is certainly well-taken, but his contention that the absence of the verb ἅπτω in the Thomas episode prevents a fruitful comparison of Mary’s and Thomas’s conducts is far-fetched. Placing a finger on a scar involves coming into physical contact with—that is, touching—someone’s body. Likewise, clinging to or holding someone involves a physical contact with that person. I therefore suggest that a comparison between Mary Magdalene and Thomas is not only possible but also instructive.

The preceding analysis shows that, on the one hand, Mary and Thomas do not engage in the same type of physical contact with the risen Jesus and, on the other hand, their actions have different functions. Mary was holding Jesus back or clinging on to him and thus hampering his movement toward the Father. Thomas wanted to touch the marks of the crucifixion on Jesus’ hands and side to verify his identity and thus get certainty that the Crucified One has been really raised from the dead. While establishing the continuity between the pre-Easter and post-Easter Jesus plays a significant role in the account about Mary’s experience, her recognition of the risen Jesus does not occur through touch. Nor does she seek to verify Jesus’ identity. Rather, her identification of the risen Jesus is presented as a consequence of Jesus’ initiative—when he called her by her name. Did, then, Jesus allow Thomas to do what he refused to Mary? The answer must be a resounding no because the identification of Jesus, which Thomas sought to accomplish through his action, was not the purpose of Mary’s holding on to Jesus.

Yet at the same time, there is a theological motif discernible in both episodes, which brings them together despite the aforementioned differences. Each account starts with Jesus’ post-resurrection

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<sup>41</sup>Frey, *The Glory of the Crucified One*, 232. See also Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 574–5. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2:1049, speaks of “a contrast between two situations: the situation of seeing Jesus and that of not seeing Jesus.”

<sup>42</sup>Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2:1011.

bodily presence and ends with an emphasis on Jesus' bodily absence. The risen Jesus meets Mary Magdalene only to tell her that he is ascending to the Father. Her holding on to him is objectionable not only because it interferes with his upward movement but also because it conveys an erroneous understanding of Jesus' post-resurrection abode, which will now be with the Father rather than with his followers on earth. Correspondingly, the Thomas episode closes with Jesus' blessing upon those who will come to believe that he has been raised from the dead without having seen him alive. In this way, the risen Jesus indicates that the post-Easter period will be marked by his permanent absence, which will nonetheless be spiritually rewarding because it will require faith that is not based on sight.

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# Who Is My Brother? A Study of the Term ἀδελφὸς in the Acts of the Apostles

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The question “Who is my brother?” takes on particular meaning in light of the use of the term ἀδελφὸς by the author of the Acts of the Apostles (hereafter, Luke, for the sake of convenience). This chapter will demonstrate, by identifying the ethnic and/or religious affiliation of the referent(s) in each occurrence, that Luke uses this kinship term consistently throughout the first fourteen chapters of the book to lead up to a significant change in its application in ch. 15. This change parallels Luke’s narrative of the dramatic expansion of the church from the original Jewish followers of Jesus in Jerusalem to the Gentile world. This unexpected growth necessitated a meeting in Jerusalem of the apostles and elders at the Apostolic Council (Acts 15) to decide the Gentile question. There they made a radical and powerful decision to accept the Gentile disciples as kin, without requiring conversion, and extended to them the title of “brethren,” in effect, redefining the family of Abraham. While recent research has dealt with the sociolinguistic use of this term in the Acts of the Apostles, it has yet to recognize Luke’s nuanced use of the term, which is unique among New Testament authors.<sup>1</sup>

Ἀδελφὸς is a kinship term defining horizontal relationships, that is, relationships between people. It can indicate immediate familial relations (“brothers”) or extended community relations, for example, cousins, members of the same team or organization, or members of clans or tribes, for example, the children of Abraham (“brethren”).<sup>2</sup> In Acts, with one definite exception (15:1), it always refers to Jews, whether by birth or conversion, until 15:23, at which point a definite

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On the occasion of the celebration of Professor James Charlesworth’s eightieth birthday, his manifold contributions to the study of Judaism and Christianity in the late Second Temple period, and his furthering of Jewish–Christian dialogue, I am very grateful to be able to present this distillation of my master’s thesis, undertaken at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, but written in Jerusalem in 1984.

<sup>1</sup>See, e.g., Julie A. Snyder, *Language and Identity in Ancient Narratives: The Relationship between Speech Patterns and Social Context in the Acts of the Apostles, Acts of John, and Acts of Philip*, WUNT 2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).

<sup>2</sup>The two English plurals of brother distinguish between immediate relatives (sons of the same parents) who are “brothers” and larger groups who recognize each other as kindred and are deemed “brethren.” Though Greek has but one word for brother (ἀδελφὸς), context makes relationship clear. This chapter will use the traditional English plurals to distinguish between immediate relations and broader kinship groups based on context and internal indicators in Acts.

change in its use occurs. From that point on, following the decision of the Apostolic Council to admit Gentiles into the community of the followers of Jesus the Messiah, brother is used of Gentile disciples, while also continuing to be used of Jews.

In order to make clear the precise use of this term by Luke, a contrast will be made with his use of the term μαθητής (disciple). Μαθητής defines a vertical relationship between persons of higher status and lower status, for example, teacher–student, master–apprentice, rabbi–*talmid*, or messiah/savior–disciple. As such, it allows for two distinct groups of disciples of Jesus to coexist without having to define their relationship to each other. In Acts, it always refers to followers of Jesus, whether Jewish or Gentile, but never to Jews who do not believe in Jesus as Messiah<sup>3</sup> and becomes Luke’s preferred term for the Gentile Christians until the Apostolic Council.

## 2. THE DATA

Ἀδελφός occurs fifty-six times in this book, four times in the singular (Ananias addressing Saul, Acts 9:17, 22:13; James the brother of John, 12:2; the Jerusalem church leaders addressing Paul, 21:20). All other occurrences are in the plural, referring to groups of individuals. Three times it refers to immediate relatives (the brothers of Jesus, 1:14; Joseph’s brothers, 7:13; James the brother of John, 12:2). The remaining fifty-three times it is used of and by individuals who are not immediate relatives, yet who recognize each other as kindred. Any application of the term to a person who is not an immediate family member, whether in the singular or plural, is of interest to this study. It is from these occurrences that Luke’s particular use of the term, replete with ecclesio-historical and theological implications, may be discerned.

In the pre-Apostolic Council era, the likelihood of Jews addressing Gentiles as brethren was remote in the extreme, for at its core “brother” infers a shared ancestor, which for the Jews was Abraham.<sup>4</sup> Luke’s use of this term likely reflects the cultural and social norms of the period before the integration of Jewish and Gentile Christians as a joint religious group. The change in use following the Apostolic Council demarcates a pivotal transition in group definition, paving the way to the broader use of brethren to refer to all Christians, a usage that became normative. The decision of the Council and the articulation of its parameters were conveyed in a letter, which, from its opening words (“The brethren, both the apostles and the elders, to the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting,” Acts 15:23), reflected immediately the elevation in status of the Gentile Christians to family members by their now Jewish brethren.

An examination of the use of ἀδελφός in the Acts of the Apostles can be divided into four sections: Acts 1–9 (the Jewish-Christians in Jerusalem-Judea-Samaria); Acts 10:1–14:27 (the emergence of the Gentile disciples in Caesarea Maritima, Antioch, Cyprus, Pamphilia, Pisidia, Lycaonia); Acts 14:28–15:29 (the Apostolic Council), and Acts 15:30–28:31 (Jerusalem, Syria, Asia, Macedonia, Achaia, Rome), with 15:23 marking the pivotal transition in its use.

It is clear from the narrative that Luke presents Cornelius and his household as the first Gentiles to become disciples of Jesus (Acts 10:45; 11:1, 18; 15:7). The multiple retellings of this event

<sup>3</sup> A vertical outline of all the occurrences in Acts of ἀδελφός and μαθητής appears in Appendix 11.1 in order that the reader may see at a glance Luke’s pattern of use of these terms.

<sup>4</sup> See the section on “Comparative Use of ἀδελφός” below.



in Acts 10 and 11 highlight its importance, its unexpectedness, and how it ultimately impacted the composition and identity of the group of disciples.<sup>5</sup> Since Cornelius and his household are emphatically marked as the first Gentiles to believe, the first opportunity for the narrative to address or describe a Gentile Christian as a brother begins only from Acts 10 on. In the purview of Luke, then, all the individuals who come to faith in Jesus before Cornelius's conversion are part of the greater family of Abraham (including the Samaritans and Ethiopian eunuch of chap. 8). It is important to note that from Acts 10–14, when the opportunity to label Gentile Christians as brethren actually exists, Luke refrains from doing so. Rather, he calls them disciples.

### 3. Ἀδελφός AND μαθητής IN ACTS 1–9

<i>Acts Reference</i>	<i>Immediate Relatives</i>	<i>Extended Kinship: Narrative</i>	<i>Extended Kinship: Direct Address</i>	<i>ἀδελφός Brethren</i>	<i>μαθητής Disciples</i>
1:14	Jesus' brothers			JC	
1:15		Post-ascension community in Jerusalem		JC	
1:16			Peter to the 120	JC to JC	
2:29			Peter to int'l Jewish audience at Pentecost	JC to J	
2:37			Audience to apostles	J to JC	
3:17			Peter to audience at Temple	JC to J	
3:22		Deut 18:15		J	
6:1		Hebrew and Hellenist Jewish-Christians			JC
6:2		Same as 6:1			JC
6:3			Peter to the disciples (6:1)	JC to JC	
6:7		Same as 6:1			JC
7:2			Stephen to the Jewish leaders	JC to J	
7:13	Joseph's brothers			J	
7:23		Israelites		J	
7:25		Israelites		J	
7:26		Israelites		J	
7:37		Deut 18:15		J	
9:1		Saul opposes Jesus' disciples			JC
9:10		Ananias in Damascus			JC

<sup>5</sup>The entire incident is recounted twice with Cornelius's vision receiving three retellings, and Peter's vision, two.

<i>Acts Reference</i>	<i>Immediate Relatives</i>	<i>Extended Kinship: Narrative</i>	<i>Extended Kinship: Direct Address</i>	<i>ἀδελφός Brethren</i>	<i>μαθητής Disciples</i>
9:17			Ananias to Saul	JC to JC	
9:19		Jesus' disciples in Damascus			JC
9:25		Damascus disciples aid Saul's escape			JC
9:26		Jewish-Christians in Jerusalem			JC
9:26		Paul			JC
9:30		Jerusalem Christians aid Saul's escape		JC	
9:36		Tabitha			JC
9:38		Disciples in Joppa			JC

Ἀδελφός is used sixteen times in Acts 1–9, in each case referring only to Jews. It twice refers to immediate family members (Jesus' brothers, 1:14; Joseph's brothers, 7:13). Five times it is used of the Israelite ancestors of the Jews, twice in quotations from the Old Testament (3:22 and 7:37, both quoting Deut 18:15), and three times in Stephen's speech referring to events in Israel's history (7:23, 25, 26). Twice it is used of the Jewish followers of Jesus (the post-ascension community of "120" in 1:15, and the Jerusalem Jewish-Christian community who aided Saul's escape in 9:30).<sup>6</sup>

Of greater interest is its use in direct speech where social relations are revealed. Ἀδελφός is used seven times in the vocative in chs. 1–9 and provides examples of the three critical relational uses: a Jewish-Christian addressing Jews who are not followers of Jesus (2:29; 3:17; 7:2), Jews addressing Jewish-Christians (2:37), and Jewish-Christians addressing Jewish-Christians (1:16; 6:3, 9:17).

In every case, those addressed are Jews, whether by birth or conversion, and their attitude toward Jesus is irrelevant to Jewish status. Descent from their shared ancestor Abraham makes them brethren. The interchange between Peter and the audience at Pentecost, as the first conversation between the Jewish followers of Jesus and the broader Jewish community, is especially valuable, as they each freely address the other as "brethren." On the basis of Acts 2:5–11, one might ask, "But are there not any Gentiles included in the audience?" Indeed, Luke creates an illusion of universality by providing a list of the international audience gathered at the feast in this passage.

Now *there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews*, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. And they were amazed and wondered, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, *both Jews and proselytes*, Cretans and Arabians, we hear

<sup>6</sup>In the charts and Appendix 11.1, "J" indicates Jews who are not followers of Jesus, "JC" indicates Jews who are followers of Jesus (Jewish-Christians), "G" indicates Gentile followers of Jesus (Gentile Christians), and "J-G" indicates mixed groups of Jewish and Gentile Christians.

them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God. (Acts 2:5–11 RSV 2d ed.; author’s emphasis)

While it seems as though the known world is represented in this list and thus present in Jerusalem at Pentecost, twice Luke explicitly delimits the group to Jews (vv. 5, 10). This sleight of hand continues, in a broad stroke, the theme of the universality of salvation begun in his Gospel (e.g., Luke 2:29–32; 24:46–48), but in the detail maintains Luke’s narrative purpose to define the brethren as Jews until after the Apostolic Council. As Peter’s speech progresses, this specificity is reflected in the interchangeability of the addressees: ἄνδρες Ἰουδαῖοι (v. 14), ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλῖται (v. 22),<sup>7</sup> ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί (v. 29),<sup>8</sup> essentially, “Jews,” “Israelites,” “Brethren.”

Acts 6:1 presents the first uses of μαθητῆς in the context of the growing community of Jewish followers of Jesus, both local (τοὺς Ἑβραίους) and international (τῶν Ἑλληνιστῶν). This mixed group of Jewish disciples, divided along linguistic, exegetical, and halakic grounds, forms the “body of disciples” (6:2) and is addressed collectively as brethren (6:3). Included among them are both Jews and converts as the list of deacons appointed in Acts 6:5 includes one Nicolaus who is “a proselyte of Antioch.”<sup>9</sup>

The final use of ἀδελφός in Acts 1–9 is when Ananias addresses Saul as Σαοὺλ ἀδελφέ in ch. 9. Ananias is a member of the community of Jewish-Christian disciples at Damascus (9:10, 19, 25), the community that Saul has set out to arrest (9:1–2). Although the designation of μαθητῆς does not specify religious or ethnic identity, the context clearly points to Ananias as a *Jewish-Christian*: his name (אנניאס); his idiomatic Hebrew response to the vision “Here I am, Lord” (הנה אנכי 9:10, cf. 1 Sam 3:4, 6, 8); and his recognition of the authority given to Saul by the chief priests (and his resultant fear of Saul; 9:13–14). Most importantly, the fact that Luke has not yet introduced the mission to the Gentiles and hence, presumably, all the believers addressed or using the term ἀδελφός are thus Jewish, would indicate that Ananias, a Jewish believer in Christ, addresses Saul, a fellow Jew and now a fellow Christian, as “brother.”<sup>10</sup>

The eight occurrences of μαθητῆς in ch. 9 (vv. 1, 10, 19, 25, 26 *bis*, 36, 38), spread among several communities (Jerusalem, Damascus, Joppa), create a feeling of movement and growth among the Jewish disciples of Jesus and prepare for the expansion of the disciples in ch. 10 to include Gentiles, beginning with the God-fearer Cornelius and his household at Caesarea Maritima.

<sup>7</sup> “Men of Israel” or “Israelites” (Ἰσραηλῖται) as opposed to “Jews” (Ἰουδαῖοι; now often translated “Judeans”) emphasizes the religious identity of the referent, cf. H. G. Kuhn, “Ἰουδαῖος,” *TDNT* 3:360–2.

<sup>8</sup> Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί occurs thirteen times in the vocative in Acts (1:16; 2:29, 37; 7:2; 13:15, 26, 38; 15:7, 13; 22:1; 23:1, 6; 28:17). E. Haenchen dubs it a “compound Greek-OT expression”; E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 159. It corresponds to אַחֵיךְ in rabbinic literature; cf. H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash* (Munich: Beck, 1924), 2:765–6 and H. F. von Soden, “ἀδελφός,” *TDNT* 1:145. In Acts the phrase is only used by Jews speaking to Jews. It occurs in later Christian literature in *1 Clem.* 14:1; 37:1; 43:4; 62:1.

<sup>9</sup> That “Hellenists” refers to Greek-speaking Jews while “Hebrews” refers to Hebrew- or Aramaic-speaking Jews is generally held; cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, 260 n.3; or L. T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra Pagina 5 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006), 105, among many others. Significant to our discussion is only that the individuals were *Jewish* followers of Christ—regardless of their mother language or theological or halakic differences. On such differences, see, e.g., R. E. Brown, “Not Jewish Christianity and Gentile Christianity but Types of Jewish/Gentile Christianity,” *CBQ* 45 (1983): 75; and R. Brown and J. P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 6–7 and 34 n.79.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. also Acts 22:12, Paul’s later description of Ananias: “And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there.”

#### 4. Ἀδελφὸς AND μαθητῆς IN ACTS 10–14

Acts Reference	<i>Immediate Relatives</i>	<i>Extended Kinship: Narrative</i>	<i>Extended Kinship: Direct Address</i>	<i>ἀδελφὸς Brethren</i>	<i>μαθητῆς Disciples</i>
10:23		Six brethren from Joppa (cf. 10:45, 11:12)		JC	
11:1		Apostles and community in Judea		JC	
11:12		Same as 10:23		JC	
11:26		Syrian Antioch community			J-G
11:29		Syrian Antioch community			“Christians” J-G
11:29		Apostles and community in Judea		JC	
12:2	James brother of John			JC	
12:17		Jerusalem community leadership		JC	
13:15			Pisidian Antioch synagogue leaders to Paul	J to JC	
13:26			Paul to synagogue audience	JC to J	
13:38			Paul to synagogue audience	JC to J	
13:52		Iconium disciples			J-G
14:2		Paul and Barnabas		JC	
14:20		Lystra disciples			J-G
14:21		Derbe disciples			J-G
14:22		Lystra, Antioch, Iconium			J-G

Ἀδελφὸς is used ten times in chs. 10–14. Once it refers to an immediate relative (James son of Zebedee, brother of John, 12:2). Six times it refers to groups of Jewish-Christian disciples: a single group from Joppa who accompany Peter to Caesarea (10:23 and 11:12), the apostles and Jewish-Christian community in Judea (11:1, 29; 12:17), and Paul and Barnabas (14:2).

Three times it is used in the vocative, all within the synagogue setting in Antioch of Pisidia. In 13:15, the synagogue leaders address Paul and Barnabas as brethren (13:15). Twice in his sermon, Paul likewise addresses the synagogue audience (13:26, 38). In all three cases, the referents are Jewish. In fact, Luke, with precision similar to that used in 2:5–11, makes it a point to distinguish

between Paul's Jewish listeners and any Gentile God-fearers who are present. This is seen in the formal greetings heading two of the three subsections of Paul's speech.

13:15	ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλίται Men of Israel	καὶ οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν and you that fear God
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The opening section of the speech (13:16–25) is a very abridged retelling of Israel's history from God's saving acts in delivering Israel from exile in Egypt, to his selection of David as king and the promise of an heir, to the ministry of John the Baptist and the appearance of Jesus the Savior, the promised descendant of David. Paul visualizes two groups in the synagogue setting, one Jewish ("Men of Israel") and one Gentile ("you that fear God") and acknowledges both of them.

The second section (13:26–37) recounts the events of the immediate past, as Paul presents the *kerygma* of Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection, with biblical proof texts. He begins this section as follows:

13:26	ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, υἱοὶ γένους Ἀβραάμ Brethren, sons of the family of Abraham	καὶ οἱ ἐν ὑμῖν φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν and those among you that fear God
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Here, brethren is clearly in apposition to "sons of the family of Abraham," parallels "Men of Israel" in 13:15, and is distinct from "you that fear God." Again, this greeting acknowledges the bipartite character of Paul's audience comprising Jews and Gentiles.

The final occurrence of ἀδελφοί (13:38) at the close of the sermon (13:38–41) stands alone without an acknowledgment of the God-fearers present. Indeed, as he closes, Paul sharpens the focus of his appeal, with his eyes fixed solely on the Jews present: "Let it be known to you therefore, brethren, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him every one that believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38–39). Though Gentile God-fearers are in attendance at the synagogue, their presence is now peripheral and they are not mentioned in the appeal of vv. 38–41. It is addressed to those who are already living by "the law of Moses." Paul is and will continue to be the apostle to the Gentiles par excellence, giving priority to sharing the gospel with his Jewish brethren first in any new setting.<sup>11</sup>

The remainder of Acts 13–14 provides a series of vignettes describing Paul and Barnabas's missionary activity in the cities of Asia Minor (Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, in addition to Antioch of Pisidia). Within this extended narrative, ἀδελφὸς is used just once, in 14:2, referring to Paul and Barnabas. Luke describes successful evangelization in these cities, among both Jews and Gentiles (14:1), though he and Barnabas are often met with resistance from the local Jewish authorities. Despite having ample opportunity for the first time in the book to designate Gentile Christians as brethren, Luke never once does so, choosing to call them disciples instead (13:52, 14:20, 21, and 22). But the movement is gaining momentum, as Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch, leaving behind a growing number of mixed communities of Jewish and Gentile disciples.

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<sup>11</sup> Paul's well-known modus operandi is amply attested in Acts 13–14, 17–18, 28, and by Paul himself in passages including Rom 1:16 and 1 Cor 9:19–23. Diaspora synagogues provided a fertile meeting place for Jews and God-fearers who, though not full converts (i.e., proselytes), would be acquainted with Jewish scripture, practice, and teaching.

## 5. Ἀδελφὸς AND μαθητῆς USED IN JUXTAPOSITION

Up to this point in Acts, Luke has used ἀδελφὸς exclusively of Jews, whether by birth or conversion, and μαθητῆς exclusively of followers of Christ, whether Jewish or Gentile. A number of occurrences, in which the terms are used in juxtaposition, are extremely helpful in highlighting Luke's intentional use.

Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world; and this took place in the days of Claudius. And the **disciples** determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the **brethren** who lived in Judea; and they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul. (Acts 11:27–30)

The setting is the mixed congregation of Jewish and Gentile Christians in Antioch of Syria. Luke carefully demarcates the Antiochian Christian community as “the disciples.” The fellow-believers to whom they are sending aid—the Jewish followers of Jesus in Judea—are “the brethren.” In describing a gesture that sought to promote unity and solidarity between the Jewish and Gentile branches of the church, one could assume that it would have been quite appropriate to refer to both groups by the same designation, brethren—a designation that would only serve to affirm the close ties of the two groups of believers. But Luke refrains from doing so. It may be that Luke's use of the distinct terms here to describe the two groups intentionally emphasizes their separateness, not their unity.

But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, and stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and went to Iconium. And the **disciples** were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue, and so spoke that a great company believed, both of Jews and of Greeks. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the **brethren**. (Acts 13:52–14:2)

Paul and Barnabas fled Antioch of Pisidia, following a successful period of ministry in Antioch and the surrounding region (13:48–49), due to growing opposition. As Luke notes, they left behind a group of disciples (not brethren) who were “filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.” Paul and Barnabas continued to Iconium, entered the synagogue, and made converts among the Jews and Gentiles in attendance but once again “the brethren” met with opposition. That brethren here speaks of Paul and Barnabas is made clear in v. 4: “But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles,”<sup>12</sup> that is, Paul and Barnabas.

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<sup>12</sup>In addition to these occurrences, the terms are used in close proximity in Acts 6:2–3 and 9:26–30 (both passages in which they refer to the Jewish-Christian community in Jerusalem), 14:28–15:1 (the church at Antioch of Syria), 15:7–10 (at the Apostolic Council), 16:1–2 (regarding Timothy), and 18:27 (Apollon, Ephesus, and Corinth), see below.

## 6. Ἀδελφός AND μαθητής IN ACTS 15:1–29

Acts Reference	<i>Extended Kinship: Narrative</i>	<i>Extended Kinship: Direct Address</i>	<i>ἀδελφός Brethren</i>	<i>μαθητής Disciples</i>
14:28	Syrian Antioch community			J-G
15:1	Gentile disciples at Antioch!		<b>G!</b>	
15:3	Jewish-Christians in Phoenicia and Samaria (8:5, 14; 11:19)		JC	
15:7		Peter to Jerusalem apostles and elders	JC to JC	
15:10	Peter re: Gentile Christians			G
15:13		James to Jerusalem apostles and elders	JC	
15:22	Judas and Silas		JC	
15:23	Jerusalem apostles and elders		JC	
15:23		Gentile Christians of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia	<b>G!</b>	

Ἀδελφός is used seven times in this section, which deals with the events leading up to the Apostolic Council and the Council itself. Five times it refers to Jewish-Christians (three times in the narrative and twice in speeches) and, for the first time, it refers twice to Gentile Christians (once in the narrative; once in direct address). In addition, ἀδελφός and μαθητής are used once again in powerful juxtaposition.

The Apostolic Council is the turning point in Acts in which, to quote Luke Timothy Johnson, “the human Church catches up with Divine initiative and formally declares itself on the side of God’s plan to save ALL humanity” by formally legitimizing the Gentile mission.<sup>13</sup> The parameters of this decision will be elucidated in the letter from the Jerusalem Jewish-Christian leadership to the Gentile Christians (15:23-29), but the pericope begins in Antioch, to which Paul and Barnabas have returned following their ministry in Asia. Acts 14:27-28 serves as the bridge to the pericope.

And when they arrived, they gathered the church together and declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

And they remained no little time with the **disciples**. But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the **brethren**, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, reporting the conversion of the Gentiles, and they gave great joy to all the brethren. (Acts 14:27–15:3)

Individuals from Judea (who we later learn were actually closely associated with the Jerusalem community, 15:24, though not official representatives) came to Antioch and taught the *brethren*(!) that they must be circumcised to be saved. It seems apparent that the Gentile believers at Antioch

<sup>13</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 268.



are being addressed. The assertion by the Jewish-Christian visitors from Judea that circumcision is a prerequisite to salvation, that is, that one must fully convert to Judaism in order to be able to accept Jesus as Messiah and Lord, could logically be directed only to the Gentile members of the Antioch community. For the first time, then, the Gentile disciples are called brethren. This single explicit occurrence of ἀδελφός outside of Luke's previous (and, as will be seen, subsequent) consistent and precise use admittedly poses the greatest challenge to this study.<sup>14</sup>

What reason can be given for the change? Has Luke "slipped" into the common Christian vernacular in which all fellow-disciples were called brethren? Such lack of care and precision at a moment of intense importance would be very uncharacteristic of Luke.

Perhaps brethren actually refers to Paul and Barnabas and the Jewish leadership of the congregation<sup>15</sup> to whom the teaching was being submitted and whose responsibility it would be to ensure that the Gentile believers were circumcised. In favor of this suggestion is the fact that it is Paul and Barnabas who respond to the challenge in v. 2. However, the use of the second-person plural περιτμηθήτε and δύνασθε would indicate that the Gentile believers are being addressed directly. And Paul and Barnabas, as the leaders of the congregation and the broader mission to the Gentiles, would have responded to the Jewish-Christians from Judea in any case.

Perhaps Luke uses brethren here for dramatic effect, creating a frame within the chapter in which ἀδελφός in 15:1 anticipates the dramatic turning point in its use at 15:23, where the Gentile disciples will, for the first time, officially be called brethren but *without* the requirement of circumcision. Ἀδελφός in 15:1 could then serve to capture the attention of the audience. Since Gentiles had not yet been called brethren in the book, the surprise of calling them so at the beginning of the chapter would have caused the listeners to sit up and take notice of the unfolding drama at the Apostolic Council, especially since their status as disciples had just been reiterated in the preceding verse (Acts 14:28). While the occurrence in 15:1 admittedly remains the single, stark exception to an otherwise clear pattern, the suggestion that ἀδελφός in 15:1 is part of an attention-getting inclusio does grant a degree of coherence and consistency to the passage.<sup>16</sup>

In Acts 15:3, Paul and Barnabas make their way to Jerusalem, visiting the Jewish-Christian communities in Phoenicia and Samaria, reporting the conversion of the Gentiles, and bringing joy to these *brethren* as they go. The Jewish background of the believers in Phoenicia is clear from Acts 11:19: "Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, *speaking the word to none except Jews.*"

But what of the Samaritans who heard the gospel from Philip in Acts 8 whom Luke refrained from calling brethren? The difficult relationship between Jews and Samaritans in the late Second Temple Period is well attested (cf., e.g., John 4:9–10, Matt 10:5).<sup>17</sup> But for Luke's purposes in Acts, it is clear that the Samaritans fall within the larger category of "Jews." Luke purposely divides the

<sup>14</sup> There are no textual variants to 15:1.

<sup>15</sup> The list of leaders at Antioch presented in Acts 13:1 indicates that they are all Jewish-Christians. In addition to Saul and Barnabas, there is one Simeon (whose name is the Greek form of שמעון) from Niger; Manaen (whose name is the Greek form of מנחם), a member of the court of Herod Antipas; and Lucius of Cyrene who is likely one of the Jewish-Christian founders of the church at Antioch, as Acts 11:20 recounts: "But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus."

<sup>16</sup> My thanks are due to Jeff Staley for his suggestion that ἀδελφός in 15:1 has a surprise effect on those listening to the reading of Acts.

<sup>17</sup> Rabbinic attitudes toward the Samaritans were mixed, running the gamut from stark animosity to recognition as fellow (if inferior) Jews; cf. A. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 182–5 and

world into two camps: Abraham’s descendants and Gentiles. His primary criterion for defining each group lies in its relationship to parent Abraham and its adherence to the law, especially in the matter of circumcision, which is the sign of the Abrahamic covenant. The Samaritans, whose descent went back to Abraham, who accepted the five Books of Moses as their *torah*, who observed the feasts and kashrut, and who practiced circumcision, lay outside of the issue at stake in ch. 15—the need for the uncircumcised to be circumcised in order to be saved. On this basis, then, the Samaritans legitimately fall within the category of brethren in Acts.

With the arrival in Jerusalem of Paul, Barnabas, and “some of the others” (15:2),<sup>18</sup> the apostles and elders recognized the importance of the matter and gathered for serious discussion. The conservative Jewish-Christians (identified in 15:5 with those of Pharisaic background in the Jerusalem Church and in 11:2 as “the circumcision party”)<sup>19</sup> considered all Gentiles (indeed, all *uncircumcised* individuals) to be unclean and unacceptable for table fellowship. The issue of table fellowship had already been highlighted in the challenge to Peter following his meeting with Cornelius: “Now the apostles and the brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, ‘Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?’” (Acts 11:1–3).<sup>20</sup>

For the conservative Jewish-Christians in Jerusalem, the solution could only be found in the full conversion of the Gentile Christians: “But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up, and said, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses’” (Acts 15:5).

As the apostles and elders deliberate, the key arguments are made by Peter (15:6–11), Paul and Barnabas (15:12), and James (15:13–21). Peter addresses this esteemed body as ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, reminding them of the conversion of Cornelius and his household under his ministry (the first Gentiles to believe) and how the Holy Spirit was given to them on the basis of faith without regard to their status. But in referring to the Gentile believers in v. 10, he refers to them as disciples, not brethren, yet another pointed juxtaposition of the two terms. Peter knows his audience. He

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citations therein. That Luke in Acts regards the Samaritans as Jews has been affirmed by R. J. Coggins, “The Samaritans and Acts,” *NTStud* 28 (1982): 431–2.

<sup>18</sup> Luke does not mention “the others” by name. Gal 2:1–10, Paul’s account of the Council, would indicate that Titus, a Greek, was one of them. Paul reports that the Council did not compel Titus to be circumcised. The presence of a Gentile believer at the Council may have posed a problem for Luke’s reconstruction of events and narrative purpose and he perhaps intentionally avoids specifying who accompanied Paul and Barnabas. Most scholars feel Acts 15 recounts a historical event, creatively presented by Luke to serve the greater purposes of Luke-Acts. Cf., e.g., Johnson, *Acts*, 258–81. Others feel that it greatly misrepresents what happened and that Gal 2:1–10 is the only reliable source; cf. H. Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament, Vol. II: History and Literature of Early Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1982), 104–6.

<sup>19</sup> ὁ ἕκ περιτομῆς refers in Acts and the Pauline epistles to the most conservative of the Jewish-Christian groups, that group which demanded that the Gentile Christians fully convert to Judaism in order to be part of the church; cf. Acts 10:45; 11:2, 18; Gal 2:12; Col 4:11; Titus 1:10.

<sup>20</sup> The uncleanness of the Gentiles is explained in tractate ‘Abodah Zarah. Jewish contact with Gentiles was prohibited—due to the danger of contamination with idolaters—to the point that even aid to a Gentile woman in labor was forbidden (*‘Abod. Zar.* 2:1). The situation was actually very complex and the rabbis held differing views on the degree to which contact could be made. Proselytes (who corresponded to the גַּר in rabbinic literature) were considered clean since they had fully converted to Judaism while God-fearers, since they were uncircumcised, remained unclean even though they observed a modicum of the law. Cf. “Proselytes,” *EncJud* 13:1182–93 and “Strangers and Gentiles,” *EncJud* 15:419–21 (Jerusalem: Keter, 1972); U. Becker, “Conversion,” *NIDNTT* 1:360; and K. Lake, “Proselytes and God-Fearers,” in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, ed. F. J. Foakes-Jackson and K. Lake (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1966), 74–95.

is speaking to his family, his brethren, to help determine how they might relate to the growing number of Gentile disciples of the Messiah Jesus.

And after there had been much debate, Peter rose and said to them, “**Brethren**, you know that in the early days God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. . . . Now therefore why do you make trial of God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the **disciples** which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?” (Acts 15:7, 10)

Following Peter’s statement on the initial move of God among the Gentiles through his ministry to Cornelius and his household, Paul and Barnabas are given the opportunity to address those present regarding the miracles done through them among the Gentiles (15:12). At the conclusion of their report, James, the brother of the Lord and the ascendant leader of the Jerusalem community, takes the chair, offering the definitive assessment of the situation and his recommendation on what is to be required of the Gentile believers. He addresses those present, the Jerusalem Jewish-Christians and Paul and Barnabas, as brethren (15:13). Having reached a decision on the issue, the Jerusalem community chooses to send Judas and Silas—leading men from among the brethren (15:22)—to visit the congregation at Antioch with a letter delineating the decision of the council.

The letter, recorded in Acts 15:23–29, opens with the standard components of sender, recipient, greeting. But even with just these opening words, the Gentile Christians realize there is very good news within.

Acts 15:23 Οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ἀδελφοὶ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν καὶ Συρίαν καὶ Κιλικίαν ἀδελφοῖς τοῖς ἐξ ἔθνῶν χαίρειω.

Acts 15:23 **The brethren**, both the apostles and the elders, **to the brethren who are of the Gentiles** in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting.

The brethren sending this letter are the Jewish apostles and elders in Jerusalem. But the recipients of the letter, formally addressed as “the brethren,” are clearly noted as Gentiles. For the first time in the book, the uncircumcised Gentile Christians have been directly and officially addressed as brethren by the Jewish disciples of Jesus. In a single sentence, the Gentile disciples have been promoted in rank to a sphere of kinship with the Jewish-Christians previously not theirs. The salutation of the letter alone heralds the positive outcome of the meeting—the acceptance of the Gentiles as more than just coreligionists, as kindred, as family, by the Jewish-Christian community.

In his use of a simple but profound kinship term, Luke has emphasized a dramatic decision on the part of the earliest Christians as to who constitutes the family of Abraham and, thus, the family of God. Paul articulates this radical redefinition succinctly in theological terms in passages like Romans 4, Ephesians 2, and Colossians 1.

## 7. Ἀδελφὸς AND μαθητῆς IN ACTS 15:32–28:31

Acts Reference	<i>Extended Kinship: Narrative</i>	<i>Extended Kinship: Direct Address</i>	ἀδελφὸς Brethren	μαθητῆς Disciples
15:32	Christians at Antioch		J-G	
15:33	Christians at Antioch		J-G	
15:36	Christians in Asia Minor		J-G	

Acts Reference	<i>Extended Kinship: Narrative</i>	<i>Extended Kinship: Direct Address</i>	<i>ἀδελφός Brethren</i>	<i>μαθητής Disciples</i>
15:40	Christians at Antioch		J-G	
16:1	Timothy			J/G
16:2	Christians at Lystra and Iconium		J-G	
16:40	Christians at Lydia's (Philippi)		G	
17:6	Christians at Thessalonica		J-G	
17:10	Christians at Thessalonica		J-G	
17:14	Christians at Beroea		J-G	
18:18	Christians at Corinth		J-G	
18:23	Disciples from Galatia and Phrygia			J-G
18:27	Christians at Ephesus		J-G	
18:27	Disciples at Corinth			J-G
19:1	Disciples at Ephesus			JC
19:9	Disciples at Ephesus			JC
19:30	Disciples at Ephesus			J-G
20:1	Disciples at Ephesus			J-G
20:30	Disciples at Ephesus			J-G
21:4	Disciples at Tyre			J-G
21:7	Christians at Ptolemais		J-G	
21:16	Disciples at Caesarea			J-G
21:16	Mnason an early disciple			JC
21:17	Jewish-Christians at Jerusalem		JC	
21:20		Jerusalem Jewish-Christians to Paul	JC to JC	
22:1		Paul to Jewish audience in Jerusalem	JC to J	
22:5	Paul re: Jews in Damascus		J	
22:13		Ananias to Saul	JC to JC	
23:1		Paul to Sanhedrin	JC to J	
23:5		Paul to Sanhedrin	JC to J	
23:6		Paul to Sanhedrin	JC to J	
28:14	Puteoli Christians		J-G?	
28:15	Roman Christians		J-G	
28:17		Paul to Jewish leaders in Rome	JC to J	
28:21	Roman Jews		J	

As we have seen, Luke's use of ἀδελφός and μαθητής throughout the first fifteen chapters of Acts leading up to the Apostolic Council is precise and consistent, with one exception (15:1). The final proof of Luke's intentional use of ἀδελφός to convey a historical and ecclesiological transition is demonstrated in his subsequent use of the term. If he reverts to the limited application to Jews alone, then its use in 15:23 was merely an epistolary nicety. If, however, he continues to apply it to Gentile disciples after 15:23, then it would be apparent that he purposely refrained from calling them brethren until the council had reached its decision.

Ἀδελφός is used twenty-four times in the second half of Acts, twice in the singular, referring to Paul, and twenty-two times referring to groups. Fourteen times it is used of Gentile Christians (thirteen times of mixed communities of Jewish and Gentile Christians and once of the Gentile Christians at Philippi).<sup>21</sup> Three times it is used of Jewish-Christians (once of the Jerusalem community and twice of Paul). Seven times it is used of Jews who are not followers of Jesus.<sup>22</sup> As previously in the book, Jews address each other as brother regardless of their belief, or lack thereof, in Jesus.

As the data in the chart clearly indicates, Luke unrestrainedly calls the Gentile disciples “brethren” from this point of the book onward, especially in the chapters immediately following the Apostolic Council. Each community in each locality is deemed brethren. The sudden proliferation of references to Gentile Christians as brethren in chs. 15–18 reinforces the contention that in the first fourteen chapters Luke had purposefully refrained from designating them such in order to heighten the impact of the decree by the Apostolic Council. Its use in these chapters, as in the salutation of the letter itself (15:23), provides a verbal emphasis to the joy with which the message of the acceptance of the Gentile Christians by their Jewish-Christian brethren was shared.

Μαθητής is used eleven times in the second half of the book, all referring to followers of Jesus, with a few cases of special note. The first is with regard to the disciple Timothy (Acts 16:1), son of a Jewish mother who was a believer (πιστής) and a Gentile father. Timothy is well respected by the brethren (Acts 16:2, i.e., the Jewish and Gentile Christians at Lystra and Iconium). This juxtaposition of ἀδελφός and μαθητής delicately hints at the irregularity of Timothy’s identity, a follower of Jesus born to a Jewish mother and a Gentile father. Paul circumcises Timothy in order to regularize his identity, showing his loyalty to Judaism and its traditions and thereby providing an anticipatory rebuttal to the charge levied against him in Acts 21:21: “They have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs.”

Acts 18:27 provides another occurrence of ἀδελφός and μαθητής in juxtaposition in the story of Apollos at Ephesus. Here the brethren (Priscilla, Aquila, and other leaders of the church at Ephesus) send a letter of introduction on Apollos’s behalf to the disciples in Achaia (Corinth). These brethren recognized early Apollos’s unique gifting as teacher and apologist (Acts 18:24–26). Perhaps the use of disciple with regard to the Christians at Corinth hints at their need of sound instruction and the role Apollos will play in providing it.

And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the **brethren** encouraged him, and wrote to the **disciples** to receive him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, for he powerfully confuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Christ was Jesus. (Acts 18:27–28)

<sup>21</sup> Chapter 16 makes no explicit indication of the presence of Jewish members in the Christian community at Philippi, though Lydia is a σεβομένη, a Gentile worshipper of God who is familiar with Jewish teaching and customs. The hospitality shown to Paul by the communities of brethren in Puteoli and Rome (Acts 28:14, 15) would indicate that they are Christians and, from what we know of the Roman community from Paul’s epistles, comprise both Jewish and Gentile believers.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Acts 22:1, the audience at the Temple Mount; 22:5, the Jews in Damascus; 23:1, 5, 6, the Sanhedrin; 28:17, 21, the non-Christian Jews in Rome.

The group of disciples at Ephesus in Acts 19:1–7, who know of Jesus and the baptism of John, but not of the Holy Spirit or baptism into Jesus, are called disciples, perhaps because they are clearly in need of proper instruction and a regularization of their identity in Christ through baptism.

Likewise, in Acts 19:9, when Paul leaves the synagogue and moves to the hall of Tyrannus, he takes the disciples with him, the focus of the activity being instruction. In these three cases (18:27; 19:1; 19:9), then, the pedagogic need of the disciples in various locations of ministry in Asia and Europe is highlighted by the use of μαθητής.

## 8. COMPARATIVE USE OF ἀδελφός

At this juncture, a brief look at the use of ἀδελφός in Greek and Jewish literature might be of help in addressing the questions of to whom Luke is writing and for whom the application of the term ἀδελφός to the Gentiles would have had the most impact. Although a detailed examination of the use of the term in Hellenistic literature is beyond the scope of this chapter, a brief review of its use in contemporary and religious literature to designate nonfamilial relationships will help to answer this question.

### 8.1. Ἀδελφός in Classical Literature

Plato (*Menex.* 239a), Philo (*Spec.* 2.79–80), and Josephus (*Ant.* 10.201; 7.371) use the term to designate compatriots. Xenophon uses it of friends (*Anab.* 7.2.25; 38). It is used in the salutations of letters (*P.Par.* 48), as a term of address between individuals of similar rank (OCI 138: 3; 168: 26; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.45; 126), to designate colleagues and associates (*PTeb* 1.12) and fellow members of a college (IG 14: 956). Finally, it is used of members of religious societies (*Vet. Val.* 4.11), including the Mithras cult (*P.Par.* 42.1; cf. *PTaur.* 1.1.20; *P.Par.* 20) and the mystery religions (APF 13: 39, 212).

### 8.2. אח in the Hebrew Bible

In addition to designating physical brothers and kindred, Hebrew אח is used to designate fellow tribesmen and, hence, Israelites (cf. Exod 2:11, 4:18; Num 20:3). It often occurs in apposition to בני ישראל (cf. Lev 25:46; Deut 3:18) and in contrast to נכרי (foreigner, a temporary resident in Israel, Deut 17:15). While Deut 24:14 distinguishes between the אח and the גר (the sojourner in Israel, a permanent, non-Israelite resident in the land), the Israelite is required to treat the גר like a fellow countryman. אח is often used interchangeably with רע (neighbor, e.g., Lev 19:17; 2 Sam 3:8; Jer 9:3; Ps 35:15 and cf. Lev 19:18–19 with Exod 20:16). The LXX translates אח with ἀδελφός and רע with πλησιον; גר is rendered by προσήλυτος.

### 8.3. אח in the Dead Sea Scrolls

In the sectarian literature from Qumran, the members of the community are designated “brothers” (e.g., The Rule of the Community, 1QS vi 10, 22). Brother and neighbor are used interchangeably (e.g., The Damascus Document, CD xx 18) and love for the brother is constantly demanded. However, the term is confined solely to the members of the יחד and is not applied to fellow Jews outside of the community, since the יחד alone constitutes the “true Israel.”

#### 8.4. *πρ* in Rabbinic Literature

The rabbis departed from the Hebrew Bible's use of *πρ*/ἀδελφός and *ער*/πλησίον by distinguishing between the brother and the neighbor, as W. Günther notes:

National and religious community were no longer considered as one as in the OT. Brother was the adherent to Judaism in contrast to the stranger living in the land who did not belong to the people of God. The full proselyte [OT: *גר*] was also a brother. By contrast the neighbor was the inhabitant who was a non-Israelite.<sup>23</sup>

#### 8.5. *Ἀδελφός* in Acts 1–15

As we have seen, Luke uses the term *ἀδελφός* in Acts 1:1–15:22 to designate adherents to Judaism, whether by birth or conversion, and apparently purposely refrains from following the NT application of the term to Gentile Christians (in cases where it would be possible to do so) until Acts 15:23. Since he does not confine the term to a single expression of Judaism, it is unlikely that he is following the Essene use of the term. The use of the term in Greek religious literature does not particularly inform its use in Acts.<sup>24</sup> It does appear, however, that Luke is aware of the use of the term in the Hebrew Bible and, perhaps, the subsequent rabbinic use. He knows that Jews are brethren, that proselytes (who are presumed to be circumcised)<sup>25</sup> are included in the designation, but that God-fearers (who are uncircumcised) fall outside of it.

The conditions associated with the application of the term to the Gentiles in 15:23 shed additional light on its use in Acts. The acceptance of the Gentiles as brethren by the Jerusalem community was not a totally unqualified acceptance. While the Gentile brethren were not required to be circumcised or observe the Sabbaths and feasts, they were required to observe certain dietary/ritual purity laws:

For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from unchastity. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell. (Acts 15:28–29)

These requirements present a tantalizing paradox to the acceptance of the Gentiles as *brethren* by the Jerusalem community. Three of the four stipulations hearken back to Leviticus 17 and 18 where the same prohibitions are given to the *גר*, the stranger in the land, the sojourner in the midst of Israel (i.e., those regarding blood, meat from strangled animals, and unchastity; Lev

<sup>23</sup> Cf. W. Günther, "Brother," *NIDNTT* 1:255, and, e.g., m. Demai 6:8–9.

<sup>24</sup> Cadbury notes regarding the use of *ἀδελφός* in Greek literature:

"It is interesting that a like usage within Gentile religious communities seems to be evidenced by an increasing number of documentary sources. It means that a usage indigenous in Jewish Christianity would seem entirely congenial in the Greek lands as the gospel spread. It is unnecessary to regard it as a Gentile coinage and as, therefore, used anachronistically in the earliest parts of Acts." H. J. Cadbury, "Names for Christians in Acts," in K. Lake and H. J. Cadbury, eds, *The Beginnings of Christianity: The Acts of the Apostles, Vol. V: Additional Notes to the Commentary*. (1933: 379)

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Becker, *NIDNTT* 1:360.



17:10–14; 18:6–18).<sup>26</sup> Since ἄλλοθι was later translated προσήλυτος, it would appear that the decision of the council promoted the Gentile believers to a category similar to that of the proselytes but without the requirement of circumcision. They were deemed “clean” on the basis of their acceptance by God as Peter states at the council: “And he [God] made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:9), not on the basis of circumcision.

Evidently, then, the acceptance of Christ by the Gentiles necessitated the creation of a new category of brother. But what of the concurrent requirements to abstain from idolatry and immorality and to partake only of ritually slaughtered meat? Still underlying this newly created category of clean, uncircumcised Gentile brethren was the practical problem of how to be able to have table fellowship with devout, ritually observant Jewish believers who, though they might be able to accept the Gentile as their brother, observed the laws of *kashrut*. The solution lay in requiring of the Gentile Christians those same things that enabled the ἄλλοθι, the foreigner in the midst of ancient Israel, to live there.

#### 8.6. Ἀδελφός in the New Testament

Brother is freely applied to all members of the Christian community, whether Jewish or Gentile (e.g., 1 Cor 15:58; Phil 4:1; 1 John 3:16; Heb 2:11), as well as to Jews by Jews (e.g., Rom 9:3) in the rest of the New Testament. Jesus redefined who his brethren are—those who hear and do God’s word (Mark 3:31–35 and parallels), and for Paul, Jesus ranks as the “firstborn among many brethren” (Rom 8:29). In the New Testament’s use of ἀδελφός to designate believers in Christ, “There can be no doubt that ... ἀδελφός is one of the religious titles of the people of Israel taken over by the Christian community.”<sup>27</sup> Since the other New Testament documents were composed after the Apostolic Council, we may say that the use of brethren in them is consistent with the use of the term introduced by Luke at Acts 15:23.

## 9. CONCLUSION

This chapter has traced the use of the term ἀδελφός in Acts in an effort to determine the religious and/or ethnic affiliation of the referent. Ἀδελφός is a term that denotes a horizontal relationship between human beings. A parallel examination of the term μαθητής was undertaken. This term, in contrast to ἀδελφός, reflects a vertical relationship between an individual and God. The two studies together suggest the following conclusions:

1. Luke uses the term ἀδελφός in Acts 1:1–15:22 to refer to individuals who are Jews either by birth or conversion. In Acts 1:1–15:22 Luke is following the contemporary Jewish use (which was based on the Hebrew Bible, Septuagint and rabbinic usages).

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, 449. Scholars disagree as to whether these stipulations were actually advanced at the Council, since Paul makes no mention of them in Gal 2:1–10. It has been suggested that they form part of a later pronouncement by James, perhaps communicated by letters carried by emissaries from James, such as the men described in Gal 2:11–14; cf., e.g., H. D. Betz, *Galatians* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1979) and Haenchen, *Acts*, 464–71.

<sup>27</sup> H. von Soden, “ἀδελφός,” *TDNT* 1:145.

2. Although Luke has ample opportunity to designate Gentile Christians as brethren from Acts 11:19 on, but for the definite exception at 15:1, he does not.
3. Instead, the Gentile Christians are most often designated μαθηται, a term that denotes adherence to a particular religious leader or movement and that, in Acts, always refers to Christians, whether Jew or Gentile, and never to non-Christian Jews.
4. Beginning with Acts 15:23, the decision of the Apostolic Council to accept Gentiles into the church without conversion to Judaism, Luke freely designates Gentile Christians as brethren, thereby departing from contemporary Jewish usage.
5. The foregoing suggests that Luke uses the term ἀδελφός in the Acts of the Apostles with a Jewish-Christian audience in mind. The application of the term to the Gentiles from 15:23 on, while good news for the Gentile Christians, would have been heard especially intently by Jewish-Christian ears. Its use would have challenged the Jewish-Christian to reconsider who his “family” was and to broaden its scope to include the Gentile Christians. Luke would imply that while Jewish-Christians were previously willing to acknowledge that the Gentile Christians *as disciples* had a similar, vertical relationship with God as the Jewish believers in Jesus, the acceptance of them *as brethren* opened up the realm of relationship between Jewish and Gentile Christians on a horizontal plane. The old barriers of clean and unclean were removed and the way was opened for the most central type of fellowship to be pursued—the celebration of the Lord’s supper around the table, as long as the food served was kosher. Thus, through the use of the term ἀδελφός, Luke subtly and accurately highlights the dramatic shift in kinship boundaries adopted by the earliest Jewish-Christians at the Apostolic Council and expressed in kingship language: the bold redefinition of the family of Abraham to include the Gentile believers in Christ.

#### APPENDIX 11.1 A Vertical Outline of Every Occurrence of the Terms ἀδελφός (“brother”) and μαθητής (“disciple”) in the Acts of the Apostles

Key: J = Jewish nonbelievers in Jesus, JC = Jewish Christians

G = Gentile believers, J-G = Jewish and Gentile believers, < > = juxtaposition of the two terms

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1:14	Jesus’ brothers— physical relations	JC		
1:15	Post-ascension community in Jerusalem	JC		
1:16	Peter to the 120 in Jerusalem	JC		
2:29	International Jewish audience at Pentecost	J		
2:37	Audience to Peter and the apostles	JC		
3:17	Peter’s audience at the Temple	J		
3:22	Jewish audience of Deut 18:15	J	6:1	Hellenists vs. Hebrews in Jerusalem JC

6:3	The “12” call the disciples “brethren”	JC < >	6:2 6:7	The “12” address the body of disciples Number of disciples increased	JC JC
7:2	Stephen to Jewish leaders	J			
7:13	Joseph to his family—physical relations	J			
7:23	Moses’ “brethren”—“the sons of Israel”	J			
7:25	Moses’ “brethren”—fellow Israelites	J			
7:26	Moses’ “brethren”—fellow Israelites	J			
7:37	Jewish audience of Deut 18:15	J			
			9:1 9:10	Saul opposes disciples Ananias—a disciple at Damascus	JC JC
9:17	Ananias to Saul	JC	9:19 9:25 9:26	Saul with disciples at Damascus Damascus disciples aid Saul’s escape Paul tries to join disciples at Jerusalem	JC JC JC
9:30	Jerusalem believers aid Saul’s escape	JC < >	9:26 9:36 9:38	Jerusalem does not believe Paul is disciple Tabitha at Joppa Disciples at Joppa send for Peter	JC JC JC
10:23	Joppa brethren accompany Peter to Cornelius	JC			
11:1	Apostles and brethren in Judea heard re: Cornelius	JC			
11:12	The six who accompanied Peter to Cornelius	JC			
			11:26	Disciples first called “Christians”	J-G
11:29	Judean brethren to receive aid	JC < >	11:29	Antioch disciples to send aid	J-G
12:2	James brother of John—physical relation	JC			
12:17	Peter: “Tell to James and brethren”	JC			

(continued)

APPENDIX 11.1 A Vertical Outline of Every Occurrence of the Terms ἀδελφός (“brother”) and μαθητής (“disciple”) in the Acts of the Apostles (continued)

13:15	Paul to synagogue leaders—Antioch of Pisidia	J			
13:26	Paul to synagogue audience	J			
13:38	Paul to synagogue audience	J			
14:2	Opposition to Paul and Barnabas	JC < >	13:52 14:20 14:21 14:22	Iconium “disciples” filled with joy Disciples at Lystra Disciples at Derbe Disciples at Lystra, Antioch, Iconium	J-G J-G J-G J-G
15:1	Disciples at Syrian Antioch	G! < >	14:28	Disciples at Syrian Antioch	J-G
15:3	Phoenician and Samaritan brethren	JC			
15:7	Peter to Jerusalem assembly	JC < >	15:10	Peter re: Gentile believers	G
15:13	James to Jerusalem assembly	JC			
15:22	Judas and Silas from among brethren	JC			
15:23	Jerusalem leadership	JC			
15:23	“Brethren among Gentiles at Antioch”	G!			
15:32	Judas and Silas exhort brethren at Antioch	J-G			
15:33	Antioch Brethren commend Judas and Silas	J-G			
15:36	Paul to visit brethren in Asia Minor	J-G			
15:40	Brethren at Antioch commend Paul and Silas	J-G			
16:2	Brethren at Lystra and Iconium re: Timothy	J-G < >	16:1	Timothy	J/G
16:40	Brethren at Lydia’s (Philippi)	J-G			
17:6	Brethren at Thessalonica	J-G			
17:10	Brethren at Thessalonica	J-G			
17:14	Brethren at Beroea	J-G			
18:18	Brethren at Corinth	J-G	18:23	Disciples from Galatia and Phrygia	J-G

18:27	Brethren at Ephesus encourage Apollos	J-G < >	18:27	Brethren write to Achaia disciples	J-G
			19:1	Disciples at Ephesus	JC
			19:9	Disciples at Ephesus	J-G
			19:30	Disciples at Ephesus	J-G
			20:1	Disciples at Ephesus	J-G
			20:30	Future disciples in Asia Minor	J-G
			21:4	Disciples at Tyre	J-G
21:7	Brethren at Ptolemais	J-G	21:16	Disciples at Caesarea	J-G
			21:16	Mnason of Cyprus (probably)	JC
21:17	Brethren at Jerusalem	JC			
21:20	Jerusalem Jewish Christians to Paul	JC			
22:1	Paul to Jewish audience in Jerusalem	J			
22:5	Paul re: Damascus Jews	J			
22:13	Ananias to Saul	JC			
23:1	Paul to Sanhedrin	J			
23:5	Paul to Sanhedrin	J			
23:6	Paul to Sanhedrin	J			
28:14	Paul to brethren in Puteoli	J-G			
28:15	Paul to brethren at Rome	J-G			
28:17	Paul to Roman Jewish leaders	J			
28:21	Roman Jews to Paul	J			

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# How Much of Israel Will Be Saved—a Remnant or All of Israel? A Fresh Look at Romans 9–11

STEPHEN J. PFANN

## 1. THE QUESTIONS

This chapter will look at Paul’s view on the question whether “all” of Israel will be saved or only a “remainder” by studying the relevant passages in Romans 9–11. It will focus on the word “only” that modern translations have added to Isa 10:22, quoted in Rom 9:27, but which is absent in the MT/LXX of the verse.

What does Paul mean in Rom 9:27 when he quotes Isa 10:22 from the Septuagint?

Rom. 9:27 Ἡσαΐας δὲ κράζει ὑπὲρ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ· ἐὰν ἢ ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ ὡς ἡ ἄμμος τῆς θαλάσσης, τὸ ὑπόλειμμα σωθήσεται·

Rom. 9:27 And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: “Even though the number of the sons of Israel will be as the sand of the sea, the remainder will be saved.” (author’s translation)

Isa. 10:22 καὶ ἐὰν γένηται ὁ λαὸς Ἰσραὴλ ὡς ἡ ἄμμος τῆς θαλάσσης, τὸ κατάλειμμα αὐτῶν σωθήσεται

Isa 10:22 For if your people, Israel, will be as the sand of the sea, the remainder of them will be preserved. (author’s translation)

What does Paul mean in Rom 11:26 when he says, “So all Israel will be saved”? Who comprises “all Israel,” bearing in mind the fact that the LXX Greek of the second century BCE had not fully developed a theology around “salvation” other than that God would preserve his people and keep them and their inheritance from harm if they followed his covenant?

Rom. 11:26 καὶ οὕτως πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται

Rom. 11:26 and thus all Israel will be saved



## 2. THE ORIGINAL TEXT OF ISAIAH 10:22

The Hebrew of Isa 10:22 reads:

כִּי אִם־יִהְיֶה עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּחֹל הַיָּם שְׂאָר יָשׁוּב

The transmission and translation of three terms—כִּי אִם, שְׂאָר and יָשׁוּב—deserve particular attention in order to understand the meaning of this verse in its original context, in its later use by Paul, and subsequently by post-Reformation Christianity. In its original context, the verse spoke of the return of the survivors of Israel to God and to his land (cf. Lev 26:40–42) following the Assyrian conquest in the eighth century BCE. כִּי אִם should be read as a positive comparative, “surely, indeed, just as, for if,” rather than a negative, which would be in tension with the promise to Abraham to which it refers (Gen 22:17). שְׂאָר is best translated in its original context as “remainder, rest, (or survivors),” not as “remnant,” which one might more appropriately expect to be a translation of the same word’s diminutive form שְׂאֲרִיָּה.<sup>1</sup> יָשׁוּב means “will return” and conveys two actions in this text. The first is turning to God (v. 21), which leads to the second, the return to their land and inheritance (v. 22). Thus, שְׂאָר יָשׁוּב is best translated, “the rest will return.” In light of this, the verse would function as a Hebraic *qal vehomer* (like the Latin *a fortiori* principle of logic), which is best translated as: “For if your people,<sup>2</sup> Israel, will be as the sand of the sea, [as God has promised, then he will certainly, all the more, ensure that] the rest will return.”

Note that the word “only,” so prominent in all modern translations, is completely lacking in the MT, LXX, and NT quotations of this verse. How did “only,” which has exerted such power on the modern interpretations of this verse and Paul’s use of it, creep into the post-Reformation translations? It first appears in Rom 9:27 in Martin Luther’s German translation of the New Testament (1522) and later in his translation of Isaiah (1534). We might suggest that Luther, disappointed with the lack of response by the Jews of his day to the Gospel, felt such a limitation of the number of Jews who would return was, in fact, appropriate. The word continues to occur in all editions of Luther’s translation until this very day.<sup>3</sup>

Remarkably, no other Bible translations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries followed Luther, not even the Geneva Bible (1598), which perhaps would have been the most likely to do so. Rather, the Geneva Bible, which was translated from the original languages, uses the positive “yet” in italic font to indicate an addition to the text, rather than the limiting “only”: “For though thy people, O Israel, be as the sands of the sea, *yet* a remnant of them shall return.” The original King James version (1611) follows the Geneva Bible, though not using italics for the inserted “yet”: “For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return.”<sup>4</sup> The English

<sup>1</sup> This distinction was preferred already in 1903 by Marcus Jastrow, *Hebrew, Aramaic, English Dictionary* (Brooklyn, NY: P. Shalom, 1967), 2:1509, s.v. שְׂאָר as “Remainder, rest” and שְׂאֲרִיָּה “Remnant.” Regrettably, although Koehler and Baumgartner read שְׂאָר as does Jastrow, they make a sole exception, surely erroneous, for its translation in Isa 10:21 where they read it as “remnant”! Cf. Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann Stamm, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon to the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), s.v. שְׂאָר.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. also Lev 26:40–42: “If you repent of your sins and the sins of your fathers, then I will remember my covenant with Jacob and Isaac and with Abraham, and I will remember the land.”

<sup>3</sup> The Coverdale Bible (1535), likely influenced by the Latin, translated: “For though thy people (o Israel) be as the sonde of the see, yet shal but the remnaunt of them only conuerte vnto him,” as did the Bishop’s Bible (1568): “For though thy people O Israel be as the sande of the sea, yet shal the remnaunt of them conuert vnto him.”

<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note that the NKJV (1982) follows its parent version translation by using “yet.”

Revised Version (1881–5) and the American Standard Version are the last English Bibles to not include “only,” translating Rom 9:27 as follows: “If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that shall be saved.”

The addition of “only” in subsequent modern translations (remembering that it is not found in either the Hebrew or the Greek) can next be traced to the German and French translations of John Nelson Darby and his students (between 1867 and 1890) and their influence upon subsequent translators.<sup>5</sup> It was not until the last decade of the nineteenth century, following Darby’s death, that virtually every new English edition from that time onward included the word “only” in both Isa 10:22 and Rom 9:27. How can we account for such a widespread translation of a word that is not present in the text?

I would suggest that since the end of the nineteenth century the impact of Darby (and subsequently Schofield) on the world of theology and Bible translation was so powerful that the rest of the translators followed suit. Having been informed by Darby’s translation, they did not read and understand the original Hebrew and Greek but let their theological tendencies and eschatological preferences influence their translations.

### 3. WHO COMPRISES “ALL ISRAEL” IN ROMANS 11:26?

Three main possibilities generally are considered when trying to identify the constituents of “all Israel” in Rom 11:26: (1) the physical descendants of Abraham, whether at the moment of Jesus’ return or throughout time, regardless of their belief in Jesus, (2) the “spiritual” Israel made up solely of the Jewish and Gentile followers of Jesus, or (3) a combination of (1) and (2).

Paul is addressing a difficult situation at Rome, from which the Jewish-Christians had been exiled by Claudius in 49 CE.<sup>6</sup> At that time, there were between twenty thousand and thirty thousand Jews in Rome. Scholars agree that the expulsion did not apply to the entire Jewish community but was only partial and was limited mainly to Jews who were followers of one “Chrestus,” a name commonly understood by New Testament scholars to refer to Christ Jesus.<sup>7</sup> Whether these Jewish-Christians were from a single synagogue or part of a larger movement containing many synagogues is debated. However, it is assumed by many scholars that Jews and God-fearers from within the synagogues came to hear about Jesus in a synagogue context.

The expulsion was rescinded upon the death of Claudius when his successor Nero invited the Jewish-Christians to return to Rome. The presence of Prisca and Aquila in Rome at the time of the writing of the Epistle to the Romans is an indication that the edict was nullified and that the members of the Roman Jewish-Christian community had returned (Rom 16:3–4). It is also understood by many scholars that prior to the expulsion, most of Rome’s Christians were connected with the synagogue. Prior to the expulsion, both Jews and Gentile God-fearers kept the Jewish customs such as Sabbath observance and kashrut, though not requiring circumcision of the Gentile Christians. During the period that the Jewish-Christians were expelled from Rome, the zeal of the Gentile

<sup>5</sup>For some unknown reason, unlike his French and German translations, Darby’s English translation of Rom 9:27 does not include the word “only.” He does include the word “only” in Isa 10:22.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Suetonius, *Life of Claudius* 25, “Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he [the Emperor Claudius] expelled them from Rome” (49 CE).

<sup>7</sup>Cf., e.g., Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 147–8, and F. F. Bruce, *Paul, Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 132, and discussions therein.

Christians to preserve these Jewish customs and practices waned. This is reflected in Romans 14 and 15 where Paul addresses the debate over observing the Sabbath versus the Lord's Day and the question of eating non-kosher food versus refraining from it ("eat vegetables"), questions that arose upon the return of the Jewish-Christians and the need to reintegrate the congregation and its practice. In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul addressed both constituencies and endeavored to restore unity with fresh approaches to their problems.

In Romans 9–11 we are faced with the need for Paul to build bridges between these groups whose once congenial relations seemed to be strained. His visit, planned for *ca.* 56/7, follows shortly after the return of the Roman Jewish-Christians from their "exile." Sufficient time had elapsed for the changes in leadership roles and congregational culture to have manifested themselves and caused problems for the returnees in particular.

Paul's letter builds up to this point, confirming in Romans 1–8 the universal appeal of God to all humankind, especially in Romans 8 where the mystical experience of being "in Christ" is emphasized. It is this that is a binding force among all Christians, both Jew and Gentile alike. Paul wants to reaffirm, however, the central role of the Jews in God's purposes. Thus he writes Romans 9–11, not as an afterthought but rather as the climax of the letter. Here, he endeavors to tackle the most difficult problem and mystery facing the early church: the rejection of Jesus by the majority of the Jews, his acceptance by the Gentiles, and the faithfulness of God to his promises.

In these chapters Paul defines the borders between the Jews and Gentiles in God's economy. Although all are beckoned by God to become his children, there remains an important role that Judaism plays in spreading the message of God in Rome and the rest of the world. Paul outright challenges the idea that Judaism now was no longer in itself able to tap into God's salvation. This was falsely perceived because the appearance of Jesus as the Christ was thought by some to replace the age-old Jewish calling and its practices, established many centuries before. On the contrary, he affirms the ongoing value of the unique gifts and privileges of the Jewish people, whom he calls his "brethren."

For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. (Rom 9:3–5)

Paul is challenging the increasing *hubris* of the Gentile leaders within the church in Romans 9–11. In fact he states in Rom 11:29: "For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable" (ἀμεταμέλητα γὰρ τὰ χαρίσματα καὶ ἡ κλησις τοῦ\_θεοῦ). In its original context Paul was applying it exclusively to the role, calling, gifts, and privileges of historic Israel and the Jewish people.

Paul presents the relationship between God and the rest of the world as being carried out through Israel, which is presented as a tree from which the Gentiles may draw nourishment and into which they can be grafted. This metaphor is linked to the promise of God to Abraham and his descendants that they would become a blessing to all nations (Gen 22:18).

#### 4. BUT HOW ARE THE JEWS THAT ARE BLIND SAVED?

Paul also uses this chapter to provide a reason as to why the Jewish people are not so quick to embrace Jesus as the Messiah. They are depicted as being in a temporary blindness that has them

standing aside while the Gentiles are being grafted in. *This blindness is not fatal nor is it permanent.* On the contrary, it is a blindness that allows the Gentiles to find salvation with their own eyes. Because of this Paul must stress that not only are the gifts and the call of God irrevocable but also that all Israel will be saved (but with some exceptions, see below).

Paul’s understanding of the world is, in many ways, rooted in his Pharisaic background, to which he refers and affirms in a number of his epistles (e.g., Phil 3 and 2 Cor 11, and see Luke’s depictions in Acts 23 and 26), and in which he consistently states that he is a Pharisee (Phil 3:5–6) and knowledgeable in particular about the Law.

Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If any other man thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law a Pharisee; as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law blameless. (Phil 3:4–6)

It is in this vein that we need to understand many of Paul’s statements including that “all Israel will be saved.” Our best parallel to that particular statement is found in Mishnah, Tractate Sanhedrin 10:

כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לְהֵם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא

All Israelites have a share in the world to come, as it is said, “Your people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land forever; the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified” (Is. 60:21). (*m. Sanh.* 10.1.A-B)

The phrase “all Israel will be saved” found in Rom 11:26 parallels, or perhaps even draws on, a rabbinic decision that reflects on the same question.<sup>8</sup> Such a decision would be rendered by a group of rabbis who debate and arrive at a final decision *ex cathedra* (seated on the seat of Moses; cf. Matt 23:2–3: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice”). The final decision becomes a *hoq* (statute). To this are attached various contextual stipulations and exceptions, which together are known as *mishpatim*. The *hoq* and the *mishpatim* are binding upon all Jews (cf. Matt 23:3 above).<sup>9</sup>

For rabbinic Judaism, the debate and decision on this very question of whether all Israel would be saved was already enacted and settled by the late first to early second century as recorded in *m. Sanh.* 10. While *m. Sanh.* 10.1.A–B preserves the *hoq*, the *mishpatim* that follow and fill out the rest of the chapter provide the conditions that will preclude an Israelite individual or a family from entering the afterlife. A brief sample of the list of exceptions shows the variety, intensity, and thoroughness of the rabbis’ debate.

<sup>8</sup> Malcolm Lowe, “And All Israel Shall Be Saved (Romans 11:26),” *Inside Israel Newsletter* 14.5 (1993): 3. The author of this article has informed me that the connection was already noticed by Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) in his massive commentary on the New Testament, *Annotaciones in Novum Testamentum*. Grotius began his comments on “All Israel will be saved” with the words “Alludit ad dictum Hebraeorum, omnem Israëlitam partem habiturum in futuro saeculo” (“It alludes to the saying of the Hebrews, every Israelite will have a part in the future age”).

<sup>9</sup> This method of law-making is similar to the process of law-making known from the Sanhedrin of Second Temple Judaism and from the account of the practices of the Essenes from Qumran. The final decision is known as a *din* in Rabbinic Law.

- A. All Israelites have a share in the world to come,
- B. as it is said, Your people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land forever; the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified (Isa 60:21).
- C. And these are the ones who have no portion in the world to come:
- D. (1) He who says, the resurrection of the dead is a teaching which does not derive from the Torah, (2) and the Torah does not come from Heaven; and (3) an Epicurean.
- E. R. Aqiba says, “Also: He who reads in heretical books,
- F. and he who whispers over a wound and says, I will put none of the diseases upon you which I have put on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord who heals you” (Exod 15:26).
- G. Abba Saul says, “Also: he who pronounces the divine Name as it is spelled out.”
- A. Three kings and four ordinary folk have no portion in the world to come.
- B. Three kings: Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh.
- C. R. Judah says, “Manasseh has a portion in the world to come,<sup>10</sup>
- D. since it is said, And he prayed to him and he was entreated of him and heard his supplication and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom”<sup>11</sup> (*m. Sanh.* 10.1C–G, 2.A–D).

The practice of placing a general law or truth/truism before a list of stipulations is not unfamiliar to Paul, who utilizes it, for example, in Galatians 5 where he writes:

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would. *But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law.* (Gal. 5:16–17)

This is followed immediately by the stipulations:

Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. *I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* (Gal. 5:19–21)<sup>12</sup>

Paul can envision a follower of Christ being separated from their eternal inheritance through constant, practiced sin (“works of the flesh”). He, though, like *m. Sanhedrin* in the case of Manasseh, can also envision a restoration from sin or separation (cf. 1 Cor 5:5 and more importantly, Rom 11:23–29) when true repentance has been made.

<sup>10</sup>Rabbi Judah HaNasi, codifier of the Mishnah.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. 2 Chr 33:13: “He prayed to him, and God received his entreaty and heard his supplication and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.” In other words, God heard and accepted Manasseh’s repentance (in spite of the egregious nature of his offenses before God).

<sup>12</sup>A parallel may be drawn between *m. Sanhedrin*’s “Epicurean” and Paul’s “drunkenness and carousing.”

## 5. CONCLUSION

I would suggest the following three conclusions. First, the phrase “only a remnant” has been read in a limiting way for far too long. “Remainder” or “rest” is a better translation of שְׂאֵר and the word “only” does not appear in the Hebrew or Greek texts. Rom 9:26 is better understood as a positive proclamation of God’s faithfulness to keep his promise to Abraham that his seed will be as the sands of the sea and, if so, God will certainly preserve the remainder of Israel.

Second, Paul’s Epistle to the Romans speaks to the delicate situation that arose in Rome upon the return of the Jewish-Christian community following their expulsion by Claudius. A shift in power roles and practices led to tension, resentment, and judgmental attitudes. Paul seeks to help restore unity with a vision of Israel as a single tree comprised of Jews and into which Gentile believers are grafted through Jesus the Messiah.

But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the rich root of the olive tree, do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember that it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you. You will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand only through faith. So do not become proud, but stand in awe. For if God did not spare the natural branches, perhaps he will not spare you. Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness toward you, provided you continue in his kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. And even those of Israel, if they do not persist in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree. (Rom 11:17–24)

In order to avoid presenting the Gentiles as necessary replacements for the Jews cut off from the tree, he presents the rejected Jews as far better candidates for being grafted back into the tree (through repentance and by the power of God, v. 23) than for the Gentiles to ever to have been grafted in through faith alone in Christ.

Third, Paul practices his Pharisaic training and methodology, in which decisions were modified by exceptions and stipulations, within epistles such as Galatians. Furthermore in stating that “all Israel will be saved” he may be reflecting upon discussions already long underway among the rabbis in which Israel’s election is assured but with the recognition that some are not worthy to enter into eternal life as reflected in *m. Sanhedrin* 10.

Thus, the statements of Paul in Rom 9:27 and 11:26 affirm that God’s calling to his people Israel remains permanent. Both passages also affirm that for both Israelites and Gentiles alike turning back to God by sincere repentance, like Manasseh’s, is the only way for a grievous, obstinate sinner to be restored.

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## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

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# Jesus Tradition, Christian Creeds, and the New Testament Canon

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Emerging Christianity initially had to deal with several important issues such as Jewish opposition to their message and their own identity,<sup>1</sup> but the most important issue had to do with agreeing on the identity of Jesus and what he did that was relevant to those who heard the proclamation about him. Who was he? The disciples of Jesus believed that he had a special relationship with God and that he was the anticipated messianic figure who would free them from the bondage of Rome and usher in God's kingdom (e.g., Acts 1:6). After his death and resurrection, Jesus' disciples began to view his death and resurrection as God's means of bringing forgiveness of sins in his name and hope for the life to come. They also saw the death and resurrection of Jesus as a fulfillment of their Scriptures (1 Cor 15:3–5; Luke 24:26–27, 44–47; Acts 2:23–39). In what follows I will argue that there is a strong connection between the earliest traditions about Jesus' identity, the early creeds of the church, and the church's New Testament (NT) canon.

### 2. JESUS' IDENTITY AND ROLE IN SALVATION

It is clear in the NT that many in the early church acknowledged Jesus' special divine identity. The earliest NT creeds or confessions acknowledge that identity. Jesus' identity as Lord (Rom 10:9), Son of God (Rom 1:3–4), and Messiah or Christ (Luke 24:26; Rom 1:1; and especially in John 1:1–3, 14; 10:11–15, 29–30; 14:1–6; 20:31, *passim*) is regularly included in several early Christian writings and inextricably connected to the early church's proclamation about him. This can be seen in various NT creedal traditions in early Christianity. The earliest creedal formulations about Jesus as Lord can be seen in Rom 10:9, likely the earliest known Christian creed. For Paul, this identity was demonstrated in Jesus' resurrection from the dead (Rom 1:3–4). For him, those who

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I am pleased to contribute this brief study to this volume that honors Jim Charlesworth, my friend and colleague. His many contributions to the rest of us both in noncanonical and canonical writings have enriched all of us who have delved into that field of inquiry. Those who have read my work are familiar with my many references to Jim's work and I can only wish him well as we celebrate his eightieth birthday. I trust that what we all offer here will demonstrate our appreciation for his many foundational volumes and friendship over many years.

<sup>1</sup>I have addressed this matter at length in "Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers," in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith*, ed. C. A. Evans and D. A. Hagner (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 215–52.

were baptized in Jesus' name were aware of his identity as Son of God who was sent from God to bring God's salvation to humanity. This identity was also seen as connected to Jesus' death and resurrection (Rom 6:3–4; Col 2:11–14). Jesus' identity and divine activity on behalf of humanity were connected from the church's beginning (Acts 2:29–36) and is reflected in the early NT creeds (1 Cor 15:3–8). Those who followed Jesus also acknowledged his special relationship with God and his identity and salvation for humanity were inextricably connected to his death and resurrection (Gal 1:1–4; cf. also 1 Cor 2:8; Eph 1:3–14; John 1:1, 14).<sup>2</sup> Although the early hymn in Phil 2:6–11 (cf. 1 Tim 3:16) does not state that Jesus died for the forgiveness of sins, Paul acknowledges that Jesus the Christ died “for our sins” and was raised from the dead or exalted by God (Gal 1:3–4; 1 Cor 15:3–8; cf. Phil 2:6–9). Although the divinity of Jesus was not acknowledged by all of those who followed him, namely the Ebionites and their predecessors who were largely the Jewish-Christian followers of Jesus, the proto-orthodox followers of Jesus exemplified in the teachings of Paul carried the day and expressed Jesus' divine identity.

Long ago Goppelt argued that the message or *kerygma* that identified the early church and its mission was called “the gospel” and that it focused both on the death and resurrection of Jesus that were regularly proclaimed in baptisms (Acts 16:29–34; Rom 6:3–4; cf. also *Did.* 7:1–4) and in the celebration of the Lord's supper (1 Cor 11:23–26). These formulations also included the words of Jesus regarding ethical behavior (1 Cor 7:10; 14:37; 2 Thess 3:6), as well as sacred traditions passed down in the churches (2 Thess 2:15; cf. possibly also 1 Thess 4:1).<sup>3</sup> The significance of Jesus' death is especially seen in summary form in the canonical Gospels in the sharing of the bread and wine in the Eucharist (Mark 14:22–25; Matt 26:26–29; Luke 22:14–20; cf. John 6:48–51).

There are several important early traditions and creedal statements that focus on Jesus' divine identity, his role in salvation, Christian responsibility, and living. These include but are not limited to Matt 16:16; 28:18–20; Mark 12:29–31 (likely also 10:45); John 1:1–3, 12–14; 1:49; 6:68–69; 20:28; Acts 2:22–36; 8:36–37; 16:31; Rom 1:3–4; 4:25; 1 Cor 8:6; 11:2; 11:23–29; 12:3; Eph 1:3–14; Phil 2:6–11; Col 1:12–20; 2:9–15; 2 Thess 2:15; 3:6; 1 Tim 2:6; 3:16; 2 Tim 2:8; 1 Pet 3:18; 1 John 4:2 (cf. also Ign. *Trall.* 9; and Pol., *Phil* 2).<sup>4</sup> The elements of several early church creedal formulations can also be seen in the sermons attributed to Peter and Paul in Acts.

Among the themes in *later* Christian creedal traditions is the regular reference to Jesus' humanity (1 John 4:2) along with his special relationship with God, but the most common and central elements in most of those early creeds are the identity of Jesus and the emphasis on and significance of his death and resurrection. From the end of the first century, most of the creeds of the church began to include an emphasis on the humanity of Jesus, that he was born of a woman, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised from the dead, and will soon also be the judge of humanity. Jesus' humanity is also clear in the canonical Gospels in that he hungered, tired, thirsted, ate, slept, and had parents. There can be no doubt, however, about the considerable diversity in early Christianity, especially

<sup>2</sup>The death of Jesus for sins is not clear in Luke-Acts but only that his death and resurrection were in the plan of God and foretold in the Scriptures (e.g., Luke 24:27, 44; Acts 2:23–32).

<sup>3</sup>L. Goppelt, *Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times. A History of the Christian Church*, trans. R. A. Guelich (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1962; repr. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1970), 152–6.

<sup>4</sup>L. T. Johnson, in his *The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why It Matters* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 2003), 10–11, has observed that several of these texts are similar to and functioned like Israel's *Shema* (Deut 6:4, 5–8).

in the second and third centuries,<sup>5</sup> but it is also nonetheless clear that the earliest surviving credal summaries of the “Gospel” included Jesus’ special relationship with God and the importance of his death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins. As can be seen from the structure and summary elements in these early formulations, they were circulating *orally* from the earliest stages of the church and decades before any NT texts were written.<sup>6</sup>

The NT creeds and traditions predate the NT writings themselves and focus generally on Jesus’ identity, activity, and commands, but mostly on his death and resurrection that was central to the core message of the earliest churches. The affirmations in these creeds and traditions that emerge from the middle to late 30s CE to roughly 60–70 CE reflect the earliest Christian beliefs and practices and focus on Jesus’ ministry and teachings, death and resurrection.

Again, near the end of the first century, Jesus’ humanity began to be doubted by some Christian docetics who claimed that Jesus only appeared to have a human body. As a result, the church leaders began to emphasize his full humanity and this began to be included in early Christian confessions of him (1 John 4:2; Ign. *Trall.* 9:1–2). It was especially seen in his crucifixion under Pontius Pilate. For example, in his *1 Apol.* 61, Justin (*ca.* 150–155 CE) affirms Jesus’ humanity during the confession at baptism as follows: “And in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Spirit, who through the prophets foretold all things about Jesus, he who is illuminated is washed” (*1 Apol.* 61; ANF modified). See also his later *Dialogue with Trypho* 89–98 in which he argued at length that Jesus had to die and be buried.

Later Hippolytus (*ca.* 170–236), in his treatise, *Against the Heresy of Noetus*,<sup>7</sup> when the presbyters condemned Noetus, affirmed Jesus’ humanity saying that he “suffered, and died even as he died, and rose again on the third day, and is at the right hand of the Father” (ANF; cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.20.2). Jesus’ humanity was regularly acknowledged in subsequent confessions of his suffering and crucifixion under Pontius Pilate. See, for example, the *Apostles’ Creed*<sup>8</sup> that combines both the divine and human traits of Jesus by affirming his birth from the virgin Mary<sup>9</sup> but goes

<sup>5</sup> For a careful discussion of these differences in early Christianity, see W. Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1971); and H. Koester, “GNOMAI DIAPHOROI: The Origin and Diversification in the History of Early Christianity,” in *Trajectories through Early Christianity*, ed. J. M. Robinson and H. Koester (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1971), 114–57.

<sup>6</sup> Most of the NT creeds are found in the writings of Paul and most were likely passed along in the churches orally. For example, this can be seen in the structure of 1 Cor 15:3–8 which is easily structured for memory and transmission orally. The balance in this early creed can be seen in the two 3–1 emphases in vv. 3–5 with each line beginning with the usual introduction of a credal statement, “that” (the Greek *hoti* = ὅτι, cf. Rom 10:9). Specifically, observe, “that—Christ died—for our sins—according to the Scriptures” followed by “that he was buried” (= 3 emphases followed by 1). The next line begins “that—he was raised—the third day—according to the Scriptures” followed by “that he appeared to Cephas” (another 3–1 structure). Further, there is a rhythm in the two Greek words for “then” (*eita—epeita*; Greek = εἶτα—ἐπειτα) that introduces the witnesses to the appearances and comes before the listing of the witnesses. Also, the witnesses are listed as one and a group in the first and third listings and as a group or single in vv. 5–8 in the listing of Peter and the twelve, then above five hundred, then James and the rest of the apostles, then Paul. This credal formulation was phrased to make it easy to remember and “handed on” (Greek: *paredoka*—παρέδωκα) in the churches (15:3).

<sup>7</sup> Noetus did not distinguish between the Father and Jesus and even claimed that the Father was born, suffered, and died.

<sup>8</sup> It is first mentioned by name *ca.* 390, but its current form dates from the eighth century and appears to be an expansion of the earlier *Old Roman Creed* (perhaps *ca.* third century and cited in Epiphanius, *Pan.* 72.3) that is more reflective of Western than Eastern Christianity and it was regularly cited and affirmed at Christian baptisms.

<sup>9</sup> Outside of Matthew and Luke, it appears that the earliest reference to the importance of the virgin birth of Jesus is next found in Ignatius (*ca.* 115) who describes Jesus’ virgin birth as an essential ingredient of Christian belief (*Eph.* 7:2; cf. 18:2) and where he specifically mentions “the virginity of Mary [ἡ παρθενία Μαρίας] and her giving birth” (19:1; cf. also *Magn.*

on to state the only historical (human) part of that creed: “He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.” Similarly, the *Nicene Creed*, after affirming Jesus as “one in being” (*homoousios*) with the Father and “for our salvation” states that Jesus “came down and became flesh, becoming human, he suffered, and rose on the third day.”<sup>10</sup> The relationship of Jesus with the Father, his birth in Judea and suffering and death, as well as triumph over death are regular elements in various creedal formulations of early Christianity and are reflective of various NT texts that later became the *Christian Scriptures* that formed the NT biblical canon of early Christianity.

### 3. AN EXPANSION OF THE EARLY CREEDS

By the end of the first century and following, several church fathers began expanding but not changing the core elements of the earlier first-century creeds. Essentially, in their expansions they reinforced the earlier traditions circulating in the churches. Clement of Rome, for example, appears to have begun the argument of apostolic succession when he challenged the Corinthian church’s decision to depose its bishops who had received their teachings from the Apostles. Speaking of the Apostles, he writes:

Our apostles likewise knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be strife over the bishop’s office. For this reason, therefore, having received complete [perfect] foreknowledge, they appointed the leaders mentioned earlier and afterwards they gave the offices a permanent character; that is, if they should die, other approved men should succeed to their ministry. These, therefore, who were appointed by them or later on by other reputable men with the consent of the whole church, and who have ministered to the flock of Christ have been well-spoken of by all—these we consider to be unjustly removed from their ministry. (*1 Clem.* 44:1–4)<sup>11</sup>

Irenaeus drew on Clement of Rome’s argument claiming that the church’s sacred traditions came from the Apostles and were passed on by them to the leaders (bishops) in the churches. He writes:

Suppose there arose a dispute relative to some important question among us. Should we not be obliged to turn to the most ancient Churches with which the apostles had dialogue and learn from them what is certain and clear in regard to the present question? And what should we do if the apostles themselves had not left us writings? Would it not be necessary in that case to follow the course of the tradition that they handed down to those to whom they entrusted the leadership of the Churches? (*Haer.* 3.4.1 adapted from ANF; for a more detailed description of this, see his *Haer.* 3.3.3)

It is difficult to argue against his logic here and it had considerable value in his arguments against so-called heretical writings.<sup>12</sup>

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11). After him, Irenaeus (*ca.* 170–180) and subsequently others included the virgin birth in most of their creeds and core Christian teachings (*Haer.* 1.10.1).

<sup>10</sup>I have made use here of Johnson’s translation in *The Creed*, 54–5.

<sup>11</sup>I have followed here the translation of M. W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 102–5.

<sup>12</sup>See L. M. McDonald, *The New Testament: Its Authority and Canonicity*, vol. 2 of *Formation of the Biblical Canon* (London: T&T Clark, 2017), 68–73.

#### 4. THE RULE OF FAITH

The emergence of “proto-orthodoxy” that both affirmed and also expanded the earlier NT writings and creedal formulations and preceded the later Nicene Creed affirmations is clearly seen in the second- and third-century church fathers. In the following examples, there is faithfulness to the apostolic deposit (the church’s traditions and “rule of faith”) circulating in the churches at that time. Irenaeus, in his *Against Heresies*, says in an authoritative manner, “as the apostle says” (Preface 1), and in citing Jesus’ words in Matt 7:15 in reference to wolves in sheep’s clothing, writes: “against whom the Lord has enjoined us to be on our guard” (Preface 2, ANF). Tertullian, promoting the “rule of faith” (*regula fidei*), urges readers to avoid darkness and seek rather to seek “our own.” That is “only that which can become an object of inquiry without impairing the rule of faith” (*On Prescription Against Heretics* 12, adapted from ANF), and later states: “For whenever it shall be manifest that the true Christian rule and faith shall be, there will likewise be the true Scriptures and expositions thereof, and all the Christian traditions” (ibid., 19, ANF). In his *Against Marcion*, Tertullian speaks against those who subvert “the rule of faith” (3.1; ANF) and clearly identifies this rule of faith with the apostolic deposit passed on in the churches saying that what is to be followed comes from the apostles, such as that which Paul brought to the Galatians to correct them, namely the “rule of faith” (4.5). Finally, Origen refers both to the rule of faith, like Irenaeus and Clement of Rome before him (see relevant texts below), and affirms that the “teaching of the Church, transmitted in orderly succession from the apostles, and remaining in the Churches to the present day, is still preserved, and that alone is to be accepted as truth which differs in no respect from ecclesiastical and apostolical tradition” (*On First Principles*, Preface 2; ANF).

Establishing the core identity of Jesus was essential before there could be a church or broad agreement on the church’s earliest creeds. The creeds were the “rule of faith” (*regula fidei*) and have their roots in the earliest history of the church as we saw above in the NT, but this is also true in the early church fathers in the late first and second centuries. There could not have been a church without some agreement on the core beliefs about Jesus. As we have seen above, his followers agreed that he was in the form of God, took on human form, died on a cross, and was highly exalted (Phil 2:6–11). This affirmation is both the primary explanation for the origin of the church and the church’s NT canon.

The most central authorities of the early followers of Jesus and the subsequent church fathers were the *words of Jesus* that were equivalent to a scriptural status (e.g., Acts 20:35; 1 Cor 7:10; 14:37; 1 Tim 5:18; see also *1 Clem.* 13:1: “especially remembering the words of the Lord” and also 46:7) and the church’s *First Scriptures*, the Jewish Scriptures, whose scope had not yet been fully determined in the first century CE.<sup>13</sup> By the middle of the second century, this also included the apostolic witness, namely if a teaching was in writings or traditions and was believed to be the words of Jesus or to have come from apostles, those traditions were also authoritative in the churches. For example, in Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho* 100.1 he writes: “*it is written in the Gospel*” and a move toward the authority of the Gospels is in *2 Clem.* 8:5 that cites Luke 16:10–12 with the introductory words: “For the Lord says in the Gospel.” See also the author of the *Didache* (8:2) citing the Lord’s prayer in Matt 6:9–13 who introduces it as follows: “as the

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<sup>13</sup>I have addressed this at length in the *Formation of the Biblical Canon*, 1.296–335.

Lord commanded in his gospel.” Before Justin (*ca.* 150), it was the “words of the Lord” in the apostolic writings (the Gospels) that were viewed as scripturally authoritative. Justin is the first *known* early Christian writer to refer to the Gospels in a scriptural manner and refer to reading them alongside of or instead of the “prophets” (Hebrew scriptures) and using the designation “*it is written*” for the Gospels. However, Hippolytus of Rome claimed that Basilides of Alexandria cited Luke, Matthew, and John as Scripture using the usual scriptural designations (see his *Refutation of Heresies* 7.22.4). Also, the author of the *Epistle of Barnabas* 4:14 (*ca.* 135–150)<sup>14</sup> cites the words of Jesus in Matt 22:14 and introduces them with the scriptural designation: “*as it is written* [Greek = ὡς γέγραπται] many called, but few chosen.” It is interesting to note in passing that the pseudonymous writings attributed to the Apostles began to emerge after the middle of the second century when apostolic authority for writings attributed to them became more prominent in the churches. This was a way for pseudonymous authors to have recognized apostolic authority for their teachings.

## 5. THE REGULA FIDEI AND THE NT CANON

Long ago, Chadwick rightly observed: “Whatever differences there might be of race, class or education, they [the early Christians] felt bound together by their focus of loyalty to the person and teaching of Jesus. The pattern of worship derived all its meaning from its references to him.”<sup>15</sup> However, at least by the end of the first century with the Docetic Christians and subsequently the Marcionites and the Gnostic Christians in the second century, Jesus’ identity, the heart of the *regula fidei*, became a hotly contested issue in the churches. That threatened the unity of the Roman Empire and so Emperor Constantine ordered the bishops throughout the empire to gather in Nicea (*ca.* 325) to find a way to have unity on this matter. Considerable, though never complete, agreement was eventually reached during the Council of Nicea deliberations, no doubt in part for political reasons and as a result of Constantine’s urging and insistence. After Nicea and the broad agreement on the identity of Jesus, various lists or catalogues of the church’s New Testament Scriptures began to appear. While differences over the identity of Jesus continued after Nicea, there was greater unity in the churches on the scope of the church’s NT canon, but never complete agreement until centuries later. Nevertheless, the broad agreement on the identity of Jesus made it possible for considerably more agreement on the scope of the NT canon. Broad agreement on the church’s core sacred traditions and creedal formulations made it possible for greater clarity in regard to which books would be included in the church’s NT canon.

Some scholars argue strongly that the second century was essentially the defining period of NT canon formation with only a subsequent “mopping up” or “finalizing” canon activity taking place thereafter. They all depend heavily on a late-second-century dating of the *Muratorian Fragment* (MF).<sup>16</sup> I have argued at length that the MF is a late-fourth-century text both in terms

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<sup>14</sup> Scholars are well aware of the difficulty of dating the *Epistle of Barnabas*. Chapter 16 gives the only clue that could allow a time just after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE or after 135 CE. It is common to date it around 135–150 CE. It was highly valued in the early churches and was included in Codex Sinaiticus.

<sup>15</sup> H. Chadwick, *The Early Church* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), 32.

<sup>16</sup> M. J. Kruger, *The Question of Canon: Challenging the Status Quo in the New Testament Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), and his *Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012); T. Bokedal, *The Formation and Significance of the Christian Biblical Canon: A Study in*



of influence and the way that the “heresies” addressed in it are more reflective of the late fourth century.<sup>17</sup>

Earlier scholars have concluded that Marcion, who edited a collection of ten letters of Paul and the Gospel of Luke, and the Gnostic Christians’ documents prompted the early church fathers to establish a broader and more appropriate collection of the Christian Scriptures. They concluded that by the end of the second century those who responded to these “heretical” threats established the church’s New Testament canon with only minor adjustments to it later. Generally speaking, these scholars, who followed the arguments of Adolf von Harnack, argued that the second-century heresies of Marcion, Gnostic Christians, and Montanists led the church to establish its NT canon.<sup>18</sup> Other scholars contend that the only canon that was widely discussed and debated in the second century was the “canon of faith” (*regula fidei*) and not a scripture canon. The heresies were answered by appeal to the “words of Lord” (Jesus), the church’s core traditions, its First Jewish Scriptures, and various NT texts.<sup>19</sup> The canon of faith that they were defending and seeking to establish on firm grounds can be seen especially in Irenaeus whose summary of the Christian faith is most clearly reflected in the second century. It reads:

The Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith: It believes in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth and the sea and all things that are in them and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations of God, the advents, the birth from a virgin, the passion, the resurrection from the dead, and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord. He also proclaimed through the prophets his future manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father “to gather all things in one,” and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race. [This will take place] in order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord, God, Saviour, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, “every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess” him. And he will execute just judgment towards all sending into everlasting fire “spiritual wickednesses,” and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, together with the ungodly, and unrighteous, and wicked, and profane among men. But he will, in the exercise of his grace, confer immortality on the righteous and holy, and those who have kept his commandments, and have persevered in his love, some from the beginning of their Christian

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*Text, Ritual and Interpretation* (London: T&T Clark, 2014); and S. E. Porter, *How We Got the New Testament: Text, Transmission, Translation*, ASBT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013).

<sup>17</sup> My arguments for a late-fourth- or early-fifth-century dating of the MF are listed in considerable detail in the *Formation of the Biblical Canon*, 2.274–305. I am also indebted to Clare Rothschild’s recent investigation of the Fragmentist in her forthcoming *The Muratorian Fragment*, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck).

<sup>18</sup> A. von Harnack, *The Origin of the New Testament and the Most Important Consequences of the New Creation*, trans. J. R. Wilkinson (New York: Macmillan, 1925); see also H. von Campenhausen, *The Formation of the Christian Bible*, trans. J. A. Baker (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1972); and B. M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

<sup>19</sup> For example, A. C. Sundberg, Jr., “The Bible Canon and the Christian Doctrine of Inspiration,” *Interpretation* 29 (1975): 352–71; and A. C. Sundberg, Jr., “Canon Muratori: A Fourth-Century List,” *HTR* 66 (1973): 1–41; G. M. Hahnemann, *The Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon*, OTM (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); H. Y. Gamble, “The New Testament Canon: Recent Research and the Status Quaestionis,” in *The Canon Debate*, ed. L. M. McDonald and J. A. Sanders (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 267–94; and McDonald, *Formation of the Biblical Canon*.



course, and others from the time of their repentance. He will surround them with everlasting glory. (*Haer.* 1.10.1, ANF adapted; cf. 3.4.2)

The early church fathers did not deal with heresy by establishing a list of NT of Scriptures, but rather by affirming its canon or rule of faith that they believed derived from and is reflected in the earliest apostolic traditions as well as in the teachings of the NT. They affirmed that the apostolic community passed on these sacred traditions to the leadership of the churches. The recognition of these early sacred traditions is summarized in several second-century creeds that formed the foundation for recognizing the later fixed collection of NT Scriptures. I have argued at length that there is no evidence for a second-century *fixed list* of NT Scriptures, that is, a canon of NT Scriptures apart from Irenaeus' fixed four-gospel collection (*Haer.* 3.11.8–9) that was not representative of all churches at that time, as we see in the story of Bishop Serapion at the end of the second century (*Hist. eccl.* 6.12.3–6).<sup>20</sup>

Differences in the surviving catalogues of those scriptures continued for centuries after church councils began deliberating and establishing a canon of the church's Scriptures at the end of the fourth and early fifth centuries (Hippo in 393, Carthage in 397 and 416), but the considerable agreements and overlaps in those canons are rooted in the church's earliest traditions and creeds. However, differences on the identity of Jesus and some of the books that comprise the church's Scriptures continued. For example, *3 Corinthians* continued in the Scripture collections of many Christians for centuries especially for the Armenian Christians who welcomed that text and other so-called noncanonical texts as Scripture well into the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup> For several centuries the so-called Minor NT Epistles (2 Peter, 2–3 John and Jude) as well as Revelation were not welcome or read in the Syrian Churches, but they did welcome for a time not only *3 Corinthians* but also Tatian's *Diatessaron*. There never was universal agreement in the ancient churches on the scope of their Scriptures or the full identity of Jesus, as in the case of Arius of Alexandria (325–336) and his followers. However, there was considerable agreement in a majority of churches on both of these issues.

While some elements in the later creeds are only found infrequently in the NT writings, for example, the virgin birth of Jesus (noted above) is nonetheless in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke and found in Ignatius as an essential part of the Christian proclamation. After Irenaeus the virgin birth was included in most creeds that focused on the identity of Jesus, but again, the core focus of the NT writings still remained Jesus' relationship with God his Father, his humanity, death for sins, and resurrection or exaltation. Jesus' humanity is clearly acknowledged in the NT Gospels as we see in references to his death through the NT. As noted above, the church's response to the denial of Jesus' humanity was noted and subsequently seen in its creeds that regularly included reference to his suffering and crucifixion under Pontius Pilate. By the sixth or seventh century, when the *Apostles' Creed* was finally penned, the humanity of Jesus does not appear to have been a point of significant disagreement any longer in most churches.

The early churches existed before there was a NT Scripture, but they could not have existed without considerable agreement on specific beliefs (their *regula fidei*) about Jesus. The church's teaching about Jesus was present from its beginning (Acts 2:29–36, 42; Rom 10:9–10; 1 Cor 15:3–9;

<sup>20</sup>I discuss the relevance of this particular text in *Formation of the Biblical Canon* 2.67–68.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 124–6 and 239 n.42.

1 Tim 3:16), and it could not have existed as a community of faith without some sense of Jesus' identity, his authority, and an understanding of his death (a stumbling block as we see in 1 Cor 1:23) and resurrection. Despite some growth and development in the later creeds that understandably reflected current issues facing the churches, the early core sacred traditions remained stable and central in the church's subsequent creeds and were also influential in the selection of the books that comprised the NT Scriptures. I should also draw attention to the fact that none of the earliest creeds included a statement about the scope of the church's Scriptures. Establishing a biblical canon was simply not a concern of second-century Christianity. That notion emerges in the third century with Origen, but it is not a major issue in churches until the fourth century.<sup>22</sup> It is difficult to believe that a fixed collection of NT Scriptures could have been adopted by a large number of churches before there was considerable agreement on the identity of Jesus, the significance of his death and resurrection, and his role in forgiveness of sins.

## 6. THE ROLE OF HERESY

The heretical issues the early churches faced in the second century doubtless affected the formation of the church's creeds, but they did not initially lead the churches to establish or form a NT Scripture canon. The creeds formulated in the midst of doctrinal conflicts no doubt eventually affected the final shape of the church's NT canon, even if not initially. Goppelt contends that this was obvious in the second century, but while I have argued at length against that conclusion, he is still generally correct in concluding that "the development of [Christian] tradition, like the development of the canon, took place in the continual struggle against a false Gospel."<sup>23</sup>

Despite the use of several NT writings in the second century and the obvious function of some of those texts as Scripture, they were *generally* not called "Scripture" until the latter half of the second century. That does not detract from their *function* as Scripture earlier. Ancient texts always *function as Scripture before they are called Scripture*. By the end of the second century only some NT writings had received scriptural designations like "as the Scripture says" or "as it is written." Goppelt correctly observes that although some of the NT Epistles were likely read instead of a sermon in the early churches, the term "scripture" was reserved initially only for the church's Old Testament Scriptures until well into the second century.<sup>24</sup> While the NT writers regularly cite and anchor their teachings in the "Scriptures," that designation was almost always reserved for what they later called their "Old Testament" Scriptures and only subsequently the NT Scriptures.<sup>25</sup> The most important exception is the words or teachings of Jesus that had a scriptural function and recognition from the church's beginning (1 Cor 7:10; 14:37; 1 Tim 5:18) noted above.

The authors of the second-century church's creeds often show familiarity with several NT writings, but they do not list them or include them in their creeds.<sup>26</sup> Johnson claims that the

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<sup>22</sup> See McDonald, *Formation of the Biblical Canon*, 2:275–318.

<sup>23</sup> Goppelt, *Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times*, 165.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>25</sup> The exception to this, is, of course, the reference to Paul's letters as "scripture" in 2 Pet 3:16 which, I have argued elsewhere, is a mid-second-century text. See my discussion of this text in *Formation of the Biblical Canon*, 2:259–60.

<sup>26</sup> A useful "Syndogmaticon," or listing of the most important ancient sources or reflections of the key elements in the church's early creedal statements, and dating from the second century CE is J. Pelikan, *Credo: Historical and Theological Guide to Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 542–70.

church's creeds have their origin and parallels in the Jewish *Shema* (Deut 6:4–9),<sup>27</sup> and, as noted above, they clarify the earliest traditions of the church (e.g., Rom 10:9–10; cf. 1 Cor 12:31; and Cor 15:3–8). These traditions are at the heart of the early church beliefs and are found in the NT writings, the Apostolic Fathers, and other second and third century church fathers who constructed the church's emerging creeds in the context of dealing with heresies and establishing the church's sacred teachings and traditions. The churches recognized as Scripture those texts that they believed best reflected their oldest traditions, despite their expansions of those creeds to address later challenges (heresies) facing the churches, as we later see in the Nicene Creed.

Although some scholars argue that the NT canon is more a reflection of the "orthodox" churches after they had received power following the conversion of Constantine, that view does not show awareness of the parallels between the later creedal developments and the earliest church traditions, creeds, and the NT writings, all of which were written long before the conversion of Constantine. Bart Ehrman and David Dungan contend that the NT canon was finally decided by the orthodox Christians after they acquired power, money, and influence in the fourth century following the conversion of Constantine,<sup>28</sup> but their evidence is not convincing and it is more likely that orthodoxy had won the day much earlier because it clearly reflected the earliest church traditions, creeds, and Christian writings that later became its NT Scriptures. That is a more powerful argument than Constantine's fourth-century influence. Irenaeus' argument for proto-orthodoxy is supported by his appeal to apostolic succession in which the apostles passed on to their successors an "apostolic deposit" (core tradition) and subsequently carried the day in the fourth century. Proto-orthodox Christianity was the dominant expression of Christian faith in the fourth century and that faith was rooted in those traditions, creeds, and writings closest to the time of Jesus.

## 7. FINAL OBSERVATIONS

Those who suggest that other expressions of early Christianity were more popular prior to the time of Constantine's influence over the church in the fourth century CE do not show familiarity with the earlier traditions and creeds circulating in churches in the first three centuries. Jenson rightly contends that there is an obvious connection between the creeds of the early church and its eventual NT canon.<sup>29</sup> Von Campenhausen rightly concluded: "The development and advance that takes place in the Church is never such that the origins in Christ and the original faith of the apostles are fundamentally superseded and eliminated." In reference to the significant changes in the history of

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He acknowledges that none of the early creeds or the early church councils resolve the problem of the Apocrypha and it was only finally resolved in the controversy in the confessions of the Reformation (139). I would add that this is also true of the NT canon itself for the early churches well into the fourth century.

<sup>27</sup> Johnson, *The Creed*, 11–30.

<sup>28</sup> See B. D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); and D. L. Dungan, *Constantine's Bible: Politics and the Making of the New Testament* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007).

<sup>29</sup> R. W. Jenson, *Canon and Creed*, Interpretation (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010). I reviewed favorably this volume in the *RBL* (2011) <http://www.bookreviews.org>. While there are some challenges in his arguments, he clearly acknowledges the often-overlooked relationship between creeds and the biblical canon of the church. The NT canon was not a late development that somehow emerged in the fourth century after the church had power, money, and influence.

the church's development, he also claims that for "all Christian Churches, the tradition of the New Testament—understood and interpreted according to its spirit—always remains the standard."<sup>30</sup>

I have argued that the church's core sacred traditions existed decades before the emergence of the New Testament writings and well before the major heresies that affected churches in the second century and later. Generally, those traditions focus more on the identity of Jesus and his relationship with the Father and only briefly and summarily on the Father and the Spirit. The later church councils that addressed the scope of the church's NT canon recognized those books that most clearly reflected the church's earliest traditions and those books that are not contrary to those traditions. Again, unless there was a widely accepted core of teachings about Jesus, it is difficult to see how a NT canon could have existed. It is important to remember that the Council of Nicea in 325 reflected for most churches the identity of Jesus and only after that do the majority of NT canon lists begin to emerge in church councils beginning with Laodicea in 360, Rome in 383, Hippo in 393, and Carthage in 397 and 419. It is also true that the NT writings are not the only early Christian documents that reflect those same sacred traditions that were pivotal in establishing a collection of sacred Christian Scriptures. Clearly, other writings were initially also widely welcomed and read in some churches that later were not included in the NT but nonetheless also reflected the NT and early church sacred traditions and creeds, for example, *1 Clement*, *Shepherd of Hermas*, *Didache*, *Epistle Barnabas*, and others.

There is no doubt that *some* traditions were seldom mentioned in the NT and were likely less known to post-Easter followers of Jesus, for example, the virgin birth and Jesus' descent into "hell" (1 Peter 3:19), but were included in some later canons of faith or creedal formulations. For instance, by the late fourth century, Rufinus, and others after him, included some traditions in the *Roman Creed* that were also included in its well-known successor, the *Apostles' Creed*. Those additional items were no doubt welcomed in some early churches, but not by all despite being included in the later formulation of the orthodox creeds. It has often been observed that the *Apostle's Creed* says very little about Jesus' humanity, except that he was "crucified under Pontius Pilate *for our sins*" (e.g., Rom 5:8; 1 Cor 15:3; Gal 1:4) which is more reflective of Paul's theology, but not clearly stated in the Synoptic Gospels or Acts (except, for example, Jesus giving his life as a ransom for many in Mark 10:45). Broadly speaking, however, the identity of Jesus seen in the NT designations of him and the significance of his death, resurrection, glorification, and relation to God are all prominent in the much later creeds of the church and no doubt this "proto-orthodoxy" played a role in the recognition and acceptance of the writings that later comprised the church's NT canon.

As suggested earlier, the logic or rationale for including all of the books of the NT canon is difficult to establish and it is also difficult to know why some orthodox books were welcomed and others were not. Timothy Lim's discussion of the failure of the ancients leaving a clear set of criteria for the formation of the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible is also true in regard to the NT canon. He concludes that there is no "criterial logic" that clearly identifies the rationale for the literature included in the biblical canon.<sup>31</sup> He chooses instead "family resemblances," that is, "resemblances are shared among the books." It is also true that there are exceptions to the usual criteria employed

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<sup>30</sup>H. von Campenhausen, *Tradition and Life in the Church: Essays and Lectures in Church History* (London: Collins, 1968), 17–18.

<sup>31</sup>T. H. Lim, "An Indicative Definition of the Canon," in *When Texts Are Canonized*, ed. T. H. Lim, BJS 359 (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2017), 1–24, esp. 12–24.

to argue for the NT canon, namely apostolicity, antiquity, orthodoxy, and use, but what the NT books do have in common are family resemblances, namely, they reflect similar early traditions and the NT and later creeds. The later church's NT canon reflects the early church's sacred traditions and creedal formulations seen first in the NT writings and the early church fathers, but they clearly existed before that. There could have been no viable church without them. While there are differences in emphases in the NT canon, at its core there is broad agreement in several of its many affirmations. That core is broadly reflected in the Irenaeus creedal formulations (*ca.* 170–180) included above, which is an early proto-orthodox position that obtained widespread approval well before the conversion of Constantine. Those writings closest to the time of Jesus and his apostles (antiquity) alone are insufficient to account for canonicity, but their primary overlapping emphases, traditions, and message are central to their affirmation and welcome into the NT canon.

Elements of the early Christian and NT traditions, including the creedal statements, are reflected in many writings from the first and second centuries, but all views about Jesus in that period do not reflect the later proto-orthodox views that gained priority in the church long before Constantine. For example, Hal Tausig's *The New New Testament* includes ten other writings that were not later included in the church's NT canon. Those additional writings included in Tausig's "new Bible" simply do not reflect the beliefs of a majority of churches in the second to fourth centuries.<sup>32</sup> No suggested criteria makes completely clear the formation of the NT canon. It is seldom clear why the *Didache*, *1–2 Clement*, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, *Letters of Ignatius*, *Letter of Polycarp*, and possibly others were excluded, or why *2 Peter*, *2–3 John*, *Jude*, and likely others were included.<sup>33</sup> There can be no doubt, however, that those early Christian writings included in the church's biblical canon had continuing relevance for the churches while others that did not were either later excluded or were simply not passed on in the majority of churches (e.g., *1 Clement*, *Didache*, *Epistle of Barnabas*, and *Shepherd of Hermas*). It is also clear that initially few churches possessed all of the NT writings for centuries as we see in the surviving NT manuscripts; only about fifty of the surviving 5,750-plus NT manuscripts contain all of the NT writings and no manuscripts before approximately 1000 CE contain all of the books of the NT and only those books. The early churches did not universally recognize all of their sacred scriptures at the same time. While most churches today welcome all of the NT writings as their NT canon of Scripture, that was not always the case for centuries and variations in the welcomed books varied for many centuries and some issues related to the accepted books continue to be debated to this day. In antiquity few churches possessed all of the sacred texts now included in the church's Bible and one can only wonder what some of their creeds would have looked like if they did.

The earliest Christian traditions and creeds reflect the earliest stages of church development and later those elements greatly influenced the creation and scope of a NT canon, but the boundaries of that canon were not always clear for centuries and it is often unclear why some books were included and others were not. What is clear, however, is the connection between the early church traditions and creeds, especially those reflected in the NT canon, and the books that were finally welcomed into the church's NT.

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<sup>32</sup> For an extended critique of H. Tausig's *A New New Testament*, see R. W. L. Moberley, "Canon and Religious Truth: An Appraisal of *A New New Testament*," in *When Texts are Canonized*, ed. T. H. Lim, BJS 359 (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2017), 108–35.

<sup>33</sup> I have addressed this issue in the *Formation of the Biblical Canon*, 2.325–47.

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PART TWO

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# Greco-Roman and Jewish World



# When Ontology Meets Eschatology: A Platonized Reading of Deuteronomy 28:1–14

GREGORY E. STERLING

One striking aspect of reading the two most expansive Second Temple authors is the relative absence of apocalyptic thought in their writings. Each gives a famous nod to it, but only a nod. In the case of Josephus, the nod comes in the retelling of Daniel in his *magnum opus*;<sup>1</sup> in the case of Philo, the nod comes in the retelling of Deuteronomy in the final treatise of the Exposition of the Law and the parallel in *De vita Moysis*.<sup>2</sup> The reasons why the historian and the philosopher tend to elide apocalyptic thought vary. As a historian Josephus was oriented to the past and reluctant to offer speculation about the future for political and personal reasons. As a Platonizing interpreter of Moses, Philo had a vertical rather than a horizontal orientation and was more preoccupied with ontological than temporal issues. Even so, both make the nod.

How should we understand Philo's nod? By nod I do not mean that Philo was unconcerned about the future of individuals or their immortal souls. He was, and addressed the future of the individual soul on multiple occasions—although even here he is less straightforward than most of us would prefer.<sup>3</sup> What is clear is that he is concerned with the ascent of the soul; the axis is vertical

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It is a privilege to contribute this essay in honor of my friend James H. Charlesworth. All of us in the guild are in his debt for his multiple contributions.

<sup>1</sup>Josephus, *A.J.* 10.276–77. Cf. also 10.280–81; 11.337; 12.322. For a helpful analysis of 10.276–77 see C. T. Begg and P. Spilsbury, *Flavius Josephus Judean Antiquities 8-10*, *FJTC* 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 313–14.

<sup>2</sup>Philo, *Praem.* 79–126 and *Mos.* 1.285–91.

<sup>3</sup>S. Yli-Karjanmaa, *Reincarnation in Philo of Alexandria*, *SPhiloM* 7 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015), has set off a recent debate by arguing that Philo accepted the Platonic understanding of reincarnation. For a critique of his argument see D. T. Runia, “Is Philo Committed to the Doctrine of Reincarnation?” *SPhiloA* 31 (2019): 107–25. For Philo's understanding of the immortality of the soul, see E. R. Goodenough, “Philo on Immortality,” *HTR* 39 (1946): 85–108, who argues that Philo vacillated between personal immortality and absorption into our Source but inclined to the latter; and J. von Ehrenkrook, “The Afterlife in Philo and Josephus,” in *Heaven, Hell, and the Afterlife: Eternity in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, Volume 1: End Time and Afterlife in Judaism*, ed. J. H. Ellens (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2013), 97–118, esp. 100–6.

or ontological not horizontal or temporal. In this contribution we are concerned with Philo's vision of the future of the people of God on a horizontal or temporal axis.

Philo's primary vision of the future occurs in his retelling of the blessings and curses attached to keeping or failing to keep the law. His treatment is part of the Exposition of the Law in which he retold the entire Pentateuch, beginning with creation in *De opificio mundi*.<sup>4</sup> He retold the stories of four ancestors as living embodiments of the law in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph—although the middle two have been lost. The first three represent different ways to cultivate virtue:<sup>5</sup> Abraham through learning, Isaac through nature, and Jacob through practice—a commonplace scheme in Hellenistic philosophy.<sup>6</sup> The exegete next worked systematically through the laws beginning with the Decalogue and then used the Ten Words as headings for other laws in *De specialibus legibus*.<sup>7</sup> His orientation to what we call virtue ethics led him to use virtues as headings for other laws in *De virtutibus*. Finally, he turned to Deuteronomy and Moses's exhortation to keep the law in *De praemiis et poeniis*. He largely passed over the first two speeches (Deut 1:1–43 and 4:44–26:19) since they had already been covered in his treatments of the laws and dealt with the final words of blessings and curses (27:1–28:68), a move that ensured coverage of the entire Pentateuch.

We will examine Philo's treatment of the blessings that begins after a lacuna in the manuscripts in which the end of his treatment of the curses and the opening of his treatment of the blessings are missing.<sup>8</sup> We will examine the biblical bases for his eschatological vision, consider the philosophical bases for it, and finally consider the relationship between the two in our conclusions.

## 1. THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR THE VISION

We begin with the biblical basis. Philo introduced the vision with the statement, “Read first the invocations (εὐχαί) that he is accustomed to call blessings (εὐλογίαι).”<sup>9</sup> This is an echo of Deut 28:2: “all these blessings (πᾶσαι αἱ εὐλογίαι αὐται) will come upon you and will find you if you

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<sup>4</sup>Philo offered his own summary of the Exposition in *Mos.* 2.45–47; *Abr.* 1–6; and *Praem.* 1–3, although the details do not agree. For an analysis, see G. E. Sterling, “‘Prolific in Expression and Broad in Thought’: Internal References to Philo's Allegorical Commentary and Exposition of the Law,” *Euphrosyne* 40 (2012): 55–76, esp. 67–9. M. Niehoff, *Philo: An Intellectual Biography*, ABRL (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), has recently argued that Philo wrote his *Exposition* in Rome. While I agree that it is later than the *Allegorical Commentary*, the place of composition was probably more complex and included Alexandria as well as Rome.

<sup>5</sup>For the ancestors as symbols of virtue in Philo see *Sobr.* 65; *Congr.* 34–38; *Mut.* 12, 88; *Somn.* 1.168; *Abr.* 52–54; *Ios.* 1; *Mos.* 1.76; *Praem.* 24–51, 57–66. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the second triad of virtues in Philo. See G. E. Sterling, “Philo's *De Abrahamo*: Introduction,” *SPhiloA* 20 (2008): 129–31.

<sup>6</sup>E.g., Plato, *Meno* 70a; Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 2.1.1103a; 10.9 1179b. Cf. also Isocrates, *Antid.* 186–8. On the use of this tradition by Philo see E. Birnbaum, “Exegetical Building Blocks in Philo's Interpretation of the Patriarchs,” in *From Judaism to Christianity: Tradition and Transition: A Festschrift for Thomas H. Tobin, S.J., on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. P. Walters, NovTSup 136 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 69–92.

<sup>7</sup>E.g., Philo, *Spec.* 1.1.

<sup>8</sup>Thomas Mangey pointed out the lacuna. On the lacuna see L. Cohn, “Prolegomena,” in *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt*, ed. L. Cohn and P. Wendland, 7 vols. (Berlin: Georg Reiter, 1896–1926), 5, xxviii–xxix; and F. H. Colson in *Philo in Ten Volumes and Two Supplementary Volumes*, ed. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929–62), 8.455.

<sup>9</sup>Philo, *Praem.* 79. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. He used εὐχαί again in §126 (cf. also §84 where it is used for prayers).

genuinely hear the voice of the Lord your God.” In the biblical text, the noun blessing (εὐλογία) is echoed in the blessings that follow<sup>10</sup> along with verbal forms of εὐλογέω.<sup>11</sup> It is clear that Philo is working within the framework of Deut 28:1–14 (Table 14.1).<sup>12</sup>

However, as we will see, he is also aware that other texts in the Pentateuch contain lists of blessings and curses and weaves them into his discussion, primarily Lev 26:3–13 and secondarily Exod 23:23–33.<sup>13</sup> While the ancient Alexandrian did not understand the critical place of blessings and curses at the end of ANE legal codes,<sup>14</sup> he knew the Greek text of the Pentateuch intimately and wove statements from the two other major examples of blessings and curses in the Pentateuch into his retelling of Deut 28:3–13.

I have set the specifics of Philo’s use of the biblical text into a chart for the sake of simplicity. Let me offer a couple of preliminary explanations. In the left column I have listed the headings of the blessings on the basis of the transitional markers that Philo provided. Philo is explicit in listing three primary blessings: victory over enemies or peace, wealth accompanied by progeny and a long life, and the body. He makes the primary character of these three blessings clear through his transitional statements from one blessing to the next.<sup>15</sup> As we noted above, the opening transitional statement has been largely lost in the transmission of the text: we have only a fragment of it (§79). However, the final transitional statement summarizing his treatment of the last blessings (§§118–125) and

<sup>10</sup>Deut 28:8.

<sup>11</sup>The participial form in Deut 28:3ab, 4, 5, 6ab; and the infinitive form in 28:12.

<sup>12</sup>See also D. Lincicum, *Paul and the Early Jewish Encounter with Deuteronomy*, WUNT II/284 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 109–10; *contra* T. H. Tobin, “Philo and the Sibyl: Interpreting Philo’s Eschatology,” *SPhiloA* 9 (1997): 84–103, esp. 96–7. I do agree with Tobin that Leviticus 26 forms the structural framework for the larger discourse since it includes a treatment of restoration that Deuteronomy lacks (Lev 26:40–45//Philo, *Praem.* 163–72).

<sup>13</sup>Cf. also Josh 24:20 for an example outside the Pentateuch.

<sup>14</sup>The Code of Hammurabi provides an excellent illustration:

If that man [king] has heeded my words, which I wrote on my stela, and did not rescind my law, has not distorted my words, did not alter my statutes, may Shamash make that man reign as long as I, the king of justice; may he shepherd his people in justice! If that man did not heed my words which I wrote on my stela, and disregarded my curses, and did not fear the curses of the gods ... may mighty Anum, the father of the gods, who proclaimed my reign, deprive him of the glory of sovereignty, may he break his scepter, may he curse his fate. (reverse xxvi; see *ANET* 1:178–9)

<sup>15</sup>Philo introduced the first blessing with these words: “the first gift you will have is victory over your enemies” (*Praem.* 79). He will later use the word “peace” when reflecting back on this initial blessing (§118). The transition between the first blessing of victory/peace and the second of wealth is in *Praem.* 98, “he says that these are the first blessings that will come to those who follow God and always, and in every place embrace his commandments and bring these into harmony with each part of life so that nothing can change the pattern of life effected by disease. The second is wealth that by necessity follows peace and secure rule.” There is a secondary transitional statement in the form of an objection within the second blessing of wealth (*Praem.* 108), “But someone will say, ‘What profit is there from these things for one who does not leave heirs and successors?’” It would be possible to argue that this is a transition statement marking the shift from the second to the third blessing, but the absence of progeny and long life in the subsequent summary leads me to consider it a secondary transition within the second blessing. It also creates a symmetry in the structure of the first two blessings that both have two major subunits. The transition from the second blessing of wealth accompanied by progeny and long life to the third blessing related to the body is *Praem.* 118:

The external goods have now been discussed: victories over enemies, power in wars, the establishments of peace, the abundance of good things in times of peace, honors, offices, and the encomia that accompany those who are successful, who are praised by everyone mouth—both those of friends and those of opponents, some by fear and others by goodwill. It is necessary to speak about a weightier matter than these, the affairs of the body.

TABLE 14.1 The Biblical Basis for Philo's Vision of the Future

Content	<i>Praem.</i>	<i>LXX</i>
Introduction	79	Deut 28:2
Victory over enemies (Peace)	79–97	Deut 28:7
Introduction to blessings	79–84	
Transition	79	
If you listen	79 <sup>a</sup>	Deut 28:1–2; Lev 26:3
The command is near you	80 <sup>b</sup>	Deut 30:11–14
Thoughts/words/actions	81–84	
A nation that calls on God	84 <sup>c</sup>	Deut 4:7
Beast peace	85–90	<i>Lev 26:6, Isa 11:6–9</i>
Human peace	91–97 <sup>d</sup>	Deut 28:7; Lev 26:6
Humans will follow beasts	91–92	
War will not pass through	93	Lev 26:6
Attackers will flee	94 <sup>e</sup>	Lev 26:7–8; Deut 28:7
A man shall come forth	95 <sup>f</sup>	Num 24:7
Hornets	96–97	Exod 23:28; Deut 7:20
Wealth	98–117	Deut 28:8–14, 3–6
Transition	98	
Wealth		
Food and shelter	99–100	<i>Deut 28:5</i>
Divine promise	101–104	
Season upon season	101–103	Lev 26:3–5; Deut 11:13–14
Barns	104 <sup>g</sup>	Deut 28:8; Lev 26:10
Impiety produces poverty	105	
Oppression at present	106	
Loans to nations	107 <sup>h</sup>	Deut 28:12; 15:6
Abundance in city and field	107	Deut 28:3, 11
Livestock abundant	107	Deut 28:4, 11; 7:13
Progeny and long life	108–117	
Transition	108	
Law of nature for procreation	108–109	Exod 23:26a
Long life	110–112	Exod 23:26b
Blessed in dealings	113–114	Deut 28:6
Restoration of exiles	115–117 <sup>i</sup>	Deut 30:4–5
The body and virtue	118–125	
Transition	118	
Freedom from disease	119	Deut 7:15
The house of the soul	120	
The mind	121–122	
God walks in palace	123 <sup>j</sup>	Lev 26:12
God broke the bonds	124	Lev 26:13
The virtuous as head	125	Deut 28:13
Summary and transition	126	

<sup>a</sup>Cf. also Philo, *Virt.* 47–48, which is a loose paraphrase of Deut 28:1–2, 7 and Lev 26:3, 6–8.

<sup>b</sup>Cf. also Philo, *Post.* 84–88; *Mut.* 236–51; *Somm.* 2.179–80; *Virt.* 183–84; and *Prob.* 80. See below for details.

<sup>c</sup>Cf. also Philo, *Migr.* 56.

<sup>d</sup>Cf. also Philo, *Virt.* 47–48.

<sup>e</sup>Cf. also Philo, *Virt.* 47–48.

<sup>f</sup>Cf. also Philo, *Mos.* 1.285–91, esp. 289–91.

<sup>g</sup>Cf. also Philo, *Sacr.* 79; *Her.* 279.

<sup>h</sup>Cf. also Philo, *Leg.* 3.104; *Deus* 156; *Her.* 76, where he also treats Deut 28:12.

<sup>i</sup>Cf. also Philo, *Conf.* 197–98 (Deut 30:4); *Praem.* 168 (Deut 30:5).

<sup>j</sup>Cf. also Philo, *Sacr.* 87; *Mut.* 266; *Somm.* 1.148; 2.248.

setting up the curses is intact (§126). The use of transitional statements is relatively common in Philo and helps the reader follow the line of argumentation.<sup>16</sup> The basic structure and sequence of the blessings are thus Philonic in design, an important point to which we will return. The summaries of the contents beneath these headings are my attempts to provide a quick indication of the basic contents Philo incorporated within each of the major blessings. I have indented these subunits to reflect their subordinate nature to the primary blessings. The center column has the Philonic references. When Philo cited the same biblical text elsewhere in his writings, I have added a footnote with the reference(s). The absence of a note indicates that he has not cited the biblical text under consideration beyond the summary of the blessings in *Praem.* In the right column I have listed the biblical text from which Philo principally worked first and the parallel(s) second. I have also put texts that may have inspired him but that he does not cite or echo verbally in italics to indicate my tentative judgment about their use.

Several patterns emerge from this evidence. Philo is working principally from Deuteronomy. When there are parallels between Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28 is his base with two exceptions: his description of the flight of the attackers in §94 and his discussion of God's continual blessing of season upon season at §§101–103.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, he appears to have made full use of both Deut 28:1–14 and Lev 26:3–13. The most notable exclusions are the covenant language in Deut 29:9 and Lev 26:9 and 11. This is not a surprise: Philo understood διαθήκη as last will and considered it a divine gift that applies primarily to the soul.<sup>18</sup>

Philo has expanded his treatment of the blessings in Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26 by incorporating blessings from other texts, most notably from the list of blessings in Exodus 23 at the conclusion of the Book of the Covenant<sup>19</sup> and from elsewhere in Deuteronomy. He added

<sup>16</sup>E.g., Philo, *Plant.* 28, 73, 94, 139–40, 150, 156, 165, 173, are transitional statements or explicit markers that set out the basic structure of the treatise. See A. Geljon and D. T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria On Planting: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, PACS 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 10–16, esp. 16.

<sup>17</sup>Tobin, “Philo and the Sibyl,” 84–103, esp. 96–7, emphasized the importance of Leviticus 26 for Philo (see above). He published a second and expanded version of this contribution as “Reconfiguring Eschatological Imagery: The Examples of Philo of Alexandria and Paul of Tarsus,” *SPhiloA* 28 (2016): 351–74.

<sup>18</sup>On the concept of covenant in Philo see E. Birnbaum, *The Place of Judaism in Philo's Thought: Israel, Jews, and Proselytes*, BJS 290/SPhiloM 2 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996), 128–92; M. Vogel, *Das Heil des Bundes: Bundestheologie im Frühjudentum und im Frühen Christentum*, TANZ 18 (Tübingen: A. Francke, 1996), 210–19; L. L. Grabbe, “Did all Jews Think Alike? ‘Covenant’ in Philo and Josephus in the Context of Second Temple Judaic Religion,” in *The Concept of Covenant in the Second Temple Period*, ed. S. E. Porter and J. C. R. de Roo, JSJSup 71 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 251–66; and G. E. Sterling, “Thunderous Silence: The Omission of the Sinai Pericope in Philo of Alexandria,” *JSJ* 49 (2018): 449–74, esp. 462–3.

<sup>19</sup>Exod 20:22–23:19.



two texts from Exodus: the hornets that God would send to fight the enemies of Israel and the promise of progeny and long life.<sup>20</sup> He added four other texts from Deuteronomy: the famous statement that the command is near you,<sup>21</sup> the greatness of the nation that calls on God,<sup>22</sup> the restoration of exiles,<sup>23</sup> and the promise of freedom from disease—a promise that Philo felt compelled to qualify.<sup>24</sup>

There are two other texts that appear to have inspired Philo's comments, although they may have done so through traditions that also appear in the third *Sibylline Oracle*. Both occur in Philo's treatment of the first blessing, peace. Philo opened his discussion by distinguishing between two types of enmity: the enmity that animals have as a result of natural antipathy (§§85–90) and the enmity among humans produced by selfishness (§§91–97). In his discussion of the enmity of animals he proceeded to envision a period when animals that are natural enemies are at peace with virtuous humans. He might be drawing from the statement in Lev 26:6: "I will remove harmful animals from your land." However, the pairing of animals that are naturally enemies makes those familiar with the biblical text think of Isa 11:6–9.<sup>25</sup> Yet Philo makes a different point than the eighth-century prophet. Rather than juxtaposing pairs that are natural enemies living together in peace, Philo listed animals that are aggressive toward humans and suggests that they will be tame. This led Isaac Heinemann to deny that Philo was drawing from Isaiah 11 and to suggest that he had drawn instead from the second or first century BCE *Sibylline Oracle* 3.<sup>26</sup> The strength of Heinemann's suggestion is that *Sib. Or.* 3 includes the statement that "he will make the beasts on earth harmless."<sup>27</sup> The weakness is that the

<sup>20</sup>Exod 23:28 at §§96–97 is one of two references to hornets; the other is Deut 7:20. It is difficult to know which text Philo had in mind or if he simply knew the tradition and did not have a specific reference in mind. I have placed Exodus as the primary reference since he is clearly aware of the blessings in Exodus 23. We know this from his treatment of Exod 23:26 at §§108–112. He also treats Exod 23:26 in *QE* 2.19–20. *QE* 2.19 deals with Exod 23:26a just as *Praem.* 108–109 and *QE* 2.20 analyze Exod 23:26b in parallel with *Praem.* 110–112.

<sup>21</sup>Deut 30:11–14 in Philo, *Praem.* 80. He also deals with this text in five other treatises (see n. b below chart). In all of these texts Philo makes the same point about the necessity of bringing harmony to words, thoughts, and actions. On this text see P. J. Bekken, *The Word Is Near You: A Study of Deuteronomy 30:12–14 in Paul's Letter to the Romans in a Jewish Context*, BZNTW 144 (Berlin: Gruyter, 2007), who argues that Paul uses Deut 30:11–14 in a similar manner that Philo does. Cf. also P. J. Bekken, "Paul's Use of Deut. 20:12–14 in Jewish Context," in *The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism*, ed. P. Borgen and S. Giversen (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1995), 183–204.

<sup>22</sup>Deut 4:7 in Philo, *Praem.* 84. Cf. also *Migr.* 56–59. Philo makes the same point in both texts.

<sup>23</sup>Deut 30:4–5 in Philo, *Praem.* 115–117. This is the only reference to this text in Philo's corpus.

<sup>24</sup>Deut 7:15 in Philo, *Praem.* 119. This is the only reference to this text in Philo's corpus.

<sup>25</sup>See also Hos 2:18; Job 5:23. For Philo's use of Isa 11 see F. H. Colson, *PLCL*, 8:455–456, who argued against Heinemann (see n. 26 below). N. Cohen, *Philo's Scriptures: Citations from the Prophets and Writings. Evidence for a Haftarah Cycle in Second Temple Judaism*, JSJSup 123 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 77–8, questioned whether Philo used Isaiah 11 in this text. Philo rarely used the prophets. For details see G. E. Sterling, "Jeremiah as Mystagogue: Jeremiah in Philo of Alexandria," in *Jeremiah's Scriptures*, ed. K. Schmidt and H. Najman, JSJSup (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 417–30, esp. 417–18.

<sup>26</sup>I. Heinemann, *Philons griechische und jüdische Bildung: Kulturvergleichende Untersuchungen zu Philons Darstellung der jüdischen Gesetze*, Bericht des Jüdisch-theologischen Seminars Fraenckelscher Stiftung für das Jar 1929 (Breslau: M&H Marcus, n.d.; repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1962), 419. See *Sib. Or.* 3.788–95:

Wolves and lambs will eat grass together in the mountains. / Leopards will feed together with young goats. / Wandering bears will spend the night with calves. / The flesh-eating lion will eat husks in the manger / like an ox, and children—even infants—will lead them / with ropes. For he will make the beasts on earth harmless. / Serpents and asps will sleep together with babies / and will not harm them, for the hand of God will rest upon them.

<sup>27</sup>*Sib. Or.* 3.794.

Sibyl appears to have been influenced by Isa 11:6–9. In fact, Isaiah, *Sib. Or.* 3, and Philo all have one pair in common: they all juxtapose wolves and lambs.<sup>28</sup> Whether Philo drew directly from Isa 11:6–9 or knew *Sib. Or.* 3, it appears that the Isaianic vision of beast peace was known to Philo. Besides the biblical tradition it is also worth remembering that Vergil employed the image of beast peace in his *Fourth Eclogue*.<sup>29</sup>

The other text is the famous Messianic text from Num 24:7 and 17.<sup>30</sup> The LXX that is considerably different than the Hebrew reads: “A man will come from his seed and he will rule over many nations; his kingdom will be exalted above Gog and his kingdom will be expanded ... a star will ascend from Jacob and a man will arise from Israel.” Philo’s treatment of Numbers 24 is similar to the heavenly Messianic figure in *Sib. Or.* 3 and 5 which may also be based on Numbers 24.<sup>31</sup> While the clearest evidence is from *Sib. Or.* 5 that is dated to the end of the first century CE, the concurrence of exegetical treatments suggests that Philo and the Sibyl both knew a common tradition. The similarities between Philo and the *Sibylline Oracles* suggest that Philo knew exegetical traditions that circulated in apocalyptic circles and incorporated them in his own vision of Israel’s future.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Isa 11:6; *Sib. Or.* 3.788; Philo, *Praem.* 87.

<sup>29</sup> Virgil, *Ecl.* 4.22–2, “cattle will not fear large lions/ and the serpent will disappear.” Cf. also Aristophanes, *Pax* 1075.

<sup>30</sup> Num 24:7 in Philo, *Praem.* 95. Cf. also *Mos.* 1.290 and *Sib. Or.* 3.49. There has been an extensive debate on Philo’s understanding of the Messiah. Some deny that Philo anticipated a Messiah, e.g., J. Drummond, *Philo Judaeus; or, the Jewish Alexandrian Philosophy in Its Development and Completion*, 2 vols. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1888), 2.321–22, who wrote: “Especially will the Israelites be blessed, being gathered together into their own land under the leadership of a wonderful vision; but of a distinctly Messianic hope I still fail to discover any trace”; E. R. Goodenough, *The Politics of Philo Judaeus: Practice and Theory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1938), 115–19, who thought that the Messiah referred to the people of Israel; A. Jaubert, *La notion de l’alliance dans le Judaïsme aux abords de l’ère chrétienne* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1983), 383–5, who recognized the place of Messianism but qualified it: “Cela ne signifie pas que le messianisme soit absent de l’œuvre de Philon. Mais le rôle du Messie y est singulièrement effacé”; B. L. Mack, “Wisdom and Apocalyptic in Philo,” *SPhiloA* 3 (1991): 21–39, who countered Borgen’s view (see below) and spoke of a restoration without a Messiah; G. S. Oegema, *Der Gesalbte und sein Volk: Untersuchungen zum Konzeptualisierungsprozeß der messianischen Erwartungen von den Makkabäern bis Bar Koziba*, *SIJD* 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 115–22, who sees a development away from a military figure in Philo; L. L. Grabbe, “Eschatology in Philo and Josephus,” in *Death, Life-after-Death, Resurrection and the World-to-Come in the Judaism of Antiquity*, vol. 4 of *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, ed. A. J. Avery Peck and J. Neusner, HdO 1.51.4 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 163–85, esp. 169–72, who offers a rejoinder to Borgen (below); Tobin, “Philo and the Sibyl,” 95, who argued that Philo recast the Sibylline traditions; and J. Lust, *Messianism and the Septuagint: Collected Essays*, BETL 178 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), 69–86, esp. 81–2. Others have argued that Philo held a view of Messiah, although they vary in their assessments, e.g., F. Grégoire, “Le Messie chez Philon d’Alexandrie,” *ETL* 12 (1935): 28–50; G. Betram, “Philo also politically-theological Propagandist des spätantiken Judentums,” *ThLZ* 64 (1939): 193–9, esp. 197; J. de Savignac, “Le messianisme de Philon d’Alexandrie,” *NovT* 4 (1960): 319–24; E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, rev. G. Vermes, F. Millar, and M. Black, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973–87), 2.507–10, who compare Philo’s understanding of the figure in Num 24:4 with the Messianic figure at Qumran (509 n.28); P. Borgen, “‘There Shall Come Forth a Man’: Reflections on Messianic Ideas in Philo,” in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 341–61; J. Kügler, *Pharao und Christus? Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Frage einer Verbindung zwischen altägyptischer Königstheologie und neutestamentlicher Christologie im Lukasevangelium*, BBB 113 (Bodenheim: PHILO, 1997), 229–33; and L. Miralles Maciá, “La figura del mesías según los historiadores judeo-helenísticos Filón de Alejandría y Flavio Josefo,” *Sefarad* 64 (2004): 363–95, esp. 364–9.

<sup>31</sup> See Tobin, “Philo and the Sibyl,” 90–1, 95. See esp. *Sib. Or.* 3.49; 5.108, 155, 256, 414.

<sup>32</sup> Tobin, “Philo and the Sibyl,” 94–103, argued that Philo revised them to downplay potential social upheaval that apocalyptic visions might inspire.

There is a final observation about Philo's use of the biblical text. While the chart makes it clear that Philo has taken his *point d'appui* from the biblical text and incorporated a range of texts into his discussion, he has arranged his material in a way that is different than any of the biblical accounts of blessings. His arrangement flows nicely, but it is not the biblical sequence. Further, he has incorporated elements that are not biblical. These two facts lead us to consider other traditions that may have influenced his view of Israel's future.

## 2. THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS FOR THE VISION

How do we explain Philo's arrangement of material and how do we account for the non-biblical elements? I suggest that Philo drew from the philosophical tradition. We will begin with the clearest evidence and then move to a more tenuous hypothesis.

### 2.1. *Specific Content*

The first is predictable and unsurprising. Philo augmented the blessings in the biblical text by including philosophical elements. There are at least ten of these in the present vision, enough to make us realize that Philo has not simply repeated the biblical text but has read it through a distinct prism. For the sake of clarity, I will list the ten in the sequence in which they appear in Philo's presentation in *Praem.* 79–126.

#### 2.1.1. Words/Thoughts/Deeds (λόγοι/διάνοιαι/πράξεις)

The first occurs in Philo's customary interpretation of Deut 30:11–14. He consistently interpreted the final statement, “the word is very close to you, in your mouth, in your heart, and in your hands to do it,” to require the harmony of words/thoughts/deeds among humans.<sup>33</sup> The Alexandrian exegete wrote: “It is next to you, very near, established firmly in the three parts that are in each of us, ‘in your mouth, in your heart, and in your hand,’ that are figures for word, thought, and deeds (λόγῳ καὶ διανοίᾳ καὶ πράξεσιν).”<sup>34</sup> While this has a clear basis in the biblical text, it is a standard aphorism in philosophical circles—especially among Stoics. For example, Seneca wrote: “Let us say what we feel, let us think what we say; let word be in harmony with life.”<sup>35</sup>

#### 2.1.2. Conscience (τὸ συνειδός)

At the conclusion of his treatment of Deut 30:11–14, Philo cited Deut 4:7: “What great nation is there for whom God is near them as the Lord our God is whenever we call on him?” Philo has rewritten this as, “If someone should ask, ‘What type of nation is great?, some might appropriately respond, ‘A nation for whom God is a responder to their pious prayers and draws near when they call on him with a pure conscience (ἀπὸ καθαροῦ τοῦ συνειδότος).’”<sup>36</sup> The reference to conscience

<sup>33</sup> On Philo's use of this motif, see N. G. Cohen, “The Greek Virtues and the Mosaic Laws in Philo,” *SPhiloA* 5 (1993): 9–23, esp. 19–23; and N. G. Cohen, *Philo Judaeus: His Universe of Discourse*, BEATAJ 24 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1995), 99–105.

<sup>34</sup> Philo, *Praem.* 80.

<sup>35</sup> Seneca, *Ep.* 75.4. See also 114.1 and Cicero, *Tusc.* 5.47, who credited the origin of this concept to Socrates.

<sup>36</sup> Philo, *Praem.* 84.

is significant. Philo is the first witness that we have to this concept, although he probably did not create it.<sup>37</sup> He appears to have derived it from Stoic sources.<sup>38</sup>

### 2.1.3. The Wealth of Nature (ὁ πλοῦτος φύσεως)

As Philo began to unpack the second major blessing, wealth, he wrote: “The inexpensive wealth of nature (πλοῦτος δὲ ὁ μὲν τῆς φύσεως εὐτελής) is food and shelter.”<sup>39</sup> Philo referred to the wealth of nature on at least three other occasions in his corpus.<sup>40</sup> This is another concept found in philosophical literature. Epicurus is reported to have said: “The wealth of nature is both limited and easy to procure.”<sup>41</sup>

### 2.1.4. The Law of Nature (ὁ νόμος φύσεως)

The next expression is a famous concept. As Philo opens his discussion of the third blessing, he turns his attention to the need to leave wealth to offspring and says that “no man will be without offspring and no woman barren, but all the genuine servants of God will fulfill the law of nature that relates to procreation (νόμον ἐκπληρώσουσι φύσεως τὸν ἐπὶ παιδοποιίᾳ).”<sup>42</sup> The expression “the law of nature” set off a well-known debate. Helmut Koester suggested that Philo made the expression popular,<sup>43</sup> but Richard Horsley pointed out that Cicero had already used the phrase.<sup>44</sup> For example, the Roman wrote, “True law is right reason in agreement with nature.”<sup>45</sup> The debate extends back to Plato and the early Stoics.<sup>46</sup> In the formulation that we find here, it appears to be a Stoic concept that Cicero and Philo embraced.<sup>47</sup>

### 2.1.5. Immortality (ἀθανασία)

Philo based his understanding of procreation on the blessing in Exod 23:26a. He extended his treatment to the second half of the verse that promised long days and suggested that long life was another form of this blessing since it is at an advanced age that one can see a house full of descendants. Philo explained that a long-lived individual passed through every stage of life until “he reaches the last, the neighbor of death or rather immortality (ἀθανασία).”<sup>48</sup> Philo believed in the immortality of the soul.<sup>49</sup> One of his fundamental anthropological views is the distinction between the body and the

<sup>37</sup> On Philo’s use of conscience see P. R. Bosman, *Conscience in Philo and Paul: A Conceptual History of the History of the Synoideia Word Group*, WUNT II/166 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); and P. R. Bosman, “Conscience and Free Speech in Philo,” *SPhiloA* 18 (2006): 33–47.

<sup>38</sup> For the use of conscience in Epictetus see A. A. Long, “Stoicism in the Philosophical Tradition: Spinoza, Lipsius, Butler,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, ed. B. Inwood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 365–92, esp. 385–8.

<sup>39</sup> Philo, *Praem.* 99. See §§99–100.

<sup>40</sup> Philo, *Somn.* 1.126, bread and clothing; 2.40, self-control and frugality; *Virt.* 7, air, water, food.

<sup>41</sup> Diogenes Laertius 10.144. Cf. also Plutarch, *Adol. poet. aud.* 37A.

<sup>42</sup> Philo, *Praem.* 108.

<sup>43</sup> H. Koester, “NΟΜΟΣ ΦΥΣΕΩΣ: The Concept of Natural Law in Greek Thought,” in *Religions of Antiquity: Essays in Memory of E. R. Goodenough*, ed. J. Neusner, SHR 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 521–41.

<sup>44</sup> R. A. Horsley, “The Law of Nature in Philo and Cicero,” *HTR* 71 (1978): 35–59.

<sup>45</sup> Cicero, *Rep.* 3.33.

<sup>46</sup> E.g., for the view of Chrysippus see Plutarch, *Stoic rep.* 1035c; 1037–8; and Diogenes Laertius 7.128.

<sup>47</sup> For the different Platonic and Stoic elements see the introduction and six essays in *SPhiloA* 14 (2003): 1–99.

<sup>48</sup> Philo, *Praem.* 110.

<sup>49</sup> For recent treatments, see C. D. Elledge, “Resurrection and Immortality in Hellenistic Judaism: Navigating the Conceptual Boundaries,” in *Christian Origins and Hellenistic Judaism: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament*, ed. S. E.

soul. In his interpretation of Gen 2:7 he wrote, “For what he breathed in was nothing other than the divine spirit (πνεῦμα), a colony sent here from that blessed and happy nature for the benefit of our race so that even if it is mortal with respect to its visible part, it may become immortal with respect to its invisible part.” He concluded: “For this reason someone may correctly say that a human is on the borderline between the mortal and the immortal, having a share in each to the degree necessary; it is mortal with respect to the body and immortal with respect to the mind.”<sup>50</sup> While he was not alone in accepting the immortality of the soul,<sup>51</sup> he did so under the influence of Platonism.

#### 2.1.6. Neither with Account nor with Number (οὔτ’ ἐν λόγῳ οὔτ’ ἀριθμῶ)

Philo offered a contrast to Exod 23:26b, “you will fulfill the number of your days,” by citing a well-known saying: “For they say that the unlearned and lawless are neither with account nor with number (οὔτ’ ἐν λόγῳ οὔτ’ ἀριθμῶ).”<sup>52</sup> The aphorism circulated among several philosophical circles. Perhaps the most notable is the statement some of Pythagoras’s students made when they said: “He considered his companions equal to the blessed gods, but others he considered neither with account nor with number (οὔτ’ ἐν λόγῳ οὔτ’ ἀριθμῶ).”<sup>53</sup>

#### 2.1.7. Excellence of Character (καλοκάγαθία)

Philo went on to comment on the fact that the Scripture did not use month or year but day as a way to describe a person’s life. He understood this to suggest that a person must fill every day of life with “excellence of character (καλοκάγαθία).”<sup>54</sup> This is a term that never occurs in the Pentateuch<sup>55</sup> but that Philo used seventy-seven times. He considered it to be the sum of the virtues. In his life of Abraham he wrote: “The lover of moral excellence (καλοκάγαθία) has the teachings of each virtue and the principles of wisdom herself.”<sup>56</sup> The virtue was developed in Greece and became a standard part of virtue ethics in the Greek philosophical tradition. For example, the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Magna Moralia* has the following: “The term moral excellence (ἡ καλοκάγαθία) is not inappropriately used for the person of perfect goodness (ἐπὶ τοῦ τελέως σπουδαίου). For they say that a person is morally excellent (καλὸς κάγαθός) when he is perfectly good (τελέως σπουδαῖος).”<sup>57</sup>

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Porter and A. W. Pitts, *TENTS 10* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 101–33, esp. 104–7; von Ehrenkrook, “The Afterlife in Philo and Josephus,” 1.100–6; and Yli-Karjanmaa, *Reincarnation in Philo of Alexandria*.

<sup>50</sup> Philo, *Opif.* 135.

<sup>51</sup> E.g., Wis 2:22–23; 8:19; 9:15. On immortality in Wisdom, see G. E. Sterling, “The Love of Wisdom: Middle Platonism and Stoicism in the Wisdom of Solomon,” in *From Stoicism to Platonism: The Development of Philosophy 100 BCE–100 CE*, ed. T. Engberg-Pedersen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 198–213.

<sup>52</sup> Philo, *Praem.* 111.

<sup>53</sup> Iamblichus, *VP* 208.

<sup>54</sup> Philo, *Praem.* 112.

<sup>55</sup> It appears in 4 Macc 1:8, 10; 3:18; 11:22; 13:25; 15:9 but nowhere else in the LXX.

<sup>56</sup> Philo, *Abr.* 220.

<sup>57</sup> Ps-Aristotle, *Mag. mor.* 2.9.2. See also Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 4.3.16. Epictetus 4.1.164, traced the concept back to Socrates: “Socrates did not save himself dishonorably, did not put it to the vote when the Athenians required, disdained tyrants, and discoursed admirably about virtue and moral excellence (περὶ ἀρετῆς καὶ καλοκάγαθίας); it was impossible to save such a person dishonorably, instead he was saved by dying, not fleeing.”

### 2.1.8. House of the Soul (οἰκία ψυχῆς)

As Philo explained the final blessings that dealt with the body, he called the body “the house of the soul (οἰκία δὲ ψυχῆς).”<sup>58</sup> This is one of a series of metaphors that Philo used to describe the relationship between the soul and the body: some are positive and some are more negative. On the positive side Philo referred to the body as an οἰκία or οἶκος of the soul<sup>59</sup> or the garment worn by the soul.<sup>60</sup> On the negative side he referred to the body as the soul’s grave<sup>61</sup> or the soul’s prison.<sup>62</sup> One of Philo’s favorite metaphors is the river metaphor based on the *Timaeus* 43A–D.<sup>63</sup> In all of these examples, the distinction between the body and soul in Philo rests on a Platonic anthropology.<sup>64</sup>

### 2.1.9. The Mind (ὁ νοῦς)

Philo went on to specify that the “house of the soul” needed to be well built “especially for the sake of the mind.”<sup>65</sup> For Philo the mind is the *imago Dei*. In one of the most impressive passages in his corpus, he explained his understanding: “Let no one compare the image to the character of a body. For neither is God in human form nor is the human body godlike. The image refers to the mind, the leader of the soul.”<sup>66</sup> The statement in *Praem.* is a summary of Philo’s Platonic anthropology.

### 2.1.10. Likeness to God (ὁμοίωσις θεῶ)

The final reference to philosophical concepts occurs in his concluding summary. Philo wrote:

These are the blessings pronounced on good humans who fulfill the laws with their actions, blessings that—he says—will be brought about by the grace of the generous God who honors and rewards good things because of their likeness to himself (διὰ τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁμοιότητα).<sup>67</sup>

The final phrase appears to be an allusion to the *telos* of Middle Platonists taken from Plato’s *Theaetetus*: the goal of human beings is “likeness to God.”<sup>68</sup> Plato wrote, “So then it is necessary to try to flee there as quickly as possible; flight is likeness to God (ὁμοίωσις θεῶ), to the extent possible.”<sup>69</sup> Philo quoted Plato in *Fug.* and alluded to this statement in *Spec.*<sup>70</sup> In our text, the Alexandrian suggested that humans who are like God will enjoy God’s blessings.

<sup>58</sup> Philo, *Praem.* 120.

<sup>59</sup> Philo, *Opif.* 137; *Det.* 33, 163; *Deus* 150; *Conf.* 27; *Migr.* 93; *Praem.* 120–21.

<sup>60</sup> Philo, *Leg.* 2.22, 55; *Gig.* 53; *Deus* 56; *Fug.* 110; *Somn.* 1.43; *QG* 1.53; 4.1, 78.

<sup>61</sup> Sometimes Philo used the famous σῶμα/σῆμα wordplay (Philo, *Leg.* 1.108; *Spec.* 4.188). At other times he used τύμβος (*Deus* 150; *Somn.* 1.139). Cf. also *Migr.* 16; *QG* 1.70; 2.69; 4.75, 153.

<sup>62</sup> Philo, *Leg.* 3.42; *Ebr.* 101; *Migr.* 9; *Her.* 68, 85; *Somn.* 1.139.

<sup>63</sup> Philo, *Gig.* 13; *Agr.* 88–89; *Somn.* 1.147; 2.109.

<sup>64</sup> See the discussion of Yli-Karjanmaa, *Reincarnation in Philo of Alexandria*, 31, 114–16, 119–20, for the Platonic nature of these metaphors.

<sup>65</sup> Philo, *Praem.* 121. See §§121–22.

<sup>66</sup> Philo, *Opif.* 69–71. On the *imago Dei* in Philo see G. E. Sterling, “Different Traditions or Emphases: The Image of God in Philo’s *De opificio mundi*,” in *New Approaches to the Study of Biblical Interpretation in Judaism of the Second Temple Period and in Early Christianity. Proceedings of the Eleventh International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature, January 2007*, ed. G. Anderson et al., *STDJ* 106 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 41–56.

<sup>67</sup> Philo, *Praem.* 126.

<sup>68</sup> J. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*, rev. ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 9–10, 44, 114, 122–3 (Eudorus), 145–6 (Philo), 192–3 (Plutarch), 298–9 (Alcinous), 335 (Apuleius), 409.

<sup>69</sup> Plato, *Theaet.* 176A–B.

<sup>70</sup> Philo, *Fug.* 63 (cf. also §82) and *Spec.* 4.188. On the concept in Philo see G. van Kooten, *Paul’s Anthropology in Context: The Image of God, Assimilation to God, and Tripartite Man in Ancient Judaism, Ancient Philosophy and Early Christianity*, *WUNT* 232 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 181–99.



These ten concepts indicate that Philo has given a philosophical coloring to his eschatological vision. Yet they are largely patina added to the blessings of the biblical text, a patina that can hardly cause surprise to anyone familiar with Philo. Is there anything more substantial?

## 2.2. *The Sequence of Blessings*

As we noted above, the sequence in which Philo treats blessings is puzzling from the perspective of the biblical text. Philo followed neither the sequence in Deut 28:1–14 nor the sequence in Lev 26:3–13. Why arrange the blessings in the sequence that we have? One possibility might be that they flow through a natural progression. Philo is able to mark the transitions from peace to prosperity to progeny and long life and finally to the body in ways that make good sense. Peace is often associated with wealth. An aspect of wealth is the size of a family that represents a blessing. Good health enables someone to enjoy all of this, especially when good health is a sign of virtue. But why start with peace?

I began to ask myself if I could think of a vision of an ideal state that opened with peace. The first example that came to mind was Plato's *Republic*. While we might argue about the structure of the *Republic*, a number of ancients thought that it opened with a discussion of peace. So, for example, Alcinous began his summary of Middle Platonic politics with this statement: "In this work (the *Republic*) he (Plato) first sketched out the state of being free from war and then the state of being in a fever and at war, investigating which are the best and how they can be established."<sup>71</sup>

The statement that Plato began with peace and war made me wonder if Philo had been influenced by Plato's ideal state. However, one agreement does not indicate much. Then I thought about the summary of Socrates's previous discourse in the opening section of the *Timaeus*. As is well known the dialogue begins with an exchange between Socrates and Timaeus in which Socrates summarized the discussion they had the previous day. There is a debate over the identity of the speech. It may be the *Republic* since Socrates was the narrator in the *Republic* and the correspondences between Socrates's summary in the *Timaeus* and the contents of the *Republic* are striking. There are, however, problems with this identification since the summary only covers parts of the *Republic* 2–5 (§§369–471). Whether it was the *Republic* or not,<sup>72</sup> the summary in the *Timaeus* resembles the *Republic* and is what is most relevant for our purposes. Socrates suggested that the first topic was the division of workers into classes, especially the separation between those who worked in agriculture and crafts from the defenders or guardians who defend the city in a time of war.<sup>73</sup> He then turned to the training of the guardians. He expanded most on their relationship to money and wealth.<sup>74</sup> Socrates concluded his summary by speaking of women, procreation, and children.<sup>75</sup>

There is a noteworthy agreement between the basic sequence of the blessings in Philo's eschatological vision in *Praem.* and Socrates's summary of the *Republic* in the *Timaeus*: the first two blessings and some of their subunits in Philo's discussion are mentioned explicitly and in the

<sup>71</sup> Alcinous, *Did.* 34.1.

<sup>72</sup> F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato Translated with a Running Commentary* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1937), 4–5.

<sup>73</sup> Plato, *Tim.* 17C–18A.

<sup>74</sup> Plato, *Tim.* 18A–B.

<sup>75</sup> Plato, *Tim.* 18C–19A.



same sequence. Both begin with peace, move to wealth, and then deal with families. But what about the third blessing, the blessings for the body? Philo concluded in the same way that Plato had. They both made the moral argument that it was necessary to be virtuous. It is true that Plato's argument in the *Republic* occurs in book 9 and there is a 10th book that addresses poetry and immortality, but the basic moral argument of the *Republic* is completed in book 9.

Did Philo use this summary as a structure for his vision of Israel's future? The Alexandrian certainly knew Plato's *Republic* and the *Timaeus*. He alluded to the *Republic* at least twenty-five times in his corpus, although not openly in *Praem*.<sup>76</sup> He knew and used the *Timaeus* even more extensively. He cited or paraphrased the *Timaeus* sixteen times<sup>77</sup> and alluded to it an additional 110 times, although again not openly in *Prob*.<sup>78</sup> However, the debt is more profound than citations/paraphrases or allusions suggest. David Runia has demonstrated that Plato's *Timaeus* had a profound influence on Philo.<sup>79</sup> What about Socrates's summary of the *Republic* in the *Timaeus*? Philo alluded to the beginning of the account in his *De vita Moysis*.<sup>80</sup> It is safe to conclude that Philo knew both Plato's *Republic* and *Timaeus* and knew them firsthand, including the summary of the *Republic* at the beginning of the *Timaeus*.

I suggest that Philo used Socrates's summary of the *Republic* as a framework for his description of the future state of Israel—whether he used it consciously or subconsciously. His use is similar to the ways in which he incorporated philosophical motifs into the specific blessings: he did not cite philosophical sources but employed language that reminded readers of philosophical motifs. Similarly, he did not call attention to Socrates's summary, but followed it. There is at least one reason why Philo may not have wanted to call explicit attention to Socrates's summary: Socrates reminded *Timaeus* that he had suggested that marriages and children should be held in common, a proposition with which Philo would have disagreed.<sup>81</sup> The use of the framework of Plato's ideal state posed no challenge to the explicit references to the biblical text and the parts of Plato's ideal that were problematic were ignored. The summary of the *Republic* simply became an organizing

<sup>76</sup>D. Lincicum, "A Preliminary Index to Philo's Non-Biblical Citations and Allusions," *SPhiloA* 25 (2013): 139–67, esp. 157–8, lists the following: Plato, *Resp.* 328A in Philo, *Opif.* 148; *Resp.* 352C in *Spec.* 4.63; *Resp.* 379A–C in *Agr.* 128–129; *Resp.* 379D in *Leg.* 3.105; *Resp.* 389B in *Deus* 65–69; *Resp.* 419–445E in *Anim* 30–65; *Resp.* 439D in *Leg.* 1.70; *Resp.* 468A in *Virt.* 23; *Resp.* 473D in *Mos.* 2.2; *Resp.* 488B–489C in *Deus* 129; *Resp.* 492C in *Abr.* 20; *Resp.* 507D–508 in *Sacr.* 36; *Resp.* 508–509 in *Abr.* 156; *Resp.* 508E in *Migr.* 40; *Resp.* 514–517 in *Prob.* 5; *Resp.* 519B in *Prov.* 2.17; *Resp.* 526E in *Legat.* 211; *Resp.* 533d in *Prob.* 5 and *Contempl.* 10; *Resp.* 546b in *Opif.* 13; *Resp.* 554f in *Deus* 24; *Resp.* 557c in *Ios.* 32; *Resp.* 576B in *Conf.* 164; *Resp.* 588C in *Somm.* 2.14; and *Resp.* 617 in *Somm.* 1.138. For broad summaries of Philo's use of Plato see G. E. Sterling, "The Jewish Philosophy": Reading Moses via Hellenistic Philosophy According to Philo," in *Reading Philo: A Handbook to Philo of Alexandria*, ed. T. Seland (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 137–41; and E. Koskenniemi, *Greek Writers and Philosophers in Philo and Josephus: A Study of Their Secular Education and Educational Ideals*, SPhA 9 (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 102–6, who only deals with the explicit references to Plato.

<sup>77</sup>Sterling, "The Jewish Philosophy," lists the following: Plato, *Tim.* 22B–23C in Philo, *Aet.* 146–159; *Tim.* 24E, 25C–D in *Aet.* 141; *Tim.* 28B–C in *Prov.* 1.21; *Tim.* 28C in *Opif.* 21; *Tim.* 29A in *Plant.* 131; *Tim.* 29B in *Opif.* 21 and *QG* 1.6; *Tim.* 32C–33B in *Aet.* 25–26; *Tim.* 33C–D in *Aet.* 38; *Tim.* 35B in *Num.*; *Tim.* 37E, 39C in *Aet.* 52 (cf. also *Spec.* 1.90); *Tim.* 38B in *Prov.* 1.20; *Tim.* 41A–B in *Aet.* 13; *Tim.* 75D–E in *Opif.* 119 and *QE* 2.118; and *Tim.* 90A in *Plant.* 17.

<sup>78</sup>Lincicum, "Preliminary Index," 158–9.

<sup>79</sup>D. T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, *PhilAntSup* 44 (Leiden: Brill, 1986).

<sup>80</sup>Compare Plato, *Tim.* 17B with Philo, *Mos.* 2.33. For details see Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, 72 and 402. Lincicum, "Preliminary Index," missed this allusion.

<sup>81</sup>Plato, *Tim.* 18C.

principle for the biblical materials. In this way Philo joined Moses and Plato eschatologically even as he had joined them ontologically in other texts.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

There have been circles of scholarship that have attempted to drive a wedge between Platonic ontology and Jewish eschatology. For those of us who work in the New Testament, studies in the Fourth Gospel and Hebrews quickly come to mind.<sup>82</sup> I suggest that the tension was not felt as keenly by ancients. Whether we think of the mixture of sapiential and apocalyptic elements in 4QInstruction<sup>83</sup> or of philosophical ontologies and Jewish/Christian eschatologies in New Testament texts, we should not overplay the distinction. I do not want to suggest that the distinction did not exist. The *pesharim* of Qumran are eschatological and contain no hint of Platonic ontology or even an awareness that such a system of thought existed. In the nearly fifty treatises of Philo that we have, *Praem.* and *Mos.* 1 are the only treatises that offer an eschatological vision of Israel. Philo's primary axis was ontological or vertical, not eschatological or horizontal. It should therefore not be a surprise that when he moved to the eschatological, he brought a philosophical framework with him. It shaped his eschatological vision in structure and in the hues of his explanations of the blessings. Israel would realize not only the blessings written by Moses but also the blessings of the ideal state described by Plato.

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<sup>82</sup>I attempted to address this in Hebrews in "Ontology versus Eschatology: Tensions between an Author and Community in Hebrews," *SPhiloA* 13 (2001): 190–211.

<sup>83</sup>See the discussion in M. J. Goff, *4QInstruction*, SBLWLaw 2 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2013), 19–23. Cf. also his earlier monograph, *The Worldly and Heavenly Wisdom of 4QInstruction*, STDJ 50 (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

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# On John the Baptist at the Jordan River: Geohistorical and Archaeological Considerations

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The question on every Christian pilgrim's lips when visiting the Holy Land is: where was Jesus baptized? This is usually followed by a question about the authenticity of the site. The simple answer is that the immersion of Jesus took place at the Jordan River, though the synoptic gospels are rather vague about the precise geographical location (Mark 1:5; Matt 3:5–6, 13; Luke 3:3). Visitors are frequently taken to Yardenit on the river, just south of the Sea of Galilee, but there is no historical or archaeological basis to this location whatsoever.<sup>1</sup> However, the traditional site of baptism is known and has been pointed out since antiquity at one very specific location on the river in the lower Jordan Valley, east of Jericho and immediately north of the Dead Sea, and numerous Eastern Christians flock to that place for their Epiphany celebrations in January of every year. This place is identified as Bethabara/Bethany and it is assumed to be the same as the one referred to in the Gospel of John (1:28; 3:26; 10:40). Archaeological remains are known on both sides of the Jordan River at this location: at the monastery of Qasr al-Yehud on the west bank and at al-Maghtas on the east bank, with additional sites further inland at Wadi al-Kharrar (notably Jabal Mar Elias). In Late Antiquity this was a well-visited locale where multiple events of baptism and worship were enacted, and it comprised the entire landscape extending to both sides of the river (west and east) (Figure 15.1).

The purpose of this essay is to evaluate the geohistorical significance of the textual sources concerning the early place of baptism at the Jordan River, and to examine the character of the relevant archaeological remains from the Early Roman period (first century CE). While assuming a measure of historicity for the background of the baptism narrative in the gospels,<sup>2</sup> we examine the

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This chapter is dedicated to Professor James Charlesworth who has been a loyal friend and colleague since I first met him in 1995. I am constantly amazed by his erudition and prolific academic productivity. We share an interest in the quest for the historical John the Baptist. This chapter is an expansion of ideas and research first broached in a preliminary fashion in my book, *The Cave of John the Baptist* (London: Random House, 2004).

<sup>1</sup>For the official website of the Yardenit baptism site, see <https://www.yardenit.com>. While no historical or archaeological claim has ever been made for this site, it is nevertheless confusing to the many thousands of visitors who are brought there every year and many do not realize the site is actually a modern invention.

<sup>2</sup>C. H. Kraeling, *John the Baptist* (New York: Scribners, 1951); C. H. H. Scobie, *John the Baptist* (London: SCM, 1964); W. Wink, *John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968, repr., 2000); W. B. Tatum,

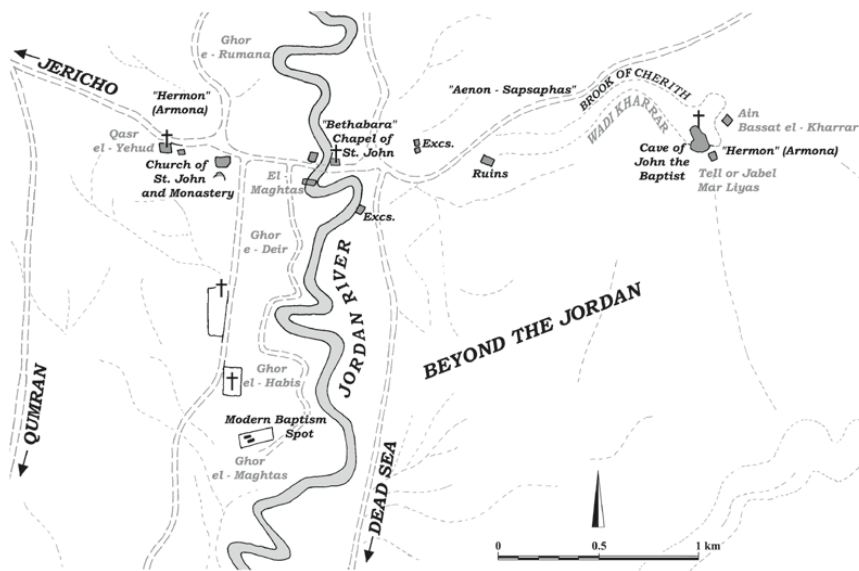


FIGURE 15.1 Location map, showing the places mentioned in this chapter. Drawing: Fadi Amirah.

very basic and practical aspects of the story in regard to the immersion of large groups of people by John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Hence, our examination does not deal specifically with the theology or literary/historical perspectives of the baptism story.<sup>3</sup> We suggest that the southern baptism site may have been one of a string of “baptism sites” existing in Early Roman times at places along the middle Jordan Valley, extending between Bethabara/Bethany in the south to Aenon/Salem in the north, and that these were populated by John the Baptist’s supporters in the first century and perhaps as late as the mid-second century.

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*John the Baptist and Jesus: A Report of the Jesus Seminar* (Sonoma: Polebridge, 1994); R. L. Webb, *John the Baptizer and Prophet: A Socio-Historical Study* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991); and J. E. Taylor, *The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> For literature published since 2000 (though this list is not intended to be exhaustive), see R. L. Webb, “Jesus’ Baptism: Its Historicity and Implications,” *BBR* 10 (2000): 261–309; B. D. Chilton, “John the Baptist: His Immersion and His Death,” in *Dimensions of Baptism: Biblical and Theological Studies*, ed. S. E. Porter and A. R. Cross, JSNTSup 234 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 25–42; D. S. Dapaah, *The Relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth: A Critical Study* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005); J. Murphy-O’Connor, “Sites Associated with John the Baptist,” *RB* 112 (2005): 253–66; C. A. Evans, “Josephus on John the Baptist and Other Prophets of Deliverance,” in *The Historical Jesus in Context*, ed. A.-J. Levine (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 55; J. H. Charlesworth, “John the Baptizer and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Scrolls and Christian Origins*, vol. 3 of *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 1–35; G. H. Twelftree, “Jesus the Baptist,” *JSHJ* (2009): 103–25; J. E. Taylor, “John the Baptist on the Jordan River: Localities and Their Significance,” *ARAM* 29.1–2 (2017): 1–19; J. D. Tabor, “John the Baptizer: More Than a Prophet,” in *Enemies and Friends of the State: Ancient Prophecy in Context*, ed. C. A. Rollston (Pennsylvania: Eisenbrauns, 2018), 513–22; and M. Rotman, “The Call of the Wilderness. The Narrative Significance of John the Baptist’s Whereabouts” (PhD diss., University of Amsterdam, 2019).





FIGURE 15.2 Qasr al-Yehud. Photo: Shimon Gibson.

## 1. A SUMMARY OF THE BAPTISM SITE IN LATE ANTIQUE SOURCES

A review of the available textual sources suggests that the traditional baptism site at Qasr al-Yehud (“Fort of the Jews”) situated on the west bank of the Jordan River, which is also known as the Monastery of the Prodomos (Deir Mar Yuhanna; Deir Fakhur), was not built before the sixth century.<sup>4</sup> The earliest reference to the buildings at Qasr al-Yehud is provided by the Piacenza pilgrim (*ca.* 570), followed by Adomnan’s account of Arculf’s travels from 685, and descriptions by Williband (724) and Epiphanius the Monk (dated to between 715 and 717) (Figure 15.2).<sup>5</sup>

On the east bank of the river, however, in the area of al-Maghtas, a church dedicated to St. John (built on arches) was erected at the instigation of the emperor Anastasius, in the late fifth or early sixth centuries (according to Theodosius *ca.* 530) (Figure 15.3).<sup>6</sup>

This church and the baptism site are also mentioned by the Piacenza pilgrim (*ca.* 570); the monastery here may very well have been the same or at least was in the vicinity of the “Monastery of the Eunuchs” referred to by John Moschus (*ca.* 575) (Figure 15.4). The baptism site is also

<sup>4</sup>For a useful collection of these sources, see D. Baldi, *Enchiridion locorum sanctorum: documenta S. Evangelii loca respicientia* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1982), 211–36.

<sup>5</sup>For a recent archaeological survey of Qasr al-Yehud, see O. Sion, “The Monasteries of the ‘Desert of the Jordan,’” *LASBF* 46 (1996): 249–50.

<sup>6</sup>For the appearance of this church and the underlying arches, see R. Mkhjian and C. H. Kanellopoulos, “John the Baptist Church Area: Architectural Evidence,” *ADAJ* 47 (2003): 9–18; and B. Hamarneh and A. Roncalli, “Wadi al-Kharrar: Sapsaphas. Gli scavi archeologici nel luogo del battesimo,” in *Giordani: Terrasanta di meditazione. Progetto del parco del battesimo*, ed. V. Sonzogni (Bergamo: Corponove, 2009), 194–212. For a review of the early exploration of the archaeological remains on the east bank in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries by Féderlin, Dalman, Buzy, Abel, and himself, see M. Piccirillo, “The Sanctuaries of the Baptism on the East Bank of the Jordan River,” in *Jesus and Archaeology*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006). To the late Fr. Michele Piccirillo (1944–2008) goes the honor of publicizing the significance of the baptism site at al-Maghtas in 1995 ahead of the archaeological excavations by M. Waheeb and others.





FIGURE 15.3 Remains of church at al-Maghtas. Photo: Shimon Gibson.



FIGURE 15.4 The Madaba Mosaic map showing the Jordan River sites. Photo: Shimon Gibson.

depicted on the mosaic map of Madaba, dated to the second half of the sixth century, which has the Greek inscription: “Bethabara (Βεθαβαρα) [the sanctuary] of John the Baptist.”<sup>7</sup>

This church was mentioned once in the seventh century by Adomnan (as a church on great vaults), twice in the eighth century by Epiphanius the Monk and Williband (as a church on vaults and with a relic stone), and finally twice in the ninth century in the *Commemoratorium de Casis Dei* (ca. 808) and in the writings of Bernard the Wise (870).

Thereafter, we do not hear of the church and we must assume that by the end of the ninth century it had been abandoned and afterward remained in ruins, with most of the needs of the pilgrims now facilitated by the Monastery of St. John at Qasr al-Yehud on the west bank.<sup>8</sup> This is confirmed by the writings of the Russian abbot Daniel (1106–8) and later sources from the time of the Crusades.<sup>9</sup>

The earliest of the Christian sources are fairly ambiguous in regard to the precise location of the site of Jesus’ baptism. Origen (ca. 248) suggests the baptism was made by John at Bethabara “alongside the Jordan,” indicating his clear preference for this place-name instead of Bethany (*Comm. Joel.* 6.40),<sup>10</sup> and Eusebius (260–340) mentions that the place was located east of Jericho, and that in his time “many believing brothers who, wishing to be reborn, are baptised in the living current” (*Onom.* 58:18–20). Perhaps the earliest positive geographical reference to a visit made to the Jordan River site is that of the Bordeaux Pilgrim (333). Approaching from the west bank, this pilgrim wrote: “Five miles from there [the Dead Sea] in the Jordan is the place where the Lord was baptized by John, and above the far [eastern] bank at the same place is the hillock from which Elijah was taken up to heaven.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>The name Bethabara is shown on the western bank but this is an artistic device, since we believe the locale Bethabara refers to the entire landscape of the ford (west and east) and its vicinity. The mosaic map also depicts the site of Sapsaphas on the eastern bank of the Jordan, which is probably to be identified with the springs situated in the Wadi al-Kharrar near Elijah’s Hill: “Aeon where now is Sapsaphas (Σαπσαφας)”: M. Avi-Yonah, *The Madaba Mosaic Map: With Introduction and Commentary* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1964), 37–8 (Sapsaphas), 38–9 (Bethabara); H. Donner, *The Mosaic Map of Madaba: An Introductory Guide* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1992), 14 (Bethabara), 38 (Sapsaphas). In excavations conducted by Mohammad Waheeb at Elijah’s Hill in the vicinity of the springs, he uncovered a chapel with a Greek inscription in its floor: “With the collaboration of the grace of Christ our god, under Rhetorius, the most god-loving presbyter and abbot, all the work of the monastery was done. May God the Saviour grant him mercy.” See M. Waheeb, “Wadi al-Kharrar Archaeological Project (Al-Maghtas),” *ADAJ* 42 (1998): 635–8, fig. 2; and M. Waheeb, “The Discovery of Elijah’s Hill and John’s Site of Baptism, East of the Jordan River from the Description of Pilgrims and Travellers,” *Asian Social Science* 8 (2012): 207. The present reading of the Greek inscription is one provided by Leah Di Segni (email message of November 20, 2002) who pointed out that the great number and variety of abbreviations in the inscription point to a date in the sixth century (or late fifth century at the earliest), which confirms Waheeb’s dating of the Byzantine remains uncovered at the site.

<sup>8</sup>A mass grave of approximately three hundred individuals, perhaps of pilgrims from Egypt, was found at the site in 1983, dating from the eighth or ninth centuries. Many showed signs of having suffered from tuberculosis, leprosy, and facial disfigurements. A total of 250 fragments of textiles were found; see O. Shamir, “Tunics from Kasr al-Yahud,” in *The Clothed Body in the Ancient World*, ed. L. Cleland, M. Harlow, and L. Llewellyn-Jones (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2005), 162–8; and O. Shamir, “Cotton Textiles from the Byzantine Period to the Medieval Period in Ancient Palestine,” *Revue d’ethnoécologie* 15 (2019): 21–3, <https://doi.org/10.4000/ethnoecologie.4176>.

<sup>9</sup>For the medieval sources relating to Qasr al-Yehud, see Gibson, *The Cave of John the Baptist*, 232.

<sup>10</sup>On Origen’s preference for the name Bethabara instead of Bethany, see Murphy-O’Connor, “Sites Associated with John the Baptist,” 260; and J. M. Hutton, “‘Bethany beyond the Jordan’ in Text, Tradition, and Historical Geography,” *Biblica* 89 (2008): 305–28.

<sup>11</sup>J. Wilkinson, *Egeria’s Travels to the Holy Land* (Jerusalem: Ariel, 1981), 161.

Based on the new archaeological discoveries at al-Maghtas and in Wadi al-Kharrar, it has been suggested that the “true” or original baptism site of Jesus was on the east bank rather than on the west bank.<sup>12</sup> We believe this argument is irrelevant—after all, everything took place in the same overall landscape, and it is likely there was some fluidity in the use of the name Bethabara for *both* sides of the Jordan River, with the name Bethany perhaps used more specifically for the east bank or for one defined part of it. In any case, the presence or absence of remains from the Byzantine period in one part of this landscape or in another does not have any real bearing on the specific location of the actual baptism of Jesus that took place four or five centuries earlier.

## 2. WHY WAS THE JORDAN RIVER THE TARGET FOR JOHN’S BAPTISM ACTIVITIES?

In an important paper on John the Baptist published in 1990, Jerome Murphy-O’Connor posed a fundamental question regarding the choice of the Jordan River for baptisms:

Why would the Baptist have chosen a place that was difficult for individuals, impossible for mass baptisms, and virtually inaccessible during the one season in the year when he would expect people to come to him, namely the relatively cool winter months.<sup>13</sup>

These are fair points, and one could argue that a more logical choice for ritual immersion and the gathering of people to John would have been at the Sea of Galilee, or even at a perennial spring of water, of which there are numerous examples in the Judaeen Hills or in the Peraea, or if it was to be in the Jordan Valley, then at a place such as Elisha’s spring in Jericho. Access to the meandering Jordan River was undoubtedly difficult and inhospitable; its steep and muddy banks are overgrown with dense vegetation and rich in wildlife, with some overflowing of the river in the winter months; there are various fords along its length, and getting to the edge of the water would have been extremely difficult and frequently treacherous (Figure 15.5).

This is still the case at the traditional site of Bethabara to the south, where wooden decks were at times built into the water to facilitate the pilgrims wanting to immerse themselves; today, more substantially built platforms have been provided to stimulate confidence in tourism (Figure 15.6).

A need for religious isolation is also unlikely to have been the reason why John chose the site and this is because the traditional site of Bethabara is situated only a short distance (6 km) from Jericho, which was a very large and prosperous city at that time, with extensive palm groves and balsam plantations, and close by was the Herodian palace complex at Talul Abu-Alayiq that was still

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<sup>12</sup> M. Waheeb, “The Discovery of Bethany beyond the Jordan River (Wadi al-Kharrar),” *Dirasat, Human and Social Sciences* 35 (2008): 115–25.

<sup>13</sup> J. Murphy-O’Connor, “John the Baptist and Jesus: History and Hypotheses,” *NTS* 36 (1990): 359–74. There are a number of assumptions in his paper (359): first, that the place of baptism was dependent upon John’s mission in Peraea, which is definitely possible but not proven, and second, that baptism must have been conducted by John only in the winter season. The Jordan Valley is indeed inhospitable and unbearably hot in the summer months, but this does not mean people could not have lived in the region outside Jericho throughout the year, and a good example is the nomads and pastoralists of that period. If John’s followers set up semi-permanent or temporary settlements in the Jordan Valley, as we believe they did (see below), then Murphy-O’Connor’s statement on seasonality must be questioned.





FIGURE 15.5 The Jordan River toward the South. Photo: Shimon Gibson.



FIGURE 15.6 The Jordan River toward al-Maghtas, from the Western bank toward the Northeast. Photo: Shimon Gibson.

functioning as a royal estate.<sup>14</sup> Indeed the baptism site at Bethabara was a place of major connectivity since it was not far from a main road linking Judaea with southwest Peraea. There were also roads running to the north toward the Sea of Galilee, and a road leading westward toward Jerusalem.<sup>15</sup> Many people used these roads to transfer goods such as dates, balsam oil, and lumps of asphalt (in the shape of “loaves”) and sacks of salt from the Dead Sea. The overall connectivity of this region would ultimately have made it easier to bring many hundreds of people to John, but it would also have brought unnecessary passersby and onlookers, and inquisitive soldiers sent by Herod Antipas. Bethabara was evidently not a place of isolation or secrecy where John’s baptism activities could have been kept out of the public eye, nor does this appear to have been John’s original intention. It was intended as an inclusive public event, and according to Josephus John called on *all* of Israel to participate in the baptism;<sup>16</sup> these are the “others” who ultimately joined the crowds surrounding John (*Ant.* 18.116–119).<sup>17</sup>

The real reason this part of the Jordan River was chosen as the place of baptism was because John and his followers were mindful of its strong biblical associations—it was a place of transition and crossing.<sup>18</sup> The fords are referred to as Bethabara (“house of crossing”: Josh 2:7; Judg 7:24).<sup>19</sup> This is the place where Joshua Ben Nun crossed into the Promised Land with the Israelites (Joshua 3–4) after having received the leadership from Moses at Mount Nebo. This is where the prophet Elijah and his disciple Elisha miraculously divided the waters of the Jordan by smiting it with a mantle (2 Kgs 2:7–14). Eventually, Elijah ascended from this spot into heaven; he disappeared and there was an eschatological expectation that he would return.<sup>20</sup> John’s baptism was intended as a rite of passage and Bethabara was a perfect location to serve this purpose.

### 3. WHERE WAS THE BAPTISM SITE OF THE EARLY ROMAN PERIOD?

While the synoptic gospels indicate that John the Baptist preached a baptism of repentance in the general “wilderness” region of the Jordan, nothing more is said about the geographical location of

<sup>14</sup>E. Netzer and R. Bar-Nathan, “Stratigraphy and Chronology of the Winter Palaces at Jericho,” in *Hasmonean and Herodian Palaces at Jericho: Final Reports of the 1973–1987 Excavations, Vol. III: The Pottery*, ed. R. Bar-Nathan (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society), 13–20.

<sup>15</sup>J. E. Taylor and S. Gibson, “Qumran Connected: The Paths and Passes of the North-Western Dead Sea,” in *Qumran und Archäologie—wechselseitige Perspektiven*, ed. J. Frey and C. Claussen (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 1–51.

<sup>16</sup>*Josephus*, trans. L. H. Feldman, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press). The credibility of the passage in Josephus’ writings dealing with John the Baptist (*Ant.* 18.116–19) is widely accepted; see H. Lichtenberger, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and John the Baptist: Reflections on Josephus’ Account of John the Baptist,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research*, ed. D. Dimant and U. Rappaport, STDJ 10 (Leiden: Brill/Yad Ben-Zvi, 1992), 340–6; J. P. Meier, “John the Baptist in Josephus: Philology and Exegesis,” *JBL* 111 (1992): 225–37; and C. A. Evans, “Josephus on John the Baptist and Other Prophets of Deliverance,” in *The Historical Jesus in Context*, ed. A.-J. Levine et al. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 55. Rivka Nir has recently suggested that this entire passage is a Christian or Jewish-Christian interpolation; see “Josephus’ Account of John the Baptist: A Christian Interpolation?” *JSHJ* 10 (2012): 32–62. While this is an interesting argument, her overall conclusion is unconvincing.

<sup>17</sup>M. Rotman, “The ‘Others’ Coming to John the Baptist and the Text of Josephus,” *JSJ* 49 (2018): 68–83.

<sup>18</sup>C. Brown, “What Was John the Baptist Doing?” *BBR* 7 (1997): 44.

<sup>19</sup>Taylor points out that John would also have been aware of the tradition of Joshua’s encampment at Gilgal (Josh 4:19–24) (“John the Baptist on the Jordan River,” 6–9).

<sup>20</sup>In Murphy-O’Connor’s words, “John appeared exactly where Elijah had disappeared”; “John the Baptist and Jesus,” 360, n.7. Cf. C. E. Joynt, “The Returned Elijah? John the Baptist’s Angelic Identity in the Gospel of Mark,” *SJT* 58 (2005): 455–67.

the place, except that it was accessible to Jerusalemites (Mark 1:5; Matt 3:5–6, 13; Luke 3:3; cf. 4:1).<sup>21</sup> More precise information is given in John (1:28; 3:26): it was at a place called “Bethabara beyond Jordan.” This place is “where John had been baptizing earlier” (John 10:40 NRSV), suggesting he went on to baptize at other places as well. Jesus lived there for a while following the death of John (John 10:40). There is also a reference in John (1:28) to “Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.”<sup>22</sup> This name may refer to another location east of the Jordan (e.g., Wadi al-Kharrar),<sup>23</sup> or it may have been an alternative name for a certain part of Bethabara—perhaps settled by John’s followers.<sup>24</sup> For later Christian pilgrims from the sixth century, there was absolute certainty as to the exact spot of Jesus’ baptism: it was marked by a marble column surmounted by an iron cross that was set up in the middle of the river and seen by all (Theodosius *ca.* 530).<sup>25</sup>

We will now examine the extent of the archaeological remains from the Early Roman period (first century CE) in the area of the lower Jordan River and north of the Dead Sea, beginning first with the region adjacent to the western bank of the river. The most recent archaeological survey of this area in 1992–3 surprisingly revealed a lack of sites from this period in the area inspected between Qasr al-Yehud and ‘Ain Hajla, and in the Jericho Plains.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, this is in sharp contrast

<sup>21</sup>C. C. McCown, “The Scene of John’s Ministry and Its Relation to the Purpose and Outcome of His Mission,” *JBL* 59 (1940): 113–31.

<sup>22</sup>Murphy-O’Connor expressed the extreme view that the name Bethany beyond the Jordan must have been an invention of a Johannine redactor who assumed that if John had an audience then there must have been a town close by; “John the Baptist and Jesus,” 260, n.4. But there is nothing in the sources that would indicate that Bethany was a town, though it may have been the name of a small encampment of Baptist followers in one sector of Bethabara. Incidentally, one should point out that this Bethany at the Jordan River site should not be confused with the village of Bethany to the southeast of Jerusalem, where Jesus stayed and where Lazarus lived (Mark 11:1; John 11). It has been suggested by P. Parker that the two Bethanys are one and the same, but this is unlikely; “Bethany beyond Jordan,” *JBL* 74 (1955): 257–61. Riesner suggested a scribal corruption derived from the name of the region Batanaea (Bashan) in southern Syria; “Bethany beyond the Jordan (John 1:28): Topography, Theology and History in the Fourth Gospel,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 38 (1987): 34–43. On the location of Bethany east or west of the Jordan, see B. F. Byron, “Bethany across the Jordan or Simply across the Jordan,” *Australian Biblical Review* 46 (1998): 36–54; and Hutton, “Bethany beyond the Jordan.”

<sup>23</sup>S.G. Brown, “Bethany beyond the Jordan: John 1:28 and the Longer Gospel of Mark,” *RB* 110 (2003): 497–516. One should note that Brown considers the Wadi al-Kharrar site to be a first-century CE “village,” but as we will show in this chapter the evidence for this is slim.

<sup>24</sup>It is unclear whether Bethabara might also be the same as the walled village called Bethennabris (Βηθενναβρίν), which is referred to by Josephus (*War* 4. 419–21). Murphy-O’Connor was certain that the two were not the same, and I now have to concur (“Sites Associated with John the Baptist,” 261, n.13). Indeed, this similarly sounding place may have been situated further north, perhaps close to the ford Abara near Beth Shean, taking into consideration that it was to that place that some fugitives fled after their town Gadara had been captured by Vespasian in 68 CE. The fugitives were subsequently hunted down by Placidus and he chased and eliminated them next to the banks of the River Jordan. Rotman has recently suggested an alternative identification of Bethennabris with Tell Nimrin; “The Call of the Wilderness,” 57–8.

<sup>25</sup>The Piacenza Pilgrim (570) states that the spot where Jesus was baptized was marked by a wooden cross. It is unclear whether this is the same cross seen by Theodosius, though a cross made out of iron might conceivably have been mistaken for wood if seen from a distance.

<sup>26</sup>O. Sion, “Archaeological Survey of Israel: Kalia: 109/5” (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2013), <http://www.antiquities.org.il/survey>. What emerges from Sion’s survey is that there are no sites of definite Early Roman date in the entire area extending between the eastern outskirts of Jericho and Qasr al-Yahud. Therefore, Sion’s map of “Roman sites” (his fig. 41) is misleading for this specific geographical zone, and Sites 42 and 49 that he lists as Roman are actually of Late Roman/Byzantine, and Late Roman/Byzantine to Ayyubid date respectively, based on the pottery finds. The two sites listed as Roman, situated closer to the Jordan River, namely Sites 32 and 52, are also of Late Roman/Byzantine, and Byzantine/Early Islamic date respectively. The total absence of Early Roman pottery in this zone is borne out by Sion’s site database that provides detailed site descriptions and lists of finds. The next map (83/13) adjacent (west of) to the Jordan River and to the north of the map surveyed by Sion has not yet been investigated or published, so we do not have the corresponding

to the abundance of sites from the Byzantine period seen in the same area, notably churches, small monastic dwellings, anchorite cells, and so forth.<sup>27</sup> Ofer Sion, who conducted this survey, indicates finding Early Roman sites but only in the proximity of Jericho, and not to the east near Qasr al-Yehud. So, why are there no remains from this period at the Jordan River? It might be that the sites from this period were exceptionally small and ephemeral, such as what one might expect of temporary encampments, which resulted in them going unrecognized in the survey.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, Sion noted in his published text that in the 'Ain Hajla area "presumably all of the important sites were documented; however, small sites, for various reasons were not recorded." Sion understandably left unstated the fact that there are active military minefields in the areas round about Qasr al-Yehud, and along the edges of the Jordan River; this is not at all conducive to those who might wish to undertake systematic archaeological surveys there. Hence, it is perfectly conceivable that remains from the Early Roman period do exist at Qasr al-Yehud and vicinity, but they are inaccessible at this point in time.<sup>29</sup>

On the east bank of al-Maghtas, remains from the Early Roman period have been reported at various locations in excavations conducted by Mohammed Waheeb and others since 1997, but the precise contextual significance of these finds is not at all certain, which is disappointing.<sup>30</sup> Apparently "related sites," presumably of Early Roman date, have been identified in the area extending for 4 km east of the Jordan River, but the character and appearance of these sites is not at all clear.<sup>31</sup> At the site known as Elijah's Hill (Jabal Mar Elias; Tell Mar Liyas) in Wadi al-Kharrar, Waheeb excavated three caves that began their use in the first century CE based on the pottery and coins found inside them (Figure 15.7).<sup>32</sup>

He also identified a cistern at the site under the floor of the northeastern pool, which apparently functioned in the Early Roman period.<sup>33</sup> Elsewhere, he identified a large "baptismal" pool, with

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archaeological data from further north for comparison. Hence, we do not know whether this phenomenon of negative Early Roman sites is repeated along the western bank of the river northward.

<sup>27</sup> Sion, "The Monasteries of the 'Desert of the Jordan'," 262–3.

<sup>28</sup> Sion did recognize one Early Roman site (Site 82) consisting of a stone heap in the plain, at Rujm al-Qabila (East) to the southeast of the Jericho ("Archaeological Survey of Israel: Kalia").

<sup>29</sup> My examination of the ground surface immediately east of the buildings at Qasr al-Yehud in 2001 revealed quantities of Byzantine/Early Islamic and medieval potsherds, but not one potsherd of Early Roman date.

<sup>30</sup> M. Waheeb, A. Mahmud, and E. al-Masri, "A Unique Byzantine Complex Near the Jordan River in Southern Levant and a Tentative Interpretation," *Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeometry* 13.2 (2013): 128; and M. Waheeb, *The Discovery of Site of St. Mary of Egypt in Site of Jesus Baptism* (Amman: Arabic Line Printing Press, 2004).

<sup>31</sup> Out of twenty-one sites investigated during the survey of Wadi el-Kharrar in 1997, only one (No. 7) is dated to the "Early to Late Roman" period (see n. 34, below), the rest are of other periods: M. Waheeb, "Wadi al-Kharrar Archaeological Project (al-Maghtas)," *ADAJ* 42 (1998): 635–8; and M. Waheeb and A. Mahmoud, "The Holy Triangular along the Christian Pilgrims Road, East of Jordan River (Baptism Site, Aenon Near to Saleem, and Tyrue Cave)," *Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Religion* 34 (2017): 47.

<sup>32</sup> M. Waheeb, F. Bala'awi, and Y. al-Shawabkeh, "The Hermit Caves in Bethany beyond the Jordan (Baptism Site)," *ANES* 48 (2011): 187 and see the drawings of Early Roman (first century CE) pottery: figs. 7: 9–11 (pilgrim flasks), 8: 1–7 (juglets), 8–10, 14–15 (cooking wares), 11–13 (bowls). The coin identifications have not yet been published. For photographs of additional pottery from the first century CE found at these sites, see M. Piccirillo, "I santuari visitati dai pellegrino sulla sponda Orientale del fiume Giordano," in *Studi in memoria di Carlo Valeri* (Ferentino: Casamari, 1998), 91–113, with artifacts on 98 (storage jars and/or jugs, and a stone cup/mug; mixed with some Byzantine pottery as well) and 104 (cooking pot, juglet, and stone cup/mugs). I am grateful to the late Fr. Piccirillo for discussing these finds with me.

<sup>33</sup> Waheeb, "The Discovery of Elijah's Hill," 208.





FIGURE 15.7 A Byzantine period Hermit's cave at Elijah's Hill (Jabal Mar Elias) that had an earlier Early Roman use. Photo: Shimon Gibson.

Byzantine pottery and a few Roman potsherds scattered around it.<sup>34</sup> According to Waheeb, Jabal Mar Elias is actually the site of Bethany and it was here that John the Baptist lived and baptized, but one has to admit that the evidence to support these claims is extremely minimal.<sup>35</sup> Michele Piccirillo has also identified pottery from the first century CE at these Wadi al-Kharrar sites, including fragments of a type of stone cup/mug.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup>M. Waheeb, *The Discovery of Bethany beyond the Jordan: Site of Jesus Baptism* (Amman: Arabic Line Printing Press, 2003), 1.62–63, pls. 40–41. Whether Waheeb is referring to Early (first century CE) or Late (second/third/fourth century CE) Roman pottery is unclear.

<sup>35</sup>Waheeb, “The Holy Triangular,” 48; and M. Waheeb and R. Al Ghazawi, “Ancient Water System in Tel Mar Elyas during the Byzantine Period: A Study,” *Journal of Human Ecology* 49 (2015): 327–33, doi: 10.1080/09709274.2015.11906852.

<sup>36</sup>During a visit to the Wadi al-Kharrar site in May 2001, Mohammed Waheeb kindly showed me some of their Early Roman period ceramic finds at their dig stores, and among these was a handle fragment of a hand-carved cylindrical stone mug. Fr. Michele Piccirillo also found fragments of stone vessels during his visit to the site in 1995 (“I santuari visitati dai Pellegrino,” 98, 104). These finds are similar to Jewish stone mugs known from Jerusalem and at sites in Judaea dating from the first century CE; cf. S. Gibson, “Stone Vessels of the Early Roman Period from Jerusalem and Palestine: A Reassessment,” in *One Land—Many Cultures: Archaeological Studies in Honour of Stanislao Lofredda OFM*, ed. G. C. Bottini et al., SBF collectio maior 41 (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 2003), 287–308, and nn.80–2 on sites in Jordan with stone vessels. Another collection of stone vessels from this period comes from Tall Zira’a in northern Jordan; see J. Häser and D. Vieweger, “Die Kalksteingefäße aus der frührömischen zeit- Religiöse und sozio-ökonomische implikationen” (2015), <https://publications.dainst.org/journals/efb/1655/4561>.

To sum up, very few archaeological remains from the first century CE have been identified on either side of the Jordan River in the Bethabara region, unless one proceeds inland to the east toward Wadi al-Kharrar, or to the west in the direction of the outskirts of Jericho. This supports our suggestion that Bethabara was a locale and not a settlement as such, and that the baptism sites were semi-permanent encampments that would not have left behind significant identifiable remains, which is the reason they have not been found.

#### 4. WHAT WOULD THE BAPTISM SITE HAVE LOOKED LIKE?

If the extent of John's baptism activity at the Jordan River was brief and undertaken solely in the winter of one specific year of his ministry (e.g., 28 CE), and cut short by his arrest by the soldiers of Herod Antipas, then it is highly unlikely that archaeological remains relating to this time will ever be found. The discipline of archaeology is at its best when dealing with the *longue durée* of settlement history, rather than with fleeting short-term events, such as those connected to baptism.

However, it would appear that John's sojourn in the area was of longer duration than has been supposed. Josephus indicates that crowds of people came to John to be baptized, and that he "was a good man and had exhorted the Jews to lead righteous lives, to practice justice towards their fellows and piety towards God, and so doing to join in baptism (βάπτισιν)" (*Ant.* 18.116–119). The fact that John had sufficient time to travel from one baptism location to another, from Bethabara to Aenon (John 3:23), is perhaps a sign that John's activity in the area was not a one-time or seasonal event, but that it lasted for some time after the start of his ministry. Indeed, the baptizing phenomenon drew large crowds of people around John—they are described in Matthew (3:5) as "streaming forth" (ἐξεπορεύετο). This congregation of large crowds of people around John greatly alarmed Herod Antipas, who thought they were there to plan an uprising, and that John had turned himself into a major destabilizing factor in the region—this ultimately sealed his fate.

On the basic organizational level it would have been easier to arrange ceremonial locations at the Jordan River, suitable for the baptism of small groups of devotees, as opposed to dealing with large numbers of expectant travelers flocking to John for baptism, some of whom would have reached the site from great distances, requiring in addition to religious support also shelter, food, and protection. There would also have been many practicalities involved in the setting up of encampments to house the large numbers of people, especially in a difficult and harsh environment such as the Jordan Valley. We may surmise therefore that these encampments consisted of makeshift structures, with those that were more permanent built out of local mud-brick, perhaps for the use of the supervisors running the camps, and that tents were mainly used by those gathering there on a short-term basis for the ceremony of baptism. While mud-brick walls crumble over time, their stone foundations usually remain, but tents will hardly leave any tangible remains, except for a few rocks to hold down the edges of tents on the ground, and of course one should also expect to find refuse, usually represented by scatters of broken pottery. As mentioned above, the limited archaeological surveys and excavations conducted hitherto on both sides of the Jordan River have not yet revealed remains that might resemble the supposed encampments from this period.

The running of the baptism encampments would have required the organizational skills of more than just one person. On the basis of John 3:26, we may assume that Jesus spent some time at the Jordan, perhaps as one of John's baptism attendants. The sole purpose of Jesus' journey from the Galilee was to be baptized by John, as is implied in Matthew (3:13). The fact that Jesus was later

seen baptizing (near Jerusalem) in parallel to John (at Aenon) suggests that John intentionally sent his followers out to different parts of the country to help spread word of his teachings and to baptize in his name; these followers may have been divided up into roving bands with their own leaders (John 3:22; 4:2). Jesus' stay at the Jordan River was sufficiently long enough for him to leave a lasting impression upon some of John's followers, resulting in two of them deciding to follow Jesus, but perhaps initially only as the nominal leader of one of John's bands. One of these was Andrew, brother of Simon (later called Peter) (John 1:35, 40). His other disciples were Simon, Philip, Nathanael, and a further unnamed individual (John 1:41, 44–45). It is quite possible that at some point during his stay at the Jordan River, Jesus began asserting his own views and ideas about matters of religious practice and purification (cf. John 3:25; cf. Mark 2:18), but there is no certainty on the details.<sup>37</sup> Jesus eventually went on to change and develop a distinctive ministry of his own in Galilee with a message that was different from the one espoused by John, with him now turning to combined healing with baptism and the proclamation of the kingdom.<sup>38</sup>

## 5. JOHN'S BAPTISM PROCEDURES

Any attempt to reconstruct the specifics of the baptism of repentance (βάπτισμα μετανοίας), as performed by John at the Jordan River is forced to rely almost entirely on information extrapolated from the description of the baptism of Jesus as it appears in the gospel accounts (Figure 15.8).<sup>39</sup> The fact that John was known as the "Baptist" (or "Baptizer": ὁ βαπτίζων) rather than "prophet" may mean that he was better known for the lustrations he performed than for his preaching/teaching and exhortation/instruction.<sup>40</sup> So what were they? One can assume that John would have adhered to the general concept of ritual cleansing with water going back to the time of the Israelite prophets (e.g., Ezek 36:25: "I will sprinkle [יורקות] clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I cleanse you" NRSV), and especially he would have identified with the symbolism of the waters of the deluge having rid the world of sin, and

<sup>37</sup>J. W. Pryor, "John the Baptist and Jesus: Tradition and Text in John 3.25," *JSNT* 19:66 (1997): 15–26.

<sup>38</sup>Cullman stated that he doubted that Jesus administered baptism during his ministry: Oscar Cullman, *Baptism in the New Testament*, SBT 1 (London: SCM Press, 1950), 9. However, recent research has a different view on this. There can be no doubt that the continued mission of Jesus, following the death of John, was intrinsically linked to water purification one way or another, even if it was not always implicitly stated, see Twelftree, "Jesus the Baptist," 103–25. Indeed, the prominent use by Jesus of the Bethesda and Siloam pools as settings for ritual bathing and healing while in Jerusalem in the Johannine tradition goes a long way to strengthen this point of view; S. Gibson, *The Final Days of Jesus: The Archaeological Evidence* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 64–80. Hence the transformation of Jesus from baptizer to healer may not have been as momentous a change as some have previously suggested, and perhaps it should be seen as a natural progression that was to be expected in terms of the development of Jesus' ideas and message. Taylor and Adinolfi (following Twelftree) argue for continued baptizing activities by Jesus throughout his Galilean ministry, they also regard his healing and exorcisms as consistent with the same "purity framework" that governed John's immersions, and show this to be reflected in the consistent narrative pattern of Mark's gospel, where Jesus' activities are characterized by the constant presence of water, often in combination with wilderness places, crowds, and teaching (and healings); cf. J. E. Taylor and F. Adinolfi, "John the Baptist and Jesus the Baptist: A Narrative Critical Approach," *JSHJ* 10:3 (2012): 247–84. In my view, Jesus' practical use of medical healing and ritual exorcism while immersing in water was a radical departure from the original form of baptism with repentance and forgiveness as practiced by John. Also, while there was definite continuity between John and Jesus, the similarities between the two have been somewhat overstated, for example, F. Bermejo-Rubio, "Why Is John the Baptist Used as a Foil for Jesus? Leaps of Faith and Oblique Anti-Judaism in Contemporary Scholarship," *JSHJ* 11:2 (2013): 170–96.

<sup>39</sup>E. Bammel, "The Baptist in Early Christian Tradition," *NTS* 18 (1971–2): 95–128.

<sup>40</sup>On John's role as a "popular prophet," see Webb, "Jesus' Baptism," 292–4, and Tabor, "John the Baptizer."



FIGURE 15.8 Pilgrims immersing in the Jordan River near Qasr al-Yahud. Photo: Shimon Gibson.

with the concept of the “crossing” of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage across the Red Sea and then later across the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Indeed, it is possible that John initially modeled himself on the cleansing procedure advocated by the prophet Elisha at the Jordan River for Na’aman the Leper (2 Kgs 5: 10–14). This procedure included three activities: first, standing on the bank of the Jordan River and calling upon the Divine name; second, for the prophet to strike his (right) hand over the place of the immersion; third, to help with the bathing process, with the person being dipped seven times in the Jordan River.

As a Jew from a priestly background, John’s baptism procedures would have been rooted in the common practice of Jewish ritual immersion in *miqwa’ot*, which was undertaken for the purpose of the purification of the flesh of the body from ritual uncleanness. This practice developed owing to Jewish concerns about contracting a state of ritual impurity, through contact with a corpse, semen, menstrual blood, and so forth, which would have been abhorrent.<sup>41</sup> By immersing in natural flowing “living water” the pollutions of the flesh and external physical defilement might be removed on a regular basis. The best possible way of achieving this state of ritual purity was by immersing in various bodies of water, such as a spring, a river, or a lake, but the common practice in towns, villages, and even in the countryside was for Jews to immerse themselves in purposefully built stepped pools (*miqwa’ot*) in the basements of houses.<sup>42</sup> In regard to the suitability of the Jordan River for Jewish immersion, Rachel Havrelock suggests that a later rabbinical source (m.

<sup>41</sup>For the ritual purification concerns of the first century CE, see J. Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>42</sup>R. Reich, *Miqwa’ot (Jewish Ritual Baths) in the Second Temple, Mishnaic and Talmudic Periods* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi/Israel Exploration Society, 2013), 25 (Hebrew); and S. Gibson, “The Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem and Jewish Purification Practices of the Second Temple Period,” *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 55 (2005): 270–93.



*Parah* 8:10) might be read as a disqualification of the use of the river as a place suitable for ritual cleansing, owing to the intermingling of its waters with that of the River Yarmouk. I believe this is unlikely to have been relevant for the first century CE, notwithstanding the known dispute between the Pharisees and Sadducees on the intermingling of ritual water.<sup>43</sup> It is more reasonable to suppose that this is a reflection of the Jewish refutation and antagonism directed at that time toward the baptism movement and its followers, some of whom were still located in the River Jordan region in the mid-second century CE and perhaps even later than that.

John's baptism procedures included much more than just bodily immersion to remove pollution or defilement. As opposed to the mainstream Jewish immersion procedures current in the first century CE, which by necessity needed to be repeated whenever a person was deemed as having been contaminated by pollution or needing purification (i.e., before prayers), the procedure as advocated by John, on the other hand, was a unique and singular event and those who participated in the ceremony of his purification eventually returned home.<sup>44</sup> John's baptism was also a group activity unlike individual immersions common at that time. Hence, John's baptism was deemed distinctive, and divisive, as is clear from John 3:25: "Now a discussion about purification arose between John's disciples and a Jew [μετά Ἰουδαίου περί καθαρισμού]." <sup>45</sup> Furthermore, it would appear that John's baptism procedure was a rite of initiation by purification, but one that only occurred following the person first undergoing repentance (with a confession of sins), seeking forgiveness, and thus ultimately requiring regeneration.<sup>46</sup> The goal was to combine the dualism of an inner (moral) and outer (ritual) purity in preparation for the eschaton.<sup>47</sup> In some ways, this procedure resembles the order of events taken in the Jewish conversion process of that time: the proselyte was immersed in a *miqweh*, but only after he had first accepted the Torah and had undergone circumcision.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>R. Havrelock, *River Jordan: The Mythology of a Dividing Line* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 198, n.51. On the dispute between the Pharisees and Sadducees on the intermingling of waters in relation to constructed *miqva'ot* and large pools, see m. Miqva'ot 6:1, 8; m. Yadaim 4:7; and H. Danby, *The Mishnah: Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983, repr.).

<sup>44</sup>Among those baptized by John, either at the Jordan or elsewhere, one should add Apollos and his brethren at Ephesus (Acts 18: 24–25; 19: 1–6); cf. Murphy-O'Connor, "John the Baptist and Jesus," 367; and Gibson, *The Cave of John the Baptist*, 182.

<sup>45</sup>The reference in John 3:25 to the Jew is probably a reference to a "Judaean"; cf. J. Beutler, "Jesus in Judea," *die Skriflig* 49.2 (2015): 1–6, <http://www.indieskriflig.org.za>, doi:10.4102/ids.v49i2.1926.

<sup>46</sup>The distinctiveness of this outer bodily purification that had to be preceded by inner purification, with the latter serving as a *precondition* for the former, is seen by Rivka Nir to be an alien concept in mainstream Judaism of the first century CE, leading her to ascribe John's method of baptism to the kind of immersions practiced by "marginal" sects in Judaism of that time ("Josephus' Account," 45). One should note that Nir's perception of a unified Judaism in the first century with groups sharing fundamental principles, beliefs, and ideas, and having much more in common with each other than differences, is unsustainable. Indeed, the divergent archaeological materials alone indicate the progressive heightening of internal cultural differences during the course of the first century CE, with idealistic fragmentation occurring within many different levels of society, and the emergence of individualism within Judaism; cf. E. Regev, "Pure Individualism: The Idea of One-Priestly Purity in Ancient Judaism," *JSJ* 31 (2000): 176–202.

<sup>47</sup>Taylor, *The Immerser*, 88–100.

<sup>48</sup>L. H. Schiffman, "Proselytism in the Writings of Josephus: Izates of Adiabene in Light of the Halakhah," in *Josephus Flavius: Historian of Eretz-Israel in the Hellenistic-Roman Period*, ed. U. Rappaport (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1982), 261–2 (Hebrew); H. H. Rowley, "Jewish Proselyte Baptism and the Baptism of John," *HUCA* 15 (1940): 313–34; and M. Samet, "Conversion in the First Centuries C.E.," in *Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple, Mishnah and Talmud Periods*, ed. I. M. Gafni, A. Oppenheimer, and M. Stern (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1993), 319–20 (Hebrew).

Another important source of information on John's baptism procedure appears in Josephus (*Ant.* 18.116–119). The passage is important because it confirms the uniqueness of John's baptism (βάπτισιν) in contrast to the common immersion practices of that time. People first gathered to listen to John and subsequently he asked them to lead righteous lives, both toward each other and toward God. This part of the ceremony included the purging of sins. Those who completed this part of the procedure were then allowed to proceed to the next step, which was to immerse in water in order to purify their flesh from pollutants in the normal fashion of that time. Webb is probably right that the baptism was an initiation that signified membership in a new sectarian movement under John's overall leadership.<sup>49</sup>

The principal source of information regarding John's baptism of Jesus is in Mark (1:9–11):

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart, and the Spirit descending like a dove [representing the *Shekhina* (שכינה)—the divine presence] on him: and a voice (*Bat Qol*) came from heaven, "Thou art my beloved son." (NRSV)

We may assume some authenticity to this passage simply because it was a source of embarrassment for the later followers of Jesus.<sup>50</sup> The assumption underlying this passage is that Jesus in accepting baptism from John must have beforehand also repented of his sins (Mark 1:4).<sup>51</sup> This concept was so irksome to early redactors that a conversation between John and Jesus was inserted in Matthew (3:13–17) and the material was heavily edited in Luke (3:21–22), to make it quite clear to the reader that Jesus was obviously without sin and could not in any way have been a subordinate of John. While these features of the story are specific to the baptism of Jesus, there may very well have been an expectation among the crowds who gathered to be baptized by John that they too would experience the descent of the *Shekhina* (שכינה) upon them.

The following is a very tentative reconstruction of the process of baptism as perhaps was practiced by John at the Jordan River: First, crowds of people gathered there to listen to his teachings or exhortations. Fasting may have occurred before the ceremony (cf. Mark 2:3). The whole procedure was presumably monitored and organized by John's attendants. John then spoke to those gathered there, exhorting them to lead righteous, virtuous, and pious lives, perhaps using a set of proscribed prayers (cf. Luke 11:1). How this ceremony was practically done is not made clear, but it may have been performed with the sprinkling of some water or perhaps even by calling on the divine name. In any case, this stage of the ceremony took place immediately *before* the immersion. Second, those who had completed the first part of the procedure were then allowed to proceed to the Jordan River for the actual physical immersion in water. This second stage of the baptism may have been inspired by the cleansing procedure conducted by the Prophet Elisha (2 Kgs 5:10–14, cf. Josephus, *War*, 4.460–465), with John perhaps raising his right hand in blessing over the place of the immersion and pouring libations.

<sup>49</sup> Webb, *John the Baptizer and Prophet*, 199–202.

<sup>50</sup> On the theological dimension as to why Jesus was baptized, see M. Bockmuehl, "The Baptism of Jesus as 'Super-Sacrament' of Redemption," *Theology* 115 (2012): 88–9. Webb has suggested that the theophany (the spirit's descent and the divine voice) was a "prophetic call-vision," but one that only occurred at a later time than the actual baptism itself ("Jesus' Baptism," 261–309).

<sup>51</sup> Webb, "Jesus' Baptism," 299.

Finally, might there have been some connection between John the Baptist and the sectarian settlement at Qumran (identified by some as the home of the Essene sect during Period II) on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea?<sup>52</sup> The physical distance between Bethabara and Qumran, which is only about 10 km or so, probably indicates that John and his followers were aware of the sectarian community at Qumran, but this familiarity does not imply reciprocal interest or sympathetic contact.<sup>53</sup> Some scholars have postulated that John spent the early years of his life at Qumran and that subsequently he was banished or left the community of his own accord.<sup>54</sup> Others suggested he was heavily influenced by the beliefs of the Dead Sea Scroll community, or conversely that some of the texts in the caves were influenced by his teachings. The Community Rule, for example, allowed for the initiate who wished to enter the covenant of God to be “cleansed by being sprinkled with cleansing waters and being made holy with the waters of repentance” (1QS 3.6–12 par. 4QSa frag. 2; cf. 5.13–14).<sup>55</sup> According to Luke 1:80, John the Baptist is said to have spent part of his youth in the wilderness, but this does not imply that it was at the Jordan River or near the Dead Sea; indeed there is no reason even to believe that John grew up in the Judean Desert region.<sup>56</sup> The fact that the Essenes—if they are the same as the Yahad group at Qumran—were in the habit of adopting children into their community, as reported by Josephus (*War* 2.120), does it necessarily signify that the juvenile John was among them?<sup>57</sup> Moreover, they were separatists and believers in predestination, with God omniscient and omnipotent, whereas John called on every pious Jew to choose to be baptized and to become a penitent, to exercise free will so long as they were also God-fearing.

## 6. ADDITIONAL BAPTISM SITES IN THE JORDAN VALLEY

At some point during his mission, John the Baptist moves his seat of operations from Bethabara in the southern part of the Jordan Valley, a distance of some 65 km to another location altogether, though whether this was intended to have been a temporary or permanent arrangement is left unclear: “John also was baptizing at Aenon (Αἰνών), near Salem, because water was abundant there; and people kept coming and were being baptized” (John 3:23 NRSV).<sup>58</sup> Why did John go to Aenon instead of staying at Bethabara? The large quantity of water at this new location is given as the reason for this shift of operations, but there was certainly more to it than this. It is more likely that John was in the process of expanding his mission of baptism northward and was turning his eye

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<sup>52</sup> Webb, “Jesus’ Baptism,” 295; K. Atkinson and J. Magness, “Josephus’s Essenes and the Qumran Community,” *JBL* 129 (2010): 317–42.

<sup>53</sup> Taylor, *The Immerser*, 42.

<sup>54</sup> Lichtenberger, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and John the Baptist,” 341; O. Betz, “Was John the Baptist an Essene?” in *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. H. Shanks (New York: Random House, 1992), 205–14.

<sup>55</sup> J. H. Charlesworth, “John the Baptizer and Qumran Barriers in Light of the Rule of the Community,” in *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. D. W. Parry and E. Ulrich, STDJ 30 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 353–75; and Charlesworth, “John the Baptizer,” 1–35. On the points of similarity between the initiation rites mentioned in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the baptism of John, see S. J. Pfann, “The Essene Yearly Renewal Ceremony and the Baptism of Repentance,” in *The Provo International Conference*, 337–52.

<sup>56</sup> Tabor, “John the Baptizer,” 517–18.

<sup>57</sup> Contra A. S. Geysler and H. B. Kossen, “The Youth of John the Baptist,” *NovT* 1 (1956): 71.

<sup>58</sup> D. Baldi and B. Bagatti, *Saint Jean-Baptiste: dans les souvenirs de sa patrie* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1980), 50–2.





FIGURE 15.9 General view of the Aenon landscape in a photograph taken from Tel Shalem toward the East. Photo: Shimon Gibson.

toward the Galilee to attract supporters from that direction. Interestingly, at that same time Jesus was baptizing with his disciples in the hill country near Jerusalem (John 3:22; contradicted slightly by the redactor in 4:2).<sup>59</sup> Indeed, it may be that John set up an entire string of places in the Jordan Valley that were connected with baptism, extending between Bethabara/Bethany and Aenon/Salem, but this is left unsaid in the gospel narratives and can only be surmised.

The location of Aenon as a place in the Jordan Valley to the south of Beth Shean has much to commend it, historically and archaeologically (Figure 15.9).<sup>60</sup>

<sup>59</sup> We have suggested in a number of publications that the baptism operations in John 3:22 may have been conducted at the Suba cave (or at a site very much like it) west of Jerusalem and close to the traditional birthplace and hometown of John the Baptist (Ain Karim). The archaeological excavation in this cave revealed evidence of complex immersion practices, which also included stone installations for the anointing of feet and stone circles for containing intentionally shattered jugs, all dating from the Early Roman period (the stratified deposits date from the late first century BCE to mid-second century CE): Gibson, *The Cave of John the Baptist*, 175; and S. Gibson, R. Y. Lewis, E. H. E. Lass, and J. D. Tabor, “Notes archéologiques: John the Baptist or Lazarus, the Patron Saint of Leprosy?—A Response,” *RB* 126 (2019): 457–63. The archaeological evidence from the Suba Cave—a final monograph on the results from the site is now in preparation—should be carefully considered by scholars. For a critical approach to the finds at the Suba cave, see Murphy-O’Connor, “Sites Associated with John the Baptist,” 253–7. However, the suggestion by Taylor that the cave was from the Crusader period is incompatible with the Early Roman and Byzantine finds at the cave (“John the Baptist on the Jordan River,” 18, n.78). Moreover, the comments made by Rotman in his recent doctoral thesis are not at all helpful for honest and fair debate on the significance of the cave and its possible connection to John the Baptist (“The Call of the Wilderness,” 29–30, n.160), and especially when he references politicized gossip; cf. S. Scham, “Diplomacy and Desired Pasts,” *Journal of Social Archaeology* 9 (2009): 182.

<sup>60</sup> Various attempts have been made to locate Aenon outside the Jordan Valley at locations near Jerusalem, Samaria, and Hebron—these suggestions are not very convincing. Hence, Aenon was identified by Barclay at Wadi Farah to the northeast of Jerusalem. Barclay was quite pleased to find that one of the wadis in the area was known as Wadi Salim; see J. T. Barclay, *The City of the Great King* (Philadelphia, 1858), 558–70. Khirbet Ainoun, located close to Tubas, to the northeast of Nablus,

According to Eusebius: “the place is still shown today, eight miles [12 km.] south of Scythopolis [Beth Shean], near Salem and the Jordan” (*Onom.* 40:1). The site is also shown on the Madaba mosaic map, dating from the second half of the sixth century, situated in the upper reaches of the Jordan Valley, and written next to it in Greek: “Ainon (Αἰνών) near Salem (Σαλήμι).”<sup>61</sup> This location has numerous springs: at least thirteen in a small area of 4 km × 4 km. Interestingly, this almost matches up with the number given by Ambrose in his writings (II, 1432) where he stated that there were twelve springs at “Ennon,” but this may just be a coincidence. On the north side of this area is Tel Shalem, which would fit with the name Salem/Salumias mentioned in the sources.<sup>62</sup> The hill has archaeological remains dating from the Early Bronze Age to medieval times, but significantly, during a visit we made to the area of the springs, east of the site, we were able to identify scatters of distinctive Early Roman potsherds from the first century CE (Figure 15.10).<sup>63</sup>

Abel suggested identifying Aenon at Khisas ed-Deir, located about 1.5 km to the southeast of Tel Shalem.<sup>64</sup> Alternatively, Aenon might have been much closer, for example, at Khirbet Hamed el-Fakhur, only half a kilometer to the southwest of Tell Shalem.

During a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Egeria visited the village of Salim (Shedima) in 384 and was told that the spring of Aenon was located very close to the village, only 200 yards away (approximately 183 meters), which she then visited:

So I asked if it was far away. “There it is,” said the holy presbyter, “two hundred yards away. If you like we can walk over there. It is from this spring that the village [of Sedima] has this excellent supply of clean water you see.” Thanking him I asked him to take us, and we set off. He led us along a well-kept valley to a very neat apple orchard, and there in the middle of it he

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has also been proposed as the site of Aenon, but a strong argument against this identification—chiefly that there are no springs of water at the site—has already been made by V. Guérin, *Description géographique, historique et archéologique de la Palestine. Samarie* (Paris, 1868), 1.364–65; and Murphy-O’Connor, “John the Baptist and Jesus,” 359–74. There is also nothing to recommend scores of other sites named Salim or Salem, either east of Nablus or close to Ta’anik, since it is more likely that they derive their name from the local Palestinian clan in that part of the country, known as the Bani Salem; cf. C. Ritter, *The Comparative Geography of Palestine and the Sinaitic Peninsula*, trans. W. L. Gage (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1866), 2.320, 350–1; and W. F. Albright, “Recent Discoveries in Palestine and the Gospel of John,” in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology*, ed. W. D. Davies and D. Daube (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956). Another site near Hebron, Khirbet Abu Rish, comprises a small rural monastic complex dating from the Byzantine period within lands belonging to the nearby village of Beit ‘Anun. Installations found at the site are said to have been used for baptismal purposes. A Greek dedicatory inscription found in a mosaic floor refers to the excavated building as a holy place to which worshippers and pilgrims came, but one must point out that no mention is made there of either John the Baptist or his worship. It was apparently suggested to be the site of Aenon based solely on the superficial similarity of this name with that of the nearby village of Beit ‘Anun; see Y. Magen and Y. Baruch, “Khirbet Abu Rish (Beit ‘Anun),” *Liber Annuus* 47 (1997): 339–58; and Y. Baruch, “Khirbet Beit ‘Anun in the Hebron Hills—A Site Connected to the Activities of John the Baptist,” in *Judea and Samaria Research Studies—Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Meeting 1997*, ed. Y. Eshel (Ariel: Ariel University, 1998), 169–79 (Hebrew).

<sup>61</sup> Avi-Yonah, *The Madaba Mosaic Map*, 14; and Donner, *The Mosaic Map of Madaba*, 37.

<sup>62</sup> Taylor has also accepted this identification of Aenon near Tel Shalem (“John the Baptist on the Jordan River,” 16).

<sup>63</sup> The surface finds from the area to the east of the tel included the rim and handle of a cooking pot, and fragments of a red-gloss Eastern Terra Sigillata platter. Since we were not undertaking an official licensed survey, these items were documented and left at the site. In the first half of the second century CE, a Roman camp was set up immediately to the southwest of the tel, and this probably ended the baptism operations at the site by John’s followers. On the Roman camp from the time of the emperor Hadrian, see W. Eck and G. Foerster, “Ein Triumphbogen für Hadrian im Tal von Beth Shean bei Tel Shalem,” *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 12 (1999): 294–313; and M. Mor, *The Second Jewish Revolt: The Bar Kokhba War, 132–136 CE* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 173–9.

<sup>64</sup> F.-M. Abel, “Mélange I, Exploration de la vallée du Jourdain,” *RB* 10 (1913): 218.



FIGURE 15.10 Early Roman pottery. A cooking pot handle and fragments of an ETS platter. Photo: Shimon Gibson.

showed us a good clean spring of water which flowed in a single stream. There was a kind of pool in front of the spring at which it appears holy John Baptist administered baptism.<sup>65</sup>

The site seen by Egeria is perhaps to be identified with ‘Ain Ibrahim, which is situated next to a Sheikh’s tomb not far from the ancient mound of Tel Shalem (Salem).

## 7. SUMMARY

The baptism site was most likely to have been at al-Maghtas (the locale Bethabara) close to the fords at the Jordan River, just north of the Dead Sea. Bethany “beyond the Jordan” may have been one specific part of this locale, presumably on the east bank or further inland (toward Wadi al-Kharrar). Bethabara probably referred to both sides of the river; that is, the name actually refers to a landscape. There were probably additional baptism sites in the middle Jordan Valley, scattered at key locations to the north, and as far as Aenon/Salem. John the Baptist was at the center of these operations and orchestrated the baptism procedures himself, even though he must have had attendants. It appears that the efficacy of the bodily purification procedure that might be acquired in the waters of the Jordan River could only become possible if the baptism candidates had previously repented and were ready for regeneration. Hence, John’s baptism was focused on inner penitence as the precondition for subsequent immersion, and this meant a ceremony for participants at two very distinct “event locations”: one on the bank of the river or very close to it, and the other with immersion in the waters of the river. The baptism effort was therefore a highly organized operation, with the setting up of encampments, and requiring leadership at all levels, with John’s attendants, including Jesus for a while, mostly in command. They would have dealt with everything from the

<sup>65</sup> Wilkinson, *Egeria’s Travels*, 108–12.

arrangement of the encampments with supplies/provisions, to the organization of the actual place of the ceremonial “event locations,” and to the order of the baptism procedures next to the Jordan River. As we have shown, archaeological remains of the baptism encampments have not yet been found, except for occasional finds, and this must indicate the very temporary nature of the sites in question. Indeed, this is in keeping with the notion that Bethabara and Aenon were probably locales, and not specific towns or villages as has sometimes been assumed.

John’s sway among those who came to him to be baptized and the overall effects of his preaching were so persuasive that Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee and Peraea, looked upon John as a person who might be capable of inciting a rebellion and since John was a threat to stability he had to be dealt with severely. According to Josephus,

Herod became alarmed. Eloquence that had so great an effect on mankind might lead to some form of sedition [or revolt]. For it looked as if they would be guided by John in everything that he did. Herod decided therefore that it would be much better to strike first and be rid of him before his work led to an uprising, than to wait for an upheaval, get involved in a difficult situation and see his mistake. (*Ant.*, 18.116–119)

There are two matters that arise from this: first, John’s message may have been somewhat more political than we are led to believe based on the information provided in the gospels, and, second, it does not appear that Herod’s soldiers encountered any immediate resistance from John’s followers, or at least Josephus does not report this. Hence, it was perhaps only John’s words that were seen to be seditious and not any actions on the ground; his followers presumably scattered peacefully and then regrouped. John was eventually brought in chains to Machaerus, a fortress town on the southern borders of Peraea, and there he was executed by beheading.

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# Greco-Roman and Jewish Historiography as Backdrop for the Gospels

DARRELL L. BOCK

## 1. SETTING THE STAGE

To know the players you need to have a program. To appreciate the game, you need to know its rules. Those clichés apply when we think of understanding writers and what they produce. Knowing the game being played as writers write makes us better readers. Conventions allow for things. They give room and frame discussions. We have conventions in how we write a report today. Some of them are so transparent and underground, we almost never think about them. We assume them because we are used to them. We know the rules of the game.

I often think about how to compare the writing of the gospels and their conventions to the array of reporting that takes place today. My analogies for the way gospel stories worked are top of the hour news reports on TV or radio, where a reporter or anchor has a limited amount of time to present several stories in a concise but communicative manner. Media today possesses several advantages over ancient reporting. They can record material and show pictures, at least on TV or over the web. Quoting is a much tidier business today. Precision is possible because we have many additional ways to preserve information. Still there are things that get done that we recognize operate at a potentially, more murky level.

My favorite illustration to raise this issue is the news report on a president's annual State of the Union address. It often lasts for around an hour. The speech covers a wide array of topics. The reporter comes on with a minute or two to report on it. When he begins with "The President said tonight ..." there are several modern choices that can be made. The reporter can run a clip that has a direct citation on the topic. She can choose to quote a single sentence or so to summarize the whole or to focus on the most controversial part of the speech. In many cases, the anchor chooses to take a long segment and boil it down to such a summarized statement. As time is an issue for the modern reporter, space was an issue for a gospel writer once the choice was made to cover many incidents in Jesus' career. Today as long as the reporter adequately summarizes what was said, no one pulls their hair out and cries foul. This is true even when the reporter puts the speech's point in his own words rather than citing the president directly. We understand that when time and space are issues, summarizing can work and is OK. We also understand that such reporting can still be accurate and historical.

I begin here because in thinking about this topic, we need to recognize that the Bible has long been understood to be popular writing, reflective of conventions and human style that had input into it. Long gone are the days when appeal is made to Holy Spirit Greek. We recognize the language of Koine. We see John the apocalyptic writer resorting to a kind of grammar and expression that does not always play by the normal rules, but is rooted in ancient conventions of a certain kind of writing we call apocalyptic. We search for the human and conventional style of the text that fits into the world in which it was composed. The gospels are no different.

One of the things that raises much discussion about the gospels is how parallel accounts between them differ. This similarity beside difference often perplexes readers of the synoptics, but these differences also raise the question how we should assess such features in a first-century historical context. A simple solution is simply to claim creation of detail and not make any real effort to examine more carefully what may be going on in terms of options. After we overview how ancient historians viewed their task, I'd like to examine two examples to ask if it may be too facile to simply utter creative detail and move on.

In 2016 Mike Licona made a proposal that argues we should look at historiographic ways of composing to understand what the possibilities are for the gospels, what people did who wrote such works.<sup>1</sup> His book focused in detail on the techniques of Plutarch. His proposal is simple enough. It is just that few have actually undertaken to give this topic a careful look. In that comparison might emerge things that look odd to us, but may not have bothered those of another time and place whose conventions may be distinct from our practices. Of course, one needs to look at such things and examine if they are present, but once such rules are identified or shown to be conventions, we are helped in what our expectations should be as we read a text. All of a sudden what might seem odd can become more comprehensible.

The complexity surfaces when we realize that there are different strokes for different folks. That what one writer is inclined to do, another may shun or avoid. Here another initial example might suffice. It is inspired by what Licona has called in his public discussions on gospel matters “guy and gal telling” to describe differences. It is my variation of his point.

I regularly host interviews on a podcast called “The Table.” I have learned people to whom you ask questions have different styles in answering. Some are crisp. As you face a “forty-seconds-to-go” landing time to a broadcast break, you can ask a question confident they will give you time to land the plane at the end of the segment.

Others you dare not ask such a question. They are more verbose. I call them footnote communicators. They give you not only an answer to your core question but also the back story that fills it in. Detail matters to them. If you ask this type a question, you may not even get the beginning of an answer before time runs out. I often say if I ask my wife if I have to be at dinner at 6:00 p.m., she will start at 6:00 a.m. and list the rationale for the answer before finally answering the question. If you ask me the same kind of question, you will get a simple yes or no. That is all. But this is not a gender issue. It is a personality style choice.

I have a colleague at Dallas who is married to a German wife. If you ask her about dinner, you will get a *Ja* or *Nein*. But if you ask her spouse, a friend I have nicknamed Dr. Google for telling

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<sup>1</sup>M. Licona, *Why Are There Differences in the Gospels? What Can We Learn from Ancient Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

things we never dreamed of knowing, you will start with the history of hospitality in the Greco-Roman world as he works his way up methodically and quite logically to answer the question you posed. Style is not a matter of guy or gal, it is just the way individuals tend to present things. And the choices are endless. So the question becomes how do we know, given the array of cultural options, that a given writer has taken a particular path in arrangement or composition choice? All we can do is ask what may be possible and then try to see if that option might work. That is where I place Licona's very helpful study. The angel is in the details. And all angels are not the same.

One more point of prolegomena needs noting that also draws on analogy from current media forms. I often encounter what is described as literary license in films that are said to be based on real events. This license also has a spectrum that runs from summary to invention. I encountered one just recently. One film, *Hacksaw Ridge*, portrays the life of Desmond Doss, a war hero who chose never to wield a weapon in battle for religious reasons. In the movie, Desmond enlists in the army in support of the Second World War effort even though he does not believe in killing and will not bear arms in battle. In real life, he was drafted, as an article shows from the *Washington Post* on March 25, 2006. Obviously this is a difference. A colleague disturbed by the movie's change pointed out this detail to me and asked what I thought of the move. When I checked this out, what I found was intriguing. Desmond had been drafted but was offered a conscientious objector status that would have allowed him out of the draft and out of the Army. He refused to take it arguing he wanted to be a medic and serve in a way that could contribute to the war effort in light of his convictions. The Army took him in on this basis. So now the question remains, in the movie's summarizing did portraying him as enlisting, that is, choosing to serve, actually fit well what he did? I might contend this is an adequate summarizing of what took place, reflecting the state of choosing to serve. The example shows the potential ambiguity of a "creative" detail when considered in light of literary tendencies to summarize.

My opening remarks serve to set the stage for how I would like to think about the issue of ancient historiography. A brief look at modern possibilities and analogies shows that many options might exist, a spectrum of choices that we need to be aware of once they are put before us, some of those kinds of choices we even see around us today. There may be more room for how history works with authorial construction than initially meets the eye. The question is when we move back in time, what were the expectations for how to present history?

## 2. WHAT DID ANCIENT AUTHORS CLAIM AS THEY WROTE HISTORY?

In this section we overview the claims of ancient historical writers for what they pursue and how they seek to accomplish it.<sup>2</sup> In spots we will note what they actually do. This is how to acquire our rules for the historical writing game. In concluding notes we will apply the results with some observations relative to the gospels.

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<sup>2</sup>A nice introduction into this theme can be found in R. A. Derrenbacher, Jr., *Ancient Compositional Practices and the Synoptic Problem*, BETL 86 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), esp. 51–117. Our survey supplements the earlier look at this topic by A. W. Mosley, "Historical Reporting in the Ancient World," *NTS* 12 (1965): 10–26. He treats Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Posidonius (but without any direct citation), Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Lucian, Cicero, Julius Caesar, Sallust, Livy, Tacitus, and Josephus. Mosley concentrates more on how classicists have viewed such authors and discusses the use of sources more than concentrating on how they saw their task. We focus on how the writers describe the goals of their task.

### 2.1. Herodotus (484–430 BCE)

One of the two great original Greek historians with Thucydides, Herodotus wrote a chronicle of the war between the Greek and Persians known as *The Persian Wars*.<sup>3</sup> He opens his account describing what he has done: “What Herodotus the Halicarnassian has learnt by inquiry is here set forth: in order that the memory of the past may not be blotted out from among men by time, and that great and marvelous deeds done by Greeks and foreigners and especially the reason why they warred against each other may not lack renown” (*Persian Wars* 1.1).

Inquiry and preservation of heroic acts for posterity motivate Herodotus to write. Later he notes the sources he used. In 2.99, he says, “So far all I have said is the outcome of my own sight, judgment and inquiry.” Direct experience was a preferred way to narrate events. Sometimes there is a mix of sources, including interviews, as next he notes, “Henceforth I will record Egyptian chronicles, according to that which I have heard, adding thereto somewhat of what I myself have seen” (2.99; see also for his efforts to interview or check out what he heard, 2.19, 32; 2.44). Egyptian priests were key sources (2.113, 118). He describes his inquiry as including people from a variety of sides, as he asked of Egyptians and Colchians (1.104).

Later another shift of sources gets the following notation: “Thus far I have recorded what the Egyptians themselves say. I will now relate what is recorded alike by Egyptians and foreigners to have happened in that land, and I will add thereto something of what I myself have seen” (2.147). In places, he notes where he has made judgments about disputed things, while contending he shows what is true (2.24–25). He underscores the depth of his inquiry by travel and sight when discussing the origin of the Nile (2.29). When stories conflict, he attempted to run down the various accounts and reported them (2.3). He was circumspect when it came to activity of the gods, saying “no man knows about the gods more than another” (2.4).

Herodotus set a solid initial standard for historical inquiry. One is struck by the care he shows in noting his sources along the way and in trying personally to verify what he had heard. His scope of interviews across racial lines also is of interest. Mosley describes him as “doing as well as he could” in observing his standards, concluding, “He does not give the impression of having set out the standards and then of having ignored them in his writing.”<sup>4</sup>

### 2.2. Thucydides (Fifth Century BCE)

In a much-discussed text, Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.22 treats how he approached his task.<sup>5</sup> He covers speeches first. He confesses he and his sources cannot recall what was said with strict accuracy. So he gives the speeches in the language it seems to him the speakers would have expressed, adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of what was said. In other words, he writes providing what he regards as accurate summaries, if not precise transcripts. He did the best he could. In an era of no tape recorders, what more could be expected?

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<sup>3</sup> Citations from Herodotus, *The Persian Wars: Books 1-2*, rev. ed., trans. A. D. Godley, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926).

<sup>4</sup> Mosley, “Historical Reporting,” 12.

<sup>5</sup> Citations from Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War: Books 1-2*, trans. C. F. Smith, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928).

He turns to events next. He thought it his duty to give them not as received from a chance informant or what seemed to him probable but only after careful investigation whether he was involved in the event or only had sources. He said this task was laborious because his eyewitnesses gave varying testimony depending on their championing “one side or the other.” The absence of fabling from his account may disappoint some in terms of what is heard. However, whoever wishes to have a clear view of events and their lessons, he hopes to have provided a model of history from which to learn.

Two observations are to be made here. First, Thucydides gave greater care to getting events right than the details of the speeches he recorded, though he tried to be faithful in both. Second, he recognized the issues tied to perspective and bias. He tried to work his way through them.

### 2.3. 2 Maccabees (Second Century BCE)

This work was composed immediately after the events they describe.<sup>6</sup> It is an example of Jewish historiography and represents a “digest” or epitomizing version of events that condenses the work of Jason of Cyrene (2:28), a work we no longer possess. This introduces a problem we often will face with ancient literature, a lack of access to written sources an author used. It is an important point, showing how much reconstruction one must do in their work about the interaction between sources and events when a new historical work is undertaken. In a literary and well-known preface in 2:19–32 the author says his goal is to reduce the mass of material from the other work with its array of statistics. Such abbreviation he says causes “sweat and loss of sleep,” like preparing a banquet for others. Exact detail is left to the original compiler preferring the “outlines of condensation.” He compares himself to the painter of a house versus the architect. The architect has to know all the detail. The painter is allowed “brevity of expression and to forgo exhaustive treatment.” I am reminded of my two types of podcast interviewees here. The writer of 2 Maccabees has taken a detailed work and sought to simplify it.

Here I think it fair to say the goal is an adequate summary of the events, something that gains understanding for the reader without overwhelming someone with excessive detail. What we get is a combination of excerpt, summary, and paraphrase in the abridgement. The author’s image is the difference between a builder and a decorator, where we clearly have a selective presentation. What motivates that selection is said to be for “pleasure,” “ease of memory,” and “profitability.” The amount of the miraculous in the work has led many to charge the author with embellishment.<sup>7</sup>

### 2.4. Polybius (Second Century BCE)

In his *Histories* 2.56, Polybius lays out his approach to history.<sup>8</sup> He is critiquing the more emotional work of Phylarchus who in vivid detail tries to sway his audience. Polybius contends the role of history is not to thrill his audience with exaggerated pictures, or write like a tragic poet so as to reckon with the probable incidental occurrences. It is “simply [a] record [of] what really happened and what was really said however commonplace.” The historian’s task, in contrast to the poet’s, is

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<sup>6</sup> Citations from the NRSV.

<sup>7</sup> Mosley, “Historical Reporting,” 22.

<sup>8</sup> Citations from Polybius, *The Histories: Books 1-2*, rev. ed., trans. W. R. Paton, rev. F. W. Walbank and Christian Habicht, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).



“to instruct and convince for all time serious students by the truth of the facts and the speeches he narrates.” There is very little detail here, only the goal. Given the choice between entertaining and working the emotions versus truth, Polybius, like Thucydides, aims for rendering the events and speeches with care.

### 2.5. *Dionysius of Halicarnassus (First Century BCE)*

In his preface to *Roman Antiquities*,<sup>9</sup> Dionysius makes his observations about history and the use of sources. Historians need the “proper equipment for the treatment of their subject” (1.1.2). Historians need to be careful not to be “careless or indolent in compiling their narratives out of such reports as chance to come in their ears” (1.1.4). In noting that there are numerous sources to the topic he covers, Dionysius explains where material comes from that others did not mention. He seeks to avert the charge of inventing events. He describes his research as involving twenty-two years, learning the Roman language (Latin), getting acquainted with their writings, and focusing on “matters bearing upon my subject” (1.7.2–4). His sources were a mix of oral testimony and data gathered from an additional list of historians not named in the earlier list. In other words, he used sources beyond those in wide circulation. Invention of events was not in his vocabulary.<sup>10</sup>

### 2.6. *Cicero (106–43 BCE)*

This famous Roman orator makes one key remark on history in *De Oratore* 2.62. There he says, “For who does not know history’s first law to be that an author must not dare to tell anything but the truth? And its second that he must make bold to tell the whole truth? That there must be no suggestion of partiality anywhere in his writings? Nor of malice?”<sup>11</sup> The goal is to try and tell the story as it was, without excessive bias. He contends this takes boldness.

### 2.7. *Arrian (Early Second Century, Born 85–90 CE)*

Arrian in his preface to *Anabasis* treats how he handles his sources (1, preface).<sup>12</sup> Where Ptolemy and Aristobulus agree, he records what they say as completely true. Where they disagree, he presents the one he regards as most trustworthy and also better worth telling. He notes there are other sources and no figure has as much contradictory information recorded about him as Alexander. He trusts

<sup>9</sup> Citations from Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities: Books I–II*, trans. Earnest Cary, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937).

<sup>10</sup> C. Kenner, “Otho: A Targeted Comparison of Suetonius’s Biography and Tacitus’s History, with Implications for the Gospels’ Historical Reliability,” *BBR* 21 (2011): 331–56, makes the same point about Suetonius’s work in comparison to Tacitus on Otho. He argues Suetonius was dependent on sources and did not seek to create events. He says, “Suetonius’s understanding of biography involved not free composition but dependence on prior information; where we can test him, this biographer mostly edited and adapted historical information rather than inventing new stories. Given its chronological proximity to eyewitness sources, a large amount of Suetonius’s information about events (if not always the participants’ motives) is likely correct” (355).

<sup>11</sup> Mosley, “Historical Reporting,” 18–22, notes Cicero is judged to have compromised his standards for the sake of literary concerns, as is Sallust. Also Livy does not come out as well nor is he seen as being as careful as other historians because he does not weigh his sources. By contrast, Tacitus comes out much better. He saw few of the events he relates, but used an array of source and documents and weighed them with more care.

<sup>12</sup> Citations from, Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander: Books 1–4*, trans. P. A. Brunt, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976).

Ptolemy and Aristobulus because both participated in the king's expeditions, with the former also having become a king. Since both wrote after Alexander died, they had nothing to fear or gain from Alexander in what they wrote. He notes that what comes from others he regards as trustworthy in another sense, as tales about him.

Arrian is at a disadvantage, being far removed from the timing of the events he records. He is at the mercy of his sources and their quality. He makes assessments of them as a result. Derrenbacher notes that the additional sources tend to be clustered and Arrian keeps mostly to his two core sources.<sup>13</sup> The author has signaled his lesser regard for these sources. Again a concern for general accuracy is driving this work.

### 2.8. *Flavius Josephus (Late First Century CE)*

Josephus also discusses his approach to history in a few places.<sup>14</sup> In *Against Apion* 1.37–42, he discusses the twenty-two books of the Hebrew Scripture, believing them to be inspired by God and arguing they do not reflect “myriads of inconsistent books” (*Apion* 1.37–38). He notes that those to whom he presented it accepted his work on *Jewish War*, which included witnesses such as Vespasian and Titus (*Apion* 50). They recognized his “scrupulous safeguarding of the truth” (*Apion* 1.52). In the same section he says, “They were not the men to conceal their sentiments or keep silent had I through ignorance or partiality distorted or omitted any of the facts” (*Apion* 1.52). He concludes his historical aside, declaring:

Surely they ought to recognize that it is the duty of one who promises to present his readers with actual facts first to obtain an exact knowledge of them himself, either through having been in close touch with the events, or by inquiry from those who knew them. That duty I consider myself to have amply fulfilled in both of my works. (*Apion* 53, alluding to *War* and *Antiquities*, while noting in *Apion* 56 that he had access to opinions in the opposite camp from the Roman commanders)<sup>15</sup>

In describing the *Antiquities* in 1.17, he comments he will follow the narrative, “neither adding or omitting anything.” In fact, when we read the account, he does in fact add and omit in relation to what Scripture presents. This difference warns us that there is a difference between what authors claim and what they do, unless we read Josephus as engaged in rhetorical hyperbole. Regardless, we do get a glimpse of what the ideal standards were.

In discussing the events following the death of Queen Alexandra, Josephus notes that the requirement of a historian extends beyond giving pleasure to a reader or possessing a charm of exposition. Rather, “their chief aim is to be accurate and hold everything else of less importance than speaking the truth to those who must rely upon them in matters of which they themselves have no knowledge” (*Antiquities* 14.1). Earlier he noted his desire to correct Roman writings about events in which Josephus had participated (*Antiquities* 1.4). As he does so he contends that he

<sup>13</sup> Derrenbacher, *Ancient Composition*, 57–9.

<sup>14</sup> Citations are from *Josephus*, trans. Henry St. Thackeray, Ralph Marcus, Alan Wikgren, Louis H. Feldman, 10 vols., LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926–65).

<sup>15</sup> In *Vita* 361–366, Josephus notes he received testimony to his “accuracy” from the emperors themselves as well as from Agrippa, with Titus and Agrippa testifying to them with endorsements.

speaks on “the matter of history, where veracity and laborious collection of facts are essential” (*Jewish War* 1.16). He goes on to say that one should “hold historical truth in honor” (*Jewish War* 1.16), and so claims he has given “the whole story in full and accurate detail” when he concludes his larger account of Israel’s history (*Antiquities* 20.260).

Josephus complains about earlier writers on Nero and declares his own historiographic standard. I cite in full:

Nor can I be surprised at those who have lied about Nero, since even when writing about his predecessors they have not kept to the facts of history. Surely they had no hatred for those emperors, since they lived long after them. Nevertheless, we must let those who have no regard for the truth write as they choose, for it is what they seem to delight in. But I, who have set as my target the truth, see no reason to give more than brief mention to matters unconnected with my proposed theme. On the other hand, my exposition of the fate of my own people, the Jews, is not merely incidental; and in my treatment I do not hesitate to give a full account either of our misfortunes or our mistakes. I shall accordingly return to the narrative of our own affairs. (*Antiquities* 20.155–157)

When we compare what Josephus claims versus what he does, there is a gap. Numerous studies have shown this. His own accounts are not even internally consistent with a variety of things going on.<sup>16</sup> Note how Josephus alternates between fullness of detail and being more concise, depending on his subject. Choices abound. Still the goals of historical effort are well understood by ancient writers, even if they sometimes fail to reach them.

### 2.9. Plutarch (ca. 45–120 CE)

Plutarch’s *Lives* were likely written early in the second century CE. It is a monumental collection of comparative biography, pairing rulers tied to Greece and Athens next to great Romans. Plutarch is one of the last of the classical Greek historians and is the model for Licona’s work on parallel accounts.

Plutarch’s comments on his task are brief. Two specific notes dominate but are quite revealing. One comes from *Theseus* 1. Here he notes his dilemma as he sought to reach back into the recesses of what was ancient history for him and tried to determine what was likely to have taken place. He compares his task to geographers, who reach the end of their knowledge about certain lands and “crowd them into the margins of their maps with the explanation, ‘Beyond this lie sandy, waterless deserts full of wild beasts.’”<sup>17</sup> In the same section Plutarch continues as he turns to his own work and says,

<sup>16</sup>Among such studies are J. Henderson, “Josephus’s *Life* and *Jewish War* Compared to the Synoptic Gospels,” *JGRChJ* 10 (2014): 113–31; F. G. Downing, “Redaction Criticism: Josephus’ *Antiquities* and the Synoptic Gospels (I),” *JSNT* 8 (1980): 46–65, and F. G. Downing, “Redaction Criticism: Josephus’ *Antiquities* and the Synoptic Gospels (II),” *JSNT* 9 (1980): 29–48. The Downing studies show the array of things that Josephus employs between his accounts in omitting, adding, rearranging, compiling, and conflating. The advantage of such analysis is we can compare extant sources and are dealing with one author.

<sup>17</sup>Plutarch, *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin Books, 1960), 13.

Now that in writing my *Parallel Lives* I have reached the end of those periods in which theories can be tested by argument or where history can find a solid foundation in fact, I might very well follow their example and say of remoter ages, "All that lies beyond are prodigies and fables, the province of poets and romancers, where nothing is certain or credible."

What is interesting here is clear distinction between history and how it should be grounded. Fable-romance is not history and reflects a genre that roams into the fog of the past with little to be able to substantiate what took place.

Still Plutarch found it reasonable to pursue Romulus with a parallel involving the founder of Athens, Theseus. He did so stating his hope this way:

Let us hope, then, that I shall succeed in purifying fable, and make her submit to reason and take on the appearance of history. But when she obstinately defies probability and refuses to admit any element of the credible, I shall throw myself on the indulgence of my readers and of those who can listen with forbearance to the tales of antiquity.

As you read Plutarch, he often notes his sources, who reported what, and where agreement and disagreement lie with his sources. He makes some attempt to sort things out as best as he can. He does what he can to try and get as close to history as his temporal distance will permit. As with other ancient historians, the issue of successful execution remains to be assessed, but the task is seen clearly here.

A second text is found in *Alexander* 1.<sup>18</sup> As it discusses his comparison of Alexander with Julius Caesar, this citation is so vivid and revealing I cite it in full.

The careers of these men embrace such a multitude of events that my preamble shall consist of nothing more than this one plea: if I do not record all their most celebrated achievements or describe any of them exhaustively, but merely summarize for the most part what they accomplished, I ask my readers not to regard this as a fault. For I am writing biography, not history, and the truth is that the most brilliant exploits often tell us nothing of the virtues or vices of the men who performed them, while on the other hand a chance remark or a joke may reveal far more of a man's character than the mere feat of winning battles in which thousands fall, or a marshaling of great armies, or laying siege to cities. When a portrait painter sets out to create a likeness, he relies above all upon the face and the expression of the eyes and pays less attention to the other parts of the body; in the same way it is my task to dwell upon those actions which illuminate the workings of the soul, and by this means to create a portrait of each man's life. I leave the story of his greatest struggles and achievements to be told by others.

This citation is fascinating because of two distinctions it makes: between history and biography and between a detailed account, which is linked to history, versus a more selective and anecdotal approach, which is tied to biography. The Gospels fit well into this characterization, although it might be better said that biography is a certain kind of history writing in contrast to tracing a country or a movement, which is more like an ethnography. Biography focuses on what great individuals can teach us. The result is that achievements are summarized and events may be left less developed

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<sup>18</sup> Plutarch, *The Age of Alexander*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin Books, 1973), 252.

than they could be or given less context (or even sequencing) than would be the case if the larger movement encased in a history was the main concern. This move to biography is Plutarch's choice. His remarks are something of a confessional. It means he chose to be selective and "creative" in his packaging of the events and experiences he chronicles. Just as his choice of pairing is a literary move to attempt to compare Athens and Rome, so also is his move to be biographical. He argues it frees him up from certain other obligations in light of other more edifying goals.

The crucial reminder here is that there are kinds of creativity that run on a spectrum in ancient historical portrayal. One type of creativity is structural or literary in moving things along topically or in summarizing, collapsing, comparing, or paraphrasing. The other type of creativity is more comprehensive. With it what did not happen or had not a possibility of happening is said to have taken place. One type connects to history and may be impacted by the perspective brought to what is described. The other is disconnected from history and is a work of the author really telling us nothing about the author's subject, being strictly a reflection of the author. It appears the authors we have surveyed know this difference. They are comfortable with one type of creativity but are less comfortable, as much as they are able, to avoid the second type.<sup>19</sup>

### 2.10. *Lucian (Second Century CE)*

The fullest ancient treatment of how to write history comes from an essay by Lucian with that very title.<sup>20</sup> We can only summarize key points in this longer work.

At the start, Lucian notes that writing history is not "easily organized or assembled without effort." It "takes careful thought" (*How to Write* 5). Next he notes that the goal is not praise of the key figure but "recording events." He goes on, "History, on the other hand, cannot tolerate introducing a lie, even for a moment, any more than doctors say the windpipe can endure anything swallowed in it" (7). Fable, eulogy, and exaggeration should be avoided (8). Later he complains about historians who get localities wrong (24), omit or mishandle key events (27), or "contrive or invent whatever comes to an ill-tamed tongue" (32).

Speaking positively, he argues for two qualities: "insight into statecraft and powers of expression" (34). He notes not everyone has these skills. Then he says this: "The single task of a historian is to tell things as they happened" (39). Truth is to be put over enmity in handling opponents (39). "You must sacrifice to truth alone, ignoring everything else" (39). Thucydides and Herodotus are seen as examples (42). He is to explain the "subject-matter as lucidly as he can" (44). "Careful, painstaking, and repeated enquiry" are involved in gathering details about events (47). Ideal is that he is a witness himself but, if not, rely on the "least biased informants and those least likely to suppress or add anything" (47). He then puts together a credible account of things. There is to be no "distortion, false colours, or alteration" (51). Their job is to give the account form like a sculptor working with his materials (51). In the case of speeches, the language has to fit the character and subject, but one can "act the orator and display your rhetorical powers" (58). On using myths, he says, "set it out for your audience to make their own conjectures about it" (60). One writes for posterity (62). He closes with this summary: "Well,

<sup>19</sup> Of course it is another question whether they actually are sufficiently aware of the difference as they seek to fill in gaps in the first type of creative move so that the line they take is really carefully reflective of the roots of the events they portray. Here the actual care and biases of the author may impact the results.

<sup>20</sup> C. D. N. Costa, trans. *Lucian: Selected Dialogues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 181–202.

that is the spirit in which history should be written: with truthfulness and a regard for future hopes, rather than with flattery aimed at getting pleasure out of present praise” (63).

What we see again is more care given to events than to speech, but truthfulness is still the goal within all of this.

### 2.11. *Cassius Dio (150–235 CE)*

This historian argues he has read nearly everything about the Romans.<sup>21</sup> He makes it clear that he made a selection of materials as he writes in *Roman History*, saying, “I have not included it all in my history, but only what I have seen fit to select” (fragment 1.2–3). In this, he sounds like 2 Maccabees but unlike Arrian, whose accounts are more fulsome. Dio also notes in the same discussion that although he has used fine style, that should not lead anyone to question the truthfulness of what is presented. His goal has been to be “equally exact” in style and truthfulness. He also used the “clearest accounts” (1.3). Later Dio changes direction. He notes he took ten years to collect information and twelve years to compose (73.23). He notes he has set everything down, having gathered it from reading, hearsay, and what he has seen (53.19.6). In his case he has reported on all that has been given out, whether it be the truth or not (53.19.6).

So it appears Dio has not done much sifting. His account is more complete than those who seek to summarize, but he still has made choices. Our spectrum of historical writing goes from full to somewhat edited down to greatly summarized. Dio is in the middle group.

### 2.12. *Apollonius/Philostratus (Late Second Century/Middle Third Century CE)*

In some ways, much like Arrian, this work does not belong in this discussion as the writer is a century plus from the events described.<sup>22</sup> Yet he still sets forth how history should be done. The sources for his work are cities where Apollonius was loved, from temples whose rites he restored, accounts left by others, and some of his own letters (*Life* 1.2.2–3).<sup>23</sup> His key source is Damis who is said to have left notebooks that a member of his family gave to the empress Julia who commissioned Apollonius’s work.<sup>24</sup> Maximus of Aegeae was a second source, as was a will left by Apollonius. There is no discussion of how these sources were handled in relationship to each other besides assembling them.

### 2.13. *Summary*

Greco-Romans and, to some extent, Josephus discussed how to do history. They knew what was required and also faced up to the hurdles such efforts involved. In general, they understood that getting events right was important and was a priority, while more room seemed to be given to speech for summary. Eyewitnesses and direct sources along with authors who could be trusted were

<sup>21</sup> Citations from Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 9 vols., trans. Earnest Cary, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914–27).

<sup>22</sup> Derrenbacker (*Ancient Composition*, 70) appears to identify this work as from the first century. It is not. Philostratus wrote this in the 220s or 230s. See C. Jones’s note on page 3 in his Loeb translation of this work; Philostratus, *Apollonius of Tyana: Books I–IV*, ed. and trans. Christopher Jones, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

<sup>23</sup> The way the verses are numbered in this work can be confusing. So I note the Loeb page on which the citations are found, on pages 37, 39.

<sup>24</sup> More on this source appears in 1.19.1 (p. 77). Philostratus notes how full this scrapbook was.



preferred. Some works sifted their material. Others simply laid out all they knew. Now these texts laid out the ideal. What historians do can be another matter, but at least the target and expectations were clear. Whatever room there was for some summarizing and crafting of the material, the expectation was that the historian was to seek to be careful about what they purported to be historical.

### 3. A FEW EXAMPLES OF GOSPEL EXECUTION

What we have seen gives us some indication of what we might expect from ancient writings, including the Gospels. Events are to be narrated with care. However, summarizing of speeches in more general terms is likely. The core of the event is the focus. That something happened may be more important than pinning down the exact sequence tied to it, because the key is the theme or lesson it portrays. Fable, invention, and excessive bias are to be avoided. Some writers go for detail. Others summarize, leaving the details to others. Everyone is making choices. So how might this work?

I take two of the sixteen examples Licona raises in chapter 4 on “Parallel Pericopes.”<sup>25</sup> Obviously one needs to work through all his examples, taking each on its own terms. Still the two I choose show the range of what I think is possible in thinking through how the gospel texts work in an ancient historical reporting context.

#### 4. WHO IS THE GREATEST? [LICONA NO. 9] (MARK 9:33–37; 10:13–16, 35–45; MATTHEW 18:1–6; 19:13–15; 20:20–28; LUKE 9:46–48; 18:15–17; 22:24–30)

The listing here is already revealing.<sup>26</sup> Multiple gospels raise the issue in multiple settings *within their own account*. This would tell us the issue of who is the greatest is a theme of Jesus’ ministry raised more than once, as Licona notes. It stands at the core of issues of character Jesus would have regularly addressed. It warns us not to be too restrictive about how the tradition works, assuming that a theme is recorded only once for one setting with one left to figure out which setting is the original. Sometimes we can be too quick to limit the possibilities here.

Here are the possible moves Licona presents from this tradition:

- Matthew transfers by having the disciples initiate the discussion rather than Jesus.
- Matthew displaces a portion of Jesus’ teaching and transplants it in a different context.
- Mark transfers the mother’s request to her sons, since they were probably the initiators or Matthew adds her in order to cast James and John in a better light.
- Matthew substitutes “kingdom” for “glory.”
- Luke probably paraphrased a teaching of Jesus before displacing and transplanting it in a different context.

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<sup>25</sup> Licona, *Why Are There Differences in the Gospels?*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 139–42.

- Luke either paraphrases and substitutes terms or uses a different source.
- Mark or Matthew substituted a term.

The moves Licona posits here are possible on the principle that themes can take precedence over sequence. One of the ways literary compression can work and save space is to summarize a topic in one setting or collapse a broad teaching of a theme into one setting. One interesting feature here is that the issue of humility and service that Luke 22 highlights also connects nicely with the act of foot washing in John 13, suggesting an overlap. Luke 22 has the look of a final summary on the theme also taught elsewhere, which is exactly how John 13 also functions.

Now does all this potential rearrangement impact the historicity of the account when it comes to what Jesus taught and emphasized? Do we lose anything in terms of the example Jesus sets? How Jesus sets an example is the expressed concern and focus of the historiography we traced. In the end, nothing at that level is impacted. What is uncertain in sequencing and in some detail<sup>27</sup> is consistent in what is being taught and the example set forth.

### **5. JESUS BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN AND PETER'S DENIAL [LICONA 14 (#332–33)] (MARK 14:53–72; MATTHEW 26:57–75; LUKE 22:55–71; JOHN 18:13–27)**

There is a lot going on in these parallels.<sup>28</sup> It is full of choices. Most obvious is a decision when to give the denials. Mark and Matthew opt to have the denials follow the Sanhedrin examination, Luke reverses the order: opening with the denials. However we conceive of the synoptic gospels' use of Mark (as first or last), it is clear one gospel writer made a distinct choice on sequence. This proves that sequence sometimes is of lesser significance in making a choice than other factors.<sup>29</sup>

The other interesting feature in the denials is who did the accusing of Peter. In Matt 26:69–75, it is a slave girl, another female, and then those standing there. The locales are in the courtyard, outside, and unspecified. In Mark 14:66–72 we have one of the slave girls, the slave girl, and bystanders. The locales are in the courtyard, out at the gateway, and unspecified. In Luke 22:54–62, it is slave girl, another person—a man, and another. The locales are sat down in a courtyard, a little later, and about an hour later. I note time instead of location because that is what Luke does here. There is a note closing the account that Peter went outside after the rooster crowed but what is not entirely clear is outside of what, the courtyard or leaving the locale as a whole? So the locale is not as much of an issue as the questioners of Peter.

When it comes to the questioners, the one difference is on the second denial. Did the same slave girl (Mark) or another female (Matthew) challenge Peter? Now here are other things the descriptions tell

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<sup>27</sup> Even an issue as to who initiates a discussion can be complex. Did the disciples put their mother up to it, so their request came from them? If so, this is not unlike the fact that in Matthew 8, the centurion seeks Jesus out for a healing, while in Luke 7, commissioned Jewish emissaries speak on his behalf. The point here is that the text as a whole plus the genuine ancient possibilities within common rules of practice show us there can be more going on than a single, and potentially flat, reading may indicate. What is important to observe in the differences is that the event's core teaching, and thus the point of presenting the account, is still consistently portrayed.

<sup>28</sup> Licona, *Why Are There Differences?* 156–61.

<sup>29</sup> It may well be the difference reflects a simultaneous action or events that overlapped to a degree, but note that none of the writers chose to mix the events in a back-and-forth manner, probably for simplicity's sake. They also made distinct choices. Simply mentioning that something took place becomes more important than possessing any real intent about giving sequence.

us. There were several bystanders. There was drama about what was taking place. Peter's first denial introduced tension into the scene. Actually, Mark may be ambiguous here. He refers to "the" slave girl. That refers back to the earlier slave girls from which one is now noted. That could be the same girl as the first denial, which could be a natural way to take it, or simply one of the others. But let's assume it is a different female. The situation we may well have is that the first girl initiated the charge and another, a new accuser to identify Peter, joined in, making a fresh bearer of the challenge. One writer chooses one way to go, while another chooses the other. One writer is concerned to trace the sequence. The other is concerned to show a stack of challengers. In the fog that was the group and eventually a group challenge, the tradition tied to the scene and its summarization may be complex or go in slightly distinct ways on detail. This suggestion strikes some as false harmonization, but it also reflects the potential, complex realities an event can possess especially when we know it is being summarized.

In the examination scene, there are timing differences. It is clearly night in Matthew and Mark, while Luke has the questions coming when it became day. The difference here may be a clue as to why Luke reversed the order between the examination and denials. The key questions came late in the sequence of time Jesus was with the leaders. It *may* even represent a later review of the gathered evidence before they go to Pilate.<sup>30</sup> The Jewish leadership had to get this right before Pilate. To take Jesus before him and have the procurator release him would be a PR disaster for the leadership.

Here is Licona's listing of issues that the parallels raise:

- Matthew substitutes by using a synonym.
- In all of the Synoptics, the accusations against Peter are offered as a statement. In John, they are always offered in the form of a question.
- Luke may have translated the dialogue between Jesus and the Jewish leaders into terms that would have been clearer to his Gentile readers.
- Luke reverses Mark's order of Jesus being condemned and the abuse given him afterward, placing the abuse prior to his condemnation. This is similar to his apparent reversal of the order in which Matthew narrates the second and third temptations and when the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom.
- The discrepancies in details between Mark and Luke pertaining to who accused Peter of being affiliated with Jesus and the specific locations where the accusations occurred suggest the event itself was remembered while some of the peripheral details were not. Thus, one or more of the evangelists reported the details as he or his sources recalled them, crafted, or creatively reconstructed them as part of their literary artistry.

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<sup>30</sup>The italicized use of "may" here is intended. What I suggest here *could* be why we have the other difference. It is something that cannot be shown one way or the other. In accounts we know are summarizing, options do remain, especially when events of some duration are being overviewed. In yet another example and in another way, that something took place is more important than sequence. However, if my suggestion is the case, then we have less prioritizing than we may think. The difference may just reflect a difference in how to summarize. Also if this alternative is the case, where the gathered evidence is being reviewed and summarized for presentation to Pilate, then the difference in the summarizing of the speech may be tied to the review taking place. All of these possibilities are reminders that when we are piecing together this variety of witnesses, we need to speak carefully and humbly about options taken and what we *know* took place or what *may* have taken place. All of us are filling in blanks. But note again how the core of what took place is consistent between the accounts.

Where does our look at the texts and the ancient context leave us? Our survey of the ancients on how speech is handled shows us that the core of the denials is historically in place, even as the wording of challenge and response may vary.<sup>31</sup> It is likely the challenges brought a give and take. Peter is also moving around while hanging around, a sign he is nervous about being identified. This also may explain the variation in peripheral detail in the tradition about a running, ongoing dispute. A resulting mix of statements and questioning is possible. Summary has simplified in distinct directions. All follow noted conventions of speech in such reporting. The evangelists are playing by the rules of convention here.

Luke may well be summarizing or translating dialogue into Greek terms as Licona suggests. Luke may also be presenting another facet of the hearing that was a resolution of a long process, a resolution taken as all had arrived. If so, then we may be getting a supplement to Matthew and Mark and less translating. There is no real way to decide between these options.

The sequencing of condemnation and abuse is another example of something taking place being more important than sequence. In a tightly sequenced set of related events, distinct authors can make distinct choices in ordering. Nothing of substance is impacted by the difference.

Licona probably overstates the options under the last category of discrepancies. Locations do not seem to be in opposition. The choice of who objected may be related to the complexity of the audience makeup, authorial or the tradition's choices about how to relate the details, and an exchange that took place in a context of summarizing reports feeding into the tradition. Rather than having error of detail or memory in sources, we may have an abundance of it variously recalled and reported. So recall is possibly at work here, as is choice in crafting. However, creative reconstruction recedes in likelihood given the other options the sources raise. The testimony our sources as a whole give us about the attitude toward invention also speaks skeptically in this direction.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The journey through ancient sources and two examples in the gospels has been revealing. Ancients knew what history should try and do. They also knew what historical writing should try and avoid. The task of summarizing meant choices. It raises options for us we must take into consideration when thinking about the rules ancients played by in recording and presenting history. The gospels seem to fit well into that world. It means there is greater room for options in how material gets handled than some may have considered in the past. Yet the presence of additional options does not undercut the core historicity of the texts that exercise such choices. Summary, the grouping of themes, and the presence of potential multiple sources make our job of historical reconstruction complex but not in a way that undercuts the fact we can still trust our gospel texts as historically reliable in the core of what they claim, even in the midst of differences between parallel accounts. The way of ancient historiography reveals such a take on these materials fits the setting of the gospels.

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<sup>31</sup>This fits with the *verba/vox* discussion that I have treated now for a long time. Both quotation and summary can be historically accurate. D. L. Bock, "Precision and Accuracy: Making Distinctions in the Cultural Context That Give Us Pause in Pitting the Gospels against Each Other," in *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith? A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture*, ed. J. K. Hoffmeier and D. R. Magary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 367–81; and D. L. Bock, "The Words of Jesus in the Gospel: Live, Jive or Memorex," in *Jesus under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents the Historical Jesus*, ed. M. J. Wilkins and J. P. Moreland (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 73–99.

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# From, To, In, and Through Caesarea: Herod's Imperial City as Significant Narrative Setting and Literary Linking Device in the Acts of the Apostles

JONATHAN E. SOYARS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Acts of the Apostles contains copious references to the geography of the Greco-Roman world. Jerusalem might seem to take center stage.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, Caesarea Maritima,<sup>2</sup> a Herodian city on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, is another “major geographical location and reference point in Acts.”<sup>3</sup> It is at least “the second most important city in Palestine” for the author.<sup>4</sup> Caesarea was so

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This chapter is dedicated to Professor James H. Charlesworth, who introduced me to the historical and symbolic geography of the Levant during my studies at Princeton Theological Seminary. I first visited Caesarea Maritima with Professor Charlesworth in 2006, and his fascination with the ancient city sparked my own. A previous version of this essay was presented at the 2007 SBL International Meeting in Vienna. I am grateful to participants in the Methods in New Testament Study Group for their constructive criticisms.

<sup>1</sup>On the importance of Jerusalem for Luke-Acts, see, e.g., Mikeal C. Parsons, “The Place of Jerusalem on the Lukan Landscape: An Exercise in Symbolic Cartography,” in *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays in Honor of Joseph B. Tyson*, ed. Richard P. Thompson and Thomas E. Phillips (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), 155–71. More specifically, the centrality of Jerusalem within Luke-Acts has been suggested via influence from *Jubilees* 8–9 by James M. Scott, *Geography in Early Judaism and Christianity: The Book of Jubilees*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 113 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), esp. 56. For critical analyses of Scott’s proposal, see Matthew Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 146 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 33–5; John M. Vonder Bruegge, *Mapping Galilee in Josephus, Luke, and John: Critical Geography and the Construction of an Ancient Space*, ed. Cilliers Breytenbach and Martin Goodman, *Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* 93 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 111–13.

<sup>2</sup>The city was also known in antiquity as Caesarea Palaestinae and should not be confused with Caesarea Philippi, which was also known as Baniyas; in this essay, “Caesarea” refers solely to Caesarea Maritima.

<sup>3</sup>Carl R. Holladay, *Acts*, New Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2016), 201 n.71.

<sup>4</sup>Martin Hengel, “Luke the Historian and the Geography of Palestine in the Acts of the Apostles,” in *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), 114; Hengel is explicitly followed by Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker



important to Luke,<sup>5</sup> and presumably so well-known to his ancient audience, that introducing it at length was unnecessary.<sup>6</sup> But its significance in Acts is not straightforward for many modern readers, so this essay explores two aspects of how Luke's "subtle but creative use of the lands and cities of Palestine and the Mediterranean basin to set the scene for his story" extends to the city.<sup>7</sup> I refute the notion that Luke had no specific interest in deploying Caesarea strategically within his narrative or that his seemingly cryptic mentions of it are essentially pointless or merely transferred from underlying sources.<sup>8</sup> Luke was not entirely ignorant of geography of the region or the cities within it.<sup>9</sup> To the contrary, he was very interested in Caesarea in particular and seems to have known quite a bit about it.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the city seems to have "held [his] attention" over the course of composing his narrative.<sup>11</sup> Admittedly, a comprehensive account of Luke's symbolic geography is impossible to compile.<sup>12</sup> But certain aspects of the purported "mystery" of his narrative use of geography, particularly as it pertains to Caesarea, can be solved.<sup>13</sup>

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Academic, 2012), 1732. For an extensive discussion of the authorship and compositional chronology of Acts, which largely adopts traditional positions, see Keener, *Acts*, 402–16; cf. Richard I. Pervo, *Acts*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 5–7.

<sup>5</sup> I assume the common authorship of Luke-Acts and refer to its implied author as "Luke" throughout. Likewise, although "Saul" only becomes "Paul" in Acts 13:9, for the sake of consistency I adopt the latter characterization.

<sup>6</sup> Joan Taylor, "Paul's Caesarea," in *The Urban World and the First Christians*, ed. Steve Walton, Paul R. Trebilco, and David W. J. Gill (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017), 43; similarly, James D. G. Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, vol. 2 of *Christianity in the Making* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 387–8.

<sup>7</sup> Edward Mazich, "Geography as Narrative in Luke-Acts," *TBT* 41:2 (2003): 95. A comparable assessment is offered by Matthew L. Skinner, *Locating Paul: Places of Custody as Narrative Settings in Acts 21-28*, *Academica Biblica* 13 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 27: "the settings of Acts are indispensable for a comprehensive understanding of Acts as a narrative account."

<sup>8</sup> These suggestions are implicit in the discussion of Acts 18:22 by Jacob Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, *Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament* 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 467–8. Similarly, see Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 2008), 134.

<sup>9</sup> Critical commentaries routinely assert Luke's lack of familiarity with the geography of the province. See, among many others, Gerhard Schneider on Paul's trip under guard from Jerusalem to Caesarea in Acts 23:23: "Lukas hat von der Entfernung kaum eine zutreffende Vorstellung"; *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 2 vols., Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 5 (Freiburg: Herder, 1980), 2:340. A far more positive assessment is attested throughout Colin J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*, ed. Conrad H. Gempf, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 49 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1989).

<sup>10</sup> C. K. Barrett, *Preliminary Introduction and Commentary on Acts I-XIV*, vol. 1 of *The Acts of the Apostles*, *International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 51 n.3. Barrett also claims, "The author so wrote as to claim contact with Caesarea; he had been there" (51); similarly, Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, 388. Keener, *Acts*, 1732, develops a more substantial version of this claim: "Caesarea was likely [Luke's] home base."

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Marguerat, *Les Actes des apôtres (1-12)*, *Commentaire du Nouveau Testament* 5a (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2007), 372 n.31.

<sup>12</sup> For an excellent analysis of symbolic geography and Luke-Acts, which reflects the scholarly turn to discussions of conceptual space, see John S. Kloppenborg, "Luke's Geography: Knowledge, Ignorance, Sources, and Spatial Conception," in *Luke on Jesus, Paul and Christianity: What Did He Really Know?*, ed. Joseph Verheyden and John S. Kloppenborg, *Biblical Tools and Studies* 29 (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 101–43. Kloppenborg correctly observes that "topography is critical to [Luke's] project" (102).

<sup>13</sup> For example, the reason for Paul's landing at Caesarea only so that he could travel briefly to Jerusalem before heading to Antioch, where he stayed for some time and therefore presumably intended to go all along (18:22–23), is labeled a "Rätsel" by Klaus Haacker, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, *Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* 5, ed. Ekkehard W. Stegemann, Angelika Strotmann, and Klaus Wengst (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2019), 313. The same language was used by Ernst Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 7th ed., *Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament* 6 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 525: "das Rätsel der geheimnisvollen Reise des Paulus."

This essay begins by surveying Luke's references to Caesarea in Acts and summarizing key aspects of the city's history up through the first century CE<sup>14</sup>. Then, in coordination with that survey and summary, it assesses previous scholarly analyses of Caesarea within the symbolic geography of Acts. That geography is "complex, even jagged, and full of movement,"<sup>15</sup> but it is also fundamentally theological,<sup>16</sup> a point rarely made in connection to Caesarea. I show that Caesarea is particularly significant in the narrative of Acts for two major related reasons. First, because of the historical role that the city played as a major seaport, seat of Roman civil and political power in the region, and center of cultural engagement and economic exchange between its citizens, Judea, and the rest of the so-called civilized world, in Acts it serves as an important *narrative setting* that reflects the city's demographics and history. This aspect of Caesarea's significance has been recognized in scholarship, although it has been explained in different (and often irreconcilable) ways. But it has not previously been associated with another of Caesarea's functions in Acts. In addition to serving as a narrative setting important in its own right, in Acts Caesarea also serves as a *literary linking device*. Paul's travels through the city symbolically connect those communities that he encountered on his various journeys and by extension the other communities that readers of Acts inhabit. They also symbolically connect such communities and readers with the roots of the Jesus movement in Jerusalem and the significance and theological implications of important events that Luke narrates in Caesarea itself, including the conversion of Cornelius and Paul's trial before he sails for Rome.

## 2. CAESAREA IN THE NARRATIVE OF ACTS

Acts attests nearly ninety specific geographical locations or regions, but certain locales obviously appear more often than others.<sup>17</sup> While Jerusalem may be the most prominent city on Luke's "geographical horizon"<sup>18</sup> or "mental map,"<sup>19</sup> Caesarea is indisputably significant

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<sup>14</sup>Even if the arguments by Richard I. Pervo, *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2006), and others were to conclusively establish the composition of Acts in the early second century, against the scholarly consensus that assigns it to the late first, this roughly bounded historical period would still be relevant.

<sup>15</sup>Holladay, *Acts*, 47. For an exploration of the significance of movement in Luke-Acts, particularly as it pertains to hospitality and migration in the present, see Eric D. Barreto, "A Gospel on the Move: Practice, Proclamation, and Place in Luke-Acts," *Int* 72 (2018): 175–87.

<sup>16</sup>Marguerat, *Actes (1-12)*, 20.

<sup>17</sup>Twelve cities or regions are explicitly mentioned more than five times: Antioch, Asia, Caesarea, Cilicia, Damascus, Egypt, Ephesus, Jerusalem, Joppa, Judea, Macedonia, and Samaria. Only Jerusalem, Caesarea, and Egypt are mentioned fifteen times or more.

<sup>18</sup>See esp. James M. Scott, "Luke's Geographical Horizon," in *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting*, vol. 2 of *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*, ed. David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 483–544, esp. 522–44. Scott detects in Acts "a confluence of two worlds—the Graeco-Roman and the Jewish" (522), but he does not explicitly reference Caesarea. Dean Philip Bechard, *Paul Outside the Walls: A Study of Luke's Socio-Geographical Universalism in Acts 14:8-20*, *Analecta biblica* 143 (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2000), 338, describes not confluence but competition between "Jewish images of the world" and "Graeco-Roman concepts and traditions." See his summary of Luke's "geographical horizon" on pp. 338–42, which only references Caesarea in passing (342), as well as his broader discussion of putative Jewish and Graeco-Roman sources on pp. 171–231 and pp. 233–353, respectively.

<sup>19</sup>Loveday C. A. Alexander has published an assessment of the narrative toponomy of Acts, with a comparison of the mental maps of Luke, Paul, Chariton, and Xenophon and an emphasis on the travel narratives in Acts: "Narrative Maps: Reflections on the Toponymy of Acts," in *Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context: A Classicist Looks at the Acts of the Apostles*, *Early Christianity in Context*; *Library of New Testament Studies* 289 (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 97–131. Alexander's essay

too.<sup>20</sup> Luke refers to it fifteen times, even though it is mentioned nowhere else in the New Testament.<sup>21</sup> The sheer numeric frequency of this use in Acts warrants narrative analysis alongside the city of David.

Despite the city's significance in Acts, the residents of Caesarea are not included in the extensive Pentecost list of 2:9–11. The city eventually appears at 8:40, where it is mentioned as the evangelist Philip's ultimate destination after his encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch.<sup>22</sup> From this point forward in Acts, Caesarea and its inhabitants will repeatedly take center stage in the narrative, particularly in reference to the gentile mission and confrontations with powerful Jewish and Roman civil authorities. A number of passing references are made to Caesarea too. For example, upon his return to Jerusalem from Damascus (9:26–30), Paul encounters certain "Hellenists" who intend to kill him, and in order to escape, believers send him to Tarsus by way of Caesarea. Paul's departure from Caesarea in 9:30 foreshadows the other sea journeys that he will take throughout the book, inaugurating an important Lukan *leitmotif*.<sup>23</sup> Following Peter's healing of Aeneas in Lydda (9:21–35) and the raising of Tabitha in Joppa (9:36–43), the story shifts back to accounts of the gentile mission's initial successes in Caesarea for the next chapter and a half.

The account of the conversion of the Roman centurion Cornelius that follows in ch. 10 and Peter's defense of it in ch. 11 are important elements in the depiction of the Jerusalem community's initial mission to gentiles (10:1–48; cf. 11:1–18).<sup>24</sup> Acts situates the first explicitly gentile conversions in Caesarea, where Luke says that "the holy spirit fell upon all those who heard the word" (10:44), presumably including others besides Cornelius, such as his family members and friends (10:24). Such conversions would presumably have been somewhat common in the metropolis of Caesarea, which as we will see was markedly diverse.<sup>25</sup> Regardless, within the narrative of Acts, Cornelius's conversion explicitly signals that what began in Jerusalem at Pentecost has made its way down from there to the Mediterranean coast. Interestingly, Acts presents numerous believers in Caesarea

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does not include specific reference to the relationship of narrative toponymy to the overarching theological trajectory of Acts. On Luke's "mental map," see also Kloppenborg, "Luke's Geography," 133.

<sup>20</sup> See also the narrative surveys of Caesarea in Acts in Lee A. Johnson, "A Literary Guide to Caesarea Maritima," in *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Caesarea Maritima*, ed. Terence L. Donaldson, Studies in Christianity and Judaism 8 (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 51–2; and Benjamin R. Wilson, "Jew-Gentile Relations and the Geographic Movement of Acts 10:1–11:18," *CBQ* 80 (2018): 88–96, which focuses on chs. 10–11. The most extensive is Taylor, "Paul's Caesarea," 43–55.

<sup>21</sup> Acts 8:40; 9:30; 10:1, 24; 11:11; 12:19; 18:22; 21:8, 16; 23:23, 33; 25:1, 4, 6, 13. The third most frequently named city in Acts is Antioch in Syria (fourteen times: 6:5, 11:19, 20, 22, 26 [*bis*], 27, 13:1, 14:26, 15:22, 23, 30, 35, 18:22). Taylor, "Paul's Caesarea," 43, mistakenly includes a reference to Syrian Antioch at 11:25 and omits the occurrence at 14:26.

<sup>22</sup> Following a tradition of German-language scholarship, Rudolf Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 2 vols., Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 5 (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1986), 1:287, 289, attributes Acts 8:40b (and thus the reference to Caesarea) to Lukan redaction, although he concedes that the putative pre-Lukan source might have included a reference to Philip's missionary activity near the coast (294); see esp. the bibliography at 287 n.6. Jürgen Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, Das Neue Testament Deutsch 5, ed. Gerhard Friedrich and Peter Stuhlmacher (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), 139, argues for the authenticity of v. 40, as noted by Pesch.

<sup>23</sup> Taylor, "Paul's Caesarea," 46.

<sup>24</sup> The literature on the characterization and significance of Cornelius in Acts is vast. In addition to the commentaries, see, e.g., Bonnie J. Flessen, *An Exemplary Man: Cornelius and Characterization in Acts 10* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> Kenneth G. Holum, Robert L. Hohlfelder, Robert L. Vann, and Roberta Blender Maltese, eds., *King Herod's Dream: Caesarea on the Sea* (New York: Norton, 1988), 157, suggests that "the crowded, alien, and intense social universe of the city definitely encouraged [them]." The claim is not elaborated or defended.

before the Cornelius event (i.e., Philip and his family [8:40, 21:8]). Their presence before Peter's arrival anticipates the presence of believers in Rome before Paul's arrival (28:15). In other words, as Luke tells the story, the conversions of Cornelius and those present with him and Peter in Caesarea (10:44, 11:15) do not inaugurate but add to a preexistent faithful community there.

One chapter later, Herod Agrippa I executes James and John (12:1–2) and arrests Peter (12:3–19a), probably in Jerusalem, given the temporal reference to the festival of unleavened bread.<sup>26</sup> Luke says that Herod Agrippa then “went down from Judea and stayed at Caesarea” (12:19b), implying that the former does not include the latter.<sup>27</sup> A description of Herod Agrippa's unusual death follows in 12:20–23.<sup>28</sup> Because he neither gave glory to God nor prevented his subjects from glorifying himself, Luke describes how an angel of the Lord struck him;<sup>29</sup> he was then eaten by worms and died (v. 23), presumably in Caesarea.<sup>30</sup> Whether the details of Herod Agrippa's death are historical does not seem to be Luke's primary concern. Instead, its significance should be understood in light of the transition that links this passage with the one that follows: “The word of God spread and continued gaining adherents” (v. 24). Simply put, in Acts the spread of God's word cannot be stopped. Not even those who try to usurp the place of God will hinder the coming of God's spirit among all people.<sup>31</sup>

Following Herod's death in ch. 12, Caesarea does not reappear until the end of Paul's second so-called missionary journey.<sup>32</sup> Paul's second journey begins in Antioch, like the first, and it ends

<sup>26</sup> On Agrippa I, see Daniel R. Schwartz, *Agrippa I: The Last King of Judaea*, Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 23 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990).

<sup>27</sup> Taylor, “Paul's Caesarea,” 49, astutely observes that “in the narrative space of Acts Caesarea is configured as lying outside Judea” (see also comparable statements on p. 57); similarly, Hengel, “Luke the Historian,” 114. For a potential explanation, see Kloppenborg, “Luke's Geography,” 118–19. According to Pervo, *Acts*, 312 n.113, “the narrator appears to equate ‘Judea’ with ‘Jerusalem,’ a kind of synecdoche.”

<sup>28</sup> A similar account is famously given in Josephus, *Ant.* 19.343–50. For a comparison of the two, see Justin Taylor, *Commentaire Historique (Act. 9,1-18,22)*, vol. V of *Les Actes des deux apôtres*, Études bibliques. Nouvelle série 23 (Paris: Gabalda, 1994), 121–5; Keener, *Acts*, 1965–8. In light of the accounts' coherence, Pervo, *Acts*, 312–13 argues that “the hypothesis that Luke used Josephus is at least as strong as the alternatives.”

<sup>29</sup> Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity*, trans. Brian McNeil (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 43–4, suggests that the crowd's acclamation of Herod's voice as “of a god” (θεοῦ φωνή καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώπου, 12:22) was intended by Luke as a veiled criticism of Nero, whose high view of his own voice was well known and even referred to in the same way by Dio Cassius. Klauck develops this idea at greater length in “Des Kaisers schöne Stimme: Herrscherkritik in Apg 12,20-23,” in *Religion und Gesellschaft im frühen Christentum: Neutestamentliche Studien*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 152 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 251–67.

<sup>30</sup> For a brief discussion of this and other so-called “punitive miracles,” see Pervo, *Acts*, 52–3. Holladay, *Acts*, 255, includes Agrippa I among the “‘God-fighters’ who try to oppose the purposes of God but instead experience divine retribution”; see the comparanda at n.185.

<sup>31</sup> O. Wesley Allen, Jr. provides an extended discussion of Herod's death with particular attention to the narrative relationship between divine providence, retribution, apologetic, and exhortation in Luke-Acts. See *The Death of Herod: The Narrative and Theological Function of Retribution in Luke-Acts*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 158 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997).

<sup>32</sup> James D. G. Dunn has argued that we should abandon the language of Paul's second and third “missionary journeys” altogether and speak instead of his “Aegean mission”; *The Acts of the Apostles*, Epworth Commentaries (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 1996), 212–13. Dunn repeats this idea in *Beginning from Jerusalem*, 660–61. For support, in the latter work Dunn cites Johannes Weiss, *Earliest Christianity: A History of the Period A.D. 30-150*, ed. Frederick C. Grant (New York: Harper, 1959), 1:277; John Knox, *Chapters in a Life of Paul*, ed. Douglas R. A. Hare, rev. ed. (London: SCM Press, 1989), 25–6 (note esp. p. 26: “the visualization of Paul's life as an apostle in terms of three great missionary tours represents a later way of seeing and interpreting a career that originally did not appear so at all”); and L. Michael White, *From Jesus to Christianity* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 2004), ch. 8. Compare Daniel Marguerat, *Les Actes des Apôtres (13-28)*, Commentaire du Nouveau Testament Deuxième série 5b (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2015), 179: “Luc relate deux voyages

in Caesarea (15:30–18:22). Caesarea is not mentioned again until the conclusion of Paul’s third journey, which, like his second, also ends there (21:8). Thus, Caesarea serves as the explicit geographical *terminus* to the last two of Paul’s three missionary journeys. (This is important and enables Caesarea to function as a literary linking device, as will be discussed at greater length below.) It also sets up the first journey, so, at least in the memory of the reader, it is closely associated with that one as well. Furthermore, the city provides the starting point for Paul’s ultimate voyage to Rome (27:1–28:14), where he will go “from Caesarea to Caesar himself.”<sup>33</sup>

In Acts, Herod’s city is also the place where important characters live. Luke suggests that certain members of “the Way” were from Caesarea, including Philip the “evangelist, one of the seven,” who with his four prophesying daughters had a home there (21:8–9).<sup>34</sup> Luke’s mention of Philip’s prophesying daughters sets up an interesting encounter—which also takes place in Caesarea—between Paul and a prophet from Judea named Agabus. In Acts 21:10–14, Luke narrates how Agabus took Paul’s belt and bound his feet and hands with it, thereby anticipating Paul’s being bound and handed over in Jerusalem (v. 11b). In response, the narrator and the “locals” urge Paul not to go to Jerusalem (v. 12). Paul’s reply to them is similarly urgent: “I am ready not only to be bound but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus” (v. 13). Agabus’s prophecy and Paul’s response to it look forward to his arrest in Jerusalem, his subsequent trial in Caesarea, and his ultimate journey to Rome from Caesarea (21:27–28:31), where Agabus’s prophecy took place.

According to the narrative of Acts, Philip and his daughters, as well as Cornelius and those converted in chs. 10–11, were not the only believers who lived in Caesarea. Other unnamed “disciples” did too (21:16). This group might have included a certain Mnason of Cyprus, although the text is uncertain.<sup>35</sup> Perhaps these believers in Caesarea were among the “friends” or “companions” whom Felix did not bar from caring for Paul during his imprisonment (24:23), although on this point the narrative is silent. One detail, however, remains clear. What in Acts began as a movement in Jerusalem has grown to encompass Jews and gentiles alike, particularly those who inhabit Caesarea and the other cities and coastal regions visited by Peter and Paul.

In addition to the gentile mission and the centrality of faithful community, in Acts Caesarea is intimately connected with the politics and propaganda of Rome, as the city had been since its refounding in honor of the emperor by Herod.<sup>36</sup> The climax of the whole narrative of Acts—the account of Paul’s trial before Felix (24:2–25), his appeal to the emperor before Festus (25:6–12), and his speech before Agrippa II (26:1–32)—is entirely situated in Caesarea once Paul is transferred there from Jerusalem.

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missionnaires de Paul séparés par le concile de Jérusalem, et non trois.” Although I grant Weiss’s point that the traditional divisions are “hardly accurate,” they are descriptively “suitable enough,” as he admits, so for the sake of convention I still use them.

<sup>33</sup> Taylor, “Paul’s Caesarea,” 55.

<sup>34</sup> Like those of Cornelius, studies of the character of Philip are extensive. See, among others, F. Scott Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip in Acts: A Study of Roles and Relations*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 67 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992); and Axel von Dobbeler, *Der Evangelist Philippus in der Geschichte des Urchristentums: Eine prosopographische Skizze*, Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter 30 (Tübingen: Francke, 2000); Christopher R. Matthews, *Philip: Apostle and Evangelist: Configurations of a Tradition*, Supplements to *Novum Testamentum* 105 (Leiden: Brill, 2002); and P. Fabien, *Philippe “l’évangéliste” au tournant de la mission dans les Actes des apôtres: Philippe, Simon le magicien et l’eunuque éthiopien*, *Lectio divina* 232 (Paris: Cerf, 2010).

<sup>35</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 539, notes that “the syntax of vv. 15–16 is garbled.” Pervo then suggests that “it is not absolutely clear that the narrator locates Mnason in Jerusalem” (539–40 n.68).

<sup>36</sup> This is a key point stressed repeatedly, and in my judgment rightly, by Taylor, “Paul’s Caesarea,” as will be discussed below.



Ultimately, Caesarea becomes a stage for narrative conflict between Paul and imperial Rome, as well as the articulation of Luke's vision of the gospel's ultimate vindication by God. And, although Acts 27:1–2 does not identify it as such, Caesarea must be the place where Paul finally sets sail for Rome near the end of the book.

### 3. KEY ASPECTS OF CAESAREA'S HISTORY

Luke's many references to geography and space contribute to the persuasive potential of Acts.<sup>37</sup> Caesarea is no exception: the city's history looms large in the narrative. That history can be written from a variety of literary sources, particularly the works of Josephus, as might be expected.<sup>38</sup> Over the past few decades, professional excavations at Caesarea have uncovered material remains that have supplemented—and in some cases supplanted—evidence from ancient authors like him.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Skinner, *Locating Paul*, 27.

<sup>38</sup> Surveys of Josephus's references to Caesarea are given by Johnson, "Literary Guide," 38–43; and Taylor, "Paul's Caesarea," 55–7. For an extensive analysis of the function of Caesarea as a setting in Josephus's *Antiquities* and *War* and Acts, see R. Jackson Painter, "East Meets West: Caesarea Maritima in Josephus and the Acts of the Apostles" (presented at the Book of Acts Section, Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Washington DC, 2006). I am grateful to Professor Painter for generously sharing a prepublication version of his forthcoming paper.

<sup>39</sup> In addition to a number of important stand-alone articles and essays, substantial excavation reports published to date include the following: Charles T. Fritsch, ed., *Studies in the History of Caesarea Maritima*, vol. 1 of *The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima*, Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research Supplementary Studies 19, ed. David Noel Freedman (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press for the American Schools of Oriental Research, 1975); Lee I. Levine and Ehud Netzer, *Excavations at Caesarea Maritima, 1975, 1976, 1979: Final Report*, Qedem 21 (Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1986); Jeffrey A. Blakely, *The Pottery and Dating of Vault 1: Horreum, Mithraeum, and Later Uses*, vol. 4 of *The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima Excavation Reports* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1987); Avner Raban, *The Site and the Excavations*, vol. 1 of *The Harbours of Caesarea Maritima: Results of the Caesarea Ancient Harbour Excavation Project, 1980–1985*, ed. John Peter Oleson, BAR International Series 491 (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1989); John P. Oleson, Michael A. Fitzgerald, Andrew N. Sherwood, and Steven E. Sidebotham, *The Finds and the Ship*, vol. 2 of *The Harbours of Caesarea Maritima: Results of the Caesarea Ancient Harbour Excavation Project, 1980–1985*, ed. John Peter Oleson, BAR International Series 594 (Oxford: Tempus Reparatum, 1994); Clayton Miles Lehmann and Kenneth G. Holum, *The Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Caesarea Maritima*, vol. 5 of *The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima Excavation Reports* (Boston, MA: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2000); Jane DeRose Evans, *The Coins and the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine Economy of Palestine*, vol. 6 of *The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima Excavation Reports*, American Schools of Oriental Research Archaeological Reports 10 (Boston, MA: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2006); Joseph Patrich, *The Objects*, vol. 1 of *Archaeological Excavations at Caesarea Maritima Areas CC, KK, and NN: Final Report* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2008); Kenneth G. Holum, Jennifer A. Stabler, and Eduard G. Reinhardt, eds., *Caesarea Reports and Studies: Excavations 1995–2007 within the Old City and the Ancient Harbor*, BAR International Series 1784 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2008); Marylinda Govaars, Marie Spiro, and L. Michael White, *Field O: The "Synagogue" Site*, vol. 9 of *The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima Excavation Reports*, American Schools of Oriental Research Archaeological Reports 13 (Boston, MA: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2009); Avner Raban, *The Harbour of Sebastos (Caesarea Maritima) in Its Roman Mediterranean Context*, ed. Michal Artzy, Beverly Goodman, and Zvi Gal, BAR International Series 1930 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2009); Yosef Porath, *Herod's Circus and Related Buildings Part 1: Architecture and Stratigraphy*, vol. 1 of *Caesarea Maritima*, IAA Reports 53 (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2013); and Robert Jehu Bull, *The Mithraeum at Caesarea Maritima*, vol. 2 of *The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima Excavation Reports*, American Schools of Oriental Research Archaeological Reports 25 (Boston, MA: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2017). See also Robert Lindley Vann, ed., *Caesarea Papers: Straton's Tower, Herod's Harbour, and Roman and Byzantine Caesarea*, Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 5 (Ann Arbor, MI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1992); Avner Raban and Kenneth G. Holum, eds., *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective after Two Millennia*, Documenta et monumenta Orientis antiqui 21 (Leiden: Brill, 1996); Kenneth G. Holum, Avner Raban, and J. Patrich, *Caesarea Papers 2: Herod's Temple, the Provincial Governor's Praetorium and Granaries, the Later Harbor, a Gold Coin Hoard, and Other Studies*, Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 35 (Portsmouth, RI: JRA, 1999);



Taken together, ancient sources and the results of modern inquiry have much to teach us about Caesarea in antiquity.<sup>40</sup> Due to the constraints of space, a mere fraction of their key contributions will be surveyed here.<sup>41</sup>

In the fourth century BCE, a Sidonian king named Strato founded a small settlement at a Phoenician port that would eventually be named for him on an important trade route near the sea.<sup>42</sup> Later the Hasmonean Alexander Jannaeus took control of Strato's Tower, and Pompey subsequently transferred it to the province of Syria in 63 BCE. Octavian then granted it to Herod the Great in 30 BCE, and he refounded, expanded, and renamed it *Caesarea*—in honor of his Roman patron, Augustus Caesar.<sup>43</sup> Motivated in part by his political aspirations, Herod led a substantial building project at the site over the course of roughly a decade (*ca.* 22–10/9 BCE). This project included the construction of an enormous harbor, which Herod named Sebastos,<sup>44</sup> a hippodrome, an amphitheater, a system of sewers and an aqueduct to Mount Carmel, and public spaces for the games, including those of the Olympiad. These massive undertakings at Caesarea demonstrated Herod's commitment to and dependence on Rome, even as Caesarea and particularly its port proved politically and strategically useful to Roman governance of the eastern provinces.<sup>45</sup> Their construction also signaled Herod's desire to win the loyalty and confidence of the city's non-Jewish inhabitants, to which he appealed by building a magnificent temple to Augustus.<sup>46</sup>

Eventually, Caesarea became the seat of the Roman prefect and the capital of the newly established province of Judea (6 CE). Thereafter the city enjoyed prominence in the sociopolitical life of the region. Roman troops, and possibly entire cohorts, were stationed in the city (cf. Acts 10:1, 27:1).<sup>47</sup> It played an important strategic role in the first Jewish revolt (66–70 CE) that resulted in the destruction

Joseph Patrich, *Studies in the Archaeology and History of Caesarea Maritima: Caput Judaeae, Metropolis Palaestinae*, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 77 (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

<sup>40</sup>For studies on the history of Caesarea without extended reference to biblical texts in general or the narrative of Luke-Acts in particular, consult, among others, Lee I. Levine, *Caesarea under Roman Rule*, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 7 (Leiden: Brill, 1975); Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.-A.D. 135)*, ed. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, and Matthew Black, rev. ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 2:115–18; Joseph Ringel, *Césarée de Palestine: étude historique et archéologique* (Paris: Éditions Ophrys, 1975); Baruch Lifshitz, "Césarée de Palestine, son histoire et ses institutions," in ANRW, ed. Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase, Part 2, *Principat*, 8 (Berlin: Gruyter, 1977), 490–518; Holum et al., *Herod's Dream*.

<sup>41</sup>An excellent synthesis of the ancient literary sources pertaining to Caesarea and the city's archaeological remains with accompanying bibliography has been provided by Taylor, "Paul's Caesarea," 55–66.

<sup>42</sup>For a more extensive overview, see Gideon Foerster, "The Early History of Caesarea," in *Studies in the History of Caesarea Maritima*, vol. 1 of *The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima*, ed. Charles T. Fritsch, Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research Supplementary Studies 19, ed. David Noel Freedman (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975), 23–42.

<sup>43</sup>Josephus, *War* 1.408–15, 3.409–13; *Ant.* 14.76, 15.331–41.

<sup>44</sup>According to Josephus, *War* 1.410, Sebastos was even larger than Piraeus, the port of Athens. On the difficulty of comparing the two, see Holum et al., *Herod's Dream*, 100.

<sup>45</sup>H. Keith Beebe, "Caesarea Maritima: Its Strategic and Political Significance to Rome," *JNES* 42.3 (1983): 195–207.

<sup>46</sup>Lee I. Levine, "The Jewish Community at Caesarea in Late Antiquity," in *Caesarea Papers: Straton's Tower, Herod's Harbour, and Roman and Byzantine Caesarea*, ed. Robert Lindley Vann, Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 5 (Ann Arbor, MI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1992), 268. In other words, according to Hohlfelder, "this ambitious building program was a gentile counterpoint to [Herod's] rebuilding of the Jewish temple"; "Caesarea," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 1:799.

<sup>47</sup>For a sober analysis of the relevant chronological and referential debates, see Christopher B. Zeichmann, "Military Forces in Judaea 6–130 CE: The *Status Quaestionis* and Relevance for New Testament Studies," *CBR* 17 (2018): 86–120, esp. 107–12.

of the Jerusalem Temple.<sup>48</sup> In fact, numerous outbursts of violence between Jews, Greeks, and their Roman rulers in Caesarea probably led in no small part to the beginning of war with Rome.<sup>49</sup>

Despite what else is known about the history of Caesarea in the first century CE, the city's religious composition has been contested. In scholarship, the debate—to the extent that there is one—largely pits biblical scholars against non-biblical scholars. Few commentaries on or studies of Acts acknowledge the existence of a sizable or even significant population of Jews in Caesarea. The claim by C. K. Barrett that “there were *many* Jews in the city” is unusual in this regard (and, as will shortly become clear, probably right).<sup>50</sup> Even the more tentative statement by Justin Taylor, namely that there was at Caesarea “une importante population juive,” is more suggestive than what is found in many commentaries.<sup>51</sup> By contrast, Martin Hengel variously claimed that most of Caesarea's residents were gentile or “Greek” and that it was “predominantly pagan.”<sup>52</sup> This suggestion is by no means original to him, but his articulation of it has exerted significant influence in subsequent biblical scholarship.<sup>53</sup> Hengel's claims were based on a straightforward reading of the testimony of Josephus, who posited “a population consisting chiefly of Greeks” (*War* 3.410; cf. 2.266–70; Thackeray, LCL).<sup>54</sup>

Crucially, though, Lee I. Levine points out the imprecision of ancient population figures available for Caesarea and, more importantly, argues for the presence of a “flourishing Jewish community” there.<sup>55</sup> He is not alone in this judgment. Irving M. Levey, whose work seems to have been largely overlooked by commentators on Acts, makes an even more pointed one: “When we first read about the Jews in their Caesarea setting, we discover that they are already a well established community with synagogues and elders and wealth and organized strength.”<sup>56</sup> Ultimately, in Levine's judgment,

<sup>48</sup> Hohlfelder, “Caesarea,” 800.

<sup>49</sup> For an extended analysis, consult Lee I. Levine, “The Jewish-Greek Conflict in First-Century Caesarea,” *JJS* 25 (1974): 381–97.

<sup>50</sup> Barrett, *Acts* (Vol. I), 498 (emphasis added).

<sup>51</sup> Taylor, *Actes* 9, 1-18, 22, 42. If the adjective “importante” is translated in a numeric sense, Taylor's point could even be the same as Barrett's.

<sup>52</sup> Compare the descriptions in Hengel, “Luke the Historian,” 112, esp. n.91, and 114. Similarly, Roloff, *Apostelgeschichte*, 168: “überwiegend heidnisch”; Alfons Weiser, *Kapitel 1-12*, vol. 1 of *Die Apostelgeschichte*, Ökumenischer Taschenbuchkommentar zum Neuen Testament 5/1, ed. Erich Gräßer and Karl Kertelge (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1981), 253: “das heidnische Cäsarea”; Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:335; F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 3rd rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 287: “as a predominantly Gentile city it was not in ‘the land of the Jews’”; Dean Philip Bechard, “The Theological Significance of Judaea in Luke-Acts,” in *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, ed. Joseph Verheyden, Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium 142 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 687: a “fully Hellenized city” and 688: a “non-Jewish sphere of Christian evangelism”; Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, 388: “its population and ethos were chiefly Gentile, and ... it had a sizeable Jewish population”; Keener, *Acts*, 1733: “Gentiles dominated the city.” By contrast, Kloppenborg, “Luke's Geography,” 118, simply refers to Caesarea as “culturally distinct.”

<sup>53</sup> The scholarly description of Caesarea as “predominantly pagan” goes at least as far back as Emil Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ* Div. 1: *Political History of Palestine, from B.C. 175 to A.D. 135*, trans. John Macpherson, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1891), 1:439.

<sup>54</sup> Hengel was not the first Acts commentator to uncritically accept Josephus's description. See, e.g., the roughly contemporaneous claim by Gottfried Schille, *Die Apostelgeschichte des Lukas*, Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament 5, ed. Erich Fascher, Joachim Rohde, and Christian Wolff (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1983), 241: “Die Einwohnerschaft bestand zum größeren Teil aus Heiden.”

<sup>55</sup> Levine, “Jewish Community,” 268.

<sup>56</sup> Irving M. Levey, “Caesarea and the Jews,” in *Studies in the History of Caesarea Maritima*, vol. 1 of *The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima*, ed. Charles T. Fritsch, Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research Supplementary Studies 19, ed. David Noel Freedman (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975), 43.

“from the city’s beginning, Jews constituted a significant part of its population, possibly over half ... After Jerusalem, Alexandria, Rome and perhaps Antioch, Caesarea may have contained the largest Jewish population in the first century Empire.”<sup>57</sup> Assuming Levine and Levey are correct, the impact of Jewish life in ancient Caesarea was pronounced and would have extended far beyond the one possible synagogue that has been excavated there to date.<sup>58</sup> In time, though, this impact diminished drastically. According to Josephus, following a massacre of Jewish inhabitants purportedly numbering over twenty thousand by their fellow city-dwellers, Caesarea “was completely emptied of Jews” when Florus was the Roman procurator, at his command (66 CE).<sup>59</sup>

Members of non-Jewish religious traditions also inhabited Caesarea in the first century. Greco-Roman temples built by Herod to Roma and Augustus attracted a sizable contingent of participants in the traditional cults to the city. The economic advantages of life in it, such as opportunities for employment and trade, attracted people of all backgrounds from the surrounding regions too.<sup>60</sup> A *mithraeum* has been discovered in the city.<sup>61</sup> In addition to the one associated with the emperor and Mithras, evidence for the practice of many other cults there exists as well.<sup>62</sup> According to Levine, “This unusual demographic configuration and the resultant dynamic interplay of social and cultural forces set the stage for the particular character of late antique society there.”<sup>63</sup> As the movement within Judaism that generations if not centuries later became recognizable as Christianity spread, beginning in the 30s CE, Caesarea emerged as a hotbed for religious, ethnic, and political struggle that endured for nearly a millennium.<sup>64</sup> The communities of Christ-believers<sup>65</sup> who inhabited the city over the first few centuries of the Common Era were themselves not immune from such conflicts, an enduring reality that would seem to have been prefigured by events described in Acts.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Levine, *Caesarea*, 22. Note the roughly equivalent statement by Levey, “Caesarea and the Jews,” 43, only a year prior: “[Jews] constitute a fairly large segment of the city’s population, possibly as much as one half of it.”

<sup>58</sup> Govaars, Spiro, and White, *Field O: The “Synagogue” Site*.

<sup>59</sup> Josephus, *War* 2.457 (Thackeray, LCL). On relations between Jews and gentiles in first-century CE Caesarea, see Wilson, “Jew-Gentile Relations,” 83–8, which draws heavily on Josephus.

<sup>60</sup> Holum et al., *Herod’s Dream*, 74.

<sup>61</sup> Bull, *Mithraeum at Caesarea Maritima*.

<sup>62</sup> For an analysis of cultic material culture at Caesarea, see Rivka Gersht, “Deities at the Services of Cities and People: Sculpted Images from Caesarea Maritima,” in *Expressions of Cult in the Southern Levant in the Greco-Roman Period: Manifestations in Text and Material Culture*, ed. Oren Tal and Zeev Weiss, Contextualizing the Sacred 6 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), 69–93.

<sup>63</sup> Levine, “Jewish Community,” 268.

<sup>64</sup> See, among others, the helpful essays on Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian religion, as well as ethnic and political conflict, in Caesarea by R. Painter, M. Murray, R. Ascough, and J. Kloppenborg, respectively, which are collected in Terence L. Donaldson, ed., *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Caesarea Maritima*, Studies in Christianity and Judaism 8 (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000). For a thorough discussion of Christian and Muslim rule of Caesarea in the later Byzantine and Crusader periods, see Holum et al., *Herod’s Dream*, 201–36.

<sup>65</sup> To avoid anachronism, I use the label “Christ-believer,” not “Christian,” to refer to characters in Acts. Pervo, *Acts*, 294 n.46, argues that this concern is unwarranted (cf. Acts 11:26, 26:28).

<sup>66</sup> On the history of early Christians in Caesarea, see Glanville Downey, “Caesarea and the Christian Church,” in *Studies in the History of Caesarea Maritima*, vol. 1 of *The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima*, ed. Glanville Downey, Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research Supplementary Studies 19, ed. David Noel Freedman (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975), 23–42; and Edgar Krentz, “Caesarea and Early Christianity,” in *Caesarea Papers: Straton’s Tower, Herod’s Harbour, and Roman and Byzantine Caesarea*, ed. Robert Lindley Vann, Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 5 (Ann Arbor, MI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1992), 261–7.

#### 4. CAESAREA'S SIGNIFICANCE IN ACTS: PREVIOUS PROPOSALS

Rote historical-criticism can fail to show how biblical texts and the geographies they present are, as Philip Alexander has noted, essentially “exercises in cognitive mapping.”<sup>67</sup> Acts is, of course, quite different from the *Geography* of Strabo or that of Ptolemy. But Luke’s “mental map” or “geographical horizon” is still fundamentally important, because it is part of what undergirds the rhetorical points he is trying to make.<sup>68</sup> Specifically, Caesarea as narrative setting performs a complex role within the wider narrative that contributes to the persuasive potential of Acts.<sup>69</sup> Numerous exegetes and commentators have addressed this complex role, but to date no comparative analysis of their proposals has appeared. This is a scholarly *desideratum*, since their suggestions diverge in significant ways. Although more focused studies of the city within specific passages of Acts do exist,<sup>70</sup> the following discussion largely engages extended scholarly investigations of Caesarea within the geography of Acts as a whole, proceeding in rough chronological order.

Perhaps the first to postulate a symbolic function of Caesarea in Acts was Hans Conzelmann. In his enormously influential commentary, he made a pointed, provocative claim that, as far as I know, was not developed elsewhere. Within a wider discussion of Cornelius’s name and cohort, Conzelmann suggested in passing that “for Luke, Caesarea is the station midway between Jerusalem and Antioch.”<sup>71</sup> In other words, at least part of the city’s narrative function, maybe its entire narrative function, is to point forward and to set up Paul’s subsequent ministry in Antioch (11:19–26), thereby connecting it with what took place previously in Jerusalem.<sup>72</sup> A few decades later, Joseph Fitzmyer adopted this viewpoint. Following Conzelmann, he contended that “it is not surprising that Luke chooses this important town as the site of the inauguration of the mission to the Gentiles. It is the station midway between Jerusalem and Antioch in Syria.”<sup>73</sup> Nearly half a century after Conzelmann’s suggestion first appeared, Richard Pervo concurred, following him as well.<sup>74</sup> The “midway station” idea obviously has had much staying power.

Conzelmann’s engagement with Caesarea was brief. By contrast, Martin Hengel was, to my knowledge, the first scholar to engage the city’s significance in Acts at length.<sup>75</sup> He contended that it

<sup>67</sup> Philip S. Alexander, “Geography and the Bible (Early Jewish),” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 2.978. On what he terms the problem of “reductionistic outworkings of historicism” in scholarship on Acts, see Sleeman, *Geography*, 30–6. The quote is from p. 36.

<sup>68</sup> On the relationship(s) between implied author, mental map, reader, and rhetorical effect, see Alexander, *Acts*, 110.

<sup>69</sup> Skinner, *Locating Paul*, 49–53, outlines the fivefold narrative functions of settings in Acts: they limit the number of possible actions, inform mood, create archetypes and contrasts “based upon recognizable sociocultural understandings,” develop oppositions with other settings, and anticipate new plot horizons. The quote is from p. 51.

<sup>70</sup> See, e.g., Wilson, “Jew-Gentile Relations.”

<sup>71</sup> Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1987), 81. Conzelmann’s Hermeneia commentary was based on the second German edition, but the statement was already present in the first: *Die Apostelgeschichte*, Handbuch zum Neuen Testament 7 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1963), 63.

<sup>72</sup> A thoroughgoing criticism of Conzelmann’s historicist engagement with the geography of Luke-Acts is offered by Sleeman, *Geography*, 30–3, who argues that it “illustrates the enduring hold of now out-of-date notions of geography within Lukan studies” (33).

<sup>73</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible 31 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1998), 448.

<sup>74</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 268. Pervo analogously describes Ptolemais in Acts 21:7 as “but a place on the road to Caesarea”; *Acts*, 535–36.

<sup>75</sup> Hengel, “Luke the Historian,” esp. 110–21.

is an important locale for multiple reasons. First, it was the seat of Roman civil, political, and military power in the region. Second, the city was home to the evangelist Philip and his daughters, which enables Luke to distinguish him from early Christ-believing leaders and communities elsewhere in Judea, including those based in Jerusalem (i.e., Peter and Paul). And, finally, and perhaps most importantly, Caesarea's harbor provided access to the wider Greco-Roman world; thus, for Hengel Caesarea functions in Acts as a "gateway to the ecumene, i.e. to the 'world mission.'" <sup>76</sup> As a gateway, it also serves as a boundary—in terms of both geography and history of mission—between what he calls "'Jewish' Palestine" and "the ends of the earth."<sup>77</sup> C. K. Barrett subsequently staked out a related view, particularly with reference to one of the most significant events to occur at Caesarea in Acts, namely, the conversion of Cornelius. For Barrett, it represents "a notable step in the progress of the Gospel into the non-Jewish world."<sup>78</sup> In a similar vein, Malina and Pilch repeatedly refer to Caesarea as "at land's end" in their commentary, construing it as an overt geographic, and perhaps implicit missional, boundary marker, although they do not cite Hengel.<sup>79</sup> A less strongly worded reading is offered by Pervo. He contends that the account of Philip's travels north from Azotus to Caesarea in Acts 8:40 represents "a typical Lucan summary that serves to expand the range of mission," although, as Pervo later adds, "it stands outside the sequential development of the gentile mission."<sup>80</sup>

Luke Timothy Johnson has articulated a threefold description of geographical movement in Acts that, although it does not explicitly engage Caesarea, can clearly accommodate the events narrated there by Luke. Johnson suggests that movement is connected to (1) the gentile mission, (2) the conquering of evil powers, and (3) the city of Jerusalem.<sup>81</sup> A review of events narrated in (or including reference to) Caesarea does not disconfirm this vision. First, the conversion of Cornelius illustrates elements of the success of the gentile mission. Second, in the accounts of his death in Caesarea and his persecution of Christ-believers that preceded it, Herod Agrippa is arguably depicted as an evil power who ultimately was undone because he did not give glory to God. Third, Caesarea is repeatedly connected with going up to or coming down from Jerusalem or its environs.<sup>82</sup>

In a presently unpublished but important conference paper, R. Jackson Painter argued that, much as it does in Josephus, Caesarea functions "as the liminal intersection between the Jewish world and the Gentile world" in Acts.<sup>83</sup> This suggestion, although presumably not yet widely known,

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<sup>76</sup> Hengel, "Luke the Historian," 114; similarly, Weiser, *Apostelgeschichte (Kap. 1-12)*, 253, albeit without the notion of "gateway." Although he also does not use that language, Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, 388, suggests that because of the harbor that Herod had built at Caesarea, "the possibility became immediately real of the message of the gospel being carried across the Mediterranean." Taylor, "Paul's Caesarea," 56, perceptively observes that the reverse is the case in Josephus, for whom Caesarea serves as "the gateway to the eastern reaches of [Caesar's] empire."

<sup>77</sup> Hengel, "Luke the Historian," 117. Hengel's historical distinction of missional targets depends on his classification of Caesarea and its inhabitants as thoroughly non-Jewish, which, in light of research by Levine and others, is arguably overstated, as discussed above; see also pp. 118–19.

<sup>78</sup> C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Shorter Commentary* (London: T&T Clark, 2002), 152.

<sup>79</sup> Malina and Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts*, 65, 74, 75, 86.

<sup>80</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 227.

<sup>81</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra pagina 5 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 11.

<sup>82</sup> Note the narrator's descriptive use of ἀναβαίνειν (11:2; 18:22; 21:12, 15; 24:11; 25:1, 9), καταβαίνειν (24:1, 22; 25:6, 7), and κατέρχασθαι (12:19; 21:10) in reference to travel between Caesarea and Jerusalem. See also the implied descent from Jerusalem in 9:30, which is briefly discussed by Taylor, "Paul's Caesarea," 46.

<sup>83</sup> Painter, "East Meets West." If the arguments by Pervo, *Dating Acts*, and others regarding the dependence of Acts upon Josephus are judged to be persuasive, then it could be argued that the former's depiction of Caesarea as intersection is



has already attracted scholarly support.<sup>84</sup> Caesarea has previously been recognized as one node in an effective communication network of “eastern Mediterranean cities and statelets”<sup>85</sup> and as a place of transregional human encounter and cultural exchange.<sup>86</sup> But Painter’s suggestion arguably represents a developed version of an idea also apparent in Hengel’s construal. Recall that for Hengel in Acts Caesarea symbolizes a geographical and missional boundary. It would be at such an imagined boundary that the intersection between Jewish and gentile worlds posited by Painter, or the possibility of crossover from one to the other, would occur.

A fundamentally different interpretation of Caesarea within the symbolic geography of Acts is offered by Daniel Marguerat. To be sure, his comment on Acts 8:40—“with Caesarea, symbolically the Roman world is looming”—echoes Hengel’s boundary framing.<sup>87</sup> Nevertheless, building upon structuralist readings of Acts 10–11 by Roland Barthes and Louis Marin,<sup>88</sup> Marguerat also develops what he calls two spatial “lines of meaning” running through this portion of Acts: the horizontal and the vertical.<sup>89</sup> The horizontal line connects the cities of Joppa, Caesarea, and Jerusalem and the human activities narrated within them; the vertical line connects earth and sky.<sup>90</sup> Specifically, for Marguerat the vertical line, presumably symbolizing connection with or revelation from the Divine and perhaps even divine action itself, enables the possibility of “transgressing religious [i.e., Jewish] regulation of human relationships.”<sup>91</sup>

As have some of the other interpretations of Caesarea in Acts, this idea has also received explicit affirmation in subsequent scholarship.<sup>92</sup> One version of it was worked out at some length by Ute

modeled upon that of the latter, but to my knowledge Painter does not make this claim; Taylor, “Paul’s Caesarea,” 66–7, argues that the “discrepancies” between the two preclude any determination. For an extensive treatment of the broader problem of influence, see Steve Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 251–96.

<sup>84</sup> Painter’s construal is explicitly affirmed by Keener, *Acts*, 1734 n.62.

<sup>85</sup> Dunn, *Acts*, 166.

<sup>86</sup> Levine, “Jewish Community,” 268, describes “Caesarea’s role as a bridge between the Roman and Judaean worlds”; cf. Peter Richardson, *Herod: King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans*, Studies on Personalities of the New Testament, ed. D. Moody Smith (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 178: “[Caesarea] rearranged trade patterns in the area. Produce, trade, and people flowed in both directions; it was a city where Hellenistic and Roman ideals jostled with Jewish convictions.”

<sup>87</sup> Marguerat, *Actes (1-12)*, 313. Similarly, Bechard, “Theological Significance,” 687–8, suggests that “by explicitly locating [the] first conversion of Gentiles in the city of Caesarea ... Luke effectively signals that the Christian mission has now reached the threshold of its last stage of expansion ‘to the end of the earth.’” Bechard’s contention might appear to overlook that Acts concludes with Paul not at the “ends of the earth” but in what the Roman imperial imagination considered the earth’s, or at least the purportedly civilized world’s, center. However, elsewhere Bechard rightly recognizes that in Acts Paul ends up reaching “the very *omphalos* of the Roman Empire” (*Paul Outside the Walls*, 341).

<sup>88</sup> Marguerat cites Roland Barthes, “L’analyse structurale du récit. A propos d’Actes 10-11,” in *Exégèse et herméneutique*, ed. Xavier Léon-Dufour, Parole de Dieu (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1971), 191–6; and Louis Marin, “Essai d’analyse structurale d’Actes 10,1-11,18,” in *Exégèse et herméneutique*, ed. Xavier Léon-Dufour, Parole de Dieu (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1971), 228–37. Both essays were reprints of articles in *RSR*.

<sup>89</sup> Marguerat, *Actes (1-12)*, 371–2.

<sup>90</sup> A fuller and somewhat different explication of these two lines was previously published in Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories: An Introduction to Narrative Criticism*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1999), 80–1.

<sup>91</sup> Marguerat, *Actes (1-12)*, 372.

<sup>92</sup> David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. D. A. Carson, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 324. Peterson quotes Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 81, at length but not Marguerat’s commentary.



E. Eisen prior to the appearance of Marguerat's commentary.<sup>93</sup> Eisen similarly refers to "two striking axes, vertical and horizontal."<sup>94</sup> As did Hengel, Eisen also reads Caesarea as a boundary marker in Acts, but she develops the idea in a creatively different manner.<sup>95</sup> Eisen argues that "the depicted world [of ch. 10-11] is divided into the space of the Jews, the Jews who believe in Christ in Joppa and Jerusalem, and the (different) Gentiles in Caesarea and in the house of Cornelius."<sup>96</sup> She differentiates between "the Jewish initial space" of Joppa and "the counterspace of [Gentile] Caesarea," which in her view is presented in Acts purportedly "in accordance with the geographical and geopolitical order."<sup>97</sup> On Eisen's reading, the Jewish-gentile boundary that is Caesarea can be focused further: Cornelius's house is what she terms the city's "extreme point."<sup>98</sup> In Acts 10:27, Peter somehow crosses this "impermeable boundary" at Caesarea, violating what Eisen labels a "rigid norm" presumably against Jews visiting or even associating with gentiles, as is claimed by Peter's statement in v. 28.<sup>99</sup>

Most recently, Joan Taylor has persuasively demonstrated that one of the key characteristics of Caesarea (i.e., "Caesar's City") in Acts as in antiquity is what she terms "performing Rome."<sup>100</sup> According to Taylor, within Luke's narrative at Caesarea "we are in a locus of *Romanitas*, 'Romanness,' " that spans imperial ideology and law.<sup>101</sup> This notion of *Romanitas* connects back with the ancient city's built environment. Taylor fruitfully surveys the results of archaeological excavations that, she argues, have uncovered "a city performing Rome in its physical structures and spaces ... [that] coheres perfectly with the representation of the city in the narrative of Acts."<sup>102</sup> Caesarea has other, somewhat less significant, functions too. For Luke it serves as a "transit city" when people, particularly Paul, pass through it.<sup>103</sup> For the apostle it becomes "a city of detention ... at the heart

<sup>93</sup> Ute E. Eisen, "Boundary Transgression and the Extreme Point in Acts 10:1-11:18," in *On the Cutting Edge: The Study of Women in Biblical Worlds: Essays in Honor of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza*, ed. Jane Schaberg, Alice Bach, and Esther Fuchs (New York: Continuum, 2004), 154-70, esp. 160-6.

<sup>94</sup> Eisen, "Boundary Transgression," 161. See also the references to the horizontal and/or vertical axes on pp. 164, 165, and 169 n.25.

<sup>95</sup> Eisen cites Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 80 on p. 169 n.17, but does not otherwise explicitly engage Marguerat's work in her essay.

<sup>96</sup> Eisen, "Boundary Transgression," 162.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> The two brief quotations are drawn from Eisen, "Boundary Transgression," 162 and 163, respectively. As support for this "rigid norm," Eisen cites Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.-A.D. 135)*, ed. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, and Matthew Black, rev. ed., 4 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973); and Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine During the Early Hellenistic Period*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974). The "rigid norm" may well be constructed on the narrative level in this part of Acts, but it does not seem to have been historical, at least according to Pervo, *Acts*, 274: "There was no specific commandment against [social] intercourse with gentiles. Observance of purity codes prevented the strictly observant from such activities as eating in gentile homes." Moreover, Pervo notes, "The verbs κολλάω and προσέρχομαι ('associate intimately with' and 'visit') are those used, in the opposite order, in 8:29 (direction for Philip to approach official)" (*Acts*, 274 n.106). In other words, the use of the same language within the wider text of Acts itself would seem to challenge Eisen's reading of Cornelius's house as "extreme point" and "impermeable boundary."

<sup>100</sup> Taylor, "Paul's Caesarea." References to Caesarea's performative function are found throughout, but see esp. pp. 46, 47 n.12, 48, 66-7. The reference to Caesarea as "Caesar's City" appears in p. 45.

<sup>101</sup> Taylor, "Paul's Caesarea," 48; similarly, see pp. 54, 67.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 46, 48, 50, 52, 67. See esp. p. 47: "All roads lead to Caesarea."

of Roman civil and military administration.”<sup>104</sup> And it is a “locus of divine action,” particularly apparent in the death of Herod Agrippa, and of the holy spirit more broadly.<sup>105</sup> Interestingly, there are faint echoes of Conzelmann in Taylor’s description, although she does not appeal to him: Conzelmann thought Caesarea pointed forward to Antioch, but for Taylor “[Caesarea] points forward to the activity of the Holy Spirit continuing to move Paul to Rome.”<sup>106</sup> Perhaps more than any other to date, Taylor’s wide-ranging essay illuminates the centrality of Caesarea to the book of Acts and the manifold ways that Luke has woven the city into his narrative.

Despite scholarly support for the midway station hypothesis, in Acts the city of Caesarea does not function simply as a preliminary setting for events leading up to the ministry of Barnabas and Paul among the first “Christians” at Antioch (11:26). So many other important things happen in Herod’s city by the sea, particularly in the last third of the book, that one cannot convincingly argue that the city’s sole function in Acts is to point forward to another one further north. Likewise, Hengel’s classification of Caesarea as a thoroughly “pagan” city led him and those influenced by him to overly emphasize its significance as a geographical and sociological boundary marker in Acts. As we have already seen, Caesarea’s population in the first century may actually have been more Jewish than gentile, despite what commentators routinely suggest.<sup>107</sup> This complicates simplistic mappings of Jewish-gentile difference onto the city and its inhabitants. Despite its accuracy, even the Caesarea-as-intersection hypothesis is not fully illustrative. As I shall explain, Luke aims not simply to show that, from the perspective of those who inhabit the province, Caesarea is situated at the beginning of the geographic end of the world to the west. The reverse is true too: in Acts, Caesarea symbolically connects the ends of the world and the communities of Christ-believers scattered around them with each other and with the significance of what happens in the city, largely via Paul’s movement through it. This idea develops Taylor’s recognition of Caesarea as a “transit city” by explaining how and to what effects the city serves as a literary linking device in Acts.

## 5. CAESAREA AS LITERARY LINKING DEVICE IN ACTS

Largely missing from scholarly considerations of Caesarea in Acts is the recognition that Christ-believers go from, travel to, live and are active in, and pass through the city with regularity. Taylor’s description of Caesarea as a “transit city” in Luke’s narrative is a commendable exception to this unfortunate pattern. In what follows, I briefly develop Taylor’s important observation by exploring the rhetorical and theological effects of Caesarea being a transit city, particularly in the case of Paul, upon readers of Acts.

As we have seen, Caesarea plays an important role in Paul’s missionary activity. Three of his four major, extended sea voyages in Acts begin or end in Caesarea. Only his first missionary journey

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<sup>104</sup> Taylor, “Paul’s Caesarea,” 52.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 48. A similar but more generalized description of Paul’s geographic movement from one city to another and ultimately to Rome is given by Keener, *Acts*, 589. For Keener’s fuller treatment of geography in Acts, which does not focus on Caesarea, see pp. 582–96.

<sup>107</sup> Although he does not explicitly reference Caesarea, in discussing Acts 8:26–40 Walter Schmithals, *Die Apostelgeschichte des Lukas*, Zürcher Bibelkommentare NT 3,2, ed. Hans Heinrich Schmid and Siegfried Schulz (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1982), 86, argues that “Lukas hält Palästina einschließlich Samariens anscheinend für ein zur Zeit der Apostel im wesentlichen jüdisches Gebiet.”

does not pass through it: strictly speaking, Paul's first journey begins and ends at Antioch (13:4–14:28). Crucially, though, prior to arriving there from Tarsus in 11:26, Paul departs from Caesarea to Tarsus itself in 9:30. Although somewhat removed from Paul's flight out of Caesarea on the narrative level, within the unfolding drama of Acts Paul's presence in and departure from Antioch on his first missionary journey depend upon his relatively recently having passed through Caesar's city. That first journey is therefore implicitly connected with it as well. On a basic level, then, Hengel's contention that Caesarea functions in Acts as a "gateway to the ecumene" is accurate. Luke does describe how what began as a movement within first-century Judaism goes forth from Jerusalem and encounters the "ends of the earth" (1:8), very often through the port at Caesarea. But what Hengel did not observe is equally if not more important. Just as believers go out through Caesarea, so too they frequently return through the same city.

Beverly Roberts Gaventa has observed how Luke's account of Paul's travels connects the communities of believers scattered around the Mediterranean. With particular reference to Paul's third journey, she argues that in crafting his narrative Luke "knit[s] the disparate communities together."<sup>108</sup> Marguerat has made a similar point on an historical level: among Paul's other goals in traveling was his aim "to maintain unity in a Christianity that was already diverse."<sup>109</sup> If that historical explanation is accepted, then, following Gaventa, it would seem subsequently reflected in the text of Acts.<sup>110</sup> I argue that Luke accomplishes this narrative feat of constructed unity among Christ-believers in significant part via the use of Caesarea as linking device.<sup>111</sup> Put differently, Gaventa's proposal regarding the unifying narrative function of Paul's third journey can be extended to include at least his second one as well, because both end in the same place;<sup>112</sup> his first journey is implicitly in view too, as discussed above. By concluding the second and third missionary journeys—each of which begins in a different location (Jerusalem and Antioch, respectively) and includes visits to different places—in Caesarea Luke links Paul's travels together and by extension, following Gaventa, links the communities through which Paul traveled on them together as well.<sup>113</sup> This is the first of two ways that Caesarea functions as linking device in Acts: it symbolically connects Christ-followers around the Mediterranean with each other.<sup>114</sup> Paul's travels through Caesarea also

<sup>108</sup> Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "Theology and Ecclesiology in the Miletus Speech: Reflections on Content and Context," *NTS* 50 (2004): 42.

<sup>109</sup> Marguerat, *Actes (13-28)*, 182: "Paul, en pasteur exemplaire, visite ses communautés pour consolider la foi, cultiver les liens et maintenir l'unité dans une chrétienté déjà diverse."

<sup>110</sup> Hemer, *Book of Acts*, 257, makes a similar point in connection with Paul's journey from Corinth to Ephesus to Jerusalem through Caesarea in Acts 18:18–22, which Hemer suggests is evidence of his being "deeply concerned with preserving the unity of Jewish and Gentile congregations."

<sup>111</sup> The significance of Caesarea in relation to Paul's various journeys is anticipated, although not explored, by Keener, *Acts*, 2794.

<sup>112</sup> Granted, Paul's arrival in Caesarea at the end of his second journey is immediately followed by his ascent to Jerusalem (18:22); he does not remain in Caesarea for a time, as he will at the end of his third journey (21:8–14). However, the point is clear: the narrative explicitly describes how, at the conclusion of two of his three major journeys in Acts, Paul passes through Caesarea.

<sup>113</sup> There is significant overlap among the cities visited by Paul on his second and third journeys. According to Acts, the following were visited on journeys that ended in Caesarea: Antioch, Beroea, Corinth, Derbe, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Troas.

<sup>114</sup> Kloppenborg, "Luke's Geography," 139, concludes that "Luke's representation of space stresses connectivity," although without mentioning Caesarea. Shortly thereafter Kloppenborg adds, "Luke's 'map' renders credible through its very realism and transparency the notion of an interconnected, harmonious, and translocal church" (140).

connect audiences in geographically (but not symbolically) disconnected communities of believers to both the events that Luke narrates in the city and their significance. What significant events and ideas, then, would Caesarea symbolically connect believers to?

First, Caesarea as linking device connects readers of Acts with the activity of God's spirit in relation to Cornelius, his relatives, and his closest friends (10:24). His is the first explicit description of a *gentile* conversion in Acts. Without debating Caesarea as the historical location of the Cornelius event,<sup>115</sup> it clearly is a "turning point" in the narrative,<sup>116</sup> even though the religious demographics of the ancient city should not be inferred from it, as seems to have happened in scholarship on Acts. It demonstrates the initial fulfillment of God's promise to Jews *and* to all who are far off (2:39), a promise first expressed by Peter in Jerusalem at Pentecost. And it signals to readers that, just as the spirit-led Jesus movement radiated from Jerusalem to Caesarea and throughout the province and region, so too that same spirit will ripple out to wherever they are, falling upon people of all sorts and backgrounds, drawing them in.

Second, scattered as they may be, Caesarea links Luke's readers with Jerusalem and the Jesus movement's historic roots in Jewish experience there. This linkage is established by Philip's "going down" from the city of David in 8:5 and ultimately arriving at Caesarea in 8:40 following his missionary activity at places between. It is also established by Paul's "going up" to Jerusalem from Caesarea in 18:22. I stress that these are narrative observations, not historical claims. The latter journey to Jerusalem in particular has frequently been explained away in the scholarly literature as historically accidental<sup>117</sup> or embarrassingly unavoidable.<sup>118</sup> It is sometimes disconnected from Caesarea altogether,<sup>119</sup> labeled an awkward accommodation to underlying tradition,<sup>120</sup> and rejected as historically improbable.<sup>121</sup> Such hypotheses risk overlooking how Paul's trip up to Jerusalem coheres with a wider Lukan pattern of depicting the apostle frequently returning to historically and pastorally significant places.<sup>122</sup> Even if Paul's ascent is purely "a Lucan contribution to the narrative,"<sup>123</sup> by passing through Caesarea on the way its symbolic effect is to more closely link believers around the Mediterranean with the community of Christ-followers at Jerusalem. That connective symbolism and implied solidarity resonate with the purpose of

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<sup>115</sup> For a discussion of the possibility that Caesarea is not the "original" setting for this story, see Pervo, *Acts*, 266.

<sup>116</sup> Marguerat, *Actes (1-12)*, 22.

<sup>117</sup> For example, commenting upon the journey that reaches land at Caesarea in Acts 18:22, Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 467, offers wind conditions as a tentative explanation. This suggestion has been influential (see, e.g., Bruce, *Acts*, 399). In support of his hypothesis, Jervell cites Haenchen, *Apostelgeschichte*, 525; and Roloff, *Apostelgeschichte*, 276. The latter is explicitly affirmed by Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 2:156. A good overview of the various historical and redactional hypotheses is given by Alfons Weiser, *Kapitel 13-28*, vol. 2 of *Die Apostelgeschichte*, Ökumenischer Taschenbuchkommentar zum Neuen Testament 5/2, ed. Erich Gräßer and Karl Kertelge (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1985), 500–3.

<sup>118</sup> Dunn, *Acts*, 247.

<sup>119</sup> Johannes Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles: Introduction, Translation and Notes*, Anchor Bible 31 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 181: "The goal of [Paul's] journey was Caesarea in Palestine though in all likelihood it actually was the Jerusalem church—but nothing is said at this point about the purpose of this visit."

<sup>120</sup> Gerd Lüdemann, *Early Christianity According to the Traditions in Acts: A Commentary*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1989), 206.

<sup>121</sup> While recognizing the danger of "historiciz[ing] the problem to the neglect of the literary character of the account," Conzelmann, *Acts*, 156, nevertheless implicitly rejects the Jerusalem journey in Acts 18:22 as historically improbable; the quote is from n.6.

<sup>122</sup> Marguerat, *Actes (13-28)*, 182 n.15. Marguerat's reading challenges the claim by Dunn, *Acts*, 248, that Paul's trip up to and short visit in Jerusalem (18:22) is, like his subsequent one to Antioch (18:23), "of little importance" to Luke.

<sup>123</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 455.

the collection for the saints there stated by Paul in his letters, even though it lacks an economic dimension.<sup>124</sup>

Finally, the account of Paul on trial at Caesarea connects readers with the gospel's public proclamation to and confrontation of powerful people in the Roman empire.<sup>125</sup> This is one of the many ways that the narrative map of Acts "remains firmly rooted in the contemporary political world."<sup>126</sup> At Caesarea, Paul presents a cogent defense of his Jewish heritage and faithfulness, as well as his calling and ministry to gentiles. But the Caesarean judicial scenes provide much more than a justification of Paul's background, piety, and embrace of his (supposedly God-given) gentile mission. As Matthew Skinner notes, "Paul's custody settings reflect the triumph ... of the gospel and of Paul's vocation over the most concentrated attempts of his enemies to squelch and discredit him."<sup>127</sup> In this way, the narrative accounts of Paul on trial before the authorities in Caesarea focus not on what Paul has done (or on what Paul must argue in order to be acquitted) per se. Rather, they focus on what God's spirit is doing and has done through those who bear faithful witness to Jesus in the face of authoritative earthly opponents.<sup>128</sup> Alongside Taylor's recognition of how Caesarea performs Rome in Acts we might add that so too at Caesarea God is active against that imperial performance in the specific activities of Peter, Paul, and others. Paul's witness in particular also serves a hortatory function, encouraging readers of Acts to make their own witness, regardless of the rank of those who hear it.<sup>129</sup> In doing so, they can be confident that their actions, like Paul's in Acts, will not be considered a legal or political liability, nor will their mission be hampered by human activity in the end;<sup>130</sup> the death of Herod Agrippa offers proof of that. Moreover, Paul's final speech before Agrippa (26:1–23) at Caesarea serves as "a virtual synopsis of Lukan theology," as Gaventa has shown, performing a didactic function for readers.<sup>131</sup> Although Paul ultimately does not defend himself while giving that particular speech, in it his "defense becomes an occasion for proclamation of the gospel," which serves as yet another model for—and encouragement to—audience of Acts.<sup>132</sup> In other words, the constructed ideal content and confidence of the collective

<sup>124</sup> Gal 2:10; 1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Cor 8:1–9:15; Rom 15:25–29; cf. Acts 11:29–30, 24:17.

<sup>125</sup> Skinner, *Locating Paul*, 132, explains Paul's contact with powerful players on the world stage while in custody: "this new gentile setting in Caesarea allows Paul to meet and interact with more powerful political figures from the gentile world"; similarly, pp. 137, 144–5, 149, 186. Note also Skinner's linking of Peter's proclamation to Cornelius and Paul's defense before Felix and Festus (132 n.54).

<sup>126</sup> Alexander, *Acts*, 111. Alexander suggests these political roots are revealed, in part, by the inclusion in Acts of older Greek designations for political regions that remained in use during the Roman period (111). More specifically, Skinner, *Locating Paul*, 6, argues that the settings of custody in chs. 21–8 "reveal the implicit and subtle, yet very real, challenges that the gospel movement poses to the most concentrated attempts to thwart its influence in society and, indeed, also to the Roman political order itself."

<sup>127</sup> Skinner, *Locating Paul*, 109.

<sup>128</sup> Citing the work of Robert C. Tannehill, Skinner offers a similar reading: "These events of Paul's custody thus accomplish more than offering Paul a forum for self-defense or for apologies to distinctively Jewish concerns (although they do this, too). They illustrate the presentation and relevance of the gospel to and for the Roman world, represented by those who control it"; *Locating Paul*, 138; cf. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1994), 2:301. Essentially, according to Skinner, these contexts "provide points of contact between the power of the gospel and the powers of the religious and political spheres depicted in Acts" (186).

<sup>129</sup> Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:302.

<sup>130</sup> Dunn, *Acts*, xiii; similarly, Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, 82 and n.114.

<sup>131</sup> Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 347.

<sup>132</sup> Gaventa, *Acts*, 348.

defense of the faith come to Luke's audience via Paul at Caesarea, with which they are symbolically linked by Paul's travels through the city and around the Mediterranean. According to Acts, though, Paul's proclamation and witness to power will not be limited to those in Caesarea, just as it was not limited to those in Jerusalem before that.<sup>133</sup> Paul famously appeals to the emperor (25:10–11), and so Luke's previous narrative hints regarding Paul's future travel to Rome are now developed in full (cf. 19:21; 23:11).<sup>134</sup> Paul will transit the seaport at Caesarea, as he has so often done before, and through him the gospel will presumably confront another powerful audience, namely the emperor himself. By implication, like Herod Agrippa I before him, the emperor will also be challenged to open his eyes, to turn from darkness to light, from the authority of Satan to God (26:18). In the connective logic of Acts, so too will all those whom the audience engages, for in the symbol of Caesarea they are linked to the spirit's prior activity and the confirmation of what God is doing and will continue to do, in their corner of the world and beyond.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The city of Caesarea exhibits a twofold function in the book of Acts. It serves as an important narrative setting that reflects the ancient city's diverse demography and history, particularly as a seaport, crucible and projector of imperial power, and place of human encounter both local and regional. In association with Paul's travels through the city and around the Mediterranean, Caesarea also serves as a literary linking device. It symbolically connects scattered communities of Christ-believers, as well as the book's readers, with each other, with Jerusalem, and with the significance of events narrated in Caesarea itself, thereby accomplishing both a hortatory and didactic purpose. Clearly, Caesarea is of central importance to the symbolic geography of Acts, indeed in new and remarkable ways.

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<sup>133</sup> F. Scott Spencer, *Acts, Readings*, ed. John Jarick (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 202, notes an "element of 'progress' in these closing prison narratives," which he claims "may also be charted geographically." On his reading, Paul moves from lower to higher realms of judicial authority as he moves from east to west (i.e., Jerusalem, then Caesarea, then Rome). To my knowledge, Spencer does not develop this aspect of Luke's symbolic geography further.

<sup>134</sup> Tannehill describes Paul's appeal as "more than the legal maneuver of a desperate prisoner" (*Narrative Unity*, 2:308). As Tannehill rightly suggests, the appeal is Paul's attempt faithfully to respond to a message from an angel of the Lord narrated in Acts 27:24.



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# Metatron and Naar: Combining Titles and Revelation 3:21 as a Probable Riddle-Solver

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Over the years there has been a lot of discussion on the etymology of the name Metatron and its possible meanings. Given that the specific celestial entity refers to a once upon a time human, the antediluvian patriarch Enoch, who was transferred to heaven, where his spectacular metamorphosis and enthronement took place, and the phenomenon of “Enochic Judaism,” the issue is very important. Actually, except for Jesus Christ, Enoch/Metatron is the only human who received such a high status,<sup>1</sup> almost godlike, and who was even named as a god. The description of his metamorphosis and his investment with angelic (even divine) qualities has no equal in relevant or parallel literature. Of course, as is known, in antiquity a name meant a lot more than it does in our days, especially when it referred to a heavenly being and/or to complex traditions and rituals.

*Contra* Scholem’s thesis, who disregarded the probability without delving into it,<sup>2</sup> this brief essay aims to show that this name is but a title and a composite term, coming from a synthesis of the Greek words μετά- and θρόνος. It is quite probable that the relevant entity was born from the “marriage” of earlier Adamic and Enochic material in circulation during the Second Temple period and even later. It is equally probable that Christian material on the person of Jesus Christ played a role in the formation of Metatron’s final composite identity as a kind of an “answer” from Jewish mystical circles to the claimed divinity of the Galilean master. Needless to say, we are deeply aware that certainty is but a rarity on these perilous grounds, so any steps should be taken with caution.

Due to the brevity of this essay, all previous scholarship on this issue has to be taken for granted. Andrei Orlov, among others, has done excellent work here and he has actually brought it back to the fore after Gershom G. Scholem,<sup>3</sup> Saul Lieberman,<sup>4</sup> Philip Alexander,<sup>5</sup> Guy Stroumsa,<sup>6</sup> Daniel

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<sup>1</sup>Of course, in other apocalyptic and mystical texts other heroes of the distant past share similar characteristics, yet the Enoch/Metatron case is unique in many of its aspects.

<sup>2</sup>See Gershom G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 3rd ed. (New York: Schocken, 1995 [1st ed. 1941]), 69–70.

<sup>3</sup>See previous note.

<sup>4</sup>Saul Lieberman, “Metatron, The Meaning of His Name and His Functions,” Appendix 1 in *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, by I. Gruenwald, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 291–7.

<sup>5</sup>Philip Alexander, “3 (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch,” in *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, vol. 1 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 223–315.

<sup>6</sup>Guy G. Stroumsa, “Form(s) of God: Some Notes on Μετατρον and Christ: For Shlomo Pines,” *HTR* 76 (1983): 269–88.



Boyarin,<sup>7</sup> and many others. Therefore, for the reader who wants to see a good presentation of the research so far, we have to refer to Orlov's *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition* and the detailed parenthesis there.<sup>8</sup> It is only a few elements we should be touching upon here for serving both justice and our purpose.

As is known, the name Metatron is found written mostly in two ways, with six letters (מטטרון), with seven letters (מיטטרון), and even with twenty-four (in *Siddur Rabbah* 24–26). Initially, it was J. Fr. von Meyer in his *Blätter für höhere Wahrheit* (vol. iv, 1823) who interpreted “Metatron as ‘der Mitthroner Gottes’ (ὁ μέτοχος τοῦ θρόνου) who is seated at the right hand of God.” In our view, von Meyer's thesis,<sup>9</sup> that “the Jewish conception of Metatron forms an exact counterpart of the Christian conception of the Son of God,” thus pointing to Rev 3:21 “as a parallel,”<sup>10</sup> deserves closer attention and merit, especially when seen together with the other data we present here. Thus, while adding source information concerning this hypothesis, our effort aims to call for more attention to this approach and for a reconsideration of all the relevant material.<sup>11</sup>

Based on the well-known throne incident with Elisha ben Avuyah and Metatron's proximity to God, both central aspects of the Metatronology, as well as on other facets of his persona, from all of the probable solutions to the etymology of his name, the one from the Greek we find the most likely. Other options (discussed in another paragraph here) seem improbable or utterly impossible. Now, *if* there were a Greek term like μεταθρονος or μεταθρόνιος, what would it mean? That would be a composite word from the preposition μετά and the noun θρόνος<sup>12</sup> and it would mean the one who comes with the throne, or the one who comes next to the throne, or the one who sits either on the same throne or on a throne that lies next to this one. Therefore, μεταθρόνιος or μετάθρονος is very similar and very close to σύνθρονος.

As is widely accepted, while ties and relations may run deeper, almost all of Judaism during and—mostly—after the Hellenistic period is a more or less Hellenized Judaism. Even more, with an unprecedented religious and cultural syncretism and the Greek *koine* as the lingua franca of many peoples around the Mediterranean at that time, language loans and constructs were not the exception but rather the norm. Thence, before introducing the core of this protasis, it is essential to present some of the material concerning the wide use of this term (concept and image, too) in Greek sources. According to the lexicographer Hesychius, σύνθρονος is the one who sits on the same throne, sometimes also called πάρεδρον, παρακαθήμενον, and παραμένον.<sup>13</sup> In a wider scope, σύνθρονος means the one who shares the same throne or the one who shares the same characteristic of being enthroned. Numerous kings, heroes, and/or gods are mentioned as being σύνθρονοι.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Boyarin, “Beyond Judaisms: Metatron and the Divine Polymorphy of Ancient Judaism,” *JSJ* 41 (2010): 323–65.

<sup>8</sup> See especially Andrei Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition*, TSAJ 107 (Tübingen: Möhr Siebeck, 2005), esp. see the chapter “The etymology of the name ‘Metatron’.”

<sup>9</sup> Similarly, by Stroumsa, “Form(s) of God”; also, Peter Schäfer, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism* (Tübingen: Möhr Siebeck, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Hugo Odeberg, *3 Enoch or the Hebrew Book of Enoch* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1928), 136.

<sup>11</sup> Here I would like to extend my *thanks* to Professor of Linguistics Georgios Babiniotis for sharing useful information on some ancient Greek terms and to Rabbi Gabriel Negrin on some of the material in Hebrew.

<sup>12</sup> Notice that a term like μετάφρενον is also found. See Deut 32:11, where God, like an eagle, carries Israel, ἐπὶ τῶν μεταφρένων αὐτοῦ (LXX; also, in Ps 90:4 and Isa 51:23 with another meaning).

<sup>13</sup> Hesychius Lexicographer, *Lexicon* (Π-Ω), entry 756.1.

Concerning Alexander the Great, it is asked if he could be σύνθρονος to Zeus, and his wife, Roxanne, is referred to as σύνθρονος to her husband, ἐγράψαμεν δὲ τῷ Περσῶν ἔθνει, ὅπως ἐρωτήσωσι τοὺς ἐν Περσίδι θεοὺς σε συνθρονισθῆναι τῷ Διὶ καὶ προσκυνεῖσθαι. Ῥωξάνην δέ, ἣν ἔκρινας σύνθρονον εἶναι σοί.<sup>14</sup> The Persian king Darius is also mentioned as being a “god” who is σύνθρονος to “Mithras” and rising together with the “sun,” σύνθρονός τε θεῷ Μίθρα καὶ συνανατέλλων ἡλίῳ, ἐγὼ αὐτὸς θεὸς Δαρεῖος.<sup>15</sup> Alexander’s father, Philip, had his statue honored like he was σύνθρονος to Zeus, too.<sup>16</sup> In the *Orphic hymns* god Pan is sitting on the same throne with the Hours (σύνθρονε Ὠραις).<sup>17</sup> Still, in a commentary to Hesiodic material, Zeus is called “son of god” (υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ) and he is referred to as ὁμοούσιον καὶ σύνθρονον (of the same essence and cothroned) to his father, god Κρόνος.<sup>18</sup> It is also interesting that in another text<sup>19</sup> god Hephaestus, Hercules, and a hero are mentioned as sitting on the same throne,<sup>20</sup> and elsewhere a hero sits on the same throne with Apollo (σύνθρονος Ἀπόλλωνι).<sup>21</sup>

To the Jewish philosopher Philo, as for the philosopher Chrysippus,<sup>22</sup> too, “virtues” are σύνθρονοι.<sup>23</sup> Clement of Alexandria in his *Stromata* refers to “gods” as being σύνθρονοι to “other gods,” καὶ θεοὶ τὴν προσηγορίαν κέκληνται, οἱ σύνθρονοι τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν, τῶν ὑπὸ τῷ σωτήρι πρώτων τεταγμένων, γενησόμενοι.<sup>24</sup> The emperor Julianus, in his *Hymn to the mother of gods*, hails her as sitting on the same throne with Zeus (ὦ θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων Μήτηρ, ὧ τοῦ μεγάλου Σύνθωκε καὶ Σύνθρονε Διός, ὧ Πηγὴ τῶν νοερῶν θεῶν).<sup>25</sup> And of course, Athanasius the Theologian writes about

<sup>14</sup> *Historia Alexandri Magni: Recensio α sive Recensio vetusta* 2.22.10. Elsewhere, the Persian king Darius is mentioned as sitting on the same throne with gods (see *Historia Alexandri Magni: Recensio α sive Recensio vetusta* 1.38.3.3); for Roxanne, see also 2.22.3 and 9. References to the above-mentioned are to be found in almost all recensions. Other references to women, a goddess Artemis and the mortal Semele, are found sitting on the throne in Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 8.415. Elsewhere, it is Nature that is σύνθρονος to man (see Photius, *Bibliotheca* Codex 277, Bekker page 517b.24) or even “violence” (βία) as σύνθρονος to Zeus (see Moschion, Fragment 6.15); also, in Joannes Stobaeus, *Anthologium* 1.8.38.16. Elsewhere (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.50.13[19]), “piety” has other “virtues” as συνθρόνους. Interestingly enough, to John Chrysostom, Love is σύνθρονος to God (Ἀγάπη τοῦ Πατρὸς σύνθρονός ἐστιν, *Caritatem secundum deum rem esse deo dignam* [Sp.], 61.681, l. 8).

<sup>15</sup> *Historia Alexandri Magni: Recensio α sive Recensio vetusta* 1.36.2.3. Also, *Historia Alexandri Magni: Recensio β* 2.16.42–43 (θεῶν σύνθρονος) and 16.64. Still, *Historia Alexandri Magni: Recensio Byzantina poetica* (cod. Marcianus 408), line 3663. *Historia Alexandri Magni: Recensio poetica* (recensio R), ll 697, 736, and 1238. Also, συνθρόνῳ ἡλίου θεοῦ μεγίστου *Historia Alexandri Magni: Recensio α sive Recensio vetusta* 1.38.2.2. Of course, this θεὸς μέγιστος is none other than Mithras (Ἠλίῳ Μίθρα, in *Historia Alexandri Magni: Recensio Byzantina poetica*, cod. Marcianus 408, ll. 1809–11).

<sup>16</sup> See Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* (lib. 1–20) 16.92.5.10.

<sup>17</sup> *Orphica*, Hymn 11.4.

<sup>18</sup> Joannes Galenus, *Allegoriae in Hesiodi theogoniam*, 342.26 and 31.

<sup>19</sup> See σύνθρονον in Lucianus, *De morte Peregrini* 29.9. Also, *Anthologiae Graecae Appendix: Oracula*, Epigram 297.5.

<sup>20</sup> For mortals sitting on the same throne, see Salaminius Hermias Sozomenus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.3.1.3. Also, Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.5.8. Sextus Julius Africanus, *Epistula ad Origenem*, 80, l. 1. Georgius Syncellus, *Ecloga chronographica*, 274, l. 25. Michael Glycas, *Annales* 611, l. 3. Pseudo-Codinus, *De officiis* (e codd Vat. gr. 162 + 975) 134, l. 25 (ἰσοστάσιον καὶ σύνθρονον τῷ καίσαρι). *Testamenta xii patriarcharum: Testamentum* 3.13.9.1. For the expression σ[ύ]νθρονος ἡρώων εἶν[ε]κα σωφροσ[ύ]ν[η]ς, meaning that sitting on a throne with heroes has been won due to wisdom, see *Anthologiae Graecae Appendix: Epigrammata sepulcralia*, Epigram 208.5.

<sup>21</sup> Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 48.978. For other instances, see Lieberman, “Metatron,” 291–3.

<sup>22</sup> Chrysippus, *Fragmenta moralia*, 671.2.

<sup>23</sup> Philo, *Legum allegoriarum libri i-iii*, 3.247.8.

<sup>24</sup> Clement, *Stromata*, 7.10.56, §7.1.

<sup>25</sup> Flavius Claudius Julianus, *Eis tήn μητέρα τῶν θεῶν* 20.2 (and 7.2); Flavius Claudius Julianus, *Eis τὸν βασιλέα Ἥλιον πρὸς Σαλοῦστιον* 22.22.

the Son sitting on the same throne with the Father, τῷ Πατρὶ συνθρονεύοντα καὶ συγκαθεζόμενον,<sup>26</sup> while to Cyril, the Son is σύνθρονός τε καὶ σύναδρός.<sup>27</sup>

To Cyril, He “became σύνθρονος to the Father,” σύνθρονος γεγωνός;<sup>28</sup> that is, the notional connection with Rev 3:21 (ὡς κἀγὼ ἐνίκησα καὶ ἐκάθισα) is even stronger here. According to the sixth article of faith in the Nicene Creed, Jesus Christ, the incarnated Logos, returns to heaven, where he sits at the right side of the Father and similarly is taught by John Chrysostom.<sup>29</sup> To Gregorius from Nazianzus, the Son is mentioned as ἀρχιερέα, καὶ σύνθρονον.<sup>30</sup> To Cyril, again, in another instance the Son is compared to the angels and He is found to be superior by far, ὁ δὲ ὑμνολογεῖται μετὰ Πατρὸς, σύνθρονός τε ὢν καὶ συμβασιλεύων αὐτῷ, καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγγέλων διακονούμενος.<sup>31</sup> To Eusebius, the Son was also “the great angel,” ὡς καὶ «μεγάλης βουλής ἀγγελος».<sup>32</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Athanasius, *Sermo in nativitate Christi* [Sp.], 28.972, line 11. Similarly, as σύνθρονος are mentioned the Son, the Holy Spirit (σύνθρονον), and King David; see Eusebius, *Demonstratio evangelica* 4.15.33–35; 5.3.2, 5, 6 and 8, *De ecclesiastica theologia*, 1.11.5 l. 2, *Commentaria in Psalmos*, 23.1149, l. 19, and *Fragmenta in Lucam*, vol. 24, 549, l. 29. Still, Epiphanius, *Homilia in laudes Mariae deiparae* [Sp.] 43.493, ll. 34 and 52. Also, Athanasius, *Commentarius de templo Athenarum* [Sp.], 111, l. 12 (similarly in his *Commentarius de templo Athenarum according to codex Bodleianus* Roe 5 [Sp.], fol. 155r, l. 5). Basilius, *De spiritu sancto* 6.15.71. Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* (libri 5) 29.760, l. 27. Cyrillus, *Additamentum ad catechesis illuminandorum sextae decimae caput tertium: Catechesis* 16.2.8. Marcellus, *Fragmenta* 110.3. Romanus Melodus, *Cantica* 13.17.3; 44.11.3; 56.1.11; 83.17.4; and 84.1.1. Ephraem, *Chronicon* 647. Cyrillus, *Epistulae paschales sive Homiliae paschales (epist. 1–30)*, 77.601, l. 6. Cyrillus, *Expositio in Psalmos*, 69.997, l. 16 and 1241, l. 16. *Catenae (Novum Testamentum): Catena in epistulam ad Romanos* (typus Monacensis) (e cod. Monac. gr. 412), 287.1; *Catenae (Novum Testamentum): Catena in epistulam ad Hebraeos* (e cod. Paris. Coislin. 204), 146.6; *Catenae (Novum Testamentum): Catena in epistulam ad Hebraeos* (catena Nicetae) (e cod. Paris. gr. 238), 310.12 and 577.19. Still, *Concilia Oecumenica (ACO): Concilium universale Ephesenum anno 431*, tom. 1.1.2.95.11 and 1.1.6.71.10. Eusebius, *Demonstratio evangelica* 4.15.39.8; 4.15.42.2; 4.15.64.1; and 5.3.5.6. Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 19.1.3. *Catenae (Novum Testamentum): Catena in Lucam (typus B)* (e codd. Paris. Coislin. 23 + Oxon. Bodl. Misc. 182), 156.24; *Catenae (Novum Testamentum): Catena in epistulam i ad Corinthios* (typus Vaticanus) (e cod. Paris. gr. 227) 308.9; *Catenae (Novum Testamentum): Catena in epistulam ad Hebraeos* (catena Nicetae) (e cod. Paris. gr. 238), 320.24. Also, *Concilia Oecumenica (ACO): Concilium universale Ephesenum anno 431*, tom. 1.1.5.54.21 and 1.1.5.54.21.

<sup>27</sup> Cyrillus, *Commentarii in Joannem* 1.374.6; also in the same commentary, 2.17.27. Cyrillus, *Quod unus sit Christus* (Aubert page), 771.2.

<sup>28</sup> Cyrillus, *Quod unus sit Christus* (Aubert page), 730.16. Also, Cyrillus, *Quod unus sit Christus* (Aubert page), 742.29; see that in this second text there is word about the question of many gods, too, thus relating to the “two powers” theme: Εἰ γὰρ καὶ εἰσὶ θεοὶ πολλοὶ <καὶ κύριοι πολλοὶ> ἐν τε οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ἀλλ’ ἡμῖν εἰς Θεὸς ὁ Πατὴρ ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα, καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐξ αὐτοῦ, καὶ εἰς Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα, καὶ ἡμεῖς δι’ αὐτοῦ (*Quod unus sit Christus* [Aubert page], 742.37). Also, Cyrillus, *Epistulae paschales sive Homiliae paschales* (epist. 1–30), 77.840.38; 852.37; 880.52; and 937.3. Cyrillus, *Expositio in Psalmos* 69.1065.42; and 1252.37. Idem, *Commentarii in Lucam* (in catenis) 72.672.31; 913.4. Also, Eustathius, *In inscriptione titulorum*, Fragment 9.1.

<sup>29</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam i ad Corinthios (homiliae 1–44)* 61.341, l. 26. John Chrysostom, *In pharisaeum et meretricem* [Sp.], 61.728, l. 53.

<sup>30</sup> Gregory from Nazianzus, *Contra Julianum imperatorem* 1 (orat. 4), 35.604, l. 26. Gregory from Nazianzus, *De moderatione in disputando* (orat. 32), 36.180, l. 18. John Chrysostom, *In Joannem (homiliae 1–88)*, 59.358, l. 34. Gregory from Nazianzus, *In Psalmum 50* [Sp.]: 55.529, l. 10. Gregory from Nazianzus, *In Psalmum 50 (homilia 2)* [Sp.], 55.583, l. 43. Gregory from Nazianzus, *In assumptionem domini nostri Jesu Christi* [Sp.], 61.712, l. 28. Gregory from Nazianzus, *Oratio de hypapante* [Sp.], 60, l. 7. Also, Cyril, *Fragmenta in sancti Pauli epistulam ad Hebraeos*, 384, l. 11. Still, *Lexicon Suda*, Alphabetic letter pi, entry 1650, l. 17.

<sup>31</sup> Cyril, *Thesaurus de sancta consubstantiali trinitate*, 75.493, l. 9. Also, *Catenae (Novum Testamentum): Catena in epistulam ad Hebraeos* (catena Nicetae) (e cod. Paris. gr. 238), 389, l. 20.

<sup>32</sup> Eusebius, *Demonstratio evangelica*, 5.19.3.11.

John from Damascus mentions the Logos not only as σύνθρονος<sup>33</sup> but also as sitting on the throne of cherubim.<sup>34</sup> Actually, to John Chrysostom, Jesus Christ, Logos incarnate, is the master of all the angels and σύνθρονος to the Father, ὁ τῶν ἀγγέλων δεσπότης, Θεὸς ὁ σύνθρονος τοῦ πατρὸς.<sup>35</sup> Strikingly, to John Chrysostom, the “only begotten Son” is not only σύνθρονος but the “authentic Child,” τοῦ γνησίου Παιδὸς, τοῦ συνθρόνου.<sup>36</sup> Now, “child” is not the same term as “Son” and it is very close to one of Metatron’s adnouns,<sup>37</sup> ַעַי meaning the young person; this is important and we will have to dig a bit here. From this point of view, the fact that Enoch-Metatron is sometimes referred to as a youth, a ַעַי, could bear some special importance.<sup>38</sup> Though the youngest of the angels (in 3 *En.* 4:10), Metatron the ַעַי was privileged and raised higher than all of them (3 *En.* 4:8, 8:2, and 9:1–15:2), just like Joseph in the Biblical story. And like Joseph and his brothers, Enoch/Metatron faced the enmity of other angels.<sup>39</sup>

According to the teaching on the Christian Holy Trinity, the Second Person is Logos incarnated to Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the Father. Now, even though the Son is the only begotten One and He is born from the Father before all the ages, true God from true God, as the Nicene Creed has it, the whole terminology seems to refer to a “younger” person;<sup>40</sup> that is, to a Son and—akin enough—to a ַעַי. It is interesting that along with σύνθρονος, Epiphanius uses the term παῖδα (“child”), too, for Him, τὸν ἅγιον παῖδά σου, τὸν σύνθρονον τῆς βασιλείας σου, τὸν συναϊδίον σου υἱόν, τὸν Θεὸν λόγον.<sup>41</sup> Again, the concept is very old. Young kouros Ganymedes is also mentioned as σύνθρονος (Γανυμήδην σύνθρονον)<sup>42</sup> and as having been received “as god” (τὸν Γανυμήδην παρέλαβεν ὡς θεόν).<sup>43</sup> In Plato’s dialogue *Euthydemus*, when the philosopher speaks about the initiation by the Corybantes in their mysteries, he uses the term θρόνωνσι (enthronement).<sup>44</sup> Again, Cleinias here in the Platonic dialogue, who is initiated to the proper use of language, is a young one, while in those mysteries children and young men are all around, forming a chorus. Of course, in ancient Greek kouros came from the Ionian kōros (Doric κῶρος), whence the Κουρήτας and (perhaps) the

<sup>33</sup> John of Damascus, *Commentarii in epistulas Pauli* [Dub.], 95.940, l. 32. Also, *Acta Philippi* 79.17. Theodoretus, *Eranistes*, 157, l. 17.

<sup>34</sup> John of Damascus, *Epistula de hymno trisagio*, 9.5. Of course, the imagery stems from Ezekiel 1 and Revelation 4.

<sup>35</sup> Chrysostom, *In illud: Apparuit gratia dei omnibus hominibus*, 22.4. Also, in Cyrillus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 1–18, 15.22.17.

<sup>36</sup> Chrysostom, *In Acta apostolorum (homiliae 1–55)*, 60.262, l. 6.

<sup>37</sup> Perhaps, like Metatron, the Hebrew term ַעַי is but a transcription of the Greek νεαρός, that is, a youth. It is more obvious in the plural, νεαροί—עַיִים.

<sup>38</sup> It is God Himself who calls Metatron “youth” (3 *En.* 2:2. 3:2). Also, see *Sefer HaQomah* 157, where this youth has the “ark of the youth.” Metatron in *b.Yevamoth* 16b is a young one who became old (עַיִן גַּם דִּוְרֵי עַיִן). Yet, he is still called עַיִן. Thus, though old, he is an eternal youth, the very image of a *puer aeternus*.

<sup>39</sup> See 3 *Enoch* 6.

<sup>40</sup> Of course, according to the Church Fathers, the Son supersedes time and creation and though born, He has no beginning or end and there was no time that He was not. He is αἰδιος. See ὁμόχρονος καὶ σύνθρονος in Romanus Melodus, *Cantica* 40.11.12. Romanus Melodus, *Cantica dubia* 61.23.1. On a similar line, see some interesting remarks in James R. Davila, “Melchizedek, the ‘Youth,’ and Jesus,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. James R. Davila (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 248–74.

<sup>41</sup> Epiphanius Scr., *Anaphora Graeca* (fragmenta) [Sp.], 298, l. 28.

<sup>42</sup> *Scholia in Theocritum*, Prolegomenon-aneecdote-poem 12.35–37a.4.

<sup>43</sup> *Scholia in Theocritum*, Prolegomenon-aneecdote-poem 12.35–37a.2.

<sup>44</sup> Plato, *Euthydemus* 277d, 7. This initiation was like a new birth. See also Hesychius Lexicographer, *Lexicon* (A-O), entry 778.1.

Κορύβαντας,<sup>45</sup> too, the young companions and guardians of newborn Zeus. The fact that Corybants were sons and young ones we know from Diodorus Siculus and others.<sup>46</sup> The actual meaning of κούρος/κῶρος is the son and/or the child, the adolescent; that is, the νεαρός/ γυν. Still, in some of those secret rituals, where one was initiated, enthronement was a part of the whole procedure.<sup>47</sup> Back to John Chrysostom's "child," the adjective γνησίον in John Chrysostom is a real eyebrow raiser, too, since it may insinuate a question about "who is the authentic Child," something very useful to this approach. Then, perhaps the question of an "authentic Child" was more pressing than we thought before? We know that in Exod 4:22–23 Israel is named God's "firstborn son," but now, for the Christian view, this title is applied to the Son.

Moving on, the term σύνθρονος is also applied to other humans. To Gregorius from Nazianzus, the perfectly faithful are σύνθρονος καὶ ὁμόδοξοι to the Son,<sup>48</sup> while John Chrysostom mentions the possibility of suddenly being seated on the same throne with God, γεγόνασιν ἐξαίφνης καὶ σύνθρονος τοῦ Θεοῦ.<sup>49</sup> The use of ἐξαίφνης ("suddenly") here betrays a similar element to the surprise insinuated in Gen 5:24 about the translation of Enoch as all of a sudden.<sup>50</sup> Similarly to Rev 3:21, where the victorious one is deemed worthy for sitting on the same throne with Christ, the same is said by Pseudo-Macarius for the Apostles, too, συνδικασταὶ καὶ σύνθρονος κατηξιώθησαν γενέσθαι.<sup>51</sup> Efraim the Syrian maintains the same for the Apostles, Νομοθέται Ἀπόστολοι, φοβεροὶ καθεζόμενοι σύνθρονος τῷ Κριτῇ.<sup>52</sup> According to the deacon Olympiodorus, the same goes for the "poor and the righteous," οἱ κατὰ θεὸν πτωχοὶ καὶ δίκαιοι μετὰ τῶν κατ' ἀρετὴν μεγάλων σύνθρονος τῷ βασιλεῖ τῶν οὐρανῶν ἔσονται νικήσαντες τοὺς νοητοὺς ἐχθροὺς καὶ ὑψωθέντες.<sup>53</sup>

The same term (participle νικήσαντες, from νικῶ) is used exactly like in the relevant verses in Rev 3:21. In a similar spirit, after his repentance, Cyprian became σύνθρονος τοῖς ἐπισκόποις καὶ λειτουργὸς τοῦ θεοῦ.<sup>54</sup> Cyril the theologian, too, refers to the saints as being equal to angels, living in the same tents and sitting on the same throne as the Apostles, τῶν προφητῶν σύσκηνοι, καὶ τῶν

<sup>45</sup> Strabo Geographer, *Geogr.* 10.3.21.18. As is mentioned, they were healers, too (χορευτὰς καὶ θεραπευτὰς; see, Strabo Geographer, *Geogr.* 10.3.15.5). In all probability, the English word "cure" comes from the healers around Zeus, the Κουρήτας.

<sup>46</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* (lib. 1–20), 3.55.9.5. Also, Dionysius Scytobrachion, *Fragmenta* (Volume-Jacoby-F 1a,32,F, fragment), 7.141. Nonnus, *Dion.* 46.14–16. In *Etymologicum Magnum* (Kallierges page 534, line 19), Τουτέστιν οἱ νεανία.

<sup>47</sup> Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.*, 12.33.7, σχεδὸν οὖν ὅμοιον ὥσπερ εἶ τις ἄνδρα Ἕλληνα ἢ βάρβαρον μιοίη παραδοῦς εἰς μυστικὸν τινα οἶκον ὑπερφυῆ κάλλει καὶ μεγέθει, πολλὰ μὲν ὄρωντα μυστικὰ θεάματα, πολλῶν δὲ ἀκούοντα τοιοῦτων φωνῶν, σκότους τε καὶ φωτὸς ἐναλλάξ αὐτῷ φαινόμενων, ἄλλων τε μυρίων γιγνομένων, ἔτι δὲ [εἰ] καθάπερ εἰώθασιν ἐν τῷ καλουμένῳ θρονισμῷ καθίσαντες τοὺς μουμένους οἱ τελούντες κύκλῳ περιχορεύειν (emphasis added). Also, in Posidonius Phil., *Fr.* 368.46.

<sup>48</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Supremum vale* (*orat.* 42), 36.484, l. 29; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Liturgia sancti Gregorii* [Sp.], 36.704, l. 48; Athanasius, *Homilia in sanctos patres et prophetas* [Sp.], 28.1065, l. 21. Also, *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, Vita 8.112; Pseudo-Macarius, *Sermones 64 (collectio B)*, Homily 26.1.16.4; Photius, *Bibliotheca*, Codex 222, Bekker page 185b.3. *Catena (Novum Testamentum: Catena in Acta (catena Andreae)* (e cod. Oxon. coll. nov. 58), 310, l. 28.

<sup>49</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Colossenses (homiliae 1–12)*, 62.332, l. 35.

<sup>50</sup> Especially in the MT of Gen 5:24 this element of surprise is seen more clearly, as the event seemed to be totally unforeseen (וַיִּבְרָא).)

<sup>51</sup> Pseudo-Macarius, *Homiliae spirituales 50* (collectio H) 28.79.

<sup>52</sup> Ephraem Syrus, *Precationes e sacris scripturis collectae, quarum pleraequae sunt Sancti Ephraim, pro iis qui uolunt suam ipsorum*, Prayer 8, 351, l. 12.

<sup>53</sup> Olympiodorus Diaconus, *Commentarii in Job*, 307, l. 20. Also, Synesius Phil., *Hymni* 1.600 (where "Father" is called upon to "enthroned" him: θρόνισόν με, πάτερ).

<sup>54</sup> *Apocalypsis Joannis: Apocalypsis apocrypha Joannis* (versio tertia), 321, l. 27.



ἀποστόλων σύνθρονοι.<sup>55</sup> Even the “Shining one” (LXX: ἑωσφόρος, MT: לְיָהּ), based on the material in Isa 14:12–14, is referred to as attempting to be σύνθρονος to God.<sup>56</sup> And then, Michael Psellus in his *Opuscula logica, physica, allegorica, alia*, when referring to the three Persons of the Christian Holy Trinity, says that they sit on the same throne (ὄτι σύνθρονα καὶ ὁμόδοξα).<sup>57</sup>

From all the evidence presented above we may feel safe to conclude that the idea (or, the concept, the *imago*) of sitting together on the same throne or on thrones standing side by side is very old and certainly pre-Christian. It is not only gods who were sitting on the same throne, but heroes, the victorious faithful, and even virtues. Of course, σύνθρονος is not the same as σύνναος<sup>58</sup> or σύμβωμος. Therefore, the *idea* or the symbol of sitting on a throne with someone else or sitting to a throne next to another was very well known. What’s more, many a time sitting together on a throne or in thrones seems like an achievement, something one has to strive and aspire for. Again, if our route of thought is correct, then, concerning the etymology of the name Metatron, the most probable place that such a composition could originate from is Rev 3:21.

It is only in Rev 3:21 that it is stated, Ὁ νικῶν, δώσω αὐτῷ καθίσει μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ μου, ὡς καὶ ἐνίκησα καὶ ἐκάθισα μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ αὐτοῦ (“To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit *with me on my throne*, just as I was victorious and sat down *with* my Father on his *throne*”—NIV; of course, emphasis added).<sup>59</sup> In this single verse both the preposition μετὰ (μετ’ and μετὰ) and the noun θρόνος are to be found. The context is quite relevant and perfectly germane. Actually, the whole narrative in Revelation 3–5 is about a human being who is (or, will be) translated to heaven and invested with supra-mundane qualities and powers. This is exactly the issue with Enoch-Metatron in the texts of *1 Enoch*, *2 Enoch*, *3 Enoch* (or, *Hebrew Enoch*; or, *Sefer Hekhalot*), *Shiur Qomah*, and (probably, underlying in) the relevant references in the Talmud. Of course, ascension through heavens is one of the main elements in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic material, too (also in 2 Cor 12:1–4). We should not fail to pay attention to all of the other related occurrences in the book of Revelation, forming a narrative where heavenly ascent and enthronement next to God form the peak. As a constellation of clues, all of them point to and amplify the probability of this approach. It sounds familiar that in Revelation 3–5 one finds the promise for heavenly translation and a heavenly ascent to the celestial temple, where a vision of the throne of God *and* of the thrones of the “elders” is mentioned.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Cyril, *Encomium in sanctam Mariam deiparam (homilia diversa 11)*, 77.1029, l. 42.

<sup>56</sup> Cyril Theol., *Commentarii in Joannem*, 2.17, l. 7 and 651, l. 22.

<sup>57</sup> Michael Psellus, *Opuscula logica, physica, allegorica, alia*, 36.376. The term occurs also in an epigram in the *Anthologia Graeca* (Σύνθρονε, in 1.24.p1).

<sup>58</sup> Some gods were σύνναοι, that is, they were worshipped in the same temple. In Plutarch, *συννάοις καὶ συμβώμοις (Quaestiones convivales (612c–748d): Stephanus page 679A.4)*. Elsewhere, goddess Demeter was σύνναος to god Poseidon; Δημητρος σύνναος ὁ Ποσειδῶν (*Quaestiones convivales (612c–748d): Stephanus page 668B.10*). On the same use of the term, see Isidor Hymn., *Hymni* 3.34. Also, Preisendanz, *Papyri magicae* 31c2 and 73.1. Aelius Dionysius, *Ἀττικά ὀνόματα*, Alphabetic letter omicron, entry 20.1.

<sup>59</sup> In Matt 19:28 Jesus states that the Apostles will sit on twelve thrones and that they will judge the twelve tribes. This, too, will come as an achievement, since they have left their homes and families, having sacrificed everything in order to follow him (see Matt 19:27 and 29). Yet, the terminological “affinities” to the term Metatron are not present there. The whole image might echo Dan 12:3 and other apocalyptic material.

<sup>60</sup> See that in the work of Dionysius of Areopagita *On the Heavenly Hierarchy* (41.14), the θρόνοι are a specific order of angelic beings, Σεραφίμ δὲ καὶ θρόνοι καὶ κυριότητες.



More specifically, in Rev 2:7 the victorious one will eat from the tree of life, while in Rev 2:17 he will eat the manna and he will receive a new name; since Enoch was given a new name, Metatron, this last detail is very important to our case. Even more, in Rev 2:28 he will receive the title “morning star”; in Rev 3:5 white garments are promised to be given; in Rev 3:12 the victorious one will become a pillar in the heavenly temple of God, while the names of God, of the New Jerusalem, and the “new name” of Christ will be inscribed on him; in Rev 3:21 the victorious one will sit with Him as He sat with His Father in the latter’s throne (the reader tends to suppose here the existence of one throne with two occupants; first, the victorious one with Jesus Christ and then, Jesus Christ with the Father); that is why the noun θρόνος is in singular.

Revelation 4 forms one of the apocalyptic crescendi in the book, where an open door in heaven, the invitation for a heavenly journey, the vision of a celestial enthroned luminous being (God) in the middle of one square or circle formed by four holy singing creatures and of another, larger one, formed by twenty-four enthroned and crowned elders; what is more, the throne has a strong fiery nature. Another even vaster circle formed by myriads of angels is insinuated in 5:11; next to this throne and at its right side there was a book that was given to the Lamb of God in 5:7–8. This Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, is portrayed as sitting in the *center* of the throne of God,<sup>61</sup> ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων (Rev 5:6); though it may seem that the Lamb stood with the throne and the living creatures and the elders, Rev 3:21 may point to standing on the throne. To the pious Christian mind of that time, it is this very verse that depicts the peak of achievement in the heavenly ascent: to be enthroned with Jesus Christ, next to him, to καθίσαι μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ μου, ὡς κἀγὼ ἐνίκησα καὶ ἐκάθισα μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ αὐτοῦ. If someone would like to name that person, who sits next on the throne (or to another throne next to the first), he would have to use either σύνθρονος or μετάθρονος. According to this source, all the composite parts of the title/name Metatron (μετά, θρόνος) are found only in Rev 3:21. Still, the fact that to the Jewish sources there is only one throne in highest heaven makes the use of the *idea* of σύνθρονος more probable.<sup>62</sup> In the Talmudic tractate, where Aḥer saw Metatron sitting in heaven, one may conceive that only the throne of God could be meant there.<sup>63</sup>

Therefore, Metatron was punished not only because he was sitting but also because he was sitting on the only place one could sit in highest heaven: on God’s throne.<sup>64</sup> This view makes him ipso facto a σύνθρονος to God (Was God absent at the time? Did He not know?). Now, according to the (other) sources who refer to a σύνθρονος (see previous paragraphs), they also use terms like πάρεδρος and συγκαθεζόμενος, yet the point is the same: there is one more occupant on the throne.

<sup>61</sup> See that in Hekhalot Zutarti the “youth” Metatron stands in the center of the “innermost centre around God” (Schäfer, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism*, 296).

<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, it is also mentioned that Metatron sits on a throne in the gate entrance to the seventh palace (see 3 *Enoch* 16).

<sup>63</sup> The fact that in the Aḥer story Metatron is punished because he is sitting in a throne in heaven proves that his punishment had to do with claims concerning the existence of another power, that is, another divine being; something unacceptable to the thought and the theology of the rabbis. It was the Christians who preached that Jesus Christ was “son of God,” Kurios and enthroned.

<sup>64</sup> In 3 *Enoch* other thrones are mentioned, too, where angels are seated; yet, no such reaction and punishment is mentioned concerning another angel. Still, Metatron’s throne is similar to God’s throne (3 *En.* 12), thus making it possible for the confusion to happen. Also, in *Hekhalot Zutarti* God’s and Metatron’s names become almost interchangeable (see Schäfer, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism*, 296–7).

Again, in our view, σύνθρονος is quite close to μετάθρονος and Lieberman is right.<sup>65</sup> As he points out, “[Synthronos] was used by the Christians as a title for Jesus, and it is not surprising that the Jews shunned this term as an appellation of the Angel.”<sup>66</sup> The term πρόθρονον is also found in an epigram.<sup>67</sup>

All this taken into consideration, the formation of the title μετάθρονος/Metatron is only one moment away. And it is only in and around Rev 3:21 that all the other adjacent thematic elements are to be found, too. Therefore, according to this approach, this specific verse might be a most suitable starting point for the formation of the term-title Metatron. At the same time, it should be noted that perhaps it is not one single trait in the book of Revelation that may be absolutely persuasive about this approach, but when all of the existing elements are seen synergistically or in a holistic way, with Rev 3:21 as their spearhead, the conclusion might seem quite probable. What’s more, it should not escape attention that many of the characteristics of the archangel Metatron are to be found in the Lamb/Christ in the book of Revelation.<sup>68</sup> Which brings us to the next question: *Why* would the Jewish mystics (or, the exegetes) invent such a term?

As is known, during the first centuries of the Common Era, there was a heated debate between Jews, Christians, and Gnostics concerning the nature and the theology of the Godhead. Christians taught about a Trinity of Persons, instead of the strict Jewish monotheism, while Gnostics felt free to invent an even more composite and pleromatic image of the divinity by reversing roles and characters. According to a very fast-evolving Christology, Jesus Christ was the preexistent Logos and Son of God that came down and tabernacled among men (John 1:1–14) and at the end of his mission he ascended *bodily* in heaven (like Enoch, perhaps the Righteous Teacher—though not after death—and apostle Paul) to be enthroned next to the Father. Now, the idea of the Son sitting on the same throne with the Father must have stirred a lot of opposition from the Jewish side.<sup>69</sup> It is not only Israel who is mentioned as God’s “firstborn son,” but the whole idea that Jesus Christ was God and equal to the Father must have brought about reactions not only on the verbal level but also on a theological or angelological one. That was the main part of the “two powers” battlefield.<sup>70</sup> How would a Jew fight this? How would a Jewish *mystic* react when former brothers—and others—demanded that God had a partner in creation, one who was sitting on a heavenly throne? One way would be that of absolute rejection: no way. Then a hermeneutical marathon would follow, one woven around Genesis 1, Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 1, and Daniel 7, to name but a few. Another way would be not only the angelization of Jesus Christ, thus rendering him less dangerous, but also his naming after one of the most annoying characteristics of his office. That is probably how the term Metatron/μετάθρονος might have come about from Rev 3:21, as a response coming from Jewish mystics to Jesus Christ sitting on the throne, next to the Father.

<sup>65</sup> For the possible connection of the two terms, see Lieberman, “Metatron,” 291–2, 294, and 296.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 297.

<sup>67</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epigrammata* 8.116.2 (or, similarly, in *Anthologia Graeca* 8.116.1).

<sup>68</sup> Schäfer has proposed that “we try to understand the figure of Metatron as an *answer* to the New Testament’s message of Jesus Christ” (*The Origins of Jewish Mysticism*, 324; emphasis original).

<sup>69</sup> Daniel Boyarin has contributed greatly on the issue of the existence of some kind of Jewish binitarianism; see his “The Gospel of the Memra: Jewish Binitarianism and the Prologue to John,” *HTR* 94 (2001): 243–84. See also Schäfer’s approach in his *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism*, 323–4.

<sup>70</sup> Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism*, *SJLA* 25 (Leiden: Brill, 1977), is now a classic.

To be sure, the name Metatron has no pre-Christian witness. Yet, figures that present some similar characteristics are there, like Enoch, who is metamorphosed to an angel, and Melchizedek, who in 11QMelch bears some angelic and messianic traits. Is it improbable that circles of early Jewish mystics received the material on the already angelized Enoch, so dear to many from the apocalyptic milieu, and projected on him some of the most “annoying” characteristics of Jesus Christ? In such a way they could explain away some of the basic claims of the Christians and at the same time retain intact their old approach on the Godhead. Then, the one seen in the visions and the traditions of the Christians was not God or a so-called Person, “the Son,” but an angel, one of the highest angels or even the highest one. After all, apocalyptic, mythical, and mystical material was replete with similar angelic beings, gods, or heroes who shared akin characteristics; why not this one, too?

If this view is valid, then, to those mystics, the divine being on the throne in many Christian texts and traditions was not God but his closest angel: one invested with light or solar traits,<sup>71</sup> deeply connected to the cosmos, a macranthropus similar to Adam haRishon<sup>72</sup> or Adam Qadmon,<sup>73</sup> who sat crowned on a heavenly throne and bore the Name itself,<sup>74</sup> actually, a “smaller god,”<sup>75</sup> yes, a younger one, but not *the* God. According to this approach, that is Metatron.

Perhaps it is of relevance to our discussion that in *b.Sanhedrin* 38b, when the rabbis converse about the creation of man (and angels), they might actually answer to Christian claims concerning the use of verbs in plural in the relevant passages in Genesis 1. For the Christian part, plural meant

<sup>71</sup> In 3 *Enoch* 15, Enoch is transformed into a fire and light being. Earlier angels prostrated themselves in front of him. One cannot help but remember Moses’ radiant face when descending Sinai (Exod 34:29–35) and Jesus’ transfiguration on the mount (Matt 17:1–8). In both cases solar/divine characteristics are present, while the elders are afraid to approach Moses and the disciples fall prostrate.

<sup>72</sup> It is not without meaning that in 3 *Enoch* and in *Sefer Razi’el* 255–256 Metatron has the same size as the “first man” (אדם הראשון) in *b.Sanhedrin* 38b. There the “first man” is reduced in size because of his sin, that is, due to his ill will to become God. Similarly, Metatron is reduced because of an analogous lapse: he sat and he gave the impression that he was God. It is in the same tractate, the same chapter and page (*b.Sanhedrin* 38b) that the measurements of the first man are addressed.

<sup>73</sup> Adam Qadmon is the cosmic Tree-Man in the later Kabbalah, especially of the *Zohar*, constituted by the organism of the sefiroth.

<sup>74</sup> Superiority on the angels and the bearing of “the name” is mentioned concerning Jesus in Heb 1:3–4; see below and Schäfer, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism*, 325–6. Alexander presents the probability of Metatron’s name being devised for magical purposes; see Alexander, “The Historical Settings of the Hebrew Book of Enoch,” 162, and his contribution in *OTP*, 243.

<sup>75</sup> The whole procedure through which Enoch becomes Metatron and is given the name “Lesser YHWH” reminds the ritual of the chrism of the high priest. What’s more, the letters of creation are inscribed on his crown, all angels fall prostrate before him, and he becomes God’s viceroy. Schäfer’s description is accurate: “he is enthroned (almost) like God, he looks (almost) like God, he has (almost) the same name as God, he knows all heavenly and earthly secrets, ... and he is worshipped (almost) like God” (*The Origins of Jewish Mysticism*, 320–1); and again, “There is only one other figure on whom similar qualities are lavished: Jesus Christ” (*The Origins of Jewish Mysticism*, 322). It should also be noted that here we see all the elements of a rite of passage or initiation, where the old self/person “dies” and a new one is born. Interestingly enough, in John 3:3–8, Jesus teaches Nicodemus that ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῆ ἄνωθεν, οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ (“no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above” 3:3—NRS). Also, in the hymn in Phil 2:6–11 elements of “death” and new “birth” are present, ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος. Attention to this hymn was paid by Stroumsa (see previous note), while Schäfer brings it back to the fore again (Schäfer, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism*, 324–5). In the Dead Sea Scrolls the Righteous Teacher or the presumed author of the *Hodayot* sits in the *edah* of the heavenly beings, the *elim*. Not only does he claim to be the only one to have ascended on high, to be enthroned, to have supramundane knowledge and wisdom, but also to have his abode there, with them, the *elim* (“gods,” from *el*, or “angels”). Jesus Christ and Enoch-Metatron may fall in the same category of contenders.

the existence of more than one person in heaven, thus pointing to the divinity of Jesus Christ *and* to his participation to the creation of the world (to the Holy Spirit, too). For the rabbis, the plural in Gen 1:26 (also in 3:22 and 11:7) referred to the angels. Still, it is here that the need to be able to deal with heretics (אפיקורוס and/or מינים) is raised, whether they are of Gentile or of Jewish origin.<sup>76</sup> Yet, the issue goes a lot more interesting, since they soon come (twice) to the hot reference of “thrones” (כרסון) in Dan 7:9 and to the ancient one who sat there (יחיב יומין ועתיק רמיו כרסון די עד); again, the plural had to be explained. Now, various explanations are offered, with the last one downplaying the plural altogether: actually, the second “throne” is not a throne at all, it is only a footstool. In such a way the issue of key terms in plural was rendered theologically secure from the part of the rabbis.

It is in this very same spot, where the discussion is on “thrones,” that the rabbis bring about a teaching concerning Metatron. To their view, in the passage concerning the invitation to Moses and the others to ascend “to the Lord” in Exod 24:17<sup>77</sup> it is Metatron speaking and not one or the other Person in the Christian Trinity.<sup>78</sup> Then, interestingly enough and up to our point, the rabbis continue, there is a danger of *exchanging* God for Metatron,<sup>79</sup> for his name is similar to his Master,<sup>80</sup> and—what’s more—His name “is in him.”<sup>81</sup> Then, they wonder, should we “worship” Metatron? And the answer goes in the negative of course, since God is only one. If one would worship someone else than God, although that one might have been invested with many heavenly qualities, that would be a serious rebellious act not to be pardoned.

A final, albeit distant, possibility should be mentioned. Could Metatron be the one who measures the *guf haShekinah* (or, the body of the Presence) in the Shiur Qomah traditions (texts full of names, letters, and measurements)?<sup>82</sup> In Greek the verb “to measure” is μετρῶ, while the noun would be

<sup>76</sup>In the same context (*b.Sanhedrin* 38b), the first Adam is deemed a min, a heretic (אדם היה הראשון מין), due to his sin. Yet, in the “two powers” incident Metatron cannot be deemed as a min, but Elisha ben Avuyah is; he is named Aher (“other,” one who cut his ties with his kin).

<sup>77</sup>LXX: ἀνάβηθι πρὸς κύριον, MT: עֲלֶה אֶל־יְהוָה.

<sup>78</sup>Notice that Jesus in John 3:12 adopts a rather polemical tone in his speech to Nicodemus, claiming that no other has ever ascended to heaven than the one who descended from there; that is, him, the “son of man.” In the same context, Moses is mentioned, though, as Charlesworth has shown, a possibility of the figure of Enoch lurking among the lines of John 3 is not unthinkable; see “Did the Fourth Evangelist Know the Enoch Tradition?” in *Testimony and Interpretation: Early Christology and Its Judeo-Hellenistic Milieu*, *Studies in Honor of Petr Pokorný*, ed. Jiri Mrázek and Jan Roskovec (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 223–39; and James H. Charlesworth, *Jesus as Mirrored in John: The Genius in the New Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 2018), chapters 10–11.

<sup>79</sup>What has been greatly overlooked here is the ancient belief of identifying or recognizing an entity not on morphical grounds (on his shape or looks) but on lexicarithmic; that is, by the numerical value of the letters constituting his name. In all probability, the numerical value had to do with the placement of the letters on a magical square and/or with the construction of a hierarchy. Herein one might find one key for solving some of the Shiur Qomah measurement riddles.

<sup>80</sup>The name Metatron had the same numerical value (314) with *Shadday*, one of God’s names.

<sup>81</sup>Reflecting on Exod 23:21, LXX: τὸ γὰρ ὄνομα μου ἐστιν ἐπ’ αὐτῶ, MT: כִּי שְׁמִי בְקִרְבּוֹ. It is not quite clear which one exactly of God’s names is meant here, though it is often taken to be the Tetragrammaton. On the other hand, many angelic names are theophoric. See, for example, Michael, Yahoel, and Uriel. Apart from the numerical value of Metatron’s name (see above), it is not easily comprehensible how His name is in (or, on) the angel. Still, in our mind, there is a great difference between the MT and the LXX due to the rendering of the preposition ἐπὶ / בְּ. It is very interesting that Jesus receives the Name above all names. See that in Phil 2:9–10 Jesus is exalted by God in the highest place and he receives “the name above every name” (ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῶ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὀνομα); as a consequence, now “every knee” shall “bow” to him, in heaven, on earth, and below (see also Matt 28:18; John 17:11–12; Eph 1:21; and 3 John 1:7).

<sup>82</sup>See Martin S. Cohen, *The Shi’ur Qomah: Liturgy and Theurgy in Pre-Kabbalistic Jewish Mysticism* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 125–6.

μέτρον.<sup>83</sup> One possible rendering of the phrase “I measure the being” would be μετρῶ-το-όν. Let us remember that the LXX translate God’s answer in Exod 3:14  $\text{הָאֵלֹהִים} \text{ אָמַר} \text{ אֲנִי} \text{ הָאֵלֹהִים}$  as ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν (emphasis added). What’s more, μητάτωρ (metator)<sup>84</sup> is the measurer of spaces and places, the χωρομέτρης, and more significantly, the μητατώριον is the place of the deacon inside the adytum.<sup>85</sup> Therefore, given his proximity to God and his high priestly duties in the heavenly temple, could Metatron be the measurer (μητάτωρ, μέτρον) who had his place in the holiest place (μητατώριον or μιτατώριον)?

Given that many a time angelic names are difficult to etymologize, a number of approaches could be possible concerning the name of Metatron. Yet, not all of them are equally probable, too. Taking into consideration a large part of the available data, the brief outline presented in the preceding pages amplifies older suggestions and calls for a reevaluation. Though some differences are acute, it is the very nature of this archangel, as much as his human past, too,<sup>86</sup> that challenges for a comparison to Jesus Christ.

In a similar way that some Gnostic sects reversed the role of persons and symbols in the Hebrew Bible, perhaps some Jewish mystics or rabbis projected on this entity some of Jesus Christ’s titles and characteristics and by degrading or knocking—the one way or the other not so very fond to the rabbis—Enoch, they tried to offer an indirect, though meaningful answer to the claims of the Christians. The whole issue could be easily classified among the many endeavors by apocalypticists and others to enrich (or to lower) biblical heroes and to fashion them according to their views. Though this approach presents some serious positive points, still it is not free of lacunae, too. Then, let us examine what happens to Jacob/Israel in the *Prayer of Joseph*.

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<sup>83</sup> See Matthew Black, “The Origin of the Name Metatron,” *VT* 1 (1951): 218.

<sup>84</sup> For μητάτωρ and μητατώριον (also, μιτάτωρ and μιτατώριον), see E. A. Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon from the Roman and Byzantine Periods (from B.C. 146 to A.D. 1100)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1914), 758, and G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 873. Terms like μετεθρονηζω, θρονηζω, θρόνιος-ον, and θρόνωσις are there (Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 655) as well as μεταχρόνιος-ον, μεταχρόνιος-ον (Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 863). Also, see Philip Alexander, “From Son of Adam to a Second God,” in *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible*, ed. Michael E. Stone and Theodore A. Bergren (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1998), 107.

<sup>85</sup> The accessory rooms nearby the temple were called μέλαθρον, μέλεθρον, or μελέθρων; see Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 840.

<sup>86</sup> The enlarged and enriched figure of Jacob/Israel in the *Prayer of Joseph* also deserves more attention.



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# Some Considerations on Ethics in Early Jewish Theologies and the New Testament

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Antiquity, with its rich and diverse Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian religious, ethical, and legal traditions, is at the root of much of the fabric of the Western mindset and societal structures. A study of its roots has mostly been understood as beneficial for a better understanding of both the past and of many a present-day issue. In light of this it rather is surprising that a comprehensive study of ethics in antiquity covering all available texts is lacking. Whereas later legal and philosophical trends and developments have picked up most of the Greco-Roman legal and philosophical heritage, and the Jewish and Christian biblical canons have been a continuous source of later Jewish and Christian theological and moral practices and beliefs, albeit in an often controversial way, almost nothing in this respect has happened with the many noncanonical writings. Admittedly, not all writings have been known to many people, and many of them only have been discovered during the past fifty to seventy years, and one can even detect several biases toward them. But the literature we are talking here about, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha, the Christian and Gnostic Apocrypha, and the writings of Philo and Josephus, merit all of our attention.<sup>1</sup>

Ethics is here understood as a branch of philosophy that involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong conduct and seeks to resolve questions of human morality by defining concepts such as good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice, justice and crime. Obviously, many noncanonical writings take moral reasoning found in the canonical books as their starting point and guideline, but at the same time they also expand argumentations or raise new questions. Where possible, one needs to differentiate between passages, which imply meta-ethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics, although the relevant passages are often too short or unspecific to be categorized and systematized accordingly.

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<sup>1</sup>For a general introduction in some of the problems see F. García Martínez and M. Popović, *Defining Identities: We, You, and the Other in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the Fifth Meeting of the IOQS in Groningen* (Leiden: Brill, 2008). See the older work S. Belkin, *Philo and the Oral Law; the Philonic Interpretation of Biblical Law in Relation to the Palestinian Halakah* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940). On the particular problem of suicide, which occupies an important role in Josephus deliberations and speeches (cf. Masada), see the articles on Josephus in L. D. Hankoff and B. Einsidler, *Suicide: Theory and Clinical Aspects* (Littleton: PSG, 1979).

## 2. CONTEXT

Once Judaism and Hellenism in the third and second centuries BCE had fruitfully engaged, new ideas and mergers of different concepts started to blossom in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. In quite a few of these writings, for example, Jesus Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon, we find evidence that the Thora is philosophically equated with the Greek concept of Wisdom and that divine teaching is identified with the law of nature or of the cosmos. In both cases, Thora/Wisdom functions as the foundation of all of the laws of society and consists of many moral teachings for humanity. Furthermore, in connection with the philosophical concept of *sophia*, we find the frequent employment of practical wisdom, specifically in the form of practical wisdom sayings, *sententiae* or *gnomoi*, most notably narrated within the framework of the pedagogical teachings of parents to their children or in general of an older generation to a newer one. A popular example here is the employment of the Golden Rule, as it best exemplifies the philosophical equation of Thora and Wisdom and at the same time is the *epitome* of practical wisdom.<sup>2</sup>

Another current of the period was that of apocalypticism, a worldview that would influence ethics in a very specific way. Crucial to this worldview was that humanity was seen as caught in a cosmic battle, humanity would be mostly the victim of a cosmic battle. A war between good and evil (either personified or seen as abstract powers): a clash between God and his angels and the fallen angels and their leaders. Although there was some room for human action and responsibility within this battle, the course of history was in principal predetermined, namely as a sequence of good and bad periods heading toward a catastrophic climax. Even in the end, God would not intervene directly, but send an Anointed or Messiah together with a host of angels to speak and execute the final judgment. With this concept in mind, human responsibility was by nature limited and ethical teaching consisted mainly of a call to follow the laws of the course of history and of the cosmos. Within the microcosmos of the individual's place in the family, clan, or smaller society, various wisdom sayings and collections of teaching that had been growing throughout history and that had come from the whole of the Ancient Near Eastern environment to enter Judaism during its postexilic period as Wisdom theology would give someone meaning and direction in life. The authors of the apocalyptic writings would see man's ethics being limited in time and subject: they therefore developed a so-called "interim ethics" for a minority.

Human responsibility, the need to act morally wise, and the necessity of developing moral teaching begin with accepting that there is at least some space for human action. This space depends on the answers given to the question on the origin of evil and death and whether and how to deal with it. The Prophets of Israel predominantly considered the wicked human heart to be the origin of evil, and with little interruption called people to return to the moral teaching of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. However, in the Persian period, the apocalyptic authors (beginning with those of the early parts of *1 Enoch*, some of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and then continuing with those of *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* around 100 CE) blamed the fallen angels for having brought about

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<sup>2</sup>See more general on wisdom in the Bible, T. A. Perry, *God's Twilight Zone: Wisdom in the Hebrew Bible* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008). Compare here A. W. Kenworthy, *The Nature and Authority of Old Testament Wisdom Family Ethics: With Special Reference to Proverbs and Sirach* (PhD diss., University of Melbourne, 1974). See S. Burkes, "Wisdom and Law: Choosing Life in Ben Sira and Baruch," *JSJ* 30 (1999): 253–76; and J. J. Collins, "Ben Sira's Ethics." Pages 62–79 in *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*. Edited by John J. Collins. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.

evil and death on earth. They divided mankind into two groups: those under influence of these fallen angels, who were acting accordingly in a wicked manner, and those under the influence of the angels of God acting righteously. Wisdom was to possess enough knowledge of where mankind came from and belonged to and acted accordingly righteous that one could avoid being pulled into the maelstrom of the evil powers.

In the Hellenistic period, under the influence of both Stoic philosophy and apocalyptic thinking, the various Jewish groups in society (especially after the Maccabean revolt of 164 BCE) were increasingly divided on questions of the interaction between fate and human responsibility. As Flavius Josephus later reports, the Sadducees thought everything to be dependent on fate and left no room for human action. As they also didn't believe in a life after death, a novel belief since the second century BCE, their maxim was to enjoy life as long as possible, as there was nothing one could do to change one's fate. Also according to Josephus the Essenes and the Pharisees tried different balances between fate and human responsibility.<sup>3</sup>

Contrary to the Sadducees, the Essenes and Pharisees believed in the possibility of different degrees of interaction between fate and one's own action and responsibility, with the Pharisees giving somewhat more room to free will and independent human action than the Essenes. For the latter, it was important that one could know one's fate by studying Scripture and reading it through the lens of their eschatological and apocalyptic worldview: there was a cosmic battle going on between the good and evil angels, who were able to influence humankind in both directions. For the Pharisees, more than for the Essenes, it was more important to develop a strategy for making the best of one's place in society and acting politically prudent.

For both the Essenes and the Pharisees it was clear that one can decide which direction to take by acting either foolishly or wisely, wickedly or righteously. Knowledge of one's fate and one's destiny and teaching the right kind of action were therefore of the utmost importance. Again, for the Pharisees there was more room for human acting than for the Essenes, who believed that, through predestination, every man had a given portion of good and evil parts in him, and it was difficult, though not impossible, to change one's course in life.

Therefore, the Pharisees were best prepared to develop a more advanced ethics and moral teaching for society at large, which they were also able to adjust to the needs of an ever-changing society and politics by constantly updating their interpretation and adaptation of the Mosaic Law. It was the Pharisees, then, who laid the foundations of the Oral Thora and later rabbinic Judaism, whereas the Essenes developed only a group ethic with an emphasis on inner social values, and the Sadducees produced an ethic, if at all, that served only themselves and was meant to allow their own party to survive as best as possible.

Between the fifth and fourth centuries BCE and the Maccabean revolt in 164 BCE the ethical values of Judaism in the Persian and Hellenistic period developed from a Prophetic acceptance, through

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<sup>3</sup>See on the "male" virtues of endurance of the Maccabees themselves according to 1 and 2 Maccabees and other writings from the Greco-Roman period, T. A. Adamopoulo, *Endurance, Greek and Early Christian: The Moral Transformation of the Greek Idea of Endurance, from the Homeric Battlefield to the Apostle Paul* (PhD diss., Brown University, 1996); and on the sociopolitical aspects of the Maccabean Revolt, G. G. Stroumsa and G. Stanton, eds., *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). See further G. G. Xeravits and J. Zsengellér, *The Books of the Maccabees: History, Theology, Ideology: Papers of the Second International Conference on the Deuteronomical Books, Pápa, Hungary, 9-11 June, 2005* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

a post-Prophetic and apocalyptically inspired denial of human responsibility to a more balanced approach between the need for human action. This call for religious freedom, and the fight for what by then would be called “Judaism,” that is, a set of Jewish values simply called the traditions of the ancestors and, as such, consisting of the essence of Mosaic teachings, would continue during the following period. It would last from the independent Jewish state ruled by the Hasmoneans until the coming of the Romans and the Herodian rule at the end of the first century BCE, and afterward also influence New Testament and early Christian ethics. From then on, man’s principal obligation in society was to defend these traditions against anyone endangering them, whether from the outside or the inside. In other words, ethics often functioned to define and defend Jewish identity with or against the definitions of other groups within Jewish society.

It is this period in history during which most of the known noncanonical writings were written. The ethics expressed in them will be the subject of this investigation. For sure, the ethics found in the early Jewish literature is as diverse as the noncanonical Jewish writings are themselves. They all witness a many-sided Early Judaism, in which many groups with sometimes very differing opinions existed next to each other. The hermeneutical background and practical application of ethics in their writings express not only the vividness of their dialogue between themselves and with society at large but also the diversity of Thora interpretation in the Second Temple. In most if not all cases ethics functions within the realm of the “religion” or “theology” of Early Judaism and its many branches and is interconnected with the various conceptions of Thora as teaching and/or derived from the theological concepts, wisdom, divine revelation, divine intervention, evil, human responsibility, and love.

The topic “Ethics in Antiquity” and the question belonging to it, namely, whether the “Ethics of the non-canonical literature” does represent a specific response to moral issues, and therefore does presuppose a theological perspective on it, clearly merit our attention. Even more so, and within the context of the more recent history of research of a truly novel approach to Early Judaism and Early Christianity in their Greco-Roman setting, they are a most valuable collection of writings, when approached theologically and not merely literarily, historically, and comparatively; they can offer important clues not only to their own ancient setting but also to modern-day questions. More importantly, it presupposes looking at Judaism and Christianity in antiquity as an independent area of research (as part of “Religions in Antiquity”), and not one serving the needs of the more traditional disciplines of Old or New Testament Studies.

A look at the state of research reveals the lack of concise studies on our topic and at the same time a need for a more systematic approach.<sup>4</sup> The *Review of Biblical Literature* website (accessed on August 25, 2017) lists seventy-three book reviews on aspects of ethics, of which the overwhelming majority deal with ethics in both the Old and New Testament, some in rabbinic Judaism and the Greco-Roman world, but none with ethics in the noncanonical literature.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>I myself have argued for a much broader and inclusive approach. See my “Non-Canonical Writings and Biblical Theology,” in *The Changing Face of Judaism, Christianity and Other Religions in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, ed. I. Henderson and G. S. Oegema, Studien zu den JSRZ 2 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus 2006), 491–512; G. S. Oegema, “Ethics in the Noncanonical Jewish Writings,” *New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 2:321–8, and G. S. Oegema, *Early Judaism and Modern Culture: Essays on Early Jewish Literature and Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011).

<sup>5</sup>When looking at two examples, D. Marguerat, *La nouvelle eschatology dans les bas-judaïsme palestinien et dans l’évangile selon Matthieu. Une approche de la relation entre l’eschatologie et l’éthique* (PhD diss., University of Lausanne, 1975), and

### 3. ETHICS IN EARLY JUDAISM

The writings of Early Judaism—that is, not only the Pseudepigrapha but also the Apocrypha, the Qumran Scrolls, Philo, and Josephus—neither represent a specific religious group or a sociological movement nor do they all originate from the same geographical area and period in history, nor do they present a uniform theology or set of religious views, let alone a common tradition they would have in common.<sup>6</sup> Instead they come to us from different life settings and represent many different, often unknown, groups and socioreligious traditions in Second Temple Judaism (538 BCE to 70/135 CE). Furthermore, equally unlike the Jewish or Christian Bible, the Pseudepigrapha and the other early Jewish writings of Early Judaism don't have a present-day faith community to represent them.

In this essay we will try to draw a more complete picture of ethics in Early Judaism, of which the noncanonical or early Jewish writings are indeed the main witness.<sup>7</sup> Whereas the organizing principle of both the *Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit* (JSHRZ) and the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha (OTP) will be known to most of you—and has been chosen here for practical reasons, although the logic behind it is admittedly imperfect—in the latter case, it will be important to mention the five theological themes or red threads with which I try to cover the different aspects of ethics within its larger context, namely, (1) Thora and wisdom; (2) Divine revelation and intervention; (3) The origin of and ways to deal with evil; (4) Human responsibility and one's role in society; and (5) Practical ethics between the “love command” and the “golden rule.”<sup>8</sup>

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T. B. Maston, *Biblical Ethics: A Guide to the Ethical Message of the Scriptures from Genesis through Revelation* (Cleveland, OH: World, 1967), one sees immediately the center of the interest in early Judaism: it is the Biblical canon.

Other studies though do give attention to our topic, but very much from the perspective of the Apocrypha, which by many traditions were and are considered to be deutero-canonical. See, e.g., A. P. Bloch, *A Book of Jewish Ethical Concepts: Biblical and Postbiblical* (New York: KTAV, 1984); E. J. Schnabel, *Law and Wisdom from Ben Sira to Paul: A Tradition Historical Enquiry into the Relation of Law, Wisdom, and Ethics*, WUNT II/16 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985); G. M. Zerbe, *Non-Retaliatio in Early Jewish and New Testament Texts: Ethical Themes in Social Contexts*, JSPSup 13 (Leiden: Brill, 1993), and already A. Cronbach, “The Social Ideals of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha,” *HUCA* 18 (1944): 119–56; H. C. Kee, “Models of Community in the Literature of Postexilic Judaism,” in *Who Are the People of God? Early Christian Models of Community* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 17–54; E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)*, ed. F. Millar; G. Vermes, rev. ed., 4 vols (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973–87).

<sup>6</sup>See A. P. Bloch, *Book of Jewish Ethical Concepts*; Schnabel, *Law and Wisdom from Ben Sira to Paul*; and Zerbe, *Non-Retaliatio*.

<sup>7</sup>Some of the older works to be mentioned here are: R. Travers Herford, *Talmud and Apocrypha; a Comparative Study of the Jewish Ethical Teaching in the Rabbinical and Non-Rabbinical Sources in the Early Centuries* (New York: KTAV, 1971); H. Maldwyn Hughes, *The Ethics of Jewish Apocryphal Literature* (London: Robert Culley, 1909); J. J. Lewis, *The Ethics of Judaism in the Hellenistic Period, from the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (PhD diss., University of London, 1958); P. Chatelion Counet, “Pseudepigraphy and the Petrine School: Spirit and Tradition in 1 and 2 Peter and Jude,” *HTS Theological Studies* 62.2 (2006): 403–24; K. H. V. Merguet, *Die Glaubens- und Sittenlehre des Buches Jesus Sirach*, vol. 1 (Königsberg: Ostpreussische Zeitungs- und Verlags-Druckerei, 1874).

<sup>8</sup>See W. Harrelson, “The Significance of ‘Last Words’ for Intertestamental Ethics,” in L. Crenshaw and J. T. Willis, eds., *Essays in Old Testament Ethics: J. Philip Hyatt, in Memoriam* (New York: KTAV, 1974), 203–14; M. de Jonge, “The Two Great Commandments in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” *NovT* 44 (2002): 371–92; and H. D. Slingerland, “The Nature of *Nomos* (Law) within the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” *JBL* 105 (1986): 39–48. See further P. Gray, “Points and Lines: Thematic Parallelism in the Letter of James and the Testament of Job,” *NTS* 50 (2004): 406–24; J. J. Collins, “Jewish Ethics in Hellenistic Dress: The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides,” *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 158–77; R. Bauckham, “The Conflict of Justice and Mercy: Attitudes to the Damned in Apocalyptic Literature,” *Apoc* 1 (1990): 181–96; J. G. Gammie, “Spatial and Ethical Dualism in Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic Literature,” *JBL* 93 (1974): 356–85.



## 4. THEOLOGICAL THEMES

Let us now come to the five theological themes we have identified, in order to place the ethics in the Pseudepigrapha in particular and in Early Judaism in general in its broader context, namely, (1) Thora and Wisdom, (2) Divine Revelation and Intervention, (3) the Origin of Evil and How to Deal with it, (4), Human Responsibility and Society, and (5) The Love Command and the Golden Rule. These broad axes will later allow for a more detailed overview, such as abortion, alcohol, divorce, sexuality, celibacy, homosexuality, slavery, violence, wealth, and poverty.

### 4.1. *Thora and Wisdom*

In a number of noncanonical Jewish writings, especially in the Wisdom literature from the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, we find evidence that the Thora is philosophically equated with the Greek concept of Wisdom and that divine teaching is identified with the law of nature or of the cosmos. In both cases, Thora/Wisdom functions as the foundation of all of the laws of society and consists of many moral teachings for humanity. Furthermore, in connection with the philosophical concept of *sophia*, we find the frequent employment of practical wisdom, specifically in the form of practical wisdom sayings, *sententiae* or *gnomoi*, most notably narrated within the framework of the pedagogical teachings of parents to their children or in general of an older generation to a newer one.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, it is also repeatedly stated that it is never enough to simply have knowledge of what is wise, but that one should also act wisely, that is to say, approach one's neighbor with mercy and righteousness. This brings us to the heart of Judaism of the Hellenistic-Roman period (and beyond that as well), namely, the centrality of piety and righteousness, nurtured by the Torah and its later interpretations, but different from the cultic and ritual or covenantal and legal aspects of it, and more easily translated into the Greek ethical concept of the virtues (see already Josephus, *Ag.Ap.* 2 §§173–175). A popular example here is the employment of the Golden Rule, as it best exemplifies the philosophical equation of Thora and Wisdom and at the same time is the *epitome* of practical wisdom. Ethics is thus embedded in a philosophical and theological system.<sup>10</sup>

The ethical passages in a number of wisdom writings cover a whole range of principles and injunctions, from charity (*Tob* 4:5–21) and the importance of studying the Torah (*Ben Sira* 39:1–11); the righteousness of Israel (*4 Ezra* 14:28–35); the importance of keeping of the commandments (*Jub.* 20:1–10) and avoiding sin (*1 En.* 99:11–16); the virtue of the wise (*TestLevi* 13:1–13); the wisdom, righteousness, and charity of the Jews (Sibylline Oracles 3:218–47); the blessings of those who fear the Lord (*2 En.* B 42:6–1); the rationality for observing the Law (*4 Macc.* 5:16–17; Philo, *On Dreams*, 1.124–125); the Way of the Spirit of Truth (1QS 4:2–6); early Christian virtues (Luke 6:20–26; Gal 5:16–24; Jas 1:19–27); and other Jewish-Christian moral virtues (*TestLevi* 13:1–6; *TestJud* 14:1–4; *TestIs* 4:1–5:3; *TesDan* 5:1–3; *TestBen* 3:1–5; *TestIsaac* 64), as well as rabbinic moral values (*Pirqe de Rabbi Nathan* A19, *bBer* 61b, *mAvot* 2:5–8).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup>See on this also J. M. Zurawski, “Mosaic *Paideia*: The Law of Moses within Philo of Aelxandria’s Model of Jewish Education,” *JSJ* 48 (2017): 480–505.

<sup>10</sup>For an introduction to the world of Biblical wisdom literature, see L. G. Perdue, *Wisdom Literature: A Theological History* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007).

<sup>11</sup>See further G. W. E. Nickelsburg and M. E. Stone, eds., *Early Judaism. Texts and Documents on Faith and Piety* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 93–119.

#### 4.2. *Divine Revelation and Intervention*

For most Jews in antiquity it was unquestionably true that all knowledge comes from God and that revelation is therefore divine. However, that God would still actively intervene in history was a view held mostly by the Prophets and their followers; for the apocalyptic thinkers and in a way also for the Essene community there exists a second power in heaven, which was capable of influencing mankind in a negative way: God's adversary together with his helpers, the fallen angels. Although few doubted that God would prevail in the end, it was indeed only at the end that God would intervene through a Messiah. Until then, humanity would be mostly the victim of a cosmic battle, a war between good and evil (either personified or seen as abstract powers): a clash between God and his angels and the fallen angels and their leaders.

Although there was some room for human action and responsibility within this battle, the course of history was in principle predetermined, namely, as a sequence of good and bad periods heading toward a catastrophic climax. Even in the end, God would not intervene directly but send an Anointed or Messiah together with a host of angels to speak and execute the final judgment.

With this concept in mind, human responsibility is by nature limited and ethical teaching consists mainly of a call to follow the laws of the course of history and of the cosmos. Within the microcosmos of the individual's place in the family, clan, or smaller society, various wisdom sayings and collections of teaching that had been growing throughout history and that had come from the whole of the Ancient Near Eastern environment to enter Judaism during its postexilic period as Wisdom theology would give someone meaning and direction in life. The authors of the apocalyptic writings would see man's ethics being limited in time and subject: they therefore developed an interim ethics for a minority.<sup>12</sup>

How this apocalyptic ethics works out in detail can according to Dale Allison be illustrated as follows.<sup>13</sup> Whereas there may not be a specific "apocalyptic" ethic, the expectation of a near end and a final judgment can motivate, amplify, or revise existing morality in the way Rabbi Eliezer says in *bShabbat* 153a: "repent one day before your death," and because no one knows of the day of one's death, it is better to always repent (see also Josephus in *J.W.* 2 § 157). On the other hand, the expectation of a new world and even a new creation relativizes the existing one considerably.

#### 4.3. *The Origin of Evil and How to Deal with It*

Intrinsically connected with the preceding is the question about human responsibility, the need to act morally wise, and the necessity of developing moral teaching, which begins with accepting that there is at least some space for human action. This space depends on the answers given to the question on the origin of evil and death and whether and how to deal with it.<sup>14</sup> The Prophets of

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<sup>12</sup>As for one aspect of the much wider question of the "religion" or "theology" of Early Judaism and its various branches, which follows from the belief in divine revelation and intervention, see G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism and Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

<sup>13</sup>D. C. Allison, "Apocalyptic Ethics and Behavior," in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, ed. J. J. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 295–311.

<sup>14</sup>See as introduction to the problem the texts quoted in M. J. Larrimore, *The Problem of Evil: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

Israel considered the wicked human heart to be the origin of evil, and without interruption called people to return to the moral teaching of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. However, in the Persian period, the apocalyptic authors, beginning with those of the early parts of *1 Enoch* and then continuing with those of *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*, blamed the fallen angels for having brought about evil and death on earth and divided mankind into two groups: those under the influence of these fallen angels, who were acting accordingly in a wicked manner, and those under the influence of the angels of God acting righteously. Wise was the one who had the knowledge of where mankind came from and belonged to and acted accordingly righteous; wicked was the one who had no knowledge of his or her origin and acted like a marionette in the hands of the evil powers. In all of this, the possibility of human action was seen as principally limited due to a lack of own responsibility.

In the Hellenistic period, under the influence of both Stoic philosophy and apocalyptic thinking, the various Jewish groups in society (especially after the Maccabean revolt of 164 BCE) were divided on questions of the interaction of fate and human responsibility. As Flavius Josephus later reports, the Sadducees thought everything to be dependent on fate and left no room for human action. As they also didn't believe in a life after death, a novel belief since the second century BCE, their maxim was to enjoy life as long as possible, as there was nothing one could do to change one's fate.

Contrary to the Sadducees, the Essenes and Pharisees believed in the possibility of different degrees of interaction between fate and one's own action and responsibility, with the Pharisees giving somewhat more room to free will and independent human action than the Essenes. For the latter, it was important that one could know one's fate by studying Scripture and reading it through the lens of their eschatological and apocalyptic worldview: there was a cosmic battle going on between the good and evil angels, who were able to influence humankind in both directions. For the Pharisees, more than for the Essenes, it was more important to develop a strategy for making the best of one's place in society and acting politically prudent.

For both the Essenes and the Pharisees it was clear that one can decide which direction to take by acting either foolishly or wisely, wickedly or righteously. Knowledge of one's fate and one's destiny and teaching the right kind of action were therefore of the utmost importance. Again, for the Pharisees there was more room for human acting than for the Essenes, who believed that, through predestination, every man had a given portion of good and evil parts in him, and it was difficult, though not impossible, to change one's course in life.

#### *4.4. Human Responsibility and Society*

The idea of human responsibility, at least for the world of Ancient Israel, goes back to the authors of the books of Moses and the Prophets and especially their Deuteronomistic editors during and after the Babylonian exile. Ezra and Nehemiah would renew and implement this concept in postexilic Jewish society and base every moral teaching on the Laws of Moses. The authors of *1 Enoch* would question this idea of human responsibility and point to the fallen angels as the cause of all evil, until, much later, the Maccabees, prepared by the authors of the book of Daniel, would take a reverse turn, and again stress the need for human action in order to defend divine teachings and especially the freedom to live according to one's own religion.

#### 4.5. *The Love Command and the Golden Rule*

The concept of love in the Hebrew Bible (love as God's love, love for God, love for others, erotic love) is distinct from that of Greek thought (*agape* as passionate love, love of people/friends, honor, etc.). However, in Hellenistic Judaism, efforts were made to combine the two, in that it stresses the love of or for God and the love for others both as the faithful fulfillment of the biblical commandments, even if this required suffering and unconditional martyrdom, as human love is the ultimate response to God's love.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, the importance of the commandment to love one's neighbor, often linked with philanthropy, is stressed again and again and often combined with or understood as an example of the originally Greek Golden Rule. Finally, authors like Philo underline the importance of both commandments for the well-being of humanity. Here it should also be noted that wisdom as such or God's teaching can be the object of love. However, *eros* is typically downplayed as being important only to the "unchaste" Greeks.

Theologically, the ethical maxim of either the Love Command or the Golden Rule or both can be founded on three arguments: (1) equality (because everyone as God's creature is equal, everyone, even the slave, deserves the same treatment and respect); (2) the importance of doing good and being merciful (this is especially expected from those in a higher position); and (3) the call for *Imitatio Dei* (as God is good and does good, one should follow this).

The Love Command, because of its universal appeal and applicability (arguments 1 and 2), would become an important element in Jewish universalism in the late Second Temple Period. This is witnessed for example by Philo of Alexandria, the *Sententiae* of Pseudo-Phocylides, and the *Third Sibylline Oracle* as well as other writings. The universal interpretation of the Love Command—together with some other more general ethical principles that were derived from a much more detailed and specific Torah of Moses—could possibly have been influenced by the universalist ideas of the Stoic thinkers, who were very active in Alexandria from the first century BCE onward.<sup>16</sup>

In the later rabbinic literature, the first and third aspect are also found to be based on the biblical teaching that humanity is created in the image of God (and for that reason everyone is equal) and that one should be holy, because God is holy (Leviticus 17–26; *t. Sanhedrin* 9:11; *Sifra, Qedushim* 4:12; *Genesis Rabbah* 24:7), whereas the second aspect becomes a cornerstone of rabbinic ethics (see especially *Talmud Sotah* 14a). Both rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity would employ all three reasons to stress the importance of the commandments to love God and the neighbor at the same time.

In conclusion, the relation of ethics in the early Jewish writings is as diverse as the noncanonical Jewish writings are themselves. They all witness a many-sided Early Judaism, in which many groups with sometimes very differing opinions existed next to each other. The hermeneutical background and practical application of ethics in their writings express not only the vividness of their dialogue

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<sup>15</sup>H.-J. Klauck, "Brotherly Love In Plutarch and in 4 Maccabees," in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, ed. D. L. Balch et al. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 144–56; A. Malamet, "You Shall Love Your Neighbor as Yourself: A Case of Misinterpretation?" in *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte: Festschrift R. Rendtorff*, ed. R. Rendtorff, E. Blum, Chr. Macholz, and E. Stegemann (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), 111–17; and G. S. Oegema, "Love Your Neighbour as Yourself: Jesuanic or Mosaic?" *Biblische Notizen: Beiträge zur exegetischen Diskussion* (Festschrift für Johann Maier zum 70 Geburtstag), BN 116, ed. M. Görg (München, 2003), 77–86.

<sup>16</sup>M. Z. Simkovich, *The Making of Jewish Universalism: From Exile to Alexandria* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2017), 95–137.

between themselves and with society at large but also the diversity of Thora interpretation in the Second Temple. In most if not all cases ethics functions within the realm of the “religion” or “theology” of Early Judaism and its many branches and is interconnected with the various conceptions of Thora as teaching and/or derived from the theological concepts Thora, wisdom, divine revelation, divine intervention, evil, human responsibility, and love.

## 5. COMPARING EARLY JEWISH ETHICS WITH NEW TESTAMENT ETHICS

New Testament and/or early Christian Ethics has a number of entry points, which would allow a comparison with early Jewish Ethics, but they are not all equally suitable.

First of all, and rather broadly spoken, New Testament or early Christian Ethics has been influenced by both Greek and Jewish ethics, with Greek ethics going back for an important part to Aristotle, and Jewish ethics going back for an important part to the Bible. Between both one will find the intermediaries of Hellenistic and Roman ethics and the ethics of Greco-Roman Judaism respectively. To a certain extent every text is written as an adaptation and reinterpretation of previous ethical material and discourses, but much depends on the genre, life setting, audience as well as the innovations of the author(s).

Second, in the New Testament and Early Christian literature one can distinguish between ethical discourses and passages with ethical contents (such as the Sermon on the Mount, the “Sündenkatologe” in the Epistles, parables, gnomic, adhortations, etc.) as well as older and tradition-historically relevant ethical material (philosophical principles, worldview, examples) in individual verses or chapters. Whereas many times there will be overlaps between genres, in which one finds ethical discourse and ethical contents, one can also observe quite a few differences.

Third, one can distinguish between several themes and principles that characterize early Christian ethics, such as the Double Love Commandment (Mark 12:28–34) and the Command to love your neighbor (Matt 5:44; Luke 27–28), both in the way they developed in the early Church and in the way they were possibly connected to the historical Jesus. An important theme is that of the coming Kingdom of God in Matthew, which can change the principles of ethics radically: is early Christian ethics “interim ethics” until the coming of Christ or the beginning of a new ethics of “better righteousness” (Matt 5:20)? Luke-Acts on the other hand focuses on themes like richness and poverty and the life of the Church, whereas Paul links the ethics of sanctification with the principle of justification (Romans; Galatians). Obviously, to a certain extent early Christian ethics differs from other ethics because of its thematic directions, in that it is universal (although this is also true of some early Jewish ethics), sacrificial (true for some Greek and Jewish ethics as well), and redemptive.

Fourth, there is the level of practical ethics, that is, ethics applied to the life settings of Christian communities, both ancient and modern, which can be applied to a whole range of life situations, such as abortion, alcohol, divorce, sexuality, celibacy, homosexuality, slavery, violence, wealth, and poverty. Obviously and contrary to Christian and rabbinic ethics, a present-day relevance of early Jewish ethics is lacking due to the lack of a faith community behind its texts.

This brings us to a fifth dimension of ethics, namely its connection with a faith community, which sees itself called to follow the ethical principles of its foundational texts. This faith community used to exist in connection with the early Jewish texts, but ceased to exist afterward. Well-known examples are the Jewish community in Alexandria and the Qumran community.

## 6. SOME THOUGHTS ON THE GREEK AND JEWISH BACKGROUND OF NEW TESTAMENT ETHICS

As for the background of Greek ethics, Aristotle first used the term “ethics” as part of the field of philosophy, which examines the good of the individual, and which is closely related to politics, which examines the good of the city-state. Central to Aristotelian ethics is the importance of developing excellence (virtue) of character (Greek *ēthikē aretē*) in order to achieve excellent conduct (Greek *energeia*). With the right character, a man will do the right thing at the right time, and in the right way. The highest aims of man are or ought to be living well and achieving *eudaimonia*, a Greek word often translated as well-being, happiness, or “human flourishing.” There are four cardinal virtues: prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice, and they are all meant to be practiced and not just known; the latter is called “prudence” or “practical wisdom” (Greek *phronesis*), as opposed to the wisdom of a theoretical philosopher (Greek *sophia*).

As for early Christian ethics, much of Christian ethics derives from Greek and later also from Roman ethics as well as from biblical sources. As for the latter, Christians have always considered the Bible profitable to teach, reprove, correct, and train in righteousness. To the four cardinal virtues of Aristotelian ethics, Christianity added the three heavenly graces: faith, hope, and charity.

As for its biblical roots, the New Testament derives all morality from the Great Commandment, to love God with all one’s heart, mind, strength, and soul and to love one’s neighbor as oneself. In this, Jesus was reaffirming a teaching of Deut 6:4–9 and Lev 19:18, and became himself an example of this double commandment, with his later followers even replacing or complementing the principle of *Imitatio Dei* with *Imitatio Christi* (see John 13:12 and the New Commandment).<sup>17</sup>

As for Jesus and the Gospels, the dominant factor in the ethical teachings of Jesus is the coming Kingdom of God, which already now dominates the presence.<sup>18</sup> In this sense, it differs from an apocalyptic interim ethics but instead calls for an immediate repentance and a following of Jesus. In his teaching Jesus critically interprets the biblical commandments and ethics with a concentration on the Love command, often sharpening biblical teachings with a social touch but never questioning it. In this sense it is obvious that the Hebrew Bible and its reinterpretation during the Second Temple Period form the basis and starting point for Jesus’ own ethics.

In the Gospels we encounter the call for a “better righteousness” (Matt 5:20), which is translated into the Golden Rule and the Double Love Command, again on the basis of biblical and Hellenistic-Jewish examples, but with a clearly parenetic goal, as it is the community of the first followers of Jesus, who need to be motivated. This life setting is most apparent in Luke-Acts, in which the life of the early Church is ideally depicted as one of solidarity, common property, and caring for those in need. The Gospel of John intrinsically ties ethics and Christology: true love is to give one’s life for someone else, as Jesus has done for us.<sup>19</sup>

As for Paul and the Deutero-Pauline epistles the close connection between dogmatic and ethical saying immediately draws one’s attention, especially in the dominant twin terms of justification

<sup>17</sup> See my “Das Nächstenliebegebot im lukanischen Doppelwerk,” in *The Unity of Luke Acts. Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense XLVII, Lewen*, 29.-31. July 1998, ed. J. Verheyden, BETL 142 (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 507–16; and G. S. Oegema, “Love Your Neighbor as Yourself: Jesuanic or Mosaic?” in *BN 116* (2003), 77–86.

<sup>18</sup> F. W. Horn, “Ethik: Neues Testament,” in *RGG<sup>4</sup>* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1998), 1606–10. Cf. F. J. Matera, “Ethics in the NT,” in *NIDB* (Nashville, TN: Abington, 2007), vol. 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*



and sanctification with different further connections to calling, the sacrament, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and eschatology, with a balanced tension between the presence and the future. Within that context Paul argues for a Christian ethics in dialogue and comparison with Jewish and pagan ethics with the command to love each other clearly in the center.

For that Paul uses the phrase “Law of Christ,” though its exact meaning and the relationship has long been disputed. In addition to this, one finds in the letters of Paul the so-called New Testament household codes. Furthermore, the Council of Jerusalem (see Acts 15) is traditionally associated with the *Apostolic Decree*, which has been held as binding for several centuries, even until today by the Greek Orthodox. Another aspect of early Christian ethics, which it partly had in common with early Judaism, referred to the question how one should relate to Roman authority and to the empire. These practical issues clearly point to the life setting of the early Church, of which Paul was a main missionary and theologian. One can add to them questions about slavery, marriage and sexuality, equal (or unequal) rights between men and women in the Church, and so on.

In the Deutero-Pauline Epistles the eschatological element has made space for an institutionalization of the life of the early church in its formulations of ethical principles in the so-called “Haustafeln.” However, much of Christian ethics has been shaped by later authors and theologians, starting with the Pastoral and Catholic letters and ending with such theologians as Augustine, and much of their later thoughts are not directly found in the early Christian literature. One important element in these writings is the decreasing expectation of the end of days and the increasing institutionalization of the church with clear ethical consequences. There is an increased focus on the *eusebeia* or the pious life of the church embedded in a civic and political context. This could lead to a distancing itself from this world through ascetism and a focus on sacrament and the eschaton, and on the other hand to an adaption to this world through adaption of gender roles and customs, obedience to the state, and the acceptance of social-ethical obligations.

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PART THREE

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# Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha



# The Pseudepigrapha and Second Temple Judaism

JOHN J. COLLINS

Jim Charlesworth's place in the history of scholarship rests securely on his accomplishment of editing the two-volume *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*.<sup>1</sup> These volumes effectively replaced the classic *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* by R. H. Charles,<sup>2</sup> as the standard collection of Jewish noncanonical literature, preserved in languages other than Hebrew and Aramaic (and excluding the writings of Philo and Josephus). It also effectively eclipsed the useful *Apocryphal Old Testament* edited by H. F. D. Sparks, which appeared about the same time.<sup>3</sup> The more comprehensive collection, *Outside the Bible*, edited by L. H. Feldman, J. Kugel, and L. Schiffman, supplements the Charlesworth collection in many ways but does not replace it,<sup>4</sup> while the ongoing *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. More Noncanonical Scriptures*, edited by R. Bauckham and J. R. Davila, was conceived as a supplement and not as a competitor.<sup>5</sup> Charlesworth's achievement, then, is considerable and deserves the plaudits it has received.

## 1. PSEUDEPIGRAPHA AS A CATEGORY

It is not difficult, of course, to cavil with various aspects of the enterprise.<sup>6</sup> Charlesworth defined "Pseudepigrapha" broadly, "so as to include all documents that conceivably belong to the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha."<sup>7</sup> He specified:

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<sup>1</sup>J. H. Charlesworth, ed., *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, vol. 1 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983); and J. H. Charlesworth, ed., *Expansions of the "Old Testament" and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*, vol. 2 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985).

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

<sup>3</sup>H. F. D. Sparks, ed., *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

<sup>4</sup>L. H. Feldman, J. L. Kugel, and L. H. Schiffman, eds., *Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture* (Philadelphia, PA: JPS, 2013).

<sup>5</sup>R. Bauckham, J. R. Davila, and A. Panayotov, eds., *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures. Volume 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013).

<sup>6</sup>E.g., R. A. Kraft, "Combined Review: *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Edited by James H. Charlesworth; *The Apocryphal Old Testament*, Edited by H. F. D. Sparks," in R. A. Kraft, *Exploring the Scriptures: Jewish Texts and Their Christian Contexts*, JSJSup 137 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 93–106.

<sup>7</sup>Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:xxv.



Those writings 1) that, with the exception of Ahiqar, are Jewish or Christian; 2) that are often attributed to ideal figures in Israel's past; 3) that customarily claim to contain God's word or message; 4) that frequently build upon ideas and narratives present in the Old Testament; 5) and that almost always were composed either during the period 200 B.C. to A.D. 200 or, though late, apparently preserve, albeit in an edited form, Jewish traditions that date from that period.<sup>8</sup>

He readily granted that this was an ad hoc description, not a definition of Pseudepigrapha as such. Several items included are not pseudepigrapha in any sense of the word (e.g., the fragments of Hellenistic Jewish writers); others are not attributed to Old Testament figures (the Sibylline Oracles, Pseudo-Phocylides). But if the principles of inclusion were somewhat arbitrary, the unclarity was offset by the practical advantage of having all these texts available.

Two criticisms, however, are worth some reflection. One is whether "Pseudepigrapha" is a helpful category for grouping texts.<sup>9</sup> Pseudepigraphy was widespread in the ancient world.<sup>10</sup> The fact that two texts are pseudepigraphic does not require that they are similar kinds of texts or serve similar purposes. Even within the Charlesworth collection, what does the *Letter of Aristeas* have in common with *1 Enoch*? The range, both generic and chronological, of pseudepigraphic material attributed to Old Testament figures, or related to the Old Testament in some way, is greatly expanded when we consider Bauckham and Davila's collection. What holds these corpora together is simply that they are not part of the biblical canon. The point here is not that there is some qualitative difference between canonical and noncanonical, or that the noncanonical material is somehow derived from the canonical, but simply that the noncanonical material has historically been neglected and is not so readily available. The fact that much of this material is pseudepigraphic is incidental, and both Charlesworth and Bauckham–Davila tacitly acknowledge that by including material that is not pseudepigraphic. In that sense, the title of the Sparks volume, the *Apocryphal Old Testament*, or that of the Feldman–Kugel–Schiffman volumes, *Outside the Bible*, is a better indication of the content of the collections. This does not detract from the value of collections of lesser-known texts, whatever the title. We should hope, however, that future study will lead to a more differentiated appreciation of the vast amount of material gathered under the heading of Pseudepigrapha.

## 2. JEWISH OR CHRISTIAN?

The other criticism that has been leveled against the category Old Testament Pseudepigrapha is more complex and far-reaching. This concerns Charlesworth's claim that the texts in his collection "almost always were composed either during the period 200 B.C. to A.D. 200 or, though late, apparently preserve, albeit in an edited form, Jewish traditions that date from that period." This issue is complicated by two factors. One concerns the fact that all these writings were preserved by

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> On the history of the category, see A. Y. Reed, "The Modern Invention of 'Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,'" *JTS* 60 (2009): 403–36; and L. DiTommaso, "The 'Old Testament Pseudepigrapha' as Category and Corpus," in *The Oxford Guide to Early Jewish Texts and Traditions in Christian Transmission*, ed. A. Kulik (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 253–79.

<sup>10</sup> See the wide range of material reviewed in J. Frey, J. Herzer, M. Janssen, C. K. Rothschild, eds., with the cooperation of M. Engelmann, *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion in frühchristlichen Briefen*, WUNT 246 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

Christians, often in translation, and are only found in manuscripts many centuries later than their supposed time of origin. Many of them contain explicit Christian references, which have often been viewed as interpolations. The other factor concerns the nature and character of Judaism in the late Second Temple period.

Robert Kraft has argued repeatedly that texts that were preserved by Christians should be studied first in their Christian contexts.<sup>11</sup> “They are, first of all, ‘Christian’ materials, and recognition of that fact is a necessary step in using them appropriately in the quest to throw light on early Judaism. I call this the ‘default’ position—sources transmitted by way of Christian communities are ‘Christian,’ whatever else they may also prove to be.”<sup>12</sup> There have indeed been several cases where scholars have argued convincingly that texts that had often been taken as Jewish with interpolations should rather be understood as Christian compositions. The showcase example is the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, where the argument for Christian provenance was made by Marinus de Jonge already in 1953.<sup>13</sup> Other plausible cases are *The Lives of the Prophets*,<sup>14</sup> *The Ascension of Isaiah*,<sup>15</sup> and *The Life of Adam and Eve*.<sup>16</sup> Other arguments along these lines, concerning *2 Baruch*<sup>17</sup> and *Joseph and Aseneth*,<sup>18</sup> have been unpersuasive.

Kraft himself has done little to document his default position by case studies. While Kraft’s student, Martha Himmelfarb, has claimed that Kraft’s observations “have come to seem obvious and commonsensical,”<sup>19</sup> not all scholars agree. Richard Bauckham has argued cogently that the oldest manuscripts of a given work are still likely to be far removed from the original time and place of composition, and has also questioned the value of having a default position at all.<sup>20</sup> If Kraft’s default position were to be adopted, the Bible in its Greek versions would be regarded first of all as Christian. Whether such works are Christian or Jewish must be decided on the merits of each individual case. Some Pseudepigrapha in the name of figures known from the Hebrew Bible are demonstrably Jewish (e.g., several sections of *1 Enoch*). Some are better understood as Christian compositions, even if they incorporate Jewish traditions (*The Testaments*). But the provenance of many texts remains open to dispute. The case for Christian composition of the *Testaments of the*

<sup>11</sup> R. A. Kraft, “The Pseudepigrapha in Christianity,” in R. A. Kraft, *Exploring the Scripturesque: Jewish Texts and Their Christian Contexts*, JSJSup 137 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 3–33; and “The Pseudepigrapha in Christianity Revisited,” in R. A. Kraft, *Exploring the Scripturesque: Jewish Texts and Their Christian Contexts*, JSJSup 137 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 35–60.

<sup>12</sup> Kraft, “The Pseudepigrapha and Christianity, Revisited,” 36.

<sup>13</sup> M. de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Study of Their Text, Composition, and Origin* (Assen: van Gorcum, 1953); and M. 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>14</sup> D. Satran, *Biblical Prophets in Byzantine Palestine: Reassessing the Lives of the Prophets*, SVTP 11 (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

<sup>15</sup> E. Norelli, *Ascension du Prophète Isaïe* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1993).

<sup>16</sup> M. de Jonge and J. Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve and Related Literature* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

<sup>17</sup> R. Nir, *The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Idea of Redemption in the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch* (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2003).

<sup>18</sup> R. S. Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph: A Late Antique Tale of the Biblical Patriarch and His Egyptian Wife, Reconsidered* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); and R. Nir, *Joseph and Aseneth: A Christian Book* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2012). See my critique of Kraemer, “Joseph and Aseneth: Jewish or Christian?” in *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture: Essays on the Jewish Encounter with Hellenism and Roman Rule*, JSJSup 100 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 112–27, and the criticism of Kraemer by M. Vogel, “Einführung in die Schrift,” in *Joseph und Aseneth*, ed. E. Reinmuth, Scripta Antiquitatis Posterioris ad Ethicam Religionemque Pertinentia XV (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 11–19.

<sup>19</sup> M. Himmelfarb, “3 Baruch Revisited: Jewish or Christian Composition, and Why It Matters,” *ZAC/JAC* 20 (2016): 41–62 at 44.

<sup>20</sup> R. J. Bauckham, “The Continuing Quest for the Provenance of Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,” in *The Pseudepigrapha and Christian Origins*, ed. G. S. Oegema and J. H. Charlesworth (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 9–29, esp. 23.

*Twelve Patriarchs* has been persuasive because the explicitly Christian elements in that work are very extensive. Much more difficult to judge is whether a composition that lacks any distinctively Christian features may nonetheless be Christian. The task of distinguishing Jewish and Christian compositions has been further complicated in recent decades by the recognition that the parting of the ways was neither as absolute nor as early as had previously been supposed.<sup>21</sup> Some followers of Jesus remained attached to Jewish traditions and may have thought of themselves as Jewish. Nonetheless, the acknowledgment of Jesus as the Christ or Messiah remains a decisive point of difference. Since most Christian literature refers explicitly to Christ, the traditional tendency has been to assume that any text that does not refer to Christ explicitly is Jewish, by default. Since many scholars now object to that tendency, however, the focus has shifted to looking for positive indications of Jewish authorship.

The difficulty of formulating positive criteria of Jewish authorship lies in the fact that such criteria require us to posit norms for authentic Judaism, when there do not seem to have been any such norms that were universally accepted. To be sure, there is plenty of evidence that some Jews regarded others as inauthentic, or falling outside the pale. For Daniel and 1–2 Maccabees, the Hellenizers, led by Jason and Menelaos, were “violators of the covenant” (Dan 11:30), but it is not apparent that they considered themselves anything but Jewish. The covenanters known from the Scrolls thought that most Jews of their time were led astray by Belial (CD iv 15–160).

The most thorough attempt to date to formulate positive criteria for Jewish authorship is that of James R. Davila. Davila grants that “no satisfactory definition of Judaism based on a *sine qua non* or core essence can be formulated.”<sup>22</sup> Instead, he favors a “polythetic approach.” Rather than attempting to find an essence common to every member, it is based on a broad grouping of characteristics or properties. A member of the class being defined must have many of these characteristics, but no single characteristic is necessarily possessed by every member.<sup>23</sup>

He offers a list of “signature features,” which need not all be present but which provide reason to see a work as Jewish:<sup>24</sup>

- Substantial Jewish content, and evidence of a pre-Christian date
- Compelling evidence that a work was translated from Hebrew
- Sympathetic concern with the Jewish ritual cult
- Sympathetic concern with Jewish Law and Halakah
- Concern with Jewish national interests

These “signature features” are helpful, but it is important to keep in mind that no single characteristic is decisive. Some Christians were surely Torah-observant, while a lack of concern for Halakah

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<sup>21</sup> A. H. Becker and A. Y. Reed, eds., *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); and D. Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judeo-Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

<sup>22</sup> J. R. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or Other?*, JSJSup 105 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 19.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 65.

would disqualify most of the Enoch literature from being regarded as Jewish, even in cases where manuscripts were found at Qumran.<sup>25</sup>

The main controversy involving the Pseudepigrapha, however, has concerned the relative lack of signature features of Jewish authorship, such as those outlined by Davila. With few exceptions, the writings transmitted by Christians provide a picture of late Second Temple Judaism that is very different from the Judaism of the rabbis, with much less emphasis on the ritual and purity laws. The first scholar to offer a reconstruction of Jewish religion based primarily on the Pseudepigrapha was Wilhelm Bousset, whose *Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* first appeared in 1903.<sup>26</sup> It was greeted by a storm of criticism from Jewish scholars.<sup>27</sup> Felix Perles praised Bousset's treatment of the piety of apocalyptic and Hellenistic Judaism but objected to the prominence accorded to this material and the lack of a systematic description of "normative Judaism," as represented by rabbinic literature. Bousset, he claimed, had missed the "center of the Jewish religion."<sup>28</sup> Others objected to "this dogmatic reduction of Judaism to a '*praeparatio evangelica*'."<sup>29</sup> Bousset's critics received weighty support from the Christian scholar George Foot Moore, whose own account of ancient Judaism accorded primacy to the rabbinic writings.<sup>30</sup>

The censure which Jewish scholars have unanimously passed on *Die Religion des Judentums* is that the author uses as his primary sources almost exclusively the writings commonly called Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, with an especial penchant for the apocalypses; and only secondarily, and almost casually the writings which represent the acknowledged and authoritative teachings of the school and the more popular instruction of the synagogue.<sup>31</sup>

Moore's position encountered criticism of its own, first from his contemporary F. C. Porter,<sup>32</sup> who questioned whether the rabbinic sources could be projected back to the New Testament era, and later from no less a figure than Jacob Neusner, who could hardly be accused of Christian bias. Neusner, with all due appreciation for Moore's goodwill, commented: "Moore's is to begin with not really a work in the history of religions at all. ... His research is into theology. It is organized in theological categories, not differentiated by historical periods at all."<sup>33</sup> The debate as to the validity of a portrait of (a segment of) Judaism based on writings transmitted by Christians has, however, persisted. There have always been some Jewish scholars who refuse to accept the Pseudepigrapha as "really Jewish," for reasons similar to those advanced by Moore,<sup>34</sup> or insisted

<sup>25</sup> J. J. Collins, *The Invention of Judaism: Torah and Jewish Identity from Deuteronomy to Paul* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 70–6.

<sup>26</sup> W. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (Berlin: Reuther und Reichard, 1903).

<sup>27</sup> See my essay, "Early Judaism in Modern Scholarship," in *Early Judaism. A Comprehensive Overview*, ed. J. J. Collins and D. C. Harlow (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 1–29.

<sup>28</sup> F. Perles, *Bousset's "Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter" kritisch untersucht* (Berlin: Peiser, 1903), 22–3.

<sup>29</sup> C. Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse: Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 180.

<sup>30</sup> G. F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927–30; repr. New York: Schocken, 1971).

<sup>31</sup> G. F. Moore, "Christian Writers on Judaism," *HTR* 14 (1921): 197–254 at 243.

<sup>32</sup> F. C. Porter, review of *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim*, by G. F. Moore, *Journal of Religion* 8 (1928): 30–62.

<sup>33</sup> J. Neusner, *Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 7.

<sup>34</sup> E.g., J. Efron, *Studies on the Hasmonean Period* (Leiden: Brill, 1987).

that they be interpreted in conformity with “essential biblical doctrines.”<sup>35</sup> Recently, Martha Himmelfarb has declared herself “suspicious of a picture of diaspora Judaism or even a major strand of diaspora Judaism as lacking in concern for the markers of Jewish particularism.”<sup>36</sup> She suspects that scholars are motivated by “the search for a usable past for Christianity, whether in purely scholarly or theological terms,”<sup>37</sup> and accuses them of construing Hellenistic Judaism, in particular, as *praeparatio evangelii*.<sup>38</sup>

### 3. WRITINGS FROM THE GREEK DIASPORA

The debate is most acute about writings composed in Greek, mostly, but not exclusively, from the Egyptian Diaspora. Most of those writings address questions of ethics and usually refer in some way to the Torah. They thus satisfy Davila’s criterion of “sympathetic concern with Jewish Law.” With few exceptions, however, they tend to bypass the distinctive Jewish laws and dwell on the importance of monotheism and matters of social and sexual morality.<sup>39</sup> We do not find in the Diaspora the kind of detailed halakic discussions that are characteristic of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 4QMMT or the *Damascus Document*.<sup>40</sup>

A few examples may suffice. *Sibylline Oracle* 3 criticizes the Romans for “unjust haughtiness,” homosexuality, and greed (3:182–190).<sup>41</sup> The Greeks are condemned for idolatry (3:545–555) and several people are denounced for homosexuality and idolatry, and for “transgressing the law of the immortal God, which they transgressed” (3:599–600). The positive requirements of the Sibyl are stated in 3:762–766:

But urge on your minds in your breasts and shun unlawful worship. Worship the Living One. Avoid adultery and indiscriminate intercourse with males. Rear your own offspring, and do not kill it, for the Immortal is angry at whoever commits these sins.

This passage is ostensibly addressed to Gentiles, and this may account for the lack of reference to distinctive Jewish practices such as Sabbath and circumcision. Nonetheless, the passage shows what the author regarded as the significant differences between Jews and Gentiles. The sibyl refers explicitly to the Law. She praises the Jews for their righteousness and concern for the poor, “fulfilling the word of the great God, the hymn of the Law” (3:246). This is explicitly identified with the Law given to Moses on Mount Sinai (3:255–258). Only the Jews observe the Law (3:597–598). They are subject to punishment if they fail to observe it, as seen from the Babylonian Exile. Yet the Law also applies to Gentiles. The sibyl seems to assume that the basic requirements of the

<sup>35</sup> P. Heger, *Challenges to Conventional Opinions on Qumran and Enoch Issues*, STDJ 100 (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

<sup>36</sup> Himmelfarb, “3 *Baruch* Revisited,” 52.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>38</sup> M. Himmelfarb, “Second Temple Literature Outside the Canon,” in *Early Judaism: New Insights and Scholarship*, ed. F. E. Greenspahn (New York: New York University Press, 2018), 29–51 at 46.

<sup>39</sup> J. J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 155–85 (“The Common Ethic”).

<sup>40</sup> Collins, *The Invention of Judaism*, 135–42.

<sup>41</sup> J. J. Collins (trans.), “Sibylline Oracles,” in *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, vol. 1 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 354–80.

Law are known to everyone by nature. This assumption is also found in *Wisdom of Solomon* 13 and Romans 1.<sup>42</sup> The basic sins are idolatry and deviant sexual practices. While the sibyl insists that the Law of Moses is the true law, she treats it in practice as natural law. Eventually, God “will put in effect a common law for men throughout the whole earth” (Sib. Or. 3:757–758). The vision of the ideal eschatological state is Judeocentric. The other nations are called on to send their offerings to the temple and to ponder the Law of the Most High God (Sib. Or. 3:718–719). It is not apparent, however, that they are expected to convert to Judaism or to observe the ritual commandments.

Another illustration is provided by the *Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*.<sup>43</sup> As in the case of the Sibylline Oracles, this work is presented as that of a pagan author. Its Jewish origin is betrayed only by a few sayings that clearly reflect the Septuagint (e.g., v. 140: “If a beast of your enemy falls on the way, help it to rise” cf. Exod 23:5). Verses 3–8 have been construed as a summary of the Decalogue.<sup>44</sup> There are exhortations to justice in vv. 9–21, with strong biblical overtones. But there is no mention of sabbath or circumcision, and the Law of Moses is not explicitly acknowledged. Again, we might suppose that the omissions are required by the pseudonymous attribution to a Greek poet. Yet the sayings have much in common with the summaries of the Law in the *Hypothetica* 7.1–9 (= Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 8.6.1–7.20), which is usually attributed to Philo,<sup>45</sup> and Josephus’s *Ag. Ap.* 2.190–219.<sup>46</sup> In addition to monotheism, all three emphasize sexual matters (adultery, homosexuality, rape of a virgin, abortion). Philo and *Pseudo-Phocylides* forbid emasculation. Josephus and *Pseudo-Phocylides* forbid sexual relations with a pregnant woman. The common material extends to the duties of parents and children, husband and wife, the young and their elders, and the burial of the dead. Conspicuously lacking are discussions of the most distinctive practices of Judaism such as circumcision and Sabbath. There is a discussion of the Sabbath in *Hypoth.* 7.10, after the epitome of the laws. But if these three authors shared a common source, as seems likely, the discussion of the Sabbath does not seem to have been part of it.

Not everything in these summaries of the Law is actually derived from the Torah.<sup>47</sup> Non-biblical injunctions include the obligation to give fire and running water to those who need them, not to deny burial or disturb the place of the dead. Some of these laws correspond to unwritten laws attributed to Buzyges, a legendary Attic hero.<sup>48</sup> Some prohibitions, such as abortion and exposure of children, are quite typical of Hellenistic Jewish literature. Some items, such as the concern for nesting birds, have a clear biblical basis.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Wis 13:5 says that God can be known by analogy from the greatness and beauty of creation. See my essay, “Natural Theology and Biblical Tradition: The Case of Hellenistic Judaism,” in my book, *Encounters with Biblical Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 117–26. On Romans 1, see J. A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, AB 33 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 269–90.

<sup>43</sup> P. W. van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* (Leiden: Brill, 1978); W. T. Wilson, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, CEJL (Berlin: Gruyter, 2005).

<sup>44</sup> Van der Horst, *Sentences*, 89.

<sup>45</sup> The attribution is challenged by J. M. G. Barclay, *Against Apion: Translation and Commentary*, Flavius Josephus. Translation and Commentary 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 354.

<sup>46</sup> K.-W. Niebuhr, *Gesetz und Paränese: Katechismusartige Weisungreihen in der frühjüdischen Literatur*, WUNT 2/28 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987), 6–72; Barclay, *Against Apion*, 353–58; and G. E. Sterling, “Universalizing the Particular. Natural Law in Second Temple Jewish Ethics,” *SPA* 15 (2003): 64–80, esp. 69–73.

<sup>47</sup> Barclay, *Against Apion*, 358.

<sup>48</sup> On Buzyges, see L. Schmidt, *Die Ethik der alten Griechen* (Berlin: Hertz, 1882), 2:278–79; and H. Bolkenstein, *Wohltätigkeit im vorchristlichen Altertum* (Utrecht: Oosthoek, 1939), 69–70.

<sup>49</sup> Pseudo-Phocylides 84–85 and Deut 22:6.



Gregory Sterling has offered an interesting comparison between the ways the Law is construed in the literature from the Diaspora and in the Dead Sea Scrolls.<sup>50</sup> On the one hand, he finds that some of the same texts figure prominently in both corpora, especially Leviticus 19–20 and Deuteronomy 22, all of which deal with sexual issues. He also notes some shared laws that do not have a direct biblical base, such as restrictions on lawful sexual intercourse, although it is clear that the rationale for the restriction was not always the same. Despite these shared features, however, the understanding of the Law in the two corpora was very different. While both found ways to extend the Law to address new situations, they did so differently. The sectarians of the Scrolls relied on authoritative interpretations or inspired exegesis. Some things were revealed to the community that were hidden even from the rest of Israel. The Diaspora authors, in contrast, are at pains to show that distinctive Jewish laws are reasonable. Philo explains that circumcision symbolizes the excision of pleasure and the rejection of conceit.<sup>51</sup> The *Letter of Aristeas* insists that the food laws are not due to obsessive concern with particular animals but rather with what they symbolize.<sup>52</sup>

We might add another notable difference. The sectarian authors were greatly concerned with the details of the Law, most conspicuously in 4QMMT. The writers from the Diaspora, in contrast, focus on broader issues. “Among the vast number of particular truths and principles,” writes Philo, “there stand out practically high above the others two main heads: one of duty to God as shown by piety and holiness, one of duty to men as shown by humanity and justice.”<sup>53</sup> The distinction of underlying principles was not necessarily peculiar to Diaspora Judaism, but it stands in contrast to the kind of detailed halakic exegesis that we find in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

We should not, of course, conclude that the Sabbath and circumcision were not important in the Hellenistic Diaspora. Philo was critical of those “who regarding laws in their literal sense in the light of symbols belonging to the intellect, are over punctilious about the latter, while treating the former with easy-going neglect,”<sup>54</sup> and he expounds the laws in detail in four books in the *Special Laws*. The *Letter of Aristeas* clearly presupposes the practice of the food laws, although it explains them in allegorical terms. *Joseph and Aseneth* celebrates the possibility of rapprochement between Jew and Gentile, but Joseph does not compromise on *kasbrut*.<sup>55</sup> Even Josephus boasts:

The masses have long since shown a keen desire to adopt our religious observances; and there is not one city, Greek or barbarian, not a single nation, to which our custom of abstaining from work on the seventh day has not spread, and where fasts and the lighting of lamps and many of our prohibitions in the matter of food are not observed.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>50</sup> G. E. Sterling, “Was There a Common Ethic in Second Temple Judaism?” in *Sapiential Perspectives: Wisdom Literature in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. J. J. Collins, G. E. Sterling, and R. Clements, STDJ 51 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 171–94.

<sup>51</sup> *Spec Leg* 1.4–8.

<sup>52</sup> B. G. Wright, *The Letter of Aristeas: “Aristeas to Philocrates” or “On the Translation of the Law of the Jews”*, CEJL (Berlin: Gruyter, 2015), 246–313.

<sup>53</sup> *Spec.* 2.62–63 (282). Cf. *Mos* 2.216 (168). Cf. K. Berger, *Die Gesetzesauslegung Jesu*, WMANT 40 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1972), 137–76.

<sup>54</sup> Philo, *Migr.* 89–93.

<sup>55</sup> See Collins, *The Invention of Judaism*, 150–8.

<sup>56</sup> *Ag. Ap.* 2.282.

Nonetheless, the tendency in the literature to emphasize the broader concerns of the Law, and to focus on matters that might also be of concern to Gentiles, is noteworthy.

The suspicion lingers that this literature provides a picture of Judaism for non-Jews.<sup>57</sup> Some of it ostensibly addresses Greeks. For a long time it was regarded as missionary or apologetic literature. Victor Tcherikover overturned that view of the literature in a famous article published in 1956, in which he argued that this literature was addressed to Jews rather than to Gentiles.<sup>58</sup> Subsequent scholarship has discredited the notion that there was any sustained Jewish proselytism in the Hellenistic or early Roman period.<sup>59</sup> The question of apologetics is somewhat more subtle. Much of the Diaspora literature has an apologetic quality insofar as it tries to show that Judaism was really in accordance with the best of Greek culture.<sup>60</sup> This need not imply any neglect of particular commandments, but it undeniably presents a very different image of Judaism from what we find in the contemporary literature from the land of Israel.

Himmelfarb protests that our picture of Diaspora Judaism depends on the texts we attribute to it, and that several works that have been used to construct this profile of Jewish ethical monotheism, such as the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *Testament of Job*, and *Testament of Abraham*, are of disputed provenance.<sup>61</sup> But even if we leave these works aside, the picture is not greatly altered. It holds true for such works as the *Wisdom of Solomon*, the *Third Sibylline Oracle*, and the *Letter of Aristeas*, and for the summaries of the Law in Pseudo-Phocylides, *Hypothetica* 7.1–9, and Josephus's *Ag. Ap.* 2.190–219, and indeed for Philo, even though his allegiance to literal observance and to Jewish particularism is not in doubt.<sup>62</sup>

We have no way of measuring how widely or well the Law was observed in the Egyptian Diaspora. I would assume that observance was the norm in Jewish communities. But there were evidently some Jews in Alexandria who did not feel bound by literal observance. In a famous passage in his treatise on *The Migration of Abraham*, Philo writes:

There are some who, regarding laws in their literal sense in the light of symbols of matters belonging to the intellect, are overpunctilious about the latter, while treating the former with easygoing neglect. Such men I for my part should blame for handling the matter in too easy and off-hand a manner: they ought to have given careful attention to both aims, to a more full and exact investigation of what is not seen and in what is seen to be stewards without reproach.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>57</sup> See, e.g., C. Gerber, *Ein Bild des Judentums für Nichtjuden von Flavius Josephus: Untersuchungen zu seiner Schrift Contra Apionem*, AGJU 40 (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

<sup>58</sup> V. Tcherikover, "Jewish Apologetic Literature Reconsidered," *Eos* 48 (1950): 169–93.

<sup>59</sup> M. Goodman, *Mission and Conversion: Proselytizing in the Religious History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). L. H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 288–341, is exceptional among recent scholars in arguing for extensive proselytism.

<sup>60</sup> J. J. Collins, "Hellenistic Judaism in Recent Scholarship," in *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture: Essays on the Jewish Encounter with Hellenism and Roman Rule*, JSJSup 100 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 1–20. See also J. M. G. Barclay, "Apologetics in the Jewish Diaspora," in *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities*, ed. J. R. Bartlett (London: Routledge, 2002), 129–48.

<sup>61</sup> Himmelfarb, "3 *Baruch* Revisited," 52.

<sup>62</sup> Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha*, 225, finds nothing in the *Wisdom of Solomon* that prohibits or even renders unlikely its having been written by a gentile Christian in the second half of the first century CE. This position can only be described as eccentric.

<sup>63</sup> Philo, *Migr.* 89.

Philo himself was observant, but he does not say that those he would blame were not Jews, or not “real Jews.” There was evidently some range of opinion and practice in the Jewish communities in Egypt.

#### 4. *PRAEPARATIO EVANGELII?*

Christianity, especially Pauline Christianity, turned away from strict observance of the Law, especially its ritual aspects. It has been argued with some plausibility that the issue between Paul and his opponents was to a large degree a difference between two Jewish ways of looking at the Law.<sup>64</sup> When Paul gives his instructions to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 4:2–12), he focuses on a few ethical issues (avoiding sexual immorality, loving the brethren, behaving properly toward outsiders) in a way that resembles the common ethic of Hellenistic Judaism. But Paul also claimed to have a higher revelation, based on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In that respect his gospel was radically discontinuous with the ethic of Hellenistic Judaism.<sup>65</sup> But Paul did not develop his teaching in a vacuum. He was a Diaspora Jew, and we should expect that his teaching was continuous with that of his contemporary coreligionists to some degree. The attempt to disqualify an aspect of Hellenistic Judaism that appealed to Christians on the grounds that *praeparatio evangelica* must be a Christian construct is just as historically unrealistic as would be an attempt to deny that rabbinic Judaism had deep roots in the Second Temple period, as we now see from the writings found at Qumran.

And herein, I submit, lies the importance of the Pseudepigrapha or, more accurately, of the writings related to the Old Testament that were preserved not by Jews but by Christians. They enable us to retrieve an aspect of Judaism in the Second Temple period that was not preserved by the rabbis, and that some latter-day apologists would still deny. Second Temple Judaism was the common ground from which both rabbinic Judaism and Christianity developed. The Pseudepigrapha must be used with caution, with an eye on the impact of Christian transmission, and some Pseudepigrapha cannot be used to reconstruct Second Temple Judaism at all. But many of them can, and they can serve as a rich source of insight into the common roots of Judaism and Christianity.

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<sup>64</sup>F. Thielman, *From Plight to Solution: A Jewish Framework for Understanding Paul’s View of the Law in Galatians and Romans*, NovTSup 61 (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 52.

<sup>65</sup>Collins, *The Invention of Judaism*, 171.

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# Enoch's Prayer for Rescue from the Flood: 1 Enoch 83–84, with a New Translation and Notes

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## PART A

### 1. INTRODUCTION

A much-overlooked part of the early Enoch tradition is found in the first part of the *Book of Dreams* (1 Enoch 83–84). It is one of several parts of what Western scholars call “1 Enoch” that has only survived in Ge‘ez (along with 1 Enoch 108 and, more famously, chs. 37–71). The character of the prayer in this section constitutes the focus of the present essay, which shall also furnish a critical translation that incorporates several of the most important manuscript witnesses that have more recently come to light. Frequently referred to merely as the “first dream vision,” 1 Enoch chs. 83–84 have received comparatively little scholarly attention, especially given the overriding interest in the “second dream vision” or *Animal Apocalypse* (chs. 85–90) that it precedes.<sup>1</sup>

In its present form, the text of 1 Enoch links both visions in the *Book of Dreams* to one another. Already at the beginning of 1 Enoch 83 the writer (assumed to be Enoch, as he is speaking to his son Methuselah) announces that he will recount “two visions,” the one of them “not like the other” (83:1). While both visions are set in a time before Enoch took a wife, the text tradition specifies that Enoch’s first vision occurred during the time he was learning to write, while the second came “before I took your mother” (83:2). Likewise, at the beginning of the second vision, the text has Enoch repeat that it occurred “before I took your mother” (85:3).

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I am grateful to James H. Charlesworth, who in 1984 first introduced me to the importance of studying the early Enoch tradition and inspired me to devote research on it in its various forms.

<sup>1</sup>A number of monograph-length studies have been devoted to 1 Enoch 85–90; cf. P. A. Tiller, *A Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch*, SBLEJL 4 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 1993); D. Bryan, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the Kosher Mentality*, JSJSS 12 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); D. Assefa, *L'Apocalypse des animaux (1 Hen 85–90): une propagande militaire?* JSJSS 120 (Leiden: Brill, 2007); D. C. Olson, *A New Reading of the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch: “All Nations Shall Be Blessed,”* SVTP 24 (Leiden: Brill, 2013). See also G. Dibley’s dissertation, “Abraham’s Uncircumcised Children: The Enochic Precedent for Paul’s Paradoxical Claim in Galatians 3:29” (PhD diss., University of California at Berkeley and Graduate Theological Union, 2013).



Despite the narrative interlinking of the two visions, it is not clear that they were originally written together by the same author or even at the same time. Thus the statement that the one is “not like the other” stems from the attempt by a redactor to explain the combination of these two visions, which are so very different from one another in character, into a shared literary context. Whereas the second vision, as is well known, consists of a review of sacred history from the beginning to the imminent future drawing on animal images to depict most of the protagonists in the story, the first largely takes the form of a vision of the cosmos followed by a prayer. Beyond the difference in focus and form, the visions are distinguishable in terms of textual attestation. In addition to being fully preserved in Ge‘ez, the *Animal Vision* is also extant in several small Greek fragments,<sup>2</sup> as well as in four Aramaic manuscripts from the Dead Sea Scrolls.<sup>3</sup>

The textual attestation is different for the first dream vision, for which, as mentioned, our only evidence comes from the Ge‘ez manuscript tradition. Before adopting this stance as a point of departure, we should note Michael A. Knibb’s suggestion that the prayer in *1 En.* 84:3–6 could overlap with and perhaps belong to the text of two Aramaic fragments in Herodian script assigned to the *Book of Giants* (at 4Q203 9 and 10).<sup>4</sup> There are indeed several small correspondences—these are, for completeness sake, included in the translation in “Part B” below—that could be compared between these fragments and 84:3–6:

84:2: “[ble]ssed”—4Q203 9.3;

84:2: “the rule of your greatness”—4Q203 9.6;

84:3: “all mysteries [you] kno[w]”—4Q203 9.3, v. 3 “you know everything”;

84:3: “nothing has defeated/is too strong for you”—4Q203 9.4; and

84:4 (cf. v. 5): “and now” (*bis*)—4Q203 9.5, 10.1: “and now, [the] h[oly ones of heaven(?)”

The evidence, however, does not support a literary identification of these texts. As the listing of shared phrases above indicates, the similarities between the Aramaic fragments and the Ge‘ez do not occur in the same sequence. Unless a number of adjustments are made in one or the other version, one is better left to note the parallels and to consider these as based on an underlying common tradition or as reflecting a widely circulating prayer tradition composed of stockmotifs. Thus, in terms of accessing an earliest reconstructable text, we are in no other position than to depend on the extant Ge‘ez materials, even though the earliest evidence stems from as late as the end of the fourteenth century (see further below). With the nature of the text-tradition in focus, we are in a position to consider the special character of *1 Enoch* chs. 83 and 84.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup>See the publications by M. Gitlbauer, “Die Überreste griechischer Tychygraphie im Codex Vaticanus Graecus 1809, I,” in *Denkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Philosophisch-Historische Classe* 28 (Wien: Aus der Kaiserlich-Königlichen Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1878), 1–110 (*1 En.* 89:42–49); J. T. Milik, “Fragments grec du livre d’Hénoch (P. Oxy. and xvii 2069),” *ChrÉgy* 46 (1971): 321–43; R. Chesnutt, “Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 2069 and the Compositional History of *1 Enoch*,” *JBL* 129 (2010): 485–505 (to *1 En.* 85:10–86:2; 87:1–3).

<sup>3</sup>So 4Q204 (4QEn<sup>c</sup>), 4Q205 (4QEn<sup>d</sup>), 4Q206 (4QEn<sup>e</sup>), and 4Q207 (4QEn<sup>f</sup>); cf. J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments from Qumrân Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 178–245.

<sup>4</sup>M. A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 2.10, and 193–5; cf. further L. T. Stuckenbruck, *1 Enoch 91-108*, CEJL (Berlin: Gruyter, 2007), 11–12.

<sup>5</sup>The comments below cannot offer a thoroughgoing study of the text as a whole in its tradition-historical context. At the same time, they may be taken as indicative of the need for a full commentary-length treatment that analyzes *1 Enoch* 83–84 in its right, that is, apart from the *Animal Apocalypse*.

Within *1 Enoch* as a whole, the first part of the *Book of Dreams* stands out in two main ways. First, we know that it does not simply consist of a vision framed by the briefest of narrative. Unlike the *Animal Apocalypse*, which—except for its frame—is wholly presented as a vision, in chs. 83 and 84 Enoch's vision is limited to 83:3–4, followed by an initial interpretation and instruction on what to do in response by Enoch's grandfather Malal'el in 83:7–8. Following his brief night vision, the text narrates that Enoch goes outside, where he has another vision, though this time it is one based on observation: under the heavens Enoch looks at the heavenly bodies and how they move in obedience to the God's instruction (especially the sun, 83:11).<sup>6</sup> This second visionary experience leads Enoch to utter a prayer (84:1–6), which serves as the high point for the section as a whole. Unlike the *Animal Apocalypse*, then, relatively little of *1 Enoch* 83–84 transmits a vision in narrative form.

A second difference distinguishes chs. 83–84 not only from the *Animal Apocalypse* but also from the remainder of *1 Enoch*. Significantly, this is the only part of *1 Enoch* in which the visionary is actually made to utter a prayer, the text of which is given.<sup>7</sup> Here we shall pay particular attention to this aspect of the text.

## 2. THE PRAYER OF ENOCH

Enoch's prayer in *1 En.* 84:1–6 is formulated as a petition of a particular kind. To be sure, in the *Book of Watchers* at *1 En.* 12:1–14:8, Enoch is asked by the rebellious angelic beings to intercede to God on their behalf; and while Enoch does travel to the heavenly throne (14:9–15:1), he does not in the text actually utter a petition but rather is given a divine pronouncement against the angels, one which emphasizes that their culpability can not be forgiven (15:2–16:3).

The closest analogies to what Enoch prays in chs. 83–84 are instead to be found in the *Aramaic Levi Document* (a prayer of Levi on behalf of his progeny)<sup>8</sup> and the *Book of Jubilees*,<sup>9</sup> which contains several prayers uttered by other patriarchal figures, such as Moses, Noah, and Abraham. Like Enoch, who requests that God grant him a posterity on the earth (which is further described in 84:6 as “the flesh of righteousness and uprightness as a seed-plant for ever”), these patriarchs are made to utter petitions that have the well-being of their offspring (or at least those who figuratively come after them) in mind. The most significant examples of this are the following (with *italics* for emphasis, and parallels underlined), each followed by brief description and comment.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup>The vision in ch. 83 draws together a number of cosmological motifs known in Enochic tradition and elsewhere that, in turn, should become the focus of future study. G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1-36; 81-108*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 347, rightly observes that “the first dream vision was shaped from traditional material (the Book of the Watchers [esp. chaps. 1–11], an archetype of chaps. 106–7, and chap. 65)” and goes on to suggest that this material had “the purpose of providing a companion pieces to what is now the second dream vision.” The derivative character of *1 Enoch* 83–84, however, should not distract from the significance of this section and the conceptual distinctiveness it occupies in the early Enoch tradition.

<sup>7</sup>Of course, “Enoch” is elsewhere narratively said to speak with God and to be in dialogue with angelic interlocutors (cf. chs. 18:1–36:4; 37–71; 81:1–10; and 90:40); however, only here is the text of his prayer itself formally provided.

<sup>8</sup>J. C. Greenfield, M. E. Stone, and E. Eshel, *An Aramaic Levi Document: Edition, Translation, Commentary*, SVTP 19 (Leiden: Brill, 2004); H. Drawnel, *An Aramaic Wisdom Text from Qumran*, JSJSS 86 (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

<sup>9</sup>C. Werman, *The Book of Jubilees: Introduction, Translation, and Interpretation* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2016), in Hebrew; and J. C. VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Commentary*, 2 vols., Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2018). The citations below are based on VanderKam's translation.

<sup>10</sup>For previous study on the petitionary prayers mentioned below, see, e.g., L. T. Stuckenbruck, “The Need for Protection from the Evil One and John's Gospel,” in L. T. Stuckenbruck, *The Myth of Rebellious Angels*, WUNT 335 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 187–215, esp. 203–11.

### 2.1. Jubilees 1:19–20

Moses pleads that God not deliver Israel “into the control of the nations with the result that they rule over them lest they make them sin against you” and that “*the spirit of Beliar not rule them so as to bring charges against them before you and to trap them away from every proper path so that they may be destroyed from your presence.*” Here Moses prays that Israel not sin and come under Beliar’s rule.

### 2.2. Jubilees 10:1–6

The prayer of Noah, in which we can note a few parallels to Enoch’s petition:

(v. 3) God ... who has acted mercifully with me and saved me and my sons from the water of the Flood. ... Let your grace be lifted up upon my sons, and *do not let the evil spirits rule over them, lest they destroy them from the earth.*

(v. 4) But bless me and my sons. ...

(v. 5) And you know that which your Watchers, the fathers of these spirits, did in my days. ... (cf. 1 En. 84:4) Shut them up and take them to the place of judgment. And do not let them cause corruption among the sons of your servant, O my God (1 En. 84:6), because they are cruel and were created to destroy.

(v. 6) And *let them not rule over* the spirits of the living because you alone know (1 En. 84:3) their judgement. And *do not let them have power over the children of the righteous now and forever.*

Again, as Moses, Noah asks for God to protect his offspring (indeed, children of the righteous) in the future. Like Enoch, whose prayer refers to what the rebellious angels have done and who appeals to God’s omniscience, Noah is concerned with his offspring. While Enoch is asking that a righteous posterity be left after God has punished evil in the Great Flood, Noah’s prayer assumes that such offspring will exist and requests that they be protected from the rule of evil spirits.

### 2.3. Jubilees 12:16–20

The prayer of Abraham (similar to 1 En. 83–84, coming after he goes outside and beholds the heavens and stars):

(v. 19) My God, my God, God most High, you alone are my God. You have created everything; everything that was and has been is the product of your hands. You and your lordship I have chosen.

(v. 20) *Save me from the power of the evil spirits, who rule the thoughts of people’s minds. May they not mislead me from following you, my God. Do establish me and my posterity for ever. May we not go astray from now until eternity.*

As mentioned, the prayer occurs while Abram is gazing at the stars by night (12:16), these spirits must be the stars linked with “astrology.” Abram recognizes, however, that it is wrong to predict on the basis of stars; this even includes the weather—for example, whether or not it will rain—as such predictions distract from the conviction that only God should control meteorological events. Alone at night, Abram resists the temptation to adopt the instruction about “the omens of the sun and

moon and stars within all the signs of heaven,” which in the story was attributed to the fallen angels and rediscovered after the Flood. Enoch’s prayer also follows his observation of the stars at night, and he too, like Abraham, declares God to be the one and only creator of all things. In addition, like Abraham, Enoch requests that God give him a posterity for ever. However, as the prayers of Moses and Noah, Abraham’s prayer focuses on protection from the personified evil, while Enoch’s prayer does not specifically mention such protection, but rather requests destruction of one kind of (wicked) flesh so that another, a righteous flesh, can be established.

#### 2.4. *Jubilees 19:28*

A prayer of Abraham as he pronounces a blessing over Jacob: “may the spirit of Mastema not rule over you or over your seed in order to remove you from following the Lord who is your God henceforth and forever” Abraham’s story shows how his prayers for rescue from the rule of “evil spirits” in chs. 12 and 19 is answered: His obedience to God thwarts Mastema’s plan to test his character; and the constitution of Israel as the elect people is God’s response to Abram’s prayer of deliverance. Enoch’s prayer is not followed by a narrative that exemplifies how his prayer is answered. Rather the text *assumes* that the prayer has been answered; readers and recipients of *1 En.* 83–84 are to understand themselves as heirs to and beneficiaries of a request uttered by Enoch before the Flood.

#### 2.5. *Aramaic Levi Document (4Q213a i 6–10 and Grk; cf. a parallel in T. Levi 2:5–4:6)*

A prayer—the text is summarized here—spoken by Levi just before he is granted a vision of heaven (cf. 4Q213a ii 14–18) and is commissioned to become a priest (cf. the later *T. Levi* 2:5–4:6). After Levi makes preparations through cleansing and various gestures (4Q213a i 6–10), he utters a prayer (Grk. vv. 5–19; Aram. 1.10–2.10). According to Robert Kugler,<sup>11</sup> this prayer may be structured as follows: (i) Levi prays that God purify him from evil and wickedness, that God show him the holy spirit, and that God endow him with counsel, wisdom, knowledge, and strength, in order that he might find favor before God and give God praise (Grk. vv. 6–9; Aram. 1.10–16); (ii) he prays that God protect him from evil (Grk. v. 10; Aram. 1.17); and (iii) he requests that God shelter him from evil, that wickedness be destroyed from the earth, and that he and his descendants will serve God for all generations to come (Grk. vv. 11–19; Aram. 1.18–2.10).

There is less immediately in common between *1 En.* 83–84 and Levi’s prayer. Though it is possible that Enoch takes on a priestly role in praying on behalf of those coming after him, it is not clear that his intercession is specifically priestly in character. Nonetheless, Enoch’s prayer, like that of Levi (and those of patriarchs in the *Book of Jubilees*), culminates in the request for righteous descendants.

These examples from the *Book of Jubilees* and the *Aramaic Levi Document*, along with parallels found in *1 Enoch* 83–84, provide evidence for a lively tradition of patriarchs’ prayers for those coming after them (i.e., recipients of these texts who understood themselves to be their legitimate heirs during the second century BCE. Though the first dream vision was originally a separate

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<sup>11</sup> R. Kugler, *From Patriarch to Priest: The Levi-Priestly Tradition from Aramaic Levi to Testament of Levi*, SBLEJL 9 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996), 131–8.

composition from the *Animal Apocalypse*, the editorial combination of the two works at an early stage suggests a date of composition around the mid-second century BCE, a date that makes it roughly contemporary with *Jubilees* and the petitionary prayers it preserves (though the latter may go back to even earlier traditions<sup>12</sup>). This tradition, which embeds petitions for progeny within a sacred narrative, arguably resurfaces in the Gospel of John, in which Jesus, just before his death, prays for his disciples (John 17:6–19), asking God to “keep them from the evil one” (v. 15), as well as for those who come to faith through what they proclaim (vv. 20–24). As in the other texts reviewed above, those receiving the text in the Gospel are assumed to be understanding themselves as covered by Jesus’ effective prayer on their behalf.<sup>13</sup>

In *1 Enoch* 84, the writer has the patriarch Enoch utter a prayer that entreats God to rescue humanity from the coming destruction of the Great Flood. As noted in the introduction above, however, the first part of the *Book of Dreams* does not simply contain a prayer; Enoch’s words are placed in a narrative, according to which he is given a vision in which “heaven” is thrown down upon the earth, resulting in the earth’s annihilation. Enoch is so troubled that he recounts the vision to his grandfather Malal’el (the only extant text from Second Temple literature that gives Malalel an active role in a narrative), with the text containing a faint echo of Eli’s advice to Samuel (1 Sam 3:15–18). Malalel tells Enoch to supplicate God that the destruction will not be complete and that a remnant among humanity will be left upon the earth. Simply put, the content of Enoch’s prayer is prescribed by his grandfather.

Directed at God, the petition is twofold. First, Enoch prays that God’s wrath rest upon those who have perpetrated evil upon the earth; these evil-doers include the angels who have rebelled against God and those of human flesh who have presumably come under their influence (*1 En.* 84:4). Thus the passage reflects an effort to make more explicit than the early part of the *Book of Watchers* (cf. *1 En.* 8:1–3) that humanity is included alongside demonic powers as those to be held responsible for wickedness on the earth. Second, the main emphasis of the petition, however, lies elsewhere. Enoch asks God to “leave *me* a posterity upon the earth,” so that the coming destruction will neither be complete nor last for ever (84:5).

Readers and hearers of Enoch’s prayer will obviously have been aware, on the basis of the storylines in Genesis 6–9 and *1 Enoch* 6–11, that both parts of these petitions were answered. We have already noted that they will have understood themselves as the heirs of those whom God rescued from the destructive Flood. They are “the flesh of righteousness and uprightness” mentioned in 84:6 and thus are those whose very existence is the outcome of Enoch’s prayer. To them, the petition uttered by Enoch resulted in deliverance from both the evil of the rebellious

<sup>12</sup>Cf. bibliographical references on the tradition-historical location of *Jubilees* in relation to Aramaic traditions in Stuckenbruck, *The Myth of Rebellious Angels*, 58–9, n.3.

<sup>13</sup>Nickelsburg, *1 En.* 1:347, 351–2, emphasizes the parallels and differences between the prayer in 84:1–6 and that of the four angelic beings in 9:4–11. He rightly points out parallels in three respects: both prayers (1) have an address, which express praise to God, who is given several comparable titles; (2) contain a description of God’s power, referring to God’s activity as creator, God’s sovereignty (rule), and God’s unequalled omniscience; and (3) close with petitions (following the introductory “and now”). However, the differentiating comparison drawn by Nickelsburg between these passages does not take into account that these formal elements are more widespread in contemporary literature and that they are associated with prayers spoken by patriarchs. Thus, the comparison with ch. 9, which does not consider the appropriation of such elements in *Jubilees*, does not do justice to Enoch’s petition in 84:1–6, especially with respect to its (efficacious) function among its recipients. Nickelsburg (*1 En.* 1:352) can only conclude that “Chapter 9 is humanity’s anguished indictment of God. Here Enoch foresees the possibility of salvation beyond the flood.”

angels and the just judgment of God against wrongs committed by humanity. It is likely that those receiving the text would have thought themselves as that very “seed-bearing plant” (84:6) founded and shaped through what Enoch has said during the pre-diluvian period.<sup>14</sup> The passage accords Enoch an importance that is unmistakable; in sacred tradition, he becomes the earliest figure through whose agency God’s purposes for humanity have been secured.

### 3. CONCLUSION

With this understanding of Enoch’s petitionary prayer in *1 Enoch* 83–84 in mind, we may offer three further observations. First, the first “dream vision” demonstrates little explicit interest in eschatology. A recognition of this differs from George Nickelsburg’s emphasis that “The relevance of this narrative lies in its typology between the flood and the final judgment.”<sup>15</sup> With such a typology at best only implicit, the prayer is less concerned with the end time, as it is with “historicizing” the Enoch tradition in order to exhort and encourage a community of the faithful who, as Enoch’s heirs, live in the present. In this respect, the text differs in emphasis from the *Animal Apocalypse*, the *Apocalypse of Weeks*, the *Epistle of Enoch*, the Eschatological Admonition in *1 Enoch* 108, the *Parables*, the Exhortation of ch. 91, the *Book of Watchers* (except for parts of chs. 21–36), and the *Birth of Noah*, in which images from the time of the Great Flood present an *Urzeit* that lends confidence for anticipating an *Endzeit* (esp. *1 Enoch* 91 and 106–107). To be sure, chapters 83 and 84 draw heavily on other, earlier parts of *1 Enoch*; however, the attribution of a new function to Enoch not found elsewhere in the early Enochic collection provides a more essential point of departure for an interpretation of how this part of the tradition may have functioned.

Second, we should state the obvious, though it is something easily overlooked: how different this pre-Flood account is from that which meets us through Genesis chs. 5 and 6. According to Genesis, it is God who reaches the decision to destroy the earth due to human sin; in Genesis 6 God’s “wrath” is not at all mentioned, in contrast to *1 En.* 84:4. Instead, Gen 6:6 states that “the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it troubled him (תעצב) to his heart,” with the Septuagint tradition weakening the sense of the verb to διανοήθη (“he considered [the matter]).” In our Enochic account, the patriarch is given some agency in how things transpire in the sacred story. Though we cannot speak of cause (prayer) and effect (in the manner that God responds to and heeds Enoch’s requests), the texts lends Enoch a prominence, so that, by praying in accordance with his grandfather Malal’el’s interpretation of his night vision, he foresees the divine judgment to come, on the one hand, and the deliverance of those who are righteous from that judgment and destruction, on the other.

Third and finally, the emphases observed above have emerged through new textual work that has been carried out to secure the text of *1 Enoch* 83–84. To illustrate this, I provide a translation

<sup>14</sup>On the widespread use of “plant” or “planting” as a metaphor for an ideal community of the righteous, see P. A. Tiller, “The ‘Eternal Planting’ in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *DSD* 4 (1997): 312–35; L. T. Stuckenbruck, “4QInstruction and the Possible Influence of Early Enochic Traditions: An Evaluation,” in *Wisdom Texts from Qumran and the Development of Sapiential Thought*, ed. C. Hempel, A. Lange, and H. Lichtenberger, BETL 159 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 245–61; and Stuckenbruck, *1 Enoch 91–108*, 100–2 and 123–4.

<sup>15</sup>Nickelsburg, *1 En.* 1:346. While one cannot maintain that eschatology plays no role in the narrative, it remains conspicuous that, unlike chapters 10:16–11:2, 91:5–10 and 106:13–107:2 (and the later chs. 65–7), a typology with the end time in view is not developed at all.



that takes into account some of the most significant Ge‘ez witnesses, including manuscripts that more recently have become accessible, with further verse-by-verse commentary to follow in future publications.

## PART B

### A NEW TRANSLATION OF 1 ENOCH CHAPTERS 83 AND 84

The translation offered here, though preliminary, is based on a sample of manuscript witnesses that, except for three (EMML 8347, Ryl, and Ullendorff<sup>16</sup>), reflect the Ge‘ez textual tradition for *1 Enoch* before it reached a standardized form.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, brief notes to the translated text are given in footnotes that are designed to serve as a catalyst for further research. The manuscripts on which the translation is critically derived include the following, given in roughly chronological order (with estimated dates, where no specific one is given, and abbreviations if used):<sup>18</sup>

- EMML 8400 (*ca.* 1400)—abbr. 8400
- EMML 8292 (also known as Tana 9; 15th cent.)—abbr. 8292
- EMML 9009 (15th cent.)—abbr. 9009
- EMML 1768 (15th cent.)—abbr. 1768
- Abb55 (15th cent.)
- Gunda Gunde 151 (late 15th/early 16th cent.)—abbr. GG 151
- Remnant Trust (late 15th/early 16th cent.)—abbr. RT
- BL485 (early 16th cent.)
- Petermann II Nachtrag 24 (early 16th cent.—palimpsest, with only parts of chs. 83–84 legible)—abbr. P II N 24
- Petermann II Nachtrag 29 (early 16th cent.)—abbr. P II N 29
- Parma 3843 (16th cent.)—abbr. Parma
- EMML 7584 (16th cent.)—abbr. 7584
- EMML 2080 (16th cent.)—abbr. 2080
- Cambridge 1570 (d. 1588)—abbr. Camb
- EMML 6281 (16th cent.)—abbr. 6281
- Abb35 (17th cent.)

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<sup>16</sup>The readings of Ryl and Ullendorff follow their reading and collation by Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, vol. 1. On these manuscripts, see Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, 2.25–26.

<sup>17</sup>A more thorough accounting of the manuscripts preserving this part of *1 Enoch* and that include at least six late copies of the pre-standardized recension (dated to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), will be published in the forthcoming edition for *1 Enoch* being prepared by Ted M. Erho and myself, with the further assistance of James Hamrick and Ralph Lee. In particular, I am indebted to Erho for many conversations from which many insights on the Ge‘ez tradition continue to emerge.

<sup>18</sup>For a description of most of these manuscripts, with explanations for the abbreviations used, see T. M. Erho and L. T. Stuckenbruck, “A Manuscript History of *Ethiopic Enoch*,” *JSP* 23 (2013): 87–133; in addition, on the recovery of Enochic text from the palimpsest Petermann II Nachtrag 24, initially detected by Ted Erho, see L. T. Stuckenbruck and I. Rabin, “Die Entdeckung verlorener Texte: Foto- und Textarbeiten am Untertext einer altäthiopischen Handschrift,” *Bibliotheksmagazin* 13.2 (2018): 72–6.

EMML 8703 (17th cent.)—abbr. 8703  
 EMMML 2436 (17th cent.)—abbr. 2436  
 BL491 (17th cent.)

From the standardizing recension:

EMML 8347 (17th cent.)—abbr. 8347  
 Ullendorff (18th cent.)—abbr. Ull  
 Rylands 23 (18th cent.)—abbr. Ryl

Further abbreviations used are: hmt. (homoiteuton); sg. (singular); pl. (plural); suff. (suffix); ptc. (participle); pron. (pronominal). Finally, the use of **bold** typeface indicates the parallels between the Ge'ez text and fragments 4Q203 (4QEnGiants<sup>a</sup>) 9 and 10 from the *Book of Giants*. The variants listed reflect differences in content (not orthography) and are given in *italics* next to manuscript witnesses that preserve them.

### Chapter 83

#### 83:1

And now <sup>a</sup>I will show you<sup>a</sup>, Methuselah my son,<sup>19</sup> <sup>b</sup>all the visions of mine<sup>b</sup> <sup>c</sup>that<sup>c</sup> I have seen. <sup>d</sup>In your presence, I will recount (them)<sup>d</sup>.

<sup>a-a</sup> 2436: *I have shown you*

<sup>b-b</sup> Abb35, 2436, 8347: *every vision* (sg.)

<sup>c-c</sup> 2436: omits

<sup>d-d</sup> 2436: *I will recount (them) in your presence.* 8400, 9009, 2080<sup>\*2</sup>, BL485, BL491: *In your presence, I will recount (them) before you.*

#### 83:2

I saw two <sup>a</sup>visions<sup>a</sup> before I took a wife<sup>b</sup>,  
 and one of them is <sup>c</sup>not like the other<sup>c</sup>:  
 The first (happened) <sup>d</sup>when<sup>d</sup> I was learning to write,  
 and the second (occurred) before I took <sup>e</sup>your mother<sup>e</sup>.  
<sup>f</sup>I saw compelling visions<sup>f</sup>, and <sup>g</sup>concerning them<sup>g</sup> I made petition to God.

<sup>a-a</sup> 8292: omits

<sup>b</sup> RT: adding rel. pron. before “I saw”, reads as an extension of v. 1: *In your presence I will recount two visions that I saw before I took a wife.*

<sup>c-c</sup> GG151: *and is like*; 8400, 8437, 8703, 7584, 6281, 1768, 2080, RT, Parma, Camb, 2436, 8292, BL485, Abb35: *and is not like the other.*

<sup>19</sup>Methuselah is significant elsewhere in *1 Enoch*; cf. *1 En.* 82:1–4; 85:1; 91:1–2; 92:1; 93:1; 105:1–2; 106–107; and 108:1; see, e.g., Stuckenbruck, *1 En.* 91–108, 10–12.

<sup>d-d</sup> 1768: omits

<sup>e-e</sup> 7584: *our mother*; 2080<sup>1</sup>: *your mother Edna*

<sup>f-f</sup> 8292: *first I saw a compelling vision*; 2080: *I saw a compelling vision*; for the sg. see <sup>g-g</sup>.

<sup>g-g</sup> 2080, 8292: *concerning it*

### 83:3

<sup>a</sup>I was<sup>a</sup> lying down in the house of Malal'el my grandfather.

<sup>b</sup>I saw<sup>b</sup> <sup>c</sup>in a vision:

Heaven<sup>c</sup> was being thrown down <sup>d</sup>and removed<sup>d</sup>;

<sup>e</sup>and it was falling upon the earth<sup>e</sup>.

<sup>a-a</sup> BL491, BL485—*you were lying down*

<sup>b-b</sup> BL485—*you saw*; 8292—*and I saw*

<sup>c-c</sup> 8400, GG151, Parma<sup>1</sup>—*in a vision of heaven* (cf. 1 En. 1); Abb55—*I saw: Heaven*; 9009—*I saw in a vision: Heaven which*

<sup>d-d</sup> BL491—*and punished*

<sup>e-e</sup> 9009, P II N 29—omit *and it was falling upon the earth*

### 83:4

<sup>a</sup>And when it fell upon the earth<sup>a</sup>,

I saw the earth as it was being devoured into a <sup>b</sup>great<sup>b</sup> abyss;

and mountains were being suspended <sup>c</sup>on mountains<sup>c</sup>,

<sup>d</sup>and hills<sup>d</sup> were sinking <sup>e</sup>on hills<sup>e</sup>;

<sup>f</sup>and tall trees<sup>f</sup> were being ripped out at their trunks,

and they were thrown away <sup>g</sup>and sank into the abyss<sup>g</sup>.

<sup>a-a</sup> Abb55—omits (hmt.)

<sup>b-b</sup> Abb55—omits

<sup>c-c</sup> Camb—omits (hmt.); BL491—*in mountains*

<sup>d-d</sup> 9009—*and even hills*

<sup>e-e</sup> P II N 29—omits (hmt.)

<sup>f-f</sup> 2436—*and high hills*

<sup>g-g</sup> Abb55—omits *and sank into the abyss*

### 83:5

<sup>a</sup>And<sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup>afterwards<sup>b</sup> a message fell into my mouth;

<sup>c</sup>and I raised<sup>c</sup> (my voice), cried out, and said:

“The earth has been destroyed!”

<sup>a-a</sup> Parma—omits

<sup>b-b</sup> 8400—*truly?* (*'emun*); 1768, 7584, 9009, RT, GG151, Parma, BL485, P II N 29, Abb55—*then*; BL491—*after these things* (pl. suff.); 8292, 8703, 8347, 6281, 2426, 2080, Camb, Abb35—*for and then: afterwards*

<sup>c-c</sup> Abb35—*and I seized (my voice)*

## 83:6

And Malal'el <sup>a</sup>my grandfather<sup>a</sup> woke me up <sup>b</sup>as<sup>b</sup> <sup>c</sup>I was lying near him<sup>c</sup>, and <sup>d</sup>he<sup>d</sup> said to me,  
 “<sup>e</sup>What<sup>e</sup> <sup>f</sup>are you crying out about like this<sup>f</sup>, <sup>g</sup>my son<sup>g</sup>,  
 and why are you moaning like this<sup>e1</sup>?”

- <sup>a-a</sup> 1768—omits  
<sup>b-b</sup> 8437—*and*  
<sup>c-c</sup> 8400—*I was sleeping with him*  
<sup>d-d</sup> 6281—*they*  
<sup>e-e</sup> 8347, 2080<sup>1</sup>, Ull, Ryl—*why are you crying out*  
<sup>e1-e1</sup> 9009—*what are you moaning about like this*  
<sup>f-f</sup> 8292—*what have you been crying about like this*  
<sup>g-g</sup> BL491—*O my son*; P II N 29—omits

## 83:7

And I told him <sup>a</sup>the entire vision<sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup>that I had seen<sup>b</sup>.  
 And he said to me,  
 “<sup>c</sup>You have seen something compelling, my son<sup>c</sup>!  
<sup>d</sup>And the vision of your dream weighs heavily on the sin of<sup>d</sup> the whole <sup>e</sup>earth<sup>e</sup>;  
<sup>f</sup>and<sup>f</sup> <sup>g</sup>it<sup>g</sup> will sink into the <sup>h</sup>abysses<sup>h</sup>  
 and <sup>i</sup>be destroyed with<sup>i</sup> a great destruction.

- <sup>a-a</sup> GG151, Parma, Ull—*all the visions* (pl.); Abb55—omits  
<sup>b-b</sup> 2436—omits  
<sup>c-c</sup> RT—*how compelling is the force (of what) you have seen*; 2080<sup>mg</sup>—*next to you have seen ... my son: make known the dream*  
<sup>d-d</sup> 8347, 7584, 1768, 2080, RT, GG151, Parma, 2436, Abb35, Abb55—*and the vision of your dream is weighty, the secrets of all the sins of*  
<sup>e-e</sup> 2080—*world*  
<sup>f-f</sup> BL485, Ull—omits  
<sup>g-g</sup> 2080—*the whole earth*  
<sup>h-h</sup> 8292, 9009, 2436, Abb35, Ryl—*abyss*  
<sup>i-i</sup> Abb55—omits

## 83:8

And now, my son, rise up and make petition to <sup>a</sup>the Lord of Glory<sup>a</sup>,  
 —for you are faithful—  
 so that a remnant will remain on the earth<sup>b,c</sup>.

- <sup>a-a</sup> Ull—*God*  
<sup>b</sup> 8347, 6281, 2436, 2080, Abb35, Ull, Ryl—add: *and that he might not destroy the whole earth* (6281 omits *not*)  
<sup>c</sup> 8400—adds: *my son* (while the other mss. begin v. 9 with the address)

## 83:9

<sup>a,c</sup>My son, all this will happen from heaven on the earth<sup>a</sup>;  
<sup>b</sup>and upon the earth there will be great destruction<sup>b,c</sup>.”

<sup>a-a</sup> Ryl—*my son, from heaven everything will happen upon the earth*; 8400—*for waters will all come upon the earth*; P II N 29—omits

<sup>b-b</sup> 9009, 6281, P II N 29—*and there will be great destruction* (P II N 29—omits *and*)

<sup>c-c</sup> Abb55—*my son, from heaven there will be a great destruction*

## 83:10

<sup>a,b</sup>And<sup>a</sup> afterwards<sup>b</sup> I arose<sup>c</sup> and prayed<sup>d</sup> and made petition.

And I wrote <sup>e</sup>my prayer<sup>e</sup> for the generations of eternity.

<sup>f</sup>And everything I will show you, my son, Methuselah<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>a-a</sup> 6281, 1768, 2080, 8292, BL491—omit

<sup>b-b</sup> Abb55—omits

<sup>c-c</sup> Abb55—*and I arose*

<sup>d-d</sup> 9009, Camb, P II N 29—omit

<sup>e-e</sup> 2080<sup>mg</sup>; Abb55—omit; BL485—*and I prayed*; 8292—*their prayer*

<sup>f-f</sup> Abb55—omits

## 83:11

<sup>a</sup>And<sup>a</sup> then<sup>b</sup> I went out <sup>c</sup>below<sup>c</sup>

<sup>d</sup>and saw heaven and the sun<sup>d</sup> going up from the east<sup>e</sup>,

<sup>f</sup>and the sun<sup>f</sup> and the moon descending <sup>g</sup>from<sup>g</sup> the west,

and <sup>h</sup>some<sup>h</sup> stars <sup>i</sup>and the whole earth<sup>i</sup>,

<sup>j</sup>and everything <sup>k</sup>that<sup>k</sup> he<sup>l</sup> had made manifest <sup>m,n</sup>at<sup>m</sup> first<sup>i,n</sup>.

And I praised<sup>o</sup> the Lord of judgment,

and I ascribed to him majesty.

For <sup>p</sup>he has made<sup>p</sup> the sun to go out from the windows of the east,

and <sup>q</sup>it ascends and rises<sup>q</sup> above the face of the heaven;

and <sup>r</sup>he raises (it) and it proceeds (on) the paths that it has been shown<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>a-a</sup> 8400—omits

<sup>b-b</sup> 2080, 2436, BL491, Abb35, Ull, Ryl—*when*

<sup>c-c</sup> 9009—*to*

<sup>d-d</sup> 9009—*and saw the sun*; BL491—*and saw the sun and heaven*

<sup>e-e</sup> Abb55—omits

<sup>f-f</sup> 8347<sup>1</sup>, 2080<sup>1</sup>, 2436, 8292, P II N 24, Abb35, Abb55, Ull, Ryl—omit

<sup>g-g</sup> 8400, 9009, 2080, 8292, BL491, P II N 29—*in*; Abb55—*to*

<sup>h-h</sup> 6281, 8292, BL485, P II N 29—*some of*

<sup>i-i</sup> 2080<sup>1</sup>, 2436, Abb35, Abb55—omit

<sup>j-j</sup> Abb55—omits

<sup>k-k</sup> 8292, P II N 29\*, Ull—omit

- <sup>l-l</sup> P II N 29—*the Holy One*  
<sup>m-m</sup> 2080, 8292—*on it*  
<sup>n-n</sup> P II N 29—*omits*  
<sup>o-o</sup> BL485—*adds concerning it*  
<sup>p-p</sup> Abb55—*they have made*  
<sup>q-q</sup> 2436—*and he has made it ascend and rise; P II N 29—and its foundation rises*  
<sup>r-r</sup> 7584, 1768, RT, GG151, Parma, Abb35—*and it rises and proceeds (on) paths which are shown it; 8292—he raises the paths (on which) it proceeds, which it has been shown; 2436—and he raises (it) and proceeds (on) the paths which it has been shown (mg.: which were ordained for it) Abb55—and it proceeds to it*

### Chapter 84

#### 84:1

And I lifted up <sup>a</sup>my hands<sup>a</sup> in righteousness,  
 and blessed the Holy One and the Great One,  
 and I spoke with the spirit of my mouth and <sup>b</sup>with<sup>b</sup> the tongue of <sup>c</sup>the<sup>c</sup> flesh,  
 which the Lord <sup>d</sup>has made for<sup>d</sup> the children of <sup>e</sup>human flesh<sup>e</sup>,  
<sup>f</sup>so that they might converse with it<sup>f</sup>  
 [[- <sup>g</sup>and<sup>g</sup> he gave them a spirit <sup>h</sup>and tongue<sup>h</sup> and mouth,  
 so that they might converse with it.]]

- <sup>a-a</sup> GG151, Parma—*my hand*  
<sup>b-b</sup> Abb35—*omits*  
<sup>c-c</sup> 8347\*, P II N 29—*my*  
<sup>d-d</sup> Parma—*has given to*  
<sup>e-e</sup> Abb55—*humanity*  
<sup>f-f</sup> Abb55—*omits*  
<sup>g-g</sup> Parma—*omits*  
<sup>h-h</sup> 8292—*omits*

#### 84:2

“<sup>a</sup>Blessed<sup>20</sup> are you, <sup>b</sup>Lord<sup>b</sup>, <sup>c</sup>Great King<sup>c</sup>,  
 and mighty <sup>d</sup>in your majesty<sup>d</sup>, <sup>e</sup>O Lord of all creation of heaven<sup>e</sup>,  
 King of Kings, and Lord of the <sup>f</sup>whole<sup>f</sup> world!  
<sup>g</sup>And your royal authority and your kingdom<sup>g</sup> <sup>h</sup>and your greatness<sup>h21</sup>  
<sup>i</sup>will remain for ever<sup>i</sup> and for ever<sup>j</sup> and ever,  
<sup>k</sup>and your authority for all generations<sup>k</sup>.  
 And all the heavens are your throne for ever;  
<sup>l</sup>and<sup>l</sup> the whole earth is your footstool for ever, <sup>m</sup>and for ever and ever<sup>m</sup>.”

<sup>20</sup>4Q203 9.3—“[ble]ssed ...”.

<sup>21</sup>4Q203 9.6—“the rule of your greatness.”



- a RT, 8292—add *and*
- b-b 9009 – *God, Lord*; BL491—omits
- c-c Camb—*King and Great One*
- d-d Parma—*and majestic*
- e-e Abb55—omits; 9009, 8347—*O Lord of all creation*
- f-f Abb55—omits
- g-g 2080—*and your kingdom and royal authority*
- h-h 8292—omits
- i-i 9009—omits; Parma, 2436—*will remain*
- j-j 8292—omits
- k-k 9009—*and for every generation*; BL491—*and for all your authority for generations*
- l-l RT—omits
- m-m GG151—*and unto eternity*

## 84:3

For you have made<sup>a</sup> and <sup>b</sup>rule over<sup>b</sup> everything;  
 and <sup>c</sup>no<sup>c</sup> deed at all is too strong for you;<sup>22</sup>  
<sup>d</sup>wisdom does not elude you.

And <sup>e</sup>your throne does not depart from its seat<sup>e</sup>, nor<sup>f</sup> from your presence.

And <sup>g</sup>you know<sup>h</sup> and see<sup>g</sup> and hear <sup>i</sup>everything<sup>i</sup>,<sup>23</sup>  
 and nothing is hidden from you, for you <sup>j</sup>see all<sup>i</sup>.

- a 2436—adds *everything*
- b-b GG151, Parma—*have planted*; 6 mss. (Eth. II)—*fill*
- c-c 8400, 8703, 8347, 7584, 6281, 1768, 2080, RT, GG151, Parma, Camb, 2436—omit emphatic *all* with the negative
- d 8292, Abb55—add *and*
- e-e 8400, 6281, Camb, BL491, BL485—*its (wisdom's) seat does not depart from you, from your throne*; P II N 29—*it (wisdom) will not depart from you, from your throne*
- f 2080<sup>mg</sup>—adds *and wisdom*
- g-g 8400—*you see and know*
- h Camb, BL485—add *and you are invisible*
- i-i 8400, RT—omit
- j-j 8292—*make everything visible*

## 84:4

And now<sup>24</sup> the angels of your heavens are doing wrong,  
 and your wrath is against human flesh <sup>a</sup>until<sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup>the great day of judgment<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> 4Q203 9.4—“nothing has defeated you / is too strong for you.”

<sup>23</sup> 4Q203 9.3—“[you] kn[ow] all mysteries.”

<sup>24</sup> 4Q203 9.5—“and now [the] h[oly] ones?”

<sup>a-a</sup> BL491—omits

<sup>b-b</sup> 1768—*your great day, your judgment*

84:5

<sup>a</sup>And now, O God, Lord, **King, Great One**,<sup>25</sup>

I make petition and I ask  
that you establish for me my request,

<sup>b</sup>that you leave for me <sup>c</sup>posterity<sup>c</sup> on the earth,  
and that you do not wipe away all human flesh,  
and <sup>d</sup>leave the earth empty,

<sup>e</sup>so that the destruction will<sup>f</sup> last for ever.

<sup>a-a</sup> 9009—omits; 8703, 8347, 7584, 6281, 1768,—*O Lord and God and Great King; 2080—O Lord and God and King and Great One; GG151—O Lord and God, Great One and King; Parma—O Lord, God, Great King; 2436—O Lord, God, Great King*

<sup>b</sup> BL491, Ull—adds *and*

<sup>c-c</sup> P II N 29 – *those who come after me* (ptc. + pron. suff.)

<sup>d</sup> 2080<sup>1</sup>, RT, Ull, Ryl—*and that you do not* (i.e. with the negative particle)

<sup>e</sup> 8400, 9009, 2436—add *and*

<sup>f</sup> 8400, 2436—add *not* (i.e. *in order that the destruction not last for ever*)

84:6

<sup>a</sup>And now, my God<sup>b</sup>,<sup>26</sup> wipe away <sup>c</sup>from upon<sup>c</sup> the earth the flesh that has made you angry,

<sup>d</sup>but establish<sup>e</sup> the flesh <sup>f</sup>of righteousness<sup>f</sup> and uprightness <sup>g</sup>as<sup>g</sup> a seed-plant<sup>d</sup> for ever.<sup>a</sup>

And do not cover <sup>h</sup>your face<sup>h</sup> <sup>i</sup>from the request of your servant<sup>i</sup>, <sup>j</sup>O God<sup>j</sup>.”

<sup>a-a</sup> P II N 29—omits

<sup>b</sup> 9009—*God*

<sup>c-c</sup> 1768—omits (i.e. *the earth, the flesh*)

<sup>d-d</sup> 9009—*but the flesh of righteousness and uprightness, and establish every seed-plant*

<sup>e</sup> 2080—adds *for me*

<sup>f-f</sup> 8703—omits

<sup>g-g</sup> 2080\*—omits

<sup>h-h</sup> P II N 29—omits (i.e. *do not hide*)

<sup>i-i</sup> GG151, Parma—*from your servant and from my request*

<sup>j-j</sup> 1768—*O my God*

<sup>25</sup> Cf. 4Q203 9.6—“the rule of your greatness.”

<sup>26</sup> 4Q203 10.1—“now, my Lord.”

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# Cain and the Example of the Birds

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One of the minor apocryphal stories, embedded in many different contexts and widespread throughout all three Abrahamic religions, is that of Abel's burial by his brother Cain, following the example of two birds.<sup>1</sup> Traces of this story are found in Rabbinic Aggadah; in Christian exegesis, chronography, and folklore; and in the Qur'an and subsequent Islamic legends. The story first emerged in the fourth century CE and is still popular in modern times. Its fascination seems to be due to the idea of cultural inventions from the beginning of mankind, which is well known from the first chapters of the biblical narration.

## 1. BIBLICAL IMPULSES AND GAPS IN GENESIS 4

Primeval history begins with learning processes. Expelled from Eden, man has to find out how to keep flocks, till the ground, make textiles, and so on. All these things are presupposed from Genesis 3 onward, but only a few outstanding inventions are mentioned explicitly: Enoch, the son of Cain, builds the first city; Jabal institutes nomadic life; Jubal creates instruments for making music; and Tubal-Cain is the first who makes things out of bronze and iron.<sup>2</sup> Later on, such a list of inventions is developed in *1 En.* 7:1 and 8:1–3, here as betrayal of heavenly secrets by the fallen “watchers” to their human wives.<sup>3</sup>

But what is the situation with such an elementary problem as dealing with the dead? Gen 3:19 only reflects on the general fact of death: man is taken from the dust and shall return to dust. “Returning to dust” is associated first of all with something like inhumation. But there is surprisingly no hint about how to manage this. Usually, funeral customs are the most important indicators for archaeologists and ethnologists to determine a people's religion.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the book of Genesis does not touch upon this question in any fundamental way. Burial is mentioned only en passant, mostly with the unspecific phrase “he buried him/her” (קבר / ἔθαψεν).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>C. Böttrich, “Die Vögel des Himmels haben ihn begraben:” *Überlieferungen zu Abels Bestattung und zur Ätiologie des Grabes*, SJD 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995).

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Gen 4:17 and 4:20–22.

<sup>3</sup>Here it includes knowledge of sorcery, charms, incantations, astronomy and astrology, weapons, metallurgy, jewelry and cosmetics, and astonishingly even ink and writing.

<sup>4</sup>H. Wißmann, P. Welten, M. Brocke, and F. Merkel, “Bestattung I-V,” *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 5 (1980): 730–57.

<sup>5</sup>E. Zenger, “Das alttestamentliche Israel und seine Toten,” in *Der Umgang mit den Toten: Tod und Bestattung in der christlichen Gemeinde*, ed. K. Richter, QD 123 (Freiburg: Herder, 1990), 132–52.

In Genesis 23, after Sarah's death, Abraham purchases the cave of Machpelah as a burial site for his family; in Gen 35:19–20, Jacob buries Rachel on the way to Ephrat and sets up a pillar on her grave.<sup>6</sup> Staying unburied as prey for birds and other animals is considered to be the most serious desecration a man can suffer.<sup>7</sup> Otherwise, the “normal” custom is simply presupposed. Only in some scattered and random references can one learn about regulations for how to deal with a dead body<sup>8</sup> and, most of all, how to avoid impurity.<sup>9</sup> Digging a grave in the ground or burying the dead in a cave seems to have been the only accepted custom. Cremation, for example, was rejected.<sup>10</sup> But nowhere do we find any instruction or theological explanation to legitimize this one form of burial.

It is no wonder that interpreters of the Bible noticed this gap—and hastened to fill it with a little story. Who was the first dead person in biblical chronology? It was Abel, long before his time and long before Adam, his father. His violent end raised a question hitherto unasked. For the first time in the narration, man had to consider what to do with a lifeless corpse. So Abel's body showed an appropriate way to solve the problem.

## 2. POSTBIBLICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF GENESIS 4

Surprisingly, the early Jewish (or “primary”) Adam literature<sup>11</sup> is not yet interested in Abel's burial. Focused on the figure of Adam, the case of Abel receives no special attention. So what about Adam's funeral? The protoplast is such an extraordinary being that the texts claim something special for him, not suitable to be a model for his children: angels carry his body and keep it, and his burial place is in heaven.<sup>12</sup> It remains the preserve of the Rabbinic Aggadah to discover and fill in the gap concerning Abel's burial.<sup>13</sup>

The earliest text narrating Abel's burial is found in *Tanḥ. Ber.* 10 §10 (fifth century CE). Its content is in short the following: after slaying Abel, Cain does not know what to do. So God sends

<sup>6</sup> The “architectural” design of important tombs is proven explicitly in 2 *En.* 71:22 and on numerous occasions in *Liv. Pro.*; cf. D. R. A. Hare, “The Lives of the Prophets (First Century A.D.),” in *Expansions of the “Old Testament” and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*, vol. 2 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 379–99; and A.-M. Schwemer, *Vitae Prophetarum*, JSRZ 1/7 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1997), 548–50. Jewish tombs from ancient times are still preserved; cf. J. Jeremias, *Heiligengräber in Jesu Umwelt* (Mt. 23, 29; Lk. 11, 47). *Eine Untersuchung zur Volksreligion der Zeit Jesu* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Deut 28:26; 2 Sam 21:10–14; 1 Kgs 14:11; 2 Kgs 9:30–37.

<sup>8</sup> For example, to close the eyes of the dead (Gen 46:4; Tob 14:15; *m. Šabb.* 23:5); to embalm (Gen 50:2–3, 26) and to dress the body (1 Sam 28:14; Ezek 32:27); to carry the corpse on a bier (2 Sam 3:31); to use aromata (2 Chr 16:14; 21:19; Jer 34:5); and to have a meal sometime later (Jer 16:7; Tob 4:18); cf. M. Joseph, “Leichenbestattung,” *Jüdisches Lexikon* 3 (1927): 1027–31.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Num 19:16 and Deut 21:22–23.

<sup>10</sup> In Amos 2:1 cremation is called wickedness; burning as a form of punishment is found in Gen 38:24; Lev 20:14 and 21:9; and Jos 7:25.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. M. E. Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve*, SBLEJL 3 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992); and M. de Jonge and J. Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve and Related Literature*, GAP (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> Later on, in the Christian (or “secondary”) Adam literature, this burial place returns to earth again, now related to the omphalos idea: Adam is buried in the middle of the earth, where Christ will be crucified. The rabbinic tradition produces a side shoot of this idea: Adam is buried where God took the dust for his creation.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. the following texts and their detailed discussion in Böttrich, *Vögel*, 33–64. A classic study in this field is: V. Aptowitz, *Kain und Abel in der Agada, den Apokryphen, der hellenistischen, christlichen und muhammedanischen Literatur* (Wien: Löwit, 1922).

him two clean birds; one bird kills the other, scratches a hole in the ground with his claws, and covers up the dead fellow. Observing this, Cain also learns how to bury Abel. The story ends with a remark shifting the interest from the human participants to the acts of the birds. Because of their helpful example, the birds are honored that in the future their blood will be covered up. This end becomes characteristic for all the following aggadic versions reflecting on a divine reward for the birds. *Gen. Rab.* 22:8 (fifth century) mentions neither Cain nor God as protagonists but only “the birds of heaven and the clean animals” who buried Abel autonomously,<sup>14</sup> rewarded by God now with two benedictions (one related to slaughter, and one to covering up their blood). In *Tosefta Geniza Ms X* on Gen 4:8 Cain again performs the burial, but the kind of bird is not specified; they give Cain the double example of both murder and burial; nothing is said about any reward; and only Cain’s fear of Adam is mentioned.

*Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* 21 (ca. eighth–ninth century) embroiders and modifies the setting further: now it is Adam and Eve mourning over Abel, unaware what to do. They learn from a raven, who appears to be their fellow sufferer: when this raven’s mate dies accidentally, the surviving dependent buries the dead one before Adam’s and Eve’s eyes. Thereafter, the raven is rewarded by God caring for its offspring (explaining Ps 147:9): as newborns, the little ravens look white and the parents flee assuming them to be a brood of snakes, but God answers their cries and feeds them. Later on, in Jacob ben Asher’s (1270–1340) *Perush al ha-Tora*, the birds are called ravens again, possibly influenced by *Pirke R. El.* 21 or by the already existing Islamic tradition; again, the ravens exemplify both murder and burial; only God is not mentioned in this context.

The Jewish-Persian author Shahin (fourteenth century) gives an identical version in his *book of Genesis* 28:14–27. The *Jalkut* on Gen § 38 (thirteenth century) repeats the version of *Gen. Rab.* 22:8 and in § 925 uses the interpretation of Ps 147:9 from *Pirke R. El.* 21. *Midrash ha-Gadol* IV:16 (thirteenth century) combines *Tanh. Ber.* 10 with *Pirke R. El.* 21 (in the version of *Jalkut Gen* § 925) with one modification: the raven itself decides to teach Adam.

Besides the Aggadah, the Islamic tradition was most successful in popularizing the bird’s example.<sup>15</sup> Without any doubt, the Qur’an borrowed the story from an early stage of aggadic discussion.<sup>16</sup> In Sura 5:31–32, the archaic dilemma is again that of Cain; his teacher is a single raven, sent by God and only scratching the ground (which is enough for Cain to have an “aha” experience); the example concentrates on the burial alone—the murder is not mentioned. But similar to the haggadic tradition, the Koranic version now also adds some further reflections. They are not dedicated to the topic of reward for the birds but to the responsibility of men: to murder one single person is like killing all humankind, and to save one single life is like preserving all people.<sup>17</sup>

The ensuing Islamic tradition follows Sura 5 closely, bound by the Koran’s authority. Ibn Hisham (ninth century), al-Tabari (ninth–tenth century), al-Kisa’i (tenth century), and al-Baidawi (thirteenth

<sup>14</sup>They are doing this against their animal-like desires to consume the dead corpse.

<sup>15</sup>Cf. for the following, Böttrich, *Vögel*, 65–77.

<sup>16</sup>A. Geiger, *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen?* (Bonn: Selbstverlag, 1833; repr. Leipzig: Kaufmann, 1902); W. Rudolph, *Die Abhängigkeit des Qorans von Judentum und Christentum* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1922); H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers, “Habil and Kabil,” *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* 1 (1953): 115; and H. P. Rüger, “Das Begräbnis Abels: Zur Vorlage von Sure 5,31,” *Biblische Notizen* 14 (1981): 37–45.

<sup>17</sup>This idea is of Jewish origin as well; cf. *m. Sanh.* 4:5.



century) only replace the one raven by two, now again fighting each other. Al-Thal‘abi (tenth–eleventh century) offers the most maverick version: Cain carries Abel around in a sack on his shoulders because of the wild beast’s desire to devour the dead; after one year, God has mercy on him and sends the ravens. An ingenious reception of Sura 5 is found in Ibn Tufail’s (twelfth century) novel *Haij ibn Jaqzan*:<sup>18</sup> it is something like a Robinson Crusoe story, telling about a male baby exposed on a lonely island where it is nurtured by a gazelle. When the boy grows up, he observes his world very carefully, learning how to lead his life from the simplest activities to sophisticated language and complex philosophical thought. When the gazelle dies, he opens her body for anatomic studies. But soon the body begins to smell and the young man learns how to bury it by observing two ravens.

Christian chronography as well as folkloristic tradition have used the little story in many different contexts.<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, no Greek example has been preserved, but some texts in Oriental languages hint at a lost Greek tradition. One context is that of riddles and erotapokriseis. Cain (or Adam and Eve) learning from two birds was a limited story with a simple plot, flexible and open for slight variations, easy to use as a building block for many purposes. A widespread Georgian fairy tale tells about a princess who challenges her suitors to a riddle competition.<sup>20</sup> Among the questions one can also find the bird’s example: the birds are ravens or crows, addressing Adam and doing both—killing and burying. A manuscript with questions and answers on the Pentateuch by a certain emperor Leo, preserved in Turkish translation, contains the story in condensed form, asking who was the first to die on earth; the example is given by a wild turtledove burying its young.

The story commenced its most prominent Christian career among the literature of Slavic Orthodoxy.<sup>21</sup> The earliest example is found in the *Nestor Chronicle* (eleventh–twelfth century). An important textual segment of this chronicle, called the “speech of the philosopher,” depicts the great drama of salvation. It tells also about Abel’s burial, embedded in the story of the fall of man. Adam and Eve mourn Abel for thirty years until two birds, sent by God, come and offer the needed example. In the *Tolkovaja Paleja*, the great repository of ancient apocryphal traditions,<sup>22</sup> we find the same version, but now the birds are turtledoves (like in the Greek-Turkish erotapokriseis mentioned above). The story became well known also in the Slavonic *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius,<sup>23</sup> widely identical with the *Chronicle* and the *Paleja*; what is different is only the unidentified birds, and the combination of murder and burial. As a specific item, in Pseudo-Methodius the idea also

<sup>18</sup> S. Schreiner, ed., *Ibn Tufail: Hajj ibn Jaqzan der Naturmensch. Ein philosophischer Robinson-Roman aus dem arabischen Mittelalter* (Leipzig: Kiepenheuer, 1983); O. F. Best, ed., *Ibn Tufail: Der Ur-Robinson, das ist Der Lebende, Sohn des Wachenden oder Philosophus autodidactus—Der von sich selbst gelehrt Philosoph. Ein philosophischer Roman* (München: Matthes & Seitz, 1987); and A. Ben-Zaken, *Reading Hayy Ibn-Yaqzan: A Cross-Cultural History of Autodidacticism* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. the texts in Böttrich, *Vögel*, 78–85.

<sup>20</sup> C. Böttrich, “Turandot in Georgien: Ein Beitrag zur Tradition biblischer Rätselfragen,” *Georgica* 17 (1994): 54–65.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. in detail Böttrich, *Vögel*, 86–101.

<sup>22</sup> A. de Santos Otero, “Alttestamentliche Pseudepigrapha und die sogenannte ‘Tolkovaja Paleja’ [TP],” in *Oecumenica et Patristica*, ed. D. Papandreou, W. A. Bienert, and K. Schäferdiek (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1989), 107–22; and C. Böttrich, “Palaea / Paleja. Ein byzantinisch-slavischer Beitrag zu den europäischen Historienbibeln,” in *Fragmentarisches Wörterbuch. Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und christlichen Theologie*, ed. K. Schiffner et al. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2007), 304–13.

<sup>23</sup> It has a place only in the Slavonic translation; all the other manuscripts lack it; for the transmission of that text, see L. DiTommaso, “The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius: Notes on a Recent Edition,” *MEG* 17 (2017): 311–21.

appears of a “chirographum” demanded by the devil from Adam: as the “Lord of the earth” the devil asserts his claim on all the dead buried in the ground.

Some further folkloristic erotapokriseis prove how widespread the story was: again Adam is operating, and the bird is a turtledove; one version interestingly calls the bird “Rakuil,” which seems to suggest an angel incognito. 2 *En* 71:36 (in the longer recension) also deserves major attention.<sup>24</sup> The passage is clearly part of a Christian interpolation dealing with events located at the “center of the earth.”<sup>25</sup> Again, Adam is the main protagonist caring for Abel who is unburied for three years, observing the behavior of a bird now called a Jackdaw. The version not only shares some details with the other Slavonic texts but also offers its own peculiarities. If the interpolation came into the text already before the translation from Greek into Slavonic (for which there is strong evidence), we would have here the oldest known Christian adaptation of the story, dating to perhaps anytime between fourth and seventh centuries CE.

Closer to modern times, the story emerges in Finnish and Estonian oral traditions.<sup>26</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century, the famous folklorist Kaarle Krohn (1863–1963) collected a large number of tales and legends from rural areas in the north, also containing some instances of the bird’s example. As would be expected, the plot of these tales is less stable than in the literary tradition. Of course, we find Adam and Eve, and the raven (or falcon), but now there is also much interest in the place, mainly a big tree; the raven’s example addresses not only humans but also all the other animals; in one version, the protoplasts learn not visually but audibly from the raven’s croaking (“bury! bury!”) and invent, by the way, the tombstone as well. In Estonia, at the same period, the theologian Jakob Hurt (1839–1907) gathered a huge collection of popular tales. Among his handwritten materials, one also finds a version of the bird’s example close to the form it has in Pseudo-Methodius. Very likely, these Finnish and Estonian traditions derive from the widespread Russian texts that inaugurated a new, secondary form of oral tradition—mediated perhaps by learned clerics, via almanacs, poems, or fables.

All these postbiblical examples of the little story speculate about the same question. The problem of having a dead body emerges unexpectedly because Abel is slain in the prime of his life. There was no time or reason to prepare for such a situation. Outside paradise, man is helpless in many respects, dependent on God’s support and advice to master all the troubles of daily existence. But God no longer speaks directly. He only gives an impulse, opens the eyes of man, and offers him an idea.

### 3. FURTHER INSTANCES OF THE STORY

All the traditions and examples reported here briefly constitute only the tip of the iceberg. When I collected the material in 1995, I had limited access only to some parts of the literature and based

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. F. I. Andersen, “2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch. (Late First Century A.D.): Appendix: 2 *Enoch* in Merilo Pravednoe. A New Translation and Introduction,” in *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, vol. 1 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 91–221; and C. Böttrich, *Das slavische Henochbuch*, JSRZ V/7 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1995).

<sup>25</sup> It is in this case mainly the burial site of Melchizedek as told in the Syrian “Cave of Treasures”; cf. C. Böttrich, *Geschichte Melchisedeks*, JSRZ.NF II/1 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2010), 30–5.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. in detail Böttrich, *Vögel*, 102–9.

my study mainly on printed sources. I am convinced that there are still many more traces in the oral tradition of the kind Florentina Badalanova-Geller has published recently.<sup>27</sup> All the languages of the Christian East must surely contain further material. And the Western, Latin literature may have at least some knowledge of it as well.

Two proofs from Slavonic literature have caught my eye in the meantime. The first is part of the so-called *See of Tiberias*, a text usually attributed to the Bogomils (because of its dualistic creation myth) and perhaps emerging between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries CE. Following Florentina Badalanova-Geller's exhaustive study on this text,<sup>28</sup> Alexander Kulik and Sergey Minov recently published it again in their collection of "Biblical Pseudepigrapha in Slavonic Tradition."<sup>29</sup>

So we are now in a much better position to evaluate the little passage concerning Abel's burial located in the latter part of the narrative. Kulik and Minov offer two recensions, a short and a long one. The short recension has the version in a form well known from all the other Slavonic texts. The story begins with Satan (a major figure in this context) showing Cain the stone with which to kill his brother. Later on the parents find Abel's body. Moved by their tears, God sends two turtledoves flying over the body of Abel. As one dies and falls down, the other digs in the earth and buries his mate. Adam and Eve follow his example and stop crying. The long recension sounds totally different. Blind Lamech (known from the *Palaea Historica* tradition) has killed Cain erroneously with his arrow. Now it is Cain who lies dead on the earth for three years<sup>30</sup> and the obligation to act is Adam's. The Lord sends two turtledoves (like in most Slavonic texts), but now one kills the other, digs in the earth, and buries its mate. Adam, observing the procedure, buries Cain. Perhaps the text is corrupt at that point; nothing is said in the long recension about Abel's fate but only about Cain's penalty. What happened with Abel if Adam did not learn from the turtledoves before Cain's death how to bury a corpse? This variant shows yet again how flexibly the bird paradigm, once established, could be used.

The second proof is the version included in the *Kratkaja Chronografičeskaja Paleja*. In 1995 I had access to it only via quotation.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, our critical edition and translation of the whole "monument" is already completed<sup>32</sup> and allows one now to study the text more precisely. The burial scene is part of the conflict story in general, introduced by the birth of the two brothers and their two sisters. God accepts only Abel's offering. Cain kills his brother with a stone because of envy, instructed by the devil verbatim. The parents mourn 30 days long, until God sends two birds; one bird dies, the other gives the example; Adam and Eve do the same thing. Here we find all the

<sup>27</sup> F. Badalanova-Geller, *Kniga suščaja v ustach. Folklornaja Biblija Bessarabskich i Tavričeskich Bolgar* (Moskva: Russkij fond sođestvija obrazovaniju i nauke, 2017); the book has some traditions about Cain and Abel, but not about the bird's example.

<sup>28</sup> F. Badalanova-Geller, "The Sea of Tiberias: Between Apocryphal Literature and Oral Tradition," in *The Old Testament Apocrypha in Slavonic Tradition: Continuity and Diversity*, ed. L. DiTommaso and C. Böttrich, TSAJ 140 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 13–157.

<sup>29</sup> A. Kulik and S. Minov, *Biblical Pseudepigrapha in Slavonic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 188–234.

<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, Cain now suffers the same fate as his brother Abel: he is slain violently and lacks a proper burial for a certain period.

<sup>31</sup> That was A. A. Šachmatov, *Povest' vremennyh let i ee istočniki*, Trudy Otdela Drevnerusskoj Literatury 4 (Moskva: Akademija Nauk, 1940), 140.

<sup>32</sup> S. Fahl and D. Fahl, with the collaboration of E. G. Vodolazkin and T. Rudi, *Kritische Edition mit deutscher Übersetzung*, vol. 1 of *Die Kurze Chronographische Paleja*, ed. C. Böttrich and E. G. Vodolazkin (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2019); and D. Fahl, S. Fahl, and C. Böttrich, with the collaboration of M. Šibaev and I. Christov, in *Einführung, Kommentar, Indices*, vol. 2 of *Die Kurze Chronographische Paleja*, ed. C. Böttrich and E. G. Vodolazkin (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2019).

main elements of the Slavonic tradition in their most condensed form. Some knowledge of the broader story (as in the *Tolkovaja Paleja*) perhaps could be presupposed. But further information is not necessary to understand the plot.

From these two further proofs one can learn something about the growing popularity, dissemination, and modification of the little story in the Slavic countries. The bird's example is well known and widespread in texts of the elite as well as in folkloristic contexts. It exists in embroidered and in condensed form, as part of a greater narration and as a simple *epitomē*. Most interesting is the fluid exchange between ancient Jewish textual tradition and much later folkloristic creativity. The Slavonic texts are good examples of this situation. Presumably, the Scandinavian versions are based on a stratum of tradition depending on Russian collections like the *Nestor chronicle*, the *Paleja* literature, *Pseudo-Methodius*, the field of erotapokriseis, and the *Sea of Tiberias*. Northern Europe became a special area of interchange for traditions like that of Cain and the birds. Could it also have become a transit zone in the direction of Western countries?

#### 4. LOCAL TRACES ON GOTLAND: THE CHURCH IN HABLINGBO

An exciting example of such a cultural exchange is found on Gotland. Already at the beginning of the Hanseatic League (since the twelfth century), Gotland was an important station on the route between northern Germany and Russia.<sup>33</sup> The flowering of Visby took place shortly before Lübeck became the queen of the Baltic cities.<sup>34</sup> In the middle of the thirteenth century, in many German places one can find companies of so-called “Gotland travelers,”<sup>35</sup> associations specialized in trade with Gotland. On the other hand, merchants from Gotland had their own settlement in Novgorod and played the role of intermediaries. Located “along the way,” the island of Gotland was an ideal place not only to handle goods but also for cultural news or ideas.

The church in Hablingbo on Gotland<sup>36</sup> clearly reveals such influence from eastern culture (Figure 22.1). It contains a tympanon above the northern entrance presenting a remarkable scene.<sup>37</sup> In the middle, centrally and dominant, there is a figure sitting on a throne—obviously a “*maiestas Domini*,”<sup>38</sup> characterized by a cross-nimbus, clothed with imperial garb, the right hand

<sup>33</sup> K. Friedland, “Gotland. Handelszentrum—Hanseursprung,” in *Gotland: Tausend Jahre Kultur- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte im Ostseeraum*, ed. R. Bohn (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1988), 57–64; and M. North, *The Baltic: A History*, trans. K. Kronenberg (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); trans. of *Geschichte der Ostsee: Handel und Kulturen* (München: Beck, 2011).

<sup>34</sup> R. Bohn, “Wisby—Die Keimzelle des hansischen Ostseehandels,” in *Die Hanse—Lebenswirklichkeit und Mythos*, ed. J. Bracker (Lübeck: Schmidt-Römhild, 2006), 269–82.

<sup>35</sup> They called themselves “*universi mercatores imperii Romani Gotlandiam frequentantes*”; cf. D. Kattinger, *Die Gotländische Genossenschaft: Der frühhansisch-gotländische Handel in Nord- und Westeuropa*, Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte NF 47 (Köln: Böhlau, 1999).

<sup>36</sup> Hablingbo is located near the southwest coast of the island. The church is one of the biggest on Gotland; its Gothic choir and nave were added in the fourteenth century to the older tower, the relic of a Romanesque ensemble from twelfth to thirteenth centuries. The amazing number of churches on Gotland (about ninety-two), all from the time of Romanesque architecture, testifies to the wealth the residents of Gotland earned at that time from trade. Cf. E. Lagerlöf and G. Svahnström, *Die Kirchen Gotlands* (Kiel: Conrad Stein Verlag, 1991), 152–6.

<sup>37</sup> Possibly this is not its original location, which is presumed to have been at the southern main entrance; cf. Lagerlöf and Svahnström, *Kirchen Gotlands*, 152.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. F. van der Meer, “*Maiestas Domini*,” *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie* 3 (1974): 136–42. The motif is based on Isa 6:1–4 and Ezek 1:4–28; mirrored in Rev 4:2–9; so it could better be called “the theophany of the Trishagion.” The Lord



FIGURE 22.1 Hablingbo Church, Gotland, Tympanon (second half of twelfth century), above the northern entrance. The photograph was taken by my daughter Eva Böttrich during our summer vacation to Gotland in August 2012.

raised in a gesture of blessing or admonition, and holding a book in his left hand. The surrounding figures tell the story of Cain and Abel in three scenes. Next to the enthroned figure in the middle, two men<sup>39</sup> are approaching: the left one presents a sheaf of corn, the right one holds a lamb in his arms.<sup>40</sup> Behind Cain on the left one can see the devil in the form of a horned little monster, with wings and claws,<sup>41</sup> touching or pushing Cain forward and perhaps whispering something from behind. Is Cain offering his gift already with diabolic intentions? The second scene in the left corner, to the right of the throne by Abel's side, depicts the murder: Cain, standing, attacks Abel, already falling down, with a hoe; Cain performs his deed turned away from the throne, whereas Abel is facing it. The third scene in the right-hand corner behind Cain and to the left of the throne fills the space below the devil's claws: two birds, doves rather than ravens,<sup>42</sup> are standing face to face, with the one pecking at the other on the head with his beak—apparently the moment of murder corresponding to the scene in the opposite corner.

The tympanon in the Hablingbo church is a fascinating example of the apocryphal story concerning Cain and the birds. Concentrated on the murder, it indicates a double influence on

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is usually enthroned on the bow of heaven, often enclosed in a mandorla or in a circle. The simple seating in Hablingbo is something special.

<sup>39</sup> They wear a plait like men in the north used to have; their garments (especially the seam with a kind of hole pattern) could betray French influence.

<sup>40</sup> In Genesis 4, Cain and Abel present their offerings in front of an altar; similarly, the Hablingbo tympanon depicts the throne in the form of a table hinting at an altar in a church. Thus, this object represents the place of encounter with the preexistent as well as the exalted Christ.

<sup>41</sup> In this form the devil has some similarities with the birds in the story.

<sup>42</sup> The two birds are of different appearance; the active one seems to be a little bigger than the other.



Cain: indoctrinated by the devil and stimulated by the birds, Cain executes his deed. The devil seems to stir up the evil plan while the birds bring about its realization. Nothing is depicted concerning the burial, which plays a crucial role in the textual tradition. In the context of the whole scene telling Genesis 4, the figure in the middle should be God, but the “*maiestas Domini*” model and all the attributes point to Christ. Seen from a Christian perspective, Christ (as part of the Holy Trinity) is already present in the Old Testament narration.<sup>43</sup> With his raised fingers and holding a book (possibly the book of life or deeds) he appears also in the habitus of a teacher warning the churchgoers against fratricide and the insinuations of evil. War, violence, and murder were a bitter reality on Gotland in the High Middle Ages. The Danish forces of King Waldemar IV Atterdag (1321–75) conquered the island in 1361 and left behind extensive devastation. In addition, there was a conflict between the trader-peasants on the island and the citizens of Visby. Congregants in Hablingbo were well aware of what it means to raise one’s hand against one’s brother. The message of the Cain and Abel story, quite popular in sacral art of this time,<sup>44</sup> was understandable without any doubt.

But could the people in Hablingbo have also known the whole story behind the picture, including that of Abel’s burial? The church is surrounded by a graveyard, like all the churches of that time. A connection between the scenario above the door and the burial site in front of it would be plausible. Of course, a question like “What could they have known?” is difficult to answer. It is more reasonable to look for the possible influence on the artist. Which type of textual tradition is mirrored in the Hablingbo relief? It is no far cry to seek for the Russian texts that were evidently influential in the Scandinavian countries as well. But because of limited space, the three scenes have too few details to identify a direct link. The Trinitarian God is the central figure—so he should also be the orderer of the bird’s example. But the birds seem to belong more to the devil’s party. God’s opponent, the devil, is directly present in the picture. He apparently has some power, as in many dualistic traditions and folkloristic stories present in Slavic culture. But he looks clearly inferior, mingy, and merely reliant on intrigue. Without the devil and the birds, the biblical text of Genesis 4 would already be sufficient to understand the tympanon. Nevertheless, the devil also needs no special explanation. Only the two birds refer to the apocryphal story. Whether these birds are doves or not—Russia was undoubtedly the closest point of origin for the artist’s inspiration.

Gotland was in the middle between East and West, on the route of traders. The masons’ guilds on the island came from the Swedish mainland, in the case of Hablingbo probably from Tryde in Schonen.<sup>45</sup> They will have been acquainted with the Western Romanesque and Gothic style. Art historians speak of influences from Westphalia and the Rhineland.<sup>46</sup> Johnny Roosval, the pioneer among the investigators of churches on Gotland, has named the anonymous master of

<sup>43</sup> Famous examples are 1 Corinthians 1–4 (already in the New Testament), or the philoxenia scene of Genesis 18 according to patristic interpretation; the *Paleja* tradition, in particular, is full of Christological readings of OT stories.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. G. Henderson, “Abel und Kain,” *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie* 1 (1974): 5–10; and H. M. von Erffa, *Ikonologie der Genesis: Die christlichen Bildthemen aus dem Alten Testament und ihre Quellen* 1 (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1989), 246–385 (= 1.3.4 Kain und Abel).

<sup>45</sup> Cf. H. Ost, “Mittelalterliches Kunstschaffen auf Gotland,” in *Gotland: Tausend Jahre Kultur- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte im Ostseeraum*, ed. R. Bohn (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1988), 65–84, esp. 66; J. Roosval, *Die Kirchen Gotlands: Ein Beitrag zur mittelalterlichen Kunstgeschichte Schwedens* (Leipzig: E.A. Seemann, 1912).

<sup>46</sup> Cf. as well Ost, “Mittelalterliches Kunstschaffen,” 67 and 71, who identifies traces of Byzantine forms also for the Hablingbo tympanon.



the Hablingbo tympanon “magister majestatis” because of his predilection for this motif,<sup>47</sup> deeply rooted in Western Romanesque symbolic language. But where does the element of the birds come from? There is no prototype in Western culture, neither in art nor in literature.

If the stonemason in Hablingbo, the “master majestatis,” had knowledge of the Russian literary tradition, it must have been of its earliest stratum. The *Nestor chronicle* can be dated to the eleventh–twelfth centuries; the compilation of the *Tolkovaja Paleja*, already using translated texts, took place at the end of the thirteenth century. The Hablingbo relief is one of the few late Romanesque masterpieces on Gotland and belongs to the end of the twelfth century. So there is good reason to imagine a stonemason from Sweden, working on the island where he became acquainted with informants (traders, travelers, scholars, artists) from Russia, maybe Novgorod, who told him the apocryphal story from the newest literature they just had read at home. In the absence of preexisting iconographic patterns and endowed only with knowledge of a new story, the artist found his own way to embody this idea.

Presumably, the Hablingbo tympanon remained an isolated case. As far as I know, it has not been copied or adapted elsewhere. Without a living, accompanying literary tradition, nobody could understand the role and function of these two strange birds. Down to modern times, art historians have not commented on or identified the birds in Hablingbo. They seem to regard them merely as decorative elements. So it was perhaps the fate of “master majestatis” not to reach his viewers, at least in this case. His bird’s scene did not encourage a further transfer of the motif from East to West. It fell into oblivion again, hidden in the south of Gotland and far removed from the emerging cultural life of the Western Hanseatic cities.

## 5. CONCLUSION: TEXT AND ICONOGRAPHY

Apocryphal traditions have spread not only via texts but also visually in the form of pictures. To follow their traces, one has to be aware of both. But unfortunately we do not know enough about apocryphal traditions in Christian iconography. Most of the material scholars have collected is devoted to the deuterocanonical texts.<sup>48</sup> Illustrations of apocryphal (noncanonical) texts still are chance hits found here and there in a particular context<sup>49</sup> but not really embedded in a broader context of research.<sup>50</sup> This is especially true concerning Old Testament texts and traditions.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. his profound opus, J. Roosval, *Die Steinmeister Gotlands: Eine Geschichte der führenden Taufsteinwerkstätte des schwedischen Mittelalters, ihre Voraussetzungen und Begleit-Erscheinungen* (Stockholm: C.E. Fritzes K. Hofbokhandel, 1918), 145–68 (= X. Anonymous Majestatis).

<sup>48</sup> Cf. E. Philpot, *Old Testament Apocryphal Images in European Art* (Göteborg: University of Gothenburg, 2009); the book deals with Tobit, Judith, and the Additions to Esther and Daniel.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Böttrich, *Geschichte Melchisedeks*, 47–51 and 145–54, based on the lucky discovery of an abundantly illustrated manuscript from Sinai; and T. N. Protaseva, “Pskovskaja Paleja 1477 goda,” in *Drevnerusskoe iskusstvo: Chudožestvennaja kultura Pskova* (Moskva: Akademija Nauk SSSR, 1968), 97–108, who comments on a series of fifty-one illustrations in a manuscript of the *Paleja*.

<sup>50</sup> Exceptions are: H. M. von Erffa, *Ikonologie der Genesis: Die christlichen Bildthemen aus dem Alten Testament und ihre Quellen 1/2* (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1989/95), who also carefully includes a lot of apocryphal traditions; and M. Bernabò, *Pseudepigraphical Images in Early Art, The Dead Sea Scrolls & Christian Origins Library 6* (North Richland Hills: Bibal Press, 2001).

<sup>51</sup> Well investigated are the iconographic traditions concerning NT apocrypha like the *Protoevangelium of James* (in the Christmas icon and in the many cycles of the life of Mary) or the *Gospel of Nicodemus* (in the Anastasis, the Easter icon).

The field of sources appears to be manifold and complex, comprising wall paintings, stone or wood cuttings, book illustrations, sculptures, and so on. Only in very few cases does one encounter a direct correspondence between text and picture, as in illustrated manuscripts or in pictures provided with inscriptions.<sup>52</sup> Examples are problematic when totally isolated from their literary basis like the tympanon relief in Hablingbo. If they have only a single element beyond the biblical text they are in danger of being completely overlooked. So it is necessary to seek depictions not only of whole stories but also of smaller segments, or features, or details. Iconographic traces of apocryphal texts can also be found in modifications of otherwise well-established patterns. Or the other way around, an illustration of an apocryphal text may avoid additional details and remain faithful to the traditional type of depiction.

In the Eastern as well as in the Western tradition, there are many iconographic treasures still waiting to be discovered. It seems to be a great task for specialists on both sides, theologians and art historians, to explore this vast and stony field systematically together.<sup>53</sup> To learn more about the iconography of the Apocrypha could deepen our knowledge about its dissemination and modification significantly. Images are not only decorative but also a constitutive part of the reception history of texts, and an important part of their tradition. The little story of Cain and the birds is an example of how revealing such tracking can be.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Illustrations in manuscripts are sometimes independent of the accompanying text and follow their own iconographic tradition.

<sup>53</sup> There was a session for the International Medieval Congress in July 2019 at the University of Leeds on the topic of “Apocryphal Iconography: Integration and Adaptation.” This is the kind of research required to reach a more comprehensive synthesis.

<sup>54</sup> Thanks are due to my colleague Daniel Stein Kokin, who reviewed this article and improved its English.

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# Die Bedeutung der *Assumptio Mosis* für die Erforschung des frühen Christentums

JAN DOCHHORN

## 1. EINLEITUNG

Thema dieses Beitrags zur Ehrung eines für die Parabiblica-/Pseudepigraphenforschung und ihre Anbindung an die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft in hohem Maße bedeutenden Gelehrten ist ein leider nicht vollständig erhaltener Text, der in der Forschung zum antiken Judentum und zum Neuen Testament seit nunmehr *ca.* 150 Jahren diskutiert wird, in seinem Potential für die religionsgeschichtliche Erklärung des Judentums und Christentums im ersten Jahrhundert nach Christus aber trotzdem noch etwas mehr gewürdigt werden kann als bisher. Es handelt sich um die *Assumptio Mosis*,<sup>1</sup> die *Himmelfahrt des Moses*; in der Forschung ist auch der Titel Testament des Mose in Gebrauch (nicht mit guten Gründen, vgl. §2). Ich möchte im Folgenden zunächst den Inhalt der *Assumptio Mosis* skizzieren (§2), danach in Kürze meine Sicht zur historischen Verortung dieser Schrift präsentieren (§3) und anschließend anhand von einigen Beispielen darlegen, was die *Assumptio Mosis* zur Erforschung des frühen Christentums beitragen kann (§4).

## 2. DER ÜBERLIEFERUNGSBESTAND DER ASSUMPTIO MOSIS

Wir haben, was wir von der *Assumptio Mosis* haben, aus christlicher Hand; im Judentum aus der Zeit nach der Tempelzerstörung haben sich keine für uns wahrnehmbaren Reste dieses Werkes erhalten. Das wichtigste Fragment entstammt einem in der Bibliotheca Ambrosiana in Mailand aufbewahrten lateinischen Textzeugen aus dem 6. Jahrhundert. Der Text umfaßt 16 Seiten eines

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<sup>1</sup>Entscheidend für Erforschung der *Assumptio Mosis* war die Erstedition des wichtigsten Fragments bei Ceriani, vgl. Anm. 2. Als Textausgaben lege ich hier zugrunde C. Clemen, ed., *The Assumptio Mosis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904); und J. Tromp: *The Assumption of Moses. A Critical Edition with Commentary* (SVTP 10; Leiden: Brill, 1993). Der Text von Tromp repräsentiert im Vergleich mit dem bei Clemen einen fortgeschrittenen Stand der dringend erforderlichen Konjekturealkritik am wichtigsten Fragment der *Assumptio Mosis*, während Clemen anders als Tromp (und andere) ein zutreffendes Dossier der Fragmente bietet, vgl. hierzu die Begründung bei J. Doehhorn, „Der Tod des Mose in der *Assumptio Mosis*,“ in M. Sommer et al., Hrsgg., *Mosebilder. Gedanken zur Rezeption einer literarischen Figur im Frühjudentum, frühen Christentum und der römisch-hellenistischen Literatur* (WUNT 390; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 167–85, sp. 167–74. Als weitere Textausgaben vgl. etwa O.F. Fritzsche, ed., *Libri Veteris Testamenti apocryphi graece* (Leipzig, 1871), 700–30; und R. H. Charles, *The Assumption of Moses* (London, 1897).



Palimpsests, einer Handschrift, die im 8. Jahrhundert ausgelöscht und neu beschriftet wurde, so daß der ursprüngliche Text aus dem 6. Jahrhundert nur noch unter Mühen entziffert werden kann.<sup>2</sup>

Dieser Text ist in den ersten Zeilen unleserlich; es ist damit gerade die Überschrift, die nicht mehr zu erkennen ist. Dennoch können wir uns—trotz gegenteiliger Auffassungen in der Forschung—einigermaßen sicher sein, daß unser Text zu einem Werk gehört, dem der Titel „Assumptio Mosis“ gebührt, denn unter dem Titel *Ἀνάληψις Μωσέως* zitiert eine anonyme Kirchengeschichte aus dem 5. Jahrhundert, die später unter dem Namen Gelasius umherlief, ein Stück griechischen Textes, der Kap. 1,6.14 des Mailänder Textes entspricht.<sup>3</sup> Am Schluß der 16. Seite bricht der Mailänder Text unvermittelt ab; wie viele Seiten fehlen, läßt sich nicht ermessen.<sup>4</sup> Geschrieben ist er in einem stark mit Vulgarismen durchsetzten Latein; zahlreiche Gräzismen lassen—wie schon die Parallele bei Ps-Gelasius—auf eine griechische Vorlage schließen;<sup>5</sup> ob diese wiederum aus einem hebräischen oder aramäischen Original übersetzt wurde, soll hier offen gelassen werden.

Was uns in dem Mailänder Text erhalten ist, erscheint einigermaßen aufsehenerregend: Wir haben es mit einer Abschiedsrede des Mose vor Josua zu tun, in der Moses hauptsächlich einen prophetischen Überblick über die—aus seiner Warte—kommende Geschichte Israels gibt. Er erzählt in knapper Form, ohne Klarnamen zu nennen und unter Verwendung rätselhafter Zahlenangaben, die Geschichte Israels von der Landnahme über das Exil bis zu den Makkabäern (*As. Mos.* 2:1–6:1). Es folgt ein relativ detaillierter Abschnitt über Herodes (6:2–6), der über eine ungewöhnlich leicht verständliche Information zu seiner Regierungszeit besonders hervorgehoben wird: Wir erfahren, daß der auch hier anonym bleibende König 34 Jahre lang regierte (6:4), und so lange regierte Herodes tatsächlich. Danach werden dessen Nachkommen erwähnt, die—so der Text—nicht so lange regieren würden wie Herodes selbst (6:7). Anschließend erfahren wir von einem Tempelbrand und der Kreuzigung jüdischer Rebellen (6:8–9), und daraufhin wird eine—durch Schadstellen in der Handschrift unverständlich gewordene—Berechnung der Endzeit geboten (7:1–2). Danach wird ein endzeitliches Szenario präsentiert, das folgendermaßen aussieht: Zuerst wird eine Gruppe von Leuten herrschen, die sich für gerecht halten, dabei jedoch auf unredliche Weise ihren Besitz vermehren und über unverhältnismäßig gute Ressourcen für üppige Gastmähler verfügen (7:3–9). Danach wird der König der Könige der Erde über Israel herrschen und alle verfolgen, die sich zur Religion Israels, unter anderem zur Beschneidung bekennen (*As. Mos.* 8). In dieser Zeit wird sich ein Mann mit dem rätselhaften Namen Taxo, ein Levit mit religiös untadeligen Vorfahren, zusammen mit seinen sieben Söhnen in eine Höhle auf dem Felde zurückziehen und dort um des jüdischen Glaubens willen den Tod erleiden (*As. Mos.* 9). Daraufhin ereignet sich nicht gerade Unbeträchtliches: Es wird das Königreich Gottes manifest (10:1a), der Teufel und mit ihm die Trübsal werden abgeführt (10:1b), und ein himmlischer

<sup>2</sup>Vgl. A. M. Ceriani: *Monumenta Sacra et Profana ex Codicibus praesertim Bibliothecae Ambrosianae, Tomus I* (Milano, 1861), 10–13 (Einleitung; Beschreibung der Handschrift); 55–62 (Text); 64 (Anmerkungen). Neben der *Assumptio Mosis* überliefert der Palimpsest Teile der lateinischen Version des Jubiläenbuchs, vgl. den Text bei Ceriani 15–54 und die Anmerkungen dort auf S. 63–64.

<sup>3</sup>Vgl. Pseudo-Gelasius, *Commentarius Actorum Nicenae Synodi* II,17,17 nach G.C. Hansen, ed., *Anonyme Kirchengeschichte (Gelasius Cyzicenus, CPG 6034)* (GCS, Neue Folge 9; Berlin, 2002), 58. Zum Titel der *Assumptio Mosis* vgl. die Diskussion bei Doehorn, „Tod des Mose,“ 167–74.

<sup>4</sup>Zur Handschrift vgl. E.-M. Laperrousaz, *Le Testament du Moïse (généralement appelé 'Assomption de Moïse')*, *Traduction avec introduction et notes* (Semitica 19; Paris 1970), 8–12.

<sup>5</sup>Zum Latein des Mailänder Fragments vgl. Tromp, *Assumption*, 27–77.

Bote, der Israel repräsentiert, wird im Himmel erhöht werden (10:2a); dieser wird Israel an seinen Feinden rächen (10:2a), und Israel kann sich, auf dem Rücken eines mächtigen Adlers gen Himmel erheben und zum Erbe des Sternenhimmels eingesetzt, aus souveräner Höhenlage das Ergehen seiner Feinde in der durch das endzeitliche Sichtbarwerden Gottes ausgelösten kosmischen Katastrophe betrachten (10:2b–10). Es folgt eine Unterhaltung zwischen Moses und Josua (10:11ff.), in der Josua unter anderem den Tod des Mose bedauert, und inmitten dieser Unterhaltung bricht unser Text ab (12:13).

Es wäre gut, wenn wir wüßten, wie es weitergeht, aber dies muß uns jetzt nicht bekümmern, denn für das hier verfolgte Anliegen werde ich mich auf die Geschichtsprophetie des Mose in *As. Mos.* 2–10 beschränken. Nur so viel sei gesagt: Wie ich an anderer Stelle ausführlich und im Einklang mit älterer Forschung dargelegt habe, lassen Testimonien und Zitate bei Clemens Alexandrinus, Origenes, Didymus von Alexandrien und Ps-Gelasius den Schluß zu, daß in den verlorengegangenen Partien von einem Streitgespräch des Erzengels Michael mit dem Teufel über der Leiche des Mose erzählt wurde, welches den drei erstgenannten Kirchenschriftstellern zufolge auch im Judasbrief (Jude 9) aufgenommen wurde.<sup>6</sup> Wir haben damit den Judasbrief als einen—allerdings etwas unklaren—Terminus ante quem für die Datierung der *Assumptio Mosis*.

### 3. HISTORISCHE VERORTUNG DER ASSUMPTIO MOSIS

Aber eine genauere Verortung der *Assumptio Mosis* ist möglich, und sie ergibt sich—wie bei vielen prophetischen Geschichtsüberblicken aus dem frühen Judentum—daraus, in welchem geschichtlichen Kontext der Erzähler-Prophet die Endzeit ansetzt. Dieser Kontext aber ist in der *Assumptio Mosis*, wie sich bereits angedeutet hat, die Zeit nach Herodes dem Großen. Über diese Zeit erfahren wir, daß nach 34 Regierungsjahren des Herodes seine Söhne kürzer als ihr Vater regieren würden (6,7), und wir erfahren weiterhin von Truppen eines Königs aus dem Westen, einem Tempelbrand und der Kreuzigung von Juden (6:8–9).<sup>7</sup> Direkt im Anschluß an diese Vorkommnisse folgen—wie bereits mitgeteilt—Endzeitberechnungen (7:1–2) sowie die Voraussage einer Herrschaft von sogenannten Gerechten (7:3–9), abgelöst von der Herrschaft des Königs der Könige der Erde (8), dem Martyrium des Taxo (9) und der Sichtbarwerdung von Gottes Königsherrschaft (10). Nichts in *Ass Mos* 7–10 läßt sich mit tatsächlichen Ereignissen der Geschichte verbinden, und genau darin verrät sich der reale Verfasser der *Assumptio Mosis*. Schon die Angabe über die Regierungszeit der Söhne des Herodes ist nicht richtig; sowohl Philippus als auch Antipas regierten länger als ihr Vater (Philippus: 4 v. Chr. – 34 n. Chr.; Antipas: 4 v. Chr. – 39 n. Chr.); nur für Archelaos, der von 4 v. Chr. bis 6 n. Chr. in Judäa, Idumäa und Samaria herrschte, gilt dies nicht.<sup>8</sup> Irgendwann nach dem Tod des Herodes, und zwar nicht allzu lange danach, ist unser Verfasser also anzusetzen, und so

<sup>6</sup>Vgl. Dochhorn, „Tod des Mose.“

<sup>7</sup>Der lateinische Text liest sich an der betreffenden Stelle indes—wie auch sonst—nicht gerade flüssig; im Ambrosianus steht: *in pares eorum mortis uenient et occidentes rex potens quia expugnabit eos et ducent captiuos et partem aedis ipsorum igni incendit aliquos crucifigit circa coloniam eorum*; zu lesen ist wohl in *par<t>es eorum <coh>ort<e>s uenient et occident<i>s rex potens qui{a} expugnabit eos et duce{n}t captiuos et partem aedis ipsorum igni incend<e>t aliquos crucifig<e>t circa coloniam eorum*. Viele dieser Konjekturen finden sich bei Clemen, *Assumptio Mosis*, 9, alle bei Fritzsche, *Libri Apocryphi*, 713. Nicht zu klären ist hier, welche Soloezismen schon auf den Übersetzer zurückgehen.

<sup>8</sup>Vgl. die Angaben bei Martin Noth, *Geschichte Israels* (Göttingen, 1954), 376–9.

wird es in der Forschung—wenn auch nicht einhellig—schon seit längerem gesehen.<sup>9</sup> Läßt sich über diesen Forschungsstand hinaus eine präzisere historische Verortung vornehmen?

Ich habe anderenorts versucht, genau dies zu tun,<sup>10</sup> und ich kann hier die von mir favorisierte Sicht nur kurz skizzieren: Am plausibelsten erscheint es mir, den Tempelbrand—wie 1904 schon Carl Clemen—mit den Ereignissen im Interregnum nach dem Tod des Herodes zu assoziieren,<sup>11</sup> als Unruhen Palästina erschütterten,<sup>12</sup> wobei Römer auch, um Aufständische zu bekämpfen, einen Brand am Tempel verursachten<sup>13</sup> und schließlich Varus nach Beendigung der Auseinandersetzungen 2000 Rebellen kreuzigte.<sup>14</sup> Weiterhin sehe es ich als ein wichtiges Indiz, daß direkt im Anschluß an dieses Ereignis in der *Assumptio Mosis* Endzeitberechnungen einsetzen. Dies legt die für meine These kennzeichnende Annahme nahe, daß alles, was darauf erfolgt, echte Endzeitprophetie ist, einschließlich der Herrschaft der sogenannten Gerechten und der endzeitlichen Verfolgung der Religion Israels durch den König der Könige. Der Verfasser erwartet also zuerst die Herrschaft von Leuten, die sich als gerecht bezeichnen und erkennbar der Religion Israels angehören, bevor ein endzeitlicher Weltherrscher über Israel regieren wird.

Ein solches Szenario lag meines Erachtens während der Regierungszeit des Archelaos in den Jahren 4 v. Chr. bis 6. n. Chr. ohne weiteres nahe: Zu Beginn seiner Herrschaft haben Josephus zufolge jüdische Notabeln gegen die Dynastie des Herodes erfolglos Beschwerde eingelegt, und zwar mit dem Ziel, eine römische Direktherrschaft zu erreichen, die mehr jüdische Autonomierechte ermöglichen sollte.<sup>15</sup> Gegen Ende seiner Herrschaft unternahmen jüdische und dazu noch samaritanische Notabeln laut Josephus ähnliches noch einmal—und diesmal mit dem Erfolg, der schon zuvor angestrebt worden war: Archelaos wurde abgesetzt und eine römische Direktherrschaft errichtet.<sup>16</sup> Allerdings erfüllte diese Direktherrschaft dann nicht die Hoffnung auf mehr jüdische Autonomie; jedenfalls sieht es bei Josephus danach nicht aus: Schon die Steuerschätzung des Quirinius, mit dem die neue Regierung gewissermaßen ihren Einstand gab, erfreute sich kaum allgemeiner Beliebtheit.<sup>17</sup>

Wichtig ist hier vor allem: Es hat den Anschein, daß Archelaos mit Widerständen aus der jüdischen Oberschicht konfrontiert war, die auch nach zehn Regierungsjahren noch durchaus virulent erschienen. Dies könnte eine Situation gewesen sein, in welcher der Verfasser der *Assumptio Mosis* mit einer Machtübernahme durch eine jüdische Elite in Palästina rechnen konnte, von der er freilich wenig Gutes erwartete. Unser Verfasser wußte zudem das römische Imperium im Hintergrund und konnte daher ahnen, daß eine solche Periode jüdischer Autonomie nur vorübergehend sein

<sup>9</sup>Zur Datierung der *Assumptio Mosis* vgl. schon die Diskussion diverser Forschungsmeinungen bei E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi* (3 Bände; Leipzig 1901-09; Nachdruck: Hildesheim 1964), 3.294-305, sp. 298-300; für ihn hat der Verfasser bald nach dem Varuskriege geschrieben (299).

<sup>10</sup>J. Doehorn, „Zur Krise der Gerechtigkeit im frühen Judentum. Reflexionen über das Entstehungsmilieu des frühen Christentums,“ *BN* 155 (2012): 77-111, sp. 88-100.

<sup>11</sup>Clemen, *Assumptio Mosis*, 9 (im Apparat).

<sup>12</sup>Josephus, *Ant.* 17.206-298, nach B. Niese, ed., *Flavii Iosephi Opera* (7 Bände; Berlin, 1887-95; Nachdruck: Berlin 1955), 4.108-26.

<sup>13</sup>Josephus, *Ant.* 17.261-264 (Niese, 4.119-20).

<sup>14</sup>Josephus, *Ant.* 17.295 (Niese, 4.126).

<sup>15</sup>Josephus, *Ant.* 17.300-317 (Niese, 4.126-30).

<sup>16</sup>Josephus, *Ant.* 17.342-344 (Niese, 4.134-35).

<sup>17</sup>Josephus, *Ant.* 18.1-10 (Niese, 4.140-41).

würde und durch etwas abgelöst werden sollte, das ihm noch schrecklicher erscheinen mußte, nicht zuletzt aufgrund der Vorgehensweise des Varus, die bei ihm offenbar einen besonderen Eindruck hinterließ.<sup>18</sup> Ich halte es daher für plausibel, die *Assumptio Mosis* in der Zeit des Archelaos zu verorten, und zwar am ehesten im Herrschaftsbereich des Archelaos selbst, da der Verfasser offenbar ein aufmerksamer und teilhabender Beobachter der politischen Vorgänge in diesem Gebiet ist.

#### 4. DIE BEDEUTUNG DER ASSUMPTIO MOSIS FÜR DIE ERFORSCHUNG DES FRÜHEN CHRISTENTUMS

Es steht zu vermuten, daß eine Schrift des palästinischen Judentums, die sich in unmittelbarer Nähe zur Zeitenwende datieren läßt, für die religionsgeschichtliche Erklärung des frühen Christentums von Bedeutung sein kann. Dieser Erwartung entspricht die *Assumptio Mosis* in der Tat, und zwar nicht zuletzt aufgrund ihres eschatologischen Szenarios, wie im Folgenden anhand von einigen Beispielen gezeigt werden soll:

(1) Die *Assumptio Mosis* erwartet für die Zukunft eine Herrschaft von Leuten, die sich für gerecht halten, in der Sicht der *Assumptio Mosis* aber wegen ihres Sozialverhaltens zu kritisieren sind (7:3–9). Sie verzehren die Güter, vermutlich von anderen Menschen (der Text ist an dieser Stelle partiell unleserlich), und behaupten, dies um der Armenfürsorge willen zu tun (7:6); sie lassen ein Interesse an Reinheitsvorschriften erkennen (7:9) und gleichzeitig eine Vorliebe für Gastmähler (7:4, 8), und offensichtlich schreibt unser Verfasser ihnen auch ein Interesse an der Ausübung von Macht zu (7:8). Interessant erscheint hier vor allem, daß es eine sich anscheinend religiös definierende und zugleich wohlhabende Elite ist. Es handelt sich um gesellschaftlich privilegierte, die ein religiös bestimmtes Selbstverständnis haben, das ihnen auch einer ihrer Gegner, der Verfasser der *Assumptio Mosis*, konzедieren muß: Sie halten sich für „Gerechte“ (7:3: *docentes se esse iustos*). In diesem Zusammenhang aber wird genau das fraglich, worauf sie sich berufen, nämlich der Begriff der Gerechtigkeit: Sie nennen sich gerecht, aber das wird ihnen abgesprochen. Das Ideal der Gerechtigkeit wird damit zum Gegenstand der Diskussion; was sich hier abzeichnet, ist eine Krise der Gerechtigkeit im Judentum Palästinas. Eine solche Krise der Gerechtigkeit läßt sich auch in der Jesusüberlieferung aufzeigen: So wird etwa in Q-Überlieferung den Pharisäern, typischen Repräsentanten dieses Ideals, vorgeworfen, daß sie an Reinheitsvorschriften mehr interessiert seien als an einem Sozialverhalten, das die Interessen schwächerer Glieder der Gesellschaft berücksichtige (vgl. Luke 11:39–41, 42 par.), und das Markusevangelium hält den Schriftgelehrten—vielleicht mit einer Parallele in *As. Mos.* 7:6—vor, daß sie die Häuser der Witwen verzehrten (Mark 12:40).<sup>19</sup> Aufgrund der *Assumptio Mosis* können wir vermuten, daß die Jesusbewegung hier eine bereits

<sup>18</sup> Der Krieg des Varus wurde offenbar auch sonst als einschneidendes Ereignis empfunden: Josephus erwähnt ihn in *Ag. Ap.* 1.34–35 (Niese, 6.8) in einer Reihe von vier Kriegen, die „unser Land“ betrafen (genannt werde der Krieg des Antiochos Epiphanes, des Pompejus Magnus, des Quintilius Varus und der jüdische Krieg).

<sup>19</sup> Vgl. *οἱ κατεσθίωντες τὰς οἰκίας τῶν χηρῶν* in Mark 12:40 und *uidua](r)(u)(m) bonorum com(e)stores* in *As. Mos.* 7:6. Die in runde Klammern gesetzten Buchstaben sind schwer lesbar, die Buchstaben außerhalb der eckigen Klammer sind ergänzt. Clemen (*Assumptio Mosis*, 10) nimmt die Ergänzung noch nicht vor, verzeichnet aber vor *(r)(u)(m)* eine Lücke von fünf Buchstaben, die eine solche Ergänzung erlaubt. Vorgeschlagen wurde die Ergänzung von W.J. Deane, *Pseudepigrapha: An Account of Certain Apocryphal Sacred Writings of the Jews and Early Christians* (Edinburgh, 1891), 115 (dort Anm. 2). Ich wage den Hinweis, daß auch nicht viel geschehen muß, damit *\*domorum* zu *bonorum* wird. Die Editoren Fritzsche, *Libri apocryphi*, 715, und Charles, *Assumption of Moses*, 78–79 lesen *paupe]rum*.

bestehende Kritik an gesellschaftlich gut gestellten Repräsentanten des Ideals der Gerechtigkeit aufnimmt. Und es lässt sich vermuten, daß dieser Trend nach Aufkommen der Jesusbewegung im Judentum nicht verschwunden ist: Noch im zweiten Jahrhundert soll Rabbi Aqiba gesagt haben, daß er in der Zeit, da er noch dem Am Ha-Aretz angehörte, dem „Volk des Landes“ (was auch immer das bedeutet), einen „Gelehrtschüler“ (הכח תלמיד) habe beißen wollen wie ein Esel (vgl. b. Pesah. 49b).<sup>20</sup>

(2) Die *Assumptio Mosis* erwartet für die Zeit direkt vor dem Ende, daß der „König der Könige der Erde“ eine Religionsverfolgung über die Juden hereinbrechen lassen werde. Vielfach wird in der Forschung bemerkt, daß diese Religionsverfolgung an die Politik des Antiochus Epiphanes erinnert, wie sie im ersten Makkabäerbuch wahrgenommen wird (vgl. 1 Macc 1:10–64).<sup>21</sup> Hier wie dort etwa betrifft die Verfolgung unter anderem diejenigen, die ihre Söhne beschneiden (As. Mos. 8:1 // 1 Macc 1:48). Auch das bereits erwähnte Martyrium des Taxo gehört, wie ich meine, in diesen Zusammenhang: Ein Levit mit sieben Söhnen, der um der jüdischen Religion willen den Tod erleidet, kann als Überbietung der ausweislich des zweiten und vierten Makkabäerbuchs im antiken Judentum prominenten Geschichte vom Märtyrertod der sieben Söhne einer jüdischen Mutter zur Zeit des Antiochus Epiphanes verstanden werden (vgl. 2 Macc 7; 4 Macc). Mit der Erwartung eines solchen Gewaltherrschers läßt die *Assumptio Mosis* ein apokalyptisches Szenario erkennen, das in der nachfolgenden eschatologischen Literatur des antiken Christentums zahlreiche Parallelen finden wird: Bevor die endgültige Heilswende kommt, so das Szenario, wird ein endzeitlicher Weltherrscher das Gottesvolk bedrängen. In der Apokalypse des Johannes nimmt diese Rolle das Tier aus dem Meere wahr, das für Nero redivivus stehen dürfte und vor der Parusie Christi die Christen verfolgt (Rev 13:1–8), und bei den Kirchenschriftstellern Irenäus und Hippolyt findet sich gegen Ende des zweiten und am Anfang des dritten Jahrhunderts die Erwartung eines jüdischen Antichrists,<sup>22</sup> die vielleicht schon in John 5:43 angedeutet ist. Die *Assumptio Mosis* zeigt uns, daß die christliche Endtyrannenmotivik eine jüdische Vorgeschichte hat, und sie zeigt auch,

<sup>20</sup> Vgl. hierzu A. Oppenheimer, *The 'Am Ha-Aretz. A Study in the Social History of the Jewish People in the Hellenistic-Roman Period* (ALGHJ 8; Leiden: Brill, 1977), 176–7. Es heißt in b. Pesah. 49b: »Es ist überliefert: Rabbi Aqiba sagte: „Als ich Am Haaretz war, sagte ich: ‚Wer gibt mir einen Gelehrtschüler, daß ich ihn beiße wie ein Esel (המור)?‘“ Seine Schüler sagten zu ihm: „Rabbi, sage, wie ein Hund“! Er sagte zu ihnen: „Der beißt und zermalmt Knochen, und der beißt und zermalmt keine Knochen.“« Der Kontext der Geschichte zeigt, daß eine solche Abneigung des Aqiba vor seiner Rabbinenzeit durchaus berechtigt scheint: Es finden sich dort lauter gehässige Aussprüche über den Am Ha-Aretz. Esel können im Übrigen, wie eine kurze Internetrecherche ergibt, zuweilen tatsächlich aggressiv werden. Dem Hund scheint Aqiba aber größere Gefährlichkeit zu attestieren. Wahrscheinlich hält Aqiba seine einstige Wut für vergleichsweise harmlos und nicht wesensbedingt.

<sup>21</sup> Clemen, *Assumptio Mosis*, notiert im Apparat zu As. Mos. 8:1–2, daß der Verfasser mit dem dort erwähnten Verfolger den Antichrist meine, für den Antiochus Epiphanes Modell stehe. Passender ist der Begriff »Endtyrann«; der Begriff Antichrist sollte auf die christliche Vorstellung von einem jüdischen (Pseudo-) Messias als Endtyrannen reserviert bleiben, wie er etwa bei Irenäus und Hippolyt belegt ist. Die Antiochus-Reminiszenzen nahm Charles, *Assumption of Moses*, 29–30, als historischen Bericht (bzw. *Vaticinium ex eventu*) und postulierte, As. Mos. 8–9 hätten einmal zwischen As. Mos. 5–6 gestanden, wo Charles Referenzen auf die Makkabäerzeit vermisst. Nickelsburg nimmt aufgrund dieser Kapitel eine Entstehung der As. Mos. zur Zeit der makkabäischen Revolte an; As. Mos. 6 und vielleicht auch 7 sei ein späterer Einschub, mit dem die Endzeitprophetie des Mose nachträglich auf Herodes bezogen würde, vgl. G.W.E. Nickelsburg, „An Antiochan Date for the Testament of Moses,“ in Nickelsburg, Hrsg., *Studies on the Testament of Moses* (SCS 4; Cambridge, 1973), 33–7. Zur Kritik dieser These vgl. K. Atkinson, „Taxo’s Martyrdom and the Role of the Nuntius in the Testament of Moses,“ *JBL* 125 (2006): 453–76, sp. 457–67. Ich halte literarkritische Operationen für weniger plausibel als die oben vorgetragene Erklärung.

<sup>22</sup> Vgl. die Aussagen des Irenäus über den Antichrist in *Haer.* 5.25–30 sowie Hippolytus, *Antichr.*, insbes. 20–29 (Auslegung von Dan 7 in Zusammenschau mit Dan 2).

warum die Idee von einem Endtyrannen im Judentum Platz greifen konnte: Die *Assumptio Mosis* sieht die Zeit vor dem Ende als eine Rekapitulation der Zeit vor dem Makkabäeraufstand und rechnet eben deshalb mit einem Endtyrannen, der wie Antiochus das Gottesvolk bedrängen wird. Konstitutiv für diese Endtyrannenkonzeption ist also die Vorstellung von einer Rekapitulation der Vormakkabäerzeit vor der Heilswende.

(3) Das bereits erwähnte Martyrium des Taxo ist in mehrfacher Hinsicht aufsehenerregend: Die Diskussion über Taxo fokussierte bisher auf den rätselhaften Namen dieser Gestalt. Hier komme ich, wie ich zugeben muß, genauso wenig weiter wie es der Forschung anscheinend bisher gelungen ist; der Überblick über die Forschungsdiskussion, den Tromp 1993 in seinem gelehrten Kommentar gegeben hat, wirkt ein wenig entmutigend.<sup>23</sup> Gleichwohl kann Relevantes über Taxo gesagt werden, und zwar vor allem über seine Funktion: Offensichtlich ist mit ihm die Heilswende verbunden. Damit ist es aber nicht ein Messias, also jemand, der königliche Macht beansprucht, der für die Heilswende auf menschlicher Seite wichtig erscheint, sondern ein religiös untadeliger Levit, der—zusammen mit seinen sieben Söhnen—ein Martyrium erleidet. Man kann sich fragen, ob er damit einen Kontrast abgeben soll zu den vermutlich an die Messiastradition anknüpfenden Rebellen, die den Berichten des Josephus zufolge nach dem Tod des Herodes die Königswürde beanspruchten und sämtlich nach zum Teil erbittertem Kampf von den Römern besiegt wurden.<sup>24</sup> Vielleicht bezeugt die *Assumptio Mosis* damit eine Ernüchterung in Bezug auf Messiasprätendenten, die möglicherweise auch in der Zeit nach Archelaos anhielt. Es fällt zumindest auf, daß sowohl Judas von Gamala *alias* Judas Galilaios, der gegen die Steuerschätzung des Quirinius nach dem Ende des Archelaos rebellierte,<sup>25</sup> als auch andere bei Josephus genannte religiös-politische Führer, etwa Johannes der Täufer<sup>26</sup> und nach ihm etwa der Zeichenprophet Theudas,<sup>27</sup> nicht erkennbar messianisches Gepräge tragen; wie es sich mit einem Messiasanspruch des Jesus von Nazareth verhält und ob Josephus Jesus überhaupt zur Kenntnis nimmt, lassen wir jetzt einmal dahingestellt.<sup>28</sup> Wichtig für die Jesusforschung erscheint etwas anderes: Die Bedeutung des Taxo für die Heilswende besteht vor allem darin, daß er stirbt. Einem Christen ist ein solches Phänomen nicht ganz unbekannt. Auch Jesus stirbt. Für die in der sogenannten Third Quest wieder neu verhandelte Frage, ob vielleicht schon der historische Jesus seinen Tod theologisch konzeptualisierte,<sup>29</sup> wird daher die *Assumptio Mosis* nicht ganz unbedeutend sein. Doch auch abgesehen von der Frage nach dem historischen Jesus wird man erörtern können, ob die *Assumptio Mosis* helfen kann, den Traditionshintergrund von Überlieferungen zum Tod Jesu zu rekonstruieren: Erwartet Jesus, ob nun der historische oder

<sup>23</sup> Tromp, *Assumption of Moses*, 124–28.

<sup>24</sup> Vgl. Josephus, *Ant.* 17.271–272 (Niese, 4.121–22) // *J.W.* 2.56 (Niese, 6.165); Judas, Sohn des Hesekias; *Ant.* 17.273–277 (Niese, 4.122) // *J.W.* 57–59 (Niese 6.165–66); Simon, ein Knecht des Herodes; Josephus, *Ant.* 17.278–284 (Niese, 4.123–24) // *J.W.* 60–65 (Niese 6.166–67); Athronges.

<sup>25</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 18.1–10 (Niese 4.140–41); 23–25 (Niese, 4.144); 20.102 (Niese, 4.293); *J.W.* 2.118 (Niese, VI.176); 433 (Niese, 6.234); 7.253 (Niese, 6.603).

<sup>26</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 18.116–119 (Niese, 4.161–62).

<sup>27</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 20.97–99 (Niese, 4.292).

<sup>28</sup> Bei Josephus gibt es bekanntlich zwei Referenzen auf Jesus, vgl. das *Testimonium Flavianum* in *Ant.* 18.63–64 (Niese, 4.151–52) und die Erwähnung Jesu im Zusammenhang mit der Hinrichtung des Jakobus in *Ant.* 20.200 (Niese, 4.310). Vor allem das *Testimonium Flavianum* ist umstritten.

<sup>29</sup> C.A. Evans, “Assessing Progress in the Third Quest of the Historical Jesus,” *JSHJ* 4 (2006): 35–54, sp. 48–49; M.R. Licona, “Did Jesus Predict his Death and Vindication / Resurrection?” *JSHJ* 8 (2010): 47–66; und M.V. Zolondek, “The Authenticity of the First Passion Prediction and the Origin of Mark 8.31–33,” *JSHJ* 8 (2010), 237–53.



der markinische, laut Mark 14:25 während seines letzten Mahles etwa deshalb, daß er nach seinem Tod Wein im Gottesreich trinken werde, weil er das Gottesreich als Folge seines Todes ansieht, ähnlich wie in der *Assumptio Mosis* das Gottesreich auf Taxos Tod folgt?

(4) Überhaupt ist es schon einmal von großer Bedeutung, daß die *Assumptio Mosis* im Zusammenhang mit der Heilswende vom Reich Gottes spricht. Sie stellt sich das Reich Gottes als etwas vor, das endzeitlich manifest wird (also prinzipiell schon vorher existierte; in *As. Mos.* 10:1 steht *tunc parebit regnum illius*) und verbunden ist mit einer Entmachtung des Teufels sowie der Erhöhung eines himmlischen Repräsentanten Israels, das dementsprechend über seine Feinde erhöht wird. Eine ganz ähnliche Konstellation liegt, wie ich in meiner Untersuchung zu Rev 12 gezeigt habe, in der Vision der Johannesoffenbarung vom Sturz des Drachen vor, wo das Inkrafttreten der Königsherrschaft Gottes assoziiert erscheint mit einem endzeitlichen Teufelsfall (Rev 12:9–10).<sup>30</sup>

Doch vermutlich ist die in der *Assumptio Mosis* bezeugte Konzeptualisierung des Gottesreiches schon relevant für Jesusüberlieferung, die wesentlich älter ist als die Apokalypse des Johannes (die ja ausweislich ihres Präskripts ebenfalls Jesusüberlieferung ist): Laut Luke 10:18, das freilich nur bei Lukas bezeugt ist, berichtet Jesus angesichts der exorzistischen Erfolge seiner Jünger, er habe den Satan wie einen Blitz vom Himmel fallen sehen. Dämonenaustreibungen, die typisch sind für das Wirken Jesu und seiner Jünger, werden hier also begründet mit einer Entmachtung des Teufels. Dasselbe ist in der durch Markus und Q doppelt bezeugten und daher wohl überlieferungsgeschichtlich alten Beelzebulperikope der Fall, wenn Jesus dort seine exorzistischen Erfolge mit der Bindung des Starken und damit der Entmachtung des Teufels bzw. Beelzebuls begründet (vgl. Mark 3:22–30; Luke 11:14–23; Matt 12:22–32).

In der Q-Version dieser Perikope identifiziert Jesus seine Dämonenaustreibungen zudem mit dem Gegenwärtigsein des Gottesreiches (Luke 11:20 par.). Es sieht so aus, als korrelierten zumindest in der Q-Version der Beelzebul-Perikope und in Luke 10:18 Gottesreich und Teufelsfall ähnlich miteinander wie in der *Assumptio Mosis*, wobei das Spezifikum der Evangelienüberlieferungen darin besteht, daß Dämonenaustreibungen als Konsequenz und damit Indiz für beide Hintergrundatbestände angesehen werden. Es wäre zu überprüfen, ob vielleicht Jesus aufgrund erfolgreicher Exorzismen zu der Überzeugung kam (vielleicht auch auf visionärem Wege),<sup>31</sup> daß der Teufel entmachtet und daß damit auch das Reich Gottes gekommen sei. Mit dem von der *Assumptio Mosis* bezeugten Bild vom Königreich Gottes wäre ein solches Szenario durchaus plausibel. Es erscheint in deutscher Tradition ungewöhnlich, bei Jesus nicht nur eine theologische Idee, sondern auch noch die Entwicklung oder gar auch Veränderung einer solchen Idee nachzuzeichnen. Das kann sich in der überwiegend amerikanisch inspirierten „Third Quest“ anders verhalten, wie sich etwa an einem Aufsatz von Joel Marcus zur Beelzebul-Perikope zeigt.<sup>32</sup> Mit einer gewissen Vorsicht wird man sich von dieser Forschungstendenz inspirieren lassen dürfen.

<sup>30</sup> Vgl. J. Doehorn, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie. Der eschatologische Teufelsfall in Apc Joh 12 und seine Bedeutung für das Verständnis der Johannesoffenbarung* (WUNT 258; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), sp. 260–307 (über den eschatologischen Teufelsfall).

<sup>31</sup> Vgl. hierzu J. Doehorn, „Die Versuchung Jesu bei Lukas und Matthäus: Eine Geschichte von der Selbstfindung des Dämonenbezwingers und neuen Salomo,“ in J. Bockmann und J. Gold, Hrsgg., *Turpiloquium. Kommunikation mit Teufeln und Dämonen in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit* (WDBP 41; Würzburg 2017), 233–57.

<sup>32</sup> Vgl. J. Marcus, „The Beelzebul Controversy and the Eschatologies of Jesus,“ in B. Chilton und C. A. Evans, Hrsgg., *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus* (NTTS 28,3; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 247–77.

(5) Das Sichtbarwerden der Königsherrschaft Gottes führt in der *Assumptio Mosis* dazu, daß Israel auf einem Adler in den Himmel steigt und Erbe des Sternenhimmels wird, während seine Feinde in einer kosmischen Katastrophe untergehen (*As. Mos.* 10:2b–10); in 10:9 heißt es: *Et altavit te deus et faciet te herere caelo stellarum* („Und Gott wird dich erhöhen und dich den Sternenhimmel erben lassen“). Es sieht so aus, als verorte die *Assumptio Mosis* die Zukunft Israels im Himmel und nicht auf der Erde. Eine derartige Sicht, die das künftige Heil im Himmel sieht, ist für das frühe Christentum möglicherweise gar nicht so untypisch: Wo wird Jesus, der historische oder der markinische, eigentlich seinen Wein trinken, wenn er in Mark 14:25 das offenbar nach seinem Tod statthabende Gottesreich mit eben dieser Tätigkeit assoziiert, im Himmel oder auf der Erde? Der Text sagt es nicht. Und wo ist wohl das Land zu verorten, das den Seligpreisungen bei Matthäus zufolge die Sanftmütigen erben sollen (Matt 5:5)? In dem wohl antik-jüdischen Testament Hiobs sagt Hiob, der gerade auf einem Wurmhügel hockt und nicht sehr herrschaftlich wirkt, sein heiliges Land befinde sich im Himmel, wo er zur Rechten Gottes sitze (*T. Job* 33); wahrscheinlich ist hier Auferstehungshoffnung und Wissen um das andere, eigentliche Leben im Himmel miteinander verbunden.<sup>33</sup>

Und wo werden die Christen nach der Sicht des Paulus ihren Aufenthalt haben, nachdem sie laut 1 Thess 4:17 mit der Auferstehung der Toten entrückt werden, um Jesus entgegenzugehen? Werden sie in Richtung Himmel entrückt, um dann mit Jesus zur Erde zurückzukehren? Besonders logisch erscheint eine solche Szenerie nicht; vielleicht ist doch eher an den Himmel als eine Stätte künftigen Heils gedacht? In der *Ascensio Isaiae*, einer christlichen Schrift, die wohl der ersten Hälfte des zweiten Jahrhunderts angehört, ist das zukünftige Heil jedenfalls im siebten Himmel angesiedelt (vgl. *Ascen. Isa* 2:9; 4:16–17; 8:14–15; 9:17–18, 24–26), wohingegen „dieser“ Himmel, „dieses“ Festland, die Berge, Hügel, Bäume und Städte am Ende von Christus verflucht und die Sünder von den Flammen seines Mundes verbrannt werden (*Ascen. Isa* 4:18). Es wird zu überprüfen sein, ob nicht die Apokalypse des Johannes, wenn sie von einem neuen Himmel und einer neuen Erde als heilvoller Zukunft spricht (Rev 21:1), wenn sie also die Erde in ihre Hoffnung einbezieht, einen eher untypischen Weg geht. Der Seher Johannes liebt anscheinend die Erde; im Zusammenhang mit dem Inkrafttreten der Gottesherrschaft spricht er von der Zerstörung derer, welche die Erde zerstören (11:18), und bei der Rettung des endzeitlichen Gottesvolkes vor der Verfolgung durch den Drachen hilft die Erde tatkräftig mit (12:16). Nicht alle Christen haben der Erde diese Aufmerksamkeit gewidmet, und schon die *Assumptio Mosis* sieht das Heil offenbar im Himmel.

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<sup>33</sup> Das *Testament Hiobs* nimmt die auf Hiob bezogene Auferstehungsaussage aus Job 42:17a LXX auf (*T. Job* 4:9), aber was wir sehen, sind Anzeichen eines Lebens nach dem Tode, vgl. *T. Job* 52, die stark verschränkt sind mit den Himmelwelt-Erfahrungen der Töchter Hiobs in *T. Job* 46–52. Auferstehung scheint primär manifest zu werden als das individuelle Fortleben der Seele des Frommen und nicht so sehr mit dem Ende der Geschichte assoziiert, und sie hat etwas mit Zugehörigkeit zur Himmelwelt zu tun. In diesem Sinne ist wohl auch *T. Job* 33 ein mit Auferstehung assoziierter Text.

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# Neither Deuteronomomic nor Priestly: The Psalms of Solomon as the Original Answer of Learned Scribes to the Wickedness of High Priests

PATRICK POUCHELLE

The contribution of James H. Charlesworth to the research on early Judaism is invaluable. The explosion of the studies on the genre of penitential prayers in 1998–9 would have probably been impossible without his work.<sup>1</sup> No less than four monographs were published in these years,<sup>2</sup> to which Richard Bautch’s book was added a few years later.<sup>3</sup> The explosion of interest in a genre that had been largely neglected apart from German scholarship<sup>4</sup> led to the publication of three volumes of collected essays.<sup>5</sup>

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I am indebted to Brad Embry for meaningful suggestions at an early stage of this chapter. I also thank the editors of this volume for their editorial work that improved my essay. All remaining errors are mine alone.

<sup>1</sup>Beyond his *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, see also James H. Charlesworth, “Jewish Hymns, Odes and Prayers (ca 167 B.C.E.–135 C.E.),” in *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, ed. Robert A. Kraft and George W. E. Nickelsburg (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1986), 411–36.

<sup>2</sup>Rodney A. Werline, *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: The Development of a Religious Institution*, EJL 13 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998); Mark J. Boda, *Praying the Tradition: The Origin and Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9*, BZAW 277 (Berlin: Gruyter, 1999); Judith Newman, *Praying by the Book: The Scripturalization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*, EJL 14 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1999); and Daniel K. Falk, *Daily, Sabbath and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, STDJ 27 (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

<sup>3</sup>Richard J. Bautch, *Developments in Genre between Post-Exilic Penitential Prayers and the Psalms of Communal Lament*, SBLAcBib 7 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2003).

<sup>4</sup>See Otto H. Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten. Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum und Urchristentum*, WMANT 23 (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1967), and the fifth edition of the book of Claus Westermann, *Das Loben Gottes in den Psalmen*, published in 1977 and translated in English a few years later: Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalm*, trans. K. R. Crim and R. N. Soulen (Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1981).

<sup>5</sup>Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline, eds., *Seeking the Favor of God*, EJL 21–3 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2006–8).

Among these recent works, the *Psalms of Solomon* (*Pss. Sol.*) as penitential prayers has been mainly studied by Rodney Werline.<sup>6</sup> Werline asserts that the *Pss. Sol.* belong to the literary genre of penitential prayers that are composed as a response to a situation of crisis, in this case the decline of the Hasmonean kingdom on the occasion of the coming of the Roman general Pompey. According to Werline, penitential prayers, and the *Pss. Sol.* in particular, are rooted in Deuteronomistic ideology.<sup>7</sup> Of course, Werline acknowledges that the *Pss. Sol.* do not convey a simple Deuteronomistic ideology; one of their aims is to explain why the righteous suffer while they should have been blessed. The response lays on the concept of divine discipline: the suffering is pedagogical. A second concern is why a foreign leader has caused such troubles in Jerusalem. The answer here is that, in his pride, the foreign leader punished Israel beyond what God allowed and therefore also will be punished.

Werline returned to these matters in a later article.<sup>8</sup> He noticed that even if *Pss. Sol.* 1 is a “slight twist” on the Deuteronomistic ideology,<sup>9</sup> its terminology and theology are close to Deuteronomy.<sup>10</sup> *Pss. Sol.* 2 finishes with the confession of God’s righteousness.<sup>11</sup> *Pss. Sol.* 8 depicts the fall of Jerusalem resulting from the sins of her leaders, and *Pss. Sol.* 17 conveys similar views, “typically in Deuteronomistic thought,”<sup>12</sup> describing how the reign of the Hasmoneans is due to the sin of the people, also alluding to the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam 7. Hence, for Werline, the use of “Deuteronomistic theology” means the “articulation of History and God’s role in it” in which the responsibility of people is what is given the priority.<sup>13</sup> If the people are suffering, this is not on account of a heavenly conflict between suprahuman entities but a result of everyone’s sin.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 185–8. But see also Daniel K. Falk, “Psalms and Prayers,” in *The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, vol. 1 of *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. D. A. Carson, P. T. O’Brien and M. A. Seifrid, WUNT 2/140 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 35–52; and William Morrow, “The Affirmation of Divine Righteousness in Early Penitential Prayers: A Sign of Judaism’s Entry into the Axial Age,” in *The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*, vol. 1 of *Seeking the Favor of God*, ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline, EJL 21 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2006), 101–17.

<sup>7</sup> See also the contribution of his supervisor, George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia, PA: Augsburg Fortress, 1981), 204–7. He asserts this view again, writing that “Psalms 1–2, 8 and 17 employ the Deuteronomistic scheme to argue that these events are divine punishment”; see George W. E. Nickelsburg, “Judgment, Life-After-Death, and Resurrection in the Apocrypha and the non-Apocalyptic Pseudepigrapha,” in *Death, Life-After-Death, Resurrection & the World-to-Come in the Judaisms of Antiquity*, vol. 4 of *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, ed. A. J. Avery-Peck and J. Neusner, HdO (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 156.

<sup>8</sup> See Rodney A. Werline, “The Psalm of Solomon and the Ideology of Rule,” in *Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apocalypticism*, ed. B. G. Wright and L. M. Wills (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2005), 69–87.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 72. Indeed, Jerusalem thought that she was “prosperous” (*Pss. Sol.* 1:1–3) but this belief is only an illusion, because the sinners sinned in secret so that Jerusalem was not able to understand (1:4–8). Yet the syntagma expressing the prosperity of Jerusalem are not to be found in Deuteronomy. Hence, “to be full of righteousness” (*Pss. Sol.* 1:2–3) could be found in Isa 33:5; for “to be prosperous” (εὐθηνέω) see Zech 7:7; for “to be full of children” see 1 Kgs [= MT 1 Sam] 2:5. *Pss. Sol.* 1 may have a “Deuteronomistic” flavor but could not be found literally in Deuteronomy.

<sup>10</sup> The author notes the frequency of “to listen” but nuances by stating that “this interpretation is quite probable, if, as most scholars think, the Psalms of Solomon has a Hebrew *Vorlage*” (p. 72). In fact, this is also true even if there is no Hebrew *Vorlage*, as they may have used the Terminology of the Septuagint of the Deuteronomy. However, it seems to me that “to listen” is not so present, see below.

<sup>11</sup> See notably Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 52.

<sup>12</sup> Werline, “The Psalm of Solomon and the Ideology of Rule,” 74.

<sup>13</sup> As summarized by G. Anthony Keddie, *Revelations of Ideology: Apocalyptic Class Politics in Early Roman Palestine*, JJS 189 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 96.

<sup>14</sup> Werline, “The Psalm of Solomon and the Ideology of Rule,” 84–5.

Conversely, benedictions are due to the righteousness. Therefore “Deuteronomic ideology” is conceived as opposed to “apocalyptic ideology.”

Werline’s assertion that Penitential prayers in general, and *Pss. Sol.* in particular, develop or deploy Deuteronomic traditions has gone largely unquestioned.<sup>15</sup> The only challenge has been raised by Mark J. Boda.<sup>16</sup> Werline regards the priestly influence on the Deuteronomic frame as minimal,<sup>17</sup> whereas Boda sees in Neh 9:5–37 a clear influence of priestly traditions.<sup>18</sup> But even here the *Pss. Sol.* play no role in their debate.

Two small points, however, suggest grounds for questioning Werline’s claim for the Deuteronomic character of the *Pss. Sol.* First, William Morrow<sup>19</sup> links the *Psalms of Solomon* to the penitential prayers in matters of divine sovereignty, mercy and justice, influences of Deuteronomic theology, and confession and contrition. According to Morrow, the emergence of penitential prayers marks an evolution, related to Jaspers’s concept of Axial age, to a transcendent God whose righteousness is beyond doubt. Morrow points out the importance of “historical retrospectives” and “confessions” of sin, but does not cite examples from the *Pss. Sol.* in this regard. However, the Psalms surface in Morrow’s treatment when he argues about the link between penitential prayers and holiness theology, notably with the issue of uncleanness and pollution. Morrow then addresses the debate between Werline and Boda. The lack of reference to the *Pss. Sol.* when Morrow speaks of the influence of Deuteronomic theology contrasts with his reference to them when he discusses the subject of holiness.

Second, in his impressive survey of the *Psalms of Solomon*,<sup>20</sup> Falk clearly sees in *Pss. Sol.* 9 a classical prayer of penitence with confession of sin, the acknowledgment of God’s justice, recollection of God’s mercies, and petition for mercy.<sup>21</sup> Yet, he notices some specificities: the saving activity of God is nearly absent,<sup>22</sup> the forgiving is present once only,<sup>23</sup> the absence of sacrifice is curious regarding the interest of the psalmist on the temple,<sup>24</sup> both Lev 26:40–45 and Deut 30:1–5 seem to be at stake in the *Pss. Sol.*<sup>25</sup> Covenant is rarely mentioned but its theology is covenantal.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>For instance, C. Marvin Pate, *The Reverse of the Curse: Paul, Wisdom, and the Law*, WUNT 2/114 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 38–9, agrees with Nickelsburg that the *Psalms of Solomon* convey several motives with a “deuteronomic ring to them.” He noticed, as Werline, that *Pss. Sol.* 1:1–3 expresses Deuteronomic blessing but fails to note the irony. The Davidic dynasty is evoked with the Deuteronomic blessing of 2 Sam 7. The Deuteronomic curses are due to the fact that the people sinned and that God raised tyrants to judge Israel and send them into exile (see also James M. Scott, “Paul’s Use of Deuteronomic Tradition,” *JBL* 112 (1993), 645–65). The notion of repentance/restoration is also linked with Deuteronomic blessing.

<sup>16</sup>See Mark J. Boda, “Confession as Theological Expression: Ideological Origins of Penitential Prayer,” in *The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*, vol. 1 of *Seeking the Favor of God*, ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline, EJL 21 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2006), 21–50, especially 22–4.

<sup>17</sup>Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 193–4.

<sup>18</sup>Boda, *Praying the Traditions*, 186–7.

<sup>19</sup>Morrow, “The Affirmation of Divine Righteousness.”

<sup>20</sup>Falk, “Psalms and Prayers,” 35–51.

<sup>21</sup>Without explicitly referring to the Deuteronomic scheme (*ibid.*, 42).

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 49, in Ps 9:7 but see below.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 49, although he thinks that this is due to the literary genre.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*



The same could be noticed for the law.<sup>27</sup> These tiny details are in line with the assertion of Sprinkle to see in *Pss. Sol.* 9:4–5, 14:2–3, and 15:1–4 an influence from Lev 18:5.<sup>28</sup>

Hence, the Deuteronomic scheme may not be the best or only model for analyzing the *Pss. Sol.* An alternative is the influence of priestly tradition. Jonathan Klawans, for example, uses the *Pss. Sol.* as examples of expression of moral impurities that defile the Temple.<sup>29</sup> Bradley Embry, in turn, analyzes the presentation of sins and purity in the *Pss. Sol.* and compares it to the system as presented in Leviticus.<sup>30</sup> He reasserts the difference between ritual and moral impurity: ritual impurity is “passive” in that a person is impure, while moral impurity is “active” in that one’s conduct renders the Temple or the Land impure, which leads to the notion that all the people are guilty if moral impurity is not redressed.<sup>31</sup> Embry suggests that the two systems remain operative in the LXX and asserts that if the system of purification and atonement be considered inoperative, another solution becomes messianism.<sup>32</sup> In the *Pss. Sol.*, where the Temple remains of paramount importance, sins are related to the impurity of the Temple, whereas the Messiah offers an ideal state where Jerusalem and the people are holy.<sup>33</sup> In the same vein, Kenneth Atkinson offers an analysis of the portrayal of priests in the *Pss. Sol.*<sup>34</sup> In his view, the community that wrote the *Pss. Sol.* condemned the priests because their conduct led to the profanation of the Temple. Atkinson suggests that the “harsh and vicious” polemic against the priests shows that “at least some of the authors of the Psalms of Solomon were once connected with the Temple, and likely priests, and members of the upper class.”<sup>35</sup>

The goal of my chapter is to extend the work of Embry and Atkinson. In my opinion, as penitential prayers, the *Pss. Sol.* have more to do with the priestly traditions than previously asserted. Yet, even the priestly traditions are not so important to the *Pss. Sol.* because the desecration of the Temple, which was perceived as a catastrophe, led them to another solution for atonement.

The first part of my chapter demonstrates that even if *Pss. Sol.* were influenced by Deuteronomy, they lack the notion of repentance and that of petition for forgiveness; the author does not feel guilty as an “active” sinner. The second part examines the influence of priestly traditions in the *Pss. Sol.*, confirming the importance of the Temple and its purity system. However, even if the general frame is priestly, the sacrifices are absent. In the third part, I argue that the aim of the *Pss. Sol.* is to suggest an answer to a legal case that is not taken into account in the Pentateuch, which is the fact that the high priest could not perform the legitimate sacrifices requested notably in Leviticus

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>28</sup> Preston M. Sprinkle, *Law and Life: The Interpretation of Leviticus 18:5 in Early Judaism and in Paul*, WUNT 2/241 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 91–9.

<sup>29</sup> Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 59, 185–6.

<sup>30</sup> Bradley J. Embry, “Prayers in Psalms of Solomon or the Temple, Covenantal Fidelity, and Hope,” in *Studies in Jewish Prayer*, ed. R. Hayward and B. Embry, JSSSupp 17 (Oxford: University Press, 2005), 81–99; Bradley J. Embry “Psalms of Assurance: An Analysis of the Formation and Function of Psalms of Solomon in Second Temple Judaism” (PhD diss., Durham University, 2005), especially 152–206, as the first part of his thesis aims at showing the presence of a prophetic paradigm (the “Deuteronomic” term is avoided by Embry) in the *Pss. Sol.* close to that conveyed by Deuteronomy 32.

<sup>31</sup> Embry, “Psalms of Assurance,” 152–70.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 181–2.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 182–206.

<sup>34</sup> Kenneth Atkinson, “Perceptions of the Temple Priests in the Psalms of Solomon,” in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology*, ed. E. Bons and P. Pouchelle, EJL 40 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2015), 79–96.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

4 and 16. As we shall see, the dissociation of forgiveness and sacrifice may be rooted in tradition of prayers, like 3 Kgs [= MT 1 Kings] 8 or Psalm 50[51] which may have been a model for the Solomonic psalmist as a response to the inability of the high priests to perform in this regard.<sup>36</sup>

Some preliminary methodological remarks are in order. First, Jan Joosten's article on the original language of the *Pss. Sol.* has challenged the long-standing consensus of a Hebrew original.<sup>37</sup> His thesis has been followed by Felix Albrecht,<sup>38</sup> but remains debated, notably by Atkinson.<sup>39</sup> I will deal with the *Pss. Sol.* as if they were composed in Greek, acknowledging that should they be proven to be a translation, our conclusion will remain valid for the Greek text but may point toward the translator rather than the author. Second, I assume that all the Psalms belong to the same tradition and make no attempt to detect an evolution in their theology.<sup>40</sup> Finally, this survey does not claim to be exhaustive. My main goal is to open new approaches on the *Pss. Sol.* and convince more scholars to take this corpus into account during their research on early Jewish history and literature.

## 1. NEITHER FULLY DEUTERONOMIC ...

When Werline analyzes the “Deuteronomic critique of rule in the Psalm of Solomon,”<sup>41</sup> he regularly speaks about the “sin-punishment ideology.”<sup>42</sup> But is such a theology really Deuteronomic? Indeed, Leviticus 26 also offers similar ideas. People are castigated (Heb יָסַר, Gr. παιδεύω) according to their sins.<sup>43</sup> Although he does not deal with the *Pss. Sol.*, David Lincicum raises the question of the definition of what could be a “Deuteronomic pattern,”<sup>44</sup> but simply recalls the position of Nickelsburg. For him, such a pattern is derived from Deuteronomy 28–32: (1) the gift of the law to Israel, joined with the announcement of blessings and maledictions; (2) Israel sins; (3) the curses are put by God on Israel; (4) Israel repents; (5) God restores Israel. Formally, when we compare Deuteronomy 28–30 to Leviticus 26, the main difference rests on the fact that in Deuteronomy, people repent, while in Leviticus, people confess their sins.<sup>45</sup> Compare Deut 30:1–3:

When all these things have happened to you, the blessings and the curses that I have set before you, if you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you,<sup>2</sup> and return (יָשַׁב qal) to the Lord your God, and you and your children obey (שָׁמַע qal) him with

<sup>36</sup>I introduce this term for denoting the author of the *Psalms of Solomon*, without assuming that this author was unique.

<sup>37</sup>Jan Joosten, “Reflections on the Original Language of the Psalms of Solomon,” in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology*, ed. E. Bons and P. Pouchelle, EJL 40 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2015), 31–47, see also Eberhard Bons, “Philosophical Vocabulary in the Psalms of Solomon: The Case of Ps. Sol. 9:4,” in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology*, ed. E. Bons, and P. Pouchelle, EJL 40 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2015), 49–58.

<sup>38</sup>Felix Albrecht, *Psalmi Salomonis*, Septuaginta vetus testamentum graecum XII,3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), 181–2.

<sup>39</sup>Kenneth Atkinson, “Responses,” in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology*, ed. E. Bons and P. Pouchelle, EJL 40 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2015), 177–9.

<sup>40</sup>For a discussion of the question of dealing with the *Psalms of Solomon* as if they were one voice, see Falk, “Psalms and Prayers,” 37–9.

<sup>41</sup>Werline, “The Psalm of Solomon and the Ideology of Rule,” 72.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 72–4.

<sup>43</sup>Lev 46:18, 23, 28.

<sup>44</sup>David Lincicum, *Paul and the Early Jewish Encounter with Deuteronomy*, WUNT 2/284 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 86–7.

<sup>45</sup>See Boda, “Confession,” 23.

all your heart and with all your soul, just as I am commanding you today,<sup>3</sup> then the Lord your God will restore (שׁוּב *qal*) your fortunes and have compassion on you, gathering you again from all the peoples among whom the Lord your God has scattered you (NRSV).

with Lev 26:40–42:

<sup>40</sup> But if they confess (יָדָה *hit.*) their iniquity and the iniquity of their ancestors, in that they committed treachery against me and, moreover, that they continued hostile to me—<sup>41</sup> so that I, in turn, continued hostile to them and brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled (כִּנְעָה *nif.*) and they make amends (רָצָה *qal.*) for their iniquity,<sup>42</sup> then will I remember (זָכַר *qal*) my covenant with Jacob; I will remember also my covenant with Isaac and also my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. (NRSV)

Both texts accept the “sin-punishment ideology,” but each describes the “restoration” differently. In the Deuteronomic scheme, a double movement is expressed by the same Hebrew verb שׁוּב, the repentance involving a movement of the people to God and a restoration involving an implicit movement from God to the people. In the Leviticus passage, the people undertake three actions: confession,<sup>46</sup> humbling, and making amends.<sup>47</sup> This is followed by God’s remembering. The fact that confession presupposes repentance is not mentioned by Leviticus.<sup>48</sup>

Similarly, the Deuteronomic repentance may be done through confession, but this is not written as such in Deuteronomy. Deut 4:29–31 is another text that puts the emphasis on the repentance:

<sup>29</sup> From there you will seek (בָּקַשׁ *pi.*) the Lord your God, and you will find (מָצָא *qal*) him if you search after (דָּרַשׁ *qal*) him with all your heart and soul.<sup>30</sup> In your distress, when all these things have happened to you in time to come, you will return (שׁוּב *qal*) to the Lord your God and heed (שָׁמַע *qal*) him.<sup>31</sup> Because the Lord your God is a merciful God, he will neither abandon you nor destroy you; he will not forget the covenant with your ancestors that he swore to them.

As in Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 30 deals with the situation of the Exile. The two Deuteronomic texts request from the people to return to God (שׁוּב, ἐπιστρέφω) and obey or heed him (שָׁמַע *qal*, ὑπακούω or εἰσακούω). Deuteronomy 4 introduces the nuance of seeking the Lord (בָּקַשׁ *pi.* and דָּרַשׁ *qal*) and finding him (מָצָא *qal*, εὐρίσκαω).

This is part of Werline’s thesis, who considers 1 Kings 8 as the link between Deuteronomy and the Penitential prayers, since it introduces the prayer in the Temple as the expression of repentance. In 1 Kings 8,<sup>49</sup> Solomon utters a prayer at the occasion of the dedication of the Temple he has built. The prayer begins in v. 22 and ends in v. 53. After a petition for God to attend to their prayers, it

<sup>46</sup>The impact of confession on penitential prayers is conceded by Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 48–50.

<sup>47</sup>That is, “to make amend,” literally, “to pay,” or “to be pleased,” a meaning conveyed by the LXX with the verb εὐδοκέω “to accept.”

<sup>48</sup>I acknowledge that confession may implicitly require repentance and some scholars associated the two words “repentance” and “confession” as if one necessarily derives from the other, see the interpretation of Milgrom made by Samuel E. Balentine “‘I Was Ready to Be Sought Out by Those Who Did Not Ask,’” in *The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*, vol. 1 of *Seeking the Favor of God*, ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline, EJL 21 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2006), 1–20 at 18: “In Milgrom’s view, the priests postulated, for the first time in history, that repentance is both desired and required by God for the mitigation of divine retribution. In support of this argument, he notes that four priestly texts (Lev 5:5; 16:21; 26:40; Num 5:7), explicitly require confession.” But I would like to note that I never found a biblical text explicitly joining these two notions lexicographically. I would be happy to be contradicted.

<sup>49</sup>And its parallel in 2 Chronicles 6.

surprisingly contains some regulations about atonement—a person who has sinned against another has to utter a vow in front of the altar, God will decide who is guilty and who is innocent (31–32). This is followed by regulations concerning the people: after a defeat (33–34), when rains are lacking (35–36), during various plagues (including besiegement, 37–43), during a military campaign (44–45), at the occasion of the Exile (46–53). This last regulation uses the Deuteronomic scheme but adds to the conversion the act of pleading:

Yet if they come to their senses in the land to which they have been taken captive, and repent (רָוַי *hip.*), and plead (הִתְחַנַּן *hit.*) with you in the land of their captors, saying, “We have sinned, and have done wrong; we have acted wickedly”; If they repent (רָוַי *qal*) with all their heart and soul in the land of their enemies, who took them captive, and pray to you toward their land, which you gave to their ancestors, the city that you have chosen, and the house that I have built for your name; then hear in heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their plea, maintain their cause and forgive your people who have sinned against you, and all their transgressions that they have committed against you; and grant them compassion in the sight of their captors, so that they may have compassion on them (for they are your people and heritage).

Applying this Deuteronomic pattern with *Pss. Sol.* is not as simple as it might at first appear. We could observe that *Pss. Sol.* 1 ends just before the punishment, and *Pss. Sol.* 2 immediate thereafter. There is no mention of repentance and restoration. Of course, *Pss. Sol.* 8 hopes for a restoration expressed in Deuteronomic way, to be compared to Deut 30:3:<sup>50</sup>

ἐπίστρεψον, ὁ θεός, τὸ ἔλεός σου ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς καὶ οἰκτίρησον ἡμᾶς  
συνάγαγε τὴν διασπορὰν Ἰσραὴλ μετὰ ἐλέους καὶ χρηστότητος,

Bring back, God, your mercy upon us and have us in pity!  
Gather the diaspora of Israel with mercy and goodness

But again, there is no repentance. The same is true for *Pss. Sol.* 17, where the salvation is attributed to the messianic era with a certain emphasis on holiness.<sup>51</sup>

Generally speaking, then, the *Pss. Sol.* lacks the theme of repentance. Hence, ἐπιστρέφω is used twice in *Pss. Sol.* 5:7, 8:27 with God as subject. The cognate substantive ἐπιστροφή is used in the title of *Pss. Sol.* 7, with no clear context allowing us to assess whether it is conversion or restoration, and in *Pss. Sol.* 9:10 and 16:11. At a first sight, *Pss. Sol.* 9:10 seems clearly Deuteronomic:

ἐν διαθήκῃ διέθου τοῖς πατράσιν ἡμῶν περὶ ἡμῶν,  
καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐλπιούμεν ἐπὶ σὲ ἐν ἐπιστροφῇ ψυχῆς ἡμῶν

you made a covenant with our fathers concerning us,  
and we shall hope in you for the restoration of our life.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> καὶ ἰάσεται (רָוַי, ἐπιστρέφω in Aquila or Theodotion) κύριος τὰς ἀμαρτίας σου καὶ ἐλεήσει σε καὶ πάλιν συνάξει σε ἐκ πάντων τῶν ἔθνων, εἰς οὓς διεσκόρπισέν σε κύριος ἐκεῖ.

<sup>51</sup> For a survey of the issue of the messianism as expressed by the *Pss. Sol.*, see Joseph Trafton, “What Would David Do?,” in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology*, ed. E. Bons and P. Pouchelle, EJL 40 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2015), 155–74; and Patrick Pouchelle, “Les Psaumes de Salomon: Le point sur les questions posées par un ‘messie’ trop étudié,” in *Encyclopédie des messianismes juifs dans l’Antiquité*, ed. D. Hamidović, X. Leveils and C. Mézange (Leuven: Peeters, 2018), 153–203.

<sup>52</sup> Translation is mine.

*Pss. Sol.* 9:6 explains that a covenant concluded with the father applies to the sons (i.e., the descendants) as though inspired directly by Deut 29:23.<sup>53</sup> The second hemistich marks the hope the psalmist places in God (collocation with ἐπί, a typically psalmic expression; see for instance *Pss* 5:12; 9:11). The double collocation with ἐπὶ and ἐν is unusual but it is possible that it denotes a complement of cause: “we hope in you owing to (or during) the restoration of our life.”<sup>54</sup> Indeed, the collocation ἐπιστροφή ψυχῆς is a hapax of the Septuagint, but the collocation ἐπιστρέφω ψυχὴν always means “to restore the life.”<sup>55</sup> In *Pss. Sol.* 16:11, moreover, I would argue that it is not so clear that ἐπιστροφή means “conversion” here:

γογγυσμὸν καὶ ὀλιγοψυχίαν ἐν θλίψει μάκρυνον ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ, ἐὰν ἁμαρτήσω ἐν τῷ σε παιδεύειν εἰς ἐπιστροφήν  
 Grumbling and faint-heartedness in affliction keep far from me, when, if I sin, you discipline me for a return.

The issue is whether ἐπιστροφή should be attributed to “me”—which would imply a conversion<sup>56</sup>—or to God—which would imply a restoration or a return.<sup>57</sup> This verse may refer in an opposite way to the situation described by Jeremiah<sup>58</sup> where the people did not want to accept the discipline and convert. *Pss. Sol.* 16:11, rather, builds a typology between the situation of the Solomonic psalmist and the people in wilderness. Indeed, the grumbling (γογγυσμός) is what the people experienced in the wilderness,<sup>59</sup> the discouragement (ὀλιγοψυχία) what they felt in Egypt (Exod 6:9), but this could also refer to the episode of the Bronze Serpent (Num 21:4) where the usual discouragement of the people is expressed by the verb ὀλιγοψυχέω.

Yet, according to MT Deut 8:5, the people have been disciplined in the wilderness in preparation to enter the promised land.<sup>60</sup> The Solomonic psalmists do not want to reproduce the errors of their fathers. Should the typology work, the return from Exile<sup>61</sup> could also be understood as the result

<sup>53</sup> Ὅτι κατελίποσαν τὴν διαθήκην κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν πατέρων αὐτῶν, ἃ διέθετο τοῖς πατράσιν αὐτῶν “Because they abandoned the covenant of the Lord, the God of their fathers, which he made with their fathers (NETS).”

<sup>54</sup> I acknowledge that my translation is against virtually all the main modern translations. See *NETS* (Atkinson): “in you when we return our souls toward you.” See also Kenneth Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord: A Study of the Psalms of Solomon’s Historical Background and Social Setting*, JSJSupp 84 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 190; and Kenneth Atkinson, *An Intertextual Study of the Psalms of Solomon*, Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 49 (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2001), 206. Similarly Robert B. Wright, *The Psalms of Solomon: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text*, Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies 1 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 133, and his former translation (OTP 2:661); Mikael Winnige, *Sinners and the Righteous: A Comparative Study of the Psalms of Solomon and Paul’s Letters*, CBNT 26 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1995), 70; and Herbert E. Ryle and Montague R. James, *Psalms of the Pharisees* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1891), 95. See also “in der Bekehrung unserer Seele” in Svend Holm-Nielsen, *Die Psalmen Salomos*, Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit 4/2 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlaghaus, 1977), 84; “et nous nous convertirons” in Pierre Prigent, “Psaumes de Salomon,” *La Bible: Ecrits intertestamentaires*, La bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), 974.

<sup>55</sup> 3 Kgs [= MT 1 Kings] 17:21; *Pss* 18[19]:8; 22[23]:2, Ruth 4:15, and 1 Macc 9:9. See also Ps 6:4. Of course, in NT, this substantive always means something related to conversion (according to *BDAG*), but in the LXX it could convey the whole semantic field of ἐπιστρέφω. See, e.g., Ezek 47:7, 11. See also Jer 51[44]:14 for the association of ἐλπίζω and ἐπιστρέφω.

<sup>56</sup> So Holm-Nielsen, *Die Psalmen Salomos*, 96.

<sup>57</sup> Viz., “to return me” (NETS); see also Wright, *The Psalms of Solomon*, 173. “Pour me ramener (à toi),” so Prigent, “Psaumes de Salomon,” 983.

<sup>58</sup> E.g., Jer 5:3 καὶ οὐκ ἠθέλησαν δέξασθαι παιδείαν· ἐστερέωσαν τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν ὑπὲρ πέτραν καὶ οὐκ ἠθέλησαν ἐπιστραφῆναι.

<sup>59</sup> See Exod 16:9–12 and Num 17:20 and 25.

<sup>60</sup> “Know then in your heart that as a parent disciplines a child so the LORD your God disciplines you” (NRSV). On that matter, see also Patrick Pouchelle, “Prayers for Being Disciplined: Notes on παιδεύω and παιδεία in the Psalms of Solomon,” in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology*, ed. E. Bons and P. Pouchelle, EJL 40 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2015), 128.

<sup>61</sup> See also Tob 14:4 for denoting the return to the land with the verb ἐπιστρέφω.

of the divine discipline, in agreement with the argument of the divine discipline in Lev 26:18, 23, and 28. In this case, *Pss. Sol.* 16:11 may resonate with Sir 18:13:<sup>62</sup>

ἔλεος ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ,  
 ἔλεος δὲ κυρίου ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα·  
 ἐλέγχων καὶ παιδεύων καὶ διδάσκων  
 καὶ ἐπιστρέφων ὡς ποιμὴν τὸ ποίμνιον αὐτοῦ.  
 τοὺς ἐκδεχομένους παιδείαν ἔλεᾱ  
 καὶ τοὺς κατασπεύδοντας ἐπὶ τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ.

The compassion of human beings is for their neighbors,  
 but the compassion of the Lord is for every living thing.  
 He rebukes and trains and teaches them,  
 and turns them back, as a shepherd his flock.  
 He has compassion on those who accept his discipline  
 and who are eager for his precepts.

Therefore, in my view, there are very few if any iterations of conversion in the *Pss. Sol.* expressed by the family of ἐπιστρέφω. Moreover, μετανοέω and its derivatives are completely absent. The unique μεταμέλεια<sup>63</sup> may well refer to the more frequent μεταμελέομαι/μεταμέλομαι. This verb denotes the regret or repentance of God but is attributed to the righteous once in Prov 5:11, where such a person regrets not having paid attention to the discipline. Hence, it is debatable whether its appearance in *Pss. Sol.* 9:7 belongs to the semantic field of repentance or of that of regret linked with shame.<sup>64</sup>

Associated with repentance and expressed by the same wordings as in Deut 30:1–3, is the petition for forgiveness as uttered in 1 Kings 8, joined to prayer and confession. In the prayer of Solomon, the atonement is not given through a sacrifice and is conditioned by its setting in the Temple. According to Embry,<sup>65</sup> the use of the verb δέομαι in the *Pss. Sol.* shows that some of these texts were also considered as prayers for the Temple. But a significant difference could be found with prayers like 1 Kings 8; there is no petition for forgiveness in *Pss. Sol.* In fact, the two Greek terms for prayer, δέησις and προσευχή, are found in the *Pss. Sol.* in contexts relatively close to the prayer of Solomon, but *Pss. Sol.* affirm that God is actually listening the prayer: τὰ ὠτά σου ἐπακούει εἰς δέησιν πτωχοῦ ἐν ἐλπίδι (Ps 18:2).<sup>66</sup> In *Pss. Sol.* 18, the Solomonic psalmist seems confident on the results of the prayer (see also *Pss. Sol.* 6:5) when the author of 1 Kings 8 wrote a petition (1 Kgs 8:29, 44, 52). The same certitude is expressed by *Pss. Sol.* 5:5:

<sup>62</sup>In Pouchelle, “Prayers for Being Disciplined,” 125–6, I underscored the connection made by Winninge between Sir 23:2–3 and *Pss. Sol.* 13. This is another case of shared ideas between Sirach and *Pss. Sol.*, which tends to confirm that the divine discipline is exerted so as to bring the righteous back to God.

<sup>63</sup>*Pss. Sol.* 9:7. For the unique use of this substantive in the other text of the LXX (Hos 11:8), see Eberhard Bons, *Les douze prophètes: Osée, La Bible d’Alexandrie 23/1* (Paris: Cerf, 2002), 145–6.

<sup>64</sup>Expressed with αἰσχύνη in *Pss. Sol.* 9:6.

<sup>65</sup>For a study of the verb in the *Pss. Sol.*, see Embry, “Prayer in Psalms of Solomon,” 92–5.

<sup>66</sup>“Your ears listen to the prayer of the poor (who is) in hope.”



καὶ σὺ οὐκ ἀποστρέψῃ τὴν δέησιν ἡμῶν,<sup>67</sup> ὅτι σὺ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν εἶ

And you will not reject our prayer because you are our God.

*Pss. Sol.* 2:22–25 is an example of such divine efficiency. The Solomonic psalmist wished that the Dragon (Pompey?) would be punished by God, and God hears his prayer! This is marvelously expressed by the repetition of the verb *χρονίζω*.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, the prayer is uttered with the clear certitude that God has heard the petitioner. It is striking how the imperative (and the subjunctive in a negative way) is not really used in the *Pss. Sol.* for denoting a petition to God. As seen before, *Pss. Sol.* 2:22–25 are false examples as the psalm continues by explaining the efficacy of the prayer. The examples of petitions are hope for salvation,<sup>69</sup> for the pity of God,<sup>70</sup> for softening the discipline.<sup>71</sup> *Pss. Sol.* 16, the most petitionary text of the collection, requests God to remain close to the psalmists (*Pss. Sol.* 16:6), to not leave them to the sins (*Pss. Sol.* 16:7–8, 11), and to guide or strengthen them (*Pss. Sol.* 16:10 and 12). There is no trace of petition for atonement, only the fear of being abandoned by God.

While it is not possible to prove that the repentance is completely absent from the corpus, it remains that it is not a central concept. Even if the equivocal expression in *Pss. Sol.* 16:10 could be interpreted as denoting “repentance,” this notion is not of crucial importance for the Solomonic Psalmist. Moreover, the two specific verbs found in Deut 4, “to seek” and “to find,” are absent from the *Pss. Sol.*<sup>72</sup> Even ἀκούω, so frequently encountered in the Deuteronomic ideology, seems to be used in the *Pss. Sol.* in ways other than in Deuteronomy: (i) to hear the noise of wars;<sup>73</sup> (ii) for God to hear the prayer of the people;<sup>74</sup> and only once (iii) to hear or obey God.<sup>75</sup> The disobedience of the people regarding the words of the Lord is only expressed once in *Pss. Sol.* 2:8, and God or the voice of God is only implicit:

ὅτι πονηρὰ ἐποίησαν εἰς ἅπαξ τοῦ μὴ ἀκούειν

Because they made evil things at once for not listening

Other usual Deuteronomic vocabulary is absent or used in uncommon ways. For instance, φυλάσσω (רמז) in the *Pss. Sol.* always has God as subject<sup>76</sup> and never denotes the obedience of the people regarding the law.

<sup>67</sup>The collocation ἀποστρέφω τὴν δέησιν is unique to the Septuagint, but could refer to Ps 21[21]:24: ὅτι οὐκ ἐξουδένωσεν οὐδὲ προσώχθισεν τῇ δεήσει τοῦ πτωχοῦ οὐδὲ ἀπέστρεψεν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ κεκραγέναι με πρὸς αὐτὸν εἰσήκουσέν μου.

<sup>68</sup>μὴ χρονίσης, ὁ θεός, τοῦ ἀποδοῦναι αὐτοῖς εἰς κεφαλᾶς (cf. 3 Kings [= MT 1 Kings] 8:32) τοῦ εἰπεῖν τὴν ὑπερηφανίαν τοῦ δράκοντος ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ (v. 25) followed by Καὶ οὐκ ἐχρόνισα ἕως ἔδειξέν μοι ὁ θεός τὴν ὕβριν αὐτοῦ (26).

<sup>69</sup>*Pss. Sol.* 8:27–28, in Deuteronomic terms (see above) or *Pss. Sol.* 12:1, from the evil people (close to expression found in canonical psalms, see, e.g., Ps 6:5; 7:2; 16[17]:13).

<sup>70</sup>*Pss. Sol.* 9:8.

<sup>71</sup>*Pss. Sol.* 5:6.

<sup>72</sup>The verb “to find” εὐρίσκω occurs three times in the negative form to denote the inexistence (*Pss. Sol.* 13:11; 14:9; 15:11) and once to express the fact that God will retribute sinners according to their work (*Pss. Sol.* 17:8).

<sup>73</sup>*Pss. Sol.* 8:1.4 (see also *Pss. Sol.* 8:5 with ἀκοή).

<sup>74</sup>*Pss. Sol.* 1:2; 5:12; 7:7; 18:2 (ἐπακούω, see Embry, “Prayer in Psalms of Solomon,” 95–6); 6:5 (εἰσακούω).

<sup>75</sup>*Pss. Sol.* 2:8 (cf. Jer 18:10).

<sup>76</sup>*Pss. Sol.* 6:2, 12:5.

In conclusion, the tenuous links with Deuteronomy 4 and 30 and 1 Kings 8 offer little support to characterize the *Pss. Sol.* as Deuteronomic. The sin–punishment ideology may be clear but the repentance–restoration hope is imperceptible.

## 2. ... NOR FULLY PRIESTLY

The absence of the Deuteronomic themes of penitence and petition for forgiveness in the *Pss. Sol.* may indicate a reliance on the sin–punishment–confession–remembrance schema of Leviticus 26. The evidence, however, indicates otherwise. The verb ἐξαγορεύω is not present, although the derived substantive ἐξαγορία is mentioned once as an indication for atonement in *Pss. Sol.* 9:6. The same could be said about remembrance. The verb μνησκόω is more used for denoting the fact that the sinners will never be remembered,<sup>77</sup> than with God as subject.<sup>78</sup>

Yet, the influence of priestly traditions is obvious. The punishment is meted out “according to the sins of the sinners” (*Pss. Sol.* 2:7, 16), which is to be compared to Lev 26:28: καὶ παιδεύσω ὑμᾶς ἐγὼ ἐπτάκις κατὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ὑμῶν. Hence, the notion of discipline, so important for the *Pss. Sol.*,<sup>79</sup> may be rooted in Leviticus 26 and not only Deut 8:5. Moreover, retribution according to the sins is rendered explicit with the punishment described by the psalmist: the defilement of the altar by the foreigner is possible only because the temple has been defiled before (*Pss. Sol.* 2:2–3). Otherwise said, this is the punishment received, understood, and accepted, which reveals that the one who was punished is in a state of sin, and how the system of purity and holiness was neglected. The temple has been profaned (*Pss. Sol.* 1:8) and polluted (2:3). The offerings have been profaned (*Pss. Sol.* 2:3) and the sacrifice meal polluted (*Pss. Sol.* 8:12). A little bit more surprisingly, Jerusalem and all that has been sanctified to the name of God (*Pss. Sol.* 8:22) have also been polluted. This corresponds to the hope that the Messiah will sanctify Jerusalem as it was in the beginning (*Pss. Sol.* 17:22, 30).<sup>80</sup>

Pollution and profanation of what is holy is one of the issues of the sacerdotal tradition. One may make a difference between profanation (i.e., to deal with a holy thing as if it was not holy) and pollution (i.e., to transform a holy thing into an impure one).<sup>81</sup> This corresponds to the classic distinction made by Milgrom between what is holy and what is profane, and between what is pure and what is impure.<sup>82</sup>

As for profanation, the Solomonic psalmist has probably in mind the certain unacceptable conduct of priests, according to the book of Leviticus,<sup>83</sup> even if this is also a prophetic concern.<sup>84</sup> The expression ἐβεβηλοῦσαν τὰ δῶρα τοῦ θεοῦ is unique to the Psalms of Solomon.<sup>85</sup> In Leviticus, there are some regulations concerning specifically τὰ δῶρα τοῦ θεοῦ: it shall be salted.<sup>86</sup> The high

<sup>77</sup> *Pss. Sol.* 3:11, 4:21, 14:7.

<sup>78</sup> *Pss. Sol.* 10:1, 4.

<sup>79</sup> Pouchelle, “Prayers for Being Disciplined,” 115–32.

<sup>80</sup> See Trafton, “What Would David Do?” 166–8.

<sup>81</sup> See especially Embry, “Psalms of Assurance,” 173, who reminds that μαινώω is rather used for denoting the effect of moral impurity.

<sup>82</sup> Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 3A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1991), 616.

<sup>83</sup> See, for instance, Lev 19:4; 22:12.

<sup>84</sup> See, for instance, especially Ezek 22:26, but also Zech 3:4; Mal 2:11.

<sup>85</sup> One may wonder if the expression ἐβεβηλοῦσαν τὰ δῶρα τοῦ θεοῦ is not the abbreviation of οὐ βεβηλώσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ αὐτῶν· τὰς γὰρ θυσίας κυρίου δῶρα τοῦ θεοῦ αὐτῶν (Lev 21:6).

<sup>86</sup> Lev 2:3.

priest who offers it should be in a state of holiness.<sup>87</sup> Neither he<sup>88</sup> nor the offerings should have a defect.<sup>89</sup> Finally, one could not have eaten a meal before the offering of the first fruits.<sup>90</sup> It is not clear what the Solomonic Psalmist had in mind in this regard, but the expression used may well refer to the acts of the high priest<sup>91</sup> that affect his holiness and the holiness of the offering.

The mention of pollution is even more polemical. In Leviticus, the pollution of “the sacred things” is mentioned once in the context with the sacrifice to Moloch.<sup>92</sup> The pollution of the sacrifice is never mentioned. But the expression ἐν ἀφένδρω αἵματος ἐμίαναν τὰς θυσίας ὡς κρέα βέβηλα<sup>93</sup> (*Pss. Sol.* 8:12) seems to point to the inappropriate sexual conduct of the priests. Becoming impure,<sup>94</sup> they would pollute the sanctuary as well as the sacrifice.<sup>95</sup> Another sexual polemic occurs in *Pss. Sol.* 2:13: ἐμιαίωσαν αὐτὰς ἐν φουρμῷ ἀναμείξεως. The expression ἐν φουρμῷ ἀναμείξεως is unique. Outside the *Pss. Sol.*, the word φουρμός occurs only in Ezek 7:23, where it corresponds to a difficult Hebrew word קוּחַר “chain.”<sup>96</sup> Whereas the MT develops an uncertain meaning by asking Ezekiel to make “a chain,” the Septuagint is more logical by carrying on the image of the people who act perversely by “disorderly conduct.”<sup>97</sup> The *Pss. Sol.* uses this image and makes it more precise with the noun ἀνάμιξις, a hapax of the LXX. This is the *nomen actionis* of the verb ἀναμίγνυμι that occurs nine times in the LXX. In Ezek 22:18, it describes Israel as an alloy that is impure.<sup>98</sup> In Dan 2:41, it describes the foot of the statue in the king’s dream that is composed of a mixture of clay and iron. There, it corresponds to the root ערב, which is used in the MT to denote illegal or illicit union<sup>99</sup> and especially in Esd 9:2 dealing with intermarriage.<sup>100</sup> Other important sexual matters in the *Pss. Sol.* are incest<sup>101</sup> and adultery.<sup>102</sup>

Even so, some details link the sins specified in the *Pss. Sol.* to Deuteronomy. Some punishments are expressed in a Deuteronomistic manner; compare here, for instance, *Pss. Sol.* 2:6 with Deut 28:41.<sup>103</sup> Surprisingly, the question of profanation and defilement is absent from the *Pss. Sol.* 17, even if one of the tasks of the Messiah is to make Jerusalem holy again. Perhaps the conflation of the kingship and high priesthood might have been an issue if this text denounces the Hasmonean

<sup>87</sup> Lev 21:5–8.

<sup>88</sup> Lev 21:16–23.

<sup>89</sup> Lev 22:21–25.

<sup>90</sup> Lev 23:9–14.

<sup>91</sup> See, for instance, 2 Esd 9:7 and 1 Esd 8:87 = (Esd 9:15), or Ezek 20:30.

<sup>92</sup> Lev 20:3 LXX: ἄρχων.

<sup>93</sup> For this expression, see Ezek 4:14 in its Lucianic version: οὐδὲ εἰσελήλυθεν εἰς τὸ στόμα μου πᾶν κρέας βέβηλον (instead of ἔωλον attested in the Vaticanus) where the prophet asserts that he never eats such meals.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Lev 15:33.

<sup>95</sup> See, e.g., Num 19:20.

<sup>96</sup> 3 Kgs [= MT 1 Kings] 6:21.

<sup>97</sup> See LSJ.

<sup>98</sup> MT גִּיס for “dregs.”

<sup>99</sup> See, for instance, Ps 106:35 LXX: μίγνυμι.

<sup>100</sup> In Greek, 2 Esd 9:2, παράγω, but 1 Esd 8:67, ἐπιμίγνυμι; see also 1 Esd 8:84 and Ezek 16:37.

<sup>101</sup> *Pss. Sol.* 8:9. See the analysis of Jan Joosten, “The Accusation of Incest in Psalms of Solomon 8:9: Apologetics, Halakha, and Exegesis,” in *Tempel, Lehrhaus, Synagoge: Orte jüdischen Lernens und Lebens: Festschrift für Wolfgang Krause*, ed. C. Eberhardt, M. Karrer, S. Kreuzer, and M. Meiser (Leiden: Schöningh, 2020), 205–15.

<sup>102</sup> *Pss. Sol.* 8:10 with ἐμοιχῶντο ἕκαστος τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ πλησίον αὐτοῦ as a clear transgression of the seventh and tenth commandment, as well as the law established in Lev 20:9. See also Ezek 18:6.

<sup>103</sup> οἱ υἱοὶ καὶ αἱ θυγατέρες ἐν αἰχμαλωσίᾳ πονηρᾷ and υἱοὺς καὶ θυγατέρας γεννήσεις, καὶ οὐκ ἔσονταί σοι ἀπελεύσονται γὰρ ἐν αἰχμαλωσίᾳ. See also *Pss. Sol.* 2:1 and Deut 28:52, or *Pss. Sol.* 4:19–20 and Deut 28:26.

dynasty (*Pss. Sol.* 17:5–6), as it is usually thought. In fact, the text alludes to the oath that God made to David and his dynasty (*Pss. Sol.* 17:4), claiming that some people have illegally taken the power. Moreover, in *Pss. Sol.* 1, the sins are explained by the fact that the sinners were exalted up to the stars, an issue also found in Deuteronomy.<sup>104</sup> Such improper exaltation is the cause for forgetting the good things God has done for his people. Their good things of which they boast (*Pss. Sol.* 1:6) may well be an ironic allusion to the good things that God has done for his people.<sup>105</sup> The emphasis on the fact that the sinners have committed more sins than the nations (*Pss. Sol.* 1:8 and 8:13) may be alluded to also in *Pss. Sol.* 2:9 and 17:14. All this seems to refer to the sin of Manasseh<sup>106</sup> and is expressed in Deuteronomic terms. In 1 Macc 7:23, however, this is what characterizes the acts of Alcimus who tried to become High Priest.<sup>107</sup> The importance of the sins made in secret<sup>108</sup> could refer to the syntagma <sup>109</sup>בסתֵר, a conduct that is clearly inappropriate for the king.<sup>110</sup> However, this is also a prophetic concern,<sup>111</sup> and also one that is found in the Psalms.<sup>112</sup> Curiously, this important notion is not present in the sacerdotal tradition with such wordings.

To conclude this section, the *Pss. Sol.* does not offer a “priestly” scheme as opposed to the Deuteronomic one. The sins highlighted by the *Pss. Sol.* are related to holiness yet are also eclectic. It combines sins related to purity, profanation, and defilement with notions that are more specifically Deuteronomic, including the sins of the king, the sins done in secret, and the sin of hubris. How did the Solomonic psalmist manage to merge such notions?

### 3. AN ORIGINAL ANSWER ROOTED IN SCRIPTURE

If there is no petition for atonement in the *Pss. Sol.*, this is because the Solomonic psalmist takes seriously the priestly system of atonement, even if the altar or the temple is defiled. The verbs used by *Pss. Sol.* for denoting atonement are always related to the priestly traditions. For instance, Lev<sup>LXX</sup> 5:13, which deals with unintentional sins, uses ἐξιλάσκομαι (*Pss. Sol.* 3:8) and ἀφίημι (*Pss. Sol.* 9:6). The concern to be purified from sins is a reference to the Day of Atonement.<sup>113</sup> It is found many times in *Pss. Sol.*,<sup>114</sup> and may refer to moral impurities. If we come back to the sins committed in secret, discussed above, it is possible that the key for the interpretation is the substantive ἄγνοια.<sup>115</sup> In *Pss. Sol.* 3:8, the Solomonic Psalmist offers a substitute to the sacrifices: ἐξιλάσατο περὶ ἀγνοίας ἐν νηστείᾳ

<sup>104</sup> See, for instance, Deut 8:14; 17:20.

<sup>105</sup> Deut 6:11; 26:11; 28:11; 30:9 but see also Num 10:32 and Mic 7:3.

<sup>106</sup> 3 Kgs [= MT 2 Kings] 21:9.

<sup>107</sup> 1 Macc 7:13–16.

<sup>108</sup> E.g., *Pss. Sol.* 1:7.

<sup>109</sup> Deut 13:7; 27:15, 24; 28:57.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. 2 Kgs [= MT 2 Sam] 12:12.

<sup>111</sup> See, e.g., Isa 45:19; 48:16.

<sup>112</sup> Ps 101:5, also expressed with במסתֵר, see *Pss. Sol.* 10:9, 17:12, 64:5. In Greek, the syntagma ἐν ἀποκρύφοις (*Pss. Sol.* 1:7; 4:5) with ἀπόκρυφος in plural is found in psalms only (Ps 9:29[10:8]; 16[17]:12; 63[64]:5) with such meaning (see also Sir 16:21, speaking of God).

<sup>113</sup> Lev 16:30, the sole mention in Leviticus of purification from sin. Otherwise, one is purified from leprosy (Lev 13–14) or from a discharge (22:4), and for a woman from having giving birth or after her period (e.g., Lev 12:8). See also the LXX of Exod 34:7 and Num 14:18.

<sup>114</sup> *Pss. Sol.* 3:8; 9:6; 10:1–2; 17:22, 30; 18:5 and the adjective καθαρός (17:36).

<sup>115</sup> *Pss. Sol.* 3:8; 13:7; 18:4. In *Pss. Sol.* 18:4 the vocabulary is sapiential: ἡ παιδεία σου ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς ὡς υἱὸν πρωτότοκον μονογενῆ ἀποστρέψαι ψυχὴν εὐήκοον ἀπὸ ἀμαθίας ἐν ἄγνοιά. The fact that a son should be obedient to the discipline of his father is

καὶ ταπεινώσει ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ, which is a clear reference to the Day of Atonement<sup>116</sup> and atonement for unintentional<sup>117</sup> sins in Lev 5:33.<sup>118</sup> Should it be the case, the tradition of interpretation conveyed by the *Pss. Sol.* may well have developed the idea that sinners sin in secret, as denounced mainly by Deuteronomy, whereas the righteous sin unwillingly.<sup>119</sup> The question is how could such a person know? *Pss. Sol.* 3, which features a sharp comparison between the righteous and the sinner, offers an answer: the divine discipline. Both righteous and sinner committed sins (or are sinners) and thus both deserve discipline,<sup>120</sup> but only the righteous praise the Lord and can examine their life to avoid any sins made in ignorance.<sup>121</sup> If we accept the idea that the sins are a community matter rather than purely individual, then sins committed by sinners in secret cause the righteous to be in a state of sin. This is precisely what occurs to Jerusalem in *Pss. Sol.* 1,<sup>122</sup> which may refer to the regulations concerning unwillingly sins:

<sup>3</sup> Or when you touch human uncleanness—any uncleanness by which one can become unclean—and are unaware of it, when you come to know it, you shall be guilty. ...<sup>5</sup> When you realize your guilt in any of these, you shall confess the sin that you have committed. (Lev 5:3, 5)

Where Leviticus 5:5 describes how to be purified of impurities, in *Pss. Sol.* the issue is with moral impurities, enacted out of ignorance. When people come to realize this by reading Leviticus, they shall confess and then they will be atoned through the sacrifice made by the priest. In *Pss. Sol.*, there is no mention of sacrifice. Moreover, in *Pss. Sol.* 9:6, the purification is made through praise and confessions (ἐν ἔξομολογήσει, ἐν ἔξαγορίαῖς). This idea is unusual. If ἔξομολογήσις is a psalmic term, it is never said that the purification of sins comes through a praise. The merging of such a cultic terminology with a psalmic term never occurs as such in the psalms. Yet, the fact that atonement is given after a praise could be found in the prayer of Solomon (1 Kgs 8:33):

<sup>33</sup> When your people Israel are defeated before enemies because they have sinned against you and they turn and confess (ἔξομολογέω) your name and pray and are bound at this house,<sup>34</sup> then may you listen from heaven and be merciful toward the sins of your servant Israel and may you bring them back to the land that you gave to their fathers.

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a topos of the Proverbs. The substantive ἀμαθία means literary “not taught” and is a hapax of the Septuagint. Symmachus used it in Prov 14:24 and Qoh 2:13 for denouncing the fools. Then the mention “ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ” seems relatively redundant in *Pss. Sol.* 18:4. *Pss. Sol.* 13:7–8 follows this idea, particularly in his Syriac version. In Syriac, the difficult, ἐν περιστολῇ, is rendered by ܐܘܢܝܢܐ “who is in knowledge.” For the Syriac translator, the righteous are disciplined for the sins they made unknowingly, whereas sinners are punished for the sins they made in conscience. The Greek version does not support this idea completely. See also Patrick Pouchelle, “Critique textuelle et traduction du treizième Psaume de Salomon,” *JSJ* 42 (2011): 508–30; Embry, “Psalms of Assurance,” 199–200.

<sup>116</sup> See Atkinson, “Perceptions of the Temple Priests,” 92–3, and Embry, “Psalms of Assurance,” 199–200.

<sup>117</sup> For the relationship with ܡܘܨܐ, see below.

<sup>118</sup> καὶ ἐξιλιάσεται περὶ αὐτοῦ ὁ ἱερεὺς περὶ τῆς ἀγνοίας αὐτοῦ, ἧς ἠγνόησεν καὶ αὐτὸς οὐκ ᾔδει, καὶ ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ.

<sup>119</sup> Should it be the case, then ἐν περιστολῇ could well refer to the secret sins of the sinners and be attached to *Pss. Sol.* 13:7 rather than to *Pss. Sol.* 13:8.

<sup>120</sup> *Pss. Sol.* 3:5.9.

<sup>121</sup> *Pss. Sol.* 3:5–8. Of course, a way to avoid committing sins without being able to know clearly them is to make a safety fence around the Torah (*Pirqe 'Abot* 1).

<sup>122</sup> See also Embry, “Psalms of Assurance,” 194.

Moreover, *Pss. Sol.* 9:6 also contains “ἐν ἑξαγορίαις,” a hapax of the Septuagint. This means “confessions” and is also a substantive derived from the verb ἑξαγορεύω (usually corresponding to hit. הִתְּ). This is possibly a reference to Lev 5:5<sup>123</sup> (see above), where when one becomes aware of one’s sin, this sin shall be confessed before the sacrifice. Hence, *Pss. Sol.* 1 may well be an example of confession: αἱ ἁμαρτίαι αὐτῶν ἐν ἀποκρύφοις, καὶ ἐγὼ οὐκ ᾔδειν (v. 7), that is, “their sins were in secret and I did not know.”

Other parts of the scriptures are convocated. One should also notice that in *Pss. Sol.* 10:1, the purification is done so that the sins of the righteous do not become too numerous.<sup>124</sup> Still in *Pss. Sol.* 10 the purification is made through the whips (μάστιξι) of the discipline (παιδεία in vv. 2–3). This is also in accordance with the assertion made in *Pss. Sol.* 13:10: τὰ παραπτώματα<sup>125</sup> αὐτῶν ἐξαλείψει ἐν παιδείᾳ. The verb ἐξαλείφω is another verb used in *Pss. Sol.* to denote forgiveness. It means “to erase,”<sup>126</sup> but it is also used to refer to the removal of sins in Ps 50[51]:3, 10.<sup>127</sup> The same Psalm also employs the concept of being purified of sins (Ps 50[51]:4). Moreover, it is striking to notice that *Pss. Sol.* 3:8 joins together fasting and humbling for atonement, which is also implicitly linked to the same canonical psalm. Indeed, the verb ταπεινῶ occurs in Ps 50[51]:17 “The sacrifice to God ... is a humiliated heart.” Psalm 50[51] is attributed to the repentant David, who fasted after his sin (2 Sam 12:16), which suggests an interesting interpretation: When the son of David became ill, David did not go to the House of the Lord but fasted and humiliated himself. Only following his son’s death did David go to the House of the Lord, implicitly to justify the decision of God (Ps 50[51]:6), after which Bathsheba gave birth to Solomon. In Ps 50[51], the psalmist asserts that God did not want any sacrifice apart from a broken heart (18–19), as for the Psalmist, he only requested from God that he do good to Zion and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, and then sacrifice would again become possible.<sup>128</sup>

Three main objections could be raised against the argument above about the significance of proximity between the concept of sin in *Pss. Sol.* and the sin of David: (1) the psalmist asks for atonement (Ps 50[51]:4, 9, 11), whereas the Solomonic psalmist does not; (2) the Solomonic psalmist does not hope in a return to sacrifice; (3) the sin of David was not a sin made “ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ.”<sup>129</sup> To answer to the first objection, we could consider Ps 31[32] as this psalm expresses the fact that the psalmist is actually forgiven, and that this atonement has been made after a confession:

I said, “I will confess (ἑξαγορεύω) my transgressions to the Lord,”  
and you forgave (ἀφίημι) the guilt of my sin (Ps 31[32]:5).

<sup>123</sup> The verb also occurs unexpectedly in 3 Kgs [= MT 1 Sam] 8:31: καὶ ἔλθη καὶ ἑξαγορεύσῃ (heb: הִתְּ, the usual correspondent of ἀράομαι) κατὰ πρόσωπον τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου σου ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ. These verses deal with an individual who has sinned and has to confess before the altar of the Lord.

<sup>124</sup> See also *Pss. Sol.* 3:6–8 for the same idea.

<sup>125</sup> For this word, see Pouchelle, “Critique textuelle,” 541.

<sup>126</sup> In the Pentateuch it rather means “to erase” the memory of someone (e.g., Exod 32:32, for such a usage see also *Pss. Sol.* 2:17).

<sup>127</sup> Cf. also Ps 108[109]:14.

<sup>128</sup> See also Embry, “Psalms of Assurance,” 200. He regards “fasting” and “humiliation” as two different categories, while I would deal with them as essentially synonyms.

<sup>129</sup> That is to say, this is not a ritual impurity but a moral one.



Even if, in the *Pss. Sol.*, the righteous never actually confess their own sins by saying “we have sinned,” the analysis of the phrase ἐν ἐξαγοραίας above shows the *Pss. Sol.* could express such confessions of being in a state of sin. Confession would be a substitute for sacrifice so that if the confession is made, through the act of uttering the Solomonic psalms, then the atonement is granted, as the sins were made (or received) ἐν ἀγνοία.

Second, it is striking that although the profanation of the Temple seems to be the issue in *Pss. Sol.* 1, 2 and 8, it is never stated that the Temple will be dedicated another time; in other words, the theme of the purification and restoration of the Temple is not part of *Pss. Sol.*<sup>130</sup> This is particularly curious in light of 2 Macc 6:12, which claims that the harsh events are divine discipline and occurred specifically after the fall of Jerusalem and the profanation of the Temple. The rededication then follows in ch. 10. This is not the case in the *Pss. Sol.* The hope for restoration expressed in *Pss. Sol.* 17 is for the sanctification of Jerusalem and not just the Temple.<sup>131</sup> Is this due to a sort of headlong rush where, after the Antiochian crisis, the dedication of the Temple and the disastrous cultic mingling between high-priesthood and kingship by the Hasmonean, nothing is expected except the restoration to the state where the whole people is holy, as it was before the golden calf?

Third, the sin of David is not unintentional. The absence of the notion of repentance seems to confirm a kind of predestination. The righteous has been chosen by God as such by pure grace,<sup>132</sup> so that it is simply not possible for them to sin willingly. It is perhaps possible that *Pss. Sol.* develops a more subtle point. The psalmist seems to allow a sinner who has sinned to be forgiven. This may be expressed specifically by *Pss. Sol.* 9:7: καὶ τίνι ἀφήσεις ἀμαρτίας εἰ μὴ τοῖς ἡμαρτηκόσιν. Moreover, the experience of David seems to correspond to that of Lev 4:23:

When a ruler sins, doing unintentionally (הִגֵּדֶנָּה) any one of all the things that by commandments of the Lord his God ought not to be done and incurs guilt, once the sin that he has committed is made known to him

The Hebrew הִגֵּדֶנָּה (corresponding to ἄγνοια in Lev 5:18; 22:14) does not necessarily infer that a person does not know he or she has violated a divine commandment. This could also denote a sin done willingly but without an unawareness of the wrongness of one’s action.<sup>133</sup> An example is the sin of Saul against David: Then Saul said, “I have done wrong; come back, my son David, for I will never harm you again, because my life was precious in your sight today; I have been a *fool*, and have made a great mistake.” This is why a “revelation” is necessary. Of course, the sin of David is not qualified as an “error” (הִגֵּדֶנָּה), but the revelatory utterance of Nathan makes David aware of his sin. Another interpretation would be to assert that, in fact, for moral impurities, sacrifice could not be efficient, since they pertain only to ritual impurities or inadvertent sins. For moral sins, forgiveness had to come from God.

In fact, the Levitical regulation on the sins made הִגֵּדֶנָּה could allow us to delve a little bit deeper. The first regulations concern the sins of the high priests who lead the people to err. According

<sup>130</sup>For the issue of the Temple in the *Pss. Sol.*, see V. Babota, “The Temple in the Psalms of Solomon,” in *Psalms of Solomon: Collected Essays*, ed. F. Albrecht, K. Atkinson, and P. Pouchelle, Parabiblica 1 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming).

<sup>131</sup>A surprising fact noticed by Trafton, “What Would David Do?” 167.

<sup>132</sup>For the question of the relationship between grace and works in the *Pss. Sol.*, see Falk, “Psalms,” 37–8.

<sup>133</sup>See Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 228.

to Milgrom<sup>134</sup> vv. 3–21 form in fact a single case. The people err because the high priest sinned, perhaps even willingly. Indeed, what is striking is that the sin of the high priest is not qualified as having been made *בְּשִׁגְגָה*. The people are obviously not responsible for the sins made by the high priest but are considered sinners by association. The sins of the high priest are not made known to him, but the fact that the people are now in a state of sin becomes known, as if there is “no uninvolved outsider.”<sup>135</sup> Applied to the *Pss. Sol.*, this would be through the response of God in initiating a foreign attack on Jerusalem. This message of this action, so to speak, is to make Israel aware that something is wrong, owing to the sin of the high priest. *Pss. Sol.* 1 may mark an awareness of this reciprocal process by personifying Jerusalem as a metaphoric witness. The unforgivable sin would be to refuse the divine warning (*Pss. Sol.* 3:9–11), which also might explain why *Pss. Sol.* always confesses the sins of others only. The Solomonic psalmists feel guilty owing to the action of the high priests and wish to acknowledge the response/judgment of God and confess the sins of others by which they are now in a state of impurity. They do not have to justify themselves, only to understand history. When the righteous correctly interpret history as the just judgment of God and the judgment is accepted, atonement is granted, even if the salvation/restoration could be delayed. That would be the reason why there is some petition for salvation/restoration in the *Pss. Sol.* but not for atonement.

To conclude, although the atonement of sins is expressed in a “priestly” manner, there is no mention of valid sacrifice. For this absence, it could be a solution to the profanation of the Temple,<sup>136</sup> or the simple fact that this was not the aim of the *Pss. Sol.* to express the validity of sacrifice as it is best done by Leviticus,<sup>137</sup> but it could also be rooted in the traditions of praying, praising, and confessing witnessed in 1 Kings 8, Psalm 50[51], and Psalm 31[32]. In this way, the Solomonic psalmist may well refer to these prayers, creating a close connection between the praise and the confession on the one hand and the forgiveness on the other hand. After the desecration of the Temple, acknowledged as justified by the Solomonic psalmist,<sup>138</sup> the sin of the high priests has been revealed, and the sacrifice has been proved inoperative.<sup>139</sup> The example of David, or the reception of Psalm 50[51], may give strength to the Solomonic psalmist for understanding what God was trying to tell his people. The suffering of the righteous, understood as discipline,<sup>140</sup> or humbling, as well as uttering the *Pss. Sol.*, was conceived as what could replace the sacrifice, at least temporarily and for the impurities caused by the moral impurity of the priests.

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<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

<sup>136</sup> See Atkinson, “Perceptions of the Temple Priests,” 91–5.

<sup>137</sup> See Embry, “Psalms of assurance,” 211. This interpretation is very subtle and could lead us to think that what is at stake is not the defilement of the Temple but the nature of the sins of the high priests. As their sins were considered moral impurities they cannot be forgiven through sacrifice. Should we follow this line fully, the author of the *Pss. Sol.* could not be qualified as “dissident” (see Werline, “The Psalms of Solomon and the Ideology of Rule,” 85–6), but would only fulfill the scriptures: How does the system of atonement work after the fact that history has proved the high priest is guilty of moral impurities? This does not necessarily mean that the Temple was neglected, but once the atonement for such moral sins is given, the system of sacrifice offered by the Leviticus is sufficient. In this case, a text like *Pss. Sol.* 3 does not deal with any righteousness but offers a contrast between a righteous high priest and a wicked one and the “house” described is really the Temple (see Embry, “Psalms of Assurance,” 190–2).

<sup>138</sup> *Pss. Sol.* 2:15; 3:5; 4:8; 8:7, 23, 26; and 9:2.

<sup>139</sup> The profanation of the altar by foreigners is the punishment of the sinners who themselves profane the temple.

<sup>140</sup> See Pouchelle, “Prayers for being Disciplined,” 115–32 and its bibliography.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This short survey deserves more detailed research. But we have detected in the *Psalms of Solomon* influence of many parts of the scripture. No pattern identified fits completely our texts. Therefore, we fully agree with Werline when he nuances his own position, “The categories prove to be more a scholarly invention than the actual manner in which Ancient Jewish authors operated.”<sup>141</sup> There are some Deuteronomic influences, but one of the main elements of this theology, the repentance, is almost absent. There is instead a clear priestly influence. The sins deal mainly with the question of holiness and probably point toward the conduct of the wicked high priest. The vocabulary for forgiveness is related to the Levitical rules. Yet, the sacrifice is completely absent, having been replaced by fasting, humiliation, discipline, prayers, and confessions. This is probably owing to some influence of prayers, like that of Solomon, or the psalms. However, the petition for forgiveness is completely absent from the *Pss. Sol.*

Werline defined the penitential prayer as follows: “Penitential prayer is a direct address to God in which an individual, group, or an individual on behalf of a group confesses sins and petitions for forgiveness as an act of repentance.”<sup>142</sup> But the *Psalms of Solomon* is not a penitential prayer. It does not contain petition for forgiveness, confession of sins, or acts of repentance. Moreover, the Deuteronomic scheme of sin–punishment–repentance–salvation is not particularly prominent. A better scheme would be: punishment–awareness of sins–prayers–hope for restoration.<sup>143</sup> These are the punishments that are the revelatory means by which the righteous know the sins of the high priest, which has caused the people to be a state of sin.<sup>144</sup> Such a scheme is something between psalmic traditions of petition for forgiveness and atonement/purification of the people in the Leviticus.

The priestly allusions are important and numerous.<sup>145</sup> When the people experience that the altar has been profaned, and that the high priest is wicked and therefore not able to perform the correct rituals for atoning, the originating community of the *Pss. Sol.* may become aware that there is no way to deal with the inadvertent sins in the Pentateuch alone. They may have found a solution in other traditions, for instance, the prayer of Solomon in 1 Kings 8.

The use of these psalms in the synagogue thus cannot be taken for granted. If we are correct to assume the influence of 1 Kings 8, and taking the priestly influence into account, we could confirm the approach initiated by Embry.<sup>146</sup> These psalms were conceived to be uttered publicly in the Temple. Whether this goal was actually achieved or not is debatable, and all the more so if the texts were composed in Greek. However, even if the sacrifices may have been inoperative, either because the altar was defiled or because the sins were moral and not ritual, prayers in the Temple could still be conceived as efficacious.

<sup>141</sup> Werline, “The Psalm of Solomon and the Ideology of Rule,” 86.

<sup>142</sup> Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 2.

<sup>143</sup> This is close to what Embry discerns: “In short, the metaphysical reaction (divine punishment) is contingent upon historical activities (disregard for Temple purity, arrogance of the Gentiles); Embry, “Psalms of Assurance,” 266.

<sup>144</sup> For this, see also Joosten, “The Accusation of Incest,” 213.

<sup>145</sup> Pace Werline, who writes: “The author’s main concern is about Hasmonean, and then Roman, oppressive rule, not about priests”; “The Psalms of Solomon and the Ideology of Rule,” 82.

<sup>146</sup> Embry, “Prayer in Psalms of Solomon,” 99; and “Psalms of Assurance,” 183–92.

Therefore, I would position the Solomonic psalmists close to a sacerdotal movement,<sup>147</sup> but hesitate to identify them as priests. The argument of *Pss. Sol.* 17 suggests that the building of a kingdom, rather than a priestly order, seems convincing.<sup>148</sup> Werline recalls the position of Horsley who sees in the Solomonic psalmist a community of scribes.<sup>149</sup> Ben Sira is a good example of a scribe with priestly concerns, without being himself a priest.<sup>150</sup> After all, ὁ τιμῶν πατέρα ἐξιλιάσκειται ἀμαρτίας (Sir 3:3) “Those who honor their father atone for sins” resonates with *Pss. Sol.* 10:1–2 in which honoring one’s father also indicates accepting his (divine) discipline and therefore becoming purified of sins. The proximity of Sir 18:13 with *Pss. Sol.* noted above may be an impetus to study further the relationship between the two texts and to explore the possibility that the *Pss. Sol.* may belong to a tradition of scribe that derives from Ben Sira.

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<sup>147</sup> As stated before by Atkinson, “Perceptions of the Temple priests,” 93.

<sup>148</sup> Werline, “The Psalms of Solomon and the Ideology of Rule,” 82.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 82. See especially Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 203–6; *Whoever Hears You Hears Me* (London: T&T Clark, 1999), 69, 106–7.

<sup>150</sup> Or at least, he did not have this claim.

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PART FOUR

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# Dead Sea Scrolls



# Contextual Errors in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>: How the Scribe Was Impacted by His Textual Environment\*

DONALD W. PARRY

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Determining a theory or theories regarding why textual deviations exist in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> versus the Masoretic Text (hereafter MT) Isaiah requires multiple levels of examination and several approaches.<sup>1</sup> One level of examination is associated with the biblical Hebrew manuscripts during the last centuries before the Common Era, which presented distinct challenges for copyists and translators of the time. These challenges included rare words (e.g., *hapax legomena*, *dislegomena*, and *trislegomena*), difficult-to-read book hands and unreadable letters and words, graphically similar characters (the graphical sets *wāw/yôd*, *dâlet/rêš*, *hê/ḥêt*, *gîmel/kâp*, and others), irregular or inconsistent orthography, incomprehensible scribal notations, inconsistent use of *matres lectionis*, lack of vocalization, and more. Additionally, there are considerations concerning scribal school conventions, stylistic approaches and methods, possible theological changes, exegetical procedures and techniques, phonological considerations, Aramaic influence on the Hebrew language,<sup>2</sup> paleographic features, paragraphing and text divisions, marginal and interlinear notations, and a multitude of categories of copyists' accidents that occurred when the text was copied onto a new leather scroll. These and other factors caused scribes and copyists to make various mechanical

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\* This chapter is dedicated to Professor James H. Charlesworth, our friend, colleague, and a scholar of great distinction! His knowledge of the ancient world is celebrated and his writings are held in high regard by worldwide audiences. He has heightened my own appreciation for the Hebrew Bible and Dead Sea Scrolls in remarkable ways and I personally acknowledge his scholarship on this occasion.

<sup>1</sup>The most complete and up-to-date study of Biblical Hebrew textual criticism is Emanuel Tov's *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012). See also Christian D. Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition* (New York: Ktav, 1966); and Jacob Weingreen, *Introduction to the Critical Study of the Text of the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982). Compare also the brief treatments of the subject by Julio T. Barrera, *Jewish Bible and the Christian Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 367–421; and Ernst Würthwein, *Text of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 107–20.

<sup>2</sup>Edward Y. Kutscher, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1982), 104, maintains that “the Aramaic influence is all pervasive” in the DSS and “The Isaiah Scroll especially is permeated by Aramaic elements.”

and unintentional errors when making new copies of the text (and the translators when creating translations from their Hebrew *Vorlage* made similar mistakes).

As Ulrich/Flint 2:89 explain,

Occasionally, all witnesses display erroneous or implausible readings, showing that the problem entered the text prior to any of the preserved witnesses. The *JPS Hebrew English Tanakh* in its translation of Isaiah lists “Meaning of Heb. uncertain” or “Meaning of verse uncertain” almost one hundred times, and suggests “Emendation yields ...” approximately as often. If a committee of eminent specialists with a neatly printed Hebrew text and with all the scholarly tools available today finds the text “uncertain” at multiple places, we should not be surprised that ancient scribes as well as the Greek translator also felt challenged by the text they were copying. They often had to choose between copying a form which they may not have recognized or may have thought erroneous and replacing it with their *lectio faciliior* to achieve a sentence that made sense. (Quotation marks added)

The objective of this chapter, therefore, is to demonstrate that a significant number of errors that exist in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> are contextual mishaps, or errors that pertain to the copyist’s<sup>3</sup> immediate textual environment. By the copyist’s immediate textual environment, I refer to the copyist’s writing line or a line or two above the writing line. The copyist’s immediate textual environment also includes the reading line of the copyist’s *Vorlage*. We categorize the contextual mishaps into eight different categories as follows:

- I. Errors Pertaining to Graphically Similar Letters
- II. Errors Pertaining to Metathesis or an Interchange of Letters
- III. Errors Pertaining to the Transposition of Words (Syntactical Variations)
- IV. Errors Pertaining to the Misdivision of Letters or Words
- V. Errors Due to the Confusion of a Ligature
- VI. Letters or Words That Constitute a Dittogram
- VII. Letters or Words That Constitute a Haplograph
- VIII. Assimilation of a Letter or Letters That Are in Proximity to the Copyist’s Writing

## 2. METHODOLOGICAL MATTERS

For the purposes of this chapter, please note the following items:

- (1) Because there are literally hundreds of contextual errors in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, I will discuss representative examples, rather than comprehensively examining each of the eight categories.

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<sup>3</sup>As Tov argues, there were actually two 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> copyists. He labels them Scribe A and Scribe B, and demonstrates that they exhibited two different scribal procedures that pertain to orthography, morphology, scribal marks, interlinear and intercolumnal corrections, plus more; see Emanuel Tov’s *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert*, STDJ 54 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 19–20, plus the bibliographic references in notes 36–7. For the purposes of this chapter, I will not attempt to identify each copyist, rather, I will simply refer to 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>’s “copyist.”

Perhaps future studies (via a thesis, a dissertation, a monograph, or another form) will constitute exhaustive studies of any one of the eight categories.

- (2) Much of the information in this study may be added to or refined by future inquiries that suggest additional theories regarding why MT deviates from 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, or vice versa. Also, a new discovery of an early text of Isaiah—be it in Hebrew, Greek, or another language—could completely change our understanding of a reading. Consequently, in this chapter I occasionally present two or more theories regarding certain deviations. See, for example, the cases in Isa 25:12; 28:17; 32:19; and 63:2.
- (3) For each of the eight categories, I present the Isaianic chapter and verse of the passage under discussion (in bold letters) followed by the lemma. In some cases, I briefly annotate the lemma to clarify the topic at hand.<sup>4</sup>

### 3. CATEGORIZED ERRORS

#### 3.1. *Errors Pertaining to Graphically Similar Letters*

The first category pertains to graphically similar letters. On a number of occasions, the 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> copyist apparently misread one or more letters on the reading line of his *Vorlage* and then copied them incorrectly. Many of the cases listed below clearly illustrate these errors caused by graphically similar letters; others cases, however, are not illustrated so clearly. For example, the interchanges with the graphical sets *hê/ḥêt* (shown below) appear to be the 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> copyist's errors, but they may actually be phonological errors, or examples of “weakening of the gutturals.”<sup>5</sup> Likewise, there are sometimes multiple legitimate explanations for deviances of graphical-set interchanges in the scroll versus MT. The following catalog sets forth possible errors in a variety of graphical sets in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> versus MT.

- (1) Possible instances of errors in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> in the graphical set *hê/ḥêt*.
  - 3:24 **הגורה** MT LXX | הגורה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.
  - 21:4 **חשקי** MT | השקי 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.
  - 21:15 **חַרְבוֹת** MT | חרבות<sup>7</sup> 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | τὸ πλῆθος LXX (via √רַבב?).
  - 30:23 **נְרַחֵב** MT | נרהב 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.
  - 42:16 **מְחַשֵּׁף** MT | מהשוכים 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.
  - 51:9 **רַחֵב** MT 1QIsa<sup>c</sup> (רהב) | רחוב 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.
  - 51:18 **מְנַחֵל** MT | מנחל 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | ὁ παρακαλῶν LXX (via √נַחח?).

<sup>4</sup>For additional notes and comments of each lemma, consult Donald W. Parry, *Exploring the Isaiah Scrolls and Their Textual Variants*, STHB 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), passim. Elisha Qimron, *A Grammar of the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Jerusalem: Yad Yizhak Ben-Zvi, 2018), passim, and Eric D. Reymond, *Qumran Hebrew: An Overview of Orthography, Phonology, and Morphology* (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2014), passim.

<sup>5</sup>Takamitsu Muraoka, “Isaiah Scroll (iQIsaa),” in *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, ed. Geoffrey Khan (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 3.



- (2) Possible instances of errors in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> pertaining to the graphical set *dālet/rēš*.
- 16:14 כביר MT | כבוד 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> LXX. A case of *dālet/rēš* confusion; or, alternatively, the scribe was influenced by כבוד, located nine words previously.
- 17:12 כבירים MT | כבדים 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | > LXX.
- 21:10 גרני MT | גרדי 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | και οι ὀδυνώμενοι LXX. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>'s גרדי (גרד), “dry-stone wall,” HALOT, 181) does not match מְדַשְׁתִּי in the parallelism.
- 22:5 קר וישוע MT | קדשו 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. An example of graphic similarity, קר וישוע = קדשו?
- 27:2 חמד MT | חוסר 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> MT<sup>ms</sup> (חמר) | καλός· ἐπιθύμημα LXX.
- 29:3 מצרות MT | מצודות 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | מצור 4QIsa<sup>f</sup> | πύργους LXX. MT has מְצָרָה (“fortified cities,” HALOT, 623) and 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> sets forth מצודות (“mountain strongholds,” HALOT, 622). Compare 29:7.
- 29:5 זרוד MT | זודי 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. We note also that a single MT<sup>ms</sup> (K, HUB–*Isaiah*) reads זודי = 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.
- 29:7 ומצרתה MT | ומצרתה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | και πάντες οι συνηγμένοι ἐπ’ αὐτήν LXX. Compare 29:3. LXX’s translator apparently misread the *šādē* for the *‘ayin*, thus reading ומעדתה.
- 33:3 מרוממתך MT | מדמתך 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | מרמתך MT<sup>ms</sup> | ἀπὸ τοῦ φόβου σου LXX. Critics are divided as to the primary reading, MT or 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.
- 47:8 אדע MT 4QIsa<sup>d</sup> (ע[אד]) LXX | אראה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.
- (3) Possible instances of errors in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> pertaining to the graphical set *wāw/yōd*.
- 5:29 וישאג MT<sup>ket</sup> | וישאג MT<sup>qere</sup> MT<sup>ms</sup> 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 4QpapIsa<sup>p</sup> | και παρέστηκεν LXX.
- 11:4 לענני MT | לענני 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> σ’ (πτωχους) | τὸς ταπεινοὺς LXX.
- 14:19 יורדי MT | יורדו 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.
- 17:5 וקצור MT LXX | וקציר 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.
- 23:7 ובליה MT | ובליה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | LXX ἢ παραδοθῆναι αὐτήν.
- 37:27 קצרי MT 2 Kgs 19:26 | קצרו 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.
- 41:29 און MT | און 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Graphical confusion? Or the scroll’s copyist was impacted by און, which is twice attested in the previous verse (see the photo, Plate XXXV, lines 7–8).
- 44:4 וצמחו MT | יצמחו 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.
- 44:7 משימו MT | משימו 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. But compare √ שים in 10:6.
- 51:5 זרעי . . . זרעי MT 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> LXX | זורעו . . . זורעו 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. “my arm” (זרעי) versus “his arm” (זורעו).
- 54:2 וטו MT | יטי 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> LXX (πιξον).
- (4) Possible instances of errors in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> pertaining to other graphical sets.
- 4:4 בער MT LXX | סער 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Graphic set *bêt/sāmek*.
- 5:11 מאחרי MT 4QpIsa<sup>b</sup> | מאחזי 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Graphic set *zayin/rēš*.
- 6:9 ואל<sup>1,2</sup> MT LXX | ואל<sup>1,2</sup> 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Graphic sets *‘ayin/‘ālep*. The interchange between אל and על in MT and 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> is common. Are the interchanges associated with phonology or graphic similarity or were they impacted by Aramaic?
- 13:9 אכרי MT | אגורי 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | ἀνιάτος LXX. Graphic set *gîmel/kāp*.
- 16:9 ארנוך MT | ארזיך 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> LXX (τὰ δένδρα σου). Graphic set *zayin/wāw*.
- 26:7 תפלט MT LXX (παρεσκευασμένη) | תפלט 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Graphic set *têt/sāmek*.
- 28:22 ועתה MT | ואתה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> LXX (και ὑμεῖς). Possibly an error pertaining to the graphic set *‘ayin/‘ālep*, or a phonetic error. Cf. similar errors in 41:8 and 64:7[8].

- 30:23 ירעה MT LXX | זרעה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. A 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> scribe corrected the first character, possible from *wāw* (or *yôd?*) to *zayin*,<sup>6</sup> but perhaps from *zayin* to *wāw*,<sup>7</sup> ultimately reading זרעה. In any case, the reading is in error, either due to *yôd/zayin* graphic similarity or impacted by זרעך, which is located in the manuscript immediately above the word under discussion (a case of a vertical appropriation; see col. XXV, line 5).
- 31:5 והמליט MT | והפליט 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | LXX και σώσει. The graphical set *pê/mêm*. Both Hebrew readings are possible in the verse.
- 34:15 קפוז MT | קופד 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Graphic set *dālet/zayin*; compare 14:23, where MT reads קפד and 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has קפו, the exact opposite that exists here in 34:15.
- 42:11 יצנחו MT | יצריחו 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> LXX(vid). Graphic set *wāw/rêš*.
- 43:19 נהרות MT LXX | נתיבות 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Graphically similar letters—*hê* and *tāw*; *bêt* and *rêš*—differentiate the readings of MT and 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.
- 44:4 כבין MT | כבין 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Graphic set *bêt/kāp*.
- 65:4 וקרק MT<sup>ket</sup> | ומרק MT<sup>qere</sup> 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> LXX Tg Vulg. The scroll likely produces the primary reading.
- 65:5 תגע MT | תגע 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | ἐγγίσῃς LXX. Graphic set *‘ayin/šîn*.
- 66:15 וכסופה MT | ובסופה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Graphic set *bêt/kāp*.

### 3.2. Errors Pertaining to Metathesis or an Interchange of Letters

In a handful of cases in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, the copyist created an error in the form of metathesis,<sup>8</sup> or an interchange of letters. These errors need to be accounted for, but doing so is challenging because it is sometimes difficult to decipher which of the two Hebrew witnesses contains the primary reading; such is the case with שלמה and שמלה in Isa 3:7. Both words are regularly attested in the Hebrew Bible—שלמה (attested thirty-one times) is attested approximately twice as often as שמלה (attested sixteen times)—and both carry the same meaning (see HALOT, 1332, 1337). But because the previous verse (Isa 3:6) is part of the same pericope, and because that verse attests שמלה for both MT and 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, then שלמה in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 3:7 may signify an error, which is an example of metathesis of the *mêm* and *lāmed*.

- 3:7 שמלה MT | שלמה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Metathesis of the *mêm* and *lāmed*.
- 5:27 ענה MT 4QIsa<sup>b</sup> | ענה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | οὐ πεινάσουσιν οὐδὲ κοπιάσουσιν LXX. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>'s copyist may have read יענה on his *Vorlage*, or, perhaps he erred by means of metathesis. Cf. also 28:12 לָעָנָה (MT) and ליענה (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>).
- 8:6 השלה MT Tg Syr | השולה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | השילה 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> | τοῦ Σιλωαμ LXX. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> either conveys an error of metathesis (השולה) or demonstrates the so-called Canaanite Shift from /a/ to /o/.<sup>9</sup>
- 9:18[19] נעתם MT | נתעם 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | συγέκασται LXX. Metathesis of the *tāw* and *‘ayin* in the Qumran text resulted in an unintelligible reading. Or, the unpronounced *‘ayin* may have caused the error, because the pronunciation of both נתעם and נעתם would have been

<sup>6</sup>Eugene C. Ulrich and Peter W. Flint, eds., *Qumran Cave 1.II: The Isaiah Scrolls*, DJD 32 (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 2:107.

<sup>7</sup>Donald W. Parry and Elisha Qimron, *Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>): A New Edition*, STDJ 32 (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

<sup>8</sup>For a brief study of metathesis in the Hebrew witnesses of the HB, see Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 232–3.

<sup>9</sup>For a discussion and examples of the Canaanite Shift, see Reymond, *Qumran Hebrew*, 180–1.

- comparable. Or, as Horgan proposes, the reading of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> is a Nithpael perfect third masculine singular via עמם “to be darkened/black.”<sup>10</sup>
- 13:19 תפארת MT | תפראת 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Metathesis of the *’ālep* and *rêš* in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> (תפראת) resulted in an unintelligible reading. The unpronounced *’ālep* may have caused the error, because the pronunciation of both תפארת and תפראת would have been similar.
- 15:5 צער MT | צעור 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> (צעור), an error of metathesis? Or, evidence of an Aramaism?
- 29:9 השתעשעו MT | התשתעשעו 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | > LXX. The scribe of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> erred by writing the non-metathesized השתעשעו, and then he or a subsequent copyist corrected the manuscript by writing the interlinear תשתעשעו (התשתעשעו), but failed to erase the *tav* that follows the *hê*. It is possible that the scroll’s scribe who wrote השתעשעו was impacted by Aramaic dialects that set forth non-metathesized forms.<sup>11</sup>
- 32:19 העיר MT | היער 2 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | > LXX. Two chief possibilities explain the error of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>: (a) the scribe accidentally transposed the letters, changing היער to read העיר; or (b) the scribe assimilated היער, which is found three words earlier in the verse.
- 35:8 מסלול MT | מסולל 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. An error of metathesis of the *lāmed* and the *wāw*?
- 40:20 ירקב MT | ירבק 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. The 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> copyist who wrote ירבק created two errors: a *dālet/rêš* confusion and a transposition of letters, writing *bêt/qôp* rather than *qôp/bêt*. The same or a subsequent scribe corrected the *dālet* to read *rêš* (see PQ 67, note 19a) but failed to repair the transposition of letters. In association with these errors of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, we note that a single medieval HB manuscript (K, HUB–*Isaiah*) reads יקרב (transposition of the *qôp* and *rêš*?).

### 3.3. Errors Pertaining to the Transposition of Words (Syntactical Variations)

In addition to word variations (caused by metathesis errors), MT and 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> also vary syntactically (e.g., see 1:30; 23:9; 36:12; 37:1, 7, 32–33; 43:3; 49:6, 25; 52:7; 55:13; 60:7; 61:7; 62:8; and 63:9, 17). The syntactical variations were possibly created as 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>’s copyist was copying the text—while the copyist’s eyes were moving back and forth from the *Vorlage* to the writing line. Though the two versions of text clearly differ, these differences do not necessarily constitute errors in either MT or 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Because of the multiple variations, Talmon writes that “the widely encountered textual phenomenon of inter-Version variations in the form of syntactical inversion cannot be judged to be merely an indication of ordinary scribal laxity.” Instead, Talmon sees many examples of such variations as “evidence for the existence of equally valid text-traditions which cannot be reduced to one common archetype, and/or scribal manifestations of stylistic conventions.”<sup>12</sup> With Talmon’s words in mind, I have not selected to deal with only the following examples of transposition of words (found in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>), which likely represents an error.

<sup>10</sup> See Maurya P. Horgan, *Pesharim: Qumran Interpretation of Biblical Books*, CBQMS 8 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1979), 109.

<sup>11</sup> On non-metathesized forms, see Elisha Qimron, *Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1986), 55–6.

<sup>12</sup> Shemaryahu Talmon, “Textual Study of the Bible: A New Outlook,” in *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*, ed. Frank Moore Cross and Shemaryahu Talmon (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 370–1. See also Fassberg’s views of word order in Isaiah and other biblical texts in Steven E. Fassberg, “The Syntax of the Biblical Documents from the Judean Desert as Reflected in a Comparison of Multiple Copies of Biblical Texts,” in *Diggers at the Well: Proceedings of*

37:32 מירושלם MT 4QIsa<sup>b</sup> 2 Kgs 19:31 LXX | מציין 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> • מהר ציון MT 2 Kgs 19:31 LXX | מירושלים 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. In this verse, 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has two deviations from the majority of witnesses—it transposes מציין and מירושלים and omits the word הר. With these departures, a copyist or scribe has apparently harmonized the verse to agree with Isa 2:3: יהוה ודבר יהוה כי מציין תצא תורה ודבר יהוה מירושלם. The great majority of other Isaianic passages that present *Zion* and *Jerusalem* within the same parallelistic pattern or within the same verse, too, consign *Zion* before *Jerusalem* (see 2:3; 4:3; 4:4; 10:12; 10:32; 24:23; 30:19; 31:9; 33:20; 37:22 = 2 Kgs 19:21; 40:9; 41:27; 52:1; 62:1; 64:10). This indicates that the scribe of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> may have harmonized the verse under discussion according to these other passages that first attest *Zion* followed by *Jerusalem*. An exception, beyond the one in MT Isa 37:32, is Isa 52:2, where *Jerusalem* precedes *Zion*.

### 3.4. Errors Pertaining to the Misdivision of Letters or Words

A few of the readings in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> also demonstrate a simple mechanical error, in which the scribe failed to properly divide words. Mechanical errors often demonstrate the laxity of the copyist in copying the text onto the writing line. The five cases below may or may not represent errors because they may pertain to scribal school approaches or stylistic differences.

18:1 צל צל MT | צל 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | πλοῖων LXX. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>'s צל צל may be an instance of an improper misdivision of the word; but compare also *umbra umbra* in *α'*.

40:20 יבקש-לו MT | ובשקלו 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. The 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> copyist wrote ובשקלו as one word (note the *qôp/lāmed* ligature on the leather); the copyist also transposed the letters *šm* and *qôp*, creating בשק instead of בקש, a simple mechanical error.

42:13 אף-נצרים MT | אפיצריה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Possibly an improper division of words.

43:2 במו-אש MT 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | [ב]מואש 1QIsa<sup>b</sup>. Improper division of words? Stylistic difference?

51:6 כמו-כן MT 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | כמוכן 1QIsa<sup>b</sup>. Improper division of words? Stylistic difference?

66:1 א-ינה . . . א-ינה MT | אינה . . . ואינה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> MT<sup>mss</sup>. Likely a stylistic difference.

### 3.5. Errors Due to the Confusion of a Ligature

Another element that may have caused some of the errors in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> is the ligatured letters in the copyist's *Vorlage*; these letters look similar to other Hebrew letters. For example, a ligatured *kāp* and *wāw* may resemble a final *mēm*; therefore, an unmindful scribe may read these letters on the *Vorlage* and copy a final *mēm* on the writing line instead of the correct letter. The copying of an incorrect, though similar-looking, letter sometimes creates a word that is meaningless or unintelligible. The following three cases serve to demonstrate the phenomenon of a confused ligature.

20:6 נסנו MT LXX | נסמך 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. It is probable, owing to the graphic similarities of נסנו and נסמך (both forms begin with *nûn* and *sāmek*, plus a ligatured *nûn* and *wāw* share the

appearance of a *mêm*), that the scribe simply misread or miscopied the verb that was in his *Vorlage*.

40:20  $\text{בִּקְשׁוּ-לֹו}$  MT |  $\text{ובשקלו}$  1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. A 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> copyist wrote  $\text{ובשקלו}$  as one word (note the *qôp/lāmed* ligature on the leather); he also transposed the letters *šîn* and *qôp*, creating  $\text{בשק}$  instead of  $\text{בקש}$ , a simple mechanical error.

44:20  $\text{יִצִיל}$  MT 4QIsa<sup>b</sup> |  $\text{יוכיל}$  1QIsa<sup>a</sup> |  $\text{δύναται ἐξελέσθαι}$  LXX. Kutscher points out that the deviation of  $\text{יוכיל}$  (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>) is the result of a “graphical” error based on  $\text{י} + \text{כ} = \text{צ}$ .<sup>13</sup> Perhaps the scribe thought he was seeing a ligatured *yôd-kāp* and wrote  $\text{יכיל}$  instead of  $\text{יציל}$ . But this theory does not explain when or why the *wāw* was inserted into  $\text{יוכיל}$ .

### 3.6. Letters or Words That Constitute a Dittogram

The error of dittography, which is found frequently throughout 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, generally exists in the same textual environment as the copyist’s writing line. Although the errors exist in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, such errors do not certify the presence of a dittogram in the scroll. As mentioned previously, many factors may explain deviations between MT and 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. One example of this is found in 28:17 ( $\text{מִקְּסָה}$  MT |  $\text{ממחסה}$  1QIsa<sup>a</sup>), which may have three explanations for the deviation: MT reads  $\text{מִקְּסָה}$  (“refuge,” HALOT, 571), but 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> presents an extra *mêm* ( $\text{ממחסה}$ ). This deviation may be no more than (a) a simple dittography of the *mêm* in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, (b) a haplography in MT, or (c) the extra *mêm* in the scroll signifies the preposition *min* (thus reading  $\text{ממחסה}$ , “from a refuge”). If this deviation is in fact a *varia lectio*, then the scroll has altered the meaning of the passage with its reading of “And hail will sweep lies from a refuge.”

(1) Dittography of an entire word, which is adjacent to the word the copyist is writing:

5:24  $\text{וַחֲשַׁשׁ לְהִבֶּה}$  MT 4QIsa<sup>b</sup> |  $\text{וַחֲשַׁשׁ לְהִבֶּה}$  |  $\text{ואש וואש}$  1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. The scribe erred by writing  $\text{ואש וואש}$  in place of  $\text{אש וחשש}$  (MT, 4QIsa<sup>b</sup>), thus creating a dittogram.

12:2  $\text{אֵל}$  MT |  $\text{אל אל}$  1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Does the reading  $\text{אל אל}$  constitute a dittography in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> or a haplography in MT?

30:30  $\text{וַהֲשִׁמִיעַ}$  MT LXX |  $\text{השמיע השמיע}$  1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>’s duplication of  $\text{השמיע}$  serves no rhetorical purpose; rather, it is a dittography.

30:6  $\text{צָרָה}$  MT LXX |  $\text{צרה וציה}$  1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. A dittography combined with graphic confusion of a *yôd* and *rêš*:  $\text{ציה} > \text{צרה}$ .

31:6  $\text{לְאֲשֵׁר}$  MT |  $\text{לאשר לאשר}$  1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.

34:15  $\text{אֶךְ}$  MT |  $\text{אכ אכ}$  1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.

35:8  $\text{שָׁם}$  MT |  $\text{שמה שמה}$  1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.

44:19  $\text{לְאִמֹר}$  MT |  $\text{לאמור לאמור}$  1QIsa<sup>a</sup> |  $\text{ᾠτ}$  LXX.

(2) Dittography of a word that appears at the end of one line and the beginning of the next line:

37:27  $\text{קָמָה}$  MT 2 Kgs 19:27 LXX |  $\text{קדימ קומכה}$  1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.  $\text{קדימ קומכה}$  (the final word of v. 27 and the first word of v. 28) constitutes a dittography in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>; or, is this a haplography in MT?

<sup>13</sup>Edward Y. Kutscher, *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>)*, STDJ 6 (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 242.

66:15 אָפוּ MT LXX | אָפוּ אָפוּ 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>'s first אָפוּ appears at the end of the line and the other at the beginning of the next line.

66:20 כָּל MT 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> (כָּל) | כָּל כָּל 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>'s first כָּל appears at the end of the line and the other at the beginning of the next line (see col. LIV, lines 9–10).

(3) Dittography of a letter within the same word:

28:20 נְהַמְסָכָה MT | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Apparently a repetition of the letters *sāmek* and *kāp*, that is, מְסַכְכָּה.

33:1 כְּהַתְמַכְךָ MT ס' | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> כהתמכך | ἀλώσονται LXX. The duplication of the *kāp* at the end of the word, that is, כהתמכך, is a simple dittograph.

34:3 הָרִים MT | הָרִים 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. A dittography in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> (הָרִים) or haplography in MT?

57:19 בּוֹרָא MT 4QIsa<sup>d</sup> (בורה) | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> בבורה | > LXX. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>'s *bêt* attached to the *qal* ptc. בורה is unprecedented, plausibly the result of a dittography.

60:8 תְּעוֹפְנָה MT 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> (תעופנה) | תעופנה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. The double *pê* (in תעופנה) signifies a dittography; or, 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>'s *polet* is a harmonization with three other *polet* verbal forms with the same verbal root in Isaiah (6:2 יְעוֹפֵף, 14:29 מְעוֹפֵף, 30:6 מְעוֹפֵף).

66:11 מִן MT 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> מִמְזוּן | ἀπὸ εἰσόδου LXX. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has the double preposition מן, in all probability a dittogram.

(4) A dittography prompted by the first letter of the following word (in the copyist's *Vorlage*):

5:3 יוֹשֵׁב MT | יוֹשֵׁב 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> LXX. Perhaps a dittography, that is, יוֹשֵׁב ירושלם, but compare LXX's reading.

6:10 יִשְׁמְעוּ MT 4QIsa<sup>f</sup> ס' Syr(vid) Vulg | ישמעו 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> LXX Tg Vulg<sup>ms</sup>. A copyist created an error by means of a dittogram, ישמעוּ ובלבבו, but compare the versions.

7:20 אַתָּה MT | אתה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> errs by creating a dittography, אַתָּה הַזִּקוֹן.

18:7 בְּעַתָּה MT 4QIsa<sup>b</sup> ( [בעת] | בעתה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. The preposition *bêt* is never attached to the adverbial particle עתה; an instance of a dittography, בעתה הַיָּהּ.

21:6 יִגִּיד MT LXX | יגיד 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | ἀνάγγειλον LXX. A dittography, that is, יגיד וראה.

25:12 הַשְׁחָה MT 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> | הַשְׁחָה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. (a) A possible dittography, that is, הַשְׁחָה הַשְׁפִּיל (but highly improbable because the superscripted *hê* is secondary); (b) more likely, the scribe confused הַשְׁחָה with הַשְׁחָה and thus wrote הַשְׁחָה (הַשְׁחָה).

27:4 שִׁמִּיר MT | שימיר 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | φυλάσσειν LXX. A simple dittography, that is, שִׁמִּיר וְשִׁית, but subsequently corrected with cancellation dots above and below the first *γōd* of שימיר.

42:5 יְהִנֵּה MT | יְהִנֵּה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, that is, יְהִנֵּה הָאֱלֹהִים.

45:24 יְבוֹא וְיָבֹשׁוּ MT | יבוא ויבושו 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> MT<sup>ms</sup>. The difference between MT and 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> may be a misplaced *wāw*: יבוא ויבושו or יבואן יבושו in either MT or the scroll.

49:7 לְמַתְעֵב MT | למתעב 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, that is, למתעב גִּי.

59:13 פְּשׁוּעַ MT | פשעו 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | ἡσθεβήσαμεν LXX, that is, פשעו וכחש, but later corrected to read with a textual type similar to MT, that is, פשוע.

60:18 וְקִרְאתָהּ הַיְשׁוּעָה MT 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> | וקראתה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, that is, וקראתה הַיְשׁוּעָה.

(5) A dittography prompted by the previous word(s):

9:19[20] יֵאָכְלוּ MT 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> Tg (יֵאָכְלוּ) | ויאכל 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> LXX (φάγεται γὰρ), that is, זרעו ויאכל.

30:11 סוּרוּ MT 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> ס' Vulg | תסירו 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | καὶ ἀποστρέψατε ἡμᾶς LXX. A dittograph of the *tāw*, that is, מתלות תסירו;



- 33:10 אָנְשָׁא MT | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> הנשא. A dittography, עתה הנשא.
- 34:11 תהו MT | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> ותהו | קוּתהו. The scribe of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> created a dittograph, that is, קוּתהו.
- 38:8 בְּמַעְלוֹת MT | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> במעלות עליית. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> is the result of dittography, based on the multiple attestations of עלה in the verse; or עליית dropped out of MT because of the multiple attestations of עלה.
- 38:16 רוחי MT | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> רוחו; or, possibly an error of the graphically similar *wāw/yôd*.
- 38:20 להושיעני MT 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> | (להשיעני) + יהוה אמתך יהוה | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | σωσος με σ' Vulg Syr. A copyist created a dittography of a block of words from v. 19; then, at a later stage a second copyist altered elements of the text based on a second text type to create the orthographic and *lectio* variants that now exist in v. 20.
- 45:24 לי אמר MT | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> ליא אמר | λέγων LXX, that is, a misplaced *yôd*, that is, haplography לַיִן or dittography לַיִן אמר.
- 46:10 אָעֲשֶׂה MT 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> LXX | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> יעשה, that is, הפצצי יעשה.
- 51:23 > MT | + ומעניך 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. For example, because of the graphic similarity of the two words מוגיד ומעניך (מ-גיך and מ-ניך), or possibly haplography in MT?
- 55:2 שמעו MT 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> | שמעו שמעו 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, that is, a dittography of the previous word, with an *'ālep* added at the end.
- 55:9 גְּבוּהוּ MT 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> | כגובה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | ὡς ἀπέχει LXX. That is, כיא כגובה, or 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has facilitated the text (i.e., made the comparative explicit).
- 54:10 תמוטינה MT | תתמוטינה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, e.g., והגבעות תתמוטינה.
- 62:5 יבעל MT 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> | (יבעל) 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> LXX, that is, כיא כבעל, or, possibly a haplography in MT?
- (6) A dittography located two or more words away from the copyist's writing word:
- 2:4 לעמים MT LXX Syr Vulg | בין לעמים 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> (*pm*) לעמים | Mic 4:3. Duplication of בין, impacted by בין located three words earlier, but subsequently corrected.
- 17:12 וישאון . . . וישאון MT | וישאון . . . וישאון 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. A dittography in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> or *wāw/yôd* confusion, writing וישאון for וישאון?
- 31:4 לוא<sup>2</sup> MT | לוא יחת 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. The dittogram consists of לוא יחת . . . לוא יחת; note that a copyist subsequently crossed out the second יחת.
- 48:8 כי ידעתי כיא MT | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> כיא ידעתי כיא. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>'s second כיא is a dittograph; note that a scribe subsequently wrote cancellation dots above the second כיא.
- 61:4 ודור MT LXX | ודור 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> repeats the same *polet* verb יקוממו in the second line of the second bicolon, a dittogram of the first attestation of this verb.
- 64:1[2] לצריכה MT | לצריכה . . . לצריכה 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. The second לצריכה may have dropped out of MT, but more likely it appeared twice in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> as a dittography.
- (7) A word located in the line directly above the writing line (vertical dittography):
- 39:2 > MT LXX | כול 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 2 Kgs 20:13. Possibly vertical dittography, because את כול is written exactly above the other (see plate XXXII, lines 17–18).
- 45:9 > MT LXX | אדם 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Possibly a vertical dittography from אדמה (see 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> col. XXXVIII, lines 15–16).

### 3.7. Letters or Words That Constitute a Haplograph

In addition to containing instances of accidentally repeated letters, the Isaiah scroll contains a handful of instances of haplography, which probably occurred when the scribe's eyes moved back and forth from the reading line of his *Vorlage* to the writing line of the manuscript; or, some haplographs materialize when the scribe views words or letters in the line(s) above the writing line of the working manuscript.

(1) This first example presents a vertical haplography:

59:21 אָמַר יְהוָה MT 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> LXX (εἶπεν γὰρ κύριος) | > 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. A possible case of vertical haplography, where the copyist's eyes read אָמַר יְהוָה on the first line (see 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> col. XLIX line 4) and failed to write the expression on the line below (line 5).

(2) The following four instances are considered to be probable haplographies in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>:

3:22 וְהִמְטַפְּחוּהוּ MT 4QIsa<sup>b</sup> (וְהִמְטַפְּחוּהוּ) | > 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. The plus in MT and 4QIsa<sup>b</sup> may indicate a dittogram, that is, וְהִמְטַפְּחוּ וְהִמְטַפְּחוּ; or more likely the minus in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> was caused by haplography.

48:20 הוֹצִיאָהּ MT 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> (הוֹצִיאָהּ) 4QIsa<sup>d</sup> LXX | > 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. A haplography, owing to two *hip'il* verbs in close proximity, וְהוֹצִיאָהּ . . . הוֹצִיאָהּ.

48:19 וְצִאָאֵי מְעִיךָ MT LXX | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> erred when it dropped מְעִיכָה via haplography, וְצִאָאֵי מְעִיכָה, or, possibly, by the repeated *yôd*, וְצִאָאֵי מְעִיכָה.

55:1 שְׁבוּרוּ MT 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> (שְׁבוּרוּ וְאָכְלוּ וְלָכְנוּ שְׁבוּרוּ); ἀγοράσατε καὶ πίετε LXX | שְׁבוּרוּ 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Possibly a haplograph in the scroll, precipitated by the word שְׁבוּרוּ, that is, שְׁבוּרוּ . . . שְׁבוּרוּ.

(3) With regard to the following cases, scholars are divided as to whether they constitute a haplography in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> or a dittography in MT.

8:9 הִתְאַפְּרוּ וְחָתוּ הִתְאַפְּרוּ וְחָתוּ MT LXX ׀' (הִתְאַפְּרוּ) 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 4QIsa<sup>e</sup>(vid) (הִתְאַפְּרוּ). That is, the twofold attestation of הִתְאַפְּרוּ וְחָתוּ in MT.

26:6 רָגַל רָגַל MT | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> LXX (πόδες).

26:8 קוּינָה MT | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> LXX Tg Syr. The multiple attestation of this suffix (ן-) in this verse (four times in MT; three times in the scroll) can account for the deviation, that is, haplography in the scroll or dittography in MT.

32:10 בָּלִי MT | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Although a haplography in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> remains a possibility, a dittography in MT (בלִי יבוא) is also conceivable.

37:29 יֵעַן הִתְרַגַּדְתָּ אֵלַי MT 2 Kgs 19:28 | > 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> lost יֵעַן הִתְרַגַּדְתָּ אֵלַי through haplography, triggered by the final word of the previous verse, that is, אֵלַי יֵעַן הִתְרַגַּדְתָּ אֵלַי; or MT possesses a dittography, וְאֵת הִתְרַגַּדְתָּ אֵלַי יֵעַן הִתְרַגַּדְתָּ אֵלַי (see vv. 28–29).

38:11 יְהוָה יְהוָה MT | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> יהוה MT<sup>miss</sup> | τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ LXX. An instance of a dittography in MT; or, a haplography in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. יהוה יהוה may have originally read יהוה.

52:6 לָכֵן<sup>2</sup> MT | > 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> LXX. MT attests לָכֵן twice in this verse (separated by three words); 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has it once.

59:13 הָרוּ וְהָגוּ MT | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> והגוּ and εἰς αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐμελετήσαμεν LXX. A haplography in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> as a consequence of graphic similarity, והגוּ? Or, a dittography in MT?

62:10 עָבְרוּ עָבְרוּ MT 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> (עָבְרוּ) 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> LXX.

### 3.8. Assimilation of a Letter or Letters That Are in Proximity to the Copyist's Writing

The final way (as far as this discussion goes) that the 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> copyist recurrently created errors in the manuscript is by sometimes inadvertently assimilating a letter, letters, or words from the copyist's immediate environment (e.g., from the writing line, from the line or two above the writing line, or from the *Vorlage*). The following examples are *representative* of the errors, but not comprehensive. As is the case with all the errors mentioned previously, the explanation of errors below are not definitive. There may be other reasons that explain the scroll's reading.

- 5:5  $\text{וְעַתָּה}$  MT LXX | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Was a copyist influenced by the forms  $\text{אַתְּכֶמָּה אַת}$  (thus,  $\text{אַתְּכֶמָּה . . . (וְאַתָּה)}$ ) located three words away? Or, was the copyist impacted by the multiple *āleps* that begin the opening words of the verse ( $\text{וְאַתָּה אֹדִיעַ בְּאֵתְּכֶמָּה אֲשֶׁר עֹשֶׂה}$ )?
- 5:7  $\text{מִשָּׁפַח}$  MT | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. The copyist inadvertently added the superfluous preposition *lāmed* to  $\text{מִשָּׁפַח}$ , an assimilation from the two prepositions in the wordplay.
- 5:18  $\text{הַשֹּׁאֵן}$  MT | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. The scribe intended to write a *wāw*, but he accidentally copied a *γōd* on the leather. Perhaps this error came about when his eyes saw the *γōd*, which terminated the previous word (בהבלי).
- 6:7  $\text{וְהַטְּאוּתֶיךָ}$  MT | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> LXX. An assimilation of the plural form  $\text{שָׁפְתֶיךָ}$ , a word that is located in the first bicolon of v. 7.
- 10:13  $\text{אָמַר}$  MT LXX | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>'s imperfect verb perhaps originated by means of assimilation from the imperfects of v. 12.
- 10:29  $\text{עָבְרוּ}$  MT | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. The scroll has assimilated  $\text{עָבַר}$  from v. 28, which refers to the king of Assyria (compare other referents to the king in 10:12–13, 32). Verse 29 is concerned with the king's army, hence the pl.  $\text{עָבְרוּ}$ .
- 11:4  $\text{פִּי}$  MT | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. The scribe assimilated  $\text{יִוֵּמַת רִשְׁעֵי}$  from the same expression found three words later. The same or a subsequent scribe encircled the two words with deletion dots.
- 16:6–7  $\text{לֹא-כֵן}$  MT 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> (לא) | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. The scroll's  $\text{לֹא כֵן}$  for  $\text{כֵן לֹא}$  may be impacted by Aramaic,  $\text{לֹא-כֵן}$  is pronounced  $\text{לָא כֵן}$  in Aramaic, hence  $\text{לֹא כֵן}$ . Or, the scribe accidentally wrote  $\text{לֹא כֵן}$ , an assimilation from  $\text{לֹא כֵן}$ , located two words away.
- 23:13  $\text{בְּחִינָיו}$  MT<sup>ket</sup> |  $\text{בְּחִינָיו}$  MT<sup>qere</sup> | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>'s *hê*, terminating  $\text{הַקִּימוֹה}$  is an error; perhaps the scribe inadvertently borrowed the *hê* of  $\text{הִנֵּה, יִסְדֶּה, אֲרַמְנוּתֶיהָ,}$  or  $\text{שְׁמָה}$ , all located in the vicinity of  $\text{הַקִּימוֹה}$ .
- 25:9 > MT LXX | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> adds  $\text{יְהוָה}$  before  $\text{אֱלוֹהֵינוּ}$ , perhaps an assimilation of the Divine Name, which appears later in the verse.
- 30:23  $\text{זָרְעָה}$  MT LXX | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. The scroll's reading is in error, either due to *γōd/zayin* graphic similarity or impacted by  $\text{זָרַעַךְ}$ , which is located in the manuscript immediately above the word under discussion (a case of a vertical appropriation; see col. XXV, line 5).
- 32:11  $\text{וְהַגִּזְרָה}$  MT | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>  $\text{חֲגִרְנָה וּסְפִדְנָה}$  |  $\text{περιζώσασθε σάκκους}$  LXX. For 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>'s odd reading, did the scribe assimilate  $\text{וְסִפְדָּה}$  from v. 12, as the scribe looked at his *Vorlage*?
- 33:21  $\text{תִּלְבֵּךְ}$  MT LXX | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Perhaps 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>'s error (the added *bêt*) was caused by the threefold repetition of the *bêt* in the environment of the word under discussion, that is,  $\text{בֵּל, בֵּל, בֵּל}$ .
- 35:9  $\text{בֵּל}$  MT 4QIsa<sup>b</sup> | 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. The double negative in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> ( $\text{בֵּל לֹא}$ ), unknown in the HB, is the result of an error. The scribe first wrote  $\text{בֵּל}$ , which is the primary reading, and

then duplicated the לוא from v. 8, vertically located on the line above on the scroll (see col. xxviii, line 25).

- 36:14 הַמֶּלֶךְ MT 2 Kgs 18:29 LXX | מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Versus MT Isaiah and the parallel 2 Kgs 18:29, 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has the explicatory (מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר “the king of Assyria”), an assimilation (harmonization) from מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר located three words earlier (in v. 13).
- 40:17 מֶאֱפֶס MT | וְכַאֲפֶס 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | καὶ εἰς οὐθὲν LXX. Scholars cannot agree on the primary reading, but perhaps the scroll’s *kāp* is an assimilation from 41:12, which attests וְכַאֲפֶס; or the scribe assimilated the *kāp* from כֹּאֵין, located two words earlier.
- 41:7 אָמַר MT 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> (אָ[נ]מַר) | יוֹאמַר 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>’s יוֹאמַר may be an assimilation of יוֹאמַר in v. 6; or, 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>’s scribe added the preformative *yōd* to אָמַר to align it with the other verbs in vv. 6–7 that have the same preformative, that is, יַעֲזוּרוּ, יוֹאמַר, וַיִּחְזַק, וַיִּחְזַקְהוּ, and יָמוּשׁ.
- 41:11 וַיִּבְדּוּ כֹל MT | וַיִּבְדּוּ כֹל 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> | וַיִּבְשׂוּ 1QIsa<sup>b</sup>. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>’s deviation of וַיִּבְדּוּ כֹל likely originated from וַיִּכְלְמוּ כֹל (imperfect plural verb), which occurs earlier in the verse, an assimilation; but cf. LXX.
- 41:17 הַמְבַקְשִׁים מְבַקְשִׁים MT LXX(vid) | הַמְבַקְשִׁים 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>’s reading with the article attached to the participle is unnecessary. This small plus may be an example of assimilation, הַעֲנִיִּים הַמְבַקְשִׁים.
- 41:22 אַחֲרֵיתָן MT | או אַחֲרֵיתָן 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>’s plus of או is likely an instance of an assimilation from the other או.
- 42:11 יִצְרִיחַ MT | יִצְרִיחַ 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> LXX(vid). Did the scroll’s reading arise via assimilation from the same verbal root that appears two verses later, in v. 13 (יִצְרִיחַ), which the scribe viewed in his *Vorlage*?
- 42:16 מִהַשּׁוֹכִים MT | מִהַשּׁוֹכִים 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> deviates from MT’s reading with מִהַשּׁוֹכִים, a confusion of the letters *hê/hêt*. The plural of the scroll is an assimilation from the plural of מְעַקְשִׁים, the corresponding term in this bicolon.
- 46:5 וַתִּשְׂוּ MT | וַתִּשְׂוּ 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> | ἴδετε LXX. The four words in close proximity to וַתִּשְׂוּ that end in *yōd*, that is, לִמְנַחֲמֵינוּ וַתִּשְׂוּ וַתִּשְׂוּ וַתִּשְׂוּ, may have impacted the scribe (for either Qumran scroll).
- 48:7 שְׂמַעְתֶּם MT | שְׂמַעְתֶּם 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. With its reading of שְׂמַעְתֶּם, the 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> scribe has inadvertently assimilated the *qal* pf. first common sg. ending of יִדְעֵתֶם, located four words away.
- 48:14 וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ . . . וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ MT | וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ . . . וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>’s impf. verbs וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ . . . וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ may signify an assimilation of the impf. וַיִּעֲמְדוּ that is located two words earlier (see v. 13).
- 49:18 שְׂאֵי MT | סְאֵי 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>’s סְאֵי is an error of homophony, or the copyist was influenced by the *sāmek* in the following word, that is, סְאֵי סְבִיב.
- 63:2 בָּגַד MT 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> LXX | בָּגַד 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>’s error may have occurred (a) when the scribe borrowed בָּגַד from וּבָגַדְךָ, located two words away (see also בָּגַדִּים, located in the previous verse); or (b) a scribe changed the *tāw* to *dālet* because “the voiced *dālet* at the end of a word sounded the same as a voiceless *taw*.”<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Kutscher, *Language and Linguistic Background*, 227.

## 4. CONCLUSION

As this essay has illustrated, ancient Hebrew copyists faced many challenges while copying text from their *Vorlages* to their new leather sheets. These challenges included difficult-to-read book hands, unreadable letters and words, graphically similar characters, and other difficulties. Indeed, the ancient master copies were decidedly unlike the Masoretic Text as we have it now in the form of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, with its consonantal and vocalization framework, and with its system of notes, accents, and versification. Additionally, the copyists' *Vorlages* may have contained interlinear or marginal corrections, scribal marks and notations, a different paragraphing system, and special morphological and orthographic features.

Because of these many factors, and perhaps owing to the 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> copyist's inexperience, laxity, or carelessness, he created a number of contextual errors in his manuscript. These included (as described previously in this essay) instances of dittography, haplography, and misdivision of letters or words; additionally, there are errors pertaining to graphically similar letters, interchanges of letters, syntactical variations, confusions of the *Vorlage*'s ligatures, and the assimilation of a letter or letters that were in proximity to the copyist's writing.

Throughout this chapter, I make numerous statements that a copyist of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> made the errors listed above and other possible changes to Isaiah's text. However, I am fully aware that the copyist may have copied those errors from the *Vorlage* or from another text or source that already contained the error. We do not always know who made the correction in the text—first copyist, second copyist, or even perhaps a common reader made a correction. As Tov explains, "Upon completing the copying, and often while still in the process, scribes frequently intervened in the text; by the same token, correctors and users often inserted their corrections in the text."<sup>15</sup>

In conclusion, this essay clearly illustrates that many categories of deviations exist due to the scribal activity of one or multiple witnesses through a long historical timeframe. Most scribal errors may be categorized according to the rules of textual criticism, and this chapter demonstrates that a single category of deviation does not dominate the contextual deviations between MT Isaiah and 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Future studies may garner additional insights regarding categories of error in ancient Hebrew texts and enable us to better understand the transmission of ancient scripture.

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<sup>15</sup> Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 222.

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# Psalmenhandschriften in den Qumrantexten

HERMANN LICHTENBERGER

## 1. VORBEMERKUNG

Ja du wirst auch dich selbs drinnen  
und das rechte Gnotiseauton finden  
Da zu Gott selbs und alle Creaturn.

M. Luther, Vorrede auff den Psalter, 1545<sup>1</sup>

In der Weltliteratur vielleicht einmalig oder nur mit wenigem vergleichbar ist dieser Schatz von 150 Psalmen, Gebeten und Liedern der alttestamentlich-jüdischen Tradition, der auch in die christliche eingegangen ist.

Es ist eine Sammlung, der schon frühere und kleinere Sammlungen zugrunde lagen. Die Psalmenüberschriften bzw. -zuschreibungen machen einige kenntlich: Davidpsalmen, Asaphpsalmen, Korachpsalmen, Wallfahrtspsalmen und andere. Schon in der Psalmenforschung des 19. Jh.s ist bewusst geworden, dass diese Teilsammlungen je ihr eigenes Gepräge haben, aber erst in den letzten Jahrzehnten fragte man intensiver danach, in welcher Weise und mit welcher Absicht diese Teilsammlungen zum Psalter der 150 Psalmen unserer hebräischen Bibel vereinigt wurden als ein theologisch und literarisch kunstvolles Gebilde, dessen Architektur wir nur langsam und nach und nach verstehen.

## 2. PSALMENHANDSCHRIFTEN IN DEN QUMRANTEXTEN

### 2.1. *Hinführung zu „biblischen“ Psalmenhandschriften*

Mit den Funden am Toten Meer (Qumran) von 1947 bis 1956 hat sich unsere Vorstellung dessen, was jüdische Literatur der biblischen und nachbiblischen Zeit ist, grundlegend verändert. Ich kann das hier nicht im Einzelnen ausführen und will mich auf die Psalmen beschränken. Unter den ca. 1000 Handschriften (HSS) von Qumran befinden sich 174 sichere und ca. 35 unsichere „biblische“ Handschriften,<sup>2</sup> und darunter 36 (+2 Masada, + 1 Hev) der Psalmen.<sup>3</sup> Nun ist diese Zahl insofern

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<sup>1</sup>Biblia: Das ist: Die gantze Heilige Schrifft Deutsch Auff's new zugericht. D. Mart. Luth. Begnadet mit Kurfürstlicher zu Sachsen Freiheit. Gedruckt zu Witte mberg Durch Hans Lufft. MDXLV (Nachdruck Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1967).

<sup>2</sup>Armin Lange, *Handbuch der Textfunde vom Toten Meer I* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 16–17.

<sup>3</sup>Lange, *Handbuch*, 373.

ungenau, als sie nur jene HSS zählt, die „biblische“ Psalmen enthalten. Daneben gibt es Sammlungen, oft in verschiedenen HSS vertreten, die ausschließlich „nichtbiblische“ Psalmen überliefern.

Eine Vorbemerkung zu „nichtbiblisch“ ist notwendig. „Nichtbiblisch“ ist ungenau, denn gemeint ist „nichtmasoretisch“. Die Fassung des Psalters, wie er uns in der Hebräischen Bibel heute vorliegt, stammt nach Umfang und Konsonantenbestand aus vorchristlicher Zeit („protomasoretischer Psalter“), hat aber seinen gültigen Vokalbestand, d.h. das festgelegte Verständnis, erst später, im frühen MA, erhalten. Voraus gehen unterschiedliche Verständnisformen, wie sie uns z.B. in der Übersetzung der LXX begegnen, die einen unvokalisierten hebräischen Text voraussetzen, und entsprechend vom später festgesetzten Wortlaut differieren können. Daneben gibt es zwei grundlegend verschiedene Arten von Psalmenhandschriften: Die eine—und ihr werden wir uns besonders zuwenden—kombiniert „biblische“ und nichtbiblische Psalmen wie 11QPs<sup>a</sup>, andere Sammlungen und Handschriften enthalten nur bisher unbekannte Psalmen.

Ein Sonderfall besteht darin, dass anderwärts bekannte Psalmen in HSS aus Qumran auftauchen: Dies gilt für Ps 151 der LXX (und der Syrischen Psalmen) und zweier weiterer Syrischer Psalmen, die ebenfalls in der HS 11QPs<sup>a</sup> erhalten sind; für 11QPs<sup>a</sup> trifft dies auch auf Sir 51:13–20 [...] 30 sowie 2 Sam 23:[1–7a]7b (letzte Worte Davids) zu.

Die Präsenz der „biblischen“ Psalmen bezeugen auch die Psalmenzitate. Allein in den Qumrantexten finden sich (ca.) 233 Psalmenzitate, die eine Bandbreite von Anspielung bis zur vollen Zitation eines ganzen Psalms haben, wie Ps 91 in 11Q11 vi 3–13 (11QPsapoc) und Ps 122 in 4Q522 22–26, 1–6 (apocr Josh<sup>c</sup>); nicht eigens gezählt sind Zitationen bestimmter Psalmverse in mehreren Handschriften.<sup>4</sup>

Eine Besonderheit stellen Psalmenkommentare dar, die nach Zitat („Lemma“) des entsprechenden Verses eine Auslegung folgen lassen. Dieser Kommentar ist auf die eschatologisch gedeutete Gegenwart der Gemeinde (תק) bezogen, bietet also eine gegenwärtig eschatologische Realisation eines Psalmverses.

- 4Q171: Ps 37:7–40; 45:1–2; 60:8–9 (108:8–9)
- 4Q173: Ps 127:2–3, 3b, 5; 129:7–8; 118 (?)
- 4Q174: 1–2 i 18–19 Zitat und Auslegung von Ps 2:1

## 2.2. Übersicht über „nichtbiblische“ Psalmenhandschriften

In einer knappen Darstellung sollen Sammlungen der bisher unbekannt Psalmen genannt werden:

An erster Stelle sind die Hodayot zu nennen, und nicht nur wegen ihres frühesten Bekanntwerdens als Liedersammlung, sondern auch wegen ihres einzigartigen dichterischen und theologischen Charakters. An dieser Stelle ist insbesondere Hartmut Stegemann zu nennen, auf den die maßgebliche Edition zurückgeht.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Armin Lange und Matthias Weigold, *Biblical Quotations and Allusions in Second Temple Literature* (JAJSup 5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 163–78.

<sup>5</sup>Hartmut Stegemann, Eileen Schuller und Carol Newsom, *1QHodayot<sup>a</sup>* (DJD 40; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); siehe James H. Charlesworth, *The Qumran Psalter לאל הודעות ברכות. The Thanksgiving Hymns among the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014) und Ulrich Dahmen, *Die Loblieder (Hodayot) aus Qumran. Hebräisch mit masoretischer Punktation und deutscher Übersetzung, Einführung und Anmerkungen* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2019).

- 1QH<sup>a</sup> und<sup>b</sup> und die sechs 4Q-HSS 4Q427-432: nach Stegemann<sup>6</sup> ca. 35 Lieder.
- 1QS Schlusspsalm und 4Q-HSS: eigentlich eine Anweisung an den Maskil (column 9? 1QS ix 12, 21), die in eine Gebetsanweisung ix 26 über Gebetszeiten übergeht und ab x 6 zu Ichrede wechselt. Dabei werden wieder, nun in Ichrede, Gebetszeiten genannt: Den Niedrigkeitsdoxologien von 1QH vergleichbare Aussagen werden gemacht. Der Einsatz eines neuen Liedes könnte in xi 15 gegeben sein („Gepriesen bist du, mein Gott,“ ברך אתה אלִי), so dass wir in dem Schlusspsalm der HS 1QS wohl zwei Psalmen/Lieder vorliegen haben.
- Psalmen in Kriegsregel (nach 1QM): x 8–xii 5 (oder bis xii 18); bzw. xii 7–18 eigener Psalm; xiii 7–18; xiv 4–15 (oder bis 18) bzw. eigener Psalm xiv 16–18; xviii 6–xix 8.: d.h. fünf bis sieben Psalmen.
- 4Q380 und 381: mindestens zehn Psalmen.
- 4Q400-407/11Q17/Mas1k Sabbatopferlieder: 13 Lieder.
- 4Q504-506 דברי המארות: sieben Lieder je für die Tage der Woche.
- 4Q434-438 ברכי נפשי: mindestens fünf Psalmen.
- 4Q448-454 Apocryphal Psalm: Reste von mindestens fünf Psalmen.
- 4Q456-457b: Reste von mindestens drei Psalmen.
- 4Q460 Gebet: ein Psalm.
- 4Q481c: Prayer for Mercy.
- 4Q505 frag. 125: Prayer for the Night.
- 4Q510-511: Songs of the Sage: Reste von zehn(?) Psalmen.
- Prayers for Festivals: 1Q34 und 34<sup>bis</sup> und 4Q507-509: geschätzt wohl Reste von ca. 30 Psalmen (Neumonde, Festtage; siehe 11Q5: David's Compositions).
- Tägliche Gebete 4Q503: Abend- und Morgengebete für jeden Tag eines Monats: Reste von 58 Gebeten.

Diese Übersicht ist nicht vollständig, erfasst aber im Wesentlichen den erhaltenen Bestand, der z.T. sehr fragmentarisch ist. Zusammen mit den zehn „außerkanonischen“ Texten von 11Q5 (11QPs<sup>a</sup>) und 11Q6 (11QPs<sup>b</sup>) sowie 4Q88 (4QPs<sup>f</sup>) kommen wir auf ca. 196, d.h. rund 200 Psalmen über den MT-Bestand hinaus. Dies ausreichend zu würdigen, ist auf die Kürze unmöglich. Darum nur wenige Hinweise. Zunächst ist einzuschränken, dass die meisten dieser ca. 200 Psalmen nicht vollständig vorliegen. Vielfach sind es nur Fragmente, die uns zu dieser Zahl bringen. Das ist die eine Seite. Die andere ist, dass wir angesichts des fragmentarischen Charakters des Erhaltenen davon ausgehen müssen, dass uns—ich glaube nicht zu übertreiben—das Meiste verloren gegangen ist. Auch wenn wir nur von dem Erhaltenen ausgehen, so finden wir eine unglaubliche theologische

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<sup>6</sup>Hartmut Stegemann, *Die Essener, Qumran, Johannes der Täufer und Jesus* (Freiburg: Herder, 1993), 151.

und literarische Produktivität in den Jahrhunderten um die Zeitenwende, und zwar nicht nur im Genre der Psalmen. Die 150 biblischen Psalmen sind in jedem Fall nur ein kleiner Teil dessen, was in Judäa seit der Perserzeit an Psalmendichtung entstanden ist. Wer diese späte(re) Dichtung verfolgt, erkennt, in welchem Maße sie auf der vorhergehenden, meist „biblischen,“ Dichtung beruht. Gewiss hat sie unterschiedliches Niveau. In einem Text wie 11QPs<sup>a</sup> „Hymn to the Creator“ begegnen wir fast nur „vorgefertigter“ Sprache, in den sog. Lehrerliedern der Hodayot in Aufnahme vorgegebener Terminologie eigener dichterischer Innovation. So kann die Bindung an „biblische Sprache“ ganz unterschiedlich ausfallen.

Diese ist, so kann abschließend konstatiert werden, in einer Weise bestimmend, die vielleicht nur mit dem Einfluss von Luthers Bibelübersetzung aufs Deutsche verglichen werden kann. Zudem muss bedacht werden, dass das Hebräische nicht mehr alltägliche Umgangssprache war, aber, wie wir gerade der fast vollständigen literarischen Dominanz des Hebräischen gegenüber dem Aramäischen vor allem in poetischen Texten entnehmen können, auch aktiv lebendig war. Die Produktion derart vieler hebräischer Texte bliebe sonst unerklärlich.

### 2.3. „Biblische“ Psalmenhandschriften<sup>7</sup>

Erhalten sind 39 HSS aus der Wüste Juda, davon 36 aus Qumran. Von den 5 HSS aus den Höhlen 1-3 sind nur wenige Reste erhalten. Die Hauptmenge der HSS stammt aus Höhle 4.

Bei den „biblischen“ Psalmenhandschriften lassen sich drei Kategorien unterscheiden:

- (a) Sammlungen von „Bibelpsaltern,“ d.h. Sammlungen von Psalmen entsprechend MT (“protomasoretischer Psalter”)<sup>8</sup>
- (b) Psalmenhandschriften mit von MT abweichender Textfolge<sup>9</sup>: 10 HSS (4Q83.84.86.87.88.92.95.98; 11Q5.6)
- (c) Psalmenhandschriften, die Texte enthalten, die nicht in MT vorhanden sind: 8 bzw. nach Flint: 9 (1Q16; 4Q88.171.173.173 fragm. 5.522; 11Q5.6.11)

Von den 36 HSS aus Qumran (+2 Masada, + 1 Hev) weichen 12 in Textfolge und/oder Umfang von MT ab. Dabei gibt es in den Abweichungen Übereinstimmungen einzelner HSS untereinander wie im Fall von 11QPs<sup>a</sup> (11Q5), 11QPs<sup>b</sup> (11Q6) und 4QPs<sup>c</sup> (4Q87). Einzelne Psalmenhandschriften enthalten nur einzelne Psalmen (wie 11Q11: Ps 91; 5QPs: Ps 119) oder Teile des Psalters (wie 11Q5).

Diese 3 Gruppen stehen noch im 1. Jh. n.Chr. nebeneinander, kanonische Geltung im strengen Sinn kann keine beanspruchen, auch wenn sich das Pendel zu MT hin neigt, der ja auch im Wesentlichen zur Grundlage der Übersetzung der LXX wurde. Vor der Tempelzerstörung gibt es keinen standardisierten Text und schon gar nicht im 2. Jh. v.Chr., als die Psalmensammlungen entstehen. Wir können also mit Lange<sup>10</sup> von „mehreren Psalmensammlungen“ in den Qumrantexten

<sup>7</sup>Siehe mit Literatur Lange, *Handbuch*, 373–450; und Peter W. Flint, “Psalms Scrolls from the Judaean Desert,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations*, vol. 4A, *Pseudepigraphic and Non-Masoretic Psalms and Prayers* (J.H. Charlesworth, Hg.; PTSDSSP; Tübingen/Louisville, KY: Mohr Siebeck/John Knox, 1997), 287–90.

<sup>8</sup>Siehe Lange, *Handbuch*, 373–450.

<sup>9</sup>Flint, *Psalms Scrolls*, 287–9.

<sup>10</sup>Lange, *Handbuch*, 416.

sprechen. Eine Gegenüberstellung von „kanonischem“ und „liturgischem“ Text kann die Problematik nicht lösen, da alle Psalmensammlungen liturgischen Charakter haben und sich durch den Gebrauch und die Akzeptanz Prioritäten bilden, die dann in eine kanonische Verbindlichkeit übergehen können.

Von den 150 MT-Psalmen sind 126 in Psalmen-HSS bzw. anderen relevanten Texten wie Pesharim (Kommentare) bezeugt.<sup>11</sup> Die fehlenden 24 Psalmen sind mit größter Sicherheit ebenfalls vertreten gewesen, aber durch Textverlust nicht erhalten. Vom 4. und 5. Teil des Psalters (Ps 90-150) fehlen lediglich fünf Psalmen (Ps 90.108?.110.111.117).<sup>12</sup> In fünf HSS (11Q5; 4Q88; 4Q522; 11Q6; 11Q11) sind insgesamt 15 nicht dem MT-Psalter zugehörige Texte erhalten, von denen neun bisher unbekannt waren (Apostrophe to Judah; Apostrophe to Zion; David's Compositions; Eschatological Hymn; Hymn to the Creator; Plea for Deliverance; Ps 1-3 von 11Q11 [apocrPs]).<sup>13</sup>

Die handschriftliche Überlieferung reicht vom 2. Jh. v.Chr. bis zur Mitte des 1. Jh.s n.Chr. Das hat wichtige Implikationen für die Entstehung der Psalmensammlungen. Nun bieten die Datierungen der HSS noch keine Aussage über die Entstehung der „Vorlage,“ d.h. einer bestimmten Sammlung, sie geben aber einen Anhaltspunkt für den spätesten Entstehungszeitpunkt. So weist eine der beiden ältesten HSS aus dem 2. Jh. v.Chr., 4Q83, eine von MT abweichende Textfolge auf. Dies mag nicht unbedingt erstaunen, ist es in dieser frühen Zeit doch durchaus verständlich, dass von MT verschiedene Sammlungen im Umlauf sind. Erstaunen aber muss die Tatsache erwecken, dass auch in der 1. Hälfte und der Mitte des 1. Jh.s n.Chr. von MT in Reihenfolge und Textbestand abweichende Fassungen kopiert wurden—prominentestes Zeugnis ist 11QPs<sup>a</sup>.

Dies führt zu Überlegungen, auf die wir später im Einzelnen eingehen werden. Soviel sei hier angedeutet: Wir haben in den beiden Jahrhunderten vor und im Jahrhundert nach der Zeitenwende neben dem MT-(genauer protomasoretischer) Psalter mit mindestens einer weiteren Psalmensammlung zu rechnen, vertreten durch 11Q5 (11QPs<sup>a</sup>) und 6 (11QPs<sup>b</sup>) (und 4Q87 [4QPs<sup>c</sup>]). Daneben konnten kleinere Sammlungen entstehen wie 11Q11 (11apocrPs), das drei nichtmasoretische und einen masoretischen Psalm (Ps 91) in eigener Gestalt vereinigt. Soviel lässt sich aber bereits hier erkennen, dass die auf den MT-Psalter hinauslaufende Sammlung bereits um die Zeitenwende eine Dominanz entfaltet, die ihn zum maßgeblichen Psalter werden lässt.

### 3. DIE THEOLOGISCHE AUSRICHTUNG VERSCHIEDENER PSALMENSAMMLUNGEN (“PSALTER”)

#### 3.1. Vorbemerkung: Zur theologischen Ausrichtung des masoretischen Psalters

In der jüngeren Psalmenforschung gibt es einen bedeutenden Wandel von der Exegese der Einzelsalmen hin zur Frage nach dem Werden und der Bedeutung des biblischen Psalmbuches, des Psalters, oder mit den Worten Erich Zengers, Matthias Millards Programm „Von der Psalmenexegese zur Psalterexegese“<sup>14</sup> variiierend, „Psalmenexegese *und* Psalterexegese“.<sup>15</sup> Dieser Aufgabe haben

<sup>11</sup> Flint, *Psalms Scrolls*, 287.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> M. Millard, „Von der Psalmenexegese zur Psalterexegese,“ in: *Biblical Interpretation* 4 (1996), 311–28.

<sup>15</sup> Erich Zenger, „Psalmenexegese *und* Psalterexegese. Eine Forschungsskizze,“ in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (Erich Zenger, Hg.; BETL 238; Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 17–65 (24); dort in Anm. 19 mit ausführlicher Bibliographie;



sich in besonderer Weise Erich Zenger und Frank-Lothar Hossfeld<sup>16</sup> sowie Bernd Janowski<sup>17</sup> und Friedhelm Hartenstein<sup>18</sup> gestellt. Programmatisch Erich Zenger: „Die neuere Psalterexegeese will den Psalter als Buchkomposition und dementsprechend die Einzelsalmen in ihrem jeweiligen Textzusammenhang lesen.“<sup>19</sup> Dabei werden einerseits die Einzelsammlungen (Davidpsalmen, Asafpsalmen, Korachiterpsalmen, Wallfahrtspsalmen) in ihrer jeweiligen Struktur und theologischen Intention erfasst, andererseits in ihrer Funktion im Gesamtgebäude des biblischen Psalters als eines theologischen Gesamtkunstwerks. Von besonderem Interesse im Blick auf Psalmensammlungen in Qumran sind die Davidpsalter (I Ps 3-41; II Ps 51-72; III Ps 101-103; IV Ps 108-110; V Ps 138-145). Es ist hier nicht der Ort, die reichen Ergebnisse der biblischen Psalterexegeese darzustellen, es sei lediglich verwiesen auf den genannten Sammelband Erich Zengers von 2010 mit 45 Beiträgen.<sup>20</sup>

### 3.2. Die theologische Ausrichtung von 11QPs<sup>a21</sup>

#### 3.2.1. Hinführung

In der Handschrift 11QPs<sup>a</sup> folgt auf 150:1–6 (MT-Zählung) xxvi 2–8 der Schöpfungshymnus „Hymn to the Creator“ xxvi 9–16 (nur bis Zeile 15 erhalten). Ihm schließen sich die „Letzten Worte Davids“ 2 Sam 23:1–7 an, die xxvii 1 enden. In xxvii 2–11 „David’s Compositions“ wird David zunächst als Weiser, Frommer und mit göttlichem Geist Begabter geschildert, dann wird eine Aufstellung der von ihm gedichteten Psalmen (תהילים) und Lieder (שיר) gegeben, wobei die Lieder eindeutig dem Tempelkult zugeordnet sind. Die durch die „Letzten Worte Davids“ verbundenen Texte des Schöpfungshymnus und der für den Tempelkult gedichteten Lieder Davids erschließen sich gegenseitig.<sup>22</sup> Den Zusammenhang zwischen Schöpfung und (kultischem) Heilshandeln Gottes am Menschen in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> herauszuarbeiten, wäre ein reizvolles und lohnendes Unterfangen, dabei würde vor allem die Gestalt Davids eine wichtige Rolle spielen.<sup>23</sup> Hier soll eine andere Verknüpfung

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vgl. den Beitrag von Bernd Janowski, „Ein Tempel aus Worten. Zur theologischen Architektur des Psalters,“ in Zenger, *Composition*, 279–306, Nachdruck in Zenger, *Der nahe und der ferne Gott. Beiträge zur Theologie des Alten Testaments 5* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlagsgesellschaft, 2014), 287–314; einen guten Überblick geben Erich Zenger und Frank-L. Hossfeld, „Das Buch der Psalmen,“ in *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (E. Zenger, Hg.; Kohlhammer Studienbücher Theologie 1,1; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 81995), 428–52.

<sup>16</sup> Siehe Christoph Dohmen und Thomas Hieke, Hg., *Frank-Lothar Hossfeld, Erich Zenger „Neigt euer Ohr den Worten meines Mundes“ (Ps 78,1). Studien zu Psalmen und Psalter* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Janowski, *Tempel*, 279–306.

<sup>18</sup> Friedhelm Hartenstein, „Schaffe mir Recht, JHWH! (Ps 7,9): Zum theologischen und anthropologischen Profil der Teilkomposition Psalm 3-14,“ in: Zenger, *Composition*, 229–58.

<sup>19</sup> Zenger, *Psalmenexegeese*, 29.

<sup>20</sup> Zenger, *Composition*.

<sup>21</sup> Ausführlicher habe ich mich damit in der Festschrift für Bernd Janowski befasst: Alexandra Grund, Annette Krüger und Florian Lippke, Hg., *Ich will dir danken unter den Völkern. Studien zur israelitischen und altorientalischen Gebetsliteratur. Festschrift für Bernd Janowski zum 70. Geburtstag* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2013), 645–57: „Die Jerusalemorientierung von 11QPs<sup>a</sup>.“ Siehe weiter Christoph A. Gasser, *Apokryphe Psalmen aus Qumran. Ihr Beitrag zur Frage nach dem Kanon* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2010).

<sup>22</sup> Siehe dazu Bernd Janowski in Friedhelm Hartenstein und Bernd Janowski, *Psalmen* (BK XV/1; Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlagsgesellschaft, 2012), 46: „Was die Schaffung von Zusammenhängen zwischen benachbarten Psalmen angeht, so kommt es durch die Nebeneinanderstellung (*iuxtapositio*) und die Verkettung (*concatenatio*) zu einer Überlagerung der Bilder und Motive.“

<sup>23</sup> Ansätze dazu bei Ulrich Dahmen, *Psalmen- und Psalter-Rezeption im Frühjudentum. Rekonstruktion, Textbestand, Struktur und Pragmatik der Psalmenrolle 11QPs<sup>a</sup> aus Qumran* (STDJ 49; Leiden/Boston, MA: Brill, 2003).

untersucht werden, nämlich die schon lange beobachtete „Davidisierung“<sup>24</sup> in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> mit einer, wie mir scheint, zu wenig beachteten „Jerusalemorientierung.“

### 3.2.2. Die „Davidisierung“ des Psalters

Die Psalmenhandschrift 11QPs<sup>a25</sup> trägt im Vergleich zu MT eine deutlich stärkere Ausrichtung auf David. Diese „Davidisierung“<sup>26</sup> wurde vielfältig beschrieben und wird von Armin Lange<sup>27</sup> zusammengefasst und weitergeführt. Dabei spielen die „Letzten Worte Davids“ (2 Sam 23:1–7; davon erhalten in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxvii 1 der Schluss von V. 7) und „David's Compositions“ direkt im Anschluss daran in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxvii 2–11 eine zentrale Rolle. Die Geistgewirktheit des Redens Davids von 2 Sam 23:2 wird in diesem Text in Z. 2–4 und 11 ausdrücklich aufgenommen. Der direkt anschließende Psalm 140 ist ein Davidpsalm (140:1; 11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxvii 12), vom folgenden Ps 134 (in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxviii 1–2) sind Teile von Vers 1 und die Verse 2 und 3 erhalten, nicht aber eine Zuschreibung. Die Psalmen 151A und B (11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxviii 3–12 und 13–14), die die letzte beschriebene Kolumne der Handschrift ausmachen, sind wieder Davidpsalmen. Ps 151 A und B führen die in MT ansatzweise vorhandene Biographisierung der Davidpsalmen (vgl. Ps 51 u.ö.) weiter. 11QPs<sup>a</sup> bietet eine Zuschreibung an David gegenüber MT in Ps 123:1 (11QPs<sup>a</sup> iii 15). Als zentralen Gedanken des Abschlusses der Handschrift stellt Lange<sup>28</sup> den davidischen Bund und dessen Schutz durch Gott heraus. Der Gottesbund mit David realisiert sich aber nicht in der politischen Herrschaft, sondern in der geistgewirkten davidischen Dichtung. Nach „David's Compositions“ ist sie mit insgesamt 4050 Dichtungen allumfassend.

Dies ist nur ein Aspekt der Davidisierung. Die Verbindungen von Ps 51 zu 11QPs<sup>a</sup> xix („Plea for Deliverance“; siehe Ps 51:4 und 11QPs<sup>a</sup> xix 13) lassen David als den Prototyp des Sünders, der Erbarmen erlangt hat, erscheinen. Dies hat Bezüge zum Davidbild von Sir 47:11, worauf Martin Kleer m.R. hingewiesen hat.<sup>29</sup>

Die Davidisierung besteht also darin: Das Bild des idealen Königs wird abgelöst durch das Bild des geisterfüllten Poeten. Dieses wird überformt durch das des Vergebung erlangenden Sünders.

Ist sich die Forschung in dieser „Davidisierung“ des Psalters—und im Blick auf 11QPs<sup>a</sup> konkret des vierten und fünften Buches des Psalters—grundsätzlich einig, so bleibt m.R. strittig, ob das

<sup>24</sup> Zu diesem Begriff siehe Zenger, *Psalter als Buch*, 40–1.

<sup>25</sup> Die Kolumnen- und Zeilenzählung folgt entgegen der Rekonstruktion von Dahmen, *Rezeption*, 62–100 der Ausgabe Sanders, *Psalms Scroll*.

<sup>26</sup> Zur neueren Diskussion siehe Martin Kleer, „Der liebliche Sänger der Psalmen Israels.“ *Untersuchungen zu David als Dichter und Beter der Psalmen* (BBB 108; Bodenheim: Philo-Verlag, 1996), 289–317; Peter W. Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms* (STDJ 17; Leiden: Brill, 1997); Dahmen, *Rezeption*; Heinz-Josef Fabry, „Der Psalter in Qumran“, in *Der Psalter in Judentum und Christentum* (Erich Zenger, Hg.; HBS 18; Freiburg: Herder 1998), 137–63; Ulrich Dahmen, „Die Psalter-Versionen aus den Qumranfunden. Ein Gespräch mit P.W. Flint“, in *Qumran kontrovers. Beiträge zu den Textfunden vom Toten Meer* (Jörg Frey und Hartmut Stegemann, Hg.; Einblicke 6; Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2003); Martin Leuenberger, „Aufbau und Pragmatik des 11QPSa-Psalters: Der historisierte Dichter und Beter David als Vorbild und Identifikationsfigur: 11QPSa als eschatologisches Lese- und Meditationsbuch des qumranischen יהוה“, in *RevQ* 22 (2005): 165–11; und Klaus Seybold, „Dimensionen und Intentionen der Davidisierung der Psalmen. Die Rolle Davids nach den Psalmenüberschriften und nach dem Septuagintapsalm 151“, in *Zenger, Composition*, 125–140 (= idem, *Studien zu Sprache und Stil der Psalmen* [BZAW 415; Berlin/New York, NY: de Gruyter, 2010], 309–328).

<sup>27</sup> Lange, *Handbuch*, 439–43.

<sup>28</sup> Lange, *Handbuch*, 441–42.

<sup>29</sup> Kleer, *Sänger*, 304: „In Sir 47,1–11 steht David in der Spannung von Sünde und Vergebung (...). Der Autor der DavComp dagegen behauptet, David sei fehlerfrei in all seinen Wegen.“ Ob dieser Widerspruch durch die eschatologische Interpretation von DavComp aufgelöst werden kann, erscheint mir sprachlich und inhaltlich mehr als zweifelhaft.

von Martin Kleer<sup>30</sup> erneuerte eschatologische Verständnis von 11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxvii 2–11 (DavComp) sachgerecht ist. Gegenüber der Annahme der Dichtung der 4050 Psalmen bzw. Liedern eines eschatologischen David ist mit Armin Lange lapidar festzuhalten: „Der Verfasser von David’s Compositions artikuliert keine eschatologische Hoffnung, sondern verweist auf einen existierenden Liedpool.“<sup>31</sup> Eine eschatologische Komponente der „Davidisierung“ ergibt sich jedoch aus der Pragmatik von 11QPs<sup>a</sup> her, wie sie Martin Leuenberger zusammenfassend formuliert:

Der kompositionell und konzeptionell vom historischen David als geistbegabtem, prophetischen Dichter und von seiner vollkommenen Rechtsordnung geprägte 11QPs<sup>a</sup>-Psalter wird als eschatologisches Lese- und Meditationsbuch des qumranischen יהד verwendet, der sich mit dem davidischen Vorbild identifiziert, sich an dessen gemeinschaftlicher Lebens- und Rechtsordnung orientiert und daran partizipiert.<sup>32</sup>

Die Frage der Eschatologisierung Davids könnte auf sich beruhen, wenn sie nicht mit der hier behandelten Thematik in enger Verbindung stünde, nämlich der Orientierung von 11QPs<sup>a</sup> am Zion und an Jerusalem und seinem Tempel.

### 3.2.3. Die Jerusalemorientierung von 11QPs<sup>a</sup>

Dieses Bild wird ergänzt durch einen zentralen Aspekt: der Orientierung an Zion, an Jerusalem und seinem Tempel. In „biblischen“ Psalmen wird über MT hinaus in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> Jerusalem bzw. der Zion genannt: Ps 135:2 MT in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> xiv 9 Zusatz וּבְתוֹכָךְ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם. Darüber hinaus weisen apokryphe Psalmen in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> Bezüge zu Jerusalem, zum Zion und zum Tempel auf (z.B. „Apostrophe to Zion“ 11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxii 1–15). Und schließlich bieten „David’s Compositions“ (11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxvii 2–11) Lieder für den Tempelgottesdienst. Die Gesamtzahl von 4050 der Dichtungen Davids ergibt sich aus:

- תהלים 3600
- ושיר לשורר 364 für das tägliche Tamidopfer
- שיר 52 für Qorban am Sabbat
- שיר 12 für Qorban der Neumonde
- שיר 30 für die Tage der Versammlung und den Versöhnungstag, gibt zusammen 446
- שיר 4 über die „Geschlagenen“

Klar an den Tempel gebunden sind die 446 Lieder (שיר), die Opfer begleiten.

Dieser Text hat m.R. eine wichtige Rolle im Zusammenhang der „Davidisierung“ des Psalters gespielt. Er zeigt ein Davidbild des vollkommenen Gerechten, des Weisen und Erleuchteten, des mit prophetischem Geist Begabten. Das Bild des Königs oder des messianischen Herrschers tritt dabei in den Hintergrund. Wichtig ist ein anderer Gesichtspunkt: David ist der Dichter sämtlicher mit dem Jerusalemer Tempelkult zusammenhängender Kultlieder, der Psalmen und Lieder. Die Zahl der 3600 Psalmen mag sich als 24 Liederzyklen von jeweils 150 Psalmen für die 24 Standmannschaften

<sup>30</sup> Kleer, *Sänger*, 301.

<sup>31</sup> Lange, *Handbuch*, 442–53.

<sup>32</sup> Leuenberger, „Aufbau,“ 199–200 (dort kursiv).

ergeben.<sup>33</sup> Insofern wäre David nicht nur der Verfasser des Psalters von 150 Psalmen wie in MT, sondern er hätte für jede Standmannschaft einen eigenen Psalter von 150 Psalmen gedichtet. Die 364 Lieder für das tägliche Tamidopfer spiegeln den qumran-essenischen Sonnenkalender mit seinen 364 Tagen wider. Die 52 Lieder für die sabbatlichen Qorbanopfer gehen von einem gleichbleibend 52-wöchigen Jahr aus. Nicht sicher können die 30 Lieder für die Neumonde (12), die Feste (?) und den Versöhnungstag (?) zugeordnet werden, aber alle genannten ergeben zusätzlich zu den 3600 Psalmen weitere 446 Lieder. Diese haben alle einen eindeutigen kultischen Zusammenhang und Bezug zum Jerusalemer Tempel. Dies wird auch für die letztgenannte Gruppe von vier Liedern über die “Geschlagenen” zutreffen, wird doch der Zusammenhang dieser Lieder mit Ps 91 aus 11QapocrPs hinreichend deutlich.<sup>34</sup>

### 3.2.4. 11QPs<sup>a</sup> und die Qumran-Essener

Bevor wir in die Entfaltung dieser These eintreten können, sind grundsätzliche Überlegungen zu 11QPs<sup>a</sup> insbesondere im Blick auf Tempel und Jerusalem notwendig.<sup>35</sup> Oder die Frage zugespitzt: Wie verhält sich die überragende Bedeutung von Jerusalem, des Zion und des Tempels in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> zur Tempel- und Jerusalemkritischen Haltung des  $\text{מִתְּנֵי}$ ? Stellt die “Davidisierung” angesichts der qumran-essenischen Messiaserwartungen<sup>36</sup> kein wirkliches Problem dar,<sup>37</sup> so verhält es sich anders im Verhältnis zu Jerusalem und seinem Tempel.

<sup>33</sup> So die plausible Überlegung von Patrick W. Skehan, “Qumran and Old Testament Criticism,” in *Qumrân. Sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu* (Matthias Delcor, Hg.; BETL 46; Paris/Leuven: Gembloux, Éditions Duculot/University Press, 1978), 163–82 (169); demgegenüber erscheint die gematrische Deutung ( $\text{מִתְּנֵי}$  hat den Zahlenwert von 24) durch Ben Z. Wacholder, “David’s Eschatological Psalter 11Q Psalms,” *HUCA* 59 (1988): 23–72 (35), der Kleer, *Sänger*, 300 zustimmt, sehr gesucht.

<sup>34</sup> Siehe Philipp S. Alexander, “The Demonology of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years. A Comprehensive Assessment* (Peter W. Flint und James C. VanderKam, Hg.; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 2:331–53; Esther Eshel, “Genres of Magical Texts in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Die Dämonen. The Demons. Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt* (Armin Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger und Diethard Römheld, Hg.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 395–415; Hermann Lichtenberger, “Ps 91 und die Exorzismen in 11QPs<sup>a</sup>,” *op cit.*, 416–21; und Lichtenberger, “Demonology in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament,” in *Text, Thought, and Practice in Qumran and Early Christianity. Proceedings of the Ninth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, Jointly Sponsored by the Hebrew University Center for the Study of Christianity, 11-13 January, 2004* (Ruth A. Clements und Daniel R. Schwartz, Hg.; STDJ 84; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 267–80; vgl. Lange, *Handbuch*, 407–10. Siehe aber den Vorschlag “Thirty Holy Seasons Based on 11QPs<sup>a</sup> XXVII David’s Compositions,” bei Shemaryahu Talmon, Jonathan Ben-Dov und Uwe Glessner, *Qumran Cave 4 XVI* (DJD 21; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 15; dort werden die vier Lieder auf “Epagomenal Days” bezogen.

<sup>35</sup> Wir können hier die Kanonfrage übergehen; 11QPs<sup>a</sup> freilich, wie Fabry, “Psalter,” 154, vehement vertritt, “endgültig aus der Kanondebatte herauszunehmen,” ist unbegründet; siehe dazu die umsichtigen Ausführungen von Lange, *Handbuch*, 416–30.

<sup>36</sup> John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (ABRL; New York, NY: Doubleday, 1995); James H. Charlesworth, Hg., *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992); Johannes Zimmermann, *Messianische Texte aus Qumran. Königliche, priesterliche und prophetische Messiasvorstellungen in den Schriften von Qumran* (WUNT II/104; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998); James H. Charlesworth, Hermann Lichtenberger und Gerbern S. Oegema, Hg., *Qumran-Messianism. Studies on the Messianic Expectations in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998); Stefan Schreiber, *Gesalbter und König. Titel und Konzeptionen der königlichen Gesalbtenenerwartung in frühjüdischen und urchristlichen Schriften* (BZNW 105; Berlin/New York, NY: W. de Gruyter, 2000) und Hermann Lichtenberger, “Qumran-Messianism,” in *Emanuel. Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov* (Shalom M. Paul, Robert A. Kraft, Lawrence H. Schiffman und Weston W. Fields, Hg.; VTS 94; Leiden/Boston, MA: Brill, 2003), 323–33.

<sup>37</sup> Siehe oben das Zitat von Leuenberger, “Aufbau,” 199–200; freilich konnte der davidische Messias dem priesterlichen nachgeordnet werden; zu Stellen und Literatur siehe vorhergehende Anmerkung.

Zwar stammen alle Handschriften der von 11QPs<sup>a</sup> vertretenen Psalmensammlung aus dem 1. Jh. n.Chr.,<sup>38</sup> doch spricht der freie Gebrauch des Tetragramms in der Aufzählung der Psalmen und Lieder Davids xxvii 2–11 für eine Entstehung vor der Mitte des 2. Jh.s v.Chr.<sup>39</sup> und in jedem Fall nicht in der qumran-essenischen Gemeinde (vom Toten Meer). Die Jerusalemorientierung und die Spezifizierung der “Israeliten, des Volks seiner Heiligkeit” von Ps 149:9 in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxvi 3 durch “alle seine Frommen” legen eine Datierung in die Zeit der Gefährdung und des zeitweiligen Verlustes des Tempels und der Rolle der Hasidim 175-164 v.Chr. nahe.<sup>40</sup> In diesem Kontext spielt die “Davidisierung” eine besondere Rolle. Zwar verband sich zunächst die Hoffnung der Hasidim mit den Hasmonäern und ihrer Erhebung, doch wich diese bald der Enttäuschung (Dan 11:34). Den die Macht an sich reißenden Hasmonäern stehen die in die essenische Gemeinschaft einmündenden Hasidim strikt ablehnend gegenüber:<sup>41</sup> Ihre messianisch-eschatologische Erwartung richtet sich u.a. auf einen legitimen Aaroniden, andererseits auf einen Davididen.<sup>42</sup> “Davidisierung” und “Jerusalemisierung” konnten sich für die qumran-essenische Gemeinschaft miteinander verbinden: David bereits hat für die Zeit, in der (wieder) ein legitimer Kult am Jerusalemer Tempel möglich sein wird, für alle kultischen Begehungen die Psalmen und Lieder gedichtet (11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxvii 2–11), und zwar aus göttlicher prophetischer Eingebung (xxvii 11). Dann wird auch wieder der legitime Sonnenkalender von 364 Tagen in Gebrauch sein (xxvii 6–7). Dabei ist David in dem Sinn durchaus als “historische” Person zu verstehen, als er König und Psalmendichter der Vergangenheit ist, dessen liturgische Dichtungen jedoch erst dann, wenn wieder ein legitimer Jerusalemer Kult stattfinden kann, zur Geltung kommt. Bis dahin werden seine Traditionen in einer Gemeinschaft gepflegt, die diesen Kult nicht in Jerusalem ausüben kann.

### 3.2.5. Die Jerusalemorientierung von 11QPs<sup>a</sup> im Rahmen des 4. und 5. Buches des masoretischen Psalters

Eine Jerusalemorientierung ist im 4. und 5. Buch des Psalters bereits vorgegeben.<sup>43</sup> Diese wird verstärkt durch zwei explizite Texte, die auf unterschiedliche Art einen Bezug zum Zion bzw. zum Tempel herstellen. Es handelt sich dabei um den im masoretischen Psalter nicht enthaltenen Psalm “Apostrophe to Zion” (11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxii 1–15) und den dort ebenfalls nicht überlieferten Prosatext “David’s Compositions” (11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxvii 2–11). Es handelt sich in beiden Fällen um vollständig

<sup>38</sup> Dazu und zum folgenden Lange, *Handbuch*, 433–34.

<sup>39</sup> Siehe dazu Hartmut Stegemann, “ΚΥΡΙΟΣ Ο ΘΕΟΣ und ΚΥΡΙΟΣ ΙΕΗΣΟΥΣ. Aufkommen und Ausbreitung des religiösen Gebrauchs von ΚΥΡΙΟΣ und seine Verwendung im Neuen Testament” (Diss. Habil., Bonn, 1969); Stegemann, “Religionsgeschichtliche Erwägungen zu den Gottesbezeichnungen in den Qumrantexten,” in Delcor, *Qumrân*, 195–217; Hermann Lichtenberger, “Eine weisheitliche Mahnrede in den Qumranfunden (4Q185),” *op. cit.*, 151–62; Lichtenberger, “Der Weisheitstext 4Q185 – Eine neue Edition,” in *The Wisdom Texts From Qumran and the Development of Sapiential Thought* (Charlotte Hempel, Armin Lange und Hermann Lichtenberger, Hg.; BETL 159; Leuven/Paris/Sterling, VA: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 2002), 127–50; und Lichtenberger, “JHWH,” *ThWQ* 2:101–6.

<sup>40</sup> Siehe Lange, *Handbuch*, 433–34.

<sup>41</sup> Hartmut Stegemann, *Die Entstehung der Qumrangemeinde* (Diss. theol., Bonn, 1971).

<sup>42</sup> Siehe die Bibliographie zu den messianischen Vorstellungen von Qumran und verwandter Literaturen bei Martin G. Abegg, Craig A. Evans und Gerbern S. Oegema, “Bibliography of Messianism and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in Charlesworth, Lichtenberger, Oegema, Hg., *Qumran-Messianism*, 204–14.

<sup>43</sup> Die folgenden Angaben berücksichtigen die in der Handschrift erhaltenen Bezüge.

erhaltene Texte, 11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxii 11–15 hat eine Parallele in 4QPs<sup>f</sup> (4Q88) vii–viii,<sup>44</sup> Einzelwörter sind auch 11QPs<sup>b</sup> (11Q6) frag. 6 belegt.<sup>45</sup>

Bei 11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxii 2–11 “Apostrophe to Zion” ist die Stellung in der Sammlung zu bedenken. Sie fügt sich ein in die Zion- bzw. Jerusalemorientierung von 11QPs<sup>a</sup>. Sie hat einen konkreten Ort in der Gefährdung, dem Verlust, der Hoffnung und schließlich der Wiedergewinnung Zions im Makkabäeraufstand. Jedoch nicht der militärische Kampf wird Zion wiedergewinnen, sondern das Hoffen und Sehnen der Frommen. Dies hat ein deutliches Pendant in der Rolle, die David in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxvii 2–11 zugeschrieben wird: Er ist nicht der königliche Herrscher oder der messianische endzeitliche Retter, sondern der Weise und Fromme, der prophetisch Begabte, der in seinen Psalmen und Liedern den Jerusalemer Kult begründet hat.

### 3.2.6. Zusammenfassende Überlegungen

Die Zentrierung auf den Zion, Jerusalem und seinen Tempel ist schon im 4. und 5. Buch des Psalters angelegt wie auch die “Davidisierung” des Psalters. Sie wird verstärkt in der Psalterversion, die in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> erhalten ist.<sup>46</sup> Zwischen dieser Davidisierung und Jerusalemzentrierung besteht ein innerer Zusammenhang, wie er sich in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxvii 2–11 (“David’s Compositions”) zeigt: David stellt die Texte des Kultes kraft prophetischer Eingabe bereit. In 11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxii 1–15 (“Apostrophe to Zion”) begegnet nicht der ursprüngliche Begründer des Jerusalemer Tempels als erster Psalmen- und Liederdichter, sondern wir werden in eine zeitgeschichtliche Not- und Hoffungszeit geführt, eben in die Zeit der Entstehung von 11QPs<sup>a</sup>. Sie wurde oben charakterisiert als eine Zeit der Gefährdung, des zeitweiligen Verlustes, der Hoffnung und der Wiedergewinnung des Jerusalemer Tempels. 11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxii 1–15 erwähnt David nicht. Die Integration aber dieses Psalms in den 11QPs<sup>a</sup>-Psalter mit seiner Davidorientierung bringt deutlich die Kritik hasidischer Kreise an der Usurpation und Ausübung priesterlicher und herrscherlicher, schließlich königlicher Herrschaft durch die Hasmonäer zur Sprache.

Die Akzeptanz und Weiterüberlieferung des Psalters 11QPs<sup>a</sup> in den Qumranfunden hat darum eben diese beiden Gründe: Die Hoffnung auf einen messianischen Herrscher aus dem Hause David (dem ein priesterlicher durchaus vorgeordnet sein kann) gegenüber und in Opposition zur hasmonäischen Herrschaft, die sich nach dem gemeinsamen Widerstand und Erfolg gegen die Fremdbestimmung als eine für die Frommen illegitime Priesterherrschaft entpuppte, und die Hoffnung auf einen Jerusalemer Tempel und einen Kult, der die damals von David geschenkten Psalmen und Lieder im Gottesdienst verwendet und dem richtigen und allein legitimen Sonnenkalender folgt. Bis dies so weit sein wird, stellt die Gemeinde selbst den Tempel dar, und ihre Opfer bestehen im Lobpreis und dem vollkommenen Wandel<sup>47</sup>—wie von David in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxvii 2–11 bezeugt. Und so entbehrt es nicht der Ironie der Geschichte, dass uns in der Bibliothek der extrem Jerusalemkritischen

<sup>44</sup>Eugene Ulrich, *Qumran Cave 4, XI, Psalms to Chronicles* (DJD 16, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 85–106.

<sup>45</sup>Florentino García Martínez, Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar und Adam S. van der Woude, Incorporating Earlier Editions by Johannes P.M. van der Ploeg, O.P. with a Contribution by Edward Herbert, *Qumran Cave 11, II, 11Q2-18, 11Q20-31* (DJD 23; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 36, Plate IV; insgesamt Dahmen, *Rezeption*, 244–48.

<sup>46</sup>Wir können in diesem Zusammenhang auf eine Diskussion der Prioritäts- oder Unabhängigkeitsfragen von 11QPs<sup>a</sup> vom protomasoretischen Psalter verzichten; siehe dazu jüngst Leuenberger, “Aufbau,” und zusammenfassend Lange, *Handbuch*, 433–43.

<sup>47</sup>Georg Klinzing, *Die Umdeutung des Kultus in der Qumrangemeinde und im NT* (SUNT 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971).



Gemeinschaft vom Toten Meer das sprachlich und theologisch wunderschöne Zionslied 11QPs<sup>a</sup> xxii 1–15 erhalten geblieben ist.<sup>48</sup>

#### 4. DIE THEOLOGISCHE AUSRICHTUNG VON 11QPSAPOC<sup>49</sup>

11Q11 bietet insgesamt vier Davidspsalmen, deren erste drei bisher unbekannt waren. Eine eindeutige Zuschreibung an David findet sich lediglich beim 3. Lied (11Q11 v 4). Ein Zusammenhang mit 11Q5 xxvii 9–10 (“vier Lieder über den Geschlagenen”) erscheint zwingend.<sup>50</sup> Somit wäre 11Q11 eine Einlösung der in 11Q5 genannten vier Lieder.

##### 4.1. Lied 1

Vom 1. Lied (Kol. i) sind leider nur Einzelwörter erhalten, darunter aber  $\cong\psi\nu\tau$  (Zeile 4) (Ps 91:13) und  $[\psi\beta\mu]$  (Zeile 6) (“beschwören”), das noch häufiger in der Handschrift Verwendung findet. Ebenso Zeile 9:  $!\psi\delta$  (“Dämonen”).

##### 4.2. Lied 2

Kol. ii 1–v 3

Im 2. Lied findet sich Zeile 1 die Wendung  $\uparrow\beta$  (“im Namen”), was deutlich auf eine Beschwörung hinweist. Zeile 2 spricht von der “Tat Salomos,” womit gewiss auf die Rolle Salomos als Beschwörer der Dämonen Bezug genommen wird (siehe Josephus, *Ant.* 8.45–47). In Zeile 3 ist die Nebeneinanderstellung von  $\tau\omega\phi\omega\rho$  (“Geistern”) und  $!\psi\delta$  (“Dämonen”) erhalten. Zeile 4 könnte auf den  $\bar{\rho}$  (“Fürsten”) der Dämonen verweisen. Zeile 7 spricht von  $\alpha\omega\pi\rho$  (“Heilung”) und Zeile 8 vom “sich stützen auf deinen Namen”. Die Fortsetzung in Kol. iii greift das “Beschwören” auf, möglicherweise bezogen auf Engel. Kol. iv nennt einen “starken Engel” (IV,5 מלאך חזק). Dieser ist verbunden mit dem “Schlagen YHWHs” mit [einem gewaltigen Schlag?], jedenfalls wird der Zorn Gottes jemanden (einen Dämon?) vernichten, wozu er den “starken Engel” aussendet. Zeile 7 spricht vom Werfen in die große Tehom und in die tiefste [Scheol], in der Finsternis ist. Dort treffen ihn die Flüche des Abgrunds. Die “Glut des Zorns” Gottes findet sich Zeile 5 und Zeile 11.

##### 4.3. Lied 3

Kol. v 4–vi 3

Das 3. Lied ist explizit David zugeschrieben und wird bestimmt als “Beschwörung” im Namen YHWHs. Diese Beschwörung wird sogleich ausgearbeitet in Aufnahme der nächtlichen Gefahr aus Ps 91: “[Wenn] er kommt zu dir in der Nacht, dann sollst du zu ihm sprechen: ‘Wer bist du? [...] Ein Mensch und vom Samen der Heiligen? Dein Angesicht ist ein Angesicht des Trugs, und deine Hörner sind Hörner des Traums, Finsternis bist du und nicht Licht, Frevel und nicht Gerechtigkeit’” (Zeile 5–8). Der Dämon wird einerseits nach seinem Namen gefragt, um dadurch Macht über ihn zu gewinnen, andererseits wird er als völlig kraft- und machtlos lächerlich gemacht. Was folgt, ist

<sup>48</sup> Wie die Parallelhandschrift 4Q88 bezeugt, handelt es sich um bewusste Überlieferung des Textes.

<sup>49</sup> Siehe Corinna Körting, “Text and Context – Ps 91 and 11QPsAp,” in Zenger, *Composition*, 567–77.

<sup>50</sup> Vgl. aber oben Anmerkung 34.

dann wohl die Verbannung in die Unterwelt durch den “Fürsten des Heeres YHWHs” (Zeile 8). Die tiefste Scheol hat eiserne Tore, die ihn auf Dauer verwahren werden (Zeile 9). Der Psalm wird abgeschlossen durch einen Hinweis auf die “Söhne Belials” und Sela (vi 3).

#### 4.4. Lied 4

Als 4. Lied schließt Ps 91 die Sammlung der vier Psalmen “über den Zerschlagenen” ab. Dabei nehmen die drei vorhergehenden Psalmen Einzelbegriffe aus Ps 91 bereits auf, wie z.B.  $\cong\psi\upsilon\tau$ ,  $\perp\alpha\mu$ . Motive aus Ps 91 werden z.B. im 3. Psalm ausgearbeitet. Gegenüber MT weist 11QPapoc eine unterschiedliche Fassung auf. Dies bezieht sich zunächst auf Einzelwörter, die entweder hinzugefügt (Zeile 4) oder ersetzt (Zeile 6) sind. Dazu gehört auch die Einfügung von “Sela” in Zeile 6, und in Zeile 14 der responsorische Abschluss mit “Amen, Amen. Sela.” In Zeile 7 und 8 sind zwei Versglieder umgestellt, um die Tageszeiten in Reihenfolge zu bringen (MT: Nacht, Tag, Dämmerung, Mittag—Qumran: Nacht, Tag, Mittag, Dämmerung). Eine kleine Wortumstellung findet sich in Zeile 9. Der wichtigste Unterschied betrifft die Weglassung der Gottesrede in Vers 14 und 15 MT, Vers 16 ist in Qumran wieder aufgenommen, setzt aber wohl die Rede von Gott in 3. Person fort. Die Qumranfassung des Psalms hat gegenüber MT ein responsorisches “Amen, Amen” und schließt mit “Sela” ab.

Kol. vi 3–14

- 3 [Wer sitzt] im Schutz des [Allmächtigen], [im Schat]ten Schadais
- 4 [nächtigt], der spricht [zu YHWH: Meine Festung] und [meine] Burg, [mein Gott] (ist) [mein] Vertrauen, [ich vertraue] auf ihn.
- 5 [Denn e]r wird dich erretten von [der Falle des Vogelfän]gers, von der [bösar]tigen Pest, [unter] seinem Gefieder wird er [dich] beschützen, und unter
- 6 seinen [Flügeln] wirst du wohnen. [Seine] Gnade ist [üb]er dir ein Schild und ein Schirm ist seine Wahrheit. Sela. Du fürchtest dich nicht
- 7 vor dem Schrecken der Nacht, vor dem Pfeil, der tagsüber fliegt, vor der Seuche, die am Mittag wütet, vor der Pest, die in der Dämmerung
- 8 einhergeht. Es fallen tausend zu deiner Seite und zehn[tausend zu deiner Re]chten, [dich] aber wird es ni[cht] treffen. Nur, [du blickst]
- 9 mit deinen Augen, du [wirst sehen] die Vergeltung an den Frevle[rn]. Du hast ge[rufen] um [deine] Rettung, du hast (ihn) gemacht zu deiner Lust. [Nicht]
- 10 fürchtest du dich, [und] nicht (ist) Plage in deinen [Zelten]. Denn [seinen Engeln] befiehlt er deinetwegen,
- 11 [dich] zu behüten auf deinen [Wegen], auf Händen [werden sie] dich [tragen], damit [du nicht] stoßest an einen Ste]in [deinen] Fuß.
- 12 Eine Schlange [wirst du zer]treten, du zertrittst [...] und Drache. Du hast festgehalten [...]
- 13 [...] [er wird] dir zei[gen] [seine] Rettung,

14 und sie sollen antw[orten: Amen, Amen]. Sela. [...]

Da es kaum denkbar ist, dass der Verfasser der Sammlung aus Ps 91 ausgerechnet das Heilsorakel in Gestalt der Gottesrede weggelassen hat, ist mit Sicherheit mit zwei unterschiedlichen Fassungen bzw. Rezensionen von Ps 91 zu rechnen. Ob in dieser die Wortänderungen und Umstellungen gegenüber dem MT-Text schon bestanden, oder ob sie durch den Verfasser der Sammlung vorgenommen wurden, lässt sich nicht mit Sicherheit sagen.

Die Verbindungen der drei vorhergehenden Lieder mit Ps 91 zeigen sich in einigen zentralen Punkten:

- (a) Die Gefahr in der Nacht (v 4: “Wenn er zu dir kommt in der Nacht” vgl. Ps 91:5)
- (b) Die Frage nach dem Namen (v 6: “Wer bist du?” vgl. Ps 91:2)
- (c) Die Frevelhaftigkeit des Dämons (v 6–8: “Dein Angesicht ist ein Angesicht der Nichtigkeit und deine Hörner sind Hörner des Traums, Finsternis bist du und nicht Licht, Frevel und nicht Gerechtigkeit” vgl. Ps 91:3–8, 10, 13)
- (d) Das Heer YHWHs (v 8: “Der Fürst des Heeres YHWHs”; vgl. IV,5: “ein mächtiger Engel”; d.h. Aktivierung der göttlichen Engel bzw. des göttlichen Heeres zugunsten der Bedrohten vgl. Ps 91:11f.)

Ps 91 hat auf die ihm vorangestellten Psalmen weniger terminologisch als inhaltlich eingewirkt. Ps 91 schließt die Sammlung von Beschwörungspsalmen mit der Gewissheit der göttlichen Rettung ab und wirkt damit wie ein Schlussstein. Durch die Einbeziehung in die Sammlung von Exorzismen wird Ps 91 selbst zu einem solchen Beschwörungstext. Das ist vor allem auch daran zu sehen, dass er, abweichend von MT, liturgisch durch “Amen, Amen, Sela” in die Sammlung integriert wird. Indem Ps 91 die Sammlung der Beschwörungen beschließt, macht er deutlich, dass am wirkungsvollsten die Anrufung Gottes selbst ist.

## 5. SCHLUSSÜBERLEGUNGEN

Konnten wir im ersten Teil die Vielfalt in Qumran überlieferter Psalmensammlungen erkennen, so sollte im zweiten Teil auf einen bereits in der biblischen Überlieferung angelegten Zug aufmerksam gemacht werden, nämlich die Orientierung an David. Der erste Teil zeigte die Vielfalt und große Zahl der Psalmenhandschriften in Qumran, unter denen einige wenige neben biblischen Psalmen entweder bisher unbekannte oder andernorts überlieferte Psalmen bieten. Daneben finden sich Sammlungen von Psalmen und Liedern, die bisher völlig unbekannte Texte überliefern. Sie umfassen eine ganze Bandbreite, nämlich von zwei Psalmen bis zu 50. Unter ihnen ragt die Sammlung der Hodayot heraus. Diese gehen entweder auf einen individuellen Verfasser, den Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit (“Lehrerlieder”), oder auf einzelne Fromme (“Gemeindelieder”) zurück. Andere Handschriften bieten Sammlungen zu täglichen Gebeten oder zu Festtagen. In ihnen spielt David keine besondere Rolle.

Die Ausrichtung auf David ist freilich ein entscheidender Zug in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> und 11QPsapoc. Im erstgenannten Text wird David faktisch zum Dichter sämtlicher kultischer Dichtungen und einer Sammlung von Exorzismen, die dann in 11QPsapoc wiederzufinden ist. Hier wird das Davidbild

über das des geistbegabten Sängers und messianischen Wiederbringers des Kultes mit einem Zug versehen, der sich in der frühjüdischen Überlieferung eher bei seinem Sohn Salomo angeheftet hat, nämlich dem des Exorzisten. Freilich ist biblisch diese für David bereits fest vorgegeben: Die  $\eta\omega\eta\psi\ \phi\omega\rho$  hatte Saul verlassen und eine  $\eta[\rho\ \phi\omega\rho$  hat ihn überfallen. David wird gerufen, der vor Saul auf seinem Instrument ( $\rho\omega\nu\kappa$ ) spielt, und jedes Mal, wenn er es tut, “wich von ihm die  $\eta[\rho\eta\ \phi\omega\rho$ ” (1 Sam 16:14–23). 11QP<sup>sapoc</sup> greift diesen Zug auf und führt ihn weiter. Die Sammlung der vier Lieder Davids dient dem Vertreiben des bösen Geistes bzw. der Dämonen und füllt eine traditionsgeschichtliche Lücke. Welche Bedeutung dies für die Heilungen und Exorzismen des Davidsohns Jesus von Nazareth hat, müssen Neutestamentler erst noch entdecken.

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# “Luxury Scrolls” from the Judean Desert

EMANUEL TOV

## 1. BACKGROUND

In my book *Scribal Practices*,<sup>1</sup> I first suggested the existence of a special type of scrolls characterized as deluxe scrolls,<sup>2</sup> illustrating an important aspect of the writing culture known from Greek sources. It is important to recognize which compositions were chosen to be included in this category.

The main argument for the existence of luxury scrolls is the presence of large top and bottom margins of more than 3.0 cm above and below the writing block. Writing material was expensive and the fact that scroll manufacturers left writing surface unused had a special meaning in ancient times.

Leaving a large area uninscribed accorded that scroll a special elegance as it accentuated the writing block. In a book culture in which top and bottom margins averaged 1.0–1.5 cm, there must have been a special reason to leave a larger area uninscribed throughout the scroll. At a certain point, I realized that this practice was accompanied by other features, among which is the fact that a larger than usual percentage of the presumed luxury scrolls contained Scripture texts.

Scrolls were usually prepared in such a way that the writing block of all columns was more or less identical. Various devices were used to guarantee that the lines had the same length, the distance between the lines was more or less identical, and that lines in adjacent columns would be written at the same height. The most frequently used device for this purpose was guide dots positioned before and after the lines, which ensured that the lines were drawn at fixed intervals.<sup>3</sup>

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This chapter is dedicated to Jim Charlesworth, a scholar of many accomplishments and a dear friend.

<sup>1</sup>E. Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert*, STDJ 54 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 125–9.

<sup>2</sup>I adopted this term from the analysis of the Greek writing culture. K. Davis, “High Quality Scrolls from the Post-Herodian Period,” in *Gleanings from the Caves: Dead Sea Scrolls and Artefacts from The Schøyen Collection*, ed. T. Elgvin, K. Davis, and M. Langlois, LSTS 71 (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 129–38, uses the term “high-quality” scrolls in his valuable analysis of the fragments found in the Schøyen Collection.

<sup>3</sup>The ruling was performed for the sheet as a whole, so that the slight deviations always recur at the same place in each column within a sheet or in several sheets. See the data relating to two scrolls: 4QpsEzek<sup>c</sup> (4Q385b) 1 i–iii: The space between lines 2 and 3 in the three adjacent columns is larger than that between the other lines. In the case of 11QT<sup>b</sup> (11Q19), three sheets containing cols. XLV–LX were ruled with identical spaces between the lines, while two subsequent sheets (cols. LXI–LXVI) were ruled differently, leaving more space between the lines. For details, see Y. Yadin, *The Temple Scroll*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society/The Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem/The Shrine of the Book, 1983), 1.11–12.

The purpose of the present chapter is to develop further the assumption of luxury scrolls, to incorporate new evidence, and to pay attention to some reactions to my initial thoughts.

The suggestion of the existence of luxury scrolls in Hebrew and Aramaic is supported by practices in the Greek writing culture applied to literary papyrus scrolls. According to Schubart,<sup>4</sup> the major criterion for recognizing deluxe editions among the papyrus scrolls is the margin size, such as in the case of the Thucydides papyri P.Oxy. 61.4103–4112 with margins of 4.0–8.0 cm (four texts from the second century CE) as well as various Herculaneum papyri with margins of 5.0–6.0 cm.<sup>5</sup> Johnson described in detail which of Schubart's arguments for the existence of luxury scrolls had been accepted by scholars and which had not, but the size of the margins remained a stable criterion.<sup>6</sup> Johnson himself provided detailed data regarding these margins, and he also turned to additional criteria.<sup>7</sup>

Our discussion turns first to the size of the margins and subsequently to other parameters of luxury scrolls. Most of the relevant data are included in Table 27.1.

## 2. LARGE TOP AND BOTTOM MARGINS IN LEATHER SCROLLS

Table 27.1 presents *all* the Judean Desert texts with large-sized top and bottom margins (more than 3.0 cm).<sup>8</sup> The table includes scrolls in which at least one of the two margins exceeds 3.0 cm, although usually both exceed that size. The purpose of the table is to establish that these parameters were used especially for deluxe editions, in this case mainly of biblical texts. Other parameters are also recorded for these texts; we will return to them below (number of lines, height, size of intercolumnar margin, date, textual character of the biblical texts, and the degree of scribal intervention expressed by the average number of lines between corrections in the text). In this table, “r” signifies “reconstructed.” In some cases (“—”), the relevant evidence is lacking. Since top and bottom margins usually measure 1.0–2.0 cm in the texts from the Judean Desert, margins such as those in MurNum (7.5 cm), 2QNum<sup>a</sup> (5.7+ cm), 4QDeut<sup>s</sup> (5.7+ cm), and XH<sup>e</sup>ev/SeNum<sup>b</sup> (7.2–7.5 cm) are very unusual. The dates of the texts listed below are quoted from Brian Webster.<sup>9</sup> Underlined names of texts have CE dates.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>4</sup> W. Schubart, *Das Buch bei den Griechen und Römern*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Gruyter, 1921), 58–9.

<sup>5</sup> G. Cavallo, *Libri scritte scribi a Ercolano* (Napoli: Macchiaroli, 1983).

<sup>6</sup> W. A. Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes in Oxyrhynchus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 132–41.

<sup>7</sup> Reduced height of the column, large script, wide line spacing (leading), excessive length of the scroll (Johnson, *Bookrolls*, 155–6). However, other scholars consider tall columns a criterion for a deluxe scroll (*ibid.*, 123).

<sup>8</sup> The table is adapted and corrected from Table 27 in Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 126–7. Johnson, *Bookrolls*, 132–41, gives detailed data on the margins in Greek literary papyrus scrolls.

<sup>9</sup> B. Webster, “Chronological Index,” in *The Texts from the Judaean Desert: Indices and an Introduction to the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert Series*, ed. E. Tov, DJD 39 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 351–446.

<sup>10</sup> The list includes three texts from the Schøyen Collection that have been published in *Gleanings from the Caves*; see nn. c, d, e in Table 27.1.

TABLE 27.1 Hebrew/Aramaic Deluxe Texts Found in the Judean Desert (Main Criterion: Large Top/Bottom Margins)

*a. Biblical Texts (27)*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Top Margin (cm)</i>	<i>Bottom Margin (cm)</i>	<i>No. of Lines</i>	<i>Height (cm)</i>	<i>Intercul. Space (cm)</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Textual Character</i>	<i>Aver. Lines b/w Corrs.</i>
1QIsa <sup>a</sup>	2.0–2.8	2.5–3.3	28–32	24.5–27	0.5–1.3	125–100 BCE	ind.	4
2QNum <sup>a</sup>	–	5.7+	–	–	–	30–68 CE	–	17+
4QGen <sup>b</sup>	3.3	–	40 r	35 r	1.2–1.5	30–100 CE	MT	62
4QExod <sup>c</sup>	4.0–4.4	3.6	ca. 43 r	38 r	1.0–1.8	50–25 BCE	MT-like	17
4QpaleoGen-Exod <sup>d</sup>	–	4.0	55–60 r	38 r	1.8–2.2	100–25 BCE	MT-like	105
4QpaleoExod <sup>m</sup>	3.0–3.5	4.3–4.5	32, 33	35+	1.5–2.2	100–25 BCE	SP	197
4QDeut <sup>s</sup> frg. 11	–	5.7+	–	–	–	1–25 CE	MT-like/SP	43
4QJudg <sup>b</sup> frg. 3	–	5.3	–	–	–	30–1 BCE	MT-like	8
4QSam <sup>a</sup>	2.2–2.7	2.9–3.1	42–44 r	30.1	1.3	50–25 BCE	ind./LXX	110
4QJer <sup>c</sup>	–	2.5–4.5	18	25.3–26.3	1.5–2.0	30–1 BCE	MT-like	25
4QEzek <sup>a</sup>	3.0+	–	42 r	29.5 r	0.7–1.7	50–25 BCE	ind.	50
4QPs <sup>c</sup>	1.5+	3.2+	33	ca. 26	1.5–2.1	1–50 CE	MT-like	52
MurGen frg 1	5.2	–	50 r	46.5 r	1.7	ca. 115 CE	MT	23+
MurNum frg 6	–	7.5	50 r	46.5 r	–	ca. 115 CE	MT	–
MurDeut frg 2	3.8	–	30–31 r	–	1.8–2.0	20–50 CE	–	–
MurIsa	–	3.0+	–	–	–	20–84 CE	MT	–
MurXII	2.6–4.0	4.5–5.0	39	35.5	2.0–2.2	ca. 115 CE	MT	75
XHev/SeNum <sup>b</sup>	–	7.2–7.5	44 r	39.5 r	1.4–2.5	50–68 CE	MT	28+
34SeNum	5.0	–	–	–	2.0	–	–	–
MasLev <sup>b</sup>	2.2	2.7	25	21	2.0–3.0	30 BCE–30 CE	MT	24
MasDeut <sup>a</sup>	3.4	–	42	33	1.0	50–1 BCE (or 50 CE?)	–	17
MasEzek	3.0	–	42	29.5	1.5	50–1 BCE (or 30–68 CE?)	MT	18
MasPs <sup>a</sup>	2.4	3.0	29	25.5	1.0–3.0 <sup>B</sup>	25–1 BCE (or 25–50 CE?)	MT	74+
SdeirGen	–	–	40 r	27–33 r	1.7–2.0	50–100 CE	–	–
XQLev <sup>c</sup> = Mur/HevLev <sup>c</sup>	3.5	–	46 r	29 r	1.8–2.1	50–100 CE	MT	–
Hev(?)Joel <sup>D</sup>	3.5	–	–	–	–	50–100 CE	–	–
Mur/HevJosh <sup>E</sup>	–	4.0	27–28	ca. 24	1.8	100 CE	MT	–

<sup>a</sup>MasDeut together with MasEzek and MasPs<sup>a</sup> were assigned later dates subsequent to the publication. For MasDeut, see F. García Martínez, “Les manuscrits des Désert de Juda et le Deutéronome,” in *Studies in Deuteronomy in Honour of C.J. Labuschagne on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. F. García Martínez et al., VTSup 53 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 63–91 at 75 [approximately 50 CE]; E. J. C. Tigchelaar, “Notes on the Ezekiel Scroll from Masada (MasEzek),” *RevQ* 22 (2005–6): 269–75 at 273–5 [30–68 CE]; G. W. Nebe, “Die Masada-Psalmen-Handschrift M1039-160 nach einem jüngst veröffentlichten Photo mit Text von Psalm 81,2-85,6,” *RevQ* 14 (1989–90): 89–97 at 94 [25–50 CE]; and A. Lange, *Handbuch der Textfunde vom Toten Meer* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 403–4 [25 BCE–25 CE]. These views have been accepted by Davis, “High Quality Scrolls.”

<sup>b</sup>Because of the stichometric arrangement, the intercolumnar margin cannot be measured easily. The average space is 2.1 cm, while in several cases it is 3.0 cm, and once 1.0 cm.

<sup>c</sup>MS 4611 in the Schøyen Collection; see *Gleanings from the Caves*, 159–67.

<sup>d</sup>MS 4612/1 in the Schøyen Collection; see *ibid.*, 223–32.

<sup>e</sup>MS 2713 in the Schøyen Collection; *ibid.*, 185–92.

#### b. Nonbiblical Texts (8)

Name	Top Margin (cm)	Bottom Margin (cm)	No. of Lines	Height (cm)	Intercolumnar Space (cm)	Date	Aver. Lines b/w Corrs.
1QM	2.7–3.5	–	20 or 23–25 r	–	1.5–2.0	30–1 BCE	17
<u>1QapGen ar</u>	2.2–3.1	2.6–3.0	34	30.5–31	1.8–2.0	30 BCE–68 CE	17
4QCommGen C (4Q254) frg. 16	–	3.8	–	–	–	25–1 BCE	40
4QcryptA Lunisolar Cal. (4Q317)	–	2.9–3.1	33 r	–	2.3	150–100 BCE	–
4Qpap paraKings et al. (4Q382), frg. 110	3.5?	2.6	–	–	–	75–70 BCE	–
4QpapRitPur B (4Q512)	3.0	–	–	–	1.5	ca. 85 BCE	32
4QapocrLevi <sup>b</sup> ? ar (4Q541)	1.1+	3.0	–	–	1.0	ca. 100 BCE	35
<u>11QT<sup>a</sup> (11Q19)</u>	–	2.8–3.6	22–29 r	–	1.8–2.4	1–30 CE	16

TABLE 27.2 Hebrew/Aramaic Deluxe Texts Found in the Judean Desert

	<i>Biblical Texts</i>	<i>Nonbiblical Texts</i>
Qumran	12	8
Other sites	15	0

The data in Table 27.1 pertain mainly to texts written on skins (leather). With one possible exception, 4Qpap paraKings et al. (4Q382), luxury papyrus scrolls with large margins have not been preserved. The reason for the lack of such papyrus scrolls is probably that most luxury texts contain Scripture and other authoritative texts (see below) and it was not customary to write Scripture on papyrus.<sup>11</sup> For the data, see Appendix 27.2.

Some remarkable facts about the distribution of texts with large top and bottom margins come to light in the analysis of Table 27.1. Altogether we identified thirty-five such texts among the Judean Desert texts, twenty at Qumran and fifteen at the other sites (see Table 27.2).<sup>12</sup>

The internal division of these texts is of interest, since the large-margin texts are statistically much more frequent at the Judean Desert sites (Masada, Murabba‘at, Naḥal Ḥever, Naḥal Mishmar, Naḥal Şe‘elim, Wadi Sdeir) than at Qumran. A mere twenty such texts (of which eight are nonbiblical) are found among the approximately six hundred Qumran texts relevant for this analysis.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, the proportion of such texts among the non-Qumran texts is much larger, fifteen out of seventy literary texts.<sup>14</sup> This disparity between the texts found at Qumran and those from other Judean Desert sites may have been caused by the differences in date since the texts from the latter are usually later than those from Qumran. There are eight non-Scripture texts among the Qumran texts, while there are none from the Judean Desert sites. In other words, among the twenty luxury Qumran texts, 60 percent are biblical, which implies that a large format was used especially for the books of Hebrew Scripture.

This percentage grows if we characterize the group as authoritative texts rather than as Scripture texts, and then include at least the Temple Scroll and possibly also 1QapGen ar. In that case, we have to reckon with fourteen authoritative scrolls forming 67 percent of the Qumran evidence. Since only some 150 (or 25%) of the approximately 600 relevant Qumran texts are biblical, the percentage of biblical scrolls with large margins is striking.

The percentage of biblical scrolls among the texts found in the Judean Desert outside Qumran is larger than that at Qumran, namely 100 percent (fifteen texts). In fact, only three Scripture scrolls with smaller margin sizes are known from the Judean Desert sites: MasLev<sup>a</sup> (bottom: 2.7 cm); MasLev<sup>b</sup> (1.8 and 2.7 cm); 5/6ḤevPs = 5/6Ḥev 1b (1.7+ and 2.1 cm). No margins have been preserved or the margin is unclear (ArugLev) in all other fragments from these sites.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup>The writing of Scripture on papyrus was forbidden according to the rabbinic texts (m. Meg. 2.2; y. Meg.1.71d). See Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 252.

<sup>12</sup>When the provenance is unclear, we record the text as not deriving from Qumran.

<sup>13</sup>The analysis includes some very fragmentary texts that contain information about the margins even if little of the text itself has been preserved.

<sup>14</sup>Masada: 25, Murabba‘at: 10, Sdeir: 1, Ḥever: 9, Şe‘elim: 1, unknown provenance: 8, Schøyen Collection: 16 (not including fragments from known works).

<sup>15</sup>The full list of the published fragments is provided in E. Tov, *Revised Lists of the Texts from the Judaean Desert* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 126–9.



In other words, we can express this parameter now with more force than in the past: the great majority of the Scripture fragments found outside Qumran have large top and bottom margins.

In most cases, the combined size of the top and bottom margins equals some 20 percent of the total height of the leather, while in the case of MurXII the margins amount to 25 percent. These high percentages emphasize the great importance attached to the space around the text. These proportions conform to the data of the Oxyrhynchus and other Greek papyri analyzed by Johnson.<sup>16</sup>

### 3. OTHER PARAMETERS OF LUXURY SCROLLS

Luxury scrolls cannot be characterized only by the employment of large margins. Additional criteria are: large intercolumnar margins, the use of a large writing block, careful scribal transmission, a late date, and MT content in the Scripture scrolls. In many cases, these parameters appear together, but sometimes they do not. In other words, large writing blocks do not always demonstrate the luxury character of a scroll, not all carefully written scrolls point to deluxe editions, and so on.

#### 3.1. *Large Intercolumnar Margins*

It is natural for scrolls with large top and bottom margins to also have larger than usual intercolumnar margins since the esthetic aspects of both dimensions go together. The data for the size of these intercolumnar margins have not been summarized in research, and therefore we need to resort to impressions. It seems to me that the average width between columns is 1.0–1.5 cm.<sup>17</sup> Larger intercolumnar margins of 1.5–3.0 cm very often appear together with large top and bottom margins (see Table 27.1), although large intercolumnar margins are also found in other scrolls.<sup>18</sup>

#### 3.2. *Large Writing Blocks*

In the mentioned examples of deluxe editions, large margins usually accompany a large writing block. Tall columns together with large margins create an aesthetically pleasing writing surface. Indeed, almost all scrolls recorded in Table 27.1 contain more than 25 lines, while many of them contain 35–60 lines. However, conversely, in the majority of the tall scrolls containing 25–34 lines (starting with 15 cm, but often measuring 20–35 cm) or very tall scrolls containing 35–60 lines (starting with 18 cm, but usually measuring between 30 and 51 cm),<sup>19</sup> no such large margins are found. In other words, most of the tall scrolls do not point to a deluxe character.

#### 3.3. *Careful Scribal Transmission*

Most deluxe scrolls are written in an elegant scribal handwriting and display a careful scribal transmission. Neither of these parameters can be defined objectively, but one aspect can be expressed with precise terms, namely the level of scribal intervention. Scribal intervention pertains to the visible correction of mistakes and to the insertion of changes in the text (supralinear corrections,

<sup>16</sup> Johnson, *Bookrolls*, 132–3.

<sup>17</sup> See Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 103.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> The data are recorded in Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 87–9.

deletions, erasures, reshaping of letters, and linear and supralinear scribal signs). All these techniques were acceptable in early scrolls, including carefully copied scrolls. I measure the amount of scribal intervention by dividing the total number of lines by the number of scribal interventions. In this way, I calculate the average number of lines between any two instances of scribal intervention, listed in the last column of Table 27.1 (in this column, “—” indicates the lack of data when the text sample is small). The lower the average number of lines between any two corrections, the higher the rate of scribal intervention.<sup>20</sup> One correction per twenty or more lines should probably be considered a low degree of scribal correction, but most scrolls in Table 27.1 have (far) fewer corrections. As a rule, there is less scribal intervention in the deluxe biblical scrolls than in the nonbiblical scrolls, and the two paleo-Hebrew scrolls (4QpaleoGen-Exod<sup>d</sup> and 4QpaleoExod<sup>m</sup>) as well as 4QSam<sup>a</sup> stand out with a very low level of scribal intervention. Most deluxe scrolls have less scribal intervention than is permissible according to the criteria that were formulated subsequently in rabbinic sources (see n. 30). A relatively high level of scribal intervention is evidenced in 4QExod<sup>c</sup> and a very high level is evidenced in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, which displays an average of one correction in every four lines. Therefore, 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> should *not* be considered a luxury scroll and the same probably pertains to 4QExod<sup>c</sup>.

Other scrolls from Qumran that were not written in deluxe format sometimes also reflect a minimal amount of scribal intervention, both MT-like scrolls and scrolls beyond the Masoretic family.<sup>21</sup> This fact shows that the criteria for luxury scrolls should be analyzed together.

### 3.4. Late Date

Possibly the use of wide margins was closely related to the late date of the documents. Eleven of the fifteen Judean Desert scrolls that derive from sites other than Qumran and that contain large margins have been given CE dates in their editio princeps. Three additional Masada texts that were dated to the second half of the first century BCE in their first publications were subsequently given a CE date (see n. 9). As a result, all fifteen Judean Desert texts from sites other than Qumran may plausibly be given CE dates. At Qumran, the picture is different: eight biblical texts that have large margins are dated before the Common Era, while only four texts have a CE date (2QNum<sup>a</sup>, 4QGen<sup>b</sup>, 4QDeut<sup>g</sup>, 4QPs<sup>c</sup>). Therefore, in the case of the Qumran scrolls, large margins are not necessarily associated with a late date. At the same time, the evidence from the non-Qumran texts is unmistakable: probably all these texts (all being Scripture texts) were produced with large top and bottom margins.

### 3.5. Masoretic Character of Scripture Scrolls

The great majority of scrolls written in deluxe format contain Scripture (twelve from Qumran and fifteen from the other sites). Most of the biblical texts reflect the MT group, either “MT-like” texts from Qumran or proto-Masoretic texts, which are virtually identical to the medieval Masoretic manuscripts, from the other sites.<sup>22</sup> The proto-Masoretic text is contained in all ten of the Scripture

<sup>20</sup>This number merely provides an impression of the extent of scribal intervention since lines that have only survived in part are included among the data (for the full data, see Tov, *Scribal Practices*, Appendix 27.1).

<sup>21</sup>See the data in Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 331–43.

<sup>22</sup>For a discussion of the nature of these two groups, see the analysis in my *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd rev. and exp. ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 29–31.

scrolls from non-Qumran sites and one scroll from Qumran (4QGen<sup>b</sup>) that contain enough material for analysis<sup>23</sup> (see Table 27.1).<sup>24</sup>

The deluxe format was used for authoritative scrolls, especially those containing Scripture of Masoretic content, and this format may have been preferred by the circles that transmitted this text (see the conclusions below). At the same time, the deluxe format was also used for other Scripture texts that scribes wished to present in a special way. Thus, 4QpaleoExod<sup>m</sup> resembles the SP and 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and 4QEzek<sup>a</sup> are textually independent (non-aligned). Furthermore, scroll manufacturers and scribes decided to prepare in this way also several nonbiblical scrolls, as listed in Table 27.1.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The aforementioned data and analysis show that we should posit among late scrolls especially a group written in deluxe format, mainly Scripture texts, that are characterized by large top and bottom margins, large intercolumnar margins, tall columns, a low incidence of scribal intervention, and a high degree of proximity to or even identity with MT. In fact, all the Judean Desert scrolls for which the margins are known<sup>25</sup> are of this type, while three texts come very close: MasLev<sup>a</sup> (2.8 cm), MasLev<sup>b</sup> (2.7 cm),<sup>26</sup> and 5/6HevPs (2.5–2.7 cm).

It appears that the use of large top and bottom margins is the major criterion for establishing that a scroll was prepared as a deluxe edition, together with other features as listed above. MasPs<sup>a</sup> and MurXII probably serve as good examples of such choice texts. In antiquity, Scripture scrolls in particular were written as luxury scrolls and, more generally, authoritative scrolls (thus including 11QT<sup>a</sup> and 1QapGen ar) and others that were deemed important in the eyes of their scribes. All these criteria also apply to a Greek scroll, 8HevXIIgr, assigned to the end of the first century BCE.<sup>27</sup>

No data are available regarding the milieu in which luxury scrolls were manufactured, and they may have been produced in more than one center. The only certain fact is that the great majority of the Judean Desert scrolls except for those from Qumran are of the luxury type. It would be an easy solution to assume that luxury production is inherent with a late date, at least for the non-Qumran

<sup>23</sup>This scroll probably did not derive from Qumran, but from one of the other Judean Desert sites; see J. R. Davila in *Qumran Cave 4.VII: Genesis to Numbers*, ed. E. Ulrich and F. M. Cross, DJD 12 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994; repr., 1999), 31.

<sup>24</sup>D. A. Teeter, *Scribal Laws: Exegetical Variation in the Textual Transmission of Biblical Law in the Late Second Temple Period*, FAT 92 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 233–7 at 234, casts doubt on the close connection between the luxury scrolls and MT, claiming that this connection pertains only to five Qumran texts. However, Teeter's analysis focuses only on Qumran, while disregarding the non-Qumran scrolls in which the connection with MT is much stronger. At the same time, Teeter rightly points out that I should not have continued my analysis with a discussion of the place of origin of these scrolls in Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 128. Writing about MurXII, P. B. Hartog agrees with Teeter: "Reading and Copying the Minor Prophets in the Late Second Temple Period," in *The Books of the Twelve Prophets, Minor Prophets—Major Theologies*, ed. H.-J. Fabry, BETL 295 (Leuven: Peeters, 2018), 411–23 at 419.

<sup>25</sup>All the biblical scrolls found at these sites attest to the medieval text of MT.

<sup>26</sup>Because of its other features, this scroll is included in Table 27.1.

<sup>27</sup>Thus P. J. Parsons, "The Scripts and Their Date," in *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Naḥal Ḥever (8HevXIIgr)*, DJD 8 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 26. This elegant scroll was written by two scribes, who intervened very little in the text. Its top margins (4.2–4.5 cm), bottom margins (3.8 cm), and intercolumnar margins (2.0–2.2 cm) are wide, the scroll was written in a large format (forty-two lines), and it closely reflects MT (revision of the Old Greek translation to MT).

scrolls. This is not the case for the Qumran scrolls since Appendix 27.1 shows that several dated to the Common Era do not fit the criteria for deluxe scrolls.

It is not impossible that the deluxe Scripture scrolls were of the so-called *sefarim mugahim* (“corrected scrolls”) type that had been corrected according to the copy in the temple, as mentioned in rabbinic literature.<sup>28</sup> This would provide an answer to the question posed by George Brooke<sup>29</sup> regarding the use of deluxe editions, illustrating an important aspect of writing culture.

Some characteristics of the luxury scrolls reflect the concerns of the rabbis and therefore they may have derived from protorabbinic circles: a low level of scribal intervention,<sup>30</sup> large top and bottom margins, and intercolumnar margins as large as in some of the Judean Desert scrolls (excluding Qumran) but usually larger.<sup>31</sup>

In sum, in this study I continue the analysis of the presumed deluxe scrolls, illustrating an important aspect of the writing culture known from Greek sources. The main argument for the existence of such scrolls is the presence of large top and bottom margins of more than 3.0 cm above and below the writing block. Writing material was expensive and the fact that scroll manufacturers left writing surface unused had a special significance in ancient times. Some remarkable facts about the distribution of texts with large top and bottom margins come to light in the analysis of Table 27.1.

Altogether, we identified thirty-five such texts among the Judean Desert texts, twenty at Qumran and fifteen at the other sites. The large-margin texts are statistically much more frequent at the Judean Desert sites (Masada, Murabba‘at’?>, Naḥal Ḥever, Naḥal Mishmar, Naḥal Şe’elim, Wadi Sdeir) than at Qumran. Additional criteria for the recognition of deluxe scrolls are: large intercolumnar margins, the use of a large writing block, careful scribal transmission, a late date, and MT content in the Scripture scrolls. In many cases, all of these parameters are present, but sometimes they are not. The deluxe format was used for authoritative scrolls, especially those containing Scripture of Masoretic content, and this format may have been preferred by the circles that transmitted this text.

<sup>28</sup> See Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 30–1.

<sup>29</sup> G. J. Brooke, “Scripture and Scriptural Tradition in Transmission: Light from the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Scrolls and Biblical Traditions: Proceedings of the Seventh Meeting of the IOQS in Helsinki*, ed. G. J. Brooke, D. K. Falk, E. J. C. Tigchelaar, and M. M. Zahn (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 1–17 at 5–6.

<sup>30</sup> According to Talmudic sources, the sacred character of the text allows for only a minimal number of corrections. The opinions quoted in b. Menah. 29b and y. Meg. 1.71c allow for two or three corrections per column (but not four), while the opinions in Sop. 3.10 allow for one to three corrections. According to these opinions, scrolls containing a greater number of corrections in a single column could not be used by the public, but b. Menah. 29b states that there is a certain leniency regarding superfluous letters, which were less disturbing when erased or deleted than were added letters.

<sup>31</sup> Large bottom margins enabled easy handling of the scroll and, as such, they were prescribed for Scripture by rabbinic sources; see b. Menah. 30a (cf. Sefer Torah 2.4): The width of the bottom margin shall be one handbreadth <7.62 cm> of the top margin, three fingerbreadths <4.56 cm> of the intercolumnar margin, and two fingerbreadths <3.04 cm> <in all the books of Scripture>. In the books of the Torah, the bottom margin shall be three fingerbreadths <4.56 cm>, the top margin two fingerbreadths <3.04 cm>, and the intercolumnar margin a thumbbreadth <2.0 cm>. Likewise, y. Meg. 1.71d and Sof. 2.5 prescribe two fingerbreadths <3.04 cm> above the text and three below <4.56 cm> for all the books of Scripture, except the Torah.

## APPENDIX 27.1 Qumran scrolls with margins less than 3.0 cm

This appendix shows that several CE scrolls were not in the nature of deluxe scrolls.

	<i>Top Margin</i>	<i>Bottom Margin</i>	
<i>a. Biblical Texts</i>			
4QPs <sup>a</sup>	2.0	–	30 BCE–30 CE
4QProv <sup>b</sup>	1.6	–	30 BCE–50 CE
11QPs <sup>a</sup>	1.7	–	1–50 CE
4QGen <sup>k</sup>	–	2.0	1–30 CE
4QDan <sup>b</sup>	2.1	1.9	20–50 CE
8QPs	1.8	–	1–100 CE
4QIsa <sup>c</sup>	–	2.1+	30–68 CE
4QPs <sup>b</sup>	–	1.5	30 BCE–70 CE
4QExod <sup>k</sup>	1.8	–	30–135 CE
<i>b. Nonbiblical Texts</i>			
3QpIsa	2.2	–	30 BCE–68 CE
4QPrayer of Enosh	1.4	–	30 BCE–68 CE
4QComposition concerning Divine Providence	0.7	–	30 BCE–68 CE
4QBarkhi Nafshi <sup>d</sup>	1.2	1.2	30 BCE–68 CE
5QNJ ar	1.6	1.6	30 BCE–68 CE
1QpHab	2.0–2.6	–	1–50 CE
4QCommGen D	2.0	–	20–50 CE
4QMyst <sup>a</sup>	–	1.9–2.1	20–50 CE
4QapocrJosh <sup>a</sup>	1.5	–	20–50 CE
11QSefer ha-Milhamah	–	3.0	30–50 CE
8QPs	1.8	–	1–100 CE
6QAllegory of the Vine	–	1.4	1–100 CE
6QD	–	1.0	1–100 CE
4QMyst <sup>b</sup>	1.2	1.2	30–68 CE
4QBer <sup>a</sup>	2.0	–	50 CE

## APPENDIX 27.2 Top and bottom margins in literary papyrus texts

	<i>Top Margin</i>	<i>Bottom Margin</i>
4QpapTob <sup>a</sup> ar (4Q196)	1.7	2.5
4QpapJub <sup>b</sup> ? (4Q217)	1.3	–
4QpapS <sup>a</sup> (4Q255)	2.0–2.3	–
4QpapS <sup>c</sup> (4Q257)	2.0	–
4Qpap paraKings <i>et al.</i> (4Q382), frg. 110	3.5? (frg. 110)	2.6
4QpapH <sup>f</sup> (4Q432)	1.8–2.2+	–
4QpapHodayot-like Text B (4Q433a)	2.3+	–
4QpapBenedictions (4Q500) 1	2.1	–
4QpapRitMar (4Q502)		1.6
4QpapPrQuot (4Q503)	1.0–1.2	2.9
4QpapPrFêtes <sup>c</sup> (4Q509) 13	2.1	–
4QpapRitPur B (4Q512) 39	2.8	–
6QpapHymn (6Q18)	1.7	–

APPENDIX 27.3 Hebrew/aramaic scrolls of large dimensions that may have been deluxe editions

The purpose of this appendix is to record a control group for the data adduced above. The scrolls listed here contain tall columns, but the other parameters of these scrolls are not characteristic of deluxe scrolls regarding the size of their top and bottom margins. The data for scribal intervention are indecisive.

<i>Name</i>	<i>No. of Lines</i>	<i>Height (cm)</i>	<i>Top Margin (cm)</i>	<i>Bottom Margin (cm)</i>	<i>Aver. Lines b/w Corrs.</i>
4QEn <sup>b</sup> ar (4Q202)	28, 29	30	–	–	–
4QInstr <sup>d</sup> (4Q418)	ca. 29	–	–	–	30
1QSa	29	23.5	1.2-1.7	1.7+	–
4QPs <sup>a</sup>	29	23.6	2.0	–	22+
4QEn <sup>c</sup> ar (4Q204)	30	24	–	2.3	–
4QDeut <sup>h</sup>	ca. 30	–	–	2.0	16
4QNum <sup>b</sup>	30–32	30	1.9	2.6	38
11QPs <sup>d</sup>	32–34	–	1.8+	–	64+
4QNarr and Poetic Comp <sup>b</sup> (4Q372) 1	32+	18.0+	–	1.0	–
1QIsa <sup>b</sup>	35	23	1.7	–	55
4QIsa <sup>c</sup>	35–40	–	2.0	2.6	58+
4QGen-Exod <sup>a</sup>	ca. 36	–	1.7+	–	30
4QJub <sup>d</sup> (4Q219)	38 r	–	–	1.7	37
4QRP <sup>b</sup> (4Q364)	39–41	35.6–37.2	–	2.1	53
4QIsa <sup>c</sup>	ca. 40	30	–	2.1	28
4QIsa <sup>e</sup>	40	35	1.6	–	26
4QEnastr <sup>b</sup> ar (4Q209)	40 (38–43?)	–	–	2.7	–
11QpaleoLev <sup>a</sup>	42	26–27+	–	2.0+	66
4QLev-Num <sup>a</sup>	ca. 43	35.2–37.2	1.8	2.2	36
4QIsa <sup>b</sup>	45	29	2.3	–	13
4QExod-Lev <sup>f</sup>	ca. 60	30	1.3	1.2+	57

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# Qumran Readings in Agreement with the Septuagint against the Masoretic Text. Part Four: 2 Samuel

CORRADO MARTONE

As a follow-up to my previous contributions devoted to the Pentateuch, Joshua-Judges, and 1 Samuel,<sup>1</sup> the present study aims to provide scholars with a tool that will allow for easy consultation of the verses of 2 Samuel in agreement with the Septuagint against the Masoretic text as attested in the manuscripts from Qumran. As noted,<sup>2</sup> the list will hopefully cover the entire Bible in the (near) future.

As in the previous studies,<sup>3</sup> at the end of this contribution the reader will find the bibliographic reference of the editiones principes of all of the quoted manuscripts as well as a brief palaeographical description and the link to the PAM photo of each text in the *Leon Levy DSS Digital Library*.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, the reader will need to refer to *Henoch's* article for more detailed bibliographic information<sup>5</sup> as well as for the methodological assumptions underlying this project.<sup>6</sup>

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It is an honor and a pleasure to dedicate this chapter to James Charlesworth in gratitude for his contribution to Jewish Studies, no less than for his friendship over the years.

<sup>1</sup>C. Martone, "Qumran Readings in Agreement with the Septuagint against the Masoretic Text. Part One: The Pentateuch," *Hen 27* (2005): 53–113; C. Martone, "Qumran Readings in Agreement with the Septuagint against the Masoretic Text. Part Two: Joshua-Judges," in *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez*, ed. Anthony Hilhorst, Emile Puech, and Eibert Tigchelaar; SJSJ 122 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 141–5; C. Martone, "Qumran Readings In Agreement with the Septuagint against the Masoretic Text: Part Three: 1 Samuel," *RevQ* 25.4 (100) (2012): 557–73.

<sup>2</sup>Martone, "Qumran Readings One," 54.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 108–13.

<sup>4</sup>See <https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/home>. All links checked on January 9, 2020.

<sup>5</sup>As an *addendum* it is worth noting that a *Biblia Qumranica* series has been launched by Brill. The volume devoted to the Minor Prophets has appeared so far: B. Ego, Armin Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Kristin De Troyer, eds., *Minor Prophets*, *Biblia Qumranica* 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2005). Moreover, Eugene Ulrich published a comprehensive transcription of the evidence for each book of the Hebrew Bible in the Dead Sea Scrolls along with an apparatus for each variant reading: E. C. Ulrich, *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants*, VTSup 134 (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

<sup>6</sup>It should be recalled, however, that *only* the variant readings regarding the LXX are registered in the *Textual Notes*: other variant readings, if any, though at the reader's disposal, are not indicated in the *Notes*.

## 1. 2 SAMUEL 2:5

4Q51 f52a-b+53<sup>7</sup>

1<sup>5</sup> 2 [אנשי יביש גלעד ויאמר אלי] הם ברוכים [אתם ליהוה אשר] 2 [עשיתם חסד האלוהים זה] על אדניכם] עם שאול משיח יהוה] 3 [ותקברו אתו]

καὶ ἀπέστειλεν Δαυὶδ ἀγγέλους πρὸς τοὺς ἡγουμένους Ἰαβὶς τῆς Γαλααδίτιδος καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς εὐλογημένοι ὑμεῖς τῷ κυρίῳ ὅτι πεποιθήκατε τὸ ἔλεος τοῦτο ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον ὑμῶν ἐπὶ Σαουλ τὸν χριστὸν κυρίου καὶ ἐθάψατε αὐτὸν καὶ Ἰωνάθαν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ

וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד מַלְאָכִים אֶל־אֲנָשֵׁי יְבִישׁ גִּלְעָד וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם בְּרָכִים אַתֶּם לַיהוָה אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתֶם חֶסֶד הַחַסֵּד הַזֶּה עִם־דָּוִד וְעִם־יֹנָתָן אֶתֹנֶה וְתִקְבְּרוּ אֹתוֹ

### Textual Notes

עם־דָּוִד וְעִם־יֹנָתָן || ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον || מ

## 2. 2 SAMUEL 2:7

4Q51 f52a-b+53<sup>8</sup>

5<sup>7</sup> [ועתה תחזקנה ידיכם] והיו לבני חיל] כי מת אדניכם שאול] 6 [וגם אתי משחו בית יהודה] עליהם] ל] מלך

καὶ νῦν κραταιούσθωσαν αἱ χεῖρες ὑμῶν καὶ γίνεσθε εἰς υἱοὺς δυνατοὺς ὅτι τέθνηκεν ὁ κύριος ὑμῶν Σαουλ καὶ γε ἐμὲ κέχρικεν ὁ οἶκος Ἰουδα ἐφ' ἑαυτοὺς εἰς βασιλεία

וְעַתָּה תַחְזַקְנָה יְדֵיכֶם וְהָיוּ לְבָנֵי־חַיִל כִּי־מָת אֲדֹנֵיכֶם שְׂאֻל וְגַם־אֵתִי מִשְׁחוּ בֵּית־יְהוּדָה לְמֶלֶךְ עָלֵיהֶם

### Textual Notes

בית־יהודה לְמֶלֶךְ עָלֵיהֶם || ἐφ' ἑαυτοὺς εἰς βασιλεία || מ

## 3. 2 SAMUEL 3:3

4Q51 f55-57a-b+58<sup>9</sup>

8<sup>2</sup> היזרעלית<sup>3</sup> ודל<sup>ה</sup>] לאביגיל ה[כרמלית] השלישי אבשלום 9 בן מעכה בת תלמי מלך גשור

καὶ ὁ δεύτερος αὐτοῦ Δαλουία τῆς Αβιγαιας τῆς Καρμηλίας καὶ ὁ τρίτος Αβεσσαλωμ υἱὸς Μααχα θυγατρὸς Θολμι βασιλέως Γεσιρ

וּמִשְׁנֵה וּכְלָב לְאָבִיגַיִל אִשְׁת׃ נַבְל הַכַּרְמֶלִי וְהַשְּׁלִישִׁי אַבְשָׁלוֹם בֶּן־מַעֲכָה בַת־תַּלְמִי מֶלֶךְ גִּשׁוֹר

### Textual Notes

כלב || Δαλουία || דל<sup>ה</sup>

<sup>7</sup> DJD 17:104; PAM 43.125 (<https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-284929>).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> DJD 17:107; PAM 43.125 (<https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-284929>).

## 4. 2 SAMUEL 3:7

4Q51 f55–57a–b+58<sup>10</sup>

13<sup>6</sup> בבית שאול<sup>7</sup> ולשאול פילגש רצפה] בת איה ויאמר מפיבשת בן] 14 שאול אל אבנר מדוע באתה אל פילגש אבי  
καὶ τῷ Σαουλ παλλακῆ Ρεσφα θυγάτηρ Ιαλ καὶ εἶπεν Μεμφιβοσθε υἱὸς Σαουλ πρὸς Αβεννηρ τί ὄτι  
εἰσηλθες πρὸς τὴν παλλακὴν τοῦ πατρὸς μου

וּלְשָׂאוֹל פִּלְגַשׁ גִּישׁ וְיִשְׁמָה רִצְפָּה בַת־אִיָּה וַיֹּאמֶר בְּנִי־אֲבִיבֶר מִדּוּעַ בָּאתָ אֶל־פִּלְגֶשׁ אָבִי

*Textual Notes*

פילגש וישמה רצפה // παλλακῆ Ρεσφα || מנ // פלגש וישמה רצפה //  
שאול // Σαουλ || > מנ //

## 5. 2 SAMUEL 3:8

4Q51 f55–57a–b+58<sup>11</sup>

14<sup>8</sup> ויחר לאבנר מאד על דבר] 15 [מפיבשת לו ה]ראש כלב אנכי אשר ליהודה היום אעשה] 16 [חסד עם בית שאול  
אביך אל אחיו ואל מרעהו ולוא המציתך ביד] 17 [דויד ותפקד עלי עון האשה היום

καὶ ἐθυμώθη σφόδρα Αβεννηρ περὶ τοῦ λόγου Μεμφιβοσθε καὶ εἶπεν Αβεννηρ πρὸς αὐτόν μὴ κεφαλὴ  
κυνὸς ἐγὼ εἶμι ἐποίησα ἔλεος σήμερον μετὰ τοῦ οἴκου Σαουλ τοῦ πατρὸς σου καὶ περὶ ἀδελφῶν καὶ  
γνωρίμων καὶ οὐκ ἠτύτομόλησα εἰς τὸν οἶκον Δαυιδ καὶ ἐπιζητεῖς ἐπ' ἐμὲ ὑπὲρ ἀδικίας γυναικὸς σήμερον

וַיַּחַר לְאֲבִיבֶר מְאֹד עַל־דְּבַר אִישׁ־בְּרִי אִישׁ־בְּשֵׁת וַיֹּאמֶר הֲרֹאשׁ כָּל־בְּנֵי אִשְׁרָאֵל לִיהוּדָה הַיּוֹם אֶעֱשֶׂה־חֶסֶד עִם־בֵּית־שָׂאוֹל אֲבִי־אֶל־אֶתְחִיל  
וְאֶל־מִרְעָהוּ וְלֹא הַמְצִיתָךְ בְּיַד־דָּוִד וְתִפְקֹד עָלַי עֲוֹן הָאִשָּׁה הַיּוֹם

*Textual Notes*

|| > מנ // πρὸς αὐτόν || לו

## 6. 2 SAMUEL 3:23

4Q51 f61i+62<sup>12</sup>

1<sup>23</sup> בן נר אל דויד וישלחהו וילך [בשלום

καὶ Ἰωαβ καὶ πᾶσα ἡ στρατιὰ αὐτοῦ ἤχθησαν καὶ ἀπηγγέλη τῷ Ἰωαβ λέγοντες ἦκει Αβεννηρ υἱὸς Νηρ  
πρὸς Δαυιδ καὶ ἀπέσταλκεν αὐτόν καὶ ἀπήλθεν ἐν εἰρήνῃ

וַיֹּאבֵב וְכָל־הַצָּבָא אֲשֶׁר־אִתּוֹ בָּאוּ וַיִּגְדּוּ לְיוֹאָב לֵאמֹר בָּאֲבִיבֶר בֶּן־נֵר אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּשְׁלַחְהוּ בְּשָׁלוֹם

*Textual Notes*

|| > מנ // אל דויד

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.<sup>11</sup> Ibid.<sup>12</sup> DJD 17:112; PAM 43.115 (<https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-284919>).

## 7. 2 SAMUEL 3:29

4Q51 f61i+62<sup>13</sup>

28 9 מעם יהוה עד עולם ודם [אבנר 29] ח' ח'ול על [ר] אש יואב ועל כ[ול] 10 בית יואב ול'וא יכרת מבי'ת יואב זב ומצ'רעו  
מ'ח'י[ק ב]פלך ונופל 11 בחרב וחסר לחם

καταντησάτωσαν ἐπὶ κεφαλὴν Ἰωαβ καὶ ἐπὶ πάντα τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ μὴ ἐκλίποι ἐκ τοῦ  
οἴκου Ἰωαβ γονορρυῆς καὶ λεπρὸς καὶ κρατῶν σκυτάλης καὶ πίπτων ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ καὶ ἐλασσοσύμενος ἄρτοις

יְחַלְוּ עַל־רֵאשׁ יוֹאָבֵן אֶל כָּל־בֵּית אָבִיו וְאֶל־יְכָרֵת מִבֵּית יוֹאָב וְיָב וּמִצְרָע וּמִתְנַיִק בַּפְּלֶה וְנִפְלַ בַּחֶרֶב וְחָסַר־לֶחֶם

*Textual Notes*

ואל // καὶ ἐπὶ || מ

## 8. 2 SAMUEL 3:33

4Q51 f61i+62<sup>14</sup>

16 32 [על קבר א]בנר ויבכו כל העם 33 [ויקנו המלך] על אבנר ויאמר 17 ה'כמו[ת]נ[ב]ל ימות אבנר

καὶ ἐθρήνησεν ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐπὶ Αβεννηρ καὶ εἶπεν εἰ κατὰ τὸν θάνατον Ναβαλ ἀποθανεῖται Αβεννηρ

וַיִּקְנֵן הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־אֲבִנֵר וַיֹּאמֶר הַכְּמוֹת נָבַל יָמוּת אֲבִנֵר

*Textual Notes*

על // ἐπὶ || מ

## 9. 2 SAMUEL 4:1

4Q51 f61i+62<sup>15</sup>

27 14 [וי]שמע מפיב[ש]ת[ב]ן שאול כי מ[מ]ת[א]ב[ב]נר בחברון וי'רפו ידיו 28 [וכו]ל י[ש]ראל נבהלו

καὶ ἤκουσεν Μεμφιβοσθε υἱὸς Σαουλ ὅτι τέθνηκεν Αβεννηρ ἐν Χεβρων καὶ ἐξελύθησαν αἱ χεῖρες  
αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλ παρείθησαν

וַיִּשְׁמַע בֶּן־שָׁאוּל כִּי מָת אֲבִנֵר בְּחֶבְרוֹן וַיִּרְפוּ יָדָיו וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל נִבְהָלוּ

*Textual Notes*

ת[ש] // Μεμφιβοσθε || > מ

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> DJD 17:113; PAM 43.115 (<https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-284919>).

## 10. 2 SAMUEL 4:2

4Q51 f61i+62<sup>16</sup>

[ושני אנשים שרי גדודי] מ למפיבשת בן שאול ש[מ הא] חד 30 [בענה ושם השני רכב] בני רמון הבארתי מבני בנימ[ין]  
 31 גמ [בארות תחשב] על בנימ[ין]

καὶ δύο ἄνδρες ἡγούμενοι συστρεμμάτων τῷ Μεμφιβοσθε υἱῷ Σαουλ ὄνομα τῷ ἐνὶ Βααα καὶ ὄνομα  
 τῷ δευτέρῳ Πηχαβ υἱοὶ Ρεμμων τοῦ Βηρωθαίου ἐκ τῶν υἱῶν Βενιαμιν ὅτι Βηρωθ ἐλογίζετο τοῖς υἱοῖς  
 Βενιαμιν

ושני אנשים שרי גדודים הם בן שאול שם האחד בענה ושם השני רכב בני רמון הבארתי מבני בנימין כי גם בארות מתקשב  
 על בנימין

*Textual Notes*

למפיבשת // τῷ Μεμφιβοσθε || > מ //

## 11. 2 SAMUEL 4:12

4Q51 f61ii+63–64a–b+65–67

6<sup>12</sup> וי[צו דויד את] הנערים [ויהרגום ויק] ויצו את ידיהם ואת [רגליהם] 7 [ויתלום על הב] רכה בחב[רון ואת ר]אש מפיבשת  
 לקח ו[יקבר] 8 [בקבר אבנר בן] נר בח[ברון]

καὶ ἐνετείλατο Δαυὶδ τοῖς παιδαρίοις αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀποκτένουσιν αὐτούς καὶ κολοβοῦσιν τὰς χεῖρας  
 αὐτῶν καὶ τοὺς πόδας αὐτῶν καὶ ἐκρέμασαν αὐτούς ἐπὶ τῆς κρήνης ἐν Χεβρων καὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν  
 Μεμφιβοσθε ἔθαψαν ἐν τῷ τάφῳ Αβεννηρ υἱοῦ Νηρ

ויצו דוד את הנערים ויהרגום ויצו את ידיהם ואת רגליהם ויתלו על הכרכה בקברון ואת ראש מפיבשת לקח ויקברו  
 בקבר אבנר בקברון

*Textual Notes*

מפיבשת // Μεμφιβοσθε || מ איש-בשת

## 12. 2 SAMUEL 5:8

4Q51 f61ii+63–64a–b+65–67

17<sup>8</sup> ויאמר [ד] 18 [ויד] ביום ההוא כול[מ] כה [י] ב[וסי יגע בצנור ואת הע] ורים ואת 19 ה[פסחי]ם שנאה נפש דויד [על]  
 כן יאמרו עור ופסח לוא [יבוא אל הבית]

καὶ εἶπεν Δαυὶδ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ πᾶς τύπτων Ἰεβουσαίων ἀπτέσθω ἐν παραξιφίδι καὶ τοὺς χωλοὺς  
 καὶ τοὺς τυφλοὺς καὶ τοὺς μισοῦντας τὴν ψυχὴν Δαυὶδ διὰ τοῦτο ἐροῦσιν τυφλοὶ καὶ χωλοὶ οὐκ  
 εἰσελεύσονται εἰς οἶκον κυρίου

ויאמר דוד דביום ההוא כול המ כה ביום ההוא יגע בצנור ואת העור ורים ואת הפסחים שנאה נפש דוד ופסח לא יבוא  
 אליהם

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.



*Textual Notes*

ם[פסח]ה [את]ה[ע]ורים ואת // τυφλοί και χωλοί || מט אַת־הַפְּחִים וְאֶת־הַעֲרִים

**13. 2 SAMUEL 5:9**

4Q51 f61ii+63–64a–b+65–67<sup>17</sup>

20<sup>9</sup> וישב דויד במצדה ויקר[א] לה עיר דויד ויבנה עיר [סביב מן] 21 המלוא וביתה

καὶ ἐκάθισεν Δαυιδ ἐν τῇ περιοχῇ καὶ ἐκλήθη αὕτη ἡ πόλις Δαυιδ καὶ ὑποκοδόμησεν τὴν πόλιν κύκλω ἀπὸ τῆς ἄκρας καὶ τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ

דויד במצדה ויקרא־לה עיר דגד וגו דויד סביב מן־המלוא ונבנתה

*Textual Notes*

וירבנה עיר // καὶ ὑποκοδόμησεν τὴν πόλιν || מט ויבנה עיר

**14. 2 SAMUEL 5:10**

4Q51 f61ii+63–64a–b+65–67<sup>18</sup>

21<sup>9</sup> המלוא וביתה<sup>10</sup> [ו]ילך־דויד[ג] הלוך וג] דל ויהוה צבאות עמו

καὶ ἐπορεύετο Δαυιδ πορευόμενος καὶ μεγαλυνόμενος καὶ κύριος παντοκράτωρ μετ' αὐτοῦ

וגלף דגד הקלף וגדול ויהנה אלתי צבאות עמו

*Textual Notes*

ויהנה אלתי צבאות || מט ויהוה צבאות // ויהוה צבאות

**15. 2 SAMUEL 6:5**

4Q51 f68–76<sup>19</sup>

5<sup>4</sup> [יהוה ואחיו הלך לפני] ארון [יהוה] ודויד ו[בני ישראל מ]ש[חקים] ל[פני] 6 [יהוה ב]כול עז [ו]בשירים ובכנורות ו[בחללים] ובתפים ובמ[נענ]עים 7 [ובנבלים]

καὶ Δαυιδ καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραηλ παίζοντες ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἐν ὄργανοις ἡρμωσμένοις ἐν ἰσχύι καὶ ἐν ψδαῖς καὶ ἐν κινύραις καὶ ἐν νάβλαις καὶ ἐν τυμπάνοις καὶ ἐν κυμβάλοις καὶ ἐν αὐλοῖς

וידנדו וכל־בית ישראל מְשַׁחֲקִים לְפָנָי יְהוָה בְּכֹל עֲצֵי בְרוּשִׁים וּבְכַנְרֹת וּבְנָבְלִים וּבְמִנְעֻנְעִים וּבְצִלְצְלִים

*Textual Notes*

וְכָל־בֵּית־יִשְׂרָאֵל || מט ו[בני ישראל] // καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραηλ

<sup>17</sup> DJD 17:118; PAM 43.115 (<https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-284919>).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> DJD 17:124; PAM 43.116 (<https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-284920>).

## 16. 2 SAMUEL 6:6

4Q51 f68–76<sup>20</sup>

7<sup>5</sup> [ובנבלי] 6 ויבא עד ג[רן] נודן וישלח עזא [את] ידו אל ארון ה'אל[יה]ים [לאזן] 8 [בו] כ'י [ש]מטו הבקר

καὶ παραγίνονται ἕως ἄλλω Νωδαβ καὶ ἐξέτεινεν Οζα τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν κιβωτὸν τοῦ θεοῦ κατασχεῖν αὐτήν καὶ ἐκράτησεν αὐτήν ὅτι περιέσπασεν αὐτήν ὁ μόσχος τοῦ κατασχεῖν αὐτήν

וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד-גְּרָן נֹדָן וַיִּשְׁלַח עֲזָא אֶל-אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים וַיָּאָזֶן בּוֹ כִּי שְׁמֵטוּ הַבֶּקֶר

*Textual Notes*

נודן // Νωδαβ || מן נודן

יד' // τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ || > מן

## 17. 2 SAMUEL 7:23

4Q51 f78–79<sup>21</sup>

1<sup>22</sup> ש[מענו באזנינו] 2<sup>23</sup> ומי כעמד כישראל גוי אחר בארץ אשר הוליד אתו] 2 אלו[הים לפדות לו לעם לשום דך שם ולע] שות ג[דלות ונוראות לגרש] 3 מפנ[י עמד אשר פדית לך ממצרים גוים] ואהלים

καὶ τίς ὡς ὁ λαός σου Ἰσραὴλ ἕθνος ἄλλο ἐν τῇ γῆ ὡς ὠδήγησεν αὐτὸν ὁ θεὸς τοῦ λυτρώσασθαι αὐτῶ λαὸν τοῦ θέσθαι σε ὄνομα τοῦ ποιῆσαι μεγαλωσύνην καὶ ἐπιφάνειαν τοῦ ἐκβαλεῖν σε ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ λαοῦ σου οὐ ἔλυτρώσω σεαυτῶ ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἕθνη καὶ σκηνώματα

ומי כעמד כפישראל גוי אחר בארץ אשר הוליד אתו ואהלים לפדות לו לעם לשום דך שם ולע שות ג[דלות ונוראות לגרש] מפנ[י עמד אשר פדית לך ממצרים גוים] ואהלים

*Textual Notes*

ואהלים // καὶ σκηνώματα || מן ואהלים

## 18. 2 SAMUEL 8:7

4Q51 f80–83<sup>22</sup>

10<sup>6</sup> [את דויד בכול אשר הלך: 7 וי]קחדויד א[ת] שלטי הזהב אשר היו] 11 [על עבדי הדדעור ויביאם ירוש[ל]י[ם] גם] [אתם ל]קח אחר שושק] 12 [מלך מצרים ב]עלותו אל י[רושלים] בימי רחבעם בן שלו[מה]

καὶ ἔλαβεν Δαυιδ τοὺς χλιδῶνας τοὺς χρυσοῦς οἱ ἦσαν ἐπὶ τῶν παίδων τῶν Αδρααζαρ βασιλέως Σουβα καὶ ἦνεγκεν αὐτὰ εἰς Ἱερουσαλημ καὶ ἔλαβεν αὐτὰ Σουσακιμ βασιλεὺς Αἰγύπτου ἐν τῷ ἀναβῆναι αὐτὸν εἰς Ἱερουσαλημ ἐν ἡμέραις Ροβοαμ υἱοῦ Σολομῶντος

וַיִּקַּח דָּוִד אֶת שְׁלֵטֵי הַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ אֶל עַבְדֵי הַדָּדְעוֹר וַיָּבִיאם יְרוּשָׁלָּם

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> DJD 17:130; PAM 43.116 (<https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-284920>).

<sup>22</sup> DJD 17:132; PAM 43.116 (<https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-284920>).

*Textual Notes*

מה [גם] אותם ל[קק] אחר שושק מלך מצרים ב[ע'לותו אל י[ו]שלים] בימי רחבעם בן שלו[מה] και ἔλαβεν αὐτὰ Σουσακιμ βασιλεὺς Αἰγύπτου ἐν τῷ ἀναβῆναι αὐτὸν εἰς Ἱερουσαλημ ἐν ἡμέραις Ροβοαμ υἱοῦ Σολομώντος || > ❧

**19. 2 SAMUEL 12:16**4Q51 f100–101<sup>23</sup>

2<sup>15</sup> [נתן] אל בִּיתוֹ וַיְגוֹף אֱלֹהִים אֶת [הילד א] שר ילד[ה אש]ת אוריה לדיוד: <sup>16</sup> וַיִּבְקֶשׁ 3 [דויד] מן האלוהים בעד הנער וי[צם דויד] ויב[ר] וי[א] וישכב בשק ארצה

καὶ ἐζήτησεν Δαυιδ τὸν θεὸν περὶ τοῦ παιδαρίου καὶ ἐνήστευσεν Δαυιδ νηστείαν καὶ εἰσηλθεν καὶ ηὐλίσθη ἐν σάκκῳ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς

וַיִּבְקֶשׁ דָּוִד אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים בְּעַד הַנְּעָר וְיָצָא דָוִד צוֹם וַיָּבֵא וְלָן וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֶרְצָה

*Textual Notes*

הצם דויד ויב[ר] וי[א] וישכב בשק ארצה // και ηὐλίσθη ἐν σάκκῳ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς || ❧ וְלָן וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֶרְצָה

**20. 2 SAMUEL 13:21**4Q51 f102ii+103–106i+107–109a–b<sup>24</sup>

12<sup>20</sup> [לדבר הזה ותשב תמר שוממה בית אבשלום אחיה: <sup>21</sup> והמלך דויד] שמע את [כול] 13 [הדברים האלה ויחר לו מאד לוא עצב את רוח אמנון בנו כי אה]בו כי בכור[ו] 14 [הוא]

καὶ ἤκουσεν ὁ βασιλεὺς Δαυιδ πάντας τοὺς λόγους τούτους καὶ ἐθυμώθη σφόδρα καὶ οὐκ ἐλύπησεν τὸ πνεῦμα Ἀμνων τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἠγάπα αὐτόν ὅτι πρωτότοκος αὐτοῦ ἦν

וַהֲמַלְאָה דָּוִד שִׁמְעָה אֶת־כְּלֵי־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיִּחַר לּוֹ מְאֹד

*Textual Notes*

ו] בכור[ו] // πρωτότοκος αὐτοῦ || > ❧

**21. 2 SAMUEL 13:39**4Q51 f102ii+103–106i+107–109a–b<sup>25</sup>

40<sup>39</sup> [ותכל רו]ח המלך לצ[את אל אב]שלום כי [נ]הם א[ל אמנון בנו כי מת]

καὶ ἐκόπασεν τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ βασιλέως τοῦ ἐξελεθεῖν ὀπίσω Ἀβεσσαλωμ ὅτι παρεκλήθη ἐπὶ Ἀμνων ὅτι ἀπέθανεν

וַתִּכַּל־דָּוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ לְצֵאת אֶל־אַבְשָׁלוֹם כִּי־נָתַם עַל־אַמְנוֹן כִּי־מָת

<sup>23</sup> DJD 17:143; PAM 43.119 (<https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-284923>).

<sup>24</sup> DJD 17:147; PAM 43.119 (<https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-284923>).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



## 24. 2 SAMUEL 23:1

4Q51 f155–158<sup>28</sup>

23 23 ואלה דְּבָרֵי דָוִד הָאֲחֵרִים [יָנִים נָאם דָּוִד בֶּן יִשִׁי וְנָאם] 24 הַגִּבֹּר הַקָּיָם אֶל מְשִׁיחַ [אֶל־וְ] הִי יֵעָבֵב וְנִעְמִים זְמֵרוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל

καὶ οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι Δαυὶδ οἱ ἔσχατοι πιστὸς Δαυὶδ υἱὸς Ἰεσσαὶ καὶ πιστὸς ἀνὴρ ὃν ἀνέστησεν κύριος ἐπὶ χριστὸν θεοῦ Ἰακωβ καὶ εὐπρεπεῖς ψαλμοὶ Ἰσραὴλ

וְאֵלֶּה דְּבָרֵי דָּוִד הָאֲחֵרִים נָאם דָּוִד בֶּן יִשִׁי וְנָאם הַגִּבֹּר הַקָּיָם עַל מְשִׁיחַ אֶלְתָּי יֵעָבֵב וְנִעְמִים זְמֵרוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל

*Textual Notes*

הַגִּבֹּר הַקָּיָם עַל מְשִׁיחַ || אֶלְתָּי יֵעָבֵב וְנִעְמִים זְמֵרוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל // ἀνὴρ ὃν ἀνέστησεν κύριος ἐπὶ χριστὸν ||

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<sup>28</sup> DJD 17:181; PAM 43.120 (<https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-284924>).

# When Prophecy Fails: Apocalyptic Schemes for Dating the “Appointed Time of the End” in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Jesus Movement

JAMES D. TABOR

Since the full release of the entire Dead Sea Scrolls corpus in 1992, it is now possible to sketch out what I would characterize as a rather comprehensive and reliable portrait of the sectarian Community (i.e., *Yachad*) that produced the scrolls. We can now fill out to a much greater extent the “life and times” of their unnamed leader or Prophet, most commonly referred to as the “Teacher of Righteousness.”<sup>1</sup> I take this descriptive title to mean the “Right” or “True” Teacher.<sup>2</sup> This pivotal figure, mentioned approximately thirty times in the DSS corpus, is also referred to as “the Teacher,”

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It is a pleasure to offer this modest contribution to James H. Charlesworth on his eightieth birthday. Jim and I have spent countless hours together trekking through the Judean Desert, whether exploring Herodian fortresses (Alexandrium, Masada, Hyrcania, and Machaerus) or the caves from Wadi Qelt to Qumran. Whether digging, lecturing, or studying texts together, at home or in the Holy Land, we have carried on a continuous dialogue for over twenty-five years, focused on our first love—the relationship of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the emerging Jesus movement in the late Second Temple period. Charlesworth’s contributions to this area of scholarship are as indispensable as they are abundant. I am honored to know him as my friend and colleague.

<sup>1</sup>Throughout this chapter, I will use the capitalized word “Community” to designate the specific apocalyptic group that lies behind the Dead Sea Scrolls that are usually judged to be “sectarian,” that is, composed by the group itself, about itself, thus reflecting its history, beliefs, and expectations.

<sup>2</sup>The phrase מורה צדק was translated “Teacher of Righteousness” as early as S. Schechter, *Documents of Jewish Sectaries: Fragments of a Zadokite Work*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), echoed in German (“Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit”) and French (“Maître/Docteur de Justice”), most often thought to derive from Hos 10:12(19) or Joel 2:23(20), and understood as the “Prophet like Moses” figure who “reveals right Torah” (4Q165 f1-2:3), without the Protestant theological connotations of “justification” by faith in contrast to the so-called “righteousness of the Law.” John Reeves has suggested the idea of the “True Lawgiver” who both definitively reveals and interprets the Torah in the last days, “The Meaning of *Moreh Sedeq* in the Light of 11QTorah,” *RevQ* 13.1/4 (1988): 287–98.



or “the unique” Teacher (מורה היחיד). The idea is not so much that of a teacher known for his wisdom or interpretive brilliance, like a revered rabbinic *chakamin* or a Greek philosopher. Instead, the designation has specific apocalyptic and eschatological associations related to the sectarian Community and its self-understanding as the chosen ones of the Last Days who will usher in the Redemption. More important, as we will see, it is the Teacher’s death that becomes the fundamental determining factor in the prophetic timetable that defined the Community’s expectations.

Here I agree with Michael Wise. As students of late Second Temple Judaism and Christian origins we have the extraordinary good fortune of having in our hands the fragmentary library of what was perhaps the *first* such movement in Western history—and thus the career of the *first* Messiah.<sup>3</sup> This chapter does not explore the fascinating “autobiographical” aspects of the life of the Teacher. However, I am convinced that given the new evaluations of the *Hodayot*, including the fragments and Cave 4 materials now associated therewith, we can in fact “hear” the Voice of the Teacher and get a sense of his personal mindset and inner psychology—a phenomenon only paralleled in this period by the early letters of Paul.<sup>4</sup>

I use the term “Messiah” in the most generic sense—not merely to refer to an ideal Davidic King but one who is understood to function as a central figure or chief agent in ushering in and mediating the expected arrival of the Last Days (Dan 2:44; Isaiah 11; Mic 5:2–4; Zech 6:12–13; Mal 3:1–2). As John the Baptist was so famously asked by his Jewish contemporaries in the gospel of John, “Are you the Messiah? Are you Elijah? Are you the Prophet?” (John 1:19–23). The followers of the Teacher at Qumran expected a variety of categories and potential candidates to fulfill a set of diverse prophetic roles based on their understanding of how the Last Days would unfold.<sup>5</sup> The complicated terminology related to understanding the apocalypticism in the Scrolls, in particular

<sup>3</sup> M. O. Wise, *The First Messiah: Investigating the Savior Before Christ* (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins, 1999), and more specifically, M. O. Wise, “Dating the Teacher of Righteousness and the Floruit of His Movement,” *JBL* 122 (2003): 53–87 and “The Origins and History of the Teacher’s Movement,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. T. H. Lim and J. J. Collins (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 92–122. For a more traditional view of the dating and possible identity of the Teacher and other figures in the scrolls (i.e., “Wicked Priest,” “Man of Lies”), see W. H. Brownlee, “The Wicked Priest, the Man of Lies, and the Righteous Teacher: The Problem of Identity,” *JQR* 73 (1982): 1–37. M. V. Novenson, *The Grammar of Messianism: An Ancient Jewish Political Idiom and Its Users* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), has questioned Wise’s assumptions and dating. Although I find Novenson’s critique of Wise’s “quest for the first messiah” useful as a cautionary note (i.e., there are never any “absolute” beginnings), I find Wise’s work nonetheless insightful and valuable. Disputes about antecedents and derivative “borrowings” by Jesus or his followers are irrelevant. Wise’s point is that we have in the DSS corpus the life and teachings of Moses-like prophet that antedates the John the Baptist/Jesus movement by as much as one hundred years.

<sup>4</sup> See J. D. Tabor, *Things Unutterable: Paul’s Ascent to Paradise in Its Greco-Roman, Judaic, and Early Christian Contexts* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986); M. C. Douglas, “The Teacher Hymn Hypothesis Revisited: New Data for an Old Crux,” *DSD* 6 (1999): 239–66; and A. K. Harkins, *Reading with an “I” to the Heavens Looking at the Qumran Hodayot through the Lens of Visionary Traditions* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018). The Teacher Hymn Hypothesis experienced a resurgence of interest in the 1990s after the publication of six fragmentary copies from Cave 4 (4Q427–32, 4QH<sup>a-c</sup>, and 4QpapH<sup>1</sup>) that had overlapping material with passages in 1QH<sup>a</sup>. For several years, Hartmut Stegemann and Émile Puech worked on 1QH independently of each other to produce a definitive reconstruction of the *Hodayot* that would restore the original arrangement of the scroll. Remarkably, their conclusions were the same. Stegemann and Eileen Schuller, along with a translation by Carol Newsom, published these results in the definitive edition of DJD 40 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). For a reader’s edition, see E. M. Schuller and C. A. Newsom, *The Hodayot (Thanksgiving Psalms): A Study Edition of 1QH<sup>a</sup>* (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> See J. D. Tabor, “Are You the One? The Textual Dynamics of Messianic Self-Identity,” in *Knowing the End from the Beginning: The Prophetic, the Apocalyptic, and Their Relationships*, ed. L. L. Grabbe and R. D. Haak, *JSPSup* 46 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2004), 180–91.

the expectation, appearance, function, or even “nonappearance,” of various “Redemptive Figures” that are referred to by a variety of overlapping terms, has received careful attention by scholars over the past seventy years.<sup>6</sup> These designations arise, for the most part, directly from the Hebrew Scriptures—Prophet, Priest, Messiahs, Stone, Branch, Prince, Messenger, Servant, Star, Scepter, and so forth. In other words, the Scrolls, as a corpus, do not refer to just one figure but reflect a developing and shifting, even speculative, application of the complexity categories drawn primarily from the Hebrew Bible.

This chapter focuses on one fascinating aspect of the history of this most seminal of millenarian movements: the demise or death of its beloved Teacher and the subsequent failure of the central prophetic expectations that he had instilled in the Community by both his presence and his teachings. After all, he is the one to whom “God made known all the mysteries of the words of His servants the Prophets” (1QpHab vii 4). One might call this our first grand case of “When Prophecy Fails.”<sup>7</sup>

I begin with the *Community Rule* (1QS), where we find no indication that any messianic figures have appeared on the scene. This includes the revered Teacher who is subsequently to play such a significant role as a type of “second Moses” figure whose career is to usher in the End of Days. The *Damascus Document* (CD) offers us a chronology on this period, namely, that 390 years after Nebuchadnezzar carried away the Jews to Babylon, God caused a “plant root” to spring up. The image, of a root in the desert spring out of the dry ground, is, in fact, messianic, drawn from a prophecy in Isaiah about the arrival of the David Messiah (Isa 53:2). The remnant Community perceived their iniquity and recognized they were guilty men, “yet for twenty years they were like blind men groping for the Way” (CD i 9). God observed their piety and “raised up for them a Teacher of Righteousness to guide them in the way of His heart” (CD i 10). It is difficult to put a precise date on the appearance of the Teacher since our modern historical chronology, which has 586 BCE as the Exile under Nebuchadnezzar, is unlikely to correspond with that of the Community, which had its own system of dating the length of the Babylonian and Persian periods. This period of 390 years was apparently based on Ezek 4:4–8 where the duration of punishment for Jerusalem and Judah is represented by Ezekiel “lying on his side” before a model of the siege of the city for 390 days—thus a day for a year. As we will see, this period was then rather ingeniously placed *within* Daniel’s “Seventy Weeks” prophecy that specified a total of 490 years (70 “weeks” of years) countdown leading to the End (Dan 9:24–27). This was then understood as ten Jubilees of forty-nine years. This dividing of the “final days” into Jubilee cycles of forty-nine years became critical to the Community’s calculations and expectations.<sup>8</sup> The remaining eighty years, following this 390-year period, left two periods of forty years. For twenty years thereafter, they are “like blind men groping for the Way,” leading up to the appearance of their Teacher. As we will see, after the

<sup>6</sup>The literature is too vast to cite here but see J. J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), for an excellent overview, as well as J. H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), and M. A. Knibb, “Apocalypticism and Messianism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 403–32.

<sup>7</sup>The phrase comes from the classic anthropological study of L. Festinger, H. W. Riecken, and S. Schachter, *When Prophecy Fails: A Social and Psychological Study of a Modern Group That Predicted the Destruction of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956).

<sup>8</sup>A. Laato, “The Chronology in the ‘Damascus Document’ of Qumran,” *RevQ* 15.4 (1992): 605–7.

Teacher's death, the final forty-year period unfolded that was expected to bring the End—allowing for a twenty-year career for the Teacher.

Even though we can't impose our modern dating of the Exile to interpret these texts, what is clear is that the Community is calculating the arrival rather precisely, year by year, based on their own understanding of the passing of years since Jerusalem's destruction. What we can say is that within the Community Rule (1QS) there is *no* indication that either the Teacher or any other anticipated messianic figures have appeared on the scene. This point is of enormous significance. It means that we can “capture” the outlook of this apocalyptic sectarian group *before* the arrival of the Teacher, and then contrast their perceptions of the Last Days in the light of his teachings. We can also investigate how they shaped their ideas *after* the Teacher's death as well.

Thus, simply put, we have three stages of their history that should be distinguished: *The Community: Before the Teacher* || *Shaped by the Teacher* || *After the Teacher's Death*. It is not always possible to assign our extant texts to one of these three periods, since our manuscripts were regularly being copied, updated, and revised. As a result, we have various versions of the same documents—especially in the hundreds of Cave 4 fragments. It is, nonetheless, insightful, to make such an attempt as our sources permit. In the case of the *Damascus Document*, we have the good fortune to possess two clear recensions, A and B, which allow us to capture and track the Community, both before and after the loss of their leader.

In the earlier recension, text A, the Community reflects its self-understanding as the New Covenant community of the Last Days. Notice the following three passages:<sup>9</sup>

1QS vii 12b-14: And when these become members of the Community in Israel according to all these rules, they shall separate from the habitation of ungodly men and shall go into the wilderness to prepare the way of Him, as it is written, “Prepare in the wilderness the way ... make straight in the desert a path for our God” (Isa 40:3). This (path) is the study of the Law which He commanded by the hand of Moses, that they may do according to all that has been revealed from age to age, as the Prophets have revealed by his Holy Spirit.

1QS ix 19b-20: This is the time for the preparation of the way in the wilderness, and he [i.e., the Master/משכיל] shall teach them to do all that is required at that time and to separate from all those who have not turned aside from all injustice.

1QS ix 9b-11: They shall depart from none of the counsels of the Torah to walk in all the stubbornness of their hearts, but shall be ruled by the primitive precepts in which the men of the Community were first instructed *until there shall come the Prophet and the Messiahs* (עד בוא נביא) (רמשידי) of Aaron and Israel.

Here we have the core self-understanding of the Community. Its role is to fulfill the prophecy of Isa 40:3 involving a separated people who will devote themselves to “preparing the Way in the wilderness.” This preparation consists of the study and obedience of the Torah based on the primitive instructions handed down by the founders of the movement. Clearly, “Preparing the Way” then leads to the coming of the Prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel. I read this as three separate figures—a Prophet and two Messiahs, although the phrase in the singular—“the

<sup>9</sup>Quotations are from the English edition of G. Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (London: Penguin, 2011), for ease of access.

messiah of Aaron and Israel” occurs four times in the *Damascus Document* with a singular verb (cf. CD xii 23–xiii 1; xiv 18–19; xix 10–11; xx 1).<sup>10</sup>

The Prophet is clearly the “Prophet like Moses,” based on Deut 18:18–19, which is quoted explicitly in 4QTestimonia (4Q175). I take this as the same figure identified as the “Star” of Num 24:17, who is described as the “Interpreter of the Torah” (CD vii 19; 4QFlor xi). A second figure, the “Scepter” of Num 24:17, is the Branch of David or “the Prince of the whole Congregation” (CD vii 20; 4QFlor xi), who arises *with* the Interpreter of the Torah. This is clearly the Davidic or royal Messiah (2 Sam 7:13; Isa 11:1). Associated with him is Priestly/Aaronic Messiah or the anointed one, described in 1QSa 2, 11–20 (4Q28a), who presides over the Messianic banquet along with the “Messiah of Israel,” whom I take to be the Davidic figure. Two very similar figures are referred to in Zech 4:14 as the two “sons of fresh oil” (שני בני הציצה) “who stand before the ‘Lord’ (*Adon*) of the whole earth.”<sup>11</sup>

Although we can document the appearance of the Prophet or Teacher of Righteousness with explicit references in various core sectarian scrolls, I find no evidence anywhere in the entire DSS corpus of the appearance of the messiah/s of Aaron and Israel. The *Damascus Document* (CD) is absolutely crucial in this regard. Two manuscripts (A and B) were found in the Cairo Genizah by S. Schechter in 1897. Also, significant fragments of the document showed up in Caves 4, 5, and 6 at Qumran. The first lines of column i clearly refer to the appearance of the Teacher 390 years after the Babylonian Exile (our 586 BCE date) and twenty years after the origin of the New Covenant movement:

He visited them and He caused a plant root to spring from Israel and Aaron to inherit His Land and to prosper on the good things of His earth. And they perceived their iniquity and recognized that they were guilty men, yet for twenty years they were like blind men groping for the way. And God observed their deeds, that they sought Him with a whole heart, and He raised up for them a Teacher of Righteousness to guide them in the way of His heart. (CD i 9–11)

What I find rather striking is that in CD manuscript A, other than in this introduction, there is no direct reference to the arrival and career of this Teacher. Indeed, in column vii we find a reference to the “Star and Scepter” promise of Numbers 24 with a decidedly “future” cast to it—as if neither figure had appeared. And in vi 2 and 10 we read: “He raised up from Aaron men of discernment and from Israel men of wisdom ... until he comes who shall teach righteousness at the end of days.”

In the critical fragment we call manuscript B we have two additional references to the community holding fast to its mission “until the coming of the Messiah of Aaron and Israel,” as mentioned above (CD xix 10–11; xx 1). However, in sharp contrast to the opening of manuscript A, we find direct references to the “gathering in” (i.e., death) of the Teacher of the Community:

CD B xix 33a–35, xx 1: None of the men who enter the New Covenant in the land of Damascus and who again betray it and depart from the fountain of living waters, shall be reckoned with the

<sup>10</sup>M. G. Abegg, “The Messiah at Qumran: Are We Still Seeing Double?” *DSD* 2 (1995): 125–44.

<sup>11</sup>The book of Revelation builds directly upon this passage, perhaps influenced by the same currents of thought reflected in the Dead Sea Scrolls, predicting “two witnesses” who “stand before the Lord of the earth” whose appearance ushers in the “seventh Trumpet” that heralds the resurrection of the dead and the judgment of the nations (Rev 11:1–13).

Council of the people or inscribed in its Book, from the day of gathering in of the [unique/היחיד] Teacher of the Community until the comings of the Messiah out of Aaron and Israel.<sup>12</sup>

CD B xx 13b-15: From the day of the gathering in of the [unique/היחיד] Teacher of the Community until the end of all the men of war who deserted to the Liar, there shall pass about forty years.

What is even more striking is that CD manuscript B recasts manuscript A column vii and quotes Zech 13:7: “Awake O Sword against my Shepherd, against the man who is my fellow, says God—smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn my hand upon the little ones” (CD B xix 7–9).

This “smiting” of the Shepherd, whom I take to be the Teacher, appears parallel in this fragment to his “gathering in.” At this very point in the text, fragment B edits out the reference in A to the Numbers 24 “Star and Scepter” prophecy—obviously seeing it as in the past. It is seldom we have such a clear example of the kind of updating or “redating” of the apocalyptic expectations of the Community. Like the early Jesus followers, following his unanticipated crucifixion, the Dead Sea Scroll group has searched the Prophetic scriptures and found the Zechariah text that for them explains the death of the Teacher. I think the implication here is that they had no expectation that he would die before the Last Days were fulfilled. However, given the recent research of M. Wise, I. Knohl, M. Fishbane, and others, it is entirely possible that the Teacher himself might have anticipated his suffering and death as part of his prophetic role, drawing upon “Suffering Servant” imagery from Isaiah. I have argued that such is the case, drawing upon the gospel of Mark in the case of Jesus, where one finds a proleptic anticipation of Jesus’ death, but with application to the Teacher in the scrolls.<sup>13</sup> What is all the more striking is that the gospel of Mark cites the same text from Zechariah in what purports to be a proleptic anticipation of Jesus’ death:

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away; for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’” (Mark 14:26–27)<sup>14</sup>

That these two communities, separated by perhaps one hundred years or more, would draw upon a very similar explanation for the suffering and death of their respective Teachers is remarkable.

But there is more. We also find a period of “about 40 years” tied to the demise of the Teacher. There is a fragment from Cave 4 (4Q171 Psalms Peshar) that refers to the same period:

*“A little while and the wicked shall be no more; I will look towards his place, but he shall not be there” (Psa 37:10), emphasis in original. Interpreted, this concerns all the wicked. At the end of the forty years they shall be blotted out and not a man shall be found on earth. (4Q171 ii 5b–8)*

Here things get a bit complicated. The chronological scheme that the group had worked out is based on the “Seventy Weeks” prophecy of Dan 9:24–27. In their understanding, a “week” (the

<sup>12</sup> Here, and in the next passage, Vermes omits the word “unique,” or beloved, so I have added it in brackets.

<sup>13</sup> Building upon the work of these scholars I have argued that Jesus and the Teacher likely anticipated acute suffering as part of their messianic roles in bringing about the Redemption. This might include drawing near to the threshold of death but with faith in God’s rescue in whatever form it might take. In that sense, I do not think the dire circumstances of either were a complete surprise to their followers. See Tabor, “Are You the One?” 185–9.

<sup>14</sup> Quotations from the Bible are from the RSV (1952, 1971). Emphases are mine.

Hebrew word is generic, meaning “heptad”) was equivalent to seven years, so that seventy weeks totals 490 years. This corresponds precisely to ten Jubilee periods of forty-nine years each (Lev 25:8–12). The Jubilee signified the “proclamation of liberty throughout the land” (Lev 25:8).<sup>15</sup> In the view of the Community, the “Last Days” were a final 490-year period “countdown” (70 × 7 years) that would neatly divide into ten Jubilees of forty-nine years each.<sup>16</sup>

This final period of forty years, preceded by the 390 years since the Exile, the twenty years of wandering between the establishment of the Community and the rise of the Teacher, and what appears to be his forty-year career before his death, one can fill out the full 490 years of Daniel rather neatly (390+20+40+40). It is this sort of precise periodization that was of immense appeal to a variety of Jewish groups in the late Second Temple period.

This all comes together in the most extraordinary text, 11QMelch (11Q13), referring to the heavenly priest Melchizedek, who will inaugurate “the Year of Grace for Melchizedek” during a final forty-nine-year Jubilee period:

And this thing [i.e., proclaiming liberty to the captives] will [occur] in the first week of the Jubilee that follows the nine Jubilees. And the Day of Atonement is the e[nd of the]tenth [Ju]bilee, when all the Sons of [Light] and the men of the lot of Mel[chi]zedek will be atoned for ... For this is the moment of the Year of Grace for Melchizedek. (11QMelch ii 6b-9a)

This is the day of [Peace/Salvation] concern which [God] spoke [through Isa]iah the prophet, who said, [How] *beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who proclaims peace, who brings good news, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion: Your ELOHIM [reigns]* (Isa 52:7). Its interpretation; *the mountains* are the prophets ... and *the messenger* is the Anointed one of the spirit, concerning whom Dani[iel] said.

Here we have reference to the first week—or *seven* years into the final Jubilee of forty-nine years—when this heavenly decree was presumably made, as “Elohim takes his place in the divine council” inaugurating the process of judgment, referencing Ps 83:1. This proclamation, presumably by the Teacher himself shortly before his death, then ushers in the final forty-years of the 490-year total. This final Jubilee is clearly probationary, a kind of last call for the “Sons of Light” to distinguish themselves from the wicked who are to be blotted out at the end of the tenth Jubilee. The text refers to the “anointed of the spirit” alluding to Isa 61:1-2, who inaugurates this period of Grace by proclaiming “good news of salvation,” while at the same time proclaiming the “day of vengeance of our God.” The text unfortunately breaks off but clearly references Dan 9:25 where the “anointed one, a prince” is cut off. Accordingly, this anointed “proclaimer” is the same as the one who is soon to die.

<sup>15</sup> In Jewish tradition, a Jubilee is understood as either fifty years or forty-nine years. Those who supported the forty-nine-year cycle considered the next year, the fiftieth, as the first year of the new forty-nine-year cycle—and simultaneously, the first of the new seven-year Sabbath cycle. See S. B. Hoenig, “Sabbatical Years and the Year of Jubilee,” *JQR* 59 (1969): 222–36; J. S. Bergsma, “Once again, the Jubilee, Every 49 or 50 Years?” *VT* 55 (2005): 121–5; and Y. H. Kim, “The Jubilee: Its Reckoning and Inception Day,” *VT* 60 (2010): 147–51.

<sup>16</sup> This 490-year prophetic scheme was applied in a variety of ways in texts surviving from the Second Temple period. See J. VanderKam, “Sabbatical Chronologies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context*, ed. T. H. Lim (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000): 159–78 and C. Werman, “Epochs and End-Time: The 490-Year Scheme in Second Temple Literature,” *DSD* 13.2 (2006): 229–55.



Once again, the parallels with the Jesus movement are striking. According to Luke, Jesus proclaimed the “acceptable year of the Lord” based on his own claim to be the “anointed of the Spirit” spoken of in Isa 61:1–2, similarly ushering the “acceptable year of the Lord” while warning of the day of vengeance (Luke 4:16–19). Luke, in particular, is keen to emphasize that the Christ or Anointed one is to fulfill everything written about his sufferings in the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings, and that his death ushers in the final generation prior to the arrival of the Kingdom of God (Luke 24:44–46; 21:28–33; 13:34–35).

We then move to the next stage of interpretation—the period after the death of the Teacher. The most important text to consider in this regard is the *Pesher* in the book of Habakkuk (1QpHab). Here we have the most extended references to the Teacher—past, present, and future, reflecting how the Community viewed their situation after his death.

First, the Community has clearly lived past the final forty-year “countdown” period following the Teacher’s death that was supposed to usher in the final Day of Redemption, with grace for the elect and destruction for the wicked. This period is called “the last generation” (1QpMic frags. 17–18, 5). A generation is considered to be about forty years (Num 14:33; Mark 13:30). The Habakkuk commentary speaks clearly about the “chastisement of the Teacher of Righteousness” by the Liar (1QpHab v 10–11). It also focuses on the “Teacher of Righteousness, to whom God has made known all the mysteries of the words of His servants the Prophets” (1QpHab vii 4–5).

The text opens with the cry of the prophet Habakkuk in a vision: “For how long, O Lord, shall I cry for help and Thou wilt not [hear]? The writer then interprets this cry of desperation as the ‘beginning of the final generation’” (1QpHab i 1–2). Clearly the Community is looking past the death of the Teacher, which was to usher in the final forty-year period, and that has now passed—not with the Redemption expected, but with further oppression and rule of the Land by the Kittim—first the Greeks, followed by the Romans.

The references are explicit in this text with the writer taking the words of the prophet Habakkuk (shown in *italics* in the translation) and then interpreting them line by line—explicitly applying them to that last generation. This is clearly one of the most extraordinary texts in the entire Dead Sea corpus in terms of understanding the faith and hope of the Community as it lived past the predicted time of the End:

And God told Habakkuk to write down that which would happen to the final generation, but He did not make known to him when time would come to an end. As for that which He said, *That he who reads may read it speedily*: interpreted, this concerns the Teacher of Righteousness, to whom God made known all the mysteries of the words of His servants the Prophets.

*For there shall be yet another vision concerning the appointed time. It shall tell of the end and shall not lie.* Interpreted, this means that the final age shall be prolonged, and shall exceed all that the Prophets have said; for the mysteries of God are astounding.

*If it tarries, wait for it, for it shall surely come and shall not be late.* Interpreted, this concerns the men of truth who keep the Torah, whose hands shall not slacken in the service of truth when the final age is prolonged. For all the ages of God reach their appointed end as he determines for them in the mysteries of His wisdom.

*Behold, his soul is puffed up and is not upright.* Interpreted, this means that the wicked shall double their guilt upon themselves and it shall not be forgiven when they are judged ...

*But the righteous shall live by his faith.* Interpreted, this concerns all those who observe the Torah in the House of Judah, whom God will deliver from the House of Judgment because of their suffering and because of their faith in the Teacher of Righteousness. (1QpHab vii 1–viii 3a)

Whether one dates the *floruit* of the Teacher and his movement in the early to mid-second century BCE, or as I prefer, the early first century BCE, the fundamental issue is the same. As the text clearly says, “the final age is prolonged and shall exceed all that the Prophets have said; for the mysteries of God are astounding.”<sup>17</sup> The community is struggling with a perennial apocalyptic challenge, whether focused on events or predicted periods. What is most expected to happen never comes about, and what is least anticipated, in fact, holds sway. In the case of the Dead Sea Scroll community, the forces of Belial/Satan, including the Greeks and Romans who occupied the Land, and their “Ephraimite” religious opponents—which they applied to all Jews who rejected their New Covenant—grew stronger, not weaker. It was as if the “Sons of Darkness” had triumphed and the “Sons of Light” were left hopeless. With the Teacher dead and the final forty years of the “last” generation passed, the group could well face a crisis of faith. Ironically, the Habakkuk pesharim pins its hopes and confidence on a verse that the apostle Paul was later to put as the center of his theology—but with an entirely different interpretation, namely, “He who is righteous will live by faith.” But in this case, the faith is that despite the “prolonging” of the Last Times beyond anything the Prophets had predicted—namely, Daniel’s “Seventy Weeks”—one is to maintain faith in what the Teacher had taught them.

A hundred years later, the Jesus movement experienced a very similar crisis, struggling with some of the same prophetic texts and a strikingly similar set of interpretations. In Paul’s earlier letters, particularly 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians, both dating in the early 50s CE, he seems to be very conscious of a calculated “time of the end.” He expects to live to see the *Parousia*, or the “Arrival” of Jesus the Messiah in the clouds of heaven (1 Thess 1:9–10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13–18; 5:1–10, 23). He advises the Jesus followers at Corinth to forgo marriage, business entanglements, or involvements with the world and to be content with their state in life—whether married, single, Jewish, Gentile, slave, or free (1 Cor 7:17–31). He argues that in “view of impending crisis” it is best to remain as one is, since “the form of this world (σῆμα τοῦ κόσμου) is passing away” (1 Cor 7:31). He declares clearly that “the appointed time has grown very short” (1 Cor 7:29). Although we do not know what precise chronological scheme Paul had in mind here, we do recognize that this phrase, the “appointed time of the end,” comes mainly from the prophecies of Daniel, who is the only prophet of the Hebrew Bible who includes chronological calculations in his predictions (Dan 8:14, 17, 19, 23; 9:24–27; 11:35, 40; 12:7–13).

The Synoptic gospels likewise expect the *Parousia* or return of the Messiah in the clouds of heaven to come approximately one generation—or forty years—after the death of their Teacher, Jesus of Nazareth:

From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that

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<sup>17</sup>On dating the community see Brownlee, “The Wicked Priest,” and Wise, “Dating the Teacher of Righteousness.” It remains the case that the core sectarian writings, namely 1QS, CD, 1QH, 1QpHab, other *pesharim*, and 1QM, date to the first century BCE on both paleographic and archaeological grounds. See the reassessment of Phase I to somewhere between 100 and 50 BCE, by J. Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015).

he/it is near, even at the very gates. Truly I tell you, *this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place*. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away (Mark 13:28–31).

So also, when you see these things taking place you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. (Luke 21: 31–32)

Paul falls right in the middle of that period, from 30 CE to 70 CE. That is apparently why the first Jewish revolt against the Romans and the subsequent destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple, as well as the devastation of the entire Land, from 66 to 73 CE was such an apocalyptic time. This was the case not only for Jesus followers but for many other Jews as well. Josephus, who lived through this period, makes the extraordinary claim:

But what more than all else incited them to the war as an ambiguous oracle, likewise found in their sacred scriptures, to the effect that at that time one from their country would become ruler of the world. (*Jewish War* 6.312)<sup>18</sup>

I am convinced that the “oracle” here is referring to Daniel 9 and the “Seventy Weeks” prophecy—now applied to the generation leading up to 70 CE. All the elements Josephus mentions fit the specific aspects of that prophecy—including the devastation of Jerusalem by the Roman general Titus and the emperor Vespasian in 70 CE, something to which Josephus was an eyewitness.

When prophetic expectations fail, various interpretive strategies are common among “Scripture-based” apocalyptic groups. We see one of them at work in the first and second generations of both the Dead Sea Community and the Jesus movement. An attempt is made to simply “prolong the time” beyond predicted expectations, without any significant reinterpretations. Since both these groups have tied their timetable for the “appointed time of the end,” to their reading of Daniel’s Seventy Weeks prophecy, that includes the idea of a messiah or anointed one being “cut off,” followed then by the events of the End within a generation—there is really little capacity for adjustment. If a movement survives such a failure of expectations—which the Jesus followers did, and the followers of the Teacher apparently did not—there is always the possibility of a complete recasting of things.

This interpretive strategy could take any number of directions. One of the most common is to allegorize the texts and claim that in fact, the expected events *did* happen—just not in the literal way that the community had first believed. A second is to redo the numbers in such a way that there is a hidden “gap” in the prophetic timetable. In the twentieth century, for example, it was common for those espousing a form of Dispensationalism to claim that sixty-nine (483 years) of Daniel’s seventy weeks was fulfilled down to 70 CE, but the final week of seven years is only to come at the end of the age. That gap could be of any length, in this case over 1,900 years. Or one might determine that Daniel’s 490-year period refers to seventy “weeks” of Jubilee years—giving a total of 3,430 years ( $49 \times 70$ )! The *terminus ad quo* is then stretched back accordingly—perhaps to the Exodus in the time of Moses or some other such benchmark.

What is perhaps more significant about this phenomenon of “delayed” or “failed” prophetic expectations is understanding how a movement that begins with intense apocalyptic fervor can

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<sup>18</sup> Josephus, *Josephus: The Jewish War, Books IV–VII*, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), vol. 3.

survive for many generations beyond its dashed hopes and expectations. That leaves us with the questions: What are the enduring aspects of the group, either drawn from its teacher/founder or from its fundamental core perceptions, that enable it to survive for many future generations? What sort of changes, shifts, and transformations are necessary? How are the clear statements of an imminent End subsequently understood or reinterpreted? In the case of the Dead Sea Scroll Community and the Jesus movement we are fortunate to have an abundance of texts, written both before and after the time of definitive disappointment, so that we can study and observe these dynamics of persistence and change and compare patterns of interpretation and response.

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# Science Fiction in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Case of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and the Nephilim

HELEN R. JACOBUS

The proposal that there is a subgenre of ancient science fiction, or proto-science fiction, that can be retrospectively applied to writers from the archaic and classical worlds who used fantasy or actual—what we might call “scientific”—tropes in their fiction is a subject of active discussion among modern SF writers and academics alike.<sup>1</sup>

Although the contribution of the Bible and some very well-known early Jewish literature preserved in Christianity or early Christian literature is also acknowledged in the discourse, it is rare and only *en passant*. This includes Revelation, Daniel, and *1 Enoch*.<sup>2</sup> As far as I am aware reception from the Dead Sea Scrolls is completely absent from any studies on ancient science fiction by those who write about the genre itself. This may be because this material is known mainly to specialists, and much of it is obscure and fragmentary.

Similarly, for scholars of biblical studies the question of identifying anachronistic literary genres in detail such as “ancient science fiction” within the classifications of types of early Jewish literature has yet to find a place on the radar of reception history. This may be because we have not developed

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<sup>1</sup>B. M. Rogers and B. Eldon, “The Past Is an Undiscovered Country,” in *Classical Traditions in Science Fiction*, ed. B. M. Rogers and B. Eldon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1–26, the authors state that they “seek to explore modern science fiction for complex points of contact with classical traditions,” 4; A. Roberts, “SF and the Ancient Novel,” in *The History of Science Fiction*, Palgrave Histories of Literature (London: Palgrave Macmillan and Online, 2016), 25–35, writing on “The Ancient Cosmos,” Roberts comments: “eschatological fantasy might be considered a work of speculative religion rather than science fiction but the juxtaposition of science and fiction creates a whole that works on the boundaries of established science in a speculative fashion. Neither is this mixture of scientific enquiry and fantastical extrapolation an uncomfortable one”; B. Stableford, *Historical Dictionary of Fantasy Literature*, Historical Dictionaries of Literature and the Arts 5 (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005), see under, “The Bible and Fantasy,” 107–8. “The Bible and Fantasy,” 107–8; however, the author solely lists key Greek and Roman classic works from the archaic to the Roman period in his Chronology: Homer, Aesop’s fables, Aristophanes, Virgil, then Ovid, p. xiii. Note that scholars of science fiction use the abbreviation “SF,” not “sci-fi,” which is regarded as referring to work that is commercial and includes novels at the populist end of the spectrum, see N. Spinrad, *Science Fiction in the Real World* (Carbondale: South Illinois University Press, 1990), 20.

<sup>2</sup>J. Clute and J. Grant, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* (London: Orbit, 1997), see under, “Jewish Religious Literature,” 520–1.



relevant and detailed forms of literary theory using modern and contemporaneous perspectives. However, within the history of SF, popular ancient novels (outside early Jewish legends) are regarded by most scholars as part of the genre's heritage.<sup>3</sup>

In this tribute to the scholarship of James H. Charlesworth, this article proposes that within the body of extracanonical Jewish writings, a vast corpus with which he is indelibly associated and to which we owe much of its accessibility, there are works that may be considered part of the history, and lost history, of modern science fiction in all its guises. Arguably, should retrospective definitions be accepted, elements of Second Temple fiction contain what may have been regarded as imaginative and universalized stories in their own right.

These include writings that found their way into early Christian works and from thence into Western literature from the early modern period. Our texts include those whose possible *Vorlagen* are now known from the Dead Sea Scrolls that slipped into an SF-like black hole time-gap for two thousand years. In particular, I would like to focus this discussion with an examination of the reception of Enoch traditions on Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818), second ed. 1823, rev. 1831 (Mary Shelley, 1797–1851), which is generally identified as the first science fiction novel.<sup>4</sup>

Although *Frankenstein* is the eponymous title of the book, arguably Dr. Victor Frankenstein's Creature (he has no name in the novella), who is the narrator, is a joint protagonist, rather than an antagonist. He is so sensitively portrayed, despite the fact that he murders those whom Dr. Frankenstein loves in revenge for being uncared for and abandoned by the scientist, that the reader feels they can understand his pain. Shelley's "hideous progeny"<sup>5</sup> owes much to the intense interest and sympathetic valorization of the fallen angels and the figure of Satan among the intellectual and radical, Non-Conformist and Dissenter circles in which Mary grew up at the end of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century.

Her father William Godwin (1756–1836), novelist, writer, and political philosopher, the author of *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Morals and Happiness* (1793), and her mother the pioneer-feminist and novelist Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–97), author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) (she died eleven days after giving birth to Mary), valorized the fallen angels as symbols of rebellion in the cause of social justice and the position of women.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Of interest, see the popular *The Halstead Treasury of Ancient Science Fiction*, ed. M. Richardson (Ultimo, NSW: Halstead Press, 2001), extracts from Western literature include Plato's Timeous and Critias (the myth of Atlantis) (360 BCE), and the satires Cicero's "The Dream of Scipio" (51 BCE) and Lucian Samosata's *A True Story or True Histories* (second century CE).

<sup>4</sup> B. M. Rogers B. E. Stevens, eds., "Introduction," in *Classical Traditions in Science Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1–5; B. Stableford, "Frankenstein and the Origins of Science Fiction," in *Anticipations: Essays on Early Science Fiction and Precursors*, ed. D. Seed (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 46–57. The page numbers in this essay are taken from Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, ed. M. Hindle (London: Penguin Classics, 1986) [1831 edition, the third and final version]. The 1831 edition is published without an editor's introduction in Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein, Or, The Modern Prometheus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). The 1818 edition in three volumes was published anonymously. Shelley's name first appeared on the second edition published in 1923, edited by her father William Godwin; for comprehensive online critical editions and background publications, see *Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, ed. Stuart Curran, <http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/index.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Mary Shelley's introduction to the 1831 edition, *Frankenstein*, 56.

<sup>6</sup> In *Political Justice*, Godwin wrote, "Why did Satan rebel against his maker? It was, as he himself informs us, because he saw no sufficient reason for that extreme inequality of rank and power which the creator assumed"; W. Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Morals and Happiness*, ed. Isaac Kramnick (Harmondsworth: Penguin,

Godwin and Wollstonecraft are credited with refashioning “Milton’s Satan into a mythic vehicle for controversial writing.”<sup>7</sup>

The later group of Romantics to which Mary Shelley’s husband Percy Bysshe Shelley, William Blake, and Lord Byron were a part further subverted the Christian reception of the fallen angels and magnified the trope by using the concept as a metaphor for the transgression of social and moral boundaries. The group were labeled the Satanic School by the Romantic poet Robert Southey as a term of approbation, which they adopted.<sup>8</sup>

The interest in the fallen angels, stripped of their moralistic Christian veneer in the radical and the Satanic Romantic movements, postdated the discovery of the *1 Enoch* manuscripts in Abyssinia, by James Bruce, in 1773. Although not translated into English for some forty years, until 1821 by Richard Laurence (1760–1838),<sup>9</sup> its publication would have been anticipated, particularly by the religious outliers, radicals, and poets alike in the late modern period<sup>10</sup> and certainly by Western scholars since the book’s existence was well-known.<sup>11</sup>

For example, no sooner had the ink dried on Laurence’s English translation of *The Book of Enoch* than artists, including William Blake, who, like Mary Wollstonecraft was also was part of the Non-Conformist movement, produced sketches to illustrate the apocryphal book. Among these are two sexualized images of the union between the sons of god and the daughters of men. Blake depicted the erotic transgression of sexual boundaries between heavenly and earthly beings, including an image that depicted one of the Nephilim as a giant in flames. They are among the very first images to portray the actual myth of the Watchers (dated *ca.* 1822).<sup>12</sup>

The publication of the translation of *The Book of Enoch* just three years after the publication of *Frankenstein* thus ended the mystery of what *1 Enoch* contained. There is no evidence from Godwin’s diaries, in which he named every person that he met over 48 years,<sup>13</sup> that he ever

1976), 309; N. Forsyth, *The Satanic Epic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 2; and R. Sharrock, “Godwin on Milton’s Satan,” *Notes and Queries* n.s. 9 (1962): 463–5. On Wollstonecraft, see S. Blakemore, “Rebellious Reading: The Doubleness of Wollstonecraft’s Subversion of Paradise Lost,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 34 (1992): 451–80 at 462–6. A reference point on this subject is: Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman with Strictures on Moral Subjects*, new ed. (London: Unwin, 1891), 75 n.1, on Milton’s “paradisaical” Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost*, “I have, with conscious dignity, or Satanic pride, turned to hell for sublimer objects”; A. Cracium, “Romantic Satanism and the Rise of Nineteenth-Century Women’s Poetry,” *New Literary History* 34 (2003): 699–721.

<sup>7</sup>P. A. Schock, *Romantic Satanism: Myth and the Historical Moment in Blake, Shelley, and Byron* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 25–34 at 34.

<sup>8</sup>Shock, *Romantic Satanism*, 18, 81, 101.

<sup>9</sup>R. Laurence, *The Book of Enoch the Prophet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1821).

<sup>10</sup>For a summary of the reception history of Enoch traditions in the early modern period, see A. Hessayon, “Og King of Bashan, Enoch and the Books of Enoch: Extra-Canonical Texts and Interpretations of Genesis 6: 1–4,” in *Scripture and Scholarship in Early Modern England*, ed. A. Hessayon and N. Keene (London: Ashgate, 2006), 4–40.

<sup>11</sup>T. M. Ehro and L. T. Stuckenbruck, “A Manuscript History of Ethiopic Enoch,” *JSP* 23 (2013): 87–133.

<sup>12</sup>“Two Angels Descending to a Daughter of Man,” and “An Angel Telling the Daughter of Man the Secrets of Sin,” in the National Gallery of Art, Rosenwald Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC; G. E. Bentley Jr, “Blake and the Antients (sic): A Prophet with Honour among the Sons of God,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* (1983): 46: 1–17; G. E. Bentley Jr, “A Jewel in an Ethiop’s Ear: The Book of Enoch as Inspiration for William Blake, John Flaxman, Thomas Moore, and Richard Westall,” in *Blake in His Time*, ed. R. N. Essick and D. Pearce (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 213–15 at 232; and A. R. Brown, “Blake’s Drawings for the Book of Enoch,” *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 77.450 (1940): 80–1, 83–5, pls. I–II.

<sup>13</sup>V. Myers, D. O’Shaughnessy, and M. Philip, ed., *The Diary of William Godwin*, 2010, <http://godwindiary.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>.

entertained Laurence, although the latter was the Regius Professor of Hebrew in Oxford (1814–22) during this period and the former wrote and published classic biblical stories for children.<sup>14</sup>

It is evident from *Frankenstein*, which is, unquestionably, a dark mirror reflecting a hell version of the creation of Adam in Gen 1:26–27, and his dramatic persona in *Paradise Lost*<sup>15</sup> that Mary grew up well-versed in biblical literature and within nonestablishment Christianity. The emotional heart of the novel, the Creature's pain, which she explicitly developed, so piercingly, from Adam's cry in *Paradise Lost*, is quoted on the title page of the 1818 edition of *Frankenstein*:

Did I request thee, Maker, from my Clay  
To mould me Man? Did I solicit thee  
From darkness to promote me?<sup>16</sup>

The novel equally strongly references the reception of the myth of the fallen angels as it appears as a source in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667, rev. 1674) and *Paradise Regained* (1671), both of which she had read, at times together with her husband.<sup>17</sup> She was to reuse and develop Milton's humanized, antihero character of Satan to question traditional religious ideas about the nature of evil, freewill, and redemption in her descriptions of the Creature's suffering and fate. Mary Shelley also differed in her use of Wollstonecraft's Satanism by showing that the metaphorical rebel angel may not be able to effect change and transformation of the establishment for the good, or for emancipation.

However, the reason the novel became a classic was because she introduced the fictionalized use of plausible modern science (galvanism)<sup>18</sup> to produce a composite sentient being, overshadowing the elements of extrabiblical reception in her monster which have been lost in the dramatizations of the work for a mass audience. Shelley's use of earthly science lifted the narrative from the category of fantasy, or Gothic horror, which it is as well, into the new category of science fiction. The novel

<sup>14</sup> W. Scolfield (pseudonym for William Godwin), *Bible Stories; Memorable Acts of the Ancient Patriarchs, Judges and Kings; Extracted from Their Original Histories, for the Use of Children*, 1st ed. (London: R. Phillips, 1802). There are two volumes. The histories begin with Abraham. Godwin does not appear to have written a story about the fallen angels.

<sup>15</sup> J. B. Lamb, "Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Milton's Monstrous Myth," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 47 (1992): 303–19, discusses the dual construct of Adam and Satan between whom the Creature must identify.

<sup>16</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, X 743–5; H. Darbishire, ed., *Paradise Lost*, vol. 1 of *The Poetical Works of John Milton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), 232; and R. Bentley, *Milton's Paradise Lost. A New Edition* (London: Tonson, 1732), 334–5. Bentley comments, "'Darkness' is but metaphorical here, and can signify nothing but inexistence"; note v, 335.

<sup>17</sup> J. C. Oates, "Frankenstein's Fallen Angel," *Critical Inquiry* 10 (1984): 543–54 at 553 n.1, writes:

The influence of John Milton on *Frankenstein* is so general as to figure on nearly every page; and certainly the very conception of the monumental *Paradise Lost* stands behind the conception of Mary Shelley's "ghost story." According to Christopher Small's excellent *Ariel Like a Harpy: Shelley, Mary, and Frankenstein* (London: Gollancz, 1972), Mary Shelley's book list notes *Paradise Regained* as read in 1815, and in 1816 she and Shelley were both reading *Paradise Lost* at intervals during the year. At one point Shelley read the long poem aloud to her, finishing it in a week in November of 1816.

The book lists are based on P. R. Feldman and D. Scott-Kilvert, eds., *The Journals of Mary Shelley, 1814–1844* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), see the online links to the books in Shelley's reading lists: <http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/MShelley/reading.html>.

<sup>18</sup> See the British Library's website with contemporaneous book illustrations, S. Rushton, "The Science of Life and Death in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*," <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-science-of-life-and-death-in-mary-shelleys-frankenstein>.

has no classical SF features such as heavenly journeys (space travel), teleportation, magic, or contact with alien beings (such as angel guides); however, the Enoch traditions embodied in the Creature are visible.

The monster who has no personal name in the novel but is variously called by Frankenstein, “Devil,” “monster,” “fiend,” “wretch,” and “daemon” draws on biblical and apocryphal literature to describe his sense of exile and estrangement from the world. He is forced to identify with Satan but longs to be, in his eyes, the fallen angel’s parallel, Adam. The first man has an ideal body and an earthly life after his expulsion from Eden. The nameless Creature laments that his own creation by Frankenstein, who rejects him and to whom he refers throughout as his “creator,” is the antithesis of the purpose of God’s creation in Gen 1:26–27. He addresses Frankenstein in a soliloquy that parallels Adam’s monologue in *Paradise Lost*, and which is the novel’s running theme: “I should have been thine Adam but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed.”<sup>19</sup>

Milton’s epic poem itself is explicitly referenced in the story, as the Creature reads it when he finds some books in the woods: Johann van Goethe’s *The Sorrows of [Young] Werther*, Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives*, and Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (it is possible that the titles of these books sum up the Creature’s narrative), the last “excited different and far deeper emotions.”<sup>20</sup> He then realizes his ontological resemblance and polar opposite state to Adam:

Like Adam, I was apparently united by no link to any other being in existence; but his state was far different from mine in every other respect. He had come forth from the hands of God a perfect creature, happy and prosperous, guarded by the especial care of his Creator; he was allowed to converse with and acquire knowledge from beings of a superior nature, but I was wretched, helpless and alone. Many times I considered Satan as the fitter emblem of my condition.<sup>21</sup>

The Creature’s despair is reinforced when he steals Frankenstein’s papers from the scientist’s laboratory and discovers the depth of the doctor’s deleterious feelings toward him, again using biblical references:

Hateful day when I received life! ... Accursed creator! Why did you form a monster so hideous that even *you* turned from me in disgust? God, in pity, made man beautiful and alluring, after his own image; but my form is a filthy type of yours, more horrid even from the very resemblance. Satan had his companions, fellow devils, to admire and encourage him, but I am solitary and abhorred.<sup>22</sup>

Like Satan in *Paradise Lost* who progressively changes his physical incarnation until he becomes the snake that seduces Eve in Christian mythology, the Creature also gradually transforms into a serpent, albeit linguistically and psychologically within the context of being denied by Frankenstein his own “Eve” and soulmate for whom he longs:

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<sup>19</sup> Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 142.

<sup>20</sup> Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 171.

<sup>21</sup> Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 171.

<sup>22</sup> Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 171–2.

But it was all a dream; no Eve soothed my sorrows nor shared my thoughts; I was alone. I remembered Adam's supplication to his Creator. But where was mine? He had abandoned me, and in the bitterness of my heart I cursed him.<sup>23</sup> ...

Shall each man ... find a wife for his bosom, each beast have his mate, and I be alone?... I may die, but first you, my tyrant and tormentor, shall curse the sun that gazes on your misery. Beware, for I am fearless and therefore powerful. I will watch with the wiliness of a snake, that I may sting with its venom. Man, you shall repent of the injuries you inflict.<sup>24</sup>

Some Frankenstein scholars suggest that physically the Creature represents the embodiment of Milton's Satan.<sup>25</sup> Although it is unclear whether Satan is ugly in mythology—he is not deformed in *Paradise Lost*<sup>26</sup>—the inference in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, which was a key source for Milton,<sup>27</sup> is that the giants were terrible to behold and as tall as towers.<sup>28</sup> I would like to propose another reason for the Creature's misshapen, repulsive, and huge body (“about eight feet in height and proportionably large”).<sup>29</sup> Rather than principally for literary impact, Mary Shelley could well have modeled his body narrative not only on Satan but also on the Enochian tradition of the offspring of the fallen angels and the daughters of men: the Nephilim of Gen 6:4 and the giants of LXX Gen 6:4. The motif of the fallen angels as rebels against oppression by society's elites was deeply familiar to her as was the expanded antediluvian legend within the dramatic arc of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regain'd*.

However, Edward Ericson observed that there is what he calls an “anomaly”: Milton used two different reception histories of Gen 6:1–4 in separate passages of his poetry.<sup>30</sup> One legend is that the sons of Seth were seduced by the daughters of Cain, a myth known from St. Augustine of Hippo,<sup>31</sup> Ephrem the Syrian, and other ancient sources<sup>32</sup> (*Paradise Lost* XI 575–92, 607–9). The other is the sons of God descended to earth and produced a race of giants with human women. These beings transgressed the boundaries between heaven and earth; the resultant progeny misused their strength and their wickedness and caused God to bring about the Flood (*Paradise Lost* XI 621–4, *Paradise*

<sup>23</sup> Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 173.

<sup>24</sup> Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 208–9.

<sup>25</sup> Oates, “Frankenstein's Fallen Angel,” 551, she comments, “A demon of mere human size would not have been nearly so compelling.”

<sup>26</sup> Forsyth, *Satanic Epic*, 3, “This Satan was a Romantic hero, politically admirable—and good to look at.”

<sup>27</sup> G. F. Butler, “Fallen Angels in Dante and Milton: The ‘Commedia’ and the Gigantomachy in ‘Paradise Lost,’” *Modern Philology* 95 (1998): 352–63.

<sup>28</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, trans. J. Ciardi (London: Penguin, 2003), 239–45.

<sup>29</sup> Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 97.

<sup>30</sup> E. E. Ericson Jr, “The Sons of God in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*,” *Milton Quarterly* 25 (1991): 79–89 (80).

<sup>31</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *City of God* (Civ. 16), cited in Thomas Aquinas, *The “Summa Theologica” of St Thomas Aquinas. Part I QQ L-LXXIV. Literally Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province*, 2nd and rev. ed. (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1922), vol. 3.

<sup>32</sup> Milton may also have known passages from Ephrem the Syrian (ca. 306–73): “The beautiful daughters of men whom they saw were the daughters of Cain who adorned themselves and became a snare to the eyes of the sons of Seth.” See E. G. Mathews Jr. and J. P. Amar, *St. Ephrem the Syrian. Selected Prose Works. Commentary on Genesis, Commentary on Exodus, Homily in Our Lord, Letter to Publius*, FC 91 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 135–6; A. Y. Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 76, 221–6; and G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1-36; 81-108*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 372–3.

*Regain'd* II 178–81). This is the interpretation portrayed in the early trajectory of the *Book of the Watchers*, extant in Ethiopic and at Qumran (1 *En.* 1–36 // 4Q201–202, 4Q204–206).<sup>33</sup> Milton could have extracted this narrative from Josephus (*Ant.* 1.72–73), Justin Martyr,<sup>34</sup> Eusebius (*Praep. ev.* 186c), who preserved parts of George Syncellus' *Extract of Chronography* (eighth to ninth century), and who himself used several earlier chronological sources,<sup>35</sup> and possibly Philo (*Gig.* 6–8).<sup>36</sup>

Loren Stuckenbruck observes: “The reason for specifying this union as especially loathsome is expressed: the sexual intermingling between spiritual, heavenly beings and earthly beings of flesh and blood violates, by definition, the natural order (1 *En.* 15:4, 9–10). The giants are misfits; the progeny of an illegitimate union, they are neither fully angelic nor fully human.” As the “embodiment of the violation of the created order” they kill and devour humans and animals and drink their blood, causing human souls to plea for divine intercession (1 *En.* 7:3–5, 9:1, 9b, 10:15).<sup>37</sup> (In contrast to the *Book of Watchers*, the “humanity” of the giants is also expressed in the Book of Giants from Qumran.<sup>38</sup> The Jewish writers in the late Second Temple period did not stereotype the giants either but made them intelligent.)<sup>39</sup>

The relevant passages in Milton's poems reflecting different sources are as follows:

*Paradise Lost* XI. 575–92:

From the high neighbouring Hills, which was thir Seat  
Down to the plain descended: ...  
Just men they seeme, and all their study bent to God aright, and know his works  
Not hid, nor those things last which might preserve

<sup>33</sup>H. Drawnel, *Qumran Cave 4: The Aramaic Books of Enoch: 4Q201, 4Q202, 4Q204, 4Q205, 4Q206, 4Q207, 4Q212* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); J. T. Milik, ed., with the collaboration of M. Black, *The Books of Enoch: The Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), (4Q201): 139–63, 340–3; L. Stuckenbruck, “(4Q201:2-8), 201 frgs. 2-8. 4QEnoch<sup>a</sup> ar,” in *Qumran Cave 4:26 Miscellaneous Texts from Qumran*, ed. S. Pfann and P. Alexander, DJD 36 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 3–7; Milik, *Books of Enoch* (4Q202): 164–78, 344–6; Milik, *Books of Enoch* (4Q204): 178–217; Milik, *Books of Enoch* (4Q205): 217–25; and idem, op. cit., (4Q206): 225–44. For the list of the correspondences in 1 *Enoch*, see J. A. Fitzmyer, *A Guide to the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 52–3; and F. García Martínez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1997–8), 1:398–409, 412–27.

<sup>34</sup>Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 160–76; Allen, “Milton and the Sons of God,” 74.

<sup>35</sup>Milik, *Books of Enoch*, 20, 58, 72, 77, 240, and 318–19. Milik states that Syncellus cited passages from the *Book of Watchers* in Greek: see under, Abbreviations, xiv, through chroniclers Panodorus of Alexandria (early fifth century) and Annianus of Alexandria (early fifth century): 1 *En.* 6:1–9:4; 8:4–10:14; 15:8–16:1; Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 229–30, 257. She includes Julius Africanus (third century), 118, n.89, 219, 222, n.72, 223–5. See also W. A. Adler, *Time Immemorial: Archaic History and Its Sources in Christian Chronography from Julius Africanus to George Syncellus*, DOS 26 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1989), 229–31; and M. Tuval, “Συναγωγή γιγάντων” (Prov 21:16): The Giants in the Jewish Literature in Greek,” in *Ancient Tales of Giants from Qumran and Turfan: Contexts, Traditions and Influences*, ed. M. Goff, L. T. Stuckenbruck, and E. Morano, WUNT 360 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 42 n.4; George Syncellus, *The Chronography of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation*, trans. W. A. Adler and P. Tuffin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>36</sup>See Tuval, “Giants,” 41–57.

<sup>37</sup>L. T. Stuckenbruck, *The Myth of the Rebellious Angels: Studies in Second Temple Judaism and New Testament Texts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 14–15.

<sup>38</sup>M. Goff, “The Sons of the Watchers in the Book of Watchers and the Qumran Book of Giants: Contexts and Prospects,” in *Ancient Tales of Giants from Qumran and Turfan: Contexts, Traditions and Influences*, ed. M. Goff, L. T. Stuckenbruck, and E. Morano, WUNT 360 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 115–28.

<sup>39</sup>Tuval, “Giants,” 57.



Freedom and Peace to men: they on the Plain  
 Long had not walkt, when from the Tents behold  
 A Beavie of fair Women, richly gay  
 In Gems and wanton dress; to the Harp they sung  
 Soft amorous Ditties, and in dance came on:  
 The men though grave, ey'd them, and let thir eyes  
 Rove without rein, till the amorous Net  
 Fast caught, they lik'd, and each his liking chose; (cf. Gen 6:2; בָּהָר) <sup>40</sup>

*Paradise Lost* XI. 607–9:

Those tents thou sawest so pleasant, were the Tents of wickedness, wherein shall dwell his Race  
 Who slew his Brother; <sup>41</sup>

*Paradise Lost* XI. 621–24:

To these that sober Race of Men, who lives  
 Religious titl'd them the Sons of God,  
 Shall yield up all thir virtue, all thir fame  
 Ignobly, <sup>42</sup>

*Paradise Lost* XI. 627:

The World erelong a world of tears must weepe. <sup>43</sup>

*Paradise Lost* XI. 683–94: The Archangel Michael shows Adam his third vision:

These are the product  
 Of those ill-mated Marriages thou saw'st;  
 Where good with bad were matcht, who of themselves  
 Abhor to join; and by imprudence mixt,  
 Produce prodigious Births of bodie or mind.  
 Such were these Giants, men of high renown;  
 For in those dayes Might onely shall be admir'd,  
 And Valour and Heroic Vertu call'd;  
 To overcome in Battel, and subdue  
 Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite  
 Man-slaughter, shall be held the highest pitch  
 Of human Glorie, <sup>44</sup>

*Paradise Lost* XI. 700–703: Enoch is shown to Adam (line number 700 is unlikely to be a coincidence):

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<sup>40</sup> Darbshire, *Poetical Works*, 1:256.

<sup>41</sup> Darbshire, *Poetical Works*, 1:257.

<sup>42</sup> Darbshire, *Poetical Works*, 1:257.

<sup>43</sup> Darbshire, *Poetical Works*, 1:258.

<sup>44</sup> Darbshire, *Poetical Works*, 1:259.

But hee the sev'nth from thee, whom thou beheldst  
 The onely righteous in a World perverse,  
 And therefore hated,<sup>45</sup>

*Paradise Lost* XI. 709–10:

Exempt from Death; to shew thee what reward  
 Awaits the good, the rest what punishment;<sup>46</sup>

The book concludes with Adam being shown a vision of the Flood. The legend is echoed in *Paradise Regain'd* II. 178–81, where Satan addresses Belial in Paradise:

Before the Flood thou with thy lusty Crew,  
 False titl'd Sons of God, roaming the Earth  
 Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men,  
 And coupl'd with them, and begot a race.<sup>47</sup>

Interestingly, in *Paradise Regain'd* II. 178–81, the Sons of God are “lusty,” rather than the daughters of men, a reversal of the sexual appetites represented in *Paradise Lost*. Milton also uses a reference to “giant angels” (*Paradise Lost* VII. 605), who some scholars identify as a parallel between Satan’s angels and the Titans of Greek mythology;<sup>48</sup> however, there is no reference to Gen 6:1–4 in these verses.

Incidentally, although modern literary scholars have not traced this story of the origins of the sons of God back to the Dead Sea Scrolls, there has been a debate about whether Milton used an unknown source. Before the discovery and publication of the Qumran scrolls, Grant McColley argued that Milton must have accessed an unidentified manuscript. McColley cited a passage from the *Book of Luminaries* (1 En. 72–82), which, unknown to him, is also similar to a fragment in the Aramaic Astronomical Book.<sup>49</sup> His theory that Milton had used an unpublished manuscript was rejected; however, no evidence was cited in return to repudiate or find an explanation for his hypothesis.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Darbishire, *Poetical Works*, 1:259.

<sup>46</sup> Darbishire, *Poetical Works*, 1:260.

<sup>47</sup> H. Darbishire, ed., *Paradise Regain'd, Samson Agonistes, Poems upon Several Occasions, both English and Latin*, vol. 2 of *The Poetical Works of John Milton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 20.

<sup>48</sup> R. H. West, “Milton’s ‘Giant Angels,’” *MLN* 67 (1952): 21–3; and J. Steadman, “Milton’s ‘Giant Angels’: An Additional Parallel,” *MLN* 75 (1960): 551–3.

<sup>49</sup> G. McColley, “The Book of Enoch and *Paradise Lost*,” *HTR* 31 (1938): 21–39. In *Paradise Lost* III 729–31, Uriel informs Satan: [the moon] “Still ending, still renewing / with borrowed light her countenance triform / Hence fills and empties to enlighten the earth/”; “countenance triform” refers to the moon’s three faces: first crescent, full moon, and waning crescent; see S. Orgel and J. Goldberg, eds., *Paradise Lost*, Oxford World Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), n. to line 730, p. 83. McColley argues that the moon which *empties* itself of light [McColley’s italics, p. 38] is similar to 1 En. 78:11–14. Here Uriel describes to Enoch the moon’s three phases and contains a reference to the moon’s waning until “its disc remains empty, without light” (line 14), trans. G. W. E. Nickelsburg and J. C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch Chapters 37–82* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 500. The passage in the *Book of Luminaries* may also arguably be compared to the Aramaic fragment from Qumran, 4QAstronomical Enoch<sup>a</sup> (4Q209) frag 6, line 9. The fragment contains a day-by-day description of the waning moon until it is hidden by the sun on the last day of the month (the conjunction), “and its disc rises empty of all light hidden with the s[un]”; so H. Drawnel, *The Aramaic Astronomical Book (4Q208-4Q211) from Qumran* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 156–9; cf. Milik, *Books of Enoch*, 284.

<sup>50</sup> A. Williams, “Milton and the Book of Enoch: An Alternative Hypothesis,” *HTR* 33 (1940): 291–9, does not offer a solution to the problem; cf. D. C. Allen, “Milton and the Sons of God,” *MLN* 61 (1946): 73–9.

Ericson suggested that Milton “double borrowed” from his sources, incorporating two versions of the legend.<sup>51</sup> This proposal may also apply to Mary Shelley’s creation: it is understood by *Frankenstein* scholars that the Adam/Satan parallel was taken from Milton but not that the Creature’s gigantic form came from LXX Gen 6:4, although that “race” is represented in Milton’s poetry. Since the Creature has also been unnaturally created, the Nephilim/Giants are an appropriate parallel with Frankenstein’s eight-foot monster. His ugliness reflects the antidivine nature of his origins, which gigantism alone does not achieve. Since the body imagery in *Frankenstein* is such a key feature of the narrative, it is possible that Shelley composited the Enoch traditions of the giants born from “ill-mated marriages” (of the Sethite/Sons of God and Cainite line that produced mighty Giants) in *Paradise Lost* XI, and the offspring of the “false titl’d sons of God” in *Paradise Regain’d* II to physically symbolize the unnatural origins of her creation that contravened and offended the divine order.

Like Mary Shelley’s “hideous progeny,” the Giants defied the biblical laws of natural creation; like Frankenstein’s Creature, the Giants did not ask to be born, and like the lonely, murderous monster who finally walked into oblivion on the sea of frozen ice and darkness in the mountains, the wicked Giants of the *Book of Watchers* perished in the Flood (more or less).<sup>52</sup> Thus, I would suggest that not only is the polarized construct of the exiled Adam and Satan acknowledged in the Creature’s conflicted and tormented psyche but that Mary Shelley gave him a physique to resemble the gigantic offspring of the Sons of God—the fallen angels being a major symbolic theme among those closest to her. She thereby gave her everlasting monstrous invention a form that embodied the eternal outsider, outcast, and misfit, the perfect dramatic antihero. By reviving and giving the ancient Jewish legend a new spark of life, Mary Shelley produced the first work of modern science fiction.

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<sup>51</sup>Ericson, “Sons of God,” 88–9.

<sup>52</sup>Stuckenbruck notes that giants have a post-diluvian existence as evil spirits, *1 En.* 15:8–9 (*The Myth of the Rebellious Angels*, 15).

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PART FIVE

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# History of Scholarship





# Of Moses, Mountains, and Models: Joseph Smith's *Book of Moses* in Dialogue with the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*

DAVID CALABRO

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Many today readily associate Joseph Smith (1805–1844), the American prophet who founded The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with the Book of Mormon, a revealed history of a branch of the house of Israel in ancient America. Less well-known are Joseph Smith's revelations of para-biblical texts. These include scattered quotations of biblical passages in the Book of Mormon, many of which differ from the received biblical text or belong to books that are not in our Bibles; the *Book of Moses* and other portions of Joseph Smith's "New Translation" of the Bible; the *Book of Abraham*; and portions of the *Doctrine and Covenants*.

Even a cursory comparison of these texts with the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha demonstrates striking similarities. We find among Joseph Smith's para-biblical texts several different narratives of Adam's repentance and redemption,<sup>1</sup> a summary of a testament of Adam that is said to have been written in "the book of Enoch,"<sup>2</sup> an apocalyptic heavenly ascent of Enoch,<sup>3</sup> an account of Noah's revelations and preaching,<sup>4</sup> expansive references to Melchizedek,<sup>5</sup> a first-person record of Abraham including an account of his near-sacrifice at the hands of his idolatrous father as well as a vision of the cosmos,<sup>6</sup> and an account of a mountaintop vision by

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<sup>1</sup>Alma 12:22–35; *Moses* 5:1–15 and 58–59; and 6:48–68. The temple endowment revealed by Joseph Smith also included "a recital of ... the condition of our first parents in the Garden of Eden, their disobedience and consequent expulsion from that blissful abode, their condition in the lone and dreary world when doomed to live by labor and sweat" and "the plan of redemption by which the great transgression may be atoned." See J. E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord: A Study of Holy Sanctuaries, Ancient and Modern* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1974), 83–4.

<sup>2</sup>*Doctrine and Covenants* 107:41–57.

<sup>3</sup>*Moses* 7.

<sup>4</sup>*Moses* 8.

<sup>5</sup>Alma 13:10–20 and JST Gen 14:25–40.

<sup>6</sup>*Abraham* 1:1–20 and 3:1–21. On this book's controversial connection with the Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri, see John Gee, *A Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2000); H. M.

Moses.<sup>7</sup> Hugh Nibley has documented extensive parallels between Joseph Smith's texts and the pseudepigrapha of Enoch and Abraham.<sup>8</sup> Others, including the honoree of this volume, have furthered Nibley's observations.<sup>9</sup>

Compared to most textual productions of the ancient world, the manner in which Joseph Smith produced his revelations is very well documented, at least with regard to the outward process. We know from eyewitness accounts as well as from the original manuscripts that Joseph Smith dictated his revelations to scribes. In the case of the Book of Mormon, he used instruments that he called the "seer stone" and the "Urim and Thummim." Eyewitnesses to moments of the revelatory process report that Joseph Smith had no book at hand (not even the gold plates he was translating from), yet it is not clear if this was the case throughout the work—thus we do not know if he referred to a Bible as he dictated biblical passages such as the long quotation of Isaiah 2–14 in 2 Nephi 12–24.<sup>10</sup> In the case of his "New Translation" of the Bible, Joseph used a copy of the King James version that contained the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha. Reading aloud from that Bible, Joseph dictated the text, including the inspired changes, to his scribes.<sup>11</sup> This process of dictating to scribes also applies to most of the revelations in the *Doctrine and Covenants*.

The abundant parallels between Joseph Smith's revelations and ancient literature, combined with the documentation of his work, bode well for comparative study. Typological comparisons of Joseph Smith with religious figures of antiquity have been advanced before; prominent among these comparisons is that of Joseph Smith and Muhammad.<sup>12</sup> But these comparisons focus on the historical typology of prophethood and neglect, for the most part, the details of the texts that these prophets revealed. Detailed comparisons between texts have been done, including some that deal with the Pseudepigrapha, but these have appeared mainly in the apologetic arena. These studies focus on substantiating Joseph Smith's claims of translating ancient texts through divine power. The main argument is that Joseph Smith, being a relatively uneducated man, lacked access to ancient texts and

Marquardt, "Joseph Smith's Egyptian Papers: A History," in *The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri: A Complete Edition*, by R. K. Ritner (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 2013), 11–68.

<sup>7</sup>Moses 1.

<sup>8</sup>H. Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1986), 23–40, 138–281; H. Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2000), 11–26.

<sup>9</sup>See J. H. Charlesworth, "Messianism in the Pseudepigrapha and the Book of Mormon," in *Reflections on Mormonism: Judaeo-Christian Parallels*, ed. T. G. Madsen (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1978), 99–137. Subsequent studies have not only added to the comparisons but also addressed problems raised by the comparative enterprise. For a recent contribution to the dialogue, see J. M. Bradshaw and R. Dahle, "Could Joseph Smith Have Drawn on Ancient Manuscripts When He Translated the Story of Enoch?: Recent Updates on a Persistent Question," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 33 (2019): 305–74.

<sup>10</sup>Some mention that Joseph saw through the seer stone the English words he was to dictate, although this is questionable, since those who report it could not have had direct knowledge of what Joseph saw. See D. C. Peterson, "A Response: 'What the Manuscripts and the Eyewitnesses Tell Us about the Translation of the Book of Mormon,'" in *Uncovering the Original Text of the Book of Mormon: History and Findings of the Critical Text Project*, ed. M. G. Bradford and A. V. P. Coutts (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2002), 67–71.

<sup>11</sup>During the latter portion of the work, Joseph dictated only the passages that differed from the King James version, and deletions and insertion marks were added to the Bible copy. See S. H. Faulring, K. P. Jackson, and R. J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2004), 3–8.

<sup>12</sup>A. H. Green and L. P. Goldrup, "Joseph Smith, an American Muhammad? An Essay on the Perils of Historical Analogy," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 6 (Spring 1971): 46–58; and A. H. Green, "The Muhammad-Joseph Smith Comparison: Subjective Metaphor or a Sociology of Prophethood?" in *Mormons and Muslims: Spiritual Foundations and Modern Manifestations*, ed. S. J. Palmer (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2002), 111–33.

therefore could not have derived his revelations from them, so the great quantity of parallels points to the revealed scriptures being authentic ancient texts restored by revelation.<sup>13</sup> Although these studies break important comparative ground, they have unfortunately tended to shape the subject into a Boolean question of authenticity, thus guaranteeing a confessionally limited readership.

It seems to me that a careful comparison between Joseph Smith's revealed ancient texts and the Pseudepigrapha could yield significant insights that have not been realized before. Smith, as an exceptionally well-documented revealer of ancient sacred texts, could provide a heuristic model informing our understanding of the far lesser-known writers of the Pseudepigrapha. The modus operandi of the writers of the Pseudepigrapha has been a matter of controversy since R. H. Charles advanced his famous theory that the writers of the Pseudepigrapha put their works under the names of ancient prophets in order to advance new doctrines in a world in which the Law was regarded as supreme and the scriptural canon as closed.<sup>14</sup> More recently, D. S. Russell has argued that the Pseudepigrapha reflect actual revelatory experiences in which "the apocalyptic visionary saw the ancient patriarch or prophet being introduced to these mysteries and in so doing he was introduced to them himself," a view that suggests interesting points of comparison with Joseph Smith.<sup>15</sup> Supplying a heuristic model based on Joseph Smith would raise many new questions. For instance, we might wonder whether a textual rather than a visionary idea of revelation could apply to the creation of the Pseudepigrapha—that is, contrary to Russell's theory, perhaps it was the text rather than a vision of the patriarch that was revealed. But the validity of such a model depends on a careful comparison of the texts themselves. Not only are the texts the only concrete evidence we have for the production of the Pseudepigrapha, but as we shall see below, some features of the texts carry implications for the contexts in which the texts were produced.

My purpose in this essay is to present a comparison of two texts: Joseph Smith's *Book of Moses* and the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve* (henceforth *GLAE*).<sup>16</sup> My focus is not only on the content of the narratives but also on structural aspects such as discourse frames and narrative flow. The similarities between these texts have to be viewed typologically, since the historical circumstances preclude any question of direct borrowing.<sup>17</sup> This comparison shows that the *Book of Moses* and

<sup>13</sup>The works by Hugh Nibley cited above are classic examples of this approach.

<sup>14</sup>R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), x; R. H. Charles, *Eschatology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 196–205; and R. H. Charles, ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), 2:viii–ix. S. E. Robinson, "Lying for God: the Uses of Apocrypha," in *Apocryphal Writings and the Latter-day Saints*, ed. C. W. Griggs (Salt Lake City, UT: Greg Kofford Books, 2007), 133–54, accepts this thesis and contrasts the revealed nature of Latter-day Saint scripture. For a critique of this approach, see D. Calabro, "An Inviting Exploration," review of *Exploring the Apocrypha from a Latter-day Saint Perspective*, by J. W. Ludlow, *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 30 (2018): 49–51.

<sup>15</sup>D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press, 1964), 127–39, 158–77; and D. S. Russell, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Patriarchs and Prophets in Early Judaism* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1987), 8–12. For some points of comparison, see Calabro, "Inviting Exploration," 51.

<sup>16</sup>Recent scholarship has rejected the traditional designation "Apocalypse of Moses" on the grounds that this is based solely on the Prologue and has nothing to do with the content of the text. Both titles are found in the manuscripts, and each has merit. See M. de Jonge and J. Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve and Related Literature* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 12, and the section on "Revelatory Framing" in the present article.

<sup>17</sup>*GLAE* was first published by Tischendorf over three decades after the *Book of Moses* was completed. E. C. Baldwin, "Paradise Lost and the Apocalypse of Moses," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 24 (1925): 383–6, argues that Milton borrowed from *GLAE* in his work *Paradise Lost*; the argument relies on Milton's knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Syriac and the circulation of copies of *GLAE* in Europe, all factors that do not apply to Joseph Smith. It is also unlikely that

*GLAE* both belong to the same category of revelatory literature, namely, that of revealed ritual narrative. The specific aspects of this category of literature, aspects that these two texts have in common, are informative as to the manner and purposes of the production of the texts.

## 2. THE BOOK OF MOSES

The *Book of Moses* is the first part of Joseph Smith's "New Translation" of the Bible. He dictated this part between June 1830 and February 1831. The original manuscript, called OT1, is wholly extant. It consists of portions written by five different scribes at Joseph Smith's dictation. Additional sources for the early history of the text include a copy of OT1, called OT2 (which is also fully extant), and the original publications of portions of the text in the periodicals *Times and Seasons* and *Evening and Morning Star*.<sup>18</sup> The *Book of Moses* is now part of the Pearl of Great Price, one of the canonical books of scripture of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Based on manuscript sources and markers within the narrative, the *Book of Moses* is easily divisible into six discrete sections:<sup>19</sup>

*Moses* 1: Prologue describing Moses' encounter with God on an unnamed mountain and framing what follows as a revelation to Moses

*Moses* 2–4: Account of the creation and events in the garden of Eden, corresponding (although with significant differences) to Genesis 1–3

*Moses* 5: Events after the expulsion from the garden: Adam and Eve have posterity; Adam offers sacrifice and an angel reveals its purpose; Cain murders Abel

*Moses* 6: Birth of Seth, genealogy from Seth to Enoch, account of Enoch's preaching; Enoch gives an account of Adam's baptism

*Moses* 7: Enoch's heavenly ascent and vision

*Moses* 8: Revelations and preaching of Noah

I have argued elsewhere, based on an internal analysis of the text and on Joseph Smith's revelation of temple ordinances linked to the text, that the *Book of Moses* is ritual literature. Specifically, it is the script of a ritual drama ostensibly performed in ancient times, reenacting the events of the creation, the fall, and the redemption of Adam and Eve.<sup>20</sup> Thus the book not only represents a stage in Joseph Smith's developing theology, but it is also a performance of the past, allowing one to place latter-day temple ordinances in the context of an ancient tradition.

## 3. THE GREEK LIFE OF ADAM AND EVE

There are thirty known manuscript witnesses to *GLAE*, some complete and some fragmentary, ranging in date from the eleventh to the seventeenth centuries.<sup>21</sup> The original date, language, and

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Joseph Smith borrowed indirectly via *Paradise Lost*, as none of the similarities that Baldwin notes are found in the *Book of Moses*.

<sup>18</sup> See Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, 3–8.

<sup>19</sup> For the rationale behind the following breakdown, see D. Calabro, "Joseph Smith and the Architecture of Genesis," in *The Temple: Ancient and Restored*, ed. S. D. Ricks and D. W. Parry (Salt Lake City, UT: Eborn Books, 2016), 165–7.

<sup>20</sup> See Calabro, "Joseph Smith and the Architecture of Genesis," 165–81.

<sup>21</sup> De Jonge and Tromp, *Life of Adam and Eve*, 31; and M. D. Johnson, "Life of Adam and Eve (First Century A.D.): A New Translation and Introduction," in *Expansions of the "Old Testament" and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature*,

religious context of the narrative are a matter of controversy. With Johnson and others, I think it likely that the Greek text derives from a now-lost Hebrew original produced around the first century CE.<sup>22</sup> The earliest manuscript witnesses would thus postdate the original composition of the work by about 1,000 years. Other versions derived from the Greek, most of which differ substantially from it, are found in Latin, Armenian, Slavonic, Georgian, and Coptic.<sup>23</sup> Tromp has recently produced an eclectic critical text based on a careful textual stemma of the manuscripts and versions.<sup>24</sup> The structure of the Greek text, which is reasonably well established despite variation in some witnesses, is as follows:

- GLAE Prologue: Prologue attributing the text to a revelation by God to Moses on Mount Sinai
- GLAE 1: Birth of Cain and Abel after the expulsion from Paradise
- GLAE 2–3: Cain’s murder of Abel
- GLAE 4:1–5:1: Birth of Seth and other children to Adam and Eve
- GLAE 5:2–3: Adam becomes ill and gathers his posterity
- GLAE 5:4–8:2: Seth enquires about illness, and Adam explains about the fall and God’s curse of seventy plagues
- GLAE 9–13: Seth and Eve try to obtain oil from the tree of Paradise, but Michael tells them that they cannot obtain it until the day of resurrection
- GLAE 14–30: Seth and Eve return to the tent where Adam is lying; Eve tells their posterity the complete story of the fall and events immediately after the expulsion from Paradise
- GLAE 31–43: Death and burial of Adam and Eve

#### 4. THE BOOK OF MOSES AND GLAE

The *Book of Moses* and *GLAE* are very similar in terms of their content. On a basic level, both deal with Adam and Eve in paradise and after their expulsion. Both texts also expand on the biblical account in similar ways. For instance, both texts describe the devil and the serpent as two separate beings, and the devil first persuades the serpent and then uses it as his “vessel.”<sup>25</sup>

Despite these similarities in content, the closest parallels between the *Book of Moses* and *GLAE* are found in the deeper, structural aspects, such as the organization of frames of discourse, the

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*Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*, vol. 2 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 249–50.

<sup>22</sup>Johnson, “Life of Adam and Eve,” 251. De Jonge and Tromp, *Life of Adam and Eve*, 65–78, argue that the text was composed originally in Greek, in a Christian environment, and between the second and fourth centuries. This view is based in part on the work of Stone and Bohak, who attempt to explain previously recognized signs of a Hebrew original as typical Greek features. See Michael E. Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992), 42–53. However, some of the evidence for a Hebrew origin remains persuasive to me. For example, in *GLAE* 9:3, ἐκ τοῦ δένδρου ἐν ᾧ ῥέει τὸ ἔλαιον ἐξ αὐτοῦ “from the tree from which oil flows out of it” clearly reflects the Hebrew use of a resumptive pronoun in a relative clause; Stone and Bohak (*History of the Literature*, 49) cite this passage along with *GLAE* 13:2, but they quote only the latter passage, which uses good idiomatic Greek: περὶ τοῦ ξύλου ἐν ᾧ ῥέει τὸ ἔλαιον “about the tree from which oil flows.”

<sup>23</sup>De Jonge and Tromp, *Life of Adam and Eve*, 18–27 and 40–1.

<sup>24</sup>J. Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve in Greek: A Critical Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

<sup>25</sup>*GLAE* 16; *Moses* 4:5–6. This motif is a mainstay of later Jewish, Christian, and Islamic lore. For a general overview of *GLAE* and its Latin version in terms of its similarities to Latter-day Saint scripture, see S. E. Robinson, “The Book of Adam



implicit invocation of ritual contexts, and the specific ways in which the texts construct distant past milieux. These deeper similarities suggest that *GLAE*, like the *Book of Moses*, is best understood as a revealed ritual narrative. In the remainder of this study, I will detail the specifics of this comparison and explain how it points to a common genre.

#### 4.1. Revelatory Framing

The first chapter of the *Book of Moses* is a lengthy prologue that frames the following chapters (on the creation, the garden of Eden, and events after the expulsion, corresponding to Genesis 1–5) as a revelation given by God to Moses. The opening words of this chapter are indicative:

The words of God which he spake unto Moses at a time when Moses was caught up into an exceeding high Mountain & he saw God face to face & he talked with him (*Moses 1:1–2*)<sup>26</sup>

*Moses 2* (corresponding to Genesis 1) continues the frame introduced in *Moses 1*, beginning as follows:

And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Moses saying Behold I reveal unto you concerning this Heaven & this Earth write the words which I speak I am the beginning & the end the Almighty God by mine only begotten I created these things yea in the beginning I created the Heaven & the Earth upon which thou standest & the Earth was without form & void (*Moses 2:1–2*)

This framing with God as the narrator is not carried through consistently. As soon as Adam and Eve are driven from the garden (*Moses 5:1*), there is a shift in the framing of the narrative; after this point, God is referred to in the third person:

& Adam called upon the name of the Lord & Eve also his wife & they heard the voice of the Lord from the way towards the garden of Eden speaking unto them & they saw him not for they were shut out from his presence & he gave unto them commandment that they should worship the Lord their God & should offer the firstlings of their flocks for an offering unto the Lord & Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord & after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam (*Moses 5:4*)

In remarkably similar fashion, *GLAE* begins with a prologue that frames the following text as a revelation by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. The eclectic text given by Tromp reads as follows:

Διήγησις καὶ πολιτεία Ἀδάμ καὶ Εὔας τῶν πρωτοπλάστων ἀποκαλυφθεῖσα παρὰ θεοῦ Μωϋσῆ τῷ θεράποντι αὐτοῦ ὅτε τὰς πλάκας τοῦ νόμου ἐδέξατο ἐκ χειρὸς αὐτοῦ διδαχθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀρχαγγέλου Μιχαήλ.

Narrative and life of Adam and Eve the first-formed, revealed by God to Moses his servant when he received the tablets of the Law from his hand, having been instructed by the archangel Michael.<sup>27</sup>

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in Judaism and Early Christianity,” in *The Man Adam*, ed. J. F. McConkie and R. L. Millet (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 1990), 141–3.

<sup>26</sup>In this and all following quotations from the *Book of Moses*, I give the text according to the original manuscript, OT1, including the idiosyncratic capitalization, spelling, and lack of punctuation.

<sup>27</sup>The text here quoted follows the eclectic edition of Tromp, *Life of Adam and Eve in Greek*. All translations of Greek and Hebrew herein are my own.

Some modern scholars are uncomfortable with this prologue, as it does not seem related to the text that follows. M. D. Johnson goes so far as to say that it is “certainly a later addition to the Greek text.”<sup>28</sup> Yet there is no textual basis for this assertion. The prologue is attested in the earliest and most conservative manuscript sources.<sup>29</sup> One can also challenge the frequently stated but subjective claim that the prologue has no thematic relationship to the rest of the text. The prologue’s mention of Moses receiving the revelation at the time when he received the “tablets of the law of the covenant” provides an authoritative context for *GLAE*’s commandment concerning a six-day mourning period followed by a day of rejoicing (43:2–3), a commandment not found in the Pentateuch.<sup>30</sup> There is also a thematic inclusio in the “teaching by the archangel Michael” with Moses in the prologue and with Seth at the end of the narrative (43:1–3).

The beginning of *GLAE*, from 1:1 to 3:1, can be read either from the viewpoint of a third-person narrator or, in light of the prologue, from God’s viewpoint. However, as with the *Book of Moses*, shortly after Adam and Eve have been expelled from Paradise, a clear third-person narrative voice emerges:

καὶ λέγει ὁ θεὸς Μιχαὴλ τῷ ἀρχαγγέλω· εἰπὲ τῷ Ἀδὰμ ὅτι τὸ μυστήριον ὃ οἶδας μὴ ἀναγγείλῃς Κάϊν τῷ υἱῷ σου, ὅτι ὀργῆς υἱὸς ἐστίν. ἀλλὰ μὴ λυποῦ· δώσω σοι γὰρ ἀντ’ αὐτοῦ ἕτερον υἱόν. οὗτος δηλώσει πάντα ὅσα ποιήσεις, σὺ δὲ μὴ εἴπῃς αὐτῷ μηδέν. ταῦτα εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς τῷ ἀρχαγγέλω αὐτοῦ. Ἀδὰμ δὲ ἐφύλαξεν τὸ ῥῆμα ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ, μετ’ αὐτοῦ δὲ καὶ ἡ Εὐά, ἔχοντες τὴν λύπην περὶ Ἄβελ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτῶν.

And God said to Michael the archangel, “Say to Adam, ‘Do not report the mystery which you know to Cain, your son, as he is a son of wrath. But do not grieve, for I will give you another son in his stead. This one will reveal all that you should do, but as for you, do not say anything to him.’” Thus said God to his archangel. But Adam kept the word in his heart, and Eve with him, grieving concerning Abel their son. (*GLAE* 3:2–3)

In both texts, it is precisely at the point when God begins speaking to Adam and Eve invisibly or through angelic intermediaries (since they are shut out from the divine presence) that God’s first-person narrative voice becomes silent.<sup>31</sup>

#### 4.2. Content Dealing with Rituals

The *Book of Moses* deals extensively with ritual, the middle two sections of the book focusing on two different ritual practices. Three major scenes in *Moses* 5 deal with sacrifice. First, God commands Adam and Eve to “offer the firstlings of their flocks for an offering unto the Lord.” After this, an angel appears to Adam and explains that animal sacrifice “is a similitude of the

<sup>28</sup> Johnson, “Life of Adam and Eve,” 259, note in Preface a.

<sup>29</sup> De Jonge and Tromp, *Life of Adam and Eve*, 12; Tromp, *Life of Adam and Eve in Greek*, 122–3.

<sup>30</sup> This provides a parallel to the rabbinic concept of the “oral Torah” going back ultimately to Moses on Mount Sinai, as expressed in Mishnah *Pirqe ’Abot* 1:1.

<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, in Eve’s account of events in Paradise later in the narrative, Eve makes a speech that would be equally appropriate in God’s voice: καὶ ἐβόησα αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ λέγουσα· Ἀδάμ, Ἀδάμ, ποῦ εἶ; ἀνάστα, ἔλθε πρός με, καὶ δείξω σοι μέγα μυστήριον (“And at that time I cried out, saying, ‘Adam, Adam, where are you? Rise, come to me and I will show you a great mystery’”—21:1). Compare LXX Gen 3:9: καὶ ἐκάλεσεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς τὸν Ἀδὰμ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Ἀδάμ, ποῦ εἶ (“And the Lord God called out to Adam and said to him, ‘Adam, where are you?’”). The narrative in *GLAE* 3:2, quoted above, assumes that God has actually taught Adam a “mystery,” but there is no clear account of this in the text as it currently stands.

sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, who is full of grace and truth.” Finally, Cain and Abel offer sacrifices—Cain a plant sacrifice, and Abel the required animal sacrifice—and Cain, having been rejected, slays Abel and is punished. *Moses 6* deals extensively with baptism, as Enoch recites a divine commandment to be baptized and tells the story of Adam’s baptism after his expulsion from the garden. In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the ancient ordinance of sacrifice and the ordinance of baptism are linked, both being associated with the Aaronic Priesthood.<sup>32</sup>

As mentioned above, *GLAE* is preoccupied to a great extent with rituals of burial and mourning. This begins near the end of the text, immediately following the death of Adam in section 32, with Eve covering her face in mourning (33:1). A seraph washes Adam’s corpse three times in the river Acheron (37:3), then the corpse lies for three hours (37:4), after which the body is carried in a procession of heavenly beings (38).<sup>33</sup> The preparation of the body consists of wrapping it in linen and silk and anointing it with fragrant oil (40:1–2).<sup>34</sup> Then the body is buried (40:6). God places a seal over the tomb so that the body can lie undisturbed for six days, a period that is explicitly prescribed for mourning over the deceased (42:1; 43:2–3).<sup>35</sup> The text puts these rituals in the context of a return to paradise (the destination of the procession and the place where Adam’s body is buried). In keeping with its revelatory nature, the text also describes what happens to Adam’s spirit while the body undergoes the physical rituals: God takes the spirit, hands it over to the archangel Michael, and commands Michael to bring the spirit to the third heaven until the day of the resurrection.

The preoccupation with ritual in both the *Book of Moses* and *GLAE* indicates that these texts are not just revelatory, but they belong more specifically in the genre of revealed ritual narrative. The revelatory frame justifies a particular type of ritual, or at least performs a historical paradigm in which such a ritual was instituted in the distant past. Further, the text itself could function as a script for the ritual, which reinforces the text’s performative function. How exactly it does so will become clearer as we continue with the comparison between these texts.

#### 4.3. Audience-Inclusive Directives

In both the *Book of Moses* and *GLAE*, the text includes exhortations that implicitly include the audience of the text. The exhortations instruct the audience how to properly observe the ritual for which the narrative establishes the mythological precedent. An example of this in the *Book of Moses* is found in the angel’s words to Adam concerning sacrifice:

<sup>32</sup>See *Doctrine and Covenants* 84:26–27 and 107:20.

<sup>33</sup>A procession in which the body was carried out through the city gate was a known practice in Jewish funerals during the first century CE; on this custom, see Luke 7:12–15; *m. Ber.* 3:1; *m. Sanh.* 2:1; and Josephus, *J.W.* 1.670–73.

<sup>34</sup>The wrapping of the body in linen, followed by anointing, is mentioned in the New Testament in the context of Jesus’s burial; see Mark 15:46; 16:16; John 19:39–40.

<sup>35</sup>The Pentateuch does not prescribe a specific length of mourning, but narrative passages in the Pentateuch describe mourning periods of various lengths. Jacob mourned for his son Joseph “many days” (Gen 37:34); Joseph mourned for his father Jacob for seven days (Gen 50:10); and the Israelites mourned for Aaron and for Moses for thirty days (Num 20:29 and Deut 34:8).

this thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the only begotten of the Father which is full of grace and truth wherefore thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forever more and in that day the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam which bore record of the Father and the Son saying I am Jesus Christ from the beginning henceforth and forever that as thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed and all mankind even as many as will (*Moses 5:7–9*)

The last phrase, “and all mankind, even as many as will,” widens the directive to include not only Adam but also the audience.

Later in the *Book of Moses*, God gives Adam a commandment concerning baptism:

I give unto you a commandment to teach these things freely unto your children saying that in as much as they were born in to the world by the fall which bringeth death by water and blood and the spirit which I have made and so became of dust a living soul even so ye must be born again of water and the spirit and cleansed by blood even the blood of mine only begotten into the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven that ye may be Sanctified from all sin and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world and eternal life in the world to come even immortal glory (*Moses 6:58–59*)

This commandment is specifically given to Adam, although presumably it would apply to Adam’s posterity when he teaches them. Later in the same pericope, however, there is a clearer widening to include the audience:

and thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years from all eternity to all eternity behold thou art one in me a son of God and thus may all become my sons amen (*Moses 6:67–68*)

The widening clause, “and thus may all become my sons,” is very similar to that in *Moses 5:7–9*; one includes the audience in the commandment to offer sacrifice in similitude of the sacrifice of the Son of God, while the other includes the audience in the invitation to receive baptism.

*GLAE* also contains a very prominent audience-inclusive directive at the conclusion of the text, after the elaborate description of the burial ritual performed for Adam:

καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐλάλησεν Μιχαὴλ τῷ Σήθ λέγων· οὕτως κήδευσον πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἀποθνήσκοντα ἕως ἡμέρας τῆς ἀναστάσεως. μετὰ δὲ τὸ δοῦναι αὐτὸν νόμον εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτόν· παρ’ ἕξ ἡμερῶν μὴ πενθήσητε. τῇ δὲ ἑβδόμῃ ἡμέρᾳ κατάπαυσον καὶ εὐφράνθητι ἐπ’ αὐτῇ, ὅτι ἐν αὐτῇ ὁ θεὸς καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι ἡμεῖς εὐφραϊνόμεθα μετὰ τῆς δικαίας ψυχῆς τῆς μεταστάσης ἀπὸ γῆς.

And the archangel Michael said to Seth, “Thus you shall prepare for burial each man who dies until the day of resurrection.” After giving him this law, he said to him, “Do not mourn more than six days; but on the seventh day rest and be glad in it, for on that day God and we angels rejoice with a righteous soul that migrates from the earth.” (*GLAE 43:2–4*)

The archangel’s directive is to be followed “until the day of resurrection,” which means that it applies not only to Seth but also to any future audience that accepts the truth of the text. This audience-inclusive directive is similar to those in *Moses 5* and *6*. In each case, the preceding narrative becomes a mythological precedent for a ritual to be performed in the present: animal sacrifice in *Moses 5*, baptism in *Moses 6*, and burial in *GLAE*.

#### 4.4. Indicators of Ritual Setting

The *Book of Moses* is organized with each ritual at the center of a pericope, so that an audience could move from one ritual context to another as the narrative progresses. Elements of the text correspond to architectural features of the Israelite temple, the implicit setting for the ritual. Chapters 2–4, which take place in the garden of Eden, correspond to the interior of the temple, guarded by cherubim on the east doors (1 Kgs 6:31–35; compare *Moses* 4:31); being driven out entails being “shut out from [God’s] presence” (*Moses* 5:4). Chapter 5, with its focus on sacrifice, would naturally center around the altar of sacrifice in the temple court. Joseph Smith later directed the construction of a round baptismal font resting on twelve oxen for the Nauvoo Temple, which suggests a correspondence between the baptismal ritual in ch. 6 and the giant laver or “sea” of the Israelite temple.<sup>36</sup>

Most of *GLAE* takes place in the “tent” (σκηνή) in which Adam and then Eve speak to their posterity, and in which Adam dies (14:1). This setting is significant in light of the focus on burial and mourning. In rabbinic discourse during the first century, “tent” was a technical term applying to any man-made structure in which a person dies. Thus the tractate of the Mishnah dealing with corpse impurity is entitled *Ohaloth*, literally “tents.” The association of the tent with death and corpse impurity comes from Num 19:14:

This is the law: When a man dies in a tent, all who enter the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean for seven days.<sup>37</sup>

By analogy, the law was applied not only to actual tents but also to more permanent structures.<sup>38</sup> Thus an addition to *GLAE*, attested in several manuscripts, mentioning Adam’s posterity gathering to “the door of the house into which he would enter to pray to God” (5:3) is not incongruent.<sup>39</sup> The term “tent” in *GLAE* 14:1 could therefore function as an indicator of the setting in which the ritual narrative was to be acted out.<sup>40</sup>

#### 4.5. Narrative Displacement

In the *Book of Moses*, there are two instances of what I have called “narrative displacement,” in which parts of the narrative do not occur in their logical or chronological place, but instead are grouped together with other parts that share the same ritual theme, in a way that is optimal for a ritual performance. This happens first with God’s commandment to Adam to offer sacrifice, which occurs in ch. 5, after Adam has been shut out from God’s presence—an awkward placement for the narrative, but appropriate for the focus on sacrifice in this chapter.<sup>41</sup> Likewise, Adam’s baptism is recounted only

<sup>36</sup> Calabro, “Joseph Smith and the Architecture of Genesis,” 171–2.

<sup>37</sup> Interestingly, in the Hebrew, the word for “a man” is אדם, which can also be the proper name “Adam”; read out of context (according to common practice in ancient exegesis), the verse could be interpreted as a reference to Adam dying in a tent, as he does in *GLAE*.

<sup>38</sup> *m. ’Ohal.* 3:7 and 5:6–7; compare LXX οἰκία “house” in Num 19:14 for Hebrew תֵּנָה “tent.”

<sup>39</sup> On this sentence as an addition, see De Jonge and Tromp, *Life of Adam and Eve*, 33.

<sup>40</sup> Tents also played a role in the Andanian mysteries in Messenia, Greece, in the first century BCE, although the nature of that role is uncertain. See M. W. Meyer, ed., *The Ancient Mysteries: A Sourcebook* (Cambridge: Harper and Row, 1987), 54.

<sup>41</sup> The placement after Adam’s having been “shut out” is also necessary in view of the outdoor location of the altar of sacrifice in the Israelite temple. See Calabro, “Joseph Smith and the Architecture of Genesis,” 172–3.

in the mouth of Enoch in ch. 6, after Adam has died, which is appropriate for the focus on baptism in this chapter.<sup>42</sup> In both cases, the events pertaining to each ritual are grouped together, providing a mythological precedent after which there is an audience-inclusive directive.

*GLAE* contains two accounts of the fall, one narrated by Adam (7–8) and a longer one told by Eve (15–29). Both accounts are presented to the posterity of Adam and Eve long after the fact, as Adam rests in the tent in which he is about to die. Thus *GLAE* is by no means a simple chronological narrative; it begins after the fall and recounts the events of the Fall itself only later in the narrative, through the voice of characters within the narrative. This complicated chronological organization subordinates the events in Paradise as explanatory background to the central ritual of the text, the burial of Adam. This is therefore a fine example of narrative displacement.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS

The similarities in narrative content, revelatory framing, ritual focus, audience-inclusive directives, indicators of ritual setting, and narrative displacement are sufficient to place the *Book of Moses* and *GLAE* in the same category of literature, despite their difference in historical context. Because of this affinity, the two texts are mutually informative. Ritual elements of the *Book of Moses*, which are readily apparent because of the book's role in Joseph Smith's restoration of Priesthood ordinances in the 1830s and 1840s, prepare us to recognize the same elements in *GLAE*. The comparison of both texts allows us to refine the description of these elements.

An understanding of *GLAE* as a ritual narrative accords with the fact that most of the text, from immediately after the introduction of the posterity of Adam and Eve in 5:1 to at least 30:1, takes place in the oratorical context of a gathering of Adam's posterity to hear the words of Adam and Eve.<sup>43</sup> For instance, ritual specialists might narrate the story and simultaneously play the parts of Adam and Eve, while a group of initiates might also participate in the drama, playing the part of the posterity of Adam and Eve (whose role in the narrative is purely that of receiving instruction).

Such a scenario would explain some peculiar features of the narrative, such as the appearance in 35:4 of "two Ethiopians," who, Seth immediately explains to Eve, "are the sun and the moon" which "prostrate themselves and pray for my father Adam" (36:1). Seth goes on to explain that they are dark because "they are not able to shine before the Light of All, the Father of Lights" (36:2–3).<sup>44</sup> This passage makes little sense if the text is simply a literary narrative, but it makes perfect sense as the script of a ritual performance. It is impossible for the sun and moon themselves to feature at the same time in a ritual, particularly in the act of prostrating themselves, but a pair of performers can easily represent them, and Seth's words to Eve provide an exegesis for the benefit of the audience.

The category of revealed ritual narrative has not been widely studied as such. I have written elsewhere on another of Joseph Smith's revealed ancient scriptures that belong in this category,

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 173.

<sup>43</sup>In sections 33 and 34, there is ambiguity between the expected third-person narrative voice and the first-person voice of Eve (for the latter, see 33:3–4 and 34:1–2).

<sup>44</sup>The Greek text reads as follows: τίνες δέ εἰσιν, υἱέ μου Σήθ, οἱ δύο Αἰθιοπες οἱ παριστάμενοι ἐπὶ τὴν προσευχὴν τοῦ πατρὸς σου; λέγει δὲ Σήθ τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ· οὗτοι εἰσιν ὁ ἥλιος καὶ ἡ σελήνη, καὶ αὐτοὶ προσπίπτοντες καὶ εὐχόμενοι ὑπὲρ τοῦ πατρὸς μου Ἀδάμ. λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ Εὐά· καὶ ποῦ ἔστιν τὸ φῶς αὐτῶν, καὶ διὰ τί γεγόνασιν μελανοειδεῖς; καὶ λέγει αὐτῇ Σήθ· οὐκ ἀπέστη τὸ φῶς αὐτῶν, ἀλλ' οὐ δύνανται φαίνειν ἐνώπιον τοῦ φωτὸς τῶν ὄλων, τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐκρύβη τὸ φῶς ἀπ' αὐτῶν.



namely the *Book of Abraham*.<sup>45</sup> Additional examples include the biblical book of Leviticus and the words of institution in the Eucharist. It remains an open question to what degree other members of this category, including perhaps other Pseudepigrapha, share the elements described here. Studies addressing this question would help to clarify whether the *Book of Moses* and *GLAE* are especially close kin within the larger category or are simply typical examples.

Another issue that remains to be clarified is the historical context of the ritual that the text performs. Since both the *Book of Moses* and *GLAE* may function on their own as performances of the past, it is not necessarily the case that the rituals they describe and prescribe were ever actually carried out. This is true not only for the past as performed by the text but also for the text's immediate readership. In the case of the *Book of Moses*, the church that adopted the text as scripture never institutionalized a ritual precisely like that which the text assumes. The book was understood as ancient background for latter-day doctrine and ordinances, different as would be expected for an ancient text, and yet similar enough to confirm that the ancient and modern revelations came from the same God.<sup>46</sup> *GLAE* belongs to a much lesser-known historical context. Was it produced and read within a particular sect? Did it support current ritual practices or condemn them as corrupt? Careful investigation of early Jewish and Christian sources may offer some further illumination. However, for now, it is enough that the comparison instructs us about the possibilities.

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<sup>45</sup>D. Calabro, "The Choreography of Genesis: The Book of Abraham as a Ritual Text," in *Sacred Time, Sacred Space, and Sacred Meaning*, ed. S. D. Ricks and J. M. Bradshaw (Salt Lake City, UT: Eborn Books, 2020), 241–61.

<sup>46</sup>The account of the revelation of *Moses 1* in *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret News, 1902), 1:98, describes it thus: "the Lord, who well knew our infantile and delicate situation, vouchsafed for us a supply of strength, and granted us 'line upon line of knowledge—here a little and there a little,' of which the following was a precious morsel" (the text of *Moses 1* follows). This account presents the book as a direct source of spiritual strength by virtue of the knowledge it imparts.

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# Paul Fiebig’s Reply to Arthur Drews on the Miracles of Jesus and Apollonius of Tyana

CRAIG A. EVANS

James H. Charlesworth will forever be linked to the publication of the literature that has traditionally been called Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. This is not only because of his publication of the magisterial two-volume *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*<sup>1</sup> but also because of his advocacy of the value of this literature in its own right. Although it is hard to imagine this now, there was a time when it was necessary to make the case that critical study of this extracanonical literature was well worth the time and effort. In a collection of studies edited by Charlesworth more than twenty-five years ago veteran scholar of sacred Scripture James Sanders penned an essay entitled, “Why the Pseudepigrapha?”<sup>2</sup>

Charlesworth has himself published a number of works in which he too shows how important this literature is for understanding Jewish and Christian origins and the emergence of their respective canons of sacred Scripture.<sup>3</sup> Today no one needs to make the case; the value of the literature is widely recognized and more of this literature—relating to both Testaments—is being sought out and published,<sup>4</sup> including critical editions of the literature recovered from the Judean desert.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>J. H. Charlesworth, ed., *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, vol. 1 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983); J. H. Charlesworth, ed., *Expansions of the “Old Testament” and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*, vol. 2 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985).

<sup>2</sup>J. A. Sanders, “Introduction: Why the Pseudepigrapha?” in *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth and C. A. Evans, JSPSup 14 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 13–19.

<sup>3</sup>E.g., J. H. Charlesworth, *The Pseudepigrapha and Modern Research, with a Supplement*, 2nd ed., SBLSCS 7 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981); and J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament*, SNTSMS 54 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); revised and reprinted as *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament: Prolegomena for the Study of Christian Origins* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998).

<sup>4</sup>E.g., R. Bauckham, J. R. Davila, and A. Panayotov, eds., *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013); B. Landau and T. Burke, eds., *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016); and T. Burke, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020). It is only appropriate that in the volume edited by Bauckham et al., Charlesworth wrote the foreword, “The Fundamental Importance of an Expansive Collection of ‘Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,’” xi–xvi.

<sup>5</sup>I refer here to the numerous volumes published in the Princeton Theological Seminary Dead Sea Scrolls Project, edited by J. H. Charlesworth and published by Mohr Siebeck/Westminster John Knox Press.

The publication and critical study of the extracanonical literature have provided interpreters and historians of Jewish and Christian beginnings with more “dots” that they can connect in the task of constructing a history or story of the past. One of the reasons much of the work undertaken during the nineteenth-century “quest” of the historical Jesus was so unsatisfactory was the lack of data. Assertions about what Jesus could or could not have said have been found to be simply false. There were not enough dots to connect. Ongoing archaeology and publication of late antique literature have gone a long way in addressing this problem. A better understanding of what history is and what the task of the historian is has played a very important role as well.<sup>6</sup> But even the possibilities and limits of historiography are closely tied to the surviving data of the past.

One of the oddest ideas that emerged in nineteenth-century German scholarship was the hypothesis that Jesus of Nazareth was not an historical figure but rather a mythological creation. Although proponents of this view claimed to be doing historical research, most today will probably agree that it was philosophy not history. It should also be pointed out that the idea that Jesus did not exist is a modern idea, not an ancient one. No one in antiquity, including early Christianity’s harshest critics, such as Celsus and Porphyry, doubted that Jesus lived. What they doubted was what Christians said and believed about him.

Although some philosophers, including individuals who were hardly more than dilettantes, suggested that Jesus did not exist (almost always as part of an agenda to discredit the Christian Church and to undermine the validity of Christian morals), it was not until David Friedrich Strauss (1808–1874) published in 1835–6 his two-volume *Das Leben Jesu*<sup>7</sup> that radical mythicism found its place in the academy. Of course, Strauss did not doubt that Jesus was a person of history; he only doubted we could know much about him because of the mythological character of the New Testament Gospels. His critique of the highly subjective rationalist attempts to find a non-supernatural Jesus in the Gospels was largely successful, even if not always well informed.

It was Bruno Bauer (1809–82), Karl Marx’s drinking companion,<sup>8</sup> who pushed the mythological approach to its limits by arguing that the Jesus story had been invented by Mark as a response to the Roman cult of the divine Caesar.<sup>9</sup> Bauer’s theses were debated in the universities of Europe, but they did not become mainstream, either among historians or among philosophers.

One of the reasons the radical skepticism of the mythicists like Bauer did not carry the day was the discovery of new sources. The discovery of Codex Sinaiticus and the rediscovery of Codex Vaticanus increased scholarly confidence in the transmission of the Greek text of the New Testament. The discovery of vast quantities of ancient papyri in Egypt began to support the traditional dates

<sup>6</sup>Such as the critique of historical positivism and its unnuanced understanding of what constitutes “authenticity.” See J. H. Charlesworth and P. Pokorny, eds., *Jesus Research: An International Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009); and J. H. Charlesworth, with B. Rhea and P. Pokorny, eds., *Jesus Research: New Methodologies and Perceptions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014).

<sup>7</sup>D. F. Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu kritisch bearbeitet*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: C.F. Osiander, 1835–6; 3rd ed., 1838–9; 4th ed., 1840); translated into English as *The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined*, 3 vols. (London: Chapman, 1846; 5th ed., 1906; repr., Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1972; repr., Lives of Jesus Series; London: SCM Press, 1973).

<sup>8</sup>Bauer and Marx (1818–83) for a time were close friends. Both were atheists. During their university days they often amused themselves by disrupting church services.

<sup>9</sup>For the argument that Jesus was not an historical person, see B. Bauer, *Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte der Synoptiker*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Wigand, 1841–2; 2nd ed., 1846); and B. Bauer, *Kritik der Evangelien und Geschichte ihres Ursprungs*, 4 vols. (Berlin: Hempel, 1850–1). For the argument that the evangelist Mark invented the Jesus story, see B. Bauer, *Christus und die Cäsaren: Der Ursprung des Christentums aus dem römischen Griechentum* (Berlin: Grosse, 1877; 2nd ed., 1879).

of the composition of the New Testament literature, as well as clarify aspects of koine Greek, the Greek in which the New Testament literature was composed.

Literature related to Christian Scripture was also beginning to come to light. Some of the writings that would eventually be classified as the "Apostolic Fathers" and the "Old Testament Pseudepigrapha" were being discovered and published. R. H. Charles and his colleagues began publishing critical editions and translations of works such as *Enoch* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, culminating in the eventual publication of *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*,<sup>10</sup> a work that became a classic and served the academy well for many decades.

Very few historians and philosophers embraced Bauer's hypothesis of the mythical Jesus. But one who did was Christian Heinrich Arthur Drews (1865–1935). Drews was a philosopher with interest in monism, metaphysics, and epistemology. Why he took an interest in the question of Jesus is not clear, at least not professionally. When one reviews Drews's scholarly work it is not obvious exactly how his work on Jesus, which was not insignificant, reflects his training and expertise. He was raised in a family of clergy and theologians, so there may have been a personal interest.<sup>11</sup> In any event, Arthur Drews made a name for himself when in 1909 he published *Die Christusmythe*.<sup>12</sup> The following year he published a small book in which he tried to show that the apostle Peter was a legendary figure.<sup>13</sup> Drews published at least three more significant books in which he attempted to make the case that Jesus of Nazareth was not a person of history but a creation of early Christianity.<sup>14</sup>

Many scholars responded negatively to Drews and his attempt to revive Bauer's mythicism. Some of the response was ecclesiastical, as we would expect. Some of the criticism came from biblical scholars, some of it came from historians, and some of it came from philosophers.<sup>15</sup> Although he argued the hypothesis much better than Bruno Bauer did, Drews could not in the end capture a following among academics trained in history; neither did he capture much of a following among philosophers. Why was that? The relevant historical data had by the twentieth century become too extensive. A handful of philosophers and dilettantes could theorize if they wanted to; serious historians and biblical critics, however, were satisfied that the Christian Church had its origins in the provocative life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, a real figure of history. Ongoing work in archaeology in the land of Israel and ongoing discovery of and publication of late antique literature have only added to the evidence that the New Testament Gospels, however free and interpretive they may be with respect to the dominical tradition, do indeed describe the historical founder

<sup>10</sup> R. H. Charles, ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913).

<sup>11</sup> For biographical information, see H. Lübke, "Drews, Christian Heinrich Arthur," *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, Band 4 (Berlin: Duncker & Humboldt, 1959), 117; and F. W. Bautz, "Drews, Arthur," in *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, Band 1 (Nordhausen: Traugott Bautz, 1975; repr. 1990), 1381–2.

<sup>12</sup> A. Drews, *Die Christusmythe* (Jena: Diederichs, 1909; 3rd ed., 1924); translated into English as *The Christ Myth* (London: Unwin, 1910).

<sup>13</sup> A. Drews, *Die Petruslegende: Ein Beitrag zur Mythologie des Christentums* (Frankfurt am Main: Neuer Frankfurter Verlag, 1910).

<sup>14</sup> A. Drews, *Die Christusmythe. Zweiter Teil. Die Zeugnisse für die Geschichtlichkeit Jesu: Eine Antwort an die Schriftgelehrten mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der theologischen Methode* (Jena: Diederichs, 1911); A. Drews, *Das Markusevangelium als Zeugnis gegen die Geschichtlichkeit Jesu* (Jena: Diederichs, 1921); and A. Drews, *Die Leugnung der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* (Karlsruhe: G. Braun, 1926).

<sup>15</sup> E.g., K. Dunkmann, "Die Christusmythe," *Der Geisteskampf der Gegenwart* (March 1910): 85–94; C. Gröber, *Christus lebte: eine Kritik der "Christusmythe" Arthur Drews* (Konstanz: Oberbadische Verlagsanstalt, 1923); K. Staab, "Wege zur 'Christusmythe' von A. Drews," *Bib 5* (1924): 26–38; M. Goguel, *Jésus de Nazareth, mythe ou histoire?* (Paris: Payot, 1925); and H. Windisch, "Das Problem der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu: die Christusmythe," *ThRu 2* (1930): 207–52.



of Christianity. This is why Rudolf Bultmann could speak of Jesus and his proclamation as the “presupposition” of Christian theology without mounting a defense of his historical existence.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, in his little book on Jesus in the popular German “Immortals” series, Bultmann gives no quarter to the mythicists, asserting: “Of course the doubt as to whether Jesus really existed is unfounded and not worth refutation. No sane person can doubt that Jesus stands as founder behind the historical movement whose first distinct stage is represented by the oldest Palestinian community.”<sup>17</sup>

One of those who believed that the mythicism of Arthur Drews was “worth refutation” was Paul Wilhelm Julius Fiebig (1876–1949). To be sure, Fiebig was very much a creature of his time. He was, among other things, a rationalist and historical positivist.<sup>18</sup> But he also knew the ancient sources very well and was frustrated that biblical scholars by and large did not. Fiebig’s first significant scholarly publication was in response to Adolf Jülicher’s groundbreaking but flawed *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu*.<sup>19</sup> Jülicher argued that allegorical and allegorizing parables in the Gospels derived from the Church, not from Jesus. In his *Altjüdische Gleichnisse und die Gleichnisse Jesu* Fiebig showed that Jülicher failed to take into account the nature and diversity of early Jewish parables and that he drew a false and unhistorical dichotomy between the Hellenistic and Jewish worlds.<sup>20</sup> Fiebig shows persuasively that Jesus’ parables—allegorical features and all—are right at home in the world of Judaism of his time.<sup>21</sup>

But it was the appearance of Arthur Drews’s *Die Christusmythe* in 1909 that brought about in Fiebig’s work a shift in emphasis but not in expertise. In 1912 Fiebig published a new work on the parables of Jesus and the parables and similes of the rabbis, in which he not only renewed his criticism of Jülicher’s older work but took on the radical skepticism of Drews as well.<sup>22</sup> The focus of Fiebig’s criticism of these two men, one a biblical scholar and the other a philosopher, centered on their inadequate grasp of the relevant source material. Neither understood ancient Jewish parables, which led to their skepticism. For Jülicher this meant that many of the parables in the Gospels did

<sup>16</sup>R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols. (New York: Scribner’s, 1951–5), 1:3.

<sup>17</sup>From R. Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, trans. L. Pettibone Smith and E. Huntress Lantero (New York: Scribner’s, 1934), 13. The translation, which I have quoted, is a bit interpretive. For the original German, see R. Bultmann, *Jesus, Die Unsterblichen: Die geistigen Heroen der Menschheit in ihrem Leben und Wirken 1* (Berlin: Deutsche Bibliothek, 1926), 16–17: “Zwar ist der Zweifel, ob Jesus wirklich existiert hat, unbegründet und keines Wortes der Widerlegung wert. Daß er als Urheber hinter der geschichtlichen Bewegung steht, deren erstes greifbares Stadium die älteste palästinensische Gemeinde darstellt, ist völlig deutlich.”

<sup>18</sup>In 1902 Fiebig came to the Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum in Leipzig as acting director and in 1903 he became supervisor of studies in the Preacher Seminar in Wittenberg. In 1904 he was appointed head master at the Gymnasium Ernestinum in Gotha. During the First World War Fiebig served as the pastor in the Peterskirche in Leipzig. In 1924 he was habilitated in New Testament at the University of Leipzig and in 1930 was made adjunct professor of theology. Fiebig also served on the faculty at the University of Wittenberg. Unfortunately Fiebig, like so many academics in this time, embraced the antisemitic doctrines of the Nazi party and in 1935 published *Neues Testament und Nationalsozialismus*. For biographical information, see H. P. Rüger, “Fiebig, Paul,” in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, Band 5 (Berlin: Duncker & Humboldt, 1961), 139.

<sup>19</sup>A. Jülicher, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu* (Freiburg: Mohr Siebeck, 1888; 2nd ed., 2 vols., 1899).

<sup>20</sup>P. Fiebig, *Altjüdische Gleichnisse und die Gleichnisse Jesu* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1904).

<sup>21</sup>For a helpful resource in which the Hebrew and Aramaic texts of the rabbinic parables are written out, see P. Fiebig, *Rabbinische Gleichnisse: Vokalisierte hebräische und aramäische Texte dargeboten für das Studium der Gleichnisse Jesu mit Verzeichnis der nichtbiblischen Wörter* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1929).

<sup>22</sup>P. Fiebig, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu im Lichte der rabbinischen Gleichnisse des neutestamentlichen Zeitalters* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1912).

not originate with Jesus. For Drews the inauthenticity of the parables simply confirmed his view that Jesus was a myth not a figure of history.

Drews's *Die Christusmythe* also led Fiebig to an investigation of the miracle stories of the Gospels. Drews argued that the miracle stories in the Gospels constituted additional evidence that the Jesus story was a fiction. Drews believes that these stories were derived from the myths and legends of the Greco-Roman world. The putative parallels accordingly suggest that the Gospel stories do not derive from an historical person but from the environment of late antiquity. Fiebig again argues that inadequate acquaintance with the relevant data allows for such a skeptical conclusion. But knowledge and critical assessment of the relevant parallels, he believes, will lead to the conclusion that these stories, even if embellished in places and sometimes perhaps entirely fictional, do go back to an historical person.

Fiebig makes his case in a small book entitled *Jüdische Wundergeschichten des neutestamentlichen Zeitalters*.<sup>23</sup> Fiebig's argument against Drews and the miracle stories is analogous to his argument against Jülicher and the parables. Drews thinks that because miracle stories are found in myths about Greco-Roman gods and other legendary figures, the presence of miracles in the New Testament Gospels places Jesus in the category of myth. Fiebig counters this logic by noting that miracle accounts are found in stories about the rabbis, yet no one would argue, not even Drews, that these rabbis did not exist. Fiebig reasons that "to reduce all traditions of Jesus to mythology, even to explain all of Jesus' miracles as myth ... is spoken against by the previously presented Jewish miracle stories."<sup>24</sup> Mythical material is not present in this tradition, although there are legendary embellishments.<sup>25</sup>

Fiebig also takes into account the miracle stories attributed to the mysterious Apollonius of Tyana, a figure that remains of great interest in modern scholarship.<sup>26</sup> In the remainder of the present essay I will allow Fiebig to speak for himself. In the translation that follows I have edited very little. I have added full bibliographical data to Fiebig's footnotes and in a few places it was necessary to add footnotes. When I do this the footnote is placed within square brackets. I have placed the page numbers to Fiebig's text in square brackets.

Under the heading of *Gechichtliches und Ungeschichtliches in den neutestamentlichen Wundern* ("Historical and Unhistorical Material in the New Testament Miracles") Fiebig writes as follows:<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> P. Fiebig, *Jüdische Wundergeschichten des neutestamentlichen Zeitalters* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1911).

<sup>24</sup> In *Jüdische Wundergeschichten*, 9–68, Fiebig discusses some two dozen stories about the rabbis, in which miracles are said to have occurred. It is to this previous discussion that he refers.

<sup>25</sup> Fiebig, *Jüdische Wundergeschichten*, 76.

<sup>26</sup> J. Hahn, "Weiser, göttlicher Mensch oder Scharlatan? Das Bild des Apollonius von Tyana bei Heiden und Christen," in *Literarische Konstituierung von Identifikationsfiguren in der Antike*, ed. B. Aland, J. Hahn, and C. Ronning, STAC 16 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 87–109; C. P. Jones, "Apollonius of Tyana, Hero and Holy Man," in *Philostratus's Heroikos: Religion and Cultural Identity in the Third Century C.E.*, ed. E. B. Aitken and J. K. B. Maclean, WGRW 6 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2004), 75–84; E. Koskenniemi, *Apollonios von Tyana in der neutestamentlichen Exegese: Forschungsbericht und Weiterführung der Diskussion*, WUNT II/61 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994); and E. Koskenniemi, "Apollonius of Tyana, the Greek Miracle Workers in the Time of Jesus and the New Testament," in *Hermeneutik der frühchristlichen Wundererzählungen: Geschichtliche, literarische und rezeptionsorientierte Perspektiven*, ed. B. Kollmann and R. Zimmermann, WUNT 339 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 165–81.

<sup>27</sup> Fiebig, *Jüdische Wundergeschichten des neutestamentlichen Zeitalters*, 81–98.

When one reads the life of Apollonius of Tyana and when one thinks that traditions regarding Buddha led, for the longest time, to the denial of the historicity of this religious founder, when one considers that the Gospel of Mark, for example, consists almost exclusively of miracle stories, and that the reliability of the Gospel of John has long been shattered beyond restoration, then Drews's claim that Jesus did not live no longer appears to be as outrageous as generally portrayed.

On the other hand, Arthur Drews should have, in my opinion, both in his judgment of Jesus' historicity, as in his judgment of the theological method, especially of Johannes Weiss' method, questioned his approach to Jesus' miracles for the following considerations:

Have not the scholars of Indology and Sanskrit recently changed their judgment regarding Buddha in favor of his historicity? Since [82] 1898, when authentic Buddha relics and inscriptions were found in the location which, according to legend, was described as Buddha's birthplace, one is convinced of Buddha's historicity. One can now research the Buddha legend, be it with caution, but still with greater confidence in historical memories than was possible before. Obviously we are not—as Drews rightfully emphasizes—in the same position with the life of Jesus as we are, since this find, with the life of Buddha; we do not have documented proof of Jesus' life. In spite of that, the progress in the field of East Indian philology should, even with all necessary caution, lead one to believe that it is not impossible that an actual historical person stands behind the New Testament traditions.

Furthermore: the life of Apollonius of Tyana<sup>28</sup> consists of legend through and through. For Apollonius historical researchers also lack documented proof, just as for many rabbis of the Tannaitic and Amoraic eras. In answering the question of Apollonius' historicity, one has to rely mainly on a single book, as the older Philostratus (c. 207 CE) has written it. That is very similar to the question of Jesus' historicity. Any accounts about Apollonius outside of that book are comparatively very weak, and any historian who relies in principle on suspicion and scepticism would consider them highly suspect. Nevertheless, historical research, as far as I know, has not accepted the thesis that Apollonius of Tyana is completely non-historical. Rather, it is convinced of his historicity in spite of the [83] difficulties. Obviously, the way things are here, research cannot exclude possibilities and probabilities in their judgments. That is just the way it is—even Drews knows that. When it comes to historical matters, one can not *always* meet the conditions he expects to have met in the field of New Testament research: one cannot always prove that it *had* to have been a certain way. One rather has to be sometimes satisfied with the speculation that it *could* have been a certain way. As sceptical as one has to be of the sources mentioned by Philostratus, as well as of that which he tells, Drews should not blame the philologists and historians who researched Apollonius for trying to determine from this biography those things which could and could not be historical, in other words, for attempting to peel down to the “historical core.” Drews calls it a “childish procedure,”<sup>29</sup> the attempt to extract an historical core out of New Testament miracle stories. Historians and philologists, as well as theologians, would

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<sup>28</sup> [Fiebig (*Jüdische Wundergeschichten*, 82) suggests a birth date of ca. 3 BCE, but scholars now suggest ca. 15 CE, or even later. For a scholarly overview of the life of Apollonius, see C. P. Jones, *Philostratus I: Apollonius of Tyana I*. Books I–IV, LCL 16 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 7–17.]

<sup>29</sup> Drews, *Die Christusmythe. Zweiter Teil*, 259.

probably consider that verdict to be too extreme, although, the way some methods of peeling down to the core have sometimes been handled, justifies Drew's harsh judgment.<sup>30</sup>

Let us illustrate what has been said with several examples from the life of Apollonius. We will limit ourselves to those miracle stories which he told. No philologist or historian would believe that the Egyptian Porteus' appearance to the mother of Apollonius was historical. One would also be skeptical of many comments about Apollonius' miraculous foreknowledge. On the other hand one should think about the following "raising of the dead," which is said to have been performed by Apollonius in Rome [84]:

Apollonius performed another miracle. There was a girl who appeared to have died just at the time of her wedding. The betrothed followed the bier, with all the lamentations of an unconsummated marriage, and Rome mourned with him, since the girl belonged to a consular family. Meeting with this scene of sorrow, Apollonius said, "Put the bier down, for I will end your crying over the girl." At the same time he asked her name, which made most people think he was going to declaim a speech of the kind delivered at funerals to raise lamentation. But Apollonius, after merely touching her and saying something secretly, woke the bride from her apparent death. The girl spoke, and went back to her father's house like Alcestis revived by Heracles.<sup>31</sup>

Her kinsmen wanted to give Apollonius a hundred and fifty thousand drachmas, but he said he gave it as an extra dowry for the girl. He may have seen a spark of life in her which the doctors had not noticed, since apparently the sky was drizzling and steam was coming from her face, or he may have revived and restored her life when it was extinguished, but the explanation of this has proved unfathomable, not just to me but to the bystanders. (Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 4.45)<sup>32</sup>

The writer himself explains this so-called raising of the dead as a reviving of the seemingly dead. It is clear that this story was already available to Philostratus. That this story, as told here, does not contain anything impossible, should be conceded. That one cannot prove that this incident *had* to have happened, is also obvious. Nevertheless, even strictly scientific historians themselves would not consider this story to be completely snatched out of thin air: because of the concrete details it contains, and because there is no doubt that magicians of that time attempted such things. The story vividly reminds one of the reviving of the young man at Nain (Luke 7:11–17). That the biblical story was copied, cannot, in my opinion, [85] be proven,<sup>33</sup> nor can it be disproven. For the reviving of the young man at Nain, Johannes Weiss refers to the

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<sup>30</sup>Wrede's skepticism toward such "cores," though exaggerated, is not completely unjustified. See W. Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien: Zugleich ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Markusevangeliums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901).

<sup>31</sup>The daughter of king Pelias of Jolkos. She dies for her beloved Admetos, but is then sent back to the living, rescued from hades by Heracles.

<sup>32</sup>[Fiebig uses the old German translation by F. Jacobs, *Flavius Philostratus des Ältern* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1828), 408–9. For the English translation above I have followed Jones, *Philostratus* I, 419.]

<sup>33</sup>R. Reitzenstein, *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1906), 41, n.3, in reference to this miracle by Apollonius: "surely not borrowed from the Gospels; the magical papyri give the chanter (*Goëten*) instructions

corresponding miracles by Elijah and Elisha.<sup>34</sup> He indicates that he considers the story to be a complete myth. Drews does not mention this work of Weiss. He must not be familiar with it. If he were, he would scarcely have mocked the method Weiss uses for explaining Jesus' miracles. In spite of what Weiss and Drews say, there is at least a possibility that the young man from Nain was in a state of suspended animation. On the other hand, the fact that during the time of the Tannaim, and in remembrance of Elijah and Elisha, rabbis were credited with raising the dead (cf. *Mek. Amalek* §1 (on Exod 17:8–13))<sup>35</sup> raises the suspicion that the story is completely unhistorical. But that that, as Drews argues, speaks against the historicity of Jesus, is not right. It is only right when Drews says that “according to the views of all ancients, extraordinary people were capable of performing such miracles.”<sup>36</sup> One must add here that this view was shared by the Palestinians during the time of Jesus. From that, though, we could only conclude that Jesus' contemporaries considered him an extraordinary individual (a prophet, as in Luke 7:16!). In other words, such miracle stories are a reflection of the greatness of such a man, an expression of the admiration he received. They are not proof against the historicity of the person concerned.<sup>37</sup>

The following should also be added here: Drews might read in the above mentioned book how Weiss judges [86] the reviving of Jairus' daughter and the healing of the woman with the issue of blood.<sup>38</sup> How critical and careful Weiss is here! That this method of treating miracles should be called “childish” cannot be maintained by Drews.

In the life of Apollonius of Tyana one also finds a whole list of exorcisms. Drews hurries by the question of historical content in such stories much too quickly. He too knows that in ancient times exorcists were common, as well as even today in Roman Catholicism such exorcisms are practised. One cannot conclude that it is all myth, and that the “possessed” as well as the exorcist are non-historical figures. When today's critical theology (compare both Johannes Weiss and Gottfried Traub) understands such healings as the effects of suggestion, it is not proof of their bias and foolishness, rather it should find the approval of philologists and historians, just as it has, for example, found the approval of a medical doctor like Wilhelm Ebstein.<sup>39</sup> In the life of Apollonius of Tyana the following exorcisms, among others, are found, which are informative in comparison to the New Testament:

The first one reads as follows:

Once he was lecturing on the subject of libations, and there happened to be present at the talk a foppish youth with such a reputation for shamelessness that he had once been the subject of bawdy songs.<sup>40</sup> Corcyra was his place of origin, and he claimed descent from Alcinous, Odysseus'

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on raising the dead.” Regarding very similar stories in which the dead are raised, compare also O. Weinreich, *Antike Heilungswunder: Untersuchungen zum Wunderglauben der Griechen und Römer*, RVV 8/1 (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1909), 173.

<sup>34</sup> J. Weiss, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, 2 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1907), 1:449.

<sup>35</sup> [Discussed in Fiebig, *Jüdische Wundergeschichten*, 36–8.]

<sup>36</sup> Drews, *Die Christusmythe. Zweiter Teil*, 258.

<sup>37</sup> One should also take note that miracles reported by Apollonius contain similar features of compassion as the story in the New Testament. Jesus, unlike Apollonius, does not use magical words.

<sup>38</sup> Weiss, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, 1:120–24.

<sup>39</sup> Compare his informative book: *Die Medizin im Neuen Testament und im Talmud* (Stuttgart: F. Enke, 1903).

<sup>40</sup> A form of common songs. [Jones, *Philostratus* I, 361 n.30, notes that the text literally reads “‘song of the carts,’ since carts were used at the Eleusinian mysteries as a place for bawdy repartee.”]

host on Phaeacia. Apollonius was explaining how to pour libations, and advising not to drink from this kind of cup, but to keep it for the gods, undefiled and untouched by human lips. He also advised that the cup should have handles, and that one should pour libations over the handle, [87] the part from which humans are least likely to drink. The youth greeted his remark with a loud, licentious laugh, at which Apollonius looked up at him and said, "It is not you that are committing this outrage, but the demon who controls you without your knowledge."

In fact without knowing it the youth was possessed by a demon. He laughed at things that nobody else did and went to weeping without any reason, and he talked and sang to himself. Most people thought that the exuberance of youth produced these effects, but he was being prompted by the demon, and only seemed to be playing the tricks that were being played on him. When Apollonius looked at the spirit, it uttered sounds of fear and fury, such as people being burned alive or tortured do, and it swore to keep away from the youth and not enter into any human. But Apollonius spoke to it as an angry householder does to a slave who is wily, crafty, shameless, and so on, and told it to give proof of his departure. It replied, "I will knock that statue over," indicating one of the statues around the Royal Colonnade, where all this was taking place.

When the statue first moved slightly, then fell, the outcry at this and the way people clapped in amazement were past description. The youth, as if waking up, rubbed his eyes, looked at the sun's beams, and won the respect of all the people gazing at him. From then on he no longer seemed dissolute, or had unsteady gaze, but returned to his own nature no worse off than if he had taken a course of medicine. He got rid of his capes, cloaks, and other fripperies, and fell in love with deprivation and the philosopher's cloak, and stripped down to Apollonius's style.<sup>41</sup> (Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 4.20.1–3)

This miracle story is easily understood as the effect of suggestion. Several concrete details raise one's confidence in the story's historicity. Only the toppling on the statue makes one skeptical. In the New Testament it is Mark which contains many exorcisms, both individual and grouped. After such stories in the New Testament, the amazement of the observers is also highlighted, without always referring to [88] Jesus' messiahship (compare, for example, Mark 1:27; also Mark 3:22–27, which says nothing of Jesus' messiahship; Mark 5:42; and so on). That a demon<sup>42</sup> was threatened, that a demon felt tortured, that he verbalized a plea and spoke with the exorcist, and the condition of the healed is all found in the New Testament, for example in Mark 5:1–12 and parallels, Mark 1:23–26. Such stories in the New Testament also contain several concrete details which raises confidence in its historicity. Drews wants to understand the story of the possessed at Gerasa or Gadara with Samuel Lublinski<sup>43</sup> as symbolic. "Only the extremely dull," he says in the above work, "would conclude from the description of the scene, from the presense of pigs and so on, that it is dealing with a historic place or that the story is historically accurate. It is so obvious that it is dealing with the underworld, with a symbolic

<sup>41</sup> [Trans. Jones, *Philostratus I*, 361, 363; cf. Jacobs, *Flavius Philostratus des Ältern*, 370–2.]

<sup>42</sup> When in the above exorcism Apollonius is called "Lord" and the demon "servant," it should be compared to Matt 8:9 and parallels.

<sup>43</sup> S. Lublinski, *Das werdende Dogma vom Leben Jesu, Urchristliche Erdkreis und sein Mythos 2* (Jena: E. Diederichs, 1910), 131–3.



visualization of the Savior's power over the demons, and the pigs are only included because they were avoided and unclean, and as such completed the picture of the underworld scene."<sup>44</sup> Pigs were already considered to be connected with the demonic by the Babylonians, which made them their preferred animals.<sup>45</sup> That they are in closer relationship with the underworld is never mentioned in Mark. In Luke 8:31–33 the demons would rather go into pigs than back into the underworld. Therefore this story isn't really dealing with the underworld, as Drews argues. The story could likely be a "visualization of the Savior's power over demons," which in those days was gladly told. I nevertheless believe with Weiss and Traub<sup>46</sup> that there are no pressing grounds here to conclude that the story is completely fictitious [89], even though Matt 8:28 speaks of two instead of one demon possessed which Jesus encountered in Gadara. There are several other discrepancies in comparison with the parallel passages in Mark 5:1–14, Matt 8:28–33, and Luke 8:26–34. The individual descriptions in these texts do not allow the incident to be seen as purely symbolic and completely unhistorical. The possibility that the story rests on mere fabrication and the building of a legend has to be admitted. Historical science cannot prove, just as it cannot with Apollonius of Tyana and many others, that it had to be like that. It can only speculate what might have happened. When Drews claims that he has the only possible explanation for the story, then that is a confidence to which he, as a historical researcher, does not have the right. One cannot go beyond possibilities and probabilities in this case.

Several additional—and for the New Testament important—miracle stories from the life of Apollonius of Tyana follow. In my opinion these show that one goes too far in judging all miracle stories as unhistorical, such as Arthur Drews thinks he can do with respect to the miracle stories of the New Testament.

The second exorcism story reads as follows:

In the middle of this conversation, the Wise Men were interrupted by the messenger bringing some Indians in need of cures. He brought forward a woman praying to them on her son's behalf. He was sixteen years old, she said, but had been possessed by a spirit for two years, and the spirit had a sly, deceitful character. When one of the Wise Men asked on what evidence she said this, she replied, "This boy of mine is rather handsome to look at, and the spirit is in love with him. He will not allow him to be rational, or go to school or to archery lessons, or to stay at home either, but carries him off into deserted places. My boy no longer has his natural voice but speaks in deep, ringing tones as men do, and his eyes, too, are more someone else's than his own. All this makes me weep and tear my hair, and I naturally scold my son, but he does not recognize me.

[90] "But when I decided to come here, as I did a year ago, the spirit confessed who he was, using my son as a medium. He said he was the ghost of a man who formerly died in war, and died still in love with his wife; but the woman broke their marriage bond three days after his death by marrying another man, and from that time, he said, he had loathed

<sup>44</sup>Drews, *Die Christusmythe. Zweiter Teil*, 259.

<sup>45</sup>Compare M. Jastrow, *Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens, Erster Band* (Giessen: J. Töpelmann, 1905), 334–7.

<sup>46</sup>Weiss, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, 1:118–20; G. Traub, *Die Wunder im Neuen Testament*, 2nd ed., Religionsgeschichtlichen Volksbücher V/2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1907), 42.

the love of women and had transferred his affection to the boy. And he promised that if I did not accuse him before you, he would give the boy many wonderful presents. This made some impression on me, but has kept me waiting for a long time now, and acts as sole master of my house, deaf to moderation and to truth.”

The Wise Man then asked her if the boy was nearby, but she said, “No: I did everything to make him come, but that spirit threatened me with ‘cliffs’ and ‘precipices,’ and with killing my son if I brought my complaint here.” “Take courage,” said the Wise Man, “he will not kill him when has read this,” and producing a letter from his pocket he gave it to the woman. It was addressed to the spirit with threats and rebuke.<sup>47</sup> (Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 3.38)

That such accounts rest largely on actual events, the likes of which were common practice for miracle doctors, exorcists and magicians during the days of the Roman emperors, should not be unthinkable; especially since it is not mentioned if “the demon” was impressed by the “terrible threats.”

Immediately after come the following healings of a lame man, a blind man, and a man with a lame hand:

There also came a lame man of about thirty. He had been an expert lion hunter, but when a lion had attacked him his hip had been dislocated and he was lame in one leg. But the Wise Man massaged his hip with his hands, the young man recovered his proper gait. Someone else who had lost the use of his eyes went with his sight fully restored, and another man with a withered arm made strong again.<sup>48</sup> (Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 3.39)

This story should also not lie beyond the realm of what is possible. When Drews [91] traces the healing by Jesus of the lame, blind, and deaf back to Isa 35:4–5,<sup>49</sup> where it says: “He himself (God) will save you. Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb will shout for joy,” this might have some support in Matt 11:4–5 and the parallel in Luke 7:22–23, but it is not sufficient to explain all healings of the lame, blind, and deaf mentioned in the New Testament. In Mark no reference is made to Isaiah in regards to the miracles. Moreover, when it comes to healings of the lame, blind, and even the deaf and dumb,<sup>50</sup> it lies close at hand that the effect was caused by suggestion. I therefore agree with the way in which Weiss explains the healing of the paralytic (Mark 2:1–12 and parallels). He says there, in my opinion rightly: “The healing procedure belongs to those miracle accounts which are the easiest for us to understand and believe.”<sup>51</sup> He is also right in emphasizing that this story, with Jesus’ surprising announcement of forgiven sins and with the other details, “is not found on the same path as typical miracle stories.” Obviously Drews has another reason for being suspicious of the paralytic’s healing. He

<sup>47</sup> [Trans. Jones, *Philostratus* I, 299, 301, 303; cf. Jacobs, *Flavius Philostratus des Ältern*, 331–3.]

<sup>48</sup> [Trans. Jones, *Philostratus* I, 303; cf. Jacobs, *Flavius Philostratus des Ältern*, 333.]

<sup>49</sup> Drews, *Die Christusmythe. Zweiter Teil*, 257–8.

<sup>50</sup> See Ebstein above, n.39.

<sup>51</sup> Weiss, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, 1:88–91.

says: “The historian knows that the miracle worker’s command to the sick to get up, take his bed and go, is a common phrase in such stories.”<sup>52</sup> Drews gained this insight from Reitzenstein and Weinreich.<sup>53</sup>

Reitzenstein plays on the following story from Lucian:

“Never mind him [the skeptic in the present dialogue],” said Ion (a Platonist), “and I will tell you [92] a wonderful story. I was still a young lad, about fourteen years old, when someone came and told my father that Midas the vine-dresser, ordinarily a strong and industrious servant, had been bitten by a viper toward midday and was lying down, with his leg already in a state of mortification. While he was tying up the runners and twining them about the poles, the creature had crawled up and bitten him on the great toe; then it had quickly gone down into its hole, and he was groaning in mortal anguish.

“As this report was being made, we saw Midas himself being brought up on a litter by his fellow-slaves, all swollen and livid, with a clammy skin and but little breath left in him. Naturally my father was distressed, but a friend who was there said to him, ‘Cheer up: I will at once go and get you a Babylonian, one of the so-called Chaldeans, who will cure the fellow.’ Not to make a long story of it, the Babylonian came and brought Midas back to life, driving the poison out of his body by a spell, and also binding upon his foot a fragment which he broke from the tombstone of a dead maiden.

“Perhaps his is nothing out of the common: although Midas himself picked up the litter on which he had been carried and went to the farm, so potent was the spell and the fragment of the tombstone.”<sup>54</sup> (Lucian, *Philops.* 11)

To this Reitzenstein makes the following comment: “for theologians I emphasize the obviously typical formula: ‘Midas himself took up the bed on which he had been brought, and left.’” Weinreich copies Reitzenstein’s words in commenting on the same story: “The end of this story, ‘Midas took up his bed and left’ is obviously a typical formula.” He adds: “To me there seems to be an increasing development in the motive. The sick person is *brought* on a bed, a litter, and can *walk* home after [93] the successful miraculous healing.” He then goes on to list several proofs for this “ability to walk home after the healing.” Here the following is to be observed: (1) Midas is not commanded to take his bed. It is merely recorded that he did. Jesus, on the other hand, commanded the paralytic to take up his bed. (2) Stories of a sick person that had to be carried before his healing would naturally include that after the healing he could walk, just like stories of a blind person that was healed naturally tell us that he could see. I do not find that one has to see this as a typical formula or characteristic. (3) That the healed man was able to carry his own bed is definitely a step beyond being “able to walk,” but to call this an “obvious typical characteristic” is not so obvious to me. That the healed man would take his litter—which seems to have been quite light—home is just as natural as a healed paralytic walking, or a healed blind person seeing.

<sup>52</sup>Drews, *Die Christusmythe. Zweiter Teil*, 197.

<sup>53</sup>Reitzenstein, *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen*, 3 n.2; Weinreich, *Antike Heilungswunder*, 174.

<sup>54</sup>[The English translation is adapted from A. M. Harmon, *Lucian III*, LCL 130 (London: Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), 335, 337. Fiebig makes use of A. Pauly’s German translation in *Griechische Prosaiker in neuen Uebersetzungen*, Band 76, ed. G. L. F. Tafel, C. N. Osiander, and G. Schwab (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1830), 1363–5.]

Reitzenstein does not give any convincing proof that this is a typical characteristic. Therefore I see no reason to question the previous Hellenistic miracle story of the paralytic on the basis of this characteristic. I would only like to include this comment:

When one reads through the dialog of Lucian's *Philopseudes*, one is involuntarily infected by his skepticism of all miracle stories from that time period. This skepticism can become so strong that one might lean towards thinking nothing whatsoever historical or factual is left in those stories, without even examining if some actual facts might be contained in them. The same skepticism is transmitted to the readers of Reitzenstein and Weinreich, who discuss literary forms of such stories without ever asking the question what historical facts they might contain. Towards historical elements [94], which might be contained in the life story of Apollonius, Reitzenstein seems to be very skeptical. I freely admit that in this entire field, including the Gospels, careful skepticism is not just our right, but our urgent obligation. We are dealing with a type of literature that makes it very difficult to determine which elements are the solid rocks of historical facts. That Drews is right in warning us not to put our trust in every detail of the stories makes sense. After all, we all know how vivid the imaginations of both people and poets are. On the other hand, such general and all-encompassing skepticism seems to overlook two things: (1) Even poetry can contain elements of reality and history, such as Schiller's historical dramas. (2) Just because an era is rich with belief in miracles does not mean miracle stories of that time cannot be based on actual events, touched up with the miraculous aspects; compare with the historical components found in the Jewish miracle stories above. One cannot measure all miracle stories with the same yardstick. One must observe the differences which lie at hand. That I do not lack in the necessary skepticism to criticize miracle stories should become apparent in the following comments. I will mainly deal with those miracles of Jesus which, in my opinion, are not based on any historical facts, which are pure legends: the miraculous feedings of the multitudes and the miraculous stories of the sea.

The miraculous feedings have parallels in the Elisha stories and in the Rabbis (cf. *b. Ta'an.* 24b–25a).<sup>55</sup> That such miracle stories should not be rationalized, as Karl Weiser does,<sup>56</sup> is today obvious. If, as Weiss believes,<sup>57</sup> the miraculous feeding is based on a memory of an actual meal Jesus shared with the multitudes, seems to me, as well as to Traub,<sup>58</sup> questionable. To tell [95] of such a miracle one does not require a memory of such a meal, rather it suffices to remember that Jesus was repeatedly surrounded by great masses of people by the Sea of Gennesaret. My view on this is strengthened by the exact correspondence of the details with 2 Kgs 4:42–44 and by the connection of these miracles with Jesus' walking on the Sea of Gennesaret.

That the stories of the sea lack any historical content, especially concerning their miraculous aspects, should be quite obvious. Regarding the walking on water, Traub refers to the Old Testament and Buddhist parallels.<sup>59</sup> One could also refer to Friedrich von Spiegel's life of

<sup>55</sup> [This is the story of the bread miracle worked by Hanina ben Dosa, which Fiebig discusses in *Jüdische Wundergeschichten*, 22–4 (no. 5).]

<sup>56</sup> [Fiebig here refers to a theatrical play by K. Weiser, called *Jesus-Tetralogie*, published in 1906.]

<sup>57</sup> Weiss, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, 1:129–31.

<sup>58</sup> Traub, *Die Wunder im Neuen Testament*, 63.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 57–60.

Zarathustra,<sup>60</sup> according to which Zarathustra's prayer parts the sea and allows him and his disciples to walk through.<sup>61</sup> Just as legendary is Peter's miraculous catch of fish, which, still missing in Mark and Matthew, first appears in Luke 5:1–11 and John 21:3–14. For Jesus to have such influence on fish is just as impossible as the story in Matt 17:24–27 or the story of the pearl in the fish in rabbinic literature (cf. *b. Šabb.* 119a).<sup>62</sup> Weiss also clearly expresses his skepticism towards this story.<sup>63</sup> For the calming of the storm we have a parallel in Ps 107:23, as well as exact parallels in rabbinic literature (cf. *b. B. Meš.* 59b; *y. Ber.* 9:1, 13b),<sup>64</sup> and Jonah 1:3, 5, to which Drews refers.<sup>65</sup> In this situation, similar to the rain magic, the prayer could have been answered through a coincidental act of nature. On the other hand, it should be considered that for Asklepios and Serapis the "power to heal the suffering of mankind came with the ability to command wind and waves."<sup>66</sup> At least I would be more willing to recognize [96] that a sea story like this could be based on a historical event, naturally without seeing a miracle in it.<sup>67</sup>

## Conclusion

### Summary and Religious Value of the Miracle Stories

Whoever considers all the presented facts will, in my opinion, have to agree with the following statements:

1. It is already clear, and will become even clearer in the future, that the New Testament, especially because of the miracle stories it contains, proves to be an ancient book, a book displaying the literature and thought processes of the Roman imperial era. Today's historically uneducated Christian wonders about the miracles of the New Testament and believes he can discover in Jesus' miracles proof of his uniqueness, while the historically educated Christian would wonder if the New Testament did not contain miracle stories and does not believe that they are unique to the person of Jesus.
2. It would be wrong to agree with Drews that the miracles of the New Testament prove that Jesus is not a historical figure. One has to differentiate between miracle stories. Reitzenstein, for example, also emphasizes this, which is an excellent testimony to Drews since it comes from a philologist rather than a theologian. In regards to the walking on water miracles Reitzenstein says: "To speak of a cultural mindset, or of a widespread belief in magic which impacts life as directly as the casting out of demons, is not possible."<sup>68</sup> What he is saying is that in those days some actual events were given miraculous explanations, events for which we today have natural explanations, while other miracle stories, void of any factual basis, were also told.
3. As all miracle stories told of historical personalities, especially the rabbinical miracle stories, prove the admiration [97] offered to those individuals, the craving for the miraculous during

<sup>60</sup>F. Spiegel, "Ueber das Leben Zarathustra's," *Sitzungsberichte der königl. bayer. Akademie der Wissenschaften* (1867): 50.

<sup>61</sup>See also Reitzenstein, *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen*, 125.

<sup>62</sup>[Discussed in Fiebig, *Jüdische Wundergeschichten*, 62–3 (no. 20).]

<sup>63</sup>Weiss, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, 1:440–41.

<sup>64</sup>[Discussed in Fiebig, *Jüdische Wundergeschichten*, 31–5, 61–2 (nos. 10 and 19).]

<sup>65</sup>Drews, *Die Christusmythe. Zweiter Teil*, 199.

<sup>66</sup>Weinreich, *Antike Heilungswunder*, 14.

<sup>67</sup>[The main body of Fiebig's text ends here. His conclusion and summary follow.]

<sup>68</sup>Reitzenstein, *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen*, 125.

that era, and prove that real faith still desires a massive, visible display of God's working, so also the New Testament miracle stories involving Jesus and the apostles prove Jesus' greatness, the admiration offered to him, and the craving for miracles in his time.

4. The religious power of those who have faith in miracles, who have unlimited confidence in God's omnipotence and the might of prayer is unmistakable. When it comes to Jesus, especially his confidence in the miraculous impact of prayer, we feel an unmistakable distance from him and his piety. We in the field of scientific theology have long ago become accustomed to this feeling of distance, arising from the gap between our piety and Jesus' apocalyptic<sup>69</sup> ideas. For the sake of truth we must emphasize that Jesus' confidence in his ability to perform miracles demonstrates a very strong religious faith. This faith of Jesus is the starting point for modern prayer-healing, and other similar practises, which does not correspond with the normal piety of our day. In this case we consciously step back from Jesus and his era.

5. One cannot deny that Jesus' originality surfaces in the miracle stories: magical formulas are not in his vocabulary, and his only magical means being spittle or the laying on of hands. Traub is justified in saying: "The simple dignity, which despises performances relying on the senses of the masses, remains the unique mark of Jesus' healing method."<sup>70</sup>

The gospels' value for today [98] is not found in the miracle stories, but rather in Jesus' words. Obviously Drews questions those as well, mainly because of the many undeniable parallels to Jesus' words in rabbinical literature. To prove Drews right or wrong in that opinion demands another book, which I soon hope to write, if God gives me life, strength and time. It will be even more apparent than in this present work how important and indispensable rabbinical studies are for New Testament research. I do not believe I can bring my comments on Jewish miracle stories and their relationship to the New Testament to a better conclusion than with the following quote from Traub's book on New Testament miracles:

... the history of the essence of miracle is no trivial study. One should not see in them God's revelation, but the confused, muddled letters, with which the human soul first tried to spell the name of God. The whole story then becomes somewhat venerable ... There is something touching in the attempts to prove Jesus' honor with that material of veneration which was known and at hand. We ridicule the old miracles, we seek to understand them inwardly and to communicate with the people of days gone by.

Only there, where one tries to bring it down to the old level, will we energetically defend the right of our piety. God remains the God of order, who desires to be known in his laws ... Jesus is no miracle man for us, but the Savior. As such we honor him, by allowing him freely to give us strength and peace, and not burdening him with a heavy, glamorous robe ... He is the leader of all who allow their souls to be led to God. That is where they experience *the* miracle.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Meaning Jesus' ideas about the imminence of his return and of the world's end. For an elementary introduction to this subject, see P. Fiebig, *Weltanschauungsfragen: Das geschichtliche Material zum Verständnis Jesu. Konfessionskunde für die Schüler und Schülerinnen höherer Lehranstalten* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1911).

<sup>70</sup> Traub, *Die Wunder im Neuen Testament*, 45.

<sup>71</sup> Traub, *Die Wunder im Neuen Testament*, 67–8.



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# Italian Scholarship on Second Temple Judaism and Christian Origins, from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century

GABRIELE BOCCACCINI

## 1. THE CRITICAL APPROACH TO THE BIBLE IN THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

We may have forgotten it, but everything started in Italy, in the mid-fifteenth century, when in the years 1452–53 the humanists Lorenzo Valla and Poggio Bracciolini engaged in one of the virulent scholarly controversies typical of the time. Both were among the protagonists of the critical rediscovery of ancient classical texts in Europe. In a series of five *Orationes in Laurentium Valla*, the more conservative papal secretary Poggio maintained that humanism and theology should remain two separate fields of inquiry and labeled Valla’s radical application of textual criticism to Scriptures as *mordacitas* and *dementia*. Valla reacted with equal strength by countering Poggio’s arguments, line by line, in his *Antidota in Pogium*. His point was that biblical religious texts also had to be treated critically, that is, the same way as any other ancient classical texts—as simple as that.

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In January 1989 I arrived at Princeton Theological Seminary as a visiting scholar. It was my first time in the United States. In the 1980s the choice to visit PTS (instead of a European institution) was still a little nonconformist for a young Italian scholar in biblical studies. But James H. Charlesworth was reason enough to break the rule. His work as editor-in-chief of the new collection of the *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* in English had made him the leading international authority in the field. I was completing my Ph.D. at the University of Turin and my supervisor Paolo Sacchi had me join the editorial team that was publishing the OT Pseudepigrapha into Italian (*Apocrifi dell’Antico Testamento*, vol. 2 (Torino: UTET, 1989)). Charlesworth welcomed me with great generosity as one of his students. I was not alone. With Loren Stuckenbruck we immediately established a close working relationship and friendship that has lasted for our entire professional careers. One of the tasks of my American mission was to translate Charlesworth’s critical work on the Pseudepigrapha into Italian (*Gli pseudodegrafi dell’Antico Testamento e il Nuovo Testamento* (Brescia: Paideia, 1990)). I soon discovered that the interest we Italians had in Charlesworth was mutual. For the Italian edition of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), Charlesworth had added a foreword and revised the text and the bibliography to include references to, and enter in dialogue with, the work of Italian scholars. He had realized the potential of the “Italian school” in the study of the Enoch tradition and was as curious to learn more about our experience.

Lorenzo Valla was indeed “the first significant biblical scholar of the Renaissance.”<sup>1</sup> Since 1443 he had been writing some critical notes in which he compared the traditional Latin text of the Vulgate to the original Greek of the New Testament. He first presented his work to Pope Nicholas V in 1453 (*Collatio Novi Testamenti*). Following the same path, Giannozzo Manetti dared produce in 1454 a new Latin translation of the New Testament from the original Greek, the first ever accomplished after Jerome’s.<sup>2</sup> Lorenzo Valla continued to revise his notes in the following years. At his death in 1457 he left a clearly more sophisticated, though shorter, version of his work (*Adnotationes in Novum Testamentum*).

Lorenzo Valla’s and Giannozzo Manetti’s works circulated in manuscript form (the press was still in its infancy) and had at the beginning only a limited impact. The first printed Italian Bible in 1471 was based on the Latin text of the Vulgate.<sup>3</sup> The author was Nicolò Malermi, a member of the Camaldolese Order. It is the second known translation of the Bible in any modern language, after the German edition by Johannes Mentelin in 1466. Malermi used and adapted previous fourteenth-century translations, even if at the expense of literary quality, and was not much concerned about philological and textual issues.

It was only a matter of time, however, before the seminal work of Valla and Manetti would produce abundant fruit. In the summer of 1504 Erasmus saw a copy of Valla’s *Adnotationes* in the Abbey of Parc near Leuven. He immediately realized the value of the work. He published it in 1505,<sup>4</sup> and made it the foundation of his revolutionary approach to Scripture, publishing in 1516 the *editio princeps* of the Greek New Testament with a new Latin translation and notes.<sup>5</sup>

In 1527 Sante Pagnini accomplished what neither Manetti in 1454 nor Erasmus in 1516 had achieved; he translated the entire Bible (not only the New Testament) into Latin from the original languages,<sup>6</sup> the first time after Jerome. Pagnini was also the first to divide the text of the Bible into chapters *and* verses. Ever since, his division of the Old Testament has become standard; we still use it today. That of the New Testament instead was modified by the French scholar Robert Estienne in his edition of the Greek text in 1551.<sup>7</sup> Pagnini’s division was not always respectful of the logical development of the texts, but proved to be very useful to identify accurately and succinctly the biblical passages.

He invited me to write an article on the contribution of Italian scholars to apocalypticism, which became my first article in English (“Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition: The Contribution of Italian Scholarship,” in *Mysteries and Revelations: Apocalyptic Studies since the Uppsala Colloquium*, ed. J. J. Collins and J. H. Charlesworth (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 33–50). Charlesworth also encouraged me to complete my dissertation in English, and not in Italian as originally planned (*Middle Judaism: Jewish Thought, 300 BCE to 200 CE* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991)). He asked me to arrange his first meeting with Sacchi in March 1992 in Rome and guided me step-by-step in my American career, in that long journey that would lead me to the University of Michigan in 1992 and to the establishment of the Enoch Seminar in 2001. I cannot think of a better way to honor James H. Charlesworth’s work than to offer him this chapter on the contribution of Italian scholarship to the study of Second Temple Judaism and Christian Origins.

<sup>1</sup>J. Monfasani, “Criticism of Biblical Humanists in Quattrocento Italy,” in *Biblical Humanism and Scholasticism in the Age of Erasmus*, ed. E. Rummel (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 21.

<sup>2</sup>A. den Haan, “Giannozzo Manetti’s New Testament: New Evidence on Sources, Translation Process and the Use of Valla’s *Annotationes*,” *Renaissance Studies* 28.5 (2013): 731–47.

<sup>3</sup>N. Malermi, *Bibbia* (Venezia: Adam de Ambergau, 1471).

<sup>4</sup>D. Erasmus, *Laurentii Vallensis viri tam gr[a]ec[a]e q[uam] latin[a]e linguae peritissimi in Latinam Noui testamenti interpretationem ex collatione Gr[a]ecorum exemplarium Adnotationes apprime utiles* (Paris: Le Petit, 1505).

<sup>5</sup>D. Erasmus, *Novum Instrumentum omne* (Basel: Johann Froben, 1516).

<sup>6</sup>S. Pagnini, *Veteris and Novi Testamenti nova translatio* (Lyon: Antoine du Ry, 1527).

<sup>7</sup>R. Estienne, *Nouum Iesu Christi D.N. Testamentum* (Genève: Ex officina Roberti Stephani, 1551).

Pagnini's Latin version produced a new generation of Italian translations "from the original texts." In 1530–2, two years before the publication of the German Bible by Martin Luther, Antonio Brucioli completed the first translation of the Bible in any modern language to openly reject the authority of the Vulgate.<sup>8</sup> Brucioli claimed he translated the entire Bible into Italian from the original languages (Hebrew and Greek), and in Venice was assisted by the Jewish scholar Elias Levita. In reality, his version of the Old Testament followed more closely the Latin translation by Sante Pagnini than the Hebrew text, and his version of the New Testament was largely based on the Latin translation by Erasmus (1516).

Brucioli's work was printed in Venice by Lucantonio Giunta. The publisher produced two new editions of the Brucioli Bible in the 1530s. He first asked Zaccaria da Firenze, a follower of Savonarola, to revise Brucioli's translation of the New Testament in 1536.<sup>9</sup> Then he had Santi Marmochino, also a follower of Savonarola, revise the Old Testament, with some stylistic modifications, and printed his work in one volume together with Zaccaria's revision of the New Testament.<sup>10</sup>

The first editions of the Hebrew Bible were also printed in Italy. Jewish printer Abraham ben Hayyim de' Tintori completed the first edition of the Torah in 1482 in Bologna, corrected by Joseph Hayyim ben Aaron Strasbourg Zarfati.<sup>11</sup> The entire Tanak appeared in a 1488 edition at Soncino by Joshua Solomon ben Israel Nathan Soncino (corrected by Abraham ben Hayyim de' Tintori), and then in 1494 at Brescia by Gerson ben Moses Soncino.<sup>12</sup> The first edition of the so-called rabbinic Bible (*Mikraot Gedolot*), including Masoretic notes, targum, and commentary, appeared in Venice by Daniel Bomberg, edited by Jewish convert Felice da Prato (Felix Pratenses) in 1517–19. It was then revised in a second edition by Jacob ben Hayyim ben Isaac ibn Adonijah in 1524–5 and in a third edition by Israel Cornelius Adelkind in 1546–8.<sup>13</sup>

The new critical spirit of Humanism also affected Judaic Studies. In 1537 Elias Levita openly challenged the antiquity ascribed to the vowel-points in the Hebrew Bible by the orthodox tradition, arguing that they were invented by the Masoretes only in the fifth century CE to facilitate the reading of the text.<sup>14</sup> In 1573–75 Azariah de' Rossi discussed the relationship between the Septuagint and the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible, making extensive use of non-rabbinic sources, from the *Letter of Aristeas* (which he translated into Hebrew) to Philo, Josephus, the New Testament, and the Church Fathers.<sup>15</sup>

The Italian biblical Renaissance did not remain confined to academic circles. Italian intellectuals composed poems and plays of biblical subject, from Feo Belcari, to Antonio Cornazzaro, Lucrezia Tornabuoni and her son Lorenzo de' Medici, Antonio Alamanni, and Giovan Battista dell'Ottonaio. Raphael in the *School of Athens* and Michelangelo in the frescoes in the Sistine Chapel gave a triumphal representation of the liberal spirit of the age.

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<sup>8</sup> A. Brucioli, *Il Nuovo Testamento* (Venezia: Giunta, 1530), and *La Biblia* (Venezia: Giunta, 1532).

<sup>9</sup> Z. da Firenze, *Il Nuovo Testamento* (Venezia: Giunta, 1536).

<sup>10</sup> S. Marmochino, *La Biblia* (Venezia: Giunta, 1538).

<sup>11</sup> *Torah* (Bologna: Abraham ben Hayyim de' Tintori, 1482).

<sup>12</sup> *Tanak* (Soncino: Joshua Soncino, 1488); *Tanak* (Brescia: Gershom Soncino, 1494).

<sup>13</sup> *Mikraot Gedolot* (Venezia: Daniel Bomberg, 1517–19; 2nd ed., 1524–5; 3rd ed., 1546–8).

<sup>14</sup> E. Levita, *Sefer Massoret ha-Massoret* (Venezia: Daniel Bomberg, 1537).

<sup>15</sup> Azariah de' Rossi, *Me'or Enayim* (Mantova: 1573–78).



The interests of Italian scholars were not limited to the Bible. During the Middle Ages, Josephus was the most widely read ancient author in Europe; the number of manuscripts of his works was second only to the Bible. Josephus was known mainly through the medium of ancient Latin versions (attributed to Rufinus and Cassiodorus) as well as in two retellings of the *Jewish War*, the “Christian” *Hegesippus* and the “Jewish” *Josippon*, both of which were attributed to Josephus.

Some of the earliest editions of Josephus’s works were published in Italy. The *editio princeps* of the Hebrew *Josippon* by Abraham Conat appeared in Mantua in 1474–6,<sup>16</sup> followed by two editions of the Latin text, by Bartolomeo Sacchi in 1475 and Girolamo Squarciafico in 1481.<sup>17</sup> An anonymous Italian translation of the Jewish war appeared as early as 1473, one of the first in any modern language.<sup>18</sup> It was followed by the translation of the *Jewish Antiquities* and the *Hegesippus* by Pietro Lauro in 1544.<sup>19</sup> In Italy there also appeared the work of the Portuguese Jewish refugee Samuel Usque, the first Jewish work after Josephus (and *Josippon*) to revisit the Second Temple period and the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple by the Romans.<sup>20</sup>

While Valla was the forefather of biblical scholarship, Pico della Mirandola began the study of what we would now call the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. A “Christian cabalist” Pico believed that traces of the original wisdom were preserved far beyond the boundaries of the “canon.” He collected and studied Jewish and Islamic texts and searched for the lost seventy “hidden” texts mentioned in *4 Ezra*. He was particularly fascinated by the possibility of recovering the book(s) of Enoch, as evidence of the ancient, prediluvian wisdom of humankind.<sup>21</sup>

The presence of Ethiopian pilgrims is attested in Rome since 1315 and a delegation of Ethiopian monks from Jerusalem attended the Council of Florence in 1441. In 1481 they got permission from Pope Sixtus IV to establish a monastery (*Hospitium Fratrum Indianorum*) in the Vatican, just behind the apse of St. Peter’s. The church is still today known as St. Stephen of the Abyssinians. Rome became the center of Ethiopic studies in Europe with the publication of the first book in Ge’ez.<sup>22</sup> Pico visited Rome in 1486, and so did Johannes Reuchlin several times, but no information about Enoch surfaced, yet.

According to the sixteenth-century writer Serafino Razzi, the first report of a special connection between Enoch and Ethiopia came in 1516 when two Ethiopian monks from Rome stopped at the Dominican monastery of Saint Catherine in Pisa on their way to Santiago de Compostela and entertained the local friars on the customs and beliefs of the Ethiopic church.<sup>23</sup> In order to exalt the virtue of an Ethiopic sage one of the monks said that “like Enoch redivivus, he was revealed the entire order of the heavens.”<sup>24</sup>

<sup>16</sup> A. Conat, *Sefer Yosipon* (Mantova: Conat, 1474–76).

<sup>17</sup> B. Sacchi, *De bello judaico* (Roma: Pannartz, 1475); G. Squarciafico, *Josephi opera* (Venezia: Raynaldus de Novimagio, 1481).

<sup>18</sup> *Guerra dei Giudei* (Firenze: Bartolommeo di Libri, 1493).

<sup>19</sup> P. Lauro, *De l’antichita giudaiche* (Venezia: Vincenzo Vaugris, 1544); P. Lauro, *Historia d’Egesippo* (Venezia: Michele Tramezino, 1544).

<sup>20</sup> S. Usque, *Consolaçam ás tribulaçoens de Israel* (Ferrara: Abraham Usque, 1553).

<sup>21</sup> G. Boccaccini, “Enochic Traditions,” in *A Guide to Early Jewish Texts and Traditions in Christian Transmission*, ed. A. Kulik (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 383–416.

<sup>22</sup> J. Potken and T. W. Samuel, *Alphabetum seu potius syllabarium literarum Chaldaearum* (Roma: Marcellus Silber, 1513).

<sup>23</sup> P. Piovanelli, “La redécouverte du Livre d’Hénoch éthiopien en Occident,” *La Règle d’Abraham* 41 (2019): 103–36.

<sup>24</sup> S. Razzi, *Vite dei santi, e beati cosi uomini, come donne del sacro ordine de’ Frati Predicatori* (Firenze: Bartolomeo Sermantelli, 1577), 134.

In 1520 diplomatic relations were established between Ethiopia and Portugal. The first monks began to arrive in Rome directly from Ethiopia and with them came more precise news about the presence of the book of Enoch in that region. In 1551 the French Christian Cabalist Guillaume Postel declared that the Enoch prophesies made before the Flood were preserved in the archives of the Queen of Sheba and that to this day they were believed to be canonical scripture in Ethiopia.<sup>25</sup> In 1553 he disclosed his source of information; in Rome (most likely, in 1545–6) he had met an Abyssinian priest (apparently, Tasfa Seyon) who illustrated him the content of *1 Enoch*.<sup>26</sup> Postel's information was included in 1559 by British playwright John Bale in his popular work on *Scriptorum Illustrium maioris Brytanniae posterior pars*. From Italy news quickly spread in all Europe that Enoch's "work is still today held as canonical scripture in Ethiopia and in the archives of the church of the Queen of Sheba (*Eius opus etiamnum supersest pro canonica scriptura, in Aethiopia: & in ecclesiae reginae Sabbaeorum archiuus*)."<sup>27</sup>

## 2. THE COUNTER-REFORMATION: THE DEMISE OF ITALIAN RENAISSANCE SCHOLARSHIP

In the first half of the sixteenth century Italy seemed to be destined for a leading role in the critical study of Second Temple Judaism and Christian Origins. The Council of Trento and the Counter-Reformation put an end to this season.

The controversy about the canon in particular had devastating consequences.<sup>28</sup> The Reformation insisted that the principle of *Hebraica veritas* enunciated by Jerome in the fourth century should be strictly interpreted with the exclusion from the canon of all Old Testament writings not included in the Hebrew Bible. The Church of Rome defended the position of Augustine who against Jerome had argued that the canon had to follow the Septuagint, which already in the Hellenistic Jewish communities had acquired a status equal to the *Biblia Hebraica*.

The council of Trento, however, was not a rematch of Jerome versus Augustine. Whereas the center of the ancient Christian debate was the *Hebraica veritas* versus the *Graeca veritas*, the question now concerned the relevance of the *Latina veritas*. The discussion had shifted from the question of what was authoritative, to the question of who had the authority. By denying the *Latina veritas*, the Reformation intended to challenge the authority of the Roman Catholic Church to define the canon in the name of its tradition, while the Catholics pursued the opposite view, having perfectly understood what was behind an apparent philological problem. At stake was the present and future authority of the Church. From the Reformers' point of view, the Old Testament documents translated into Latin from the Greek by Jerome without the support of the Hebrew texts came to symbolize the Roman Catholic abuse of authority. From the opposite perspective of the Roman Catholic Church, the refusal of the *Latin veritas* and the translation of the Bible "from the original texts" was an intolerable rebellion against the foundations of ecclesiastical authority.

<sup>25</sup> G. Postel, *De Etruriae regionis originibus* (Firenze: Giovanni Cipriani, 1551).

<sup>26</sup> G. Postel, *De originibus* (Basel: Joannes Oporinus, 1553); see M. L. Kuntz, *Guillaume Postel, Prophet of the Restitution of All Things: His Life and Thought* (Den Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981), 65.

<sup>27</sup> J. Bale, *Scriptorum illustrium maioris Brytanniae posterior pars* (Basel: Joannes Oporinus, 1559), 3.

<sup>28</sup> G. Boccaccini, "Some Brief Notes on the Early History of the Deuterocanonics," in *Canonicity, Setting, Wisdom in the Deuterocanonics*, ed. G. G. Xeravits, X. Szabó, and J. Zsengellér (Berlin: Gruyter, 2014), 19–28.

In 1549, three years after the conclusion of the Council of Trent, the crisis erupted. In England Richard Taverner removed Jerome's "apocryphal" books from its Bible and published them as an autonomous book. The corpus of the OT Apocrypha was born.<sup>29</sup>

The reaction of the Roman Catholic Church was extreme. The establishment of the ghettos in 1555 and the condemnation of Pagnini's translation in 1559 were two sides of the same coin in the fight against the *Hebraica veritas* to reaffirm with the *Latina veritas* the centrality of ecclesiastical authority according to the principles of the Council of Trent. The enunciation of the new Tridentine orthodoxy in biblical interpretation was entrusted to the work of a brilliant Italian scholar, Sixtus of Siena.

Sixtus was born in Siena in 1520 to a Jewish family and as a boy he worshiped in the local Synagogue and learned Hebrew. He converted to Christianity in his youth and entered the Franciscan order, where he distinguished himself as a theologian and preacher. In 1551, for his sympathies for the Reformation, he was accused of heresy and sentenced to the stake. He later recanted and was pardoned by the Inquisitor, the Dominican Antonio Michele Ghislieri, who had him transferred to the Dominican order and employed him in Cremona as a member of the Tribunal of the Inquisition. Sixtus's *Bibliotheca sacra* was completed in 1566, the same year in which his former accuser and now protector Ghislieri became Pope Pius V.<sup>30</sup> Published at Venice with papal patronage, Sixtus's work was the first main commentary on the Bible after the Council of Trent, a monumental encyclopedia aimed at defining the orthodox criteria for the interpretation of the biblical text and the definitive reading of its most controversial passages against the falsehood of the heretics. It was Sixtus who, in rejecting the Lutheran label of "apocryphal," coined the term "deuterocanonical" in recognition of Jerome's doubts but also to stress that the particular status of that body of literature did not diminish in any way its canonicity.

That the recognition of the superiority of the *Latina veritas* over the *Hebraica veritas* came from a Jewish convert and a former sympathizer of the Reformation enhanced the Catholic view of complete submission of the faithful to the authority of the Church and sealed the end of any freedom in biblical research.

To conform or to leave became the question many had to face. Some of the best biblical scholars and theologians left Italy, such as Bernardino Ochino, Pietro Martire Vermigli, and Girolamo Zanchi. They went to Switzerland, England, or Germany, where they contributed to the development of the Reformation. In Geneva, the son of Italian refugees, Giovanni Diodati translated the Bible into Italian in 1603 for the first time without the help of any Latin versions, directly from the Hebrew and Greek texts.<sup>31</sup> His translation became the standard version used for centuries by Italian Protestants.

The scholars who remained in Italy had to conform. They quickly learned how to approach the biblical texts indirectly, with literary narratives where history and erudition could be displayed without questioning the Latin canon and Tridentine orthodoxy, an art in which both Bartolomeo Dionigi and Filippo Picinelli excelled.<sup>32</sup> Also carefully avoiding theological controversies, Carlo Sigonio and the Jewish scholar Leone Modena concentrated on the study of the legal institutions

<sup>29</sup>R. Taverner, *The Volume of the Bokes called Apocrypha* (London: John Day and William Seres, 1549).

<sup>30</sup>S. da Siena, *Bibliotheca sancta*, 8 vols. (Venezia: Griffio, 1566).

<sup>31</sup>G. Diodati, *La Bibbia* (Genève: Jean de Tournes, 1603; 2nd ed., with annotations, 1607).

<sup>32</sup>B. Dionigi, *Compendio storico del Vecchio, e del Nuouo Testamento, cauato dalla sacra Bibbia* (Venezia: Valerio Bonelli, 1586); F. Picinelli, *The Lumi riflessi; or dir vogliam, Concetti della Sacra Bibbia osseruati ne i volumi non sacri* (Milano: Francesco Vigone, 1667).

and cultic practices of ancient (and modern) Israel.<sup>33</sup> Although restricted to canonical subjects, Italian artists such as Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio and Artemisia Gentileschi defied the canons of triumphant Counter-Reformation, revisiting biblical themes with great freedom and unprecedented realistic sensitivity.<sup>34</sup>

Italian scholars found more freedom outside the Bible. Between 1560 and 1575 Giulio Ballino, Agostino Ferentilli, and Pier Francesco Zini for the first time translated and divulged some of Philo's treatises.<sup>35</sup> In 1580–1 Francesco Baldelli produced another translation of the works of Josephus.<sup>36</sup>

Some successfully explored new fields. Cesare Baronio devoted his life to the study of Church history.<sup>37</sup> Antonio Bosio's *Roma sotterranea* offered in 1632 a first survey of the ancient catacombs of Rome, establishing the new field of Christian archaeology.<sup>38</sup> The *Biblioteca magna rabbinica* (1675–93) by Giulio Bartolucci and Carlo Giuseppe Imbonati laid the foundations for the study of Jewish post-biblical literature.<sup>39</sup> Yet despite all these achievements, the critical study of ancient sources never regained the centrality it had between 1450 and 1550, when Italy was at the forefront of biblical studies.

### 3. THE ITALIAN ENLIGHTENMENT

The revival of biblical studies in Italy in the eighteenth century was prompted by the influence of the French Enlightenment. It was in France that a Catholic biblical scholarship first emerged, eager to compete with their Protestant colleagues. Three monks, the Carmelite Arcangelo Agostini in Venice, the Benedictine Lamberto Gaetano Ponsampieri in Lucca, and the Benedictine Prospero Dell'Aquila in Naples, played a pivotal role not so much for their original research but as translators and interpreters of the French scholarship in Italy.

A prolific and accomplished author, Agostini, who wrote under the pseudonym of Selvaggio Canturani, translated several philosophical and historical works from French authors, including Augustin Calmet and Claude Fleury.<sup>40</sup> Lamberto Gaetano Ponsampieri, dean of the Collegiate Church of Saint Michael in Lucca, translated the exegetical work of Augustin Calmet on the Bible.<sup>41</sup> A well-respected professor at the University of Naples, Prospero Dell'Aquila turned a rather minor

<sup>33</sup> C. Sigonio, *De republica Hebraeorum* (Bologna: Rossi, 1582); L. Modena, *Historia de' riti hebraici* (Paris: 1637; and Venezia: Calleoni, 1638).

<sup>34</sup> A. Graham-Dixon, *Caravaggio: A Life Sacred and Profane* (New York: Norton, 2011); M. D. Garrard, *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989).

<sup>35</sup> G. Ballino, *La vita di Mose* (Venezia: Bevilacqua, 1560); A. Ferentilli, *La creazione del mondo* (Venezia: Gabriel Giolito Di Ferrari, 1570); P. F. Zini, *Il ritratto del vero et perfetto gentilhuomo* (Venezia: Rampazetto, 1575).

<sup>36</sup> F. Baldelli, *Flavio Giuseppe: Dell'Antichità de' Giudei* (Venezia: Gio. et Gio. Paolo Gioliti de' Ferrari, 1580); and F. Baldelli, *Flavio Giuseppe: Della guerra dei Giudei, Contra Apione, Dell'imperio della ragione* (Venezia: Gio. et Gio. Paolo Gioliti de' Ferrari, 1581); see S. Castelli, "Josephus in Renaissance Italy," in *A Companion to Josephus*, ed. H. H. Chapman and Z. Rodgers (Chichester: Wiley, 2016), 402–13.

<sup>37</sup> C. Baronio, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 12 vols. (Roma: Typographia Vaticana, 1588–1607).

<sup>38</sup> A. Bosio, *Roma sotterranea* (Roma: Facciotti, 1632).

<sup>39</sup> G. Bartolucci and C. G. Imbonati, *Biblioteca magna rabbinica*, 4 vols. (Roma: Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, 1675–93).

<sup>40</sup> A. Calmet, *La storia dell'Antico e Nuovo Testamento*, trans. S. Canturani (Venezia: Pezzana, 1725); C. Fleury, *Costumi degl'Israeliti, e de' cristiani*, trans. S. Canturani (Venezia: Pezzana, 1728).

<sup>41</sup> A. Calmet, *Il tesoro delle antichità sacre e profane*, 7 vols., trans. L.G. Ponsampieri (Lucca: Sebastiano Domenico Cappuri, 1729–42; 2nd ed., 6 vols., Verona: Dionisio Ramanzini; and Venezia: Francesco Pitteri, 1741–50).

product of French scholarship by Pierre Barral into the most popular Bible dictionary in Italy; for almost one century, the work would remain unrivaled, being reprinted several times throughout Italy.<sup>42</sup>

The French connection helped Italian scholars overcome the gap that for almost two centuries had kept them isolated from the international debate. Thanks to Agostini, Ponsampieri, and Dell'Aquila, a new generation of Enlightenment scholars emerged in Italy in the second half of the eighteenth century. Among them were Alessio Simmaco Mazzocchi, Antonio Martini, and Francesco Angiolini.

Mazzocchi, as many other Italian scholars educated in the seventeenth century, had made a name for himself safely in the field of Christian archaeology,<sup>43</sup> but his acquaintance with Prospero Dell'Aquila in Capua and Naples led him to the study of the Bible. Two years after the appearance of Dell'Aquila's dictionary he completed the first volume of a comprehensive critical commentary of Scriptures, something that no Italian scholar had accomplished since the sixteenth century.<sup>44</sup>

In the same years the Tuscan Antonio Martini began the project of translating the entire Bible from the Latin into Italian, the first time after Nicolò Malermi in 1471. First, he translated the New Testament and then with the help of a Florentine rabbi he approached the Old Testament. While following the texts of the Vulgate, in the notes he discussed at length the variants with the original Greek and Hebrew texts. For his massive display of erudition Martini gained universal acclaim and was appointed archbishop of Florence.<sup>45</sup> His translation was approved by Pope Pious VI and remained the official Catholic Italian version of the Bible until 1971.<sup>46</sup>

Francesco Angiolini was a Jesuit priest. A precocious polyglot, he traveled extensively in Europe and composed poems and hymns in various languages. He translated into Italian works of ancient authors written in Greek. Among them was the entire corpus of Flavius Josephus, which in 1779–80 he published in Verona in four volumes with notes, two centuries after the translation by Francesco Baldelli.<sup>47</sup>

The eighteenth century was also a significant age for Jewish studies. Two Italian Jewish emigrants became ambassadors of Italian scholarship in the world. David Nieto in 1702 moved from Venice and Livorno to lead the Sephardic community of London,<sup>48</sup> and Judah Monis settled in the English Colonies in North America to become the first college instructor of Hebrew language at Harvard in 1722.<sup>49</sup> In his monumental *Thesaurus antiquitatum sacrarum* (1744–69), Christian Hebraist Biagio Ugolini relentlessly accumulated all the texts he could find relating to Judaism.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>42</sup> P. Barral, *Dizionario portatile della Bibbia*, 4 vols., trans. P. Dell'Aquila (Napoli: Benedetto Gessari, 1758–60).

<sup>43</sup> G. Ceserani, "The Antiquary Alessio Simmaco Mazzocchi: Oriental Origins and the Rediscovery of Magna Graecia in Eighteenth-Century Naples," *Journal for the History of Collections* 19.2 (2007): 249–59.

<sup>44</sup> A. S. Mazzocchi, *Spicilegium Biblicum*, 3 vols. (Napoli: Stamperia Reale, 1762–78); see A. Perconte Licatense, *Alessio Simmaco Mazzocchi* (S. Maria C.V.: Edizioni Spartaco, 2001).

<sup>45</sup> P. D. Giovannoni, *Fra trono e cattedra di Pietro: Antonio Martini arcivescovo di Firenze nella Toscana di Pietro Leopoldo, 1781–1790* (Florence: Pagnini, 2010).

<sup>46</sup> A. Martini, *La sacra Bibbia* (Torino: Stamperia Reale, 1769–71).

<sup>47</sup> F. Angiolini, *Delle opere di Giuseppe Flavio*, 4 vols. (Verona: Eredi di Marco Moroni, 1779–80).

<sup>48</sup> D. Nieto, *Matteh Dan; or, Kuzari Heleq Sheni* (London: Ilive, 1714).

<sup>49</sup> J. Monis, *A Grammar of the Hebrew Tongue* (Boston: Jonas Green, 1735).

<sup>50</sup> B. Ugolini, *Thesaurus antiquitatum sacrarum*, 33 vols. (Venezia: Herthz, 1744–69).

The richness of the Italian Enlightenment is also apparent in the arts, where Apostolo Zeno, Pietro Metastasio, and Pietro Chiari were among the most illustrious librettists of biblical oratorios in Europe, and Francesca Manzoni Giusti and Alfonso Varano composed celebrated dramas on Second Temple Jewish history.<sup>51</sup>

Italy's greatest opportunity, however, came in the field of Enochic studies.<sup>52</sup> It started with the posthumous publication in 1703 of *Archivorum Veteris Testamenti*, a massive collection of canonical and noncanonical materials attributed to biblical figures of the Old Testament, by the Neapolitan Jesuit Scipione Sgambati.<sup>53</sup> Johann Albert Fabricius acknowledged Sgambati's work as one of the major sources of inspiration for his *Codex pseudepigraphicus Veteris Testamenti* (1713).<sup>54</sup> Among the materials collected by Sgambati were the Greek fragments of the book of Enoch, edited by Scaliger in 1606.<sup>55</sup>

In 1710 the Bishop of Bisceglie Pompeo Sarnelli authored the first commentary on the surviving portions of the book of the Watchers.<sup>56</sup> Bisceglie in Apulia was the ancient *Vigiliae* of Roman foundation. As the bishop of the *Vigilantes* (= Watchers) Sarnelli took special pride in writing a commentary on those angels who bore the same name as the people under his pastoral care. Sarnelli took a quite liberal and sympathetic approach. His goal was to show that the book conformed to, and confirmed, the orthodox Catholic doctrine. He staunchly defended the "authenticity" of Enoch's prophecies from any misunderstanding, which he attributed to heretics, Jews, and Muslims, never to the book itself.

The interest in the recovery of the book of Enoch was as strong in Italy as in the rest of Europe. Since the mid-sixteenth century it was well known that the book of Enoch was preserved in Ethiopia but any attempt to recover it had failed, until James Bruce's momentous trip to Ethiopia in 1769–73. In his official reports Bruce would always claim to have brought back from Ethiopia only three copies of the book of Enoch, now preserved in Paris and Oxford.<sup>57</sup> However, after returning to France and before his coming back to England, Bruce spent several months in Italy,<sup>58</sup> went to Rome in December 1773, and as confirmed by the correspondence between Pietro and Alessandro Verri,<sup>59</sup> donated a "fourth" copy of *1 Enoch* to the pope.<sup>60</sup> The manuscript was entrusted to the care of the library of Leonardo Antonelli; the orientalist Agostino Antonio Giorgi examined it immediately and confirmed in a letter to Antonelli that it was the same book from which the fragments of Syncellus had been extracted.

For a while it seemed that Italy could regain its status among the most advanced European nations and have a new beginning after the Renaissance. The turbulent events of the Napoleonic

<sup>51</sup> F. M. Giusti, *L'Ester* (Verona: Tumermani, 1733); A. Varano, *Giovanni di Giscala, tiranno del tempio di Gerusalemme* (Venezia: Valvasense, 1754).

<sup>52</sup> G. Boccaccini, "Earliest Commentaries on 1 Enoch before Laurence: Pompeo Sarnelli (1710) and Daniele Manin (1820)," in *Rediscovering Enoch? The Ancient Jewish Past from the 15th to 19th Century*, ed. A. Hessayon, A. Yoshiko Reed, and G. Boccaccini (Boston: Academic Studies Press, forthcoming).

<sup>53</sup> S. Sgambati, *Archivorum veteris testamenti* (Napoli: Michele Luigi Muzio, 1703).

<sup>54</sup> J. A. Fabricius, *Codes pseudepigraphus Veteris Testamenti* (Hamburg: Liebezeit, 1713).

<sup>55</sup> J. J. Scaliger, *Theusaurus temporum* (Leiden: Thomas Basson, 1606; 2nd ed., Amsterdam: Joannis Janssen, 1658).

<sup>56</sup> P. Sarnelli, *Annotazioni sopra il libro degli Egregori del s. profeta Henoch* (Venezia: Antonio Bortoli, 1710).

<sup>57</sup> J. Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, 1768–73*, 5 vols. (London: Robinsons, 1790).

<sup>58</sup> A. Murray, *Account of the Life and Writings of James Bruce, of Kinnaird, Esq. F.R.S.* (Edinburgh: George Ramsay, 1808).

<sup>59</sup> E. Greppi and A. Giuliani, eds., *Carteggio di Pietro e Alessandro Verri. Vol.6: gennaio 1773 – giugno 1774* (Milano: Casa Editrice L.F. Cogliati, 1928).

<sup>60</sup> G. Boccaccini, "James Bruce's 'Fourth' Manuscript: Solving the Mystery of the Provenance of the Roman Enoch Manuscript (Vat. et. 71)," *JSP* 27 (2018): 237–63.



age and of the Restoration blocked the development of the Italian Catholic scholarship. In 1820 a decree by Pope Pious VII once again prohibited all Italian translations of the Bible, including the Martini Bible. The Enoch ms. was never translated and languished forgotten in the Antonelli library.<sup>61</sup>

#### 4. THE ITALIAN “RISORGIMENTO”

All biblical scholars of the Italian Enlightenment were priests or members of religious orders. But times were changing. The Italian “Risorgimento” was not only the movement that led to the political unification of Italy as one nation but also marked the struggle for the emancipation of Italian society and the laity from ecclesiastical control.

It began with the arts, where events from the Second Temple Period and the cry of oppressed Jews were freely used by authors and patriots like Gioachino Rossini, Silvio Pellico, and Giuseppe Verdi to support the political struggle for Italian independence.<sup>62</sup>

A new kind of scholar began to emerge, figures like Daniele Manin, who, before becoming one of the leaders of the Italian Risorgimento, at the age of sixteen in 1820 produced a commentary on the Greek fragments of the *Book of Watchers*.<sup>63</sup> The proud scion of the Jewish-Venetian family of *conversi*, he declared his submission to the Church and dedicated his book to his teacher, a priest, but boldly claimed that his knowledge came from his father’s teachings, showing a spirit of independence that would have been inconceivable in previous generations.

With Aurelio Bianchi-Giovini, by far the most brilliant and non-conformist Italian biblical scholar of the nineteenth century, any residual formal submission to the Church disappeared. His 1844 introduction to Second Temple Judaism was a groundbreaking work for its strictly historical approach, the usage of all available sources, the emphasis on religious diversity, and the inclusion of Jesus and Christian origins.<sup>64</sup> It was one of the first books by an European scholar not only to enter in conversation with the work of Jewish scholars, such as Isaak Markus Jost and Peter Beer, but also to solicit, and host as a thirty-page appendix, the response by the leading Italian Jewish scholar of his time, Samuel David Luzzatto, who in 1830–1 had taught a pioneering course on Second Temple Judaism at the Collegio Rabbinico di Padova.<sup>65</sup> Equally innovative was Bianchi-Giovini’s 1853 treatise on New Testament criticism and the search for the historical Jesus.<sup>66</sup>

Bianchi-Giovini’s books were banned by the Catholic Church, but this did not prevent their circulation in the new Italy. The ultimate victory of the revolution and the birth of Italy as a unified

<sup>61</sup>The manuscript was eventually purchased by Angelo Mai for the Vatican Library in 1825 and its presence disclosed in 1831. It was too late for having any significant impact in Enochic studies, since Laurence had already published the English translation of the Oxford manuscript in 1821 and other manuscripts had in the meantime reached Europe from Ethiopia. See Boccaccini, “James Bruce’s ‘Fourth’ Manuscript.”

<sup>62</sup>G. Rossini, *Ciro in Babilonia* (1812); S. Pellico, *Esther of Engaddi* (1821); G. Verdi, *Nabucco* (1842); see P. Stefani, ed., *Dalla Bibbia al Nabucco* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2014), and F. Piperno, *La Bibbia all’opera: drammi sacri in Italia dal tardo Settecento al Nabucco* (Rome: Neoclassica, 2018).

<sup>63</sup>D. Manin, *Degli Egregori* (Venezia: Francesco Andreola, 1820).

<sup>64</sup>A. Bianchi-Giovini, *Storia degli Ebrei e delle loro sette e dottrine religiose durante il secondo tempio* (Milano: Pirota, 1844).

<sup>65</sup>The twenty-one *Lezioni di storia giudaica* were published by Luzzatto in 1852 as the second volume of his *Il giudaismo illustrato nella sua teorica, nella sua storia e nella sua letteratura* (Padua: Bianchi, 1852).

<sup>66</sup>A. Bianchi-Giovini, *Critica degli Evangelii* (Zürich: C. Fuesslin, 1853).

and independent nation in 1861 created a new climate of freedom. The new liberal constitution recognized the separation between Church and State and made all religions equal before the Law. For the first time in Italian history, Jews, Protestants, and liberal Catholics occupied important government positions in the administration of the new Kingdom.

The beginning of a new era in Italy is symbolically marked by the translation of the works of David Friedrich Strauss and Ernest Renan in 1863.<sup>67</sup> The Church had lost his monopoly over the press and the educational system. Jewish scholars (Giuseppe Rafaele Levi, Elia Benamozegh, Davide Castelli)<sup>68</sup> and university professors (Alessandro Chiappelli, Baldassare Labanca)<sup>69</sup> introduced into Italy the principles of the European Liberal School that promoted a rationalistic approach to Scriptures.

The Catholic hierarchy felt under siege and the best Catholic scholars of the nineteenth century, Angelo Mai and Antonio Maria Ceriani, were philologists who worked as librarians and collectors of manuscripts. But not even the Vatican could escape the new times if a layman like Giovanni Battista de Rossi was appointed director of the Christian Museum and president of the Pontifical Academy of Archaeology, and began the modern study of the Roman catacombs.<sup>70</sup>

Soon, the French Modernist movement penetrated Italy and made its official appearance on the Italian cultural scene with the journals *Studi Religiosi* (Florence, 1901–7) and *Rivista storico-critica delle scienze religiose* (Rome, 1905–10).<sup>71</sup> In a 1919 report the *American Journal of Theology* concluded that all conditions were now in place for the birth and development also in Italy of “a school of religions that could emulate the section of religious sciences of the famous Ecole des Hautes-Etudes de Paris.”<sup>72</sup> In fact, all the ingredients for a successful mix were present: the laity (Adolfo Omodeo, Luigi Salvatorelli, Raimondo Bacchisio Motzo, Panfilo Gentile, Piero Martinetti), the Protestants (Piero Chiminelli, Giovanni Luzzi), the “orthodox” biblical scholars (Leone Tondelli, Giuseppe Ricciotti), the Jews (Felice and Arnaldo Momigliano, Aldo Lattes, Umberto Cassuto, Israel Zolli), and the “modernists” (Giuseppe Bonaccorsi, Ernesto Buonaiuti, Salvatore Minocchi). Even the arts contributed with the popularity of Lorenzo Perosi’s oratorios and the success of the movie *Christus* (1916) directed by Giulio Antamoro.<sup>73</sup>

Among the most original accomplishments of this generation were works on the New Testament and the historical Jesus by Ernesto Buonaiuti, Adolfo Omodeo, and Salvatore Minocchi;<sup>74</sup> studies on

<sup>67</sup>D. F. Strauss, *La vita di Gesù; o, Esame critico della sua storia*, 2 vols. (Milano: F. Sanvito, 1863–5); E. Renan, *La vita di Gesù* (Milano: Daelli, 1863).

<sup>68</sup>G. R. Levi, *Parabole, leggende e pensieri: raccolti dal talmudici dei primi cinque secoli dell’e.v.* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1861); E. Benamozegh, *Storia degli esseni* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1865); D. Castelli, *Ammaestramenti del Vecchio e del Nuovo Testamento, Raccolti e Tradotti* (Firenze, G. Barbera, 1896).

<sup>69</sup>A. Chiappelli, “Gesù Cristo e i suoi recenti biografi,” *Nuova Antologia* 32 (1891): 427–56, 689–719; and 33 (1892): 246–61; B. Labanca, *Gesù Cristo nella letteratura contemporanea straniera e italiana* (Torino: Bocca, 1903).

<sup>70</sup>G. B. de Rossi, *La Roma sotterranea Cristiana*, 3 vols. (Roma: Cromo-litografia pontificia, 1864–77).

<sup>71</sup>M. Ranchetti, *The Catholic Modernists: A Study of the Religious Reform Movement, 1864–1907*, trans. Isabel Quigly (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

<sup>72</sup>L. H. Jordan, “The Study of the History of Religions in the Italian Universities,” *American Journal of Theology* 23 (1919): 41–60; cf. W. F. Badè, “Italian Modernism, Social and Religious,” *HTR* 4 (1911): 147–74.

<sup>73</sup>G. Boccaccini, “Gesù ebreo e cristiano: sviluppi e prospettive di ricerca sul Gesù storico in Italia, dall’Ottocento a oggi (with an appendix of works available in translation),” *Henoch* 29.1 (2007): 105–54.

<sup>74</sup>E. Buonaiuti, *Saggi di filologia e storia del Nuovo Testamento* (Roma: Ferrari, 1910); E. Buonaiuti, *Gesù il Cristo* (Roma: Formiggini, 1926); A. Omodeo, *Gesù e le origini del cristianesimo* (Messina: Principato, 1913); S. Minocchi, *Il Panteon. Origini del cristianesimo* (Firenze: Seeber, 1914).

Hellenistic Judaism by Raimondo Bacchisio Motzo and Arnaldo Momigliano;<sup>75</sup> the translation of the Bible into Italian by Giovanni Luzzi;<sup>76</sup> the introduction to Second Temple Judaism by Giuseppe Ricciotti along with his translation of Josephus;<sup>77</sup> and the survey of post-biblical Jewish literature by Umberto Cassuto.<sup>78</sup> Although none of these works were made available in translation to the international community,<sup>79</sup> they are a testament to the high level of quality reached in those years by the Italian scholarship and to its potential for future research.

The condemnation of Modernism by Pope Pius X in 1907 and, even more decisively, the rise of Fascism in the 1920s, the Concordat of 1929, and the anti-Jewish racial laws in 1938 caused a progressive and dramatic decline in freedom of research and put an end to this creative experience. The common sentiment has changed; the most popular work of the 1920s was *La storia di Cristo* by Giovanni Papini, an international bestseller that was translated in twenty-three languages but in which Italy showed its most conservative face.<sup>80</sup> One after another the most original voices were silenced. Salvatore Minocchi and Ernesto Buonaiuti survived the excommunication in 1907 by becoming professors in Italian universities but lost their positions as a consequence of the 1929 concordat between Fascist Italy and the Vatican, which reestablished Catholicism as the State religion and marginalized Protestants and dissidents.<sup>81</sup> Luigi Salvatorelli, Pietro Martinetti, and Giorgio Della Vida were persecuted because of their militant anti-fascism. The last to give up were Arnaldo Momigliano and Umberto Cassuto, who left Italy immediately after the 1938 racial laws, to continue their careers in England and Israel, respectively. In the end only Ricciotti survived, capable of producing significant works on Jesus and Paul still in the 1940s but at the cost of becoming more and more apologetic in his approach.<sup>82</sup> The generation of Modernism would have no heirs.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Since its rise in the mid-fifteenth century, Italian biblical scholarship has experienced a dramatic series of ups and downs, reaching its heights during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, and in the aftermath of the Risorgimento. Following the devastating experience of Fascism, the Holocaust, and the Second World War, it took several decades to see a new beginning and blossoming of an Italian school. In the 1960s the Vatican II Council laid the foundations for a renewed interest in historical research, fostered a new climate of freedom and ecumenical dialogue, and inspired the international success of Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Gospel according to Matthew* (1964). The study of

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<sup>75</sup> R. B. Motzo, *La condizione giuridica dei giudei di Alessandria sotto i Lagida e i Romani* (Torino: Bocca, 1913); R. B. Motzo, *Aristea* (Torino: Bocca, 1915); R. B. Motzo, *Saggi di storia e letteratura giudeo-ellenistica* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1925); A. Momigliano, *Prime linee di storia della tradizione maccabaica* (Roma: Foro italiano, 1930).

<sup>76</sup> G. Luzzi, *La Bibbia* (Firenze: Fiedes et Amor, 1921–30).

<sup>77</sup> G. Ricciotti, *Storia d'Israele*, 2 vols. (Torino: SEI, 1932); and *Flavio Giuseppe tradotto e commentato* (Torino: SEI, 1937).

<sup>78</sup> U. Cassuto, *Storia della letteratura ebraica postbiblica* (Firenze: Israel, 1938).

<sup>79</sup> The only exception is the lengthy survey of the research on the historical Jesus published in English by L. Salvatorelli, "From Locke to Reitzenstein: The Historical Investigation of the Origins of Christianity," *HTR* 22 (1929): 263–369.

<sup>80</sup> G. Papini, *La storia di Cristo* (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1921).

<sup>81</sup> V. Vinay, *Ernesto Buonaiuti e l'Italia religiosa del suo tempo* (Torre Pellice: Claudiana, 1956); B. Greco, *Ketzer oder Prophet?: Evangelium und Kirche bei dem Modernisten Ernesto Buonaiuti, 1881–1946* (Zürich: Benziger, 1979); C. D. Nelson and W. N. Pittenger, eds., *Pilgrim of Rome: An Introduction to the Life and Work of Ernesto Buonaiuti* (Welwyn: James Nisbet, 1969).

<sup>82</sup> G. Ricciotti, *Vita di Gesù Cristo* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1941), and G. Ricciotti, *Paolo apostolo* (Roma: Coletti, 1946).

Second Temple Judaism and Christian Origins in Italy was revived in the 1980s and the 1990s by scholars such as Giuseppe Barbaglio, Rinaldo Fabris, Giovanni Garbini, Giorgio Jossa, Clara Kraus Reggiani, Bruno Maggioni, Carlo Maria Martini, Luigi Moraldi, Romano Penna, Mauro Pesce, Paolo Sacchi, Giuseppe Segalla, Lea Sestieri, and Jan Alberto Soggin. The translation of works by Soggin, Garbini, Sacchi, Penna, and Pesce in particular highly contributed to the international reputation of Italian scholarship.<sup>83</sup>

The future is difficult to predict. Italian biblical scholarship has consolidated institutions, such as the Italian Biblical Association and the Italian Association for the Study of Judaism, and research tools, from the journals *Henoch* to the *Rivista Biblica* and *Materia giudaica*. Italian scholars now active in the field are no longer insulated but fully engaged and integrated in international ventures (Luca Arcari, Francesca Calabi, Piero Capelli, Giovanni Ibbà, Corrado Martone, Luca Mazzinghi).<sup>84</sup> Some of them teach outside of Italy, including Giovanni Bazzana, Gabriele Boccaccini, Sandra Gambetti, Edmondo Lupieri, and Pierluigi Piovanelli. Yet Italy has not solved all its structural problems: the situation of studies in religion in Italian universities and seminaries remains precarious and makes it difficult for younger researchers and scholars to find academic positions.<sup>85</sup> What will follow the generation of the Vatican Council is yet to be seen.

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<sup>83</sup>J. A. Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976) and J. A. Soggin, *A History of Israel* (London: SCM, 1984); G. Garbini, *History & Ideology in Ancient Judaism* (London: SCM, 1988) and G. Garbini, *Myth and History in the Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003); P. Sacchi, *The History of the Second Temple Period* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994); and P. Sacchi, *Jewish Apocalyptic and Its History* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); R. Penna, *Paul the Apostle* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996); and A. Destro and M. Pesce, *Encounters with Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012).

<sup>84</sup>See G. Boccaccini, "Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition: The Contribution of Italian Scholarship," in *Mysteries and Revelations: Apocalyptic Studies since the Uppsala Colloquium* ed. J. J. Collins and J. H. Charlesworth (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 33–50; F. Calabi, ed., *Italian Studies on Philo of Alexandria* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); C. Martone, "Qumran Research in Italy," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Scholarly Perspective: A History of Research*, ed. D. Dimant, STDJ 99 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 601–10.

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