THEMES IN BIBLICAL NARRATIVE

Abraham, the Nations, and the Hagarites

Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Perspectives on Kinship with Abraham

edited by Martin Goodman, George H. van Kooten and Jacques T.A.G.M. van Ruiten

BRILL

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Biblical Narrative
Jewish and Christian Traditions

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ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviations are according to *The SBL Handbook of Style* with the following additions:

ADPV	Abhandlungen des deutschen Palästinavereins
AJEC	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
AnOx	Anecdota Oxoniensia
BAChr	The Bible in Ancient Christianity
BBA	Berliner byzantinistische Arbeiten
BCNHT	Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi textes
BHR	*Bibliothèque d'humanisme et renaissance*
BKP	Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie
Boreas	*Boreas*
BSIH	Brill's Studies in Intellectual History
BUS	Brown University Studies
Byzant	Moravcsik, G., *Byzantinoturcica* (2 vols.; 3rd ed.; Berliner byzantinistische Arbeiten 10–11; East-Berlin 1983).
Campus	Campus
CCR	Cambridge Companions to Religion
CFHB SB	Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae. Series berolinensis
CHPT	Cambridge History of Political Thought
CLL	Classical Life and Letters
ColC	*Collectanea cisterciensia*
Controv	Controversions
Copt	*Coptica*
CSCD	Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine
CSIC	Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization
CTan	Corpus tannaiticum
DK	Diels, H. and W. Kranz, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (3 vols.; 6th ed.; Berlin 1951–1952).
DLZ	*Deutsche Literaturzeitung*
EAC	Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique
EC	*Les études classiques*
EDSS	Schiffman, L.H. and J.C. VanderKam, eds., *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (2 vols.; Oxford 2000).
EHST	Europäische Hochschulschriften Theologie

EI²	*The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (12 vols.; 2nd ed.; Leiden 1960–2009).
EQ	*Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān* (6 vols.; Leiden 2001–2006).
FARG	Forschungen zur Anthropologie und Religionsgeschichte
FChr	Fontes christiani
GNO	Gregorii Nysseni opera
GPM	*Göttinger Predigtmeditationen*
HCS	Hellenistic Culture and Society
HSoed	Horae soederblomianae
IM	Islamkundliche Materialien
IOSt	*Israel Oriental Studies*
ISBL	Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature
JCPS	Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series
JS	*Jewish Studies: Forum of the World Union of Jewish Studies*
JSAI	*Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*
JSIJ	*Jewish Studies Internet Journal*
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JWCI	*Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*
KT	*Kerk en theologie*
LBG	Trapp, E., *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität, besonders des 9.–12. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna 1994–).
LDiff	*Lectio difficilior*
LLJC	The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization
LM	*Lexikon des Mittelalters*
LOS	London Oriental Series
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
MAW	*Met andere woorden*
Megh	*Meghillot*
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historia
Mnem	*Mnemosyne*
MP	*Masoret ha-Piyyut*
MTS	Major Thinkers Series
NGWGPHK NAW	Nachrichten von der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen: Philologisch-historische Klasse. Fachgruppe 1. Nachrichten aus der Altertumswissenschaft
NP	*Der Neue Pauly*
NTR	New Testament Readings
NTTheol	New Testament Theology
OPA	Les œuvres de Philon d'Alexandrie

OSHT	Oxford Studies in Historical Theology
PA	Philosophia antiqua
PACS	Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series
Phron	*Phronesis*
PM	Past Masters
POS	Princeton Oriental Studies
PseudS	Pseudepigrapha Series
PT	*Poetics Today*
PTA	Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen
RArch	*Rivista di archeologia*
RBLit	*Review of Biblical Literature*
RechAug	*Recherches augustiniennes*
RechRenc	Recherches et rencontres
RH	*Revue historique*
RM	*Rheinisches Museum*
RocO	*Rocznik orientalistyczny*
RPh	*Revue de philologie, de littérature et d'histoire anciennes*
Saec	*Saeculum*
SCJ	Studies in Christianity and Judaism / Études sur le christianisme et le judaïsme
SCMIC	Studia Collegii Maximi Immaculatae Conceptionis
ScrA	Scriptores aethiopici
ScrCI	*Scripta classica israelica*
SGPSPS	Structure and Growth of Philosophic Systems from Plato to Spinoza
SHGR	Studies in the History of Greece and Rome
Sinai	*Sinai*
SLAEI	Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam
SMHC	Studies in Medieval History and Culture
SMTFIJS	S. Mark Taper Foundation Imprint in Jewish Studies
SOA	Sammlung Orientalischer Arbeiten
SPOT	Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament
SRB	Studies in Rewritten Bible
SSSBL	Symposium Series SBL
STCPFGL	Studi e testi per il corpus dei papiri filosofici greci e latini
Stern, *GLAJJ*	Stern, M., ed., introd., trans., and comm., *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (3 vols.; Jerusalem 1976–1984).
SUNY BP	SUNY Series in Near Eastern Studies Bibliotheca Persica
SupCalv	Supplementa Calviniana

SWR	Studies in Women and Religion
TBN	Themes in Biblical Narrative
TDSA	Testi e documenti per lo studio dell'antichità
TECC	Textos y estudios Cardenal Cisneros
TEDPJT	Translations of Early Documents. Series 1. Palestinian Jewish Texts (Pre-Rabbinic)
ThDiss	Theologische Dissertationen
TSMEMJ	Texts and Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Judaism
TST	Toronto Studies in Theology
TT	Texts and Translations
TTH	Translated Texts for Historians
TW	Theologische Wissenschaft
TzF	Texte zur Forschung
VHPS	Veröffentlichungen aus der Heidelberger Papyrus-Sammlung
Viv	*Vivarium*
WBS	Wiener byzantinistische Studien
Zet	Zetemata

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INTRODUCTION

Abraham's Children in the "Genome" and the "Pre-Genome" Era

Recently, in an eye-catching article in the *American Journal of Human Genetics*, Gil Atzmon and colleagues tackled the question "of whether current Jewish communities around the world share more than a religious background" through genome-wide analysis. According to the results, the different Jewish populations can be distinguished genetically and can also be separated from non-Jewish populations. Hence the article is entitled as follows: "Abraham's Children in the Genome Era: Major Jewish Diaspora Populations Comprise Distinct Genetic Clusters with Shared Middle Eastern Ancestry."[1] The results indicate that contemporary Jews share both religious and genetic history. The article's authors, who have been historically informed by scholars of ancient Judaism such as Lawrence Schiffman, make it explicit that their study "touches upon an issue that was raised over a century ago by Maurice Fishberg, Joseph Jacobs, and others about whether the Jews constitute a race, a religious group, or something else." In the outcome of their discussion, the authors now conclude that indeed, through their genomic research, "Over the past 3,000 years, both the flow of genes and the flow of religious and cultural ideas have contributed to Jewishness."

It is the religious and cultural ideas about the Jews' ethnic identity as a *genos* which we study in this volume, together with their views on other nations, and the way in which Christianity and Islam, from their distinctive perspectives, relate to the Jewish *genos*. Central to our enquiry is the narrative of Abraham. Jews, Christians, and Muslims describe their origins with close reference to this, including the complex story of Abraham's relationship to Hagar (Gen 16 and 21:8–21). This volume sketches the history of interpretation of some of the key passages in this narrative, not least the verses which state that in Abraham

[1] G. Atzmon et al., "Abraham's Children in the Genome Era: Major Jewish Diaspora Populations Comprise Distinct Genetic Clusters with Shared Middle Eastern Ancestry," *AJHG* 86 (2010): 850–859.

all the nations of the earth will be blessed (Gen 12:1–3). This passage, which features prominently in Christian historiography, is largely disregarded in ancient Judaism, prompting the question of how the relationship between Abraham and the nations was perceived in Jewish sources. This focus is supplemented by the question of how Islamic historiography relates to the Abraham narrative, and in particular to the descent of the Arabs from Abraham through Ishmael and Hagar. In studying the traditional readings of these narratives, the volume offers a detailed yet wide-ranging analysis of important aspects of the accounts of their origins which emerged within the three Abrahamic religions. Thus, the volume is about Abraham, the nations, and the Hagarites, offering Jewish, Christian, and Islamic perspectives on kinship with Abraham. We use the term "Hagarites" to designate the offspring of Abraham through Hagar and their son Ishmael. As is shown in two articles in this volume, by Ed Noort and Anthony Hilhorst, although the Ishmaelites and Hagarites occur in the Old Testament, it is only later that the link between Ishmael and the Ishmaelites, and that between Hagar and the Hagarites, is rendered explicit. The Hagarites are mentioned as Arab tribes on several occasions in late texts of the Old Testament (Ps 83:7; 1 Chr 5:10, 19, 20; 27:31), but it is nowhere said that they are the descendants of Hagar. Yet, as Hilhorst notes, there was an awareness that Hagar and Ishmael were genealogically connected with the Hagarites and the Ishmaelites, also because the Hebrew ending *-î* in the terms *Hagrîm* and *Yišmĕʿēʾlîm* is probably patronymic. By studying the relationship between Abraham, the nations, and the Hagarites, we focus on the question how the kinship with Abraham was perceived within Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the three so-called Abrahamic religions. This also involves the phenomena of ethnocentrism and hostility towards the nations. As will appear from the volume, the narrative of the blessing of the nations in Abraham (Gen 12:1–3) is barely received and commented upon in Judaism. Christianity in its turn, following Paul (as has been emphasized in the so-called New Perspective on Paul), consciously justifies its existence with this narrative and argues that true Abrahamites do not need to be genetically related to Abraham. Islam, in its turn, again emphasizes a genetic understanding of Abraham's children, in the sense that the Arabs are understood as the genetic descendants of Abraham through Hagar and Ishmael.

The present volume is the result of a two-stage project. In October 2006, a *Themes in Biblical Narrative* colloquium was held at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Groningen,

devoted to Abraham and Hagar. Two years later, in September 2008, under the co-direction of Martin Goodman, another colloquium was devoted to Abraham and the nations. In this introduction, we will summarize the main thrust of argumentation which runs through the various papers.

Old Testament Narrative

The first part is devoted to Abraham, the nations, and the Hagarites in the Old Testament. In his contribution on Abraham and the nations, Ed Noort (Groningen) addresses those texts in the Old Testament in which Abraham's relationship to the nations is discussed. He first shows how the prophetic texts on the cusp of the exile enrich the figure of Abraham. His role as an exemplary ancestor grows and sometimes he surpasses Jacob. However, the supposed universalism of Gen 12 is nowhere present. The prophets do not portray Abraham as the ancestor who plays a role as a mediator of universal blessings for all the families of the earth. They focus exclusively on the future of exiled Israel. Subsequently, Noort studies the oldest narratives, within the Abraham cycle itself, that focus on the relationship between Abraham and the neighbouring nations: the Abraham and Lot cycle, and the Hagar and Ishmael cycle. These narratives do not have a universalistic meaning. The relationship to Abraham or Israel is not decisive for the automatic reception of blessings for all people. Finally, he shows how Gen 12:1–3 breathes universalism: blessings and all the families of the world take centre stage. He opts for a reflexive translation of the *nip'al* in v. 3b: Abraham's blessing will be so great that all the families of the earth *shall bless themselves* by him/his name. The accumulation of blessings indeed counteracts the dark tones of universal judgement in Gen 2–11.

In his contribution on Hagar, Ed Noort focuses on kinship with Abraham in the narratives of Gen 16 and 21 on the birth of Ishmael (Gen 16) and the sending away of Hagar and Ishmael (Gen 21:8–21). Genesis 16 demonstrates the view held by sedentary groups about the strange and dangerous people of the desert, who were nevertheless still family, since the ancestor of both groups was Abraham. The sociological setting of the groups living in and on the fringes of the desert can be found in the Assyrian texts from the eighth century BCE onwards. The link to Abraham is made by the figure of Hagar, created in the image of her son Ishmael. Genesis 21 is a late reworking of the original narrative

of Gen 16. Ishmael, the first-born son, will not be the real heir; Isaac, the child of divine rather than human initiative, shall inherit. Although they live apart and develop different cultures, both children receive the divine promise of a future great nation after undergoing a near-death trial.

Early Judaism and Its Greco-Roman Environment

The second part of the volume deals with the reception of Abraham, the nations, and the descendants of Hagar and Ishmael in early Jewish literature, and to the knowledge of Abraham in Greco-Roman sources. In his paper "Spartans and Jews: Abrahamic Cousins?," Jan N. Bremmer (Groningen) studies the forged Jewish-Spartan correspondence, dating from the second century BCE and used by the Jewish author of 1 Maccabees, in which the Spartans claim that Abraham is their ancestor, too. According to this correspondence, the Spartan king Areus writes that the Spartans and the Jews "are brothers and that they are of the stock (*genos*) of Abraham." As Bremmer argues, this view of Jewish-Spartan *syngeneia* was the current legend among the Jewish upper-class in the first half of the second century BCE. The background of this genealogical construction between Jews and Spartans is the Jewish need to justify their distinctive lifestyle against Greek charges that they did not mix with other people and kept themselves separate from others. As Bremmer argues, "In order to defend themselves, they evidently developed the interesting strategy of comparing their way of life with that of the Spartans. The latter similarly had a famous lawgiver, namely Lycurgus, and were known in Greece as people that did not like, and even expelled, strangers. By comparing themselves to the xenophobic but illustrious Spartans, the Jews thus cleverly … tried to legitimate their own special ways of life." In Bremmer's view, real diplomatic contacts between Jerusalem and Sparta never took place during the Maccabean and Hasmonean period. But although not authentic, this correspondence is still very important. Areus's claim that Abraham is the ancestor of both Spartans and Jews rests on God's promise that all nations will be blessed in Abraham (Gen 12:3; 17:5). Moreover, its claim of kinship between Jews and other peoples must have been a *topos* in contemporary Judaism, which clearly was intent on raising the status of Abraham. According to Bremmer, the collection of such Jewish-Spartan letters can be compared to the contemporary collection of letters from Solomon to Pharaoh Vaphres and the Phoenician king Souron. It seems that in the middle of the second

century BCE collections of letters circulated in Jerusalem that had to prove the importance of the Jews within the world at large. It is in this context that the appeal to Abraham in the Jewish-Spartan correspondence must be seen. It is testimony to the Jewish tendency to integrate itself into the universal world.

In his paper "Did the Gentiles Know Who Abraham Was?," Pieter W. van der Horst (Utrecht) gives an overview of pagan literature from the third century BCE till the sixth century CE. In his treatment, van der Horst differentiates between the magical papyri and the extant literary sources. As regards the former, it appears that various magical papyri contain the formula "the God of Abraham" (or, more probably, "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"). Yet, it appears to be extremely doubtful whether the magicians had any idea of what the names of the three patriarchs stood for. In spite of their use of this formula, these practitioners of magical rites and exorcists did not know who Abraham and his son and grandson were; none of the passages from the magical papyri gives the impression that their authors knew more than just the names of the three patriarchs. In the literary sources, the picture is altogether different, however. Although some of these authors did not have any first-hand knowledge of the Bible, others do have reliable information, although hardly before the first centuries CE. What is remarkable in several instances is the positive tone. As van der Horst argues, although Abraham was not widely known, all authors who mention him had a positive evaluation of the patriarch; he is seen as a wise and just man, who was also a ruler, with expertise in astrology. One of the concluding observations which van der Horst makes is "that, unlike in the case of Moses, by and large both the well-informed and the less well-informed authors held Abraham in high regard. Why were they more critical of Moses than of Abraham? Was it because, unlike Abraham, Moses was always seen as the lawgiver of the Jews and for that reason as the founder of the Jewish way of life that was so often derided and despised by the Greeks and Romans?" "This question," as he rightly remarks, "certainly deserves closer investigation."

Mladen Popović (Groningen), subsequently, shows that there is no reception history of Gen 12:3 in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The idea that all the nations, or rather families, of the earth are blessed in, find blessing in, or bless themselves through Abraham does not appear in the Scrolls from Qumran. The absence of a reception history for this passage in the Dead Sea Scrolls is not a coincidence, as almost no early Jewish texts give evidence of its reception history, and should be understood against

the extremely negative role that the Gentiles play in many early Jewish eschatological and apocalyptic texts.

Jacques van Ruiten (Groningen) shows how the Jewish book of *Jubilees* occupies the most extreme position at the negative side of the universalistic spectrum of early Jewish texts. The book opts for a sharp exclusion of other nations. Also, Abraham is connected with these polemics. An analysis of the rewriting of Gen 12:1–3 shows that Abraham's moving from his homeland and his father's house is in fact his departure from the impure world of idolatry of the nations. Apparently, the author of *Jubilees* sees no contradiction between his particularistic theology and his borrowing of the universalistic expressions from the book of Genesis to bless these nations. It is important to note, however, that these expressions to bless the nations are adopted literally in *Jubilees*. There are no additions in the book with regard to Genesis that run counter to its particularistic view. That means that the universalistic strains in the book are mainly derived from Genesis, and completely subordinated to its particularistic emphasis on Israel.

As regards the reception of the narrative of Hagar in *Jubilees*, Jacques van Ruiten traces the way in which both Gen 16 and 21 were rewritten. He shows that *Jub*. 14:21–24 alters the narrative of the birth of Ishmael mainly through omissions. According to *Jubilees*, Abraham's entire family lives in great harmony. Both Isaac and Ishmael have kinship with Abraham. It is, therefore, not necessary for the author of *Jubilees* to speak about Hagar's flight into the wilderness and her subsequent return in *Jub*. 14:21–24, because he does not report the tension between Hagar and Sarah. This, consequently, changes the picture of both Sarah and Hagar in *Jubilees*. Sarah is depicted more positively, and while Hagar's status is neither raised nor lowered, her relationship to Sarah is altered. Moreover, the birth of Ishmael is closely connected to the concluding of the covenant and its promises of progeny and land. A second account about Hagar in *Jub*. 17:1–14, which reworks Gen 21, shows that on the occasion of the feast celebrating Isaac's weaning, Ishmael is not only present but is also referred to by name and is reported to be near his father Abraham. Abraham's happiness at the banquet triggers Sarah's jealousy because it threatens the divine promise that Isaac will be the true heir of Abraham and Sarah. God affirms Sarah's right to send Hagar and Ishmael away, which according to *Jubilees* is one of the ways that God tested Abraham.

In her paper "Abraham and the Nations in the Works of Philo of Alexandria," Phoebe Makiello (Oxford) comments on Philo's interpretation of Gen 12:2–3 about the blessing of the nations in Abraham. All

quotations of this passage are restricted to his treatise *De migratione Abrahami*. In Philo's interpretation, it is the wise, virtuous man who is addressed in this passage, upon whom the rest of humanity is dependant. Or, anthropologically speaking, it is the perfect mind which will sanctify all its tribes, i.e., all its faculties. This righteous man acts as a mediator between God and humanity. As Makiello explains, the blessings which are mediated through the wise man can be bestowed on any human being, regardless of ethnicity or religion. Philo's allegorical interpretation of Gen 12:3 appears to abandon all religious particularism, since his view on the controlling effect of a virtuous mind upon the senses and passions is applicable to all humankind.

Philo of Alexandria is also the topic of the next paper by Abraham Bos (Amsterdam), but now with attention to the figure of Hagar. Bos focuses particularly on the many references to Hagar in Philo's *On Mating with the Preliminary Studies* (*De congressu eruditionis gratia*). As Bos explains, Philo etymologizes Hagar's name as "foreigner," "asylum-seeker," and is cognizant of the fact that she is the *progenetrix* of the people characterized by their conflict with the people of Israel. Yet the tension between Hagar and Sarah is dehistoricized and taken in a metaphorical way, along the lines of the method of philosophical allegoresis borrowed from the Greek literary tradition. In Philo's understanding, Sarah's proposal to Abraham that he should take her slave Hagar as his concubine is not seen as an improper way of begetting offspring for Abraham but is very wise indeed. Sarah is only to bear children to those who have the required spiritual adulthood. Therefore, as Bos explains, "Abraham, symbol of the soul in search of knowledge, must necessarily, before he can achieve a truly fruitful possession of wisdom, first address himself to study of the 'preparatory disciplines,' which together form the propaedeutics of wisdom. This is why the encyclopaedic sciences, though secondary, seem 'earlier' and older as a phase on the way towards knowledge." Philo's differentiation between wisdom and the *enkyklios paideia* has its background in Greek philosophy. A comparison with the philosophers shows that the identification between the propaedeutic sciences with Hagar, Abraham's handmaiden, does not mean that study of these branches of science is a "slavish" activity. As Greco-Roman philosophers such as Seneca show, there is only a hierarchical subordination of all "free" sciences to the "most free" science of philosophy. In this sense, the tensions between Hagar and Sarah are minimized.

In his essay "Josephus on Abraham and the Nations," Martin Goodman (Oxford) emphasizes that the universal figure of Abraham, because

of whom a blessing would come to all the world, is almost absent from Josephus' writings. He hardly makes use of the universal significance of Abraham as described in Gen 12:1–3. The option was available to Josephus to make a great deal of the significance of Abraham, and in this way he could have explained to non-Jews the excellence of Judaism and the unfairness of contemporary accusations that Jews were misanthropic. But, as Goodman observes, "the picture of Abraham which Josephus chose to paint fell far short of the depiction of a figure of universal significance which might have been expected." In his *Jewish Antiquities* Josephus largely gives the impression that the figure of Abraham had no "importance beyond the confines of purely Jewish history. The wider perspective, when it comes, involves neither Abraham's message nor, more broadly, the divine blessing mediated through him, but through his non-Jewish descendants whose lineage was traced back not to Sarah but either to his concubine Hagar or to his second wife Keturah." Through Hagar Abraham becomes the ancestor of the Arabs, and through Keturah, whose six sons were sent out to found colonies, his descendants also spread in Troglodytis, Arabia Felix, Libya, and Africa. Yet neither motive is further developed by Josephus. The silence of Josephus about Abraham's universal importance, as Goodman argues, leads to the conclusion that Josephus did not expect "the reputation of Abraham as the source of blessings to the whole world to be known to his Gentile readers."

In her paper "Hagar, Ishmael, and Abraham's Household in Josephus' *Antiquitates judaicae*," Birgit van der Lans (Groningen) argues that Josephus' reworking of the biblical narrative, and his stipulation of the relationship between Isaac (Abraham's "legitimate" son) and Ishmael (the son of a concubine), owes much to contemporary family law concerning marriage and inheritance, slavery and concubinage. It seems that, as in other biblical cases of children born to concubines or slaves, Josephus also considered Ishmael to be an illegitimate child. Isaac, however, is viewed as Abraham's only son, thus implying a difference in legal status between Ishmael and Isaac. The latter is Abraham's only *legitimate* son because Ishmael was born to a concubine. Whereas this distinction between legitimate children and children born from concubines is not found in the Hebrew Bible or the Septuagint, it seems very plausible that it is introduced because Josephus adopts contemporary family law. Josephus' reworking not only demonstrates the high level of acculturation to his Roman context, but also seems to reveal his wish to show that Judaism was not incompatible with Roman society, as Flavian propaganda after the Jewish War claimed.

Rabbinic Judaism

The third section of the volume deals with rabbinic perspectives on Abraham, the nations, and the descendants of Hagar and Ishmael. Moshe Lavee (Haifa) compares the traditions from the two divergent rabbinic milieus of Late Antiquity—Babylon and the land of Israel (Palestine), and by uncovering the work of late redactors and transmitters, he is able to portray the important shift in the image of Abraham as a proselytizer that occurred as rabbinic traditions migrated from the land of Israel to Babylon during the first half of the first millennium. The image of Abraham's mission to the nations was very popular in traditions preserved in classical rabbinic literature. Abraham is portrayed as proclaiming the name of God in public; leading people to recognize the monotheistic belief; practising common missionary acts; serving food and taking care of people's needs in order to, or in a manner that, brought them near either to the faith, to God, or to the Jewish people. The Babylonian Talmud shows a coherent and consistent tendency to depart from these earlier Jewish Palestinian traditions encouraging missionary activity. The tendency was accomplished using the literary strategies of (1) internalizing the mission, (2) a shift from preaching to polemics, and (3) silencing the missionary traditions. The Palestinian traditions lost their missionary flavour and were converted in Babylonian circles to deal with the intra-Jewish rabbinic mission for rabbinic dominance among the Jews themselves.

Further treatments of rabbinic literature are also offered in subsequent papers. Joanna Weinberg (Oxford) examines the first four sections of *Midrash Tanhuma* for the pericope *lek leka*, each of which sheds light on the meaning of Abraham's call in Gen 12:1. The purpose is patently particularistic. The nations have little or no place in the scheme of this particular exegete. Exile from his fatherland is the consequence of Abraham's perfect behaviour in a land contaminated by idolatry. Abraham can now put behind him the lifeless world of the idolatrous people among whom he lived. Abraham's exit from his fatherland and progression to great nationhood is indicative of the beginning of a new era, and this new creation will come to fulfilment when Israel receives the Torah. Abraham's mission is for the sake of one nation, Israel. The undefined "blessing" in Gen 12:2 is unequivocally interpreted in relation to Abraham and Israel. This is confirmed by the midrashic literal interpretation of the phrase "I shall bless those who bless you" in Gen 12:3, which is taken to refer to those responsible for the priestly benediction—the tribe of Levi—whose role was to bless Israel. Thus ignoring the final part of the verse,

Midrash Tanhuma weaves its own understanding of the particular nature of Abraham's call within a larger framework of a history of the Jewish people which extends from Abraham to Moses, culminating in the restored kingdom of Judea.

Ronit Nikolsky (Groningen) concentrates on exegetical motifs in chs. 5 and 6 of the Tosefta tractate *Sotah* about the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael. This biblical story contains a difficulty for the rabbis as Gen 21:9 suggests that Ishmael's playing, whatever that activity may involve, was the reason for the expulsion of him and his mother. In *t. Sotah* 6, Ishmael's playing is therefore interpreted as a grave sin. The rabbis differ from each other on whether this sin was idol worship, incestuous behaviour, murder, or a competition with Isaac over the inheritance. These different exegetical motifs are used by the early sages to illustrate arguments in a debate about exegesis and authority. The visibility and vitality of the exegetical motifs was part of the culture of the sages. The exegetical motif of Ishmael as an idol-worshipper received an authoritative status and became a fixed textual unit. This, in turn, was used by an unlearned copyist to replace an original argument of Sarah, which is now lost, rendering a whole Tosefta passage incoherent.

Florentino García Martínez (Groningen—Leuven) explores the traditions built around the figure of Hagar in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*. With regard to her Egyptian origin, the Targum makes Hagar a daughter of Pharaoh and a granddaughter of the Babylonian King Nimrod, because the Targum associates Hagar and Ishmael with idolatry. Moreover, because Hagar was a descendant of the detested Nimrod who originally exiled Abraham and Sarah from their homeland, Sarah hated Hagar. Nevertheless, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* makes Hagar a free woman in order to avoid Abraham becoming the father of a slave's child. Her child, Ishmael, is accused by God of having abandoned the training given to him by Abraham, and more particularly of practising idolatry. Moreover, the positive promises of God to make a great people from Ishmael are transformed into the making from him of a people of robbers.

Wout van Bekkum (Groningen), finally, focuses on the Hebrew liturgical hymns of the fourth to sixth century CE in Palestine, the Byzantine period until the Arab conquest. Composers and their listeners were familiar with the biblical stories of Abraham through the liturgical readings of the Torah pericopes with accompanying expositions. Midrashic traditions connected with Genesis have influenced the image of Abraham, but the hymnists may have known also about non-rabbinic interpretations and understandings of Abraham in Jewish folklore and from

non-Jewish sources or traditions. This may have caused them to picture Abraham as even more zealous for the one God of Israel than otherwise would have been the case.

New Testament and Early Christianity

The fourth section on the New Testament and early Christianity opens with a contribution by Karin Neutel (Groningen). In her paper, entitled " 'Neither Jew Nor Greek': Abraham As a Universal Ancestor," Neutel addresses the question of how Paul, in his Letter to the Galatians, redefines who belongs to Abraham. The paper focuses on Paul's appeal to Abraham in Gal 3, where Abraham is portrayed not as a Jewish ancestor, but as a universal ancestor. Yet the problem is raised of how universal an appeal to a figure from Jewish Scripture is. Recently, within the so-called Radical New Perspective on Paul, it has been argued that instead of presenting a universal message, Paul proclaims a message only to Gentiles, about how to become one of Abraham's descendants. "In this view," according to Neutel, "Paul uses arguments and models from his Jewish heritage and opens them up to include Gentiles, but only on condition of their leaving their own cultural heritage behind. Rather than spreading an ethnicity-free gospel, it is suggested, Paul proclaims a distinctly Jewish message which asks for no cultural change from Jews, who already belong to God, but a complete transformation from non-Jews." Neutel's paper, however, is designed to question this perspective, and to show the consequences of Paul's view for both Gentiles and Jews: "While Paul's Abraham is a universal Abraham, he was not everyone's Abraham."

That there was a debate among Jews about who could count as Abraham's true descendants, is shown by Birgit van der Lans, in her paper "Belonging to Abraham's Kin: Genealogical Appeals to Abraham As a Possible Background for Paul's Abrahamic Argument." As she argues, the limited reception of the narrative of the blessing of the nations in Abraham (Gen 12:3; 18:18) in ancient Judaism, as demonstrated in this volume, suggests indeed that Paul's view on the issue was innovative by any Jewish standard. "Yet," van der Lans emphasizes, "this does not mean that his use of the figure of Abraham in a genealogical appeal was completely unfamiliar to his audience." For that reason, van der Lans discusses various claims to genealogical kinship with Abraham in other Jewish texts. Several of them prove to be familiar with the notion that Abraham is the father of many nations, but more dominant is the idea that Abraham

is the father of the Jews. He is the actual starting point of the Hebrew *genos* and often seen as the ideal Torah-observant Jew, although he lived prior to Moses. The implication of this clearly is that since Abraham already observed Mosaic law, it is obvious that his seed should do the same. The importance of observance of the law for claims to genealogical kinship with Abraham is emphasized in Josephus' writings. In his view, belonging to the *genos* of Abraham is characterized and conditioned by observance of Mosaic law. As van der Lans reveals, according to Josephus the kinship of Jews with Abraham is considered "to be abolished when the laws are no longer observed. When the laws are abandoned, one is no longer reckoned part of the Jewish *ethnos*, nor part of Abraham's *genos*." In Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*, this is particularly emphasized against those who believe they can bypass Moses by going directly back to Abraham. It is exactly this interconnectedness between Abraham and Moses, van der Lans argues, which Paul seeks to undermine in his Letter to the Galatians: "Paul drives a wedge between Abraham and law observance, stating that those who share Abraham's faith are his descendants, not just those who observe the law." Against the background of other Jewish views, it is clear that Paul's understanding of the blessing of the nations in Abraham, unique as it may be, is part of a broader Jewish debate on the promises made to Abraham in Genesis and the identity of Abraham's seed. It seems very likely that Paul rebelled against understandings of Abrahamic descent that made it dependant on observance of the law, and that in turn, Paul's opponents accused him of undermining the foundation of belonging to the *genos* of Abraham.

Paul's universalism, however, already predates his universalizing views on Abraham. In his contribution on Paul and the ethnographical debate of his time, George van Kooten (Groningen) emphasizes that Paul's universalistic conviction is not only expressed in his emphasis on the universal nature of Abraham's religion in his correspondence to the Galatians and the Romans, but already apparent in his oldest preserved letter, that to the Thessalonians. Already in this letter, we find an inverted expression of Paul's universalism in his criticism of the Jews who persecuted the Christians in Judea and "oppose everyone by hindering us from speaking to the nations so that they may be saved." At the same time Paul draws a comparison with the fate which the ex-pagan Christians in Thessalonica suffer from their compatriots (1 Thess 2:14–16). This comparative remark, van Kooten suggests, can be understood in the context of the contemporary ethnographical debate, which shows that not only Judaism was keen to maintain its ancestral, ethnic customs, but

Greek paganism knew the same concern. They both criticized Christianity's universalism for its abandonment of ancestral religion. Although this debate becomes particularly visible in Celsus' second-century CE attack on Christianity's revolutionary universalism, the same issues can already be discerned, from a Christian perspective, in Paul's earliest correspondence. Paul's universalizing interpretation of the figure of Abraham, in whom the nations were to be blessed, is then only a further expression of his universalistic thought.

In his Letter to the Galatians, Paul not only gives a universalizing interpretation of the figure of Abraham in Gal 3, but at the end of the subsequent chapter, Gal 4:21–32, he continues with an allegorical interpretation of Abraham's two sons Ishmael and Isaac, the one by Hagar, the other by Sarah. In his contribution, "Hagar and Paul's Covenant Thought," Albert Hogeterp (Tilburg) gives a general interpretation of Gal 4, focusing on the way in which the two female figures of Hagar and Sarah are identified with two covenants, one covenant associated with slavery and one associated with freedom. Remarkably, in the course of Paul's exposition, Mount Sinai, traditionally the place where the law was revealed to Moses, becomes personified in Hagar, who is subsequently also identified as the present Jerusalem. In this way Paul identified Hagar with observance of the Mosaic law, Jerusalem as the authoritative religious centre, and the law-observant gospel mission of his opponents in Galatia.

The Greco-Roman strategies which Paul employs in his allegorization of the figures of Hagar and Sarah is the topic of the next contribution by George van Kooten. As he argues, Paul's criticism of Jewish genealogical claims in both Abraham passages in Gal 3 and Gal 4, and their inversion in Gal 4, to the effect that pagan and Jewish Christians, as "true Jews," have their origins in Abraham and Sarah whereas ethnocentric Jews are in fact descendants of Abraham through Hagar, strongly resembles Greek philosophical critiques of genealogical claims, particularly the frequent claims of being descended from Heracles. These genealogical claims are either bluntly criticized, or countered through the subtle statement that "true Heraclids" are those who emulate Heracles' exemplary behaviour, even if they are not genetically related. Subsequently, in his identification of Hagar with the present Jerusalem, as opposed to the heavenly Jerusalem, Paul also shows himself to be familiar with the Platonic-Stoic discourse of two cities, the earthly and the heavenly city, which involve two different kinds of citizenship. Although the vocabulary is political, the notion of the heavenly, supra-ethnic, cosmic city is depoliticized and mildly criticizes all forms of earthly, ethnic, political allegiance. Both

strategies, that of criticizing and inverting genealogical claims and that of depoliticizing politics are operative in Paul's allegorization of Hagar and Sarah.

The allegorical interpretation of Hagar and Sarah is repeated in later gnostic writings which comment on Paul's allegorization of both figures in Gal 4. This is shown in a paper by Bas van Os (Leusden), in which he focuses on the reinterpretation of Paul's allegory of Hagar and Sarah in the *Gospel of Philip*. Whereas Paul reinterprets the figure of Hagar as the symbolization of ethnocentric Jews, whereas Sarah represents the "true Abrahamites," gnostic Christians, like the author of the *Gospel of Philip*, use Gal 4 to distinguish between two types of Christians within early Christianity: gnostic and mainstream Christians. In this view, Sarah becomes the divine Sophia, and Isaac the spiritual man. "By implication," as van Os points out, "Ishmael came to stand for mainstream Christians that were still 'enslaved' by the laws of the Creator of the cosmos. His mother Hagar, the slave woman, came to stand for worldly wisdom that ends in death." The importance of such gnostic arguments and the centrality of Galatians in this debate are mirrored in the orthodox criticism of these views in Irenaeus, who in his debate with gnostic Christians argues that Abraham's true children in Gal 3 represent the church.

More perspectives from Gnosticism are opened up in the contribution by Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta (Groningen), who comments on the reception of Gen 12 in the *Exegesis of the Soul*, the sixth tractate of Nag Hammadi Codex II, probably composed in Greek around 200 CE. In this tractate the focus is not so much on God's promise to bless the nations in Abraham (Gen 12:2–3), but on the first part of God's communication with Abraham, on his following command: "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you" (Gen 12:1). As Roig Lanzillotta explains, the anonymous author of the *Exegesis of the Soul* exhorts his readers to otherworldliness, focusing on the soul's nature and fate, which includes an account of her fall into materiality as well as of the possible recovery of her pristine condition. After he has described the soul's descent and its degraded condition, he starts out to explore the possibility that the soul recovers her primal state and gains the grace of God. After her repentance she regains her former state of androgyny by being reunited with her other half, the heavenly bridegroom. At this point the author introduces God's command to Abraham to leave his country, his kinsmen, and the house of his father since, as the treatise states, the soul's heavenly bridegroom "requires her to turn her

face from her people and her adulterers." By quoting Gen 12:1 the author encourages his readers to depart from the delusion and flux of the tangible world, to forget the house of the earthly father, and to return to the heavenly Father.

The next contribution in this section is by Anthony Hilhorst (Groningen), and is devoted to the emergence of the terminology of Ishmaelites, Hagarenes, and Saracens in the Old Testament, ancient Judaism, and early Christian literature. As Hilhorst rightly emphasizes, "Names of peoples are less stable than one might think at first glance." As he explains with regard to the terms "Ishmaelites" and "Hagarenes," Hilhorst notes that the first author to mention the links between Ishmael and Ishmaelites, and Hagar and Hagarenes, and to use them to designate the same people is Eusebius in his *Chronicon*, written around 300 CE. The terminology of Ishmaelites and Hagarenes does occur in the Old Testament, but for the readers it is as yet not evidence that they are linked to Ishmael and Hagar. "Nevertheless," as Hilhorst explains, "there seems to have been an awareness of a genealogical connection between Hagar and her son Ishmael on the one hand and the Hagarenes and Ishmaelites on the other. Generally speaking, the Hebrew ending *-î* in the terms '*Yišmĕ 'ē'lîm*' and '*Hagrîm*' could be taken as a patronymic. Moreover, the idea of the numerous progeny of Ishmael is clearly present in Genesis." From the third century BCE the idea is increasingly articulated, both in ancient Jewish and pagan literature, that "the kings of the Arabs were descendants of Israel, sons of Abraham, and brothers of Isaac" (Artapanus) and that the Arabs were Hagar's offspring (Apollonius Molon). The Dead Sea Scrolls and other Jewish literature speak of "sons of Ishmael" and "sons of Hagar," the book of *Jubilees* also calls the Arabs "Ishmaelites," and Josephus highlights the genealogical link between the Arabs, Ishmael ("the founder of their race"), and Hagar. But it is only in Eusebius' *Chronicon*, around 300 CE, that the emerging terminology is fully articulated and systematized: "Through his female slave Hagar, Abraham fathers Ishmael, from whom comes the race of Ishmaelites, later called Hagarenes, and finally Saracens." After Eusebius, Hilhorst concludes, this knowledge remains commonplace. It was after the emergence of Islam, then, that these terms became synonymous with Muslims.

In patristic literature the various themes which were linked with the figures of Abraham and Hagar in ancient Judaism and early Christianity remain present. In his contribution "After Philo and Paul: Hagar in the Writings of the Church Fathers," Johan Leemans (Leuven) shows that the patristic authors follow both Philo's and Paul's interpretations.

In Philo's interpretation, as was already shown in detail in the contribution by Abraham Bos, Abraham in his desire for knowledge married Sarah, the symbol of virtue, but first mated with Hagar, the symbol of the propaedeutic instruction of the "profane sciences" (the *enkyklios paideia*). The influence of Philo's interpretation can be detected in various early Christian authors such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Didymus the Blind. Other authors reflect more the influence of Paul's understanding of Gal 4. First, Leemans notes that Gal 4, where Paul explicitly styles his interpretation as an allegorical one (Gal 4:24), played a crucial role in the patristic discussions about the justifiability of the allegorical versus the literal method of interpretation. As Leemans explains, "in this discussion the literal one as practised by the representatives of the Antiochene school opposed the allegorical one of the Alexandrian school. The latter used Gal 4:24 as an argument in defence of their position whereas, to the representatives of the literal sense, it was a major stumbling block." Secondly, the antithesis which Paul draws in Gal 4 between Hagar and Sarah as the representatives of the old and the new covenant proved to lend itself to substituting the types of Hagar and Sarah with a variety of oppositional types; they represent two options in the field of religion. Various authors used this opposition to underline Christianity's superiority vis-à-vis Judaism. Origen took the figures of Hagar and Sarah to represent those who do adhere to God out of fear and because of threats and those who do so out of love on the basis of free choice respectively. Others, such as Augustine, apply this dichotomic scheme to differentiate between orthodox believers, heretics, and schismatics.

Also, the theme of Abraham and the nations continued to attract attention, as Augustine Casiday (Lampeter) shows in his contribution. In the midst of controversies in fifth-century Gaul pertaining to the question of divine initiative and human responsiveness in matters of salvation, the account in Gen 12 wherein God promises to make a great nation of Abraham (and the reception of that account in Gal 3 and Rom 8:9) plays an important part. Casiday focuses on John Cassian (ca. 360–ca. 435), and Tiro Prosper of Aquitaine (ca. 390–ca. 455), key figures in the early history of reactions to the theology of Augustine. In Cassian's writing, *Conference* 3, Abraham is held up as an example of how to behave rightly. Abraham's response to God's behest to leave his father's home is portrayed as a radical renunciation of his attachment to everything except God. The stories about Abraham illustrate the correct disposition toward concrete, physical things. As for Prosper's *The Call of*

All Nations, Abraham is a cipher for universalism, which is something that Prosper takes from Paul's re-reading of Abraham in Galatians and Romans. Moreover, Prosper's interest in Abraham is rather abstract. It matters less what Abraham did than the fact that Abraham did it after he had been called to action by God. Nevertheless, Abraham is the chief example of God calling someone so as to forge a new relationship with that person.

W.J. Aerts (Groningen) focuses on the figure of Hagar in the *Daniel-diegesis*, a very particular apocalypse, which contains material from the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, the *Vaticinium Severi et Leonis Imperatorum* of Leo, and the *Sibylline Oracles*, and was written at the earliest in the later ninth century. The historical setting of the *Daniel-diegesis* is dominated by the contemporary struggle with the Arabs, with suggestions, however, of a growing threat to be expected from the West. He concludes that there is no indication whatsoever that the Byzantines were interested in the person of Hagar herself but only in Hagar as the *progenetrix* of contemporary political forces. His mentioning of the so-called three sons of Hagar is a clear reference to three armies of the Hagarenes, the usual Byzantine term for Arabs and/or Muslims.

Islam

The final part of the volume contains papers on Abraham and Hagar in the Qurʾan and its early commentaries. In his paper "The Religion of Abraham and Islam," Gerald Hawting (London) suggests that the Islamic idea of the religion of Abraham should be understood as a product of the religious and social conditions brought about by the Arab conquests in the Middle East. The idea of Abraham as the builder of the Kaʿba originated in connection with the claim that he was the forefather of the religion that had the Kaʿba as its central shrine, Islam. The elaborate Muslim narratives which historicize the idea of Islam as the continuation of the religion of Abraham, and the associated explanation of how the Arabs came to be descended from him through Ishmael, are the product of the interaction between the Arabs and the subject peoples in the period after the Arab conquests.

Hawting's emphasis on the secondary nature of Islam's engagement with Abraham may be confirmed by the contribution by Fred Leemhuis (Groningen), who shows that in the earliest period of Islam we do not have much reference to Hājar at all. The earliest written source which

mentions Hājar as the mother of the Arabs is the *Tafsīr* of ʿAbd al-Razzāq which dates from the end of the second Islamic century, i.e., the beginning of the ninth century CE. He therefore considers it highly unlikely that Hājar played any serious part in the early doctrinal history of Islam. Hājar's absence from the Qurʾan is indeed remarkable, not because she was suppressed by Islamic tradition, but because she only came on stage at a later date. As the authenticity of the early tafsīr is also sufficiently established by now, it is no surprise that it corroborates Hājar's relative insignificance in the early period of Islam.

In the epilogue to the volume, Martin Goodman particularly reflects on Abraham and the nations, and makes some comments about Terence Donaldson's recent source book *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE)* (Waco, Tex., 2007) in the light of the main thrust of this volume. Goodman ends by noting that in his view on Abraham and the nations Paul seems to have been original: "It should not perhaps totally surprise that the powerful contrast between Abraham as archetype of the faith of the Gentiles should have originated with Paul, who designated himself according to Acts as 'apostle to the Gentiles.' The search for the Jewish background to the teachings of Paul the Jew is entirely warranted, but just occasionally it emerges from this search that Paul's message was original. It is not unreasonable to suggest that it was precisely this originality that led to the enduring influence of his work." This chimes in with the view which Goodman set forth in his article on Josephus' view on Abraham and the nations, in which he concluded that Josephus did not expect "the reputation of Abraham as the source of blessings to the whole world to be known to his Gentile readers." Goodman considers the silence of Josephus significant. Josephus was apparently unable to take the universal figure of Abraham for granted.

The question of how Judaism, Christianity and Islam saw their relationship to Abraham is fascinating. It is to be hoped that the studies included within this volume may go some way to clarify the diversity of answers to this question to be found within these traditions, and that these studies may thus help understanding of the development of each tradition from late antiquity up to the present day.

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Groningen, June 2010
George van Kooten & Jacques van Ruiten

OLD TESTAMENT NARRATIVE

ABRAHAM AND THE NATIONS

Ed Noort

1. Introduction

Sometimes reduced to a mere slogan, the concept of "Abrahamitic faith"[1] is often used in the interreligious dialogues of today, in the context of their difficult position within political reality.[2] "Abrahamitic faith" reaches beyond the mere fact that Abraham is a literary figure in the ancient texts of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. His specific role within the traditions of these religions is of importance, and within all three he has become the symbol for a new and decisive stage within religious history.[3] In this contribution, my focus is on the Hebrew Bible. More specifically, I will address those texts within the Abraham cycle in which Abraham's relationship to the nations is discussed.

Naturally, the main focus will be on Gen 12:1–3, without doubt the passage within the Abraham cycle which has been most commented upon. This popularity already points to its function as the linchpin of the primeval history and the patriarchal narratives. Whatever their role or stage of the tradition, these verses address Abraham's relationship with all of the families and nations of the earth. For Judaism, Abraham is the ancestor from whom the Israelite people sprang in accordance with a divine promise. For Islam, Abraham is the father of Ishmael and the grandfather of Esau, the ancestors of the Arab people from which Muhammad sprang. For Christianity, Paul linked Christ and his believers

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[1] E. Noort, "1.Mose 12,1–4a," *GPM* 54 (2000): 319–324.

[2] In his inaugural address *Representaties van religie in het Nederlandse debat* (Groningen; University of Groningen 2008), A.F. Sanders referred to the Islamic initiative "A Common Word between Us and You" (Online: http://www.acommonword.com/index.php?lang=en&page=option1) of 138 Muslim leaders and the reactions on the Jewish and Christian sides. In the Netherlands the reactions were minimal. After some time, the Protestant Church in the Netherlands appointed a committee, and "open letters" play a role in the debate now (2009).

[3] Some examples of the reception history include: in the Old Testament Gen 15:6; Isa 51:1–2; 63:16 and in the New Testament Rom 4:1–25; Gal 3:6–14, 16, 29; 4:21–31; Heb 11:8–19; in Judaism *Gen. Rab.* 38:13; in Islam Sura 3:65, 67, 68; 6:74–83; 37:91–93.

directly to Abraham (Gal 3:16, 29). In this essay the role of Abraham is highlighted from a "diachronic" perspective. No less important, however, is the relationship of Abraham and his descendants to the neighbouring peoples, a "synchronic" perspective. They are addressed either in the final chapter of the Abraham-Lot composition (Gen 19:30–38 Moab and Ammon) or in the Ishmael/Hagar narratives (Gen 16; 21:8–21 Isaac and Ishmael).

The abrupt לך־לך ("Go") to Abraham[4] in Gen 12:1 introduces the divine commandment to him to sever his bonds to country, clan, and father's house.[5] Abraham then starts his journey "to the country that I shall show you." However, Abraham's wanderings in Palestine and Egypt are nothing in comparison to the virtual travels he has experienced at the hands of the scholarly community. Moreover, the exegetical presentation of the figure of Abraham clearly demonstrates which tendencies in exegesis were fashionable during a certain period. The figure of Abraham is a genuine mirror of the changes in exegetical preferences.[6]

Chronologically, the dating of the patriarchs along a timeline from 2000 BCE to the post-exilic period went into free fall, occurring within a short period of forty years.[7] Van Seters and Thompson successfully contested the trustworthiness and relevance of the extra-biblical evidence

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[4] I neglect the differences in the naming of Abraham before and after Gen 17.

[5] M. Köckert, *Vätergott und Väterverheissung: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit Albrecht Alt und seinen Erben* (FRLANT 142; Göttingen 1988), and Idem, "Die Geschichte der Abrahamsüberlieferung," in *Congress Volume Leiden 2004* (ed. A. Lemaire; VTSup 109; Leiden 2006), 123–124, has once again pointed out that Gen 12:1–3 presupposes the priestly תולדת תרח ("the genealogies of Terah"). With J.L. Ska, "L'appel d'Abraham et l'acte de naissance d'Israël: Genèse 12,1–4a," in *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomic Literature: Festschrift C.H.W. Brekelmans* (ed. M. Vervenne and J. Lust; BETL 133; Leuven 1997), 370, 376, he decides that 12:1–4a is a later interpolation added to the related 11:27–32; 12:4b–5 and argues against the proposal that 11:27–32 was written as an introductory passage to 12:1–4a.

[6] For an overview of the history of research from Wellhausen to Alt, see H. Weidmann, *Die Patriarchen und ihre Religion im Licht der Forschung seit Julius Wellhausen* (FRLANT 94; Göttingen 1968).

[7] These developments can be best detected in the summaries of standard works. R. Martin-Achard, "Abraham I," *TRE* 1/3:364–372 grounds the patriarchs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries BCE. Twenty years later "bleibt die Gestalt Abrahams dem historischen Zugriff entzogen" (E. Blum, "Abraham," *RGG*[4] 1:71). See however, A.R. Millard, "Abraham," *ABD*, 1:35–41: "To place Abraham at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC is … sustainable. The extra-biblical information … does not demand such a date, (but) it certainly allows it" (40). Cf. L.L. Grabbe, *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?* (London 2007), 52–56.

and Van Seters dated the patriarchal stories to exilic times.[8] Alt's influential religio-historical thesis that behind the "God of the Fathers"[9] of the patriarchal narratives there is a pre-Israelite type of semi-nomadic religion was successfully criticized by Köckert.[10] However, even more influential were the renewed debates on source criticism itself,[11] the date of the Yahwist,[12] the compositional structure of the narratives,[13] and the dating of the divine promises.[14] Finally, the renewed debate on the growth of the Pentateuch[15] also concerns Abraham.

Against this background of Abraham's travels in the scholarly world, I will first look at the figure of Abraham outside Gen 12–25, discussing the other parts of the Hebrew Bible in which he plays a role. The next step will be to return to the Abraham cycle itself, studying the oldest narratives that focus on the relationship between Abraham and the neighbouring nations: Abraham and Lot; as well as Abraham, Hagar, and Ishmael. Finally, I will turn to Gen 12:1–3, paying special attention to the crucial v. 3.

2. Outside the Abraham Cycle

Outside Gen 11:27–25:11 Abraham is mentioned in the priestly genealogy of Isaac and Ishmael (25:12, 19), in the divine speeches to Isaac in the Gerar scene (26:1, 15, 18), with a reference to Abraham's oath (26:3) and the renewal of the promise of land, offspring, and blessing because—in clear post-Deuteronomistic wording—Abraham obeyed God's voice (שׁמע בקלי) and kept God's charge, commandments, statutes, and laws

[8] T.L. Thompson, *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives: The Quest for the Historical Abraham* (BZAW 133; Berlin 1974); J. Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven 1975).

[9] A. Alt, *Der Gott der Väter* (BWANT 3.12; Stuttgart 1929); repr. In Idem, *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (ed. M. Noth; 3 vols.; München 1968), 1:1–78.

[10] Köckert, *Vätergott und Väterverheissung*.

[11] R. Rendtorff, *Das überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch* (BZAW 147; Berlin 1976).

[12] C. Levin, *Der Jahwist* (FRLANT 157; Göttingen 1993).

[13] E. Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte* (WMANT 57; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1984).

[14] Ska, "L'appel d'Abraham," 367–390.

[15] T.C. Römer, "Recherches actuelles sur le Cycle d'Abraham," in *Studies in the Book of Genesis: Literature, Redaction and History* (ed. A. Wénin; BETL 155; Leuven 2001), 179–211; T.B. Dozeman and K. Schmid, eds., *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (SSSBL 34; Atlanta 2006).

(וישמר משמרתי מצותי חקותי ותורתי) (26:5). The Beersheba scene repeats that the promises to Isaac will be fulfilled because of Abraham (26:24). In Gen 26 the Isaac tradition is woven into the Abraham tradition, again in clear (post)-Deuteronomistic formulations: "oath," "to listen to Yhwh's voice," Yhwh's "commandments," "statutes," and "laws." In the Jacob cycle the notion of "the blessing of Abraham" (ברכת אברהם) is introduced as a well-known formula, referring to offspring and possession of the land (28:4). Genesis 28:8–9 once again portrays Abraham's son Ishmael, but ultimately the formula "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob/Israel" prevails.[16] Offspring, the sworn and given land,[17] and the covenant[18] are the main themes connecting the deity and the three patriarchs. Abraham appears, with or without his patriarchal colleagues, in prayers, blessings, geographical notions, genealogies, and in the enigmatic presentation of Josh 24:2–3.[19]

In the Latter Prophets—important for the problems of chronology—Abraham is only mentioned seven times: Isa 29:22; 41:8–9; 51:2; 63:16; Jer 33:26; Ezek 33:24; Mic 7:20.[20] Here, Abraham figures in the prophetic literature on the edge of exile or later.

The last verse of the book of Micah (7:20) presupposes the promise of the land as an oath to the patriarchs:

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[16] God of Abraham, God of Isaac (Gen 28:13); God of (our fathers) Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (1 Kgs 18:36; 1 Chr 29:18; 2 Chr 30:6); God of my father, God of Abraham, and פחד יצחק ("the fear of Isaac") (Gen 31:42); God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac (Gen 32:9); God of your father, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exod 3:6); God of your/their fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exod 3:15, 16; 4:5); God before whom Abraham and Isaac walked (Gen 48:15); God of Abraham, God of Nachor (Gen 31:53); God who chose (בחר) Abram/renamed Abraham (Neh 9:7); Yhwh appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as אל שדי ("El Shaddai") (Exod 6:3).

[17] Land given to Abraham and Isaac, (now) to you (Jacob) and your descendants (Gen 35:12); land, I/he swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen 50:24; Exod 6:8; 33:1; Num 32:11 [אדמה]; Deut 1:8; 6:10; 9:5, 27; 30:20; 34:4); land given to Abraham, your אהב ("friend") (2 Chr 20:7).

[18] Covenant with Abraham (and Isaac, and Jacob) (Exod 2:24; Lev 26:42; Deut 29:11; 2 Kgs 13:23; Ps 105:9; 1 Chr 16:16).

[19] Cf. Gen 35:27 (Kiriat-Arba "where Abraham and Isaac as aliens lived"); Gen 48:16 ("let my name [Jacob] be perpetuated and the name of Abraham and Isaac"); Gen 49:30, 31; 50:13 (Machpelah; Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah and Leah); Exod 32:13 ("remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Israel"); Josh 24:2 (Abraham and Nahor); Josh 24:3 (the taking of Abraham from beyond the river); Ps 105:6, 42 (offspring of Abraham his servant); 1 Chr 1:27, 28, 34 (the genealogy of Abraham).

[20] C. Jeremias, "Die Erzväter in der Verkündigung der Propheten," in *Beiträge zur alttestamentlichen Theologie: Festschrift für Walther Zimmerli zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. H. Donner, R. Hanhart, and R. Smend; Göttingen 1977), 206–222; Köckert, "Geschichte," 103–128.

Grant faithfulness to Jacob
and steadfast love to Abraham,
as you have sworn to our fathers
in the days of old. (Mic 7:20)

After Julius Wellhausen, scholars almost unanimously ascribe the hymnic fragments Mic 7:8–10, 14–17, 18–20 to redactional hands.[21] The author hopes for Yhwh's אמת ("faithfulness") and חסד ("love") a fulfilment of the oath made to the fathers even in the present situation of Israel's guilt and sin.[22] Both Jacob and Abraham are mentioned, not as individuals but as the descendants of the fathers, the present generation in exile. In the past, Yhwh had sworn an oath to the fathers (patriarchs). Referring to that oath, the descendants of those patriarchs hope for a renewed fulfilment in the present situation.

The oldest prophetic text in which Abraham plays a part is the divine saying in Ezek 33:24–29.

Ezekiel 33

24aα Son of man, the inhabitants of these ruins in the land of Israel (אדמת ישׂראל) say:
24aβ "Abraham was only one,
24aγ and he gained possession of the land;
24bα but we are many:
24bβ the land is surely given to us to possess." (Ezek 33:24)

Yhwh himself quotes the complaint of the people in his word to the prophet. The people addressed are the non-exiled inhabitants of Jerusalem after the fall of the city (587 BCE). They are still many, so they claim the land with a reference to Abraham, who was only one. If, according to the tradition, this one man was entitled to the land, then surely his offspring, who had a narrow escape from death and deportation, were also entitled. This claim is refuted by Yhwh because "a *right* is derived from the fact of their having been spared."[23] Therefore a judgement oracle

[21] A.S. van der Woude, *Micha* (POT; Nijkerk 1976), 266, sees here his Deutero-Micah at work. He offers two useful corrections for the translation. תתן ("you will give") should be handled as a iussive and with reference to 7:15, מימי קדם should not be translated as "*since* the days of old," but as "*in* the days of old."

[22] "Die Sammlung liturgischer Stücke in 7,8–20 … ist aber in ihrer Fülle und in ihrem Gehalt insgesamt ein völliges Novum am Ende des Michabuches. Kein Gerichtswort ist mehr zu hören, weder Anklagen noch Urteilsansagen …" (H.W. Wolff, *Micha* [BKAT 14.4; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1982], 208).

[23] W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia 1983), 198.

follows: "Those who are among the ruins, shall fall by the sword …" (Ezek 33:27–29).

Whether, as Köckert proposes, Ezek 33:27–28, 29 presuppose the existence of the temple, cannot be proven. Nor can the supposition that Ezek 33:24 was intended as a word of encouragement.[24] The text fits the chaos after the actual fall of Jerusalem. A discussion that started in Ezek 11 with a similar claim concerning the first deportations of 597 BCE, was prolonged after 587 BCE. In Ezek 11 the statement of the Jerusalemites was: "They [the exiles] are far from Yhwh, to us [Jerusalemites] has the land been given for a possession" (11:15). This claim was also denied. The question behind this denial—Are the exiles cut off from Yhwh?—is answered with the assurance of Yhwh's presence among the exiles. Hence, the vision ends with the chariot and the כבוד יהוה ("the glory of Yhwh"), which ascends from the city to the Mount of Olives and retreat to the east (11:22–23). Although used within a negatively judged quotation, the image of Abraham is clear. Abraham is the one lone man for whom the promise of the land was fulfilled. The tradition of Gen 12 must lie in the background.

Second and Third Isaiah reveal other details:

Isaiah 41

8aα But you, Israel, my **servant**,
8aβ Jacob, whom I have *chosen*,
8b offspring of Abraham, who loved me,
9aα you, whom I took from the ends of the earth,
9aβ called from its farthest corners,
9bα saying to you: "You are my **servant**,
9bβ I have *chosen* you and not cast you off." (Isa 41:8–9)

Through the adversative ואתה ("but you"), Isa 41:8–13 address the triplet Israel/Jacob/seed of Abraham. In this way, the exiled Israel is placed within the Abrahamitic tradition. The terminology is familiar: עבד ("servant") and בחר ("to choose") (41:8, 9; 42:1; 43:10; 44:1, 2; 45:4; 49:6, 7), קרא ("to call") and the servant Israel (41:9; 49:3), and חזק ("to be strong") (*pi'el* 41:7; 54:2; *hip'il* 41:9; 42:6 + קרא ["to call"]; 45:1). The usual translation of the apposition אהבי ("my friend") establishes the relationship between Abraham and Yhwh within the framework of בחר ("to choose"). The stress is on Yhwh's love for Abraham, as the versions and James demonstrate: LXX σπέρμα Αβραὰμ ὃν ἠγάπησα ("the seed of Abraham,

[24] Köckert, "Geschichte," 104–107.

whom I loved"), Aquila σπέρμα Αβρααμ ἀγάπητου μου ("the seed of Abraham, my beloved"), Symmachus του φιλου μου ("my friend"), Vg. *Abraham amici mei* ("Abraham, my friend"), and Jas 2:23 (φίλος θεοῦ "the friend of God").[25] Within the wider context of the Hebrew Bible this position is mainly supported by Deuteronomistic literature. It is, however, contrary to the active participle of the MT (אֹהֲבִי "he who loves me"). Therefore, it is no coincidence that the *BHS* proposes to vocalize the active form as a passive participle אֲהֻבִי ("he who was loved by me") in order to harmonize the classic meaning with the MT. However, both Neh 9:7 and Ezek 33:24[26] proclaim an active translation: Abraham, who loves Yhwh.

At this stage of the reception history, Isa 41:8b demonstrates how Abraham is on the one hand, involved in part of the identification of Jacob/Israel, while on the other hand his position is a higher one because of his love for God. Therefore, Abraham has a special status. He is an exemplary believer who loves Yhwh, who has called him from the ends of the world, not far from where the exiles were now situated (9a), and Abraham followed this calling. "From the ends of the earth" (מקצות הארץ) refers to the promised land, and the land is the focus of both the Abraham tradition and the encouragement of Jacob/Israel. Yhwh has even dedicated the servant's title עבדי ("my servant") to Abraham.[27] Through זרע אברהם ("the offspring of Abraham"), the promise once made to Abraham is now also applicable to the exiles.[28] Chosenness and covenant include Jacob/Israel. Therefore, there is hope for the future.

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[25] Apart from this first meaning, Beuken, *Jesaja IIA*, also leaves room for an active translation of אהב ("he who loves"), meaning loyalty on the part of Abraham: "because Yhwh has chosen, Abraham was capable of loyalty." To the active interpretation and translation of אהבי as "who loved me," see J.L. Koole, *Jesaja II* (2 vols.; COT; Kampen 1985), 1:102–103. Koole demonstrates that the archaic translation of the Dutch Statenvertaling "My lover/devotee" correctly observed this. P. Höffken, "Abraham und Gott, oder: wer liebt hier wen? Anmerkungen zu Jes 41,8," *BN* 103 (2000): 17–22, pointed out that in the Greek translations the emphasis is on God's acting towards Abraham, because they leave out the suffix החזקתיך ("I took you"), pointing towards Israel/Jacob. Abraham, not Jacob/Israel, should be the addressee in this passage. He himself, like Koole, proposed an active translation, mentioning eleven parallels for participles with suffixes. *Pace* C. Jeremias, "Erzväter," 209.

[26] Koole, *Jesaja II*, 1:103 and Höffken, "Wer liebt hier wen," 21.

[27] The title עבדי ("my servant") is not used in the Abraham cycle itself, but appears again in the promise to Isaac: Gen 26:24.

[28] Köckert, "Geschichte," 111, believes he has enough proof to reconstruct the original text: vv. 8a, 10–13. He holds vv. 8b–9 to be a later reworking that sharpens the contours of Abraham's profile. However, his main argument is the exceptional use of the Abraham analogy. There is no reason to deny this analogy to Second Isaiah.

Isaiah 51

1aα Listen to me,
1aβ you that pursue righteousness,
1aγ you that seek Yhwh;
1bα Look to the rock (from which) you were hewn
1bβ and to the quarry[29] (from which) you were dug;
2aα Look to Abraham your father
2aβ and to Sarah who gave you birth;[30]
2bα Certainly,[31] he was but one when I called him,
2bβ for blessing him[32] and making him many. (Isa 51:1–2)

Structured by the threefold call to listen (שׁמע 1aα, 7aα; קשׁב *hip'il* 4aα), the complex of Yhwh's צדקה ("deliverance") in Isa 51:1–8 starts in vv. 1, 2 with the proclamation of those who identify themselves with the servant in contrast to those "who are far from צדקה ('deliverance')" (Isa 46:12; 48:1–2).[33] It is not the land, but Zion which is at the centre of interest, the usual focus of Second Isaiah (Isa 51:3). The addressees are those who respond to the servant's call to return to Zion. In Isa 51:1–3, everything is focused on the rebirth of the people, exemplified by the names of Abraham and Sarah. However, the connection to Abraham and Sarah is controversial: צור ("rock") is a usual metaphor for the deity[34] (Isa 44:8). In this context, the rock should refer to Abraham, of which no proof can be found.[35] Nevertheless, both

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[29] נקב 〉 מקבת ("to pierce") means here either the tool to drive in nails (hammer) or the result (the hole). בור ("pit") is probably a gloss, see Koole, *Jesaja II*, 2:117.

[30] Pol. Impf. חיל ("to give birth in pain").

[31] As in v. 3, the emphatic כי is indicated.

[32] 1QIsa[a] reads ואפרהו ("and I will make him fruitful"), from פרה ("to be fruitful"), which points to the blessing itself, but is also an elaborate interpretation. The LXX offers its own interpretation of v. 2. After καὶ εὐλόγησα αὐτὸν ("and I blessed him") it adds καὶ ἠγάπησα αὐτὸν ("and I loved him"), in which God's love for Abraham is emphasized in accordance with Gen 41:8 LXX.

[33] W.A.M. Beuken, *Jesaja deel IIB* (POT; Nijkerk 1983), 109.

[34] D. Eichhorn, *Gott als Fels, Burg und Zuflucht: Eine Untersuchung zum Gebet des Mittlers in den Psalmen* (EHST 4; Frankfurt 1972); P.A.H. de Boer, *Second-Isaiah's Message* (OTS 11; Leiden 1956), 58–67 ("The Rock").

[35] In this case, the passive forms חֻצַּבְתֶּם ("you were hewn") and נְקֻרֹתֶם ("you were dug") are problematic. The versions solve the problem by using active forms such as the LXX ἐμβλέψατε εἰς τὴν στερεὰν πέτραν ἣν ἐλατομήσατε καὶ εἰς τὸν βόθυνον τοῦ λάκκου ὃν ὠρύξατε ("Look to the solid rock, that you hew out and to the hole, the cistern, that you dig"). De Boer, *Second-Isaiah's Message*, 65, argued that in the MT active forms should also be read: חָצַבְתֶּם ("you hew out") and נָקַרְתֶּם ("you bore/dig"). The rock and the cistern become metaphors for Yhwh himself. The God-seekers of v. 1 are "people who hew out the rock to find life-giving water and protecting qualities, who dig a cistern that can hold water … Yhwh reminds … the exiles of his wonderful and life-giving strength" (65).

Köckert[36] and Steck[37] point out that צור ("rock") is not only used for the deity of Zion, but also for Zion itself, while the verbs refer to the exile. The contrast is made in the promise of salvation of v. 3: "Yhwh will really comfort Zion, … all her waste places. He will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the גן־יהוה ('the garden of Yhwh') …." Within this framework, reference is made to Abraham and Sarah (Isa 51:2). The climax of the verse is clear: Abraham has been called as the (only) one to become father to a multitude of many nations.[38] Zion's motherhood is visualized by the matriarch *par excellence*, Sarah, once barren. In a combination of past and present,[39] the matriarch bears the new Israel (תחוללכם "[she] who bore you"), here addressed. This presupposed image represents both priestly and non-priestly traditions, among which are Gen 11:27–32; 12:1–3; 13:10.[40] The focus is on the blessing and the multitude of offspring.

> Isaiah 29
>
> Therefore, thus says Yhwh, the God[41] of the house of Jacob, who redeemed (פדה) Abraham: "No longer shall Jacob be ashamed, no longer shall his face grow pale." (Isa 29:22)

Isaiah 29:22 is dependent on Second Isaiah, as generally agreed. The redemption of Abraham is a signal for the future redemption of Jacob/Israel. פדה ("to ransom") belongs to the field of Deuteronomistic language and is normally used to express deliverance out of Egypt (Deut 7:8; 13:6; 15:15). It remains unclear to which event in the Abraham cycle the text refers. It is either possible that a later interpretation understood Abraham's adventures in Egypt and Gerar (Gen 12:10–20; 20) as deliverance or that Abraham being "taken away" from the pagan Mesopotamian context was seen as deliverance (*Jub*. 12; *Apocalypse of Abraham*). The latter

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[36] Köckert, "Geschichte," 109n15.

[37] O.H. Steck, "Zions Tröstung: Beobachtungen und Fragen zu Jesaja 51, 1–11," in *Gottesknecht und Zion: Gesammelte Aufsätze zu Deuterojesaja* (by O.H. Steck; FAT 4; Tübingen 1992), 84–86.

[38] Including Gen 17:4–5; 28:3; 35:11; 48:4.

[39] Köckert, "Geschichte," 109n17 and his translation "Sara, die mit euch in Wehen liegt" (108). Compare Koole, *Jesaja II*, 2:118, who defends the past meaning of the imperfect in poetic language.

[40] Köckert, "Geschichte," 110.

[41] In accordance with *BHK/BHS*, אֵל ("God") rather than אֶל ("to") should be read, for otherwise the house of Jacob would have liberated Abraham. Compare O. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja Kapitel 13–39* (ATD 18; Göttingen 1973), 221n2.

might be supported by Josh 24:2–3. Moreover, neither Gen 12 nor 20 give reason to speak of "redemption." The point of reference may be uncertain, but the function of Isa 29:22 is crystal clear. Just as Yhwh once redeemed Abraham, he will also redeem Jacob/Israel in the future.

Isaiah 63

16aα Certainly, you are our father
16aβ for Abraham does not know us
16aγ and Israel does not acknowledge us;
16bα You, Yhwh, are our father,
16bβ our Redeemer from old is your name (Isa 63:16)

The prayer of lament Isa 63:15–64:11 starts with the twofold imperative הבט וראה ("Look down and see …") in Isa 63:15, and reaches its first climax in the call for Yhwh's intervention ("O that you would tear open the heavens and come down") in 63:19b MT (64:1 RSV). The plea ends in 64:11 with the rhetorical question to Yhwh concerning whether the destruction of Zion/Jerusalem and the temple are not reason enough for a divine response. Within this complex, the reasoning in Isa 63:16 is remarkable. Yhwh's fatherhood and the fatherhood of Abraham and Jacob/Israel are contrasted in a surprising way. Beyond the fatherhood of Abraham, the prayer's final trust rests in Yhwh's fatherhood. Nevertheless, the phrase "for Abraham does not know us" (Isa 63:16b) is crucial. Most scholars understand v. 16 as a statement that Israel no longer depends on these forefathers but upon the God of the exodus.[42] Beuken[43] explained the verse in a different way. With regard to Isa 63:16aβγ, he argues that Abraham and Jacob no longer *wish* to know their offspring, and therefore he connects this passage to the Levi saying of Deut 33:9 ("[Levi], who said of his father and mother, 'I regard them not'; he disowned his brothers, and ignored his children"). Only here and in Isa 63:16, do נכר (*hipʿil*: "to regard") and לא ידע ("to know not") occur as parallels. The complete, bloody loyalty of the Levites (Exod 32:27–29) to Yhwh, unattached to kinship or offspring, and driven only by obedience to Yhwh's word and covenant, is now transferred to Abraham. The Abraham cycle offers a point of departure for such an association: Gen 22. There Abraham also chose faithfulness to Yhwh's command over the fate of the son of promise.

[42] Köckert, "Geschichte," 114.
[43] W.A.M. Beuken, *Jesaja deel IIIB* (POT; Nijkerk 1989), 24.

In summary, the Latter Prophets use the character of Abraham in different ways. The oldest text, Ezek 33:24–29, reflects the Jerusalemites' claim on the land after 587 BCE. The juxtaposition—he was only one, we are many—presupposes the position of the group as Abraham's offspring. Abraham is claimed for this small group and Yhwh refutes the claim in the context of a judgement oracle. In the oracle of salvation, Isa 41:8–13, vv. 8–9 give Abraham a special status: he is said to love Yhwh. Corporate Israel is not only the offspring of Jacob, but also of Yhwh's servant Abraham. Isaiah 51:2 stresses the role of Abraham and Sarah as the ancestors of the exiles. The matriarch bears the new Israel, with a focus on blessing and the multitude of the offspring. Isaiah 29:22 heightens the relationship between Yhwh and Abraham theologically. Yhwh redeemed Abraham. Although the point of reference is unclear, the message is not: since Yhwh once redeemed Abraham, he will therefore redeem Jacob/Israel in the future. In Mic 7:20 Abraham is a point of reference for the divine oath and "the days of old" and at the same time the representative of his descendants through an enigmatic use of the name. Apart from Ezek 33:24–29, the prophetic texts that mention Abraham do so in a positive way: Abraham is Yhwh's servant, he loved Yhwh and is redeemed by Yhwh, and Abraham and Sarah are the real ancestors of Israel. In Isa 63 Abraham's face is changed. Now he is the ancestor who does not wish to know his offspring and he is described as a Levite, obeying Yhwh's word and covenant. Judah cannot find any comfort in the figure of Abraham after the return from exile. Only Yhwh himself can be Judah's/Israel's father.

The prophetic texts at the edge of the exile enrich the figure of Abraham. His role as an exemplary ancestor grows and sometimes he surpasses Jacob. In spite of the differences and variations in the texts, one point is clear. The supposed universalism of Gen 12 is nowhere present. The prophets do not know anything of a role for Abraham in relation to "all the families of the earth" (Gen 12:3). They focus exclusively on the future of exiled Israel.

3. Lot and Abraham

Returning to the narratives of the Abraham cycle itself, two exemplary stories highlight the relationship between Israel/Judah and Moab represented by Abraham and Lot. A strange ambivalence characterizing this relationship can be found in many texts. On the one hand Moab is the

enemy, the threat to Israel as narrated in the Balaam cycle with reference to the Moabite king Balak. Deuteronomy 23:3–4 states that the Moabites—and the following ten generations—shall be refused entry to the עדת יהוה ("the assembly of Yhwh"), because they refused Israel crucial passage through their land.[44] On the other hand, Deut 2:9, 19, states that Israel has no claim to the land of Moab: "Do not harass Moab or engage them in battle, for I will not give you any of its land as a possession, since I have given Ar as a possession to the descendants of Lot." Hence, the land of Moab is granted to Lot's descendants as a divine gift from Yhwh. The same is the case with Ammon. This ambivalence can also be found at the end of the Abraham-Lot cycle in Gen 19:30–38.

As Blum has demonstrated,[45] the aetiological narrative concerning the origin of Ammon and Moab cannot be detached from the preceding scenes concerning the annihilation of Sodom, the promise of Isaac's birth, and the division of the land between Lot and Abraham. With the annihilation of Sodom the closing scene is prepared: 1. The "two daughters, who have not known a man" (Gen 19:8); 2. The two sons-in-law who refuse to leave the city (Gen 19:12, 14); and 3. The death of Lot's wife (Gen 19:26). All of these elements are required for the events of 19:30–38 to occur. Genesis 19:30–38 is the finale of a composition that commences in Gen 13. Here, the geographical points of departure are clarified: Abraham is in Mamre and Lot in Sodom. The narrative turns on the correctness of their choices. Abraham, who allows his nephew to choose, ends up with the best part, while Lot, who takes the first choice—that of the Jordan plain, which is "like the garden of Yhwh" (13:10, 11)—eventually ends up in a cave.[46] From Gen 13, the Abraham-Lot cycle continues with the visit of the three men to Mamre and the proclamation of Isaac's birth. A division of these passages in accordance with literary criticism does not lead to satisfactory solutions. However, the profoundly different themes and images concerning Abraham in Gen 18:16b–33

[44] E. Noort, "Balaam the Villain," in *The Prestige of the Pagan Prophet Balaam in Judaism, Early Christianity and Islam* (ed. G.H. van Kooten and J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten; TBN 11; Leiden 2008), 6.

[45] Blum, *Vätergeschichte*, 281. Compare H. Seebass, *Genesis II.1: Vätergeschichte I (11,27–22,24)* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1997), 156.

[46] Blum, *Vätergeschichte*, 283.

must be explained diachronically.[47] Van Seters[48] has correctly defended the interdependence of Gen 18 and 19. An original independence cannot be supported, due to the verbal similarity and the interwoven sequence of scenes: "The first episode (Gen 18) takes place at midday, the second (Gen 19) in the evening, and this accounts for all the changes in detail from reclining in the shade of a tree to spending the night in the 'shade' of Lot's house."[49]

The connections between Gen 13:2, 5, 7a, 8–11, 13, 18; 18:1–16a; 19:1–26 establish the closing act of 19:30–38. On the one hand, its concern is incest: the neighbouring peoples of Moab and Ammon originate from incest. Therefore, it is no coincidence that in Genesis no blessings or other promises are given or mentioned in the description of these tribes of Abrahamitic descent.[50] On the other hand, Deuteronomy rewards the offspring of Lot with a divine promise of land. Moreover, it is noteworthy that there is no condemnation of Lot's daughters within the story itself. In fact, 19:31 portrays the daughter's distress: ואישׁ אין בארץ לבוא עלינו כדרך כל־הארץ ("and there is not a man *on earth* to come in to us after the manner of all the world").

This portrayal demonstrates a background in which—in the case of the cave story—Lot indeed is the only remaining man on earth. The story parallels the flood narrative. However, while the flood narrative is globally contextualized through its place in the primeval history, the catastrophe in Sodom is locally restricted.[51] Hence, the Abraham-Lot cycle differentiates between the Moabites and Ammonites: they are neighbouring peoples and family. Their ancestor Lot chooses the part that seems the best and settles in Sodom. He is neatly plucked from the city when it is destroyed and becomes the patriarch of the Moabites and Ammonites through the acts of his daughters.

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[47] E. Noort, "For the Sake of Righteousness: Abraham's Negotiations with Yhwh as Prologue to the Sodom Narrative: Genesis 18:16–33," in *Sodom's Sin: Genesis 18–19 and Its Interpretations* (ed. E. Noort and E. Tigchelaar; TBN 7; Leiden 2004), 5: "The figure of Abraham has already been developed to such an extent that Abraham 'deserves' to be informed of Yhwh's plans .... Abraham here has become a Righteous One who must be kept informed, even of Yhwh's plans for destruction and who, in the best deuteronomi(st)ic tradition, instructs his descendants in צדקה ומשׁפט ('righteousness and justice')."

[48] Van Seters, *Abraham*, 209–226.

[49] Van Seters, *Abraham*, 216.

[50] W. Zimmerli, *1.Mose 12–25: Abraham* (ZBK; Zürich 1976), 94.

[51] Even though his formulations are somewhat archaic ("heroic"), H. Gunkel, *Genesis* (Göttingen 1910), 217–220, described the background accurately.

Irony might be detected in the names. The name of the older son, Moab (מואב), in Gen 19:37 means "from father," which is strengthened by the LXX (καὶ ἐκάλεσεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Μωαβ λέγουσα ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς μου "and she called his name Moab, saying 'from my father' "). The same is the case with the name of the younger son, Ben-ammi (בן־עמי), the forefather of Ammon, in v. 38, which means "son of my family." This is supported by the LXX (καὶ ἐκάλεσεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Αμμαν υἱὸς τοῦ γένους μου "and she called his name Amman, 'son of my kin' ") and by the Vg. (*Ammon, id est filius populi mei* "Ammon, that is 'son of my people' "). However, we cannot be absolutely certain about this. Moreover, it is often overlooked that even the incest laws in Lev 18 and 20 do not mention a law against incest between father and daughter.

Leviticus 20:14 addresses sexual intercourse between mother and daughter. Moreover, in ancient Near Eastern law, incest between father and daughter only led to the exile of the father, while the daughter remained unpunished.[52] In the case of mother and son, incest led to capital punishment. Another mitigating factor might be that Lot was made drunk so that he would not notice anything. However, this can also be explained in two ways. First, this might be a means of freeing Lot from any responsibility. Second, the initiative taken by Lot's daughters for the sake of procreation might be emphasized in Gen 19:32, 34. In spite of vv. 33, 35, I tend towards the second possibility.

With the birth of Moab and Ammon the cycle ends; however, returning to the Sodom scenes, the question of *why* Lot was saved arises. He is not an exemplary צדיק ("a righteous one"), "although his actions are contrasted with those of all the men in the city. He offers hospitality and protection, even to the extent of sacrificing his own daughters. He goes outside to calm the crowd but that is all."[53] He *looks* like a צדיק ("a righteous one") because of the foregoing scene of the dialogue and negotiations between Abraham and Yhwh. Here the fundamental question of the fate of the righteous who live among the wicked is treated. Therefore, Lot's rescue seems to be presented as the rescue of a צדיק ("a righteous one"). Nevertheless, Gen 19:29 offers another and more fitting solution: "*God remembered Abraham*, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow." Furthermore, "According to the interpretation of this author, Lot was not rescued because he was righteous but because he was part of Abraham's

[52] Code of Hammurabi §154: [67]When an *awīlum* [69]has had intercourse [68]with his daughter [71]they shall make [70]that *awīlum* [71]leave the city.

[53] Noort, "For the Sake of Righteousness," 14.

family."[54] The oldest parts of the Abraham-Lot cycle do not include a universalistic role for Abraham. This is changed by the interpolation[55] of Gen 18:16–33. Abraham is now the righteous one (צדיק) who must be kept informed, even of Yhwh's plans for destruction, and who instructs his descendants in "righteousness and justice." The central problem of the scene can be found in Gen 18:25: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" The dilemma of Yhwh's righteousness, exemplified by the question of whether the righteous should be slain alongside the wicked, is a theoretical problem with universalistic dimensions. However, this concerns post-exilic fields. The Abraham-Lot cycle demonstrates how an original family and group-oriented narrative of destruction and survival changed the role of Abraham and his relationship with Yhwh by insertion and composition. Consequently, the question of 18:25 concerns all humankind and the mediator is Abraham.

4. Ishmael, Hagar, and Abraham

As I discuss this topic in another article within this collection of essays, entitled "Created in the Image of the Son: Ishmael and Hagar in Gen 16 and 21," here I will only summarize the conclusions drawn there. Genesis 16:12 portrays Ishmael (and his mother Hagar) as a "wild ass" (פרא אדם) who is hostile to everybody (ידו בכל ויד כל בו "his hand against all and the hands of all against him"). Therefore, "he shall dwell apart from all his brothers" (Gen 16:12b). The author looks at nomadic life in complete amazement and astonishment. Nomads and nomadic life are strange and dangerous to him. They are a threat. Nevertheless, these people are *brothers* and neighbours; and although they are distant brothers, they are still family. This is a family and tribal-oriented narrative in which Abraham has only a background role. The focus is on Ishmael and Hagar.

Genesis 21 is a late reworking of the original narrative of Gen 16. The deadly threat for Ishmael in Gen 21 cannot be read without reading Gen 22, the Aqedah. Genesis 21 is rewritten as a parallel to that narrative. *Both* sons of Abraham must go through a near-death event to be liberated by Yhwh/Elohim: "The divine promise only opens up the future after a deadly threat."[56] Nevertheless, the real heir (Gen 15:4) is Isaac, not

[54] *Ibidem*.
[55] Noort, "For the Sake of Righteousness," 4–5.
[56] E. Noort, "Genesis 22: Human Sacrifice and Theology in the Hebrew Bible," in

Ishmael, with the child of divine rather than human initiative becoming the real heir. However, both children receive the divine promise of a future great nation, although they live apart and develop different cultures. Again the focus of the Hagar-Ishmael cycle is on related tribes. It is family-oriented. There will be the blessing of progeny and land for specific groups. In other words, the horizon of the stories is not universal.

5. The Blessing of Abraham: Gen 12:1–3[57]

The Abraham-Lot cycle of Gen 13*; 18–19* and the Hagar-Ishmael cycle of Gen 16* (21) set the stage in terms of peoples, tribes, and groups in Cis- and Transjordan, the Negeb and the Arab desert. The events and groups we meet are relatively small-scale. Returning to the beginning of the Abraham cycle (Gen 11:27–25:11), the linchpin (Gen 12:1–3) of the primeval history and the patriarchal narratives breathes universalism. Apart from the question of translating Gen 12:3 (and 2), blessings and all the families of the world take the centre stage. These blessings function to counteract the dark tones of universal judgement in Gen 2–11. Even though the exegesis of this passage is strongly connected to Von Rad and the Old Testament scholars who work in his tradition, I will start with the view of Benno Jacob. Although arguing against all of the constructions and conclusions of the Documentary Hypothesis,[58] Jacob's Genesis commentary reaches theological conclusions that do not differ

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The Sacrifice of Isaac: The Aqedah (Genesis 22) and Its Interpretations (ed. E. Noort and E.J.C. Tigchelaar; TBN 4; Leiden 2002), 4–5.

[57] I do not discuss here the detailed study of K.N. Grüneberg, *Abraham, Blessing and the Nations: A Philological and Exegetical Study of Genesis 12:3 in Its Narrative Context* (BZAW 332; Berlin 2003), for one simple reason. Grüneberg studies the Hebrew *nip'al* in ch. 3 and concludes that the *nip'al* expresses a "middle" sense (S. Kemmer, *The Middle Voice* [Amsterdam 1993]). Moreover, he states that most *nip'al* constructions should be rendered as passive forms. Reflexive use of the *nip'al* is very rare. Therefore, 12:3b should be translated as a passive. His exegetical analysis of the corpus of texts is astute and a great help for scholars studying the blessings in the Hebrew Bible. Nevertheless, the decisive moment of the study always comes down to his opinion of the grammatical meaning of the *nip'al*, even when text and context do not fit. A more flexible approach is offered by D. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis: Historical and Literary Approaches* (Louisville, Ky. 1996), 155–158. The seldom used reflexive meaning for the promises of Gen 12:3; 28:14 (18:18) was replaced in a later stage by the more common *hitpa'el* (Gen 22:18; 26:4).

[58] B. Jacob, *Das erste Buch der Tora: Genesis* (Berlin 1934), 949–1049 (Anhang "Quellenscheidung").

greatly from the successful hypothesis introduced by Von Rad four years later in *Das formgeschichtliches Problem des Hexateuch*.[59]

Jacob argues that the imperative והיה ברכה ("so that you will be a blessing"; Gen 12:2b, with Masoretic vocalization) is a "command to history, a word of creation."[60] The idea that a second creation is being narrated is further elaborated upon in the exegesis of v. 3b, with Jacob creating parallels between the five occurrences of the word אור ("light") in the first creation story (Gen 1:3–5) and the fivefold occurrence—in different forms—of ברך ("to bless"). On this basis he concludes: "Es ist eine zweite Welt, die mit Abraham ins Dasein gerufen wird, die Welt des Segens durch Menschen für Menschen."[61]

The fact that Gen 12 concerns the entire world and all peoples, bears witness to a universalism which, even in comparison with the latter prophets, is unequalled.[62] However, even though scholars have attempted to minimize its importance,[63] Jacob's conclusion is: "Am Anfang der Geschichte Israels stehend, ist sich die Tora voll des Letzten bewußt, worauf sie hinausgehen soll." Therefore, he draws a line between the "second creation" by the blessing of Abraham and the universal blessing of all nations, which is the ultimate goal of the Torah according to Jacob.

Along different lines, von Rad finds an extraordinary meaning for Gen 12:1–3. His Yahwist not only collects material but also authors Gen 12:1–3. In order to narrate the divine promise of a great nation (Gen 12:1: גוי גדול) and the promise of the land to the offspring, he has a given tradition before him. However, this is not the case in Gen 12:3b. The promise that through Abraham all of the nations of the earth are blessed is a theological-prophetic vision of the Yahwist himself.[64] This makes Gen 12:1–3 not only the close of the primeval history, but in effect

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[59] G. von Rad, *Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuch* (BWANT 26; Stuttgart 1938); repr. in Idem, *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (TB 8; München 1965), 74–75.

[60] Jacob, *Genesis*, 336.

[61] Jacob, *Genesis*, 339.

[62] Jacob, *Genesis*, 339.

[63] Jacob primarily points to Gunkel, who comments on 12:3 as follows: "Hier spricht sich unbefangen die volkstümliche Stimmung aus, welche die Propheten später so bitter bekämpft und doch selber selten ganz überwunden haben." Gunkel argues against a passive translation of נברכו ("they shall be blessed") in v. 3b because such a universalism would be a stark contrast "zu dem volkstümlichen Partikularismus" of v. 3a. (H. Gunkel, *Genesis* [GHKAT; Göttingen 1969]), 165.

[64] Von Rad, *Das formgeschichtliche Problem*; repr. in Idem, *Gesammelte Studien*, 74–75.

also the hermeneutical key to the whole narrative. For, according to Von Rad, Gen 12:3b answers the primeval history's open question of how God's relationship to the non-Israelite peoples and humankind as a whole should be perceived.[65]

The primeval history ends with a divine judgement (Gen 11:1–9). The narrative's central sentence concerning the building of the tower, נעשׂה־לנו שׁם (11:4a: "let us make a name for ourselves"), has its contrasting point in אגדלה שׁמך (12:2aγ: "[I will] make your name great").[66] While the people of Gen 11 want to make a name for themselves (11:4a), in Gen 12, Yhwh will make Abraham's name great (12:2aγ). This contrast determines the meaning of Gen 12:3b. The ultimate goal of the promise concerns the bridging of the gap between God and humanity.[67] Of course, Von Rad agrees with a passive translation of Gen 12:3b.[68] For him, Gen 12:1–3, and especially 3b, is "die Ätiologie aller Ätiologien Israels."[69] His exegesis of v. 3 ends with a reference to the New Testament.[70]

Another step is taken by Wolff in his article "Das Kerygma des Jahwisten."[71] Even more forcefully than Von Rad, he locates the Yahwist within the Salomonic period. The syntactical structure, with the imperative of Gen 12:1 and the fivefold imperfect consecutive in vv. 2–3a, encircling the promise, lead to the perfect of v. 3b. Genesis 12:3b "gilt damit als *die* Folge (v.3b) *der* Folgen (v.2–3a) des Auszugs Abrahams (v.1)."[72] Everything is focused upon the content: a blessing for all of humanity by Abraham's people.[73] According to Wolff, this message becomes even stronger

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[65] Von Rad, *Das formgeschichtliche Problem*, 72.

[66] G. von Rad, *Das erste Buch Mose: Genesis* (ATD 2–4; Göttingen 1972), 122. With a reference to Jacob.

[67] Von Rad, *Das formgeschichtliche Problem*, 73: "Weder rational begründet noch in Einzelheiten schon faßbar, verkündet er [der Jahwist] als das Fernziel der von Gott in Israel gewirkten Heilsgeschichte die Überbruckung der Kluft zwischen Gott und den Menschen insgesamt." Jacob could have said this of the ultimate goal of the Torah.

[68] In 1938, Von Rad dedicated a footnote (Von Rad, *Formgeschichtliches Problem*, 73n99) to the question of a reflexive or passive translation, here pointing out the possibility that in a reflexive interpretation the later generations not only will use the blessing together with Abraham's name, but that they also wish to share his blessing. Interpreted in this manner, both interpretations are not too far apart.

[69] Von Rad, *Das formgeschichtliche Problem*, 73.

[70] Von Rad, *Genesis*, 123: "Diese Weissagung, die auf eine jenseits des Alten Bundes liegenden Erfüllung hindeutet, war dem rückschauenden Blick der alttestamentlichen Zeugen von besonderer Wichtigkeit (Acts 3:25–26; Rom 4:13; Gal 3:8)."

[71] H.W. Wolff, "Das Kerygma des Jahwisten," *EvT* 23 (1963): 73–98; repr. in Idem, *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (TB 22; München 1964), 345–373.

[72] Wolff, "Kerygma," 353.

[73] Wolff, "Kerygma," 354.

when Gen 12:1–3—and especially 12:3b—is understood as the Yahwist's own message set against the negative background of the primeval history. However, Gen 12:1–3 not only provides the key to Gen 2–11, the Yahwistic parts of the patriarchal narratives also provide an answer to the question of how the nations of the earth can be blessed by Abraham and his descendants. This is made clear by means of the Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, and Arameans: the intercession (Abraham), peaceful coexistence (Isaac), and economic prosperity (Jacob).[74] The strength of Wolff's analysis, however, lies in its connection to the primeval history. After the stories of guilt, annihilation, and death in Gen 3–6, the rescue of Noah from the waters of the great flood (Gen 8), and the scattering of the people (Gen 11), Gen 12:1–3 stands in contrast. From this point on, humanity is blessed and all nations may take part due to Abraham.

For a moment, this line of theological exegesis seemed to be broken by an influential article by Rendtorff.[75] He contests the thesis that the Yahwist's primeval history ends in Gen 12:1–3 and makes a case for it coming to a close in 8:21, after the flood ends in a divine guarantee of life on earth. However, Rendtorff's proposal is sufficiently criticized by Steck,[76] who contests the idea that Gen 8:21ab refers back to 3:17 and that the curse over the earth is lifted in 8:21.[77] Furthermore, he stresses that in 8:21–22 the keyword, "blessing," is not mentioned, and he correctly points out that Rendtorff cannot explain the compositional place of Gen 11.[78] Moreover, alongside the confusion of languages, the scattering of the people is also mentioned, which is not addressed positively in any sense by the narrator. Thematically, the curse of the אדמה ("ground/earth") is only lifted after Gen 12.

The step from curse to blessing is unthinkable without the blessing of Abraham and his descendants.[79] In Gen 13:10 Lot is able to describe the Jordan valley as "the garden of Yhwh" (גן־יהוה). In Gen 26:12 Isaac "sowed seed in that land, and in the same year reaped a hundredfold. Yhwh blessed him." Steck states that the lifting of the curse does not take

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[74] Wolff, "Kerygma," 365.

[75] R. Rendtorff, "Genesis 8,21 und die Urgeschichte des Jahwisten," *KD* 7 (1961): 69–78.

[76] O.H. Steck, "Genesis 12:1–3 und die Urgeschichte des Jahwisten," in *Probleme biblischer Theologie: Gerhard von Rad zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. H.W. Wolff; München 1971), 525–554.

[77] The other deteriorations in the quality of life in Gen 3:14–19 are not addressed.

[78] Steck, "Genesis 12:1–3," 527–538.

[79] *Pace* Rendtorff.

place through the blessing of the earth, but because of the blessing of people, that is, the patriarchs.[80] Maintaining the connection between Gen 2–11 and 12:1–3, Steck maintains the tradition stemming from Von Rad and Wolff. Against the background of the primeval history, humanity partakes in the blessing due to a new initiative of Yhwh. The blessing of the world is no longer possible without Abraham/Israel. The garden of Eden belongs to the irrevocable past, but the choosing of Abraham/Israel will bring a renewed blessing to humanity.

The last name I will mention in this post-Second World War quartet of exegetes is Zimmerli, who, in his Zürcher Bibelkommentar on Gen 12–25, dedicates an elaborate footnote to the passive or reflexive translation of Gen 12:3b.[81] He enumerates the arguments for a reflexive translation, including the examples of Gen 48:20 and Jer 29:22. There are good reasons for translating 12:3b as "With you(r name) all the families of the earth shall bless themselves."[82] However, according to Zimmerli, such a translation does not do Abraham justice. To use his name alone as an *example* of blessings fails to live up to the preceding promises. Not only this verse, but the whole of the Yahwistic corpus "dürfte … auf ein volleres Verständnis weisen,"[83] by which, without a doubt and in the light of the New Testament, the traditio-historical and theological surplus value of a passive translation are meant.

I have consciously chosen this quartet of German/Swiss exegetes (Von Rad, Wolff, Steck, and Zimmerli), who dominated the exegetic-theological field on this topic after the Second World War,[84] for it is clear that their concepts cannot be seen independently of the time or circumstances in which they were conceived. Noth's lonely Deuteronomist, who—in his Deuteronomistic History—has no more hope for the future, sees the divine judgement over the temple and the city in 587 BCE as "die Stunde Null," the definitive sign of the end. This interpretation is irrevocably bound to the circumstances of the war in 1943,[85] the beginning of the

[80] Steck, "Genesis 12:1–3," 541.

[81] Zimmerli, *1.Mose 12–25*, 21n4.

[82] *Ibidem*.

[83] *Ibidem*. In the main text his conclusion is: "über die Krisis hinaus, zu welcher Abraham und das von ihm herkommende Volk für seine ganze Umwelt wird, ist hier *ein aktives Tun Gottes an den Völkern der Welt ausgesagt* [italics E.N.]." Because of the passive translation, the peoples disappear as the subject in v. 3b and the blessing is now an act of Yhwh.

[84] The reception of Jacob's work had a long way to go. It found acceptance and admiration only in the 1990s.

[85] M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (Halle/S 1943), 108, 110. It is no

end of the *Drittes Reich*. In the eyes of the above-mentioned exegetes, the Yahwist is the counterpart of Noth's Deuteronomist.[86] Beyond all guilt and annihilation (the great flood), the Yahwist, as the first theologian of the Hebrew Bible, proclaims the blessing as God's definitive will for humanity.

In the years after the war, a similar image profoundly contributed to the revival of Old Testament exegesis as a theological discipline. Several factors were important here. Firstly, the unspoken wish to portray the Yahwist as the oldest theologian of the Hebrew Bible, who fulfilled the historical-critical longing to penetrate the oldest layers of the tradition. Secondly, to renew the theological reasoning of the Hebrew Bible[87] after its devaluation and neglect in the dark years of the Nazi regime. Thirdly, to return to the sources after the defilement of the greater part of systematic theology over the preceding years. Of course, to ascribe the theological pathos, the images, and the reconstruction of the Yahwist's *Sitz im Leben* solemnly to the circumstances would be an oversimplification. However, the context of post-Second World War Germany no doubt provided the conditions of possibility for this image to originate. Nevertheless, extreme political circumstances were not the only cause of this image. One of the most important fields of study in German exegesis during this time was the *Einleitungswissenschaft*[88] and its concerns for *Formgeschichte*. Thus, it was form-critical study that started the above-mentioned line of interpretation.

The profound influence of this exegetical line can clearly be observed in Seebass' later commentary.[89] He argues that neither the passive nor the reflexive translation can be assigned to Gen 12:3. His argument against

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coincidence that the concept of the Deuteronomist and Deuteronomistic History was unanimously accepted by scholars for decades, but that Noth's portrayal of the Yahwist without any hope for the future was opposed immediately, even in the circles of his direct colleagues and friends (Von Rad, Wolff, Zimmerli; cf. W. Zimmerli, *Grundriß der alttestamentlichen Theologie* [TW; Stuttgart 1982], 156–159).

[86] Von Rad's *Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuch* was published in 1938!

[87] E. Noort, "Tussen geschiedenis en theologie: Over valkuilen en mogelijkheden in de bijbelse theologie," *KT* 53 (2002): 202–223, esp. 208–211.

[88] H.W. Wolff, "Gespräch mit Gerhard von Rad," in *Probleme biblischer Theologie: Gerhard von Rad zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. H.W. Wolff; München 1971), 654: "Fragt man ihn welche Vorlesung er selbst wohl am liebsten gehalten habe, so nennt er die »Einleitung in das Alte Testament« sein »Kassenstück«. Da konnte er vom Literarischen und Historischen an die Schwelle des Theologischen führen. Was da zu sagen ist, wächst mehr und mehr in die Theologie des Alten Testaments hinein."

[89] Seebass, *Vätergeschichte I*, 15–16.

a passive translation is that the *pu'al* is already known as a passive of the *nip'al* (13×) and the latter did not lose its original reflexive meaning in all instances.[90] However, it cannot be a reflexive either, for then v. 3b would theologically find itself subordinate to v. 3a (Zimmerli, Westermann).

However, times are changing. The exegetical approaches have shifted the focus from critical studies of genre to critical analysis of redaction and further to composition criticism. One of the most influential studies in which the traditional image of the Yahwist is questioned can be found in this latter field.[91] In the work of Blum, the source critically constructed Yahwist disappears in favour of a composition of narrative cycles. Moreover, the collection of essays edited by Dozeman and Schmid is entitled *A Farewell to the Yahwist?*[92] After the debate over the last five years, the question mark in the title could now be replaced by an exclamation mark.

6. The Divine Promise of Gen 12:2–3: The Text and Its Interpreters[93]

2aα	ואעשׂך לגוי גדול	I will[a] make of you a great nation
2aβ	ואברכך	I will bless you,
2aγ	ואגדלה שׁמך	I will make your name great
2b	והיה ברכה	so that you[a] will be a blessing[b]
3aα	ואברכה מברכיך	And I will bless those,[a] who bless you
3aβ	ומקללך אאר	and him,[a] who disdains you, I shall curse
3bα	ונברכו בך	(and) all the families of the earth
3bβ	כל משׁפחת האדמה	shall bless themselves by you(r name)

2aα[a]: Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 266, already mentioned by Gispen, *Genesis II*, 26. **2b**[a]: Sam.P. והוי as in Gen 17:1; "you": the *BHK/BHS* (Eissfeldt) propose the vocalization of והיה not as a *qal* imperative singular (MT), but as a *qal* perfect consecutive: "That it (your name) will be a blessing." The change of the vowels is defended by Giesebrecht, Gunkel, and Speiser, but unnecessary. The imperative following a cohortative expresses "a consequence which is to be expected with certainty" (GK, 110i; Gispen, *Genesis II*, 26; Seebass, *Vätergeschichte I*, 10; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 266; Westermann, *Genesis II.1*, 166); **2b**[b]: The translation of the LXX (εὐλογητός) and

[90] Seebass, *Vätergeschichte I*, 15.

[91] Blum, *Vätergeschichte*.

[92] Dozeman and Schmid, *Farewell to the Yahwist?*.

[93] W.H. Gispen, *Genesis II* (COT; Kampen 1979); H. Gunkel, *Genesis*, 164; E.A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB; New York 1962), 85–86; K.R. Veenhof, "De zegen van Abraham," *MAW* 27 (2008): 43–52; G. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* (WBC 1; Waco, Tex., 1987); C. Westermann, *Genesis II.1* (BKAT; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1981), 166.

Vg. (*benedictus*) "be blessed," cf. Tg. and Pesh. (מברך), avoids the supposed difficulty of the imperative "be a blessing." **3aα** and **3bα**: Chiastic construction: אברכה ("I will bless") // אאר ("I will curse"); and מברכיך ("who bless you") // מקללך ("who disdains you"). **3aα**[a] and **3aβ**[a]: Note the plural in מברכיך ("those, who bless you") versus the singular in מקללך ("him, who disdains you") expressing the stress on the fivefold repeated forms of blessing in 12:2, 3. The LXX did not note the distinction: τοὺς εὐλογοῦντάς σε ("those, who bless you"), τοὺς καταρωμένους σε ("those, who curse you"). In the same way, Pesh. and Vg. (*maledicentibus tibi*), followed by *BHS* app. 2b and 3bα.

The importance of Abraham's blessing from a reception history point of view lies in the interpretation of v. 3b and, derived from it, v. 2b. Noteworthy is v. 3b's *nipʿal* **ונברכו** ("[they] shall bless themselves"), with the subject **כל משפחת האדמה** ("all the families of the earth"). Apart from v. 3b, a *nipʿal* 3rd person plural of **ברך** ("to bless") only occurs in Gen 18:18 (**בו כל גויי הארץ ונברכו** "and all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by him") and Gen 28:14 (**ונברכו בך כל־משפחת האדמה ובזרעך** "and by you and your descendants shall all the families of the earth bless themselves"). Both times the construction is **ב** + **ברך** ("to bless by"). In Gen 18:18, "all the nations of the earth" are the subject, in Gen 28:14 "all the families of the earth," the latter a perfect parallel to 12:3. Genesis 18:18 can be seen as a quote from Gen 12:3. Yhwh's deliberation (Gen 18:17–20), which precedes the dialogue with Abraham in Gen 18:23–25, is thematically connected to Ezek 14 and 18. In 28:14 the **ב**-construction also holds **זרעך** ("your offspring"). Since Gunkel and Wellhausen,[94] **זרעך** ("your offspring") is seen as an ornament, a secondary addition.[95] However, in Gen 28:14 **זרעך** ("your offspring") is a structural part of Gen 28:13–14, in which **זרעך** ("your offspring") is placed at the end of the sentence in Gen 28:13bβ. Fokkelman has described this construction as a "double chiasmus."[96] Not only on a structural level, but also with regard to content, the differences between Gen 12:3 and Gen 28:14 can be satisfactorily explained. Genesis 12:3 is focused on Abraham. The promise to make him a great nation aims of course at future offspring. The word **זרעך** ("your offspring") appears finally in Gen 12:7, not in Gen 12:1–3. It is a different case in Gen 28:13–15, where in

[94] Gunkel, *Genesis*, 318, considers **זרעך** ("your offspring") a gloss and holds v. 14 to be secondary.

[95] For the normal construction, see 2 Kgs 5:27.

[96] J.P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art in Genesis: Specimens of Stylistic and Structural Analysis* (SSN 17; Assen 1975), 58.

the divine speech everything is focused on the offspring of Jacob/Israel. The offspring will possess the land, and the directions in which Israel will expand and where the offspring will settle are also described. There is no compelling reason to explain זרעך ("your offspring") or Gen 12:13–14 as secondary.

The original reflexive meaning of the *nipʿal* could be correct in the three parallels, but a passive meaning cannot be excluded either. A compelling reason to choose one over the other cannot be found in the meaning of *these* three texts. However, reception-historical paths are leading in different directions and these differences in theological interpretation are significant. In a reflexive interpretation, the families or the nations bless each other, having Abraham as an exemplary model. A passive interpretation holds that by means of a divine action all of the families, that is, the nations of the earth, will be blessed, with Abraham as the intermediary. The two possibilities are:

	Reflexive	*Passive*
12:3	and by you(r name) all the families of the earth shall bless themselves	and by you(r name) all the families of the earth will be blessed
18:18	and all the nations of the earth will bless themselves by him	and all the nations of the earth will be blessed by him
28:14	and by you and your offspring all the families of the earth will bless themselves	and all the families of the earth will be blessed by you and your offspring

How did the preference for a passive meaning, so clear from a later Christian rereading, arise? The neologism ἐνευλογέομαι ("to be blessed") in the passive form ἐνευλογηθήσονται ("they will be blessed") is not only used in the translation of the *hitpaʿel* in Gen 22:18 and 26:4, but also of the *nipʿal* in Gen 12:3; 18:18; 28:14. Hence, in general the LXX translates in the passive. The subtleties of the subject are maintained in the LXX: πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς ("all the tribes of the earth"; Gen 12:3; 28:14: כל משפחת האדמה "all the families of the earth"); πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῆς γῆς ("all the nations of the earth"; Gen 18:18; 22:18; 26:4: כל גויי הארץ "all the nations of the earth"). Not only the LXX but also Sir 44:21 (ἐνευλογηθῆναι ἔθνη ἐν σπέρματι αὐτοῦ "the nations would be blessed through his posterity") uses the passive form. With the help of the LXX and supported by Sirach, the passive meaning in Gal 3:8 (ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη "in you shall all the nations be blessed") and in Acts 3:25 (καὶ ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου [ἐν]ευλογηθήσονται πᾶσαι αἱ πατριαὶ τῆς γῆς

"and in your posterity shall all the families of the earth be blessed")[97] receives its theological weight. Now Gen 12:3b functions as an argument in the discussion about the mission to the Gentiles. It is an anticipation of the universal blessing of all of the families of the earth through Jesus Christ. A common reasoning runs as follows. In the NT, the passive meaning is as obvious as in the LXX and Sirach, and whenever a passive meaning can be ascribed to the texts of Genesis, especially Gen 12:3b, a biblical theological thread can be established from Genesis to Galatians. However, can Gen 12:3 bear such a theological weight?

When we consider the parallels with the *hitpa'el*, things seem different, because only a reflexive translation is viable, Gen 22:18 ("all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves [התברכו] by your descendants") and the literal parallel Gen 26:4 ("all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants"). In the first case, Abraham is the addressee, but the focus is on the son, who has just been saved from sacrificial death. Therefore, it is "by your descendants." In a similar way, Gen 26:4a establishes that the context of the descendants of Gen 26:4b. Jeremiah 4:2 is somewhat different: (והתברכו בו גוים ובו יתהללו "then nations shall bless themselves by him [Yhwh], and in him [Yhwh] they shall glory").[98]

The גוים ("nations") are in the centre, on both sides marked with "by him" (בו). The way in which the formula "bless each other" works, becomes clear in Gen 48:20 ("By you[r name] Israel will invoke blessings, saying 'God make you *like Ephraim and Manasseh*' "). Ephraim and Manasseh exemplify the exceptional bearers of blessing. In the same way, the Israelites will later bless each other. Exemplary names are used to identify the quality of the blessing. This is also the case for its counterpart, the curse: "This curse shall be used by all the exiles from Judah in Babylon: 'Yhwh make you *like Zedekiah and Ahab*, whom the king of

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[97] C.K. Barrett, *Acts 1–14* (ICC; London 2004), 212, holds 3:25b to be a conflation of Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18 and correctly argues: "The promise to Abraham is certainly taken to contain a promise that the blessing offered in the first instance to him and his family would be extended to the non-Jewish people. The Christians were not the first to take the passage in this way; the LXX's passive verb ἐνευλογηθήσονται can hardly mean anything else. Whether this rightly represents the Hebrew נברכו (Gen 12.3:18.18), והתברכו (22.18), is another question; probably it does not."

[98] See Isa 65:16 for the use of the *hitpa'el* (to bless each other with the name of אלהי אמן ["the God of truth/faithfulness"]). This divine name indicates that he is a God who fulfills what he proclaims. In the context of the blessing, a blessing that will take place. Therefore, Isa 65:15 strengthens the explanation that in Jer 4:2 בו ("by him") points to Yhwh and not to Israel (Beuken, *Jesaja IIIB*, 78).

Babylon roasted in the fire'" (Jer 29:22). Psalm 72:17 ("men[99] may bless themselves [יתברכו] by him, all nations call him blessed") holds, as has been widely recognized, a reflexive meaning because of the parallelism. The use of the exemplary name returns in Zech 8:13. In the divine speech it is stated: "Just as you have been a cursing (קללה) among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you and you shall be a blessing (ברכה)."

The cursing indicates Israel's situation after its destruction, deportation, and exile. The word of salvation in Zech 8:12 describes the opposite situation: "The vine shall yield its fruit, the ground shall give its produce, and the skies shall give their dew." The curse can only point to Israel as an exemplary bearer of a curse. Israel being a curse to all nations is not a viable translation in this context. Moreover, Israel's curse had become a proverbial saying: "Cursed like Israel." According to Zech 8:12 the reverse occurs. Now all nations will be blessed like Israel. In a short and clear excursus, Westermann concludes that "Diese Parallele (Ps 72:17, wie auch Jer 4:2) die reflexive Übersetzung (von Gen 12:3b) bestätigt." However, he continues, "Damit ist jedoch das Entscheidende noch nicht gesagt"[100] and argues—like Von Rad and others—for a *receptive* meaning. The formal appearance pleads for a reflexive form, but the gift of the blessing is so clear that it approaches the passive meaning. Whenever groups bless each other with a blessing like that of Abraham, the supposition is that they will indeed share in that blessing.[101] In this way, the boundaries between the meaning of the reflexive and passive translations are neutralized. In his study, Wehmeier argues for this solution. While he sympathizes with a passive translation, he also argues that the author would then already have used the *puʿal*.[102] Therefore, he holds the receptive meaning to be the most probable: "By him all the families of the earth will *gain* blessing."[103]

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[99] The connection between Ps 72:17 and Genesis has been observed by the LXX. The LXX adds πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς ("all the tribes of the earth") from Gen 12:3 and 28:14. See app. *BHS*.

[100] C. Westermann, *Genesis 12–36* (BKAT 1.2; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1981), 176.

[101] Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 176: "Wo man sich mit dem Namen Abrahams segnet, da wird tatsächlich Segen verliehen und Segen empfangen. Wo in dieser Weise der Name Abrahams in einem Segenwunsch laut wird, da strömt der Segen Abrahams über, und für dieses Überströmen gibt es keine Grenzen, es reicht zu allen Geschlechtern der Erde."

[102] G. Wehmeier, *Der Segen im Alten Testament: Eine semasiologische Untersuchung der Wurzel brk* (ThDiss 6; Basel 1970), 176–186.

[103] Wehmeier, *Segen*, 178.

However, Blum has correctly pointed out that a receptive solution blurs the decisive difference between reflexive and passive without any concrete philological or textual evidence. Moreover, Abraham's blessing itself is not central, but rather the wish to be blessed like Abraham.[104] Genesis 48:20 does not turn Ephraim and Manasseh into mediators of blessing. They, like Abraham himself, are the paradigms of a blessed figure,[105] nothing more, nothing less. The argument that this translation reduces the theological importance of Gen 12:3 cannot be substantiated. Indeed, Gen 12:3a states that the one who blesses Abraham will be blessed himself, while the one who curses Abraham will also be cursed himself. For some scholars, it is the backdrop for Gen 12:3b where the blessing is not automatically transferred to all families on earth. Only the passive meaning of Gen 12:3b supersedes the promise of Gen 12:3a. This is a universalism of a blessed earth, but occurring through Abraham. This is the main argument of those who favour a passive translation. Consciously or not, Galatians and Acts play a major role in such reasoning.

The fact that Abraham's name affects the whole earth and exemplifies the wish for blessing can indeed be seen as the climax of Gen 12:1–3. Verse 3a states that the relationship between Yhwh and Abraham is so intense that blessing or cursing Abraham causes blessings or curses for the speaker. If the difference between the plural "those who bless you" (Gen 12:3aα) and the singular "him, who disdains you" (Gen 12:3aβ) points to an abundance of blessing, it is also a logical climax when in Gen 12:3b the reflexive form is used, with Abraham as the exemplary model: "To be blessed like Abraham." Therefore, it is no coincidence that Benno Jacob, who cannot be accused of a lack of theological interest, translates it as "und segnen sollen sich mit dir alle Geschlechter des Erdbodems."[106] He demonstrates no uneasiness with a reflexive translation.[107] Therefore, we might conclude that the exegetically and contextually bound portrayal of the Yahwist called for the thesis of a theological subordination of v. 3b to v. 3a in the case of a reflexive translation. Hence, also in a reflexive translation of v. 3b, Gen 12:1–3 functions as a link between the

[104] Blum, *Vätergeschichte*, 352: "Dieses Ergebnis nötigt M.E. zu dem Urteil, dass es einen »Segen für andere« in den Verheissungen der Genesis nicht gibt."

[105] Blum, *Vätergeschichte*, 349–359, esp. 352.

[106] Jacob, *Genesis*, 337.

[107] Referring to Nahmanides and Cassuto, Veenhof, "De zegen," 43–52, prefers the reflexive translation. He refers to Gen 48:20; Ruth 4:11; Jer 29:22; Zech 8:13; Ps 21:7; 37:26; 72:17; 83:12.

negatively coloured narratives of the primeval history and the blessings of the patriarchal stories. Therefore, in the context of Genesis as a whole and in light of the instrumental way the name is used here, a reflexive meaning for Gen 12:3 must be favoured.

7. Conclusions

The reflexive meaning of the *nipʿal* has not been lost, and in the texts with the *hitpaʿel*, the parallelisms in Ps 72:17 demonstrate the original meaning of the reflexive form: "Men may bless themselves by him (בו), all nations call him blessed." The instrumental ב is clarified by Gen 48:20: "By you (בך) Israel will invoke blessings, saying 'God make you *like* (כ) *Ephraim and Manasseh*.'" Ephraim and Manasseh are examples of blessings *par excellence*. The instrumental use, in which Abraham's name is used as an ultimate example of blessing, can be seen within the same context. "To make your name great" (Gen 12:2aγ) leads to "so that you will be a blessing" (2b). His name and prosperity will be used paradigmatically in a call for blessing: "Be (blessed) like Abraham!"[108] Genesis 12:3aα and 3aβ substantiate this blessing. Wherever this blessing is proclaimed, it will materialize. This leads to a universal expansion. Abraham's blessing will be so great that all the families of the earth shall bless themselves by him/his name. The accumulation of blessings indeed counteracts Gen 1–11.

In the older narrative cycles that connect Abraham to the neighbouring nations/peoples through the construction of a genealogy, a hierarchy is established between Abraham/Israel/Judah on the one hand and Moab/Ammon/Ishmael on the other. These neighbouring peoples are indeed entitled to a heritage, and a divine promise guarantees offspring and land. However, Yhwh's promise, which is formulated increasingly in terms of covenant and oath, is directed towards Abraham and his descendants. Ishmael is blessed, but the question of the identity of the true heir is answered in favour of Isaac. The older narratives do not emphasize a universalistic meaning in the stories of Abraham, and most certainly not in a form in which the relationship to Abraham/Israel is decisive for the automatic reception of blessing (passive or reflexive). Abraham and his heirs in the patriarchal narratives are examples of blessing. Nothing more, nothing less. Even the prophets on the edge of the exile do not

[108] Veenhof, "De zegen," 47.

portray Abraham as the ancestor who plays a role as a mediator of universal blessings for all the families of the earth. In his relationship with Yhwh, Abraham is the exemplary ancestor. He is Yhwh's servant, he loved Yhwh, and he is even redeemed by Yhwh. Due to this role, there is hope for the future of the exiles. He surpasses Jacob and becomes a character that can even hold his own against Judah (Isa 63). He even wishes to neglect his offspring. The prophets do not know anything of a role for Abraham in relation to "all the families of the earth" (Gen 12:3). They focus exclusively on the future of exiled Israel. The further development of the figure of Abraham can be observed through the secondary parts of Gen 18:16–22*, 23–32. Now Yhwh must inform Abraham, the righteous one *par excellence*, of his plans to destroy Sodom. He is the one who can ask Yhwh: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" (Gen 18:25). It is here that a universal understanding of Gen 12:3 would work, from which the step to a true mediator of blessing is a small one. In the LXX, Sirach, and the New Testament the definitive change into a passive translation is executed. However, this is not how Gen 12 first started.

CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF THE SON: ISHMAEL AND HAGAR

Ed Noort

Hagar, the slave girl, is mentioned only twelve times in the Hebrew Bible—eleven times in the stories of Gen 16 (16:1, 3, 4, 8, 15 [bis], 16) and Gen 21 (21:9, 14, 17 [bis]) and once in Gen 25:12. In the latter text, however, the focus has already shifted from Hagar to her son: here, the descendants of Ishmael are listed. Statistically, the role of Hagar is limited, with Ishmael taking the greater part. He enters the stage in Gen 16 to be born in the last verses of the chapter (16:11, 15, 16). He returns in the most important text of the priestly covenant theology in Gen 17 (17:18, 20, 23, 25, 26). He is absent in name, but not in person in the second story of Hagar and Ishmael in Gen 21.[1] He returns prominently in Gen 25 (25:9, 12, 13 [bis], 16), with his descendants and the noting of his death at 137 (25:17), an age even Moses did not reach (Deut 34:7). He, his daughter Mahalath, and his son Nebaioth are mentioned in Gen 28:9;[2] 36:3[3] and he deserves his place in the genealogies of 1 Chronicles (1:28, 29, 31).[4] Moreover, his descendants are pictured as caravan traders, to whom Joseph is sold (Gen 37:25, 27, 28; 39:1), and as Bedouin raiders interchangeable with the Midianites (Judg 8:24). Finally, the Hagarites

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[1] Gen 21:9 (בן־הגר), 10 (בן־האמה), 11 (בנו), 12 (נער), 13 (בן־האמה), 14 (ילד), 15 (ילד), 16 (ילד), 17 (נער bis), 18 (נער), 19 (נער), 20 (נער).

[2] In the priestly composition, Esau is married to Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael, according to the wish of his father Isaac (Gen 28:6–8). See C. Westermann, *Genesis* (BKAT 1.2; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1981), 547.

[3] Here the daughter of Ishmael is called Basemath. The Samaritan Pentateuch noticed the difference and consequently changed the name into Mahalath in line with Gen 28:9. P retains the alternative name, but adds "the sister of Nebaioth," conforming to 28:9.

[4] For the priority of Ishmael in the genealogy, see T. Willi, *Chronik* (BKAT 14.1; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1991), 20: "Deutlich ist, dass in den Stammbäumen die Nebenlinien zuerst behandelt werden, während die Stammreihen zuerst in den Hauptlinien münden, die sie dann mit den Nebenlinien komplettieren .... So bringt der Chronist ... mit den beiden Namen »Isaak und Ismael« so verschiedenartige Traditionen wie Gen 16:1–4 (ursprünglich JP); 17:15–22 (P); 21:8–13 (E); 22:16 (E); 25:9 (P) auf den kleinsten gemeinsamen Nenner: die Zuordnung von Ismael und Isaak und die Vorrangstellung Isaaks."

should be mentioned, they are Arab tribes mentioned five times in the late texts of the Hebrew Bible (Ps 83:7; 1 Chr 5:10, 19, 20; 27:31).[5] Coming to the end of the narrative thread in Genesis, however, we see Ishmael at peace with his brother Isaac. Abraham has died and "his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpela .... There Abraham was buried with his wife Sarah" (Gen 25:9, 10). Here Abraham is buried by his two sons, as if nothing had happened in the troublesome stories before. Of course, we can separate the texts diachronically, but the final composition gives Ishmael a place alongside Isaac: "all's well that ends well."

It appears that Ishmael has an important role while Hagar plays only a supporting part. Nevertheless, in the narratives of Gen 16 and 21, the stories we are focusing on, the stage is set in a different way. Of the five protagonists, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Hagar, and Ishmael, Hagar is the most important in Gen 16. The camera follows her in almost every scene,[6] with the others only having supporting roles. There is a change, however, for the focus in the second story slowly shifts from Hagar to the unnamed Ishmael—to the promises made to him and his fate. He is at the centre of Sarah's concerns about inheritance (Gen 21:10), but Abraham does not want to send him away (Gen 21:11) because he is his son. The divine speech promises him a "nation" (Gen 21:13, 18). When Ishmael is near death (Gen 21:16), Elohim hears his voice (Gen 21:17), and as he grows up as a hunter in the wilderness, God is with him (Gen 21:20–21).

Looking at the final form of the text with the shift of focus from Hagar to Ishmael, the portrayal of Ishmael should be highlighted before we picture his mother, the slave girl Hagar. Whom and what does Ishmael, Abraham's eldest son, represent? The first promise of Gen 16:10 is still a general one, "to multiply greatly your offspring." The characterization in v. 12, however, is much more specific:

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[5] See the paper by Anthony Hilhorst in this volume.

[6] Gen 16:1–2: introduction of Hagar, the slave girl; 16:3: Hagar is given to Abraham; 16:4: Hagar is pregnant; 16:5–6: Hagar is humiliated and runs away; 16:7–9: Hagar meets the angel of Yhwh; 16:10–12: divine promises to Hagar; 16:13–14: Hagar names the deity; 16:15–16: Hagar gives birth to Ishmael; Gen 21:8–11: inheritance problems for the son of Hagar; 21:12–13: divine speech with promise to the son of the slave woman; 21:14: Abraham sends Hagar and her son away; 21:15–16: Hagar is lost in the desert; 21:17–18: the angel of God calls from heaven to Hagar; 21:19: God opens Hagar's eyes; 21:20–21: Hagar finds a wife for Ishmael.

> Indeed, he will be a wild ass of a man;
> his hand against all
> and the hands of all against him.
> And he shall dwell apart from all his brothers. (Gen 16:12)

This verse portrays Ishmael as a "wild ass" of a man who is hostile to everybody ("his hand against all and the hands of all against him"). The outcome is sketched in Gen 16:12b ("he shall dwell apart from all his brothers").

What kind of world-view does the author of Gen 16:12 have? Somebody with a settled way of life is writing here, someone looking at nomadic life in complete amazement and astonishment. Nomads and nomadic life are strange and dangerous. They are fighters, solitaries, at home nowhere. They live over a widespread area. They are a threat. It is no accident that in the biblical texts Amalekites, Midianites and Ishmaelites are sometimes interchangeable. The image chosen for Ishmael is perfect. In all the prophetic (Isa 32:14; Jer 2:24; Hos 8:9) and poetic (Job 24:5; 39:5–8) texts in which the wild ass is portrayed, its freedom from humans and civilization is stressed: "It scorns the tumult of the city; it does not hear the shouts of the driver" (Job 39:7). These people, however—and this is the other side of the coin—are *brothers* and neighbours. They are distant brothers, not direct heirs of the great ancestor Abraham, but nevertheless family.

Is there a sociological setting for this picture of Ishmael? We are talking of a modest life on the fringes of the desert, mainly self-subsistent, but in bad times resorting to raids on settlements, trade caravans, or herds. There was probably a continuum between groups of people moving constantly between a sedentary and a nomadic life, moving from one economic activity to the other. "Their niches are not fixed in any way, economically, ecologically, or geographically. Pastoralists provide the cities and towns with meat, dairy products, wool, leather."[7] One part of the population lived a sedentary life, another part had a more nomadic or transhumant lifestyle, necessary to care for the large flocks and herds. Thus, we see a sociological construction with many interrelationships between the cities, the fields, the mountains, and the fringes of the desert. Each kind of life needed the other. The fluctuation and flexibility of the different forms of life are substantial. However, what about the otherness of the nomadic groups, as seen through the eyes of sedentary people?

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[7] E.J. van der Steen, *Tribes and Territories in Transition* (OLA 130; Leuven 2004), 105.

The records of travellers from the nineteenth century demonstrate an expanded system of obtaining food and valuables using hostile methods.[8] The reports and observations of travellers during the period, together with the records of the Ottoman government, reflect a well-organized system of raiding and pillaging. During times in which social systems break down and the interrelationship between the cities and their rural surroundings is disrupted, life on the mountain plateaus and on the fringes of the desert really becomes a case of survival of the fittest. In the centre stands a tribe with a few allies: "All others were potential enemies and raiding and robbing one's enemies was perfectly legal as a display of strength as well as a source of income."[9] Raids were undertaken to steal sheep, goats, and camels.

For the settled population, life was hard. In several parts of the region, such as the Jordan valley, Syria, and the northern Jordan, whole villages were abandoned due to the constant raids of the Bedouin tribes. One of the nicest passages amongst the travellers' tales tells how the grave of a famous war leader on the Kerak plateau became a place of pilgrimage for robbers to ask a blessing for their coming raid.[10] Thus, we have both sides of the coin. During times in which social systems functioned there was intensive contact between those engaged in the nomadic and sedentary ways of life, between the city and the mountains, and between the fields and the desert. Do we have any material on this that can bridge the gap between our knowledge of this type of nomadism over the last two centuries and that of the first millennium BCE?

In the eighth and seventh centuries BCE we find a confederation of nomadic tribes named *Šumu'il* in the annals of the Assyrian kings Tiglath-pileser III and Ashurbanipal. The Assyrian name *Šumu'il*[11] renders a north Arabian tribal name *Šumaʿʾil*, which is without doubt the same name as the Hebrew *Jišma'el* (= Ishmael) the imperfect of שׁמע with the subject אל, which means "God heard" or "God hears." The confederation extended across north Arabia from the reign of Tiglath-pileser III to that of Ashurbanipal (eighth and seventh centuries BCE). Its first

[8] Could these records from the nineteenth century also reflect a reality of hundreds or even thousands of years ago? Generally speaking, if the geopolitical circumstances and the sociological conditions have not changed dramatically, the chronological gap is not the most important element.

[9] Van der Steen, *Tribes and Territories*, 115.

[10] *Ibidem*.

[11] Following E.A. Knauf, "Ishmael," *ABD*, 3:515, Assyrian *s* renders West Semitic *š* and Assyrian *u* occurs in Arabian names in Assyrian transcription rather than Semitic *a*.

rulers were *queens*, not *kings*. The first four rulers we know of are *Zabibe*, *Šamši*, *Yati'e*, and *Te'elchunu*, all queens of Arabia. It is the queen of the Qedarites, *Zabibe*, who pays a tribute of male and female camels to Tiglath-pileser in 738 BCE, as does her successor Queen *Šamši*, who still had to pay tribute to Sargon II in 716. In the words of Tiglath-pileser:

> As for *Šamši*, queen of Arabia (Arubu), I killed 9,400 of her warriors near the mountain Saqurri, 30,000 camels … 20,000 cattle, 5,000 containers with all kinds of spices … the property of her gods, … [h]er own possessions, I took away from her. She herself fled to save her life … *like a wild ass* [italics E.N.] … forced by hunger … I brought male and female camels before me.[12]

Into which portrait of these nomads do the Ishmaelites of the eighth and seventh centuries fit? They are a mixture of both possibilities. On the one hand they are feared raiders and robbers, on the other hand "they comprised camel-breeding Bedouins and oasis towns. They organized and controlled the long distance trade through the deserts of Arabia."[13]

Does this mean that this comprises a real historical background to the Hagar/Ishmael stories? Not necessarily: historicity is in another league. However, there were nomadic tribes in the Arabian Desert,[14] as witnessed from the eighth century BCE onwards, and "this group of tribes derived itself from an eponymous ancestor named Ishma'el."[15] Two of the stories told about an eponymous ancestor can be found in the Hebrew Bible. Thus, there is a setting and a background to be evaluated, stretching from modern times back to the first millennium.

Having found a setting for the Ishmaelites, the next step is to compare the picture of Hagar in the first narrative with the image of Ishmael and the setting of the story. The leading question is simple: Is the mother created in the image of the son? Is there a correspondence between the proud, independent, hostile nomad and the self-confident, proud woman taking advantage of the situation in Gen 16?[16]

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[12] "Tiglath-pileser III (744–727): Campaigns against Syria and Palestine: (b) Annalistic Records," translated by D.D. Luckenbill (*ANET*, 284), with some adaptations.

[13] Knauf, "Ishmael," 517.

[14] R. Dussaud, *Les Arabes en Syrie avant l'Islam* (Paris 1907).

[15] Knauf, "Ishmael," 514.

[16] In his fine overview, Thomas Dozeman (T.B. Dozeman, "The Wilderness and Salvation History in the Hagar Story," *JBL* 117 [1998]: 23–43) noticed the shift in the presumed perspective of the stories. From Gunkel to Blum the category of the wilderness setting was the starting point. In recent research the family conflict between Sarah and Hagar has arrived centre stage but from different directions: form-critical, anthropological, and theological. Furthermore, during the last decades, the feminist approach has been added

In Gen 16, Hagar is called a maidservant (שִׁפְחָה); in other words, a slave belonging to the mistress of the house, Sarah. The word שִׁפְחָה has connotations of a young girl[17] found at the bottom of the social strata of the patriarchal family (בית אב). The problem is that the term is different from אמה ("slave woman"), which is used for Hagar in Gen 21:10. Probably the best explanation is a relational one. In relation to the mistress, she is a שִׁפְחָה ("maidservant"); in relation to the master, an אמה ("slave woman"). Sometimes this looks like a social stratification, with the אמה ranked a little higher than the שִׁפְחָה. With her mistress in absolute power, she is given to Abraham to give birth to a son. Abraham accepts this, and Hagar is not asked. However, her finest hour comes when she is pregnant. *She* is pregnant; Sarah is not. What happens next is inevitable. The text reads: "When she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was lowered in her esteem" (Gen 16:4). In a society in which childbirth was a social necessity and living on after death occurred by passing your name on to the next generation, the lower social status of Hagar is countered by being pregnant and giving birth to the son of the clan's patriarch. Thus it appears to Hagar, and she acts accordingly: "She looked down on her mistress" (Gen 16:4). Sarah repeats the point in her complaint to Abraham (Gen 16:5). Abraham's response is clear, cruel, and completely correct in a judicial sense. Hagar is Sarah's maidservant, so: "Deal with her as you think right" (Gen 16:6). Soberly, the text adds: "Sarah treated her harshly" (Gen 16:6).

Hagar is not willing to accept her former position and runs away. She knows where to go; knows the way to the springs in the desert and survives there on the way to Egypt. There she is met by the messenger of Yhwh. The fearless answer to the first part of the question "From where do you come and where do you go?" (Gen 16:8) is crystal clear: "I am running away from my mistress Sarah" (Gen 16:8). That is the answer

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(J. Grimes, "Reinterpreting Hagar's Story," *LDiff* 1 [2004]: 1–12; R.H. Jarrell, "The Birth Narrative as Female Counterpart to Covenant," *JSOT* 97 [2002]: 3–18; P.T. Reis, "Hagar Requitted," *JSOT* 87 [2000]: 75–109; P. Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* [OBT; Philadelphia 1984], 9–35; P. Trible, "The Other Woman: A Literary and Theological Study of the Hagar Narratives," in *Understanding the Word: Essays in Honor of Bernhard W. Anderson* [ed. J.T. Butler, E.W. Conrad, and B.L. Ollenburger; JSOTSup 37; Sheffield 1985], 221–246). In his article, Dozeman wants to introduce the "wilderness" category again, for the focus on the family history and family conflict narrows the scope of the stories. Nevertheless, we are form-critically dealing with a tribal story. The characters in the narrative of Ishmael reflect the images of clans and tribes.

[17] *HAL* 1496–1497.

needed. The question is put precisely so that the answer can be given.[18] It is more difficult to find an answer to the second part of the question in Gen 16:8: "Where do you go?" The question belongs to the motif of the fleeing slave, but is not in need of an answer in the story, for Hagar returns to Sarah. Nevertheless, the question is an interesting one in the light of two details within the narrative: that Hagar comes from Egypt (Gen 16:1) and that she dwells at a certain spring on the way to Shur (Gen 16:7). The word שׁוּר ("wall") is a proper name, a place on the north-eastern border of Egypt. Thus, Hagar knew where she was going. She was not helpless, she did not have any difficulty finding springs and water on the desert road to Egypt. If we take the narrative point of departure seriously—Hebron from Gen 13:18—and take into account that the road to Shur is somewhere west of Kadesh Barnea, Hagar must have already travelled for several days before she met the messenger of Yhwh. She was desert-savvy.[19] The description of the Assyrian texts of Queen *Šamši* ("like a wild ass") and the qualification of Ishmael in Gen 16:12 ("a wild ass of a man") could also be a perfect image for Hagar ("a wild ass of a woman"). Here everything is in accord: the literary figure of Hagar in Gen 16 is created in the image of her son, the wild ass.[20]

The name of Egypt in this story creates mixed feelings. Throughout the Hebrew Bible, Egypt is the "house of bondage" (Exod 20:2), "a land of oppression" (Exod 3:9; Deut 26:7), "from which you are liberated and to which you should not return" (Deut 17:16). In Genesis, however, Egypt is the land to which Abraham flees during a famine in Canaan (Gen 20:10). In Gen 13:10, the land of Egypt has abundant water and food and is compared to the garden of Yhwh. It is a land of refuge. Although Joseph is sold to Egypt in the Joseph cycle and undergoes many troubles there, as a ruler of Egypt he also represents it as a place with food and providing safety during a famine. Thus, Hagar, the queen mother of the Ishmaelites, is a figure heading for safety, fleeing from oppression and apparently at home in the desert.

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[18] Exegetes who wonder why the messenger is able to address her as שִׁפְחַת שָׂרַי ("maid-servant of Sarah") but does not know where she comes from and where she is going, are missing the rhetorical point in the dialogue.

[19] The point about the desert-savvy Hagar has already been made by H. Seebass, *Genesis II.1: Vätergeschichte I (11,27–22,24)* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1997), 88.

[20] Cf. the retelling by D.N. Fewell, "Changing the Subject: Retelling the Story of Hagar the Egyptian," in *Genesis: A Feminist Companion to the Bible* (ed. A. Brenner; FCB 2nd Series 1; Sheffield 1998), 182–194.

Focusing on the birth oracle as the central part of the narrative, Gen 16:11 declares that the child of the pregnant woman will be a son who will be called "Ishmael". This name, meaning "God heard" or "God hears" is explained by Yhwh's commitment: "Yhwh has 'heard' your oppression" (16:11bβ). The verb שׁמע ("to hear") is used both in the name and in the explanation. Thus, Ishmael will be a tribal ancestor with a deity committed to him.

Without doubt the narrative focus is on Hagar. She alone is the main character here. Sarah, her mistress, and Abraham, her bed-partner and master, act in the story's margins. The same is the case for the messenger of Yhwh. While they are important because of their actions and words, the camera follows Hagar: thrown into the arms of her master, pregnancy, her changing relationship with Sarah, her humiliation and escape into the desert, her confrontation with the divine messenger and her presumed return.

The use of names reflects the tension of the narrative. Only the narrator and the divine messenger know and use Hagar's name. Sarah exclusively refers to "my maidservant" (Gen 16:2, 5: שׁפחתי), as does Abraham with "your maidservant" (Gen 16:6: שׁפחתך). The divine messenger, however, uses both her real name and her position: "Hagar, maidservant (שׁפחת) of Sarah" (Gen 16:8). Strikingly, this is the only time the divine messenger uses Sarah's name in direct speech. Indeed, the command of Gen 16:9, "Return to your mistress," does not use Sarah's name! Only her position is mentioned. The reaction of Hagar in Gen 16:13 also belongs to this play on naming and non-naming. There *she* names the deity, more specifically, she gives Yhwh a name of his own, playing with the verb ראה in the meaning of "to look after,"[21] in the same way as Abraham will do in

[21] Accurate overviews are offered by T. Booij, "Hagar's Words in Genesis XVI 13b," *VT* 30 (1980): 1–7; K. Koenen, "Wer sieht wen? Zur Textgeschichte von Gen XVI 13," *VT* 38 (1988): 468–474. The exact rendering, however, has been a crux for exegetes from early times onwards. The text-critical remarks of the apparatus in the *BHS* demonstrate vividly the difficulties connected with the text. They are concentrated in v. 13bβ. The most famous conjecture is Wellhausen's. He reads אלהים and inserted ואחי. The clause emended in this way reads: "Have I really seen (God) and (lived) after my seeing (him)?" Wellhausen interpreted the scene as a theophany, as in Exod 33:20. Seebass rejects אלהים. He substitutes הלם for לחיים and reads: "War es nicht zum Leben, dass ich hinter dem her schaute, der mich ausersehen hat?" Koenen tries to find his way through, adhering to the MT without changing the consonants. His solution is followed here. The verse could be rendered as follows: (13aα) "And she called the name of Yhwh, who had spoken to her (13aβ): 'You are God who sees me' (13bα). For she said: (13bβ) 'Truly, here I have seen Him, who looks after me.' "

Gen 22:14. Yhwh, who received a new name from the maidservant, also receives a memorial, a well that is called "Well of the living, who sees me" (Gen 16:14: **באר לחי ראי**).

The narrative of Gen 16 is retold in Gen 21. A first link between Gen 16 and Gen 21 can be found in Gen 16:9. Here we have the short and direct command: "Return to your mistress and submit yourself *under her hand*!" The verse contradicts Gen 16:11b: "Yhwh has heard your oppression!" Normally the divine hearing of oppression leads to liberation, but not here. Here, Gen 16:9 has only one function: to enable the second story of Gen 21 to occur. Without a return there could not be a repeat in Gen 21. The redactional hand in this composition uses a very fine play on words to connect the stories, with the occurrence of the word **יד** ("hand") in the narratives. It starts with the judgement of Abraham in the speech to Sarah (Gen 16:6): "She (Hagar) is in (**ב**) your *hand*." The command of the messenger of Gen 16:9 says: "Submit yourself under (**תחת**) her *hand*!" In the story of Gen 21 Ishmael is saved and Hagar is told: "Hold him with your *hand*" (Gen 21:18). Thus, we move from oppression to compassion. All of this circulates around the tribal saying about Ishmael: "His *hand* against all and the *hands* of all against him" (Gen 16:12).

There is another link between Gen 16 and 21. In contrast to the first story, Gen 21 deals with inheritance. This could be an independent motif, but it is not, for in normal cases the status of a slave girl's son would never challenge the inheritance rights of the principal wife.[22] Only in Gen 16 could that happen. Since Sarah gave her slave girl to her husband, the son was formally a child of Abraham and Sarah. Therefore, the text of Gen 21:10 presupposes the circumstances of Gen 16 and is dependent on the former narrative.[23]

In Gen 21 we have the same actors and the same names, but the scene is completely different. Let us start again with the use or non-use of names and include the first seven verses of Gen 21, in which the young Isaac enters onto the stage. The *naming* of Isaac is mentioned in Gen 21:3. His name is repeated several times: during circumcision (Gen 21:4), as the son of Abraham's old age (Gen 21:5), the weaning (Gen 21:8), the inheritance problem (Gen 21:10) and finally as part of the divine speech (Gen 21:12). Ishmael is not mentioned at all. He is "the son that Hagar the

[22] J. Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven 1975), 197.
[23] Van Seters, *ibidem*.

Egyptian had borne to Abraham" (Gen 21:9). In Sarah's furious speech (Gen 21:10) about inheritance, there is a chiasmus, stressing the humble position of Hagar and the position of Isaac (C):

A	גרֵשׁ האמה הזאת	Get that *slave* out of here,
B	ואת־בנה	along with her *son*;
B'	כי לא יירַשׁ בן	no *son*
A'	־האמה הזאת	of that *slave*
C	עם־בני	is going to share the inheritance with my son,
C'	עם־יצחק	with Isaac (Gen 21:10)

Ishmael is never called by name. He is called "a son" (Gen 21:11), "a boy" (21:12, 17, 18, 19, 20: נער), "a slave's son" (21:13), "the child" (21:15, 16: הילד). Apart from "the Egyptian" (Gen 21:9), Hagar is only called "a slave" (10, 12, 13: אמה). In the direct speeches of Sarah and Abraham, the names of Hagar and Ishmael are never mentioned. It is the narrator who uses the name of Hagar in Gen 21:9, 14 and the divine messenger in his call from heaven in Gen 21:17. This time, however, the call mentions Hagar without the addition of "slave of Sarah!" When Isaac appears, with his heavily loaded name, the names of Ishmael and Hagar disappear.

Throughout the story of Gen 21, Ishmael is anonymous. While Gen 16 had offered a characterization of Ishmael, in Gen 21 the divine promises are central. Twice, in Gen 21:13, 18, Yhwh promises that the maid's son will be a great[24] nation. Moreover, it is said that "Elohim was with the boy as he grew up .... He lived in the desert and became a skilled bowman" (Gen 21:20). This is an image of a man of the desert, but he has had to learn skills to become such. Geographically, the narrative starts with "the wilderness of Beer Sheba." It is described as a region with a lot of water and many wild animals, in which a hunter could make a good living. The image sketched here is completely different from that of Gen 16. The latter depicted the nomad-raider; here we find the desert-hunter. In Gen 16 the tribe acted against all others; in Gen 21 the hunter adapts himself to the natural surroundings under divine protection. Also, his mother Hagar, not his father, will find him an Egyptian wife.

This maturing of the son brings out a completely different image of Hagar. In Gen 16 she was an active, proud, self-confident woman finding her own way through the desert, well acquainted with the springs and the ways of the wilderness. In Gen 16 she finds water even where Moses

[24] The word "great" in Gen 21:13 does not occur in the MT, but it does in Sam.P., LXX, Pesh., and Vg.

could not find any (Exod 15:22). Here, in Gen 21, she wanders aimlessly in the wilderness of Beersheba (14), a region with more water and food than the desert of Shur. When the water runs out she gives up, sitting down at a distance from her son and saying to herself: "Let me not look on as the child dies" (16). Elohim, however, is with her son and teaches her how to live in the desert: "Look there is a well" (19).

Genesis 21:8–21 presupposes more context than Gen 16. In v. 8 the use of הילד ("the child") and יצחק ("Isaac") presuppose the birth narratives of Gen 18:1–15; 21:1–7. The wordplay of the name of יצחק ("Isaac") with the verb צחק ("to laugh"), which is so prominent in Gen 18, returns in the first verses of Gen 21. The rewriting of Gen 21 follows the pattern of Gen 16, with some significant differences.[25] Common to both narratives is that the actions of Sarah and Abraham are the basis of the real story. Common to both narratives is that Sarah starts the conflict with all of the judicial rights on her side. This suggests that the writer of Gen 21 wants the reader to have the circumstances of Gen 16 in mind. Otherwise, there would be no inheritance problem. Common to both stories is that Yhwh/Elohim is to decide on the conflict. In Gen 21 he even forces Abraham to send Hagar away. Also common to both stories is that the decisive moments take place in the desert, which in both stories are introduced by and start with "the messenger of Yhwh/Elohim." In addition, both stories mention the promise of numerous offspring and a great nation.

In Gen 16 Abraham directly agrees with Sarah after her complaint, but in Gen 21 Abraham is not willing to send Hagar away or to free her. It is Elohim who forces him to do so. However, this is only the starting point for the divine activities. Elohim himself *hears* the crying boy and the divine messenger repeats the promise of a great nation. Again, Elohim himself opens Hagar's eyes, allowing her to see where she is. Elohim himself is with the boy as he grows up.

In Gen 21 there is a deadly threat to Ishmael. He nearly dies in the wilderness, which will be his home and that of his descendants. In the next chapter, Gen 22, the son of promise, Isaac, nearly dies on his father's altar. The deadly threat to Ishmael in Gen 21 cannot be read without Gen 22, the sacrifice of Isaac, the Aqedah. Genesis 21 is rewritten to be a parallel to that narrative. Both narratives, the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael (Gen 21:8–21) and the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 22:1–14, 19),

[25] Cf. Seebass, *Vätergeschichte I*, 94.

are related by formal threads and content.[26] The threat of death in the desert (Gen 21:15–16) is a counterpart to the threat of death on the altar (Gen 22:10). In both cases, a promise-bearing son is involved, and both situations are initiated by Elohim (Gen 21:12; 22:1, 2). At the very last moment, the voice of a divine messenger from heaven rescues the victim (Gen 21:17–18; 22:11). In both cases, the rescue ends with a renewed promise of progeny (21:18; 22:18 final text). The main players may differ and the conflict may be on different levels, but it is clear that "the divine promise only opens up the future after a deadly threat."[27] *Both* sons of Abraham must go through a near-death situation to be liberated by Yhwh/Elohim. There will be a future for both of them. However, the real heir (Gen 15:4) is Isaac, not Ishmael.

Apart from the theological thread, Gen 16 demonstrates the view held by sedentary groups about the strange and dangerous people of the desert. Although strange and dangerous, they were still family, since the ancestor of both groups was Abraham. The sociological setting of the groups living in and on the fringes of the desert can be found in the Assyrian texts from the eighth century BCE onwards. The link to Abraham is made by the figure of Hagar, created in the image of her son Ishmael. Genesis 21 is a late reworking of the original narrative of Gen 16. Ishmael, the first-born son, will not be the real heir; Isaac, the child of divine rather than human initiative, shall inherit. Although they live apart and develop different cultures, both children receive the divine promise of a future great nation after undergoing a near-death trial (Gen 21; 22).

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[26] S. Nikaido, "Hagar and Ishmael as Literary Figures: An Intertextual Study," *VT* 51 (2001): 218–242.

[27] E. Noort, "Genesis 22: Human Sacrifice and Theology in the Hebrew Bible," in *The Sacrifice of Isaac: The Aqedah (Genesis 22) and Its Interpretations* (ed. E. Noort and E.J.C. Tigchelaar; TBN 4; Leiden 2002), 4–5.

EARLY JUDAISM AND ITS
GRECO-ROMAN ENVIRONMENT

SPARTANS AND JEWS: ABRAHAMIC COUSINS?

Jan N. Bremmer

In a study about Abraham and the nations, a chapter on the relationship between Spartans and Jews cannot be absent, and stranger Jewish relatives than the Spartans are hardly imaginable. The connections between the two peoples, authentic or not, have often been analysed,[1] and in my contribution I will once again look at them but limit myself in my discussion to the most recent literature, in particular the studies by Momigliano, Gruen and Jones.[2] No new documents have turned up since the debate about the relationship started in the eighteenth century,[3] but a fresh look can still offer some new insights, as I hope to show.

Our earliest, if indirect, source for a Jewish-Spartan relationship can be found in Hecataeus of Abdera's treatise *On Egypt*. This is also the oldest surviving work on the Jews in Greek literature, even though knowledge about them was already available in Peripatetic circles.[4] Hecataeus probably wrote his work on Egypt around 315 BCE.[5] Jews had of course been in Egypt for many centuries, but after the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great and the consolidation of his power by Ptolemy I there was a great influx of Jewish immigrants, military and otherwise. Hecataeus, who came to Egypt in the entourage of Ptolemy, must have soon met some of those Jews in Alexandria. They will have stood out in the Egyptian society as people who were clearly non-Egyptian and non-Greek. Cohen has posed the question: "How do you know a Jew in antiquity when you see one?" The answer must have surely varied, depending on geography, but it is clear from papyri that Jews in Egypt were often

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[1] For the older literature, see the bibliography in R. Katzoff, "Jonathan and Late Sparta," *AJP* 106 (1985): 485n1.

[2] E. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism* (Berkeley 1998); C.P. Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999); A. Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom* (Cambridge 1975).

[3] P.E. Jablonski, *Opuscula* (4 vols.; Leiden 1804–1813), 3:261–286 ("De Lacedaemoniorum cum Iudaeis cognatione").

[4] F. Dirlmeier, review of W. Jaeger, *Diokles von Karystos*, *DLZ* 59 (1938): 1836.

[5] P.M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (3 vols.; Oxford 1972), 2:719–720.

described as "honey-coloured,"[6] which is not surprising as the Egyptians themselves were not uncommonly of a dark countenance.[7]

However, Hecataeus did not single out physical differences or describe what he saw in Egypt, but he concentrated more on the situation in Palestine. In his discussion, which has come to us in an excerpt by Diodorus Siculus (*Bibliotheca historica* 40.3),[8] he describes how the Jews had been thrown out of Egypt, but had reorganised themselves in Palestine under the guidance of Moses to whose wisdom and courage he ascribes the present state of the country and its legislation. For our purpose the most interesting notice is the following:

> The lawgiver [i.e., Moses] laid down many rules about military training, making the young practice courage, endurance, and in short, bear every kind of hardship. He also led expeditions against the neighbouring tribes and divided the large amount of land he had won into allotments. He gave lots of equal size to ordinary persons, but larger ones to the priests, so that they might enjoy larger incomes, and thus perform the service of God without cessation or distraction. Ordinary persons were forbidden to sell their own lots in case anybody was led by greed to buy lots, oppress the poor and cause depopulation. (Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* 40.30.6–7 [Jones, LCL; slightly adapted])

The various features strongly suggest the situation in Sparta, even if its name is not mentioned. This similarity cannot be chance and has often been noted,[9] but the reason for this comparison has been insufficiently examined until now. Hecataeus' source about the Jews must have been twofold. On the one hand, we can see the influence of Egyptians, probably priests,[10] who are responsible for the beginning of Hecataeus' report, in which he relates the Jewish expulsion from Egypt. On the other, there must have been Jews with a much more sympathetic take on their past. This is clear from the fact that Hecataeus can even quote the Torah, as he

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[6] S.J.D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness* (Berkeley 1999), 29–30.

[7] For the (black) colour of the Egyptians, see most recently A. Cameron, *Callimachus and His Critics* (Princeton 1995), 233–236; J. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXII* (Groningen 1995), 310; S. Walker and M. Bierbrier, *Ancient Faces: Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt* (London 1997).

[8] Sometimes we can supplement Diodorus' excerpt. E.g., Theophrastus (frg. 584A Fortenbaugh = Porphyry, *Abst*. 2.26) seems to have derived his information on Jewish sacrificial practice from Hecataeus, cf. W. Jaeger, *Diokles von Karystos* (Berlin 1938), 134–153, although this is contested by Dirlmeier (n. 4).

[9] Most recently: M. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus* (2nd ed.; Tübingen 1973), 465 (hesitatingly); Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom*, 84; Gruen, *Heritage*, 261: "the parallel … seems quite incontestable"; Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy*, 73–74.

[10] F. Jacoby, *FGH* on Hecataeus F 6 (p. 50).

says at the end of his excursus: "At the end of their Laws there is even written that Moses spoke these words to the Jews having heard them from God" (Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* 40.3.6). The quote is not literal, although it seems to echo Deuteronomy (29:1), but it is hard to imagine an Egyptian priest coming up with these words. In passing, we may also note that we have here one of the earliest passages in post-Alexander the Great literature where we can see that the Pentateuch is referred to as a whole. On the basis of a comparison of Sir 39:1–3 and the Prologue to the same book, Sirach, van der Kooij has noted a tripartite division of "the Law, the prophets and the other books of our ancestors" at that time,[11] but our passage already suggests the existence of the Pentateuch as a separate whole in the late fourth century BCE.[12] Momigliano even thought that "a pre-Septuagint translation of some sections of the Torah is not altogether incredible,"[13] but to presuppose such translations within a good two decades after Alexandria's foundation seems rather adventurous.

The earliest Alexandrian Jews must have been soon confronted with the problem of how to explain and justify their different lifestyle, both religious and secular. Hecataeus' words that Moses "as a result of their own expulsion (*xenēlasian*) had introduced a way of life that was somewhat unsocial (*apanthrōpon tina*) and xenophobic (*misoxenon*)" (Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* 40.3.4) demonstrate that already at a very early stage of Alexandrian life the Jews had to counter Greek charges that they did not mix with other people and kept themselves separate. In order to defend themselves, they evidently developed the interesting strategy of comparing their way of life with that of the Spartans. The latter similarly had a famous lawgiver, namely Lycurgus,[14] and were known in

[11] A. van der Kooij, "Canonization of Ancient Hebrew Books and Hasmonean Politics," in *The Biblical Canons* (ed. J.-M. Auwers and H.J. de Jonge; Leuven 2003), 27–38; A. van der Kooij, "The Canonization of Ancient Books Kept in the Temple of Jerusalem," in *Canonization and Decanonization* (ed. A. van der Kooij and K. van der Toorn; Leiden 1998), 17–40.

[12] The passage has been overlooked by K. De Troyer, "When Did the Pentateuch Come into Existence? An Uncomfortable Perspective," in *Die Septuaginta: Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten* (ed. M. Karrer and W. Kraus; Tübingen 2007), 269–286.

[13] Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom*, 84.

[14] For Moses as lawgiver see L. Feldman, "Parallel Lives of Two Lawgivers: Josephus' Moses and Plutarch's Lycurgus," in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (ed. J. Edmondson et al.; Oxford 2005), 209–243; D. Timpe, "Moses als Gesetzgeber," *Saec* 21 (1980): 66–77.

Greece as people that did not like, and even expelled, strangers.[15] By comparing themselves to the xenophobic but illustrious Spartans, the Jews thus cleverly, if not always successfully, tried to legitimate their own special ways of life. From Hecataeus' description of Moses' military training we can even conclude that some Jews must have gone pretty far in elaborating the comparison, although from a historical point of view clearly much too far.

Yet the comparison must have been successful and was probably sustained by continuing Greek charges of misanthropy against the Jews. At least this conclusion is hardly avoidable from the notice in 2 Macc 5:9 that the high-priest Jason (175–172 BCE), after unsuccessful attempts at finding refuge among the Nabataeans and Egyptians, finally took ship to Sparta "because of their kinship (*syngeneian*)" and seems to have perished during this journey. We cannot be one hundred percent certain that the words quoted were already in the source of our present text, the original by Jason of Cyrene which was probably written in the 150s BCE, but it seems not implausible. Hengel, followed by Habicht in his much praised translation and commentary on 2 Maccabees, suggests that the legend only originated in the time of Jason and in the circles of *Reformjudentum*,[16] but this is improbable in the light of our discussion. If the legend had been of such recent origin, Jason would have hardly taken it that seriously. The fact that his successor as high priest was called Menelaus (171–ca. 161 BCE), the name of the mythological king of Sparta during the Trojan War, is probably another indication of the legend.[17]

Our next testimonies are three letters, which I will discuss in chronological order, from 1 Maccabees, a book dated to the decades around 100 BCE.[18] The oldest two letters occur in chapter 12 in connection with an

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[15] For all sources for Spartan *xenēlasia* see T. Figueira, "*Xenelasia* and Social Control in Classical Sparta," *CQ* 53 (2003): 45n6.

[16] C. Habicht, *Historische und legendarische Erzählungen: 2. Makkabäerbuch* (JSHRZ 1.3; Gütersloh 1976), 226n9a, who rightly rejects the idea that Jason's last journey points to the existence of a Jewish colony in Sparta, as still was accepted by Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus*, 134, 410n682; Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom*, 89.

[17] So, persuasively, Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus*, 139; Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy*, 77.

[18] For different datings, which range from 120–180 BCE, see Gruen, *Heritage*, 265n86 ("probably at the end of the second century BCE"); K.-D. Schunck, *Historische und legendarische Erzählungen: 1. Makkabäerbuch* (JSHRZ 1.4; Gütersloh 1980), 292 (ca. 120 BCE); E. Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (ed. and trans. G. Vermes et al.; 4 vols.; Edinburgh 1973–1986), 3.1:181 ("the first decades of the first century BC").

embassy, consisting of Numenius and Antipater (12:16), sent by Jonathan (161–143 BCE) around 143 BCE to the Romans and Spartans. The names of the ambassadors are indicative of the early process of Hellenisation of Palestine.[19] Antipater is a typically Macedonian name, in this case perhaps inspired by Alexander the Great's first successor, Antipater.[20] Numenius, on the other hand, was equally a proper Greek name, inspired by the celebration of the new moon, but also a Greek name carried by many Syrians and Phoenicians, where it translates the epichoric name "(Ben-)Chodesh."[21] As we find the name "Chodesh" also in 1 Chr 8:9, a similar process may have taken place in Palestine.

Immediately following the text of the letter that Jonathan purportedly sent to the Spartans, we find a second letter from the Spartan king Areus. The letter is also quoted by Josephus who not only adapts the style to the phraseology of a genuine Greek letter,[22] but also adds a new end.[23] I will give here first the text as we find it in 1 Maccabees and add the end as we find it in Josephus:

> To Onias the high priest, Areus, king of the Spartans, greeting. It has been found in a document concerning the Spartans and the Jews that they are brothers and that they are of the stock (*genos*) of Abraham. Now that we know these things, you will do well to write us concerning your peace. We in turn write to you: your livestock and your belongings are ours, and ours are yours. We therefore command that they [i.e., the letter-carriers] apprise you concerning these things (1 Macc 12:19–23). Demoteles the letter-carrier will transmit this letter. The writing is square: the seal is an eagle clutching a serpent. (Josephus, *A.J.* 12.227 [Jones, LCL])

The protagonists of this letter are the Spartan king Areus (309/8–265 BCE) and, probably, the high priest Onias I. Gruen considers Onias II more likely, but the negative picture of the latter in Josephus (*A.J.* 12.157–

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[19] For early Greek names among the Jews, see also Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus*, 118–120, 139; L. Grabbe, *The Early Hellenistic Period (335–175 BCE)* (vol. 2 of Idem, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*; LSTS 68; London 2008), 144–146.

[20] T. Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity* (Tübingen 2002), 264–265.

[21] O. Masson, *Onomastica Graeca Selecta* (3 vols.; Geneva 1990–2000), 3:173–174; overlooked by Ilan, *Lexicon*, 300.

[22] T. Nisula, "'Time Has Passed since You Sent Your Letter': Letter Phraseology in 1 and 2 Maccabees," *JSP* 14 (2005): 212–215.

[23] For a useful juxtaposition of letters from 1 Macc in Josephus' *A.J.*, see F. Francis, "The Parallel Letters of Josephus' *Antiquities* and 1 Maccabees," in *Tradition as Openness to the Future* (ed. F. Francis and R. Wallace; Lanham 1984), 161–174, albeit accompanied by a superficial analysis.

167) makes this less plausible.[24] In any case, it is beyond any reasonable doubt that this letter is not authentic.[25] First, there are the typical Semitic formulations of putting the name of the recipient first (20),[26] of asking after somebody's peace (22; cf. Gen 37:14; 43:27; Exod 18:7 etc.) and the offering of the livestock (23; cf. 1 Kgs 22:4; 2 Kgs 3:7), as if Sparta was still a nomadic society, like Israel at the times of Abraham. Second, it is unthinkable that a Spartan king would have claimed to be a descendant of Abraham. The lack of authenticity is confirmed, somewhat paradoxically, by Josephus' end. As Cardauns has well noted, such detailed information is not proof of authenticity but of forgery. Moreover, the letter-carrier with his Spartan name as well as several expressions of Josephus have been lifted straight from Xenophon (*Hell.* 7.1.32, 39).[27] Even the motif of the serpent-clutching eagle is probably derived from Greece, although it has also been found on lintels of late antique synagogues in the Golan.[28]

However, there is a significant difference between Areus' letter in 1 Maccabees and Josephus that has not yet received the attention it deserves. In the Maccabean version Areus claims to have read in a document, which is of course not specified, that Spartans and Jews both have Abraham as their ancestor. Naturally, the forger could not let Areus say that this was traditional knowledge, but Areus' lack of surprise at suddenly finding a new ancestor is rather striking. Participants in modern television programs such as the BBC's "Who do you think you are?" would not get away with such a diffident attitude! Yet his belonging to Abraham's *genos* perfectly fits the notice that Jason sailed to Sparta because of their *syngeneia*. This clearly was the current legend among the Jewish upper-class in the first half of the second century BCE. Jose-

[24] Areus: P. Cartledge and A.J. Spawforth, *Hellenistic and Roman Sparta* (London 1989), 28–37; Gruen, *Heritage*, 254–256; G. Marasco, *Sparta agli inizi dell'età ellenistica: Il regno di Areo I* (Florence 1980). Onias I/II: Gruen, *Heritage*, 254n32 and the detailed discussion by J. VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas: High Priests after the Exile* (Minneapolis 2004), 124–137, with an unconvincing discussion of Areus' letter.

[25] The best analysis is by B. Cardauns, "Juden und Spartaner," *Hermes* 95 (1967): 317–319, with previous bibliography. M. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem* (London 2007), 104; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Hellenistische Dichtung in der Zeit des Kallimachos* (2 vols.; Berlin 1924), 1:43n1 already noted: "eine freche Fälschung."

[26] This is well observed by J. Goldstein, *1 Maccabees* (New York 1976), 460, who refers to J.A. Fitzmeyer, "Some Notes on Aramaic Epistolography," *JBL* 93 (1974): 211.

[27] Cardauns, "Juden und Spartaner," 319. The connection with Xenophon had already been noted by F.-M. Abel, *Les Livres des Maccabées* (Paris 1949), 222.

[28] M. Schmidt, "Adler und Schlange: Ein griechisches Bildzeichen für die Dimension der Zukunft," *Boreas* 6 (1983): 61–71; Y. Turnheim, "The Eagle and the Snake on Synagogue Lintels in the Golan," *RArch* 24 (2000): 106–113.

phus, however, speaks of an intimate relationship (*A.J.* 10.226: *oikeiotēs*). In the Greek world both terms, *syngeneia* and *oikeiotēs*, denoted relationships between cities or peoples. However, *syngeneia* was used in the case of blood relationship or common ancestry, whereas *oikeiotēs* indicated just close relationships.[29] Josephus clearly lived in a different world from Jason, and he knew it. In his time, claims of *syngeneia* would no longer be acceptable, and that is why he, much more subtly, opted for the Greek term *oikeiotēs*.

Let us now move on to the second letter. Given that Areus' letter is a fake, albeit an interesting one, any letter that refers to it must by necessity be suspect too. Is this also the case with Jonathan's letter? Let us take a closer look:

> Jonathan the high priest, the senate of the nation,[30] the priests, and the remaining Jewish people to their brothers the Spartans, greeting. Already in time past a letter was sent to Onias the high priest from Areus, your king, that you are our brothers, as the appended copy shows. Onias welcomed the envoy with honour, and received the letter, which contained a clear declaration of alliance and friendship. Therefore, though we have no need of such relations, since we have as encouragement the holy books which are in our hands,[31] we have endeavoured to send this letter to renew our brotherhood and friendship with you, so that we may not become alienated from you, for it is a long time ago since you sent your letter to us. We therefore remember you constantly on every occasion, both at our feasts and the other appropriate days, at the sacrifices which we offer and in our prayers, as it is right and proper to remember brothers. And we rejoice at your glory. But as for ourselves, many afflictions and many wars have encircled us and the kings around us have made war against us. We did not want to annoy you, the other allies and our friends in these wars, for we have the help from heaven coming to our aid, and we were rescued from our enemies, and our enemies were humbled. We therefore have chosen Numenius the son of Antiochus and Antipater the son of Jason, and have

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[29] For the terms, see most recently E. Will, "Syngeneia, oikeiotès, philia," *RPh* 69 (1995): 299–325; O. Curty, "La parenté légendaire à l'époque hellénistique: Précisions méthodologiques," *Kernos* 12 (1999): 167–194; O. Curty, "Les parentés entre cités chez Polybe, Strabon, Plutarque et Pausanias," in *Origines gentium* (ed. V. Fromentin and S. Gotteland; Paris 2001), 49–56; D. Musti, "La '*syngheneia*' e la '*oikeiotes*': Sinonimi o nuances?," in *Linguaggio e terminologia diplomatica dall'Antico Oriente all'Impero Bizantino* (vol. 4 of *Antiqua et mediaevalia*; ed. M.G. Angeli Bertinelli and L. Piccirilli; Rome 2001), 43–63.

[30] On the *gerousia*, see Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus*, 48–51.

[31] For the expression "holy books" see J.N. Bremmer, "From Holy Books to Holy Bible: An Itinerary from Ancient Greece to Modern Islam via Second Temple Judaism and Early Christianity," in *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism* (ed. M. Popović; Leiden 2010), 327–360.

> sent them to Rome to renew the former friendship and alliance with them. We have commanded them to go also to you, to greet you and deliver to you this letter from us concerning the renewal and our brotherhood. And now we would very much appreciate it if you send us a reply to this.
> (1 Macc 12:6–18)

As with his report of the letter of Areus, Josephus supplies us with a version that is much more like the decrees of Greek cities in the Hellenistic period and does not contain embarrassing sentences (*A.J.* 13.166–170). However, unlike Jones, I would not conclude from this more tactful composition that Josephus' version is more authentic.[32] As with the letter of Areus, he was just better informed and more sensitive to the world around him.

In fact, as especially Gruen has argued, the idea is hard to sustain that the Jews would have any advantage by approaching Sparta around that time.[33] It is also hard to imagine that the author of 1 Maccabees would have concentrated on the Spartans only and not mentioned anything from the letter to the Romans, if both letters had been available in the Jerusalem archives. Moreover, the letter is puzzling from a practical point of view, as Jonathan does not require any specific help, is patently insincere, as it is unthinkable that the Jews would remember the Spartans during their sacrifices and festivals, and demonstrates a lack of awareness of the Spartan position after the Roman destruction of Corinth in 146 BCE.[34] Finally, the letter is couched in terms that clearly go far beyond what was possible in contemporary diplomatic relations. Surely, if one wants good diplomatic contacts, the last thing to write is: we do not need your help for we have a much better, supernatural ally!

What about the third letter? According to the author of 1 Maccabees, the Romans and "even the Spartans" were highly distressed when they heard about Jonathan's death (1 Macc 14:16). Once again the mention of Sparta looks like an afterthought, as the place in the sentence indicates and the fact that the verbs in the next two verses regard only the Romans.[35] In fact, after mentioning the letter on brass tablets that the Romans sent to renew the friendship and alliance with the Jews, which in itself is a pretty improbable detail, the transition to the letter of the Spartans is rather abrupt:

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[32] Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy*, 77–79.
[33] Gruen, *Heritage*, 257–258.
[34] J.R. Bartlett, *1 Maccabees* (Sheffield 1998), 96.
[35] See also J.T. Nelis, *I Makkabeeën* (Roermond 1972) and Schunck, *1. Makkabäerbuch*, ad loc.

> And this is a copy of the letter which the Spartans sent: "The magistrates and the city of the Spartans to Simon the high priest, the elders, the priests and the rest of the Jewish people, our brothers, greeting. The envoys who were sent to our people have told us about your glory and honour, and we rejoiced at their coming. And what they said in the councils of the people we have recorded as follows: 'Numenius the son of Antiochus and Antipater the son of Jason, envoys of the Jews, came to us to renew their friendship with us. It has pleased the people to receive these men with honour and to place a copy of their words in the State Archives, so that the people of the Spartans may have a record of them.' And they have sent a copy of this to Simon the high priest." (1 Macc 14:20–23)

Although some recent scholars still seem inclined to accept the authenticity of this letter,[36] this is rather unlikely: when the two earlier letters are not authentic, the third one can hardly be authentic either, as Gruen rightly observes.[37] And indeed, there are a number of questionable expressions in the letter. Although the letter mentions the envoys of Jonathan, the letter is addressed to Simon. Goldstein suggests that a private Jewish traveller reported the news of Jonathan's execution while the envoys were in Sparta, but this ingenious suggestion clearly constitutes special pleading, just as his earlier, rather fantastic suggestion that Areus employed an Aramaic scribe to translate his letter into Aramaic.[38] The suggestion also passes over the fact that the vocabulary of the letter does not look Spartan at all and does not contain any specific Spartan expression. Moreover, the Greek is sometimes rather convoluted and employs typically Jewish-Greek expressions.[39] To start with, the combination of *archontes* and *polis* (14:20) is unique for Sparta, where we would expect mention of the *ephors*, but the combination does occur in early second-century Seleucid royal letters.[40] The same is true for the combination "glory and honour" (14:21), which we find from the middle of the third century BCE onwards in Seleucid royal letters.[41] Jewish influence can also be seen in the term used for the high priest, as we find

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[36] Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy*, 78; Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom*, 113–114.

[37] Gruen, *Heritage*, 258–259.

[38] Goldstein, *1 Maccabees*, 456–457 (Aramaic scribe), 492 (traveller).

[39] See especially Nelis, *I Makkabeeën*, ad loc.

[40] Compare C.B. Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period* (New Haven 1934), no. 43.2 (Nysa: early second century BCE), 45.2 (Pieria: 186 BCE), 75.1 (Susa: 21 CE = F. Canali de Rossi, *Iscrizioni dello Estremo Oriente Greco* [Bonn 2004], no. 218.2).

[41] Welles, *Royal Correspondence*, no. 15.12 (after 261 BCE: Erythrae = *I. Erythrae* 31.11), 42.6 (ca. 196 BCE: Ilion = *I. Ilion* 37.6), 44.19–20 (189 BCE: Daphne), 52.37 (167/6 BCE: Miletus = *I. Miletus* 306.Ib.37); note also *I. Ilion* 32.33 (decree for Antiochus I: ca. 280 BCE).

here the Jewish expression *hiereus megalos* (14:20) instead of the usual diplomatic term *archiereus*.[42] The joy (14:21) of the Spartans over the "glory and honour" is undoubtedly also due to the author of 1 Maccabees who expresses joy at many occasions in his book.[43] Finally, the letter contains several obscure or non-diplomatic expressions such as *boulais tou dēmou* (14:22; not really clear), *epidexasthai* (14:23) instead of the usual *apodexasthai*,[44] and the curious *ta apodedeigmena tōi dēmōi biblia* (14:23), which must mean something like "State Archives." In short, the letter is a concoction of Seleucid terminology, Jewish vocabulary and bad Greek—hardly the characteristics we would expect in a Spartan letter.

With these letters we have come to the end of the Jewish-Spartan correspondence. Our conclusion must be that real diplomatic contacts never took place during the Maccabean and Hasmonean period, although that conclusion is hard to accept even for scholars who have questioned the authenticity of the letters.[45] The Essenes may have been influenced by Spartan ideas,[46] but real contacts between the two peoples would occur only much later, at the time of Augustus, when the Spartan dynast Eurycles went to Herod the Great, for reasons we do not know, as we have only the hostile report of Josephus (*B.J.* 1.513–531; *A.J.* 16.300–310). In any case, there is no evidence whatsoever to write as Cartledge and Spawforth do in a recent study of Eurycles: "the kinship between the Spartans and the Jews was by now an accepted fiction."[47] More intriguing is the mention of a family of rabbis in late antique Israel who are all qualified by the name "Ben-Lakonia."[48] Yet they too cannot be connected to the

[42] Welles, *Royal Correspondence*, 318–319.

[43] Nelis, *1 Makkabeeën*, 214 compares 1 Macc 3:2, 7; 4:56, 58–59; 5:23, 54; 7:48; 10:66; 11:44; 12:12; 13:52; 14:11.

[44] Nelis, *1 Makkabeeën*, 214 compares Polybius, *Historiae* 2.39.4; 33.28.4; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* 1.3.1. See also Welles, *Royal Correspondence*, 316.

[45] Cf., e.g., Cardauns, "Juden und Spartaner," 321: "Eine tatsächliche diplomatische Beziehung zu Sparta soll aber nicht gänzlich ausgeschlossen werden," although he does not adduce any evidence for such contacts.

[46] See the striking resemblance of ideas and practices as listed by S. Mason, "Essenes and Lurking Spartans in Josephus' *Judean War*: From Story to History," in *Making History: Josephus and Historical Method* (ed. Z. Rodgers; Leiden 2007), 219–261.

[47] Cartledge and Spawforth, *Hellenistic and Roman Sparta*, 100. For Eurycles, see also J.-S. Balzat, "Le pouvoir des Euryclides à Sparte," *EC* 73 (2005): 289–301; H. Lindsay, "Augustus and Eurycles," *RM* 135 (1992): 290–297; L. Ullmann and J. Price, "Drama and History in Josephus' '*Bellum Judaicum*'," *ScrCI* 21 (2002): 97–111.

[48] O. Amitay, "Some Ioudaio-Lakonian Rabbis," *ScrCI* 26 (2007): 131–134.

theme of our book, as no data is available to explain their name. In any case, at that time the days in which Jews could claim kinship with the Spartans were long past.

But, if the letters are fakes, one wonders who faked them, when were they written, and what prompted their composition. These questions are of course not easy to answer and have not received the attention they deserve. Naturally, those scholars who defended their authenticity did not need to answer these questions, but even those who refuted their authenticity in great detail, such as Gruen,[49] have hardly concerned themselves with this issue. Yet Cardauns, like most commentators (Abel, Nelis,[50] Schunck), has rightly stressed that the present place of the letters in 1 Maccabees is rather problematic. The first two letters fit their context only loosely and in the case of the last letter hardly at all. This is clear from the fact that after the Spartan response to Jonathan's letter the author mentions that Simon sent Numenius to Rome (14:24), whose consul Lucius supposedly gave him letters of protection for passing through all kinds of states, from Ptolemy's Egypt to Arsaces' Parthia, Sparta included (15:23); needless to say, these letters are fictitious too.[51] In fact, Goldstein (ad 1 Macc 14:16–24) and Schunck (ad 1 Macc 14:24) try to mend the problem by rearranging the text in different ways. For my purpose it is sufficient to note that this concern for the text points to a separate existence of these letters, as Cardauns and others indeed have concluded.[52]

Such a separate collection of letters was not unique. At about the same time, in the middle of the second century BCE, the Jewish author Eupolemos (*FGH* 723 F 2) could quote letters from Solomon to Pharaoh Vaphres and the Phoenician king Souron (the biblical Hiram).[53] These letters use the biblical text, but also formulas of contemporary Hellenistic royal

[49] Gruen, *Heritage*, 253–268.

[50] Unfortunately, this excellent commentary has been overlooked by Goldstein, Schunck, and Goodman: *Batava non leguntur*.

[51] However, the author of the passage should probably not be identified with that of the Spartan letters, as is concluded after a detailed discussion by J.-D. Gauger, *Beiträge zur jüdischen Apologetik: Untersuchungen zur Authentizität von Urkunden bei Flavius Josephus und im 1. Makkabäerbuch* (Cologne 1977), 297–306.

[52] Cardauns, "Juden und Spartaner," 322; similarly Gauger, *Beiträge zur Judischen Apologetik*, 20n23.

[53] The identification with Eupolemos, who served as an ambassador for Judas Maccabeus, is unpersuasively contested by Gruen, *Heritage*, 139–140.

correspondence,[54] just as we noted in the case of Areus' letter (above). In other words, in the middle of the second century BCE collections of letters circulated in Jerusalem that had to prove the importance of the Jews within the world at large—letters that used the biblical tradition but also, perhaps, Seleucid letters which were in the Jerusalem archives.

But did the author of 1 Maccabees copy these letters without thinking? This is clearly not the case, as a detail in the second letter demonstrates. Unlike 2 Maccabees, in which God plays an important role, 1 Maccabees speaks only from "heaven" when it refers to God.[55] The fact that this is also the case in the letter from Jonathan suggests a stylistic adaptation by the author of the letter. A detailed investigation of the vocabulary of 1 Maccabees by Nelis shows that Jonathan's letter contains both a number of words that do not occur elsewhere in the book as well as words and expressions that are typical of 1 Maccabees. Nelis persuasively concluded therefore that the author revised an already existing letter.[56] Moreover, as Nelis notes, 1 Macc 8 on Judas' contacts with the Romans is immediately followed by 1 Macc 9 with his death. Similarly, after Jonathan's embassy to the Romans and the letter to the Spartans, there follows his death (12:39–53; 13:23), and Simon's contacts with the Romans take place only after the capture of Jerusalem's citadel (14:16–19, 24). The letters, as Nelis suggests, were thus incorporated in passages about Roman treaties with the intention of relativizing the value of those treaties and stressing the power of God's help.[57]

Yet even if it is not authentic, the first Spartan letter is still very important within the theme of this book, as Areus claims Abraham as the ancestor of both Spartans and Jews. The claim rests of course on God's promise that all nations will be blessed in Abraham (Gen 12:3; 17:5). This claim of kinship between Jews and other peoples must have been a *topos* in contemporary Judaism, which clearly was intent on raising the status of Abraham, who was made into a kind of culture hero by Eupolemos. We find the same intention also in a text of "Cleodemus the prophet who is also called Malchus" (*FGH* 727 F 1),[58] a text quoted by Eusebius (*Praep. ev*. 9.20), who quoted Josephus (*A.J*. 1.240), who quoted

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[54] This was already seen by J. Freudenthal, *Alexander Polyhistor* (Breslau 1875), 109–112; see now Gruen, *Heritage*, 142.

[55] 1 Macc 3:18–19, 50, 60; 4:10, 24, 40, 55; 9:46; 12:15; 16:3.

[56] Nelis, *I Makkabeeën*, 17–19.

[57] Nelis, *I Makkabeeën*, 157.

[58] Note that the passage is completely misquoted by Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 2:963.

Alexander Polyhistor (*FGH* 273 F 102), the great Greek first-century BCE compiler of Jewish writings. The nature of Cleodemus' profession of "prophet" has not yet been satisfactorily explained, just as we do not know his ethnic origin. Yet it seems reasonable to accept Goodman's conclusion that he was a Jew.[59] His name, *Kleodēmos . . . ho kai Malchos*, displays the typically double name of Jews in the Diaspora, which often started with the Greek name, to be followed by the Jewish name.[60] Malchus ("King") is a typically Syro-Phoenician name, which was well known in Rome (witness Petronius' Trimalchio)[61] and not current in Palestine, where the only known bearer of the name is the (Syrian?) slave whose ear was lopped off by Peter (John 18:10). As his genealogy combines Abraham's ancestry of Africa and Assyria, he may well have been a Phoenician Jew with contacts in North Africa or vice versa.[62] Cleodemus' text clearly is another indication of the Jewish tendency to integrate itself into the world at large.

In the end, then, we have to discard the idea of the Spartans being relatives of the Jews. Yet we have also made a gain. We can now see that these "Spartan" letters must have played a role in the middle of the second century BCE in the cultural and religious debate between the Hellenizing Jews and those who advocated a strict adherence to the Law. In other words, it highlights the dispute between universalizers and particularists. We can see that debate only through a glass darkly, but the issues at stake have not lost their relevance for the Jews of today.[63]

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[59] Schürer, *History of the Jewish people*, 3.1:526–528.

[60] W. Ameling, *Kleinasien* (vol. 2 of *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis*; ed. W. Ameling; TSAJ 99; Tübingen 2004), 103; M.H. Williams, "The Use of Alternative Names by Diaspora Jews in Graeco-Roman Antiquity," *JSJ* 38 (2007): 307–327, who overlooked Cleodemus.

[61] For this and other examples, see J.N. Bremmer, "Malchos 'King' and Trimalchio," *Mnem* 34 (1981): 395–396. Add to my Latin passages that explain Malchus as "King": Jerome, *Vit. Malch*., 2: *Erat illic quidam senex nomine Malchus, quem nos Latine "regem" possumus dicere, Syrus natione et lingua*.

[62] For Jewish genealogical speculations about Africa, see also Y. Modéran, "Mythe et histoire aux derniers temps de l'Afrique antique: À propos d'un texte d'Ibn Khaldûn," *RH* 303 (2001): 315–341.

[63] I am most grateful to Suzanne Lye for her skilful editing of my text. I would also like to thank Albertina Oegema and Marjan Pierhagen for their careful reading of my text.

DID THE GENTILES KNOW WHO ABRAHAM WAS?

Pieter W. van der Horst

1. Introduction

Sometime in the second half of the second century CE, the Platonist philosopher Celsus published his *Alēthēs Logos* ("True Doctrine"). In this attack on Christianity, he also dealt very critically with the Greek Bible, including the Jewish part of it, the Septuagint. In one of his critical passages, he remarks that circumcision did not originate with the Jews because this custom had been taken over by them from the Egyptians. In his refutation, written not long before 250 CE, the formidable Christian scholar Origen states that it is better to believe Moses "who says that Abraham was first among men to be circumcised" (*Cels.* 1.22).[1] The mention of the name of Abraham then induces Origen to make a brief excursus in which he adds the following words:

> Many also of those who chant incantations for demons use among their formulas "the God of Abraham"; they do this on account of the name and the familiarity between God and this righteous man. It is for this reason that they employ the expression "the God of Abraham" although they do not know who Abraham is. (*Cels.* 1.22)[2]

This is an instructive passage in that we learn from it (1) that the expression "the God of Abraham" (or, more probably, in its more extended form, "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob")[3]

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[1] The translation is by H. Chadwick, *Origen*: Contra Celsum (2nd ed.; Cambridge 1965), 22. The Greek text I used is the *Sources Chrétiennes* edition by M. Borret, *Origène*: Contre Celse (5 vols.; SC 132, 136, 147, 150, 227; Paris 1967–1976). On this passage see J.G. Cook, *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism* (STAC 23; Tübingen 2004), 102–103.

[2] In his *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 85.3, Justin says that demons cannot be exorcised in the name of kings or prophets or patriarchs but only in the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

[3] This biblical formula plays a prominent role in the theophany to Moses at the burning bush (cf. Exod 3:6, 15, 16; 4:5). It is found in the form "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel" in 1 Kgs 18:36; 1 Chr 29:18; 2 Chr 30:6. It is often found in post-biblical Jewish prayers of which the best known instance is the *berakhah Avoth* of the Shemoneh Esre.

was used in exorcisms by non-Jews and non-Christians in Origen's lifetime, and (2) that Origen thinks that the exorcists who do so had no idea who Abraham was. As to the first point, later on Origen says that the Israelites trace their genealogy back to the three fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and he continues:

> Their names are so powerful when linked with the name of God that the formula "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" is used not only by members of the Jewish nation in their prayers to God and when they exorcise demons, but also by almost all others who deal in magic and spells. For in magical treatises it is often to be found that God is invoked by this formula, and that in spells against demons his name is used in close connection with the names of these men. (*Cels*. 4.33)[4]

And as to the second point, after the passage just quoted, Origen continues:

> We ask all those who use such invocations of God: "Tell us, sirs, who Abraham was, and how great a man was Isaac, and what power was possessed by Jacob, that the name 'God' when attached to their names performs such miracles?" … [But] in answer to our question no one can show any history as the source of the stories about these men. (*Cels*. 4.34)[5]

And, finally, in yet another passage (*Cels*. 5.45), Origen stresses that it would make a spell useless and ineffective if one were to change the names of the three patriarchs into their supposed Greek translations resulting in the formula "the God of the chosen father of the echo, the God of laughter, and the God of the man who strikes with the heel" (etymologies of the names that Origen found in the works of Philo).[6] Interestingly, Origen adds the warning that the words "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" are effective only if pronounced in Hebrew. This passage

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See M. Rist, "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: A Liturgical and Magical Formula," *JBL* 57 (1938): 289–303 (293–295 on Samaritan use of the formula). Cf. also Philo, *Abr*. 50–51. For a NT occurrence see Acts 3:13.

[4] See M. Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (London 1978), 73.

[5] In this very same passage Origen also says that the formula "the God who drowned the king of Egypt and the Egyptians in the Red Sea" was also widely used by pagans to overcome demons. See P.W. van der Horst, "'The God Who Drowned the King of Egypt': A Short Note on an Exorcistic Formula," in *The Wisdom of Egypt: Jewish, Early Christian, and Gnostic Studies in Honour of Gerard P. Luttikhuizen* (ed. A. Hilhorst and G.H. van Kooten; AJEC 59; Leiden 2005), 135–140; repr. in P.W. van der Horst, *Jews and Christians in Their Graeco-Roman Context: Selected Essays on Early Judaism, Samaritanism, Hellenism, and Christianity* (WUNT 196; Tübingen 2006), 280–284.

[6] See Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 300n2–4 for references to Philo. For Abraham as *patēr eklektos ēchous* see, e.g., *Gig*. 64 and *Abr*. 82, with the comments in D. Winston

makes unambiguously clear that Origen himself was convinced of the efficacy of this formula in the fight against demons. But we will leave it at that and let our agenda be dictated by the first two passages which inevitably raise two questions adumbrated already above: (1) Is there independent proof that Gentiles used the formula "the God of Abraham (and Isaac and Jacob)" for magical purposes? (2) Is Origen right in saying that these Gentiles had no idea who Abraham is? The answer to both questions is a qualified yes.[7]

2. The Magical Papyri

As is well-known, the importance of Jewish elements in Greek magical papyri should not be underrated: in approximately one third of the rites and charms Jewish elements are detectable.[8] Not only are Iao and Adonai and Sabaoth invoked more frequently than most other deities, except Helios, but also Moses, Solomon and the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob figure in several passages in these papyri, and "angels, archangels, cherubim and seraphim abound."[9] All these biblical names seem to have become elements of a "transcultural magical lingo," as Smith has dubbed it.[10] Also the strange sounding *voces magicae* or *nomina barbara*[11] may in some cases have a Hebrew or Aramaic background.[12] Even if that is not the case, sometimes alliterative hocus-pocus of several hundred

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and J. Dillon, *Two Treatises of Philo of Alexandria* (BJS 25; Chico, Calif., 1983), 271, and esp. L.L. Grabbe, *Etymology in Early Jewish Interpretation: The Hebrew Names in Philo* (BJS 115; Atlanta 1988), 126–127.

[7] For a brief general survey of the role of Abraham in early Jewish, Christian, and Graeco-Roman sources see T. Klauser, "Abraham," *RAC* 1:18–27.

[8] See M. Smith, "The Jewish Elements in the Magical Papyri," in Idem, *Studies in the Cult of Yahweh* (2 vols.; Leiden 1996), 2:246–247. Note that this implies that in two thirds of the material no Jewish influence at all is to be detected. On the importance of Jewish elements see also T. Hopfner, *Griechisch-ägyptischer Offenbarungszauber* (2 vols.; Amsterdam 1974–1983; corrected reprint of the edition of 1921–1924), 2:31–33.

[9] W. Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri: An Introduction and Survey; Annotated Bibliography (1928–1994)," *ANRW* 2.18.5:3427. Brashear's book-length article is the best introduction to the study of Greek magical papyri to date.

[10] Smith, "The Jewish Elements," 245.

[11] For an extensive list see Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri," 3576–3603.

[12] For instances see C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian* (Ann Arbor 1950), 187. But see also the *caveat* by G. Bohak, "Hebrew, Hebrew Everywhere? Notes on the Interpretation of *Voces Magicae*," in *Prayer, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World* (ed. S. Noegel, J. Walker, and B. Wheeler; University Park, Pa., 2003), 69–82.

words is simply called Hebrew by the magicians themselves.[13] This has to do with the great reputation of Jewish magicians and magic in late antiquity.[14] Jewish and biblical elements, names, motives and formulas were borrowed freely because they were believed to be exceptionally potent and effective. It is, therefore, not strange that, if one moves from pagan magical texts to Jewish ones, one often does not have the feeling of moving to a different world. If syncretism is to be found anywhere, it is in the world of ancient magic.[15] The only thing that mattered there was that the spell worked.

And apparently spells with the formula "the God of Abraham" (or, more probably, "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob") did work. When we take a look at the corpus of Greek magical papyri in the edition of Preisendanz (*PGM*),[16] we find several instances of magical recipes containing that formula.[17] For example, *PGM* IV.1227–1264 is a spell for driving out demons. Although it is part of a pagan handbook for magical rituals,[18] it contains several elements of both Jewish and Christian nature. In half Greek and half Coptic it invokes "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" but also Jesus Chrestos (*sic*) and the Holy Spirit (1231–1234). Because the pagan elements are not very prominent in this case, one may wonder whether we may have here an originally Christian magical recipe taken into service by the pagan compiler of the handbook, perhaps because it contained the formula "the God of Abraham." In *PGM* V.459–489,

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[13] In *PGM* V.115–116 even the Egyptian name *Osoronnophris* (= Osiris Wennefer) is said to be "the true name which has been transmitted to the prophets of Israel"! For Hebrew in Coptic magical papyri see A.M. Kropp, *Ausgewählte koptische Zaubertexte* (3 vols.; Brussel 1930), 3:218.

[14] For literature see Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri," 3426n222; J. Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Nashville 1972), 134–161; M. Simon, *Verus Israel: A Study of the Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (AD 135–425)* (Oxford 1986), 339–368.

[15] Sometimes it is impossible to decide whether a magical papyrus is of Christian or Jewish provenance, e.g., P.IFAO iii 50 in R.W. Daniel and F. Maltomini, eds., *Supplementum Magicum* (2 vols.; Opladen 1990–1992), 1:49–52 (no. 19).

[16] K. Preisendanz and A. Henrichs, *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri* (2nd ed.; 2 vols.; Stuttgart 1973). For an English translation see H.D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* (Chicago 1986).

[17] For Christian instances of the formula see, e.g., Kropp, *Ausgewählte koptische Zaubertexte*, 2:165, 236 (nos. 45, 71).

[18] See P.W. van der Horst, "The Great Magical Papyrus of Paris (*PGM* IV) and the Bible," in Idem, *Jews and Christians in Their Graeco-Roman Context: Selected Essays on Early Judaism, Samaritanism, Hellenism, and Christianity* (WUNT 196; Tübingen 2006), 269–279.

however, we have a very clear-cut case: After some vague allusions to the biblical creation story the text goes on calling upon "the god of gods" who is called both Iao (= Yhwh) and Zeus. Then follows a long list of *nomina barbara* or *voces magicae* with the word *Hebraïsti* prefixed. This string of nonsense[19] is certainly not Hebrew, except for four words in the middle (479–480): *barouch Adōnai elōai Abraam* ("Blessed is the Lord, the God of Abraham"). There is little reason to assume that the writer of this charm understood this Hebrew phrase, but the fact that the name of Abraham occurred here in a setting of a "transcultural magical lingo" that he took to be Hebrew (correctly, in this case), apparently sufficed for it to be included in this spell.

Another case is *PGM* XII.270–350.[20] It first describes a ring of a special stone of which it is said that "it makes men as famous and great and admired and rich as can be" (270) and "it also works for demoniacs" (281). When its bearer wants it to work one of its miracles, he/she should say a spell that consists mostly of the usual abracadabra, in the middle of which we suddenly come across the names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (287, spelled as *Abraän*, *Isak*, *Jakkōbi*). Here we see that the mere mentioning of the name(s), without the words "the God of" being prefixed, was deemed sufficient to be effective.[21] The fact that the names are here part of a string of nonsense words (such as *Nouchitha*, *Nēphygor*, *Katakerknēph*) makes one suspect that the compiler of the spell had no idea of what these names stood for and perhaps even thought they were deities.[22]

In another spell, *PGM* XIII.734–1077, we find Zeus and Helios mentioned side by side with the names of Egyptian gods and of Iao Sabaoth. It is a clearly polytheistic text with again several strings of *nomina barbara*. In the middle of one such series, containing words with many Egyptian elements, we suddenly read: "I have received the power of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (815–817). Here again we find only the names of the patriarchs (God not being mentioned), but the formulation

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[19] See P. Cox Miller, "In Praise of Nonsense," in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality: Egyptian, Greek, Roman* (ed. A.H. Armstrong; London 1986), 481–505.

[20] For *PGM* XII and XIII the present author consulted the newer edition by R.W. Daniel, *Two Greek Magical Papyri in the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden* (Opladen 1991).

[21] The same applies to *PGM* I.219 where the words *Ambrami Abraam* occur in a string of *voces magicae*.

[22] Klauser, "Abraham," 20: "In diesen Texten [= *PGM*] ist 'Abraham' oder 'A[braham], Isaak und Jakob' vielfach als Name des Judengottes verstanden." For Jacob as a deity in the *PGM* see G. Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History* (Cambridge 2008), 199.

indicates that the author knew that these names referred to powerful persons (or deities). The quasi-Egyptianizing setting, however, makes one doubt whether the author had any notion of the biblical provenance of these names. This impression is further strengthened by the fact that further on in the same spell there is an isolated notice (in a list of supposedly secret writings) to the effect that something (but what?) is explained in the Law in Hebrew as follows: "Abraham, Isaac, Jacob" followed by a list of *voces magicae*, most of them being permutations of the divine name Iao (975–978). It is extremely doubtful whether the magician had any idea of what the names of the three patriarchs stood for. Neither did the author of the spell in *PGM* XXXVI.295–311 who mentions Abraham in the midst of a series of *nomina barbara*.[23]

Not from *PGM* but from the *Supplementum Magicum* is the following material. Number 2 is a silver amulet against fever in the form of a triangular tablet inscribed with the following text: "I call upon you, who are over the air of the ocean, *obach*, and by *babarathan baroch Abraham sabaraam*, protect him who wears you from fever and everything (else) etc."[24] Here the easily recognizable Hebrew words *barukh Avraham* ("blessed be Abraham") leave little doubt that the author of this spell had no idea what these words meant. For him it was as much sacred abracadabra as the immediately surrounding words. To put it in the words of Bohak: "When powerful formulae moved from one culture to another, and into the hands of people who had no firm grasp of the culture whence they came, such misunderstandings, transformations, and creative reconfigurations were almost bound to happen."[25] In no. 29, another amulet against fever, we find an invocation of "the Lord of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," but we leave this case out of account because the surrounding text with quotes from both Ps 90 and the Paternoster make clear that here we have to do with a Christian charm.[26] Finally, atten-

[23] See on this latter spell also Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, 204–206. *PGM* VII.315 too lists the name Abraham at the beginning of a list of *nomina barbara*. There are two more passages in *PGM* where Abraham or the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are mentioned, namely *PGM* XXIIb.6 and *PGM* XXXV.14, but I leave them out of account since these spells are almost certainly of Jewish origin and probably did not undergo recasting by pagan magicians, as far as I can judge. On *PGM* XXIIb.6 see now the commentary by Judith Newman in P.W. van der Horst and J.H. Newman, *Early Jewish Prayers in Greek* (Berlin 2008), 215–246.

[24] Daniel and Maltomini, *Supplementum Magicum*, 1:7–8 (no. 2).

[25] Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, 200.

[26] It is also no. LXXXIII in Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri*, 300, where Roy Kotanski describes it as "syncretistic rather than distinctively Christian." In no. 75, line 21 (Daniel

tion should be paid to the famous love charm on a lead tablet from the necropolis of Hadrumetum (near Carthage) in which a woman named Domitiana invokes among others "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (albeit in a very garbled form)[27] in order to induce a certain Urbanus to take her as his wife.[28] Although the religious affiliation of the writer cannot be determined with certainty, I think it most likely that this is a case of "a pagan writer using a magical recipe which was originally composed by a Jewish practitioner."[29]

This quick overview of the evidence from magical papyri and amulets,[30] limited though it is, does make clear that Origen informed us correctly when he stated that his non-Jewish and non-Christian contemporaries used the formula "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" for exorcistic and other ritual purposes. His observation that these pagans, in spite of their use of this formula, did not know who Abraham and his son and grandson were, would also seem to be confirmed since none of the passages from the magical papyri gives any impression that the authors knew more than just the names of the patriarchs.

3. The Literary Sources

But this is not the end of our investigation. There is other evidence than the magical papyri that can inform us about the extent of the knowledge Gentile authors had about the patriarchs, Abraham in particular. It is

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and Maltomini, *Supplementum Magicum*, 2) Daniel and Maltomini supplement a lacuna in the papyrus as *b[arouch Abram]*, but that is no more than a conjecture. In no. 88, line 11 (Daniel and Maltomini, *Supplementum Magicum*, 2), the name Abraham does occur but without context because of gaps on both sides of the word. The spell seems to be pagan.

[27] The text reads the names as *Abraan, Iakou, Israma*. One could take *Iakou* to be a form of *Iakoub* (*Iakōb*), but the fact that the garbled form *Israma* must mean Israel (= Jacob) makes it more probable that *Iakou* is a mistake for *Isakou*, the genitive of *Isakos*, so that we have the traditional order of the names of the patriarchs. The heavy garbling of these names makes it less probable that the author was Jewish.

[28] Text, photo, translation, and commentary in A. Deissmann, *Bibelstudien* (Marburg 1895; repr., Hildesheim 1977), 25–54. See also L. Blau, *Das altjüdische Zauberwesen* (Budapest 1898; repr., Westmead 1970), 96–112; J.G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford 1992), 112–115.

[29] Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, 211. See also A. Bernand, *Sorciers grecs* (Paris 1991), 299–302. For (Jewish and Christian) epigraphic attestations of the formula "the God of Abraham etc." see A.E. Felle, *Biblia Epigraphica: La Sacra Scrittura nella documentazione epigrafica dell' orbis christianus antiquus (III–VIII secolo)* (Bari 2006), nos. 234, B1083.

[30] For depictions of Abraham sacrificing Isaac on three magical gems see C. Bonner, *Magical Amulets*, 171, 226–227.

thanks to the comprehensive *magnum opus* of the late Stern that this evidence can easily be surveyed. In the index of his valuable work, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (*GLAJJ*),[31] he lists several passages from ancient authors that mention Abraham. Let us take a quick look at them in order to see whether these pagan intellectuals were better informed than the magicians. We follow a roughly chronological order.[32]

We have to begin on a sad note because one of the earliest Greek writers to mention Jews at all, Hecataeus of Abdera (ca. 300 BCE), is said by both Josephus and Clement of Alexandria to have written a work about Abraham, a work, however, that is now completely lost.[33] But there is some consolation to be found in the fact that most modern scholars take this work (if it existed at all) to have been a Jewish apologetic forgery,[34] and this is almost certainly the case. Next comes Hecataeus' slightly later contemporary, the Babylonian priest Berossus who, according to Josephus, "mentions our father Abramos, though he does not name him, in the following words: 'In the tenth generation after the flood among the Chaldeans there was a certain man, just and great and expert in heavenly matters'" (*A.J.* 1.158). This passage is left out by Stern who thinks that "it is doubtful that the righteous man experienced in celestial affairs … can be identified with Abraham."[35] And, admittedly, it might be that Josephus indulges in wishful reading here, but one may also rightly ask: Who else other than Abraham could be meant here by Berossus? If he did refer to Abraham here, one should note the intriguing fact that Berossus depicts Abraham as "a man experienced in celestial affairs," that is, an astrologer, a motif that was destined to have a long history.[36]

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[31] M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (3 vols.; Jerusalem 1974–1984).

[32] L.H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* (Princeton 1993), 530–531n1 gives a (long but not comprehensive) list of passages in pagan authors where Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, and Solomon are mentioned. The best study to date is J.S. Siker, "Abraham in Graeco-Roman Paganism," *JSJ* 18 (1987): 188–208.

[33] See Josephus, *A.J.* 1.159; Clement, *Strom.* 5.14.113 = Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 13.13.40.

[34] See the survey in L.H. Feldman, *Flavius Josephus III, Judean Antiquities 1–4* (Leiden 2000), 59n511. See also Stern in *GLAJJ*, no. 22 ("a product of Jewish religious propaganda").

[35] Stern, *GLAJJ*, 1:55.

[36] See, e.g., J.H. Charlesworth, "Jewish Astrology in the Talmud, Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Early Palestinian Synagogues," *HTR* 70 (1977): 183–200; R. Leicht, *Astrologumena Judaica: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der astrologischen Literatur der Juden* (TSMEMJ 21; Tübingen 2006); G. Mayer, "Aspekte des Abrahambildes in der hellenistisch-jüdischen Literatur," *EvT* 32 (1972): 118–127.

Be that as it may, we have to wait till the first century BCE in order to find the first certain reference to Abraham, namely in a work by the renowned rhetorician Apollonius Molon (*GLAJJ*, no. 46). Josephus presents him in his *Contra Apionem* as a fanatic Jew-hater, but the fragment of his work that was preserved by Eusebius (via Alexander Polyhistor) "does not show any marked anti-Semitic features."[37] There we read that the man who survived the flood (Noah) came with his sons to Syria where, after three generations, Abraham was born, whose name signifies "the friend of the father." He was a wise man and went to the desert. He took two wives, a local relative of his and an Egyptian handmaid. The Egyptian woman bore him twelve sons, who emigrated to Arabia and divided the country between themselves; they were the first kings over its inhabitants. Hence till our days there are twelve kings among the Arabs, all of them namesakes of the sons of Abraham. Of his lawful wife one son was born to him whose name in Greek is *Gelōs* ("laughter" = *Yitshaq* [Isaac]).[38] Abraham then died of old age, while to *Gelōs* and a native woman there were born eleven sons, and a twelfth one, Joseph, whose grandson was Moses (*apud* Eusebius, *Praep. ev*. 9.19.1–3).[39] This curious hodgepodge of biblical names and motives combined with non-biblical data makes it quite certain that Apollonius did not have any first-hand knowledge of the Bible. There are simply too many glaring mistakes to make that probable. What we have here is second-hand information based on hearsay, but it should immediately be added that here for the first time Abraham is mentioned by name, as is his son Isaac (albeit in an *interpretatio graeca*), and also his two wives, Sarah and Hagar (albeit without their names). Moreover Abraham is called a wise man and nothing negative is said about the patriarch at all. This is certainly an indication that Apollonius had made some effort to get acquainted in a serious way with biblical or Jewish traditions.

The first-century BCE polymath Alexander Polyhistor (already mentioned in passing) is the first pagan author who provides us with evidence of exact knowledge of the biblical Abraham stories. This is not surprising if one realizes that he is the author of a work *Peri Ioudaiōn* in which he presents his readers not only with biblical information but also with large chunks of text from the writings of several postbiblical Graeco-Jewish

[37] Stern, *GLAJJ*, 1:148.
[38] On *Gelōs*-Isaac see J.G. Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 19n9.
[39] On this passage see Cook, *Interpretation of the Old Testament*, 11–12.

authors.[40] This voluminous writer and compiler is the main source for our knowledge of much of the early Jewish-Hellenistic literature. Eusebius, who heavily drew upon Polyhistor, informs us that after having presented excerpts of several authors (such as Eupolemus, Artapanus etc.) on Abraham, Polyhistor himself adds the following:

> Shortly afterwards God commanded Abraham to bring him Isaac as a burnt-offering. Abraham led the child up the mountain, piled up a funeral pyre and placed Isaac upon it. However, when he was on the point of slaying him, he was prevented from doing so by an angel, who provided him with a ram for the offering. Abraham then removed the child from the pyre and he sacrificed the ram.
>
> (Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.19 = *GLAJJ*, no. 51a)

This is purely biblical information, so we can conclude that here we have the first case of a pagan author who has read the Bible. His information is factual and correct.

It is, therefore, somewhat disappointing to see how the next author who mentions Abraham, namely Nicolaus of Damascus, a prolific historian and friend of Herod the Great, who was active in the decades around the turn of the era, deals with the first patriarch.[41] He says that Abraham, after having left the land of the Chaldeans with an army, became the king of Damascus, but that not long thereafter he left with his people for the land then called *Chananaia* but nowadays Judaea. He then adds the notice that "the name of Abraham is still celebrated in the region of Damascus, and a village there is called after him Abraham's abode (*Abramou oikēsis*)" (cited by Josephus, *A.J.* 1.159–160 = *GLAJJ*, no. 83). The Bible does not refer to Abraham's stay in Damascus, let alone his kingship over that city, but it should be added that there were several early Jewish traditions about Abraham as king (albeit not of Damascus).[42] The main point, however, is the positive tone in this short account: traditions about Abraham as a king are taken into the service of Nicolaus' glorification of Damascus, the city where he had lived all his life. And of course his patron Herod would be pleased to learn that even today Abraham's name lives on in the name of a village near Damascus called *Abramou oikēsis*.

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[40] On Alexander Polyhistor see E. Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (ed. and trans. G. Vermes et al.; 4 vols.; Edinburgh 1973–1986), 3.1:510–512.

[41] On Nicolaus see J. Malitz, *Nikolaos von Damaskus: Leben des Kaisers Augustus* (TzF 80; Darmstadt 2003), 1–5.

[42] See L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (7 vols.; Philadelphia 1925), 5:216n46.

From roughly the same period is another text that speaks of a connection between Damascus and Abraham, namely the *Historiae Philippicae* of Pompeius Trogus of which only the excerpts in Justinus' *Epitome* have been preserved. It is a rather muddleheaded account to the effect that the origin of the Jewish people is from Damascus. Its first king was Damascus after whom the city was named. "After Damascus, Azelus, and then Adores,[43] Abraham, and Israhel were their kings. A felicitous progeny of ten sons made Israhel more famous than any of his ancestors" (*Epitome* 2.1–4 = *GLAJJ*, no. 137). Israel is here of course the third patriarch, Jacob (Isaac is overlooked). All we learn about Abraham is that he was the fourth king of Damascus, a motif very similar to what we have just found in Nicolaus, although not identical because Nicolaus knows of Abraham's Mesopotamian origin. Also what follows in this short excerpt does not inspire much confidence in his knowledge of biblical stories, e.g., when he says that Moses was Joseph's son (2.11).[44]

In the work of the second-century CE astrologer Vettius Valens we find two very brief references to Abraham as an astrologer (*Anthologiae* 2.28–29 = *GLAJJ*, nos. 339–340), a motif also known from Berossus (and see below on Firmicus Maternus and Julian). Not the slightest critical note is found here, on the contrary, the phrase *ho thaumasiōtatos Abramos* is an unequivocal expression of admiration.

In the final decades of the second century CE, the Platonist Celsus launched his attack on Christianity in his *Alēthēs Logos*. In it, he also ridicules as utterly absurd the begetting of children when the parents are too old, and Origen rightly surmises that "he obviously means the case of Abraham and Sarah" (*Cels*. 4.43).[45] Even though Celsus' knowledge of the Bible is considerably less detailed than that of the other great anti-Christian polemicists (Porphyry and Julian), this very brief passage is a correct summary of the story in Gen 18.

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[43] According to Stern (*GLAJJ*, 1:339): "These names stand for Hadad and Hazael, both well known from the Bible as kings of Aram."

[44] I leave out of account as not informative the short note in Stephanus of Byzantium's *Ethnika* to the effect that the second-century CE historian Claudius Charax states that the name Hebrews for Jews is derived from the name Abraham, an etymology already found in the second-century BCE Jewish (?) author Artapanus, frg. 1 (= Eusebius, *Praep. ev*. 9.18.1). In his brief discussion of this fragment, Stern (*GLAJJ*, 2.161) points to the fact that according to Josephus "a public document from Pergamum, the city of Charax, of c. 112 BCE, refers to ancient relations between the Jews and the city in the time of Abraham, who is called *pantôn Hebraiôn patêr* (*Antiquitates Judaicae* XIV, 255)."

[45] On this passage see G. Rinaldi, *La Bibbia dei pagani II: Testi e documenti* (Bologna 1998), 124.

An interesting case is another Platonist, this time from around 300 CE, Alexander of Lycopolis. Alexander mentions Abraham only briefly, when he states that the Christian doctrine that Jesus Christ

> gave himself up for the remission of sins has a certain plausibility in the eyes of many people[46] in view of the stories told among the Greeks about some persons who gave themselves up for the safety of their cities; and also Jewish history furnishes an example of this doctrine in preparing the son of Abraham for sacrifice to God. (*Contra Manichaei opiniones* 24)[47]

As I have argued elsewhere, in his anti-Manichaean treatise Alexander demonstrates that

> he had some knowledge of the Bible but it was not extensive .... It cannot even be excluded that all the biblical references in his work are based on hearsay, not on his own reading. The (only?) biblical books he appears to have had some knowledge of were Genesis and the Gospels (as usual among pagan authors with some knowledge of the Bible) .... But this knowledge apparently did not inspire him to vehement attacks on the Bible, in sharp contrast to Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian.[48]

It is not unimportant, however, to notice that Alexander mentions Isaac as an example of "people giving themselves up" for the sake of others, whereas the biblical story portrays Isaac as the completely passive object of God's command and Abraham's obedience. The motif that Isaac volunteered to be the sacrifice God wanted to have and that he did this for the welfare of the people of the Jews is found only in postbiblical Jewish sources of the Roman and Byzantine periods. I would submit that Alexander was acquainted with Jewish haggadic material, either oral or written, or perhaps with Christian variants of these haggadic interpretations.[49]

From the first half of the fourth century we have the writings of Firmicus Maternus. Obviously we will only have a brief look at the work

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[46] But not of Alexander himself.

[47] J. Mansfeld and P.W. van der Horst, trans., *An Alexandrian Platonist against Dualism: Alexander of Lycopolis' Treatise* Critique of the Doctrines of Manichaeus (Leiden 1974), 94.

[48] P.W. van der Horst, "'A Simple Philosophy': Alexander of Lycopolis on Christianity," in *Polyhistor: Studies in the History and Historiography of Ancient Philosophy Presented to Jaap Mansfeld on His Sixtieth Birthday* (ed. K.A. Algra, P.W. van der Horst, and D.T. Runia; PA 72; Leiden 1996), 328–329.

[49] For Jewish haggadic material see van der Horst, "A Simple Philosophy." For a fascinating example of these Christian variants see P.W. van der Horst and M.F.G. Parmentier, "A New Early Christian Poem on the Sacrifice of Isaac," in *Le Codex des Visions* (ed. A. Hurst and J. Rudhardt; RechRenc 18; Genève 2002), 155–172.

he wrote in his pre-Christian period, the so-called *Mathesis*, a handbook for astrologers (not at his *De errore* which is from his Christian period). Here again (as in Vettius Valens), Abraham is mentioned as a great astrologer and writer on astrological matters, in line with Nechepso and Petosiris, Orpheus, Critodemus and others (*Math.* 4.Proem.5; 4.17.2, 5; 4.18.1 = *GLAJJ*, nos. 473–476).

The emperor Julian, known as the Apostate, devoted a couple of lines to Abraham in his anti-Christian work *Contra Galilaeos*.[50] In the first fragment the fact that no less a person than Abraham chose to be an alien in a foreign country is used as an argument against the Christians' abandonment of Judaism (209D = *GLAJJ*, no. 481a = Masaracchia frg. 49). Why they should have adhered to their Jewish origins is made clear by Julian in the second fragment, where he stresses the great importance of sacrifice by saying the following:

> I will prove in a few words that Moses himself thought that it was necessary to bring fire from outside [for the sacrifices], and even before him, Abraham the patriarch likewise .... I am one of those who avoid keeping their festivals with the Jews; but nevertheless, I always revere the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob .... They revered a God who was ever gracious to me and to those who worshipped him as Abraham did, for he is a very great and powerful God, but he has nothing to do with you [Christians]. For you do not imitate Abraham by erecting altars to him or building altars of sacrifice or worshipping him. For Abraham used to sacrifice even as we do, always and continually.
>
> (Julian the Apostate, *Contra Galilaeos* 343D, 354A–C = *GLAJJ*, no. 481a = Masarachhia frgs. 83, 86, 87)[51]

Then follows a long passage about Abraham as a practitioner of astrology, augury, and other forms of divination, motifs that we know from several Hellenistic-Jewish writings and that were also partly found in the works of Vettius Valens and Firmicus Maternus. Aside from that, however, we see that Julian's portrait of Abraham as one who sacrifices to God is biblical (see, e.g., Gen 15; 22), something not really amazing since this pagan emperor had had a Christian education.

A curious testimony of the admiration for Abraham on the part of pagans is a much-discussed passage in the fourth-century *Scriptores*

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[50] The best edition with commentary is E. Masaracchia, *Giuliano Imperatore*: Contra Galilaeos (Roma 1990).

[51] On this passage see Cook, *Interpretation of the Old Testament*, 275–280, 295–296. See also briefly J.G. Cook, *The Interpretation of the New Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism* (SAC 3; Tübingen 2000), 323–324.

historiae Augustae. Here we find in the *Vita Alexandri Severi* the curious notice that the emperor Alexander Severus (222–235) had a private sanctuary in his palace in which he kept statues of deified emperors and also of certain holy souls among whom were Apollonius (of Tyana), Jesus Christ,[52] Abraham, Orpheus, and others of the same character (29.2 = *GLAJJ*, no. 522).[53] Whatever one wants to speculate about the historical value (or lack of it) of this curious form of syncretism, it is certain that our fourth-century author did not deem it impossible that Abraham would be worshipped alongside other deified or heroic personalities.

Finally, in the first half of the sixth century, we find in Damascius' *Vita Isidori* the notice that Proclus' successor as head of the Platonic Academy in Athens, Marinus, once had once belonged to the Samaritan community. He

> originated from Neapolis (Nablus) in Palestine, a city founded near the so-called Mount Argarizon (*sic*), where there is a most sacred temple of Zeus the Most High, to whom Abraham, the ancestor of the ancient Hebrews, was consecrated, as Marinus himself used to say.[54]

But Marinus gave up the Samaritan creed since it deviated from Abraham's religion, and hence he fell in love with paganism (Athanassiadi frg. 97A = *GLAJJ*, no. 548). Because this confused and suspect piece of information does not teach us anything about pagan knowledge of Abraham, we will leave it out of account.

What we have seen in these (non-magical) literary witnesses is that, although Abraham was not widely known, all authors who mention him had a positive evaluation of the patriarch. He is seen as a wise and just man, who was also a ruler, with expertise in astrology. He came from somewhere in the East (Syria or Mesopotamia), a factor which always contributed to a person's prestige in literary circles of the Hellenistic and Roman eras, and, possibly for that reason, "Abraham was not so closely identified with the Jews … that the pagan criticism of the Jews ever rubbed off on him."[55]

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[52] Here the author adds: "according to a contemporary writer" (*quantum scriptor suorum temporum dicit*), as if to express his doubts about it.

[53] As Stern remarks, it is striking that the immediate collocation of Abraham and Orpheus occurs also in Firmicus Maternus (see above in the text). One of these two texts may depend on the other. Siker "Abraham," 197, wrongly states that this passage deals with Julian the Apostate.

[54] Translation by P. Athanassiadi, *Damascius: The Philosophical History* (Athens 1999), 237 (slightly modified).

[55] Siker, "Abraham," 208.

4. Conclusions

Although I do not claim that this has been an exhaustive presentation of the evidence, I am confident that at least the most important pieces of our evidence have passed review, however briefly. Let us now try to draw some conclusions. These conclusions are bound to be tentative since most probably more evidence has been lost than preserved. What we do have, however, only partly confirms what Origen asserted about the total lack of knowledge about Abraham among the Gentiles. As we have seen, he was certainly right as far as the practitioners of magical rites and exorcists are concerned (and that is probably what he primarily had in mind). In the magical texts, as we have seen, one does not find indications that they were acquainted with anything more than just the name of Abraham and sometimes even did not know whether it was the name of a human person or a deity. But in the case of the literary evidence, the picture is different. To be sure, there too we find some quite "wrong" information: Abraham as king of Damascus, as father of twelve sons, etc. But we also find relatively well-informed statements, although hardly before the first centuries of the Common Era. It is a striking observation that, unlike in the case of Moses, by and large both the well-informed and the less well-informed authors held Abraham in high regard. Why were they more critical of Moses than of Abraham? Was it because, unlike Abraham, Moses was always seen as the lawgiver of the Jews and for that reason as the founder of the Jewish way of life that was so often derided and despised by the Greeks and Romans? This question certainly deserves closer investigation.

As was to be expected, the opponents of Christianity, who had read (parts of) the Bible for polemical purposes, were better informed than most others (except the Alexander who is rightly called Polyhistor). In this respect the fact that the evidence from the greatest adversary of Christianity, Porphyry, is lost, is regrettable because he differed widely from both Celsus and Julian in that he had a remarkably positive view of Judaism[56] (but perhaps he just did not have reason to mention Abraham). Be that as it may, the limited evidence we have allows us to say that there were some pagan authors who had a good knowledge of the biblical evidence, but it is a reasonable guess that this knowledge remained restricted to only a handful of pagan intellectuals.[57]

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[56] See P.W. van der Horst, "Porphyry and Judaism" (forthcoming).

[57] Again I am most grateful to my friend James N. Pankhurst for his unfailing readiness to correct the English text of my papers.

ABRAHAM AND THE NATIONS IN THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS: EXCLUSIVISM AND INCLUSIVISM IN THE TEXTS FROM QUMRAN AND THE ABSENCE OF A RECEPTION HISTORY FOR GEN 12:3

Mladen Popović

1. Introduction

There is no reception history of Gen 12:3 in the Dead Sea Scrolls. That is, Abraham and the nations do not appear together. The idea that all the nations, or rather families, of the earth are blessed in, find blessing in, or bless themselves through Abraham does not appear in the Scrolls from Qumran.

This may simply be due to chance. As is well known, most manuscripts of the Dead Sea Scrolls have come to us in fragmentary form. If we consider the so-called biblical manuscripts from Qumran, there are the remains of possibly twenty manuscripts of Genesis. In addition, two come from Murabbaʿat, one from Sdeir and another one from Masada.[1] None of these twenty-four "biblical" manuscripts of Genesis has preserved Gen 12.[2] But we may assume that those manuscripts originally did contain Gen 12. Unfortunately, the "non-biblical" manuscripts also have no quotation, reference or allusion to Gen 12, or more specifically to Abraham and the nations.[3] To be sure, Abraham appears in the non-biblical manuscripts, but he does not figure prominently. His name

[1] See E. Tov et al., *The Texts from the Judaean Desert: Indices and an Introduction to the* Discoveries in the Judaean Desert *Series* (DJD 39; Oxford 2002), 167–168, 179.

[2] Interestingly, the text originally published as 4QGen$^{h\text{-}para}$ (J.R. Davila, "4QGen$^{h\text{-}para}$," in *Qumran Cave 4.VII: Genesis to Numbers* [E. Ulrich et al.; DJD 12; Oxford 1994], 62–63) does contain (a paraphrase of) Gen 12:4–5. However, the same fragment has also been published as 4Q464 1 (M.E. Stone and E. Eshel, "An Exposition on the Patriarchs [4Q464] and Two Other Documents [4Q464^{a} and 4Q464^{b}]," *Mus* 105 [1992]: 243–264). This was first observed by Eshel. The latter assignment is correct, and the reference 4QGen$^{h\text{-}para}$ has been cancelled. I thank Eibert Tigchelaar for this information.

[3] Except for 4Q464 1, which refers to Abraham and Haran. See E. Eshel and M. Stone, "464: 4QExposition on the Patriarchs," in *Qumran Cave 4.XIV: Parabiblical Texts, Part 2* (M. Broshi et al.; DJD 19; Oxford 1995), 217.

occurs some eighty times (forty-nine times as Abraham; thirty-one times as Abram), in a total of twenty-five of the non-biblical Hebrew and Aramaic Qumran texts.[4] Only three manuscripts have preserved enough material to demonstrate the retelling of the narratives known from Gen 11–25, to which I shall turn below. However, the apparent nonexistence of a reception history of Gen 12:3 in the Dead Sea Scrolls may not necessarily be the result of chance preservation or the fragmentary state of the manuscripts.

I will argue that the absence of a reception history for this passage in the Dead Sea Scrolls is not a coincidence, as almost no early Jewish texts give evidence of its reception history, and should be understood against the extremely negative role that the Gentiles play in many early Jewish eschatological and apocalyptic texts. In order to put into context this non-reception of Gen 12:3 and the idea of the blessing of the nations in relation to Abraham, I will first discuss three non-biblical Scrolls in which Abraham appears, one of which may provide a clue that Gen 12:3 was ignored deliberately as a result of an exclusivist perspective on who was to possess the land. Second, a brief overview of early Jewish Abraham traditions will show that the theme of Abraham and the blessing of the nations was not a major issue in other early Jewish texts outside the Qumran collection. This may demonstrate that the absence of the theme of Abraham and the blessing of the nations in the texts from Qumran was not an isolated phenomenon at the time. Third, I will look at two texts from Qumran in which Abraham and the nations possibly appear together and that give expression to the idea that the nations are excluded from the benefits of the covenant with Abraham. Finally, a look at the role of the nations in apocalyptic and eschatological texts shows how they appear as the typical archenemy of Israel, only awaiting final judgement or to be destroyed at the end of times. This portrayal of the nations is hardly conducive to providing a context for the reception history of Gen 12:3 and the blessing of the nations in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Notwithstanding possibly inclusivist tendencies in some texts, the exclusivist strand remains dominant and may explain the absence of a reception history for Gen 12:3.

[4] Cf. C.A. Evans, "Abraham," *EDSS* 1:2; S. Holst, "Abraham at Qumran," in *Historie og konstruktion: Festskrift til Niels Peter Lemche i anledning af 60 års fødselsdagen* (ed. M. Møller and T.L. Thompson; Copenhagen 2005), 181.

2. The Figure of Abraham in Three Non-biblical Scrolls from Qumran

4QPseudo-Jubilees[a] (4Q225)

The Hebrew manuscript 4Q225, called 4QPseudo-Jubilees[a] and dated to around the end of the first century BCE, contains a composition that was influenced by Genesis, Exodus and *Jubilees*. The extant text consists of three fragments, the third of which is too fragmentary to say anything meaningful about it.[5]

The two columns preserved in the second fragment deal with God's promise to Abraham in Gen 15, the birth of Isaac in Gen 21 and his binding in Gen 22 and Passover and the escape from Egypt in Exod 12–14, but are not relevant to our current conference theme; García Martínez has already discussed that material at a previous *Themes in Biblical Narrative* conference.[6]

The first fragment of 4Q225 was originally thought to deal with Abraham and the issue of circumcision,[7] but a re-examination of the manuscript eliminated the reading וימל ("and he circumcised") in line 4, replacing it with ויאכלו ("and they ate") and also relocated frg. 1 to follow upon frg. 2.[8] According to the new reconstruction by Kugler and VanderKam, much of 4Q225 1 "recalls *Jubilees*' account of the first Passover and the Exodus from Egypt (*Jubilees* 48–49)."[9]

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[5] For the *editio princeps* see J.C. VanderKam and J.T. Milik, "225: 4QPseudo-Jubilees[a]," in *Qumran Cave 4.VIII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 1* (H. Attridge et al.; DJD 13; Oxford 1994), 141–155. See also D. Hamidović, *Les traditions du Jubilé à Qumrân* (Paris 2007), 203–225; R.A. Kugler and J.C. VanderKam, "A Note on 4Q225 (4QPseudo-Jubilees)," *RevQ* 20/77 (2001): 109–116.

[6] F. García Martínez, "The Sacrifice of Isaac in 4Q225," in *The Sacrifice of Isaac: The Aqedah (Genesis 22) and Its Interpretations* (ed. E. Noort and E. Tigchelaar; Leiden 2002), 44–57. See also more recently, and for references to earlier studies J.A. Fitzmyer, "The Interpretation of Genesis 15:6: Abraham's Faith and Righteousness in a Qumran Text," in *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and the Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov* (ed. S.M. Paul et al.; Leiden 2003), 257–268; B. Halpern-Amaru, "A Note on Isaac as First-Born in *Jubilees* and Only Son in 4Q225," *DSD* 13 (2006): 127–133; J. Kugel, "Exegetical Notes on 4Q225 '*Pseudo-Jubilees*,'" *DSD* 13 (2006): 73–98; R.A. Kugler, "4Q225 2 i 1–2: A Possible Reconstruction and Explanation," *JBL* 126 (2007): 172–181; R.A. Kugler, "Hearing 4Q225: A Case Study in Reconstructing the Religious Imagination of the Qumran Community," *DSD* 10 (2003): 81–103.

[7] VanderKam and Milik, "4QPseudo-Jubilees[a]," 143–144.

[8] Kugler and VanderKam, "Note on 4Q225." See also R. Fidler, "Circumcision in 4Q225? Notes on Sequential and Conceptual Shifts," *Meghillot* 5–6 (2007): 197–218 (Hebrew).

[9] Kugler and VanderKam, "Note on 4Q225," 109.

From this short overview it becomes clear that the manuscript fragments of 4Q225 have not preserved any text from Genesis previous to the retelling of Gen 15. Nor in its retelling of the narratives from Gen 15 onwards does 4Q225 seem to pay any attention to the blessing of the nations, such as in Gen 18:18; 22:18, or, in connection with, respectively, Isaac and Jacob, Gen 26:4; 28:14. It is possible that the nonappearance of Abraham and the blessing of the nations is due to the character of the text of 4Q225. It is not just a retelling of narratives from Genesis and Exodus, displaying knowledge of *Jubilees* while doing so and following the biblical texts closely. On the contrary, the remaining portions of the text may have Passover as a unifying theme,[10] which may explain the lack of attention to the theme of the blessing of the nations.

Genesis Apocryphon (1Q20)

The *Genesis Apocryphon* is an Aramaic text from Cave 1 that contains the remains of twenty-three columns of a paraphrase of narratives from Genesis. But the text's character is not limited to just an Aramaic paraphrase of Genesis. While sometimes adhering closely to Genesis, the text at times also departs significantly from Genesis. Through the use of traditions outside Genesis, some of which are also embedded in *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees*, a new composition emerged. The manuscript dates from around the beginning of our era, but the text was probably composed in the early first century BCE or even earlier.[11] Following upon the first person accounts of Lamech and Noah, Abraham was probably introduced in col. 18, which is so badly damaged that there is not a single decipherable word. Column 19 begins in line 7, which has Abraham already in the land of Canaan calling upon the name of God, where according to Gen 12:8 he built his second altar in Bethel in the land of Canaan. Column 18 must have contained the beginning of the Abraham story in Gen 11–12.

[10] Cf. Kugler, "4Q225 2 i 1–2," 176–180.

[11] The scholarly discussion regarding the *Genesis Apocryphon* is rapidly evolving. For orientation, see most recently D.K. Falk, *The Parabiblical Texts: Strategies for Extending the Scriptures among the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London 2007), 26–106; J.A. Fitzmyer, *The* Genesis Apocryphon *of Qumran Cave 1 (1Q20): A Commentary* (3rd ed.; Rome 2004); D.A. Machiela, *The Dead Sea* Genesis Apocryphon: *A New Text and Translation with Introduction and Special Treatment of Columns 13–17* (Leiden 2009); S. White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 2008), 105–129. For another possible appearance of Abraham in the *Genesis Apocryphon*, see D.A. Machiela, "Who Is the Aramean in Deut 26:5 and What Is He Doing? Evidence of a Minority View from Qumran Cave 1 (1QapGen 19.8)," *RevQ* 23/91 (2008): 395–403.

It is certainly possible that a reference to Abraham and the nations was included in the badly damaged manuscript of the *Genesis Apocryphon* but is now lost. Regarding the Abraham cycle in general, the *Genesis Apocryphon* follows the biblical text more closely than in the case of the Noah material. Also, since the *Genesis Apocryphon* used *Jubilees* or its traditions as a source, this could be another indication of the appearance of Abraham and the nations: *Jub*. 12:22–23 echo Gen 12:1–3. While it is possible that similarly to *Jubilees*, the *Genesis Apocryphon* originally featured a passage on Abraham and the nations, it is by no means certain. The *Genesis Apocryphon* not only shares features with *Jubilees*, but also differs from it. Be that as it may, it remains the case that the *Genesis Apocryphon* is not directly relevant for the reception history of Abraham and the nations from Gen 12.

Commentary on Genesis A (4Q252)

Another Hebrew manuscript from Cave 4 contains exegetical material pertaining to Abraham and is therefore of interest for the theme of this volume. Moreover, this text may provide a clue that Gen 12:3 and the idea of the blessing of the nations in relation to Abraham was ignored deliberately.

The manuscript of 4Q252, called *Commentary on Genesis A* and dating from the second half of the first century BCE, consists of six fragments that preserve the remains of six columns.[12] The text contains a commentary on selected passages from Gen 6–49. 4Q252 is probably a so-called sectarian text, meaning that it was authored within the community of Qumran.[13] This composition is especially important because of "the variety of types of biblical interpretation that are represented, including rewritten Bible, halakhic exegesis, and *pesher*."[14] According to White Crawford, 4Q252 may exemplify a transition period between implicit exegesis in the form of rewriting a scriptural base text and, with what was to become the dominant form in later Jewish and Christian

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[12] For the *editio princeps* see G.J. Brooke, "252: 4QCommentary on Genesis A," in *Qumran Cave 4.XVII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 3* (G.J. Brooke et al.; DJD 22; Oxford 1996), 185–207.

[13] This is corroborated by its reference to the "men of the community" (אנשי היחד) in 4Q252 V, 5 (cf. also 4QCommentary on Genesis C [4Q254] 4 4) and by its use of the pesher method of interpretation in 4Q252 IV, 5–7 and 4Q252 V, 1–7, which is characteristic of the sectarian commentary texts from Qumran (the pesharim).

[14] G.J. Brooke, "Commentary on Genesis," *EDSS* 1:300.

commentary, explicit exegesis in the form of citing a passage from the scriptural text and commenting upon it.[15]

The manuscript starts with a retelling of the flood.[16] Several very fragmentary sections concern Abraham, but little can be said about this material and the manner in which it briefly treats the Genesis narratives in Gen 15 (4Q252 II, 11–13: the covenant of the pieces), Gen 17 (4Q252 III, 1–3: the twelve princes), Gen 18 (4Q252 III, 2–6: the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah)[17] and Gen 22 (4Q252 III, 6–10: the binding of Isaac).

There is one more instance in which the *Commentary on Genesis A* deals with the Abraham narrative and that concerns Abraham's entry into the land of Canaan. Following a *vacat*, the short passage reads:

> Terah was one hundred and fo[r]ty years old when he left Ur of the Chaldees and came to Haran, and Ab[ram was se]venty years old. Abram lived five years in Haran, and afterwards [Abram] went [to] the land of Canaan. Six[ty ...]. (4Q252 II, 8–10)

According to Brooke the text "attempts to solve the textual problems of *Genesis* 11.31 with a precise dating system."[18] In addition to the importance of such chronological concerns for the character of 4Q252, I would like to emphasize that the text is apparently not interested in quoting from, referring to or retelling Gen 12:1–3. After the lines just quoted, the next line, 4Q252 II, 11, continues immediately with the covenant of the pieces from Gen 15. Although 4Q252 II, 10 breaks off at "Six[ty ...]," there is enough space to contain Gen 12:1–3 or a meaningful

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[15] White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture*, 130–143. For a discussion of the text's character see also, e.g., G.J. Brooke, "The Genre of 4Q252: From Poetry to Pesher," *DSD* 1 (1994): 160–179; G.J. Brooke, "The Thematic Content of 4Q252," *JQR* 85 (1994): 33–59; M. Bernstein, "4Q252: From Re-Written Bible to Biblical Commentary," *JJS* 45 (1994): 1–27; M. Bernstein, "4Q252: Method and Context, Genre and Sources: A Response to George J. Brooke," *JQR* 85 (1994): 61–79; I. Fröhlich, "Themes, Structure and Genre of Pesher Genesis: A Response to George J. Brooke," *JQR* 85 (1994): 81–90; G.J. Brooke, "4Q252 as Early Jewish Commentary," *RevQ* 17/65–68 (1996): 385–401; Falk, *Parabiblical Texts*, 120–139.

[16] Also already dealt with by García Martínez at the first *Themes in Biblical Narrative* conference: F. García Martínez, "Interpretations of the Flood in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Interpretations of the Flood* (ed. F. García Martínez and G.P. Luttikhuizen; Leiden 1998), 86–108.

[17] See E. Tigchelaar, "Sodom and Gomorrah in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Sodom's Sin: Genesis 18–19 and Its Interpretations* (ed. E. Noort and E. Tigchelaar; Leiden 2004), 47–62.

[18] Brooke, "Commentary on Genesis," 301.

part thereof, the commentary seems rather to describe the sixty further years that Terah lived (cf. Gen 11:32).[19]

In general, 4Q252 should be read as a discussion of selected passages of Genesis, not as a running commentary on the text of Genesis. 4Q252 is for example interested in the chronological issues in this part of the Abraham narrative. It tells that Abraham was seventy years old when he came to Haran and lived there for five years. In this part of the commentary text 4Q252 picks up on Gen 12:4–5 where it is said that Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran for Canaan. Genesis 12:1–3 is thus left out of consideration.

In addition to the text's chronological interest in determining the selection of passages from Genesis, there may be another reason for the silence on Gen 12:1–3 in 4Q252. Before the start of the Abraham narrative in 4Q252 II, 8, the *Commentary on Genesis A* retells part of Gen 9 and explains why Canaan instead of Ham was cursed:

> And Noah awoke from his wine and he knew what his youngest son had done. And he said: "Cursed be Canaan! He will be a slave of slaves for his brothers!" And he did not curse Ham, but only his son. For God had blessed the sons of Noah. And in the tents of Shem may He dwell. He gave the land to Abraham, his beloved. (4Q252 II, 5–8)[20]

The last sentence could refer to 2 Chr 20:7 where the Judaean king Jehoshaphat prays to God: "Did you not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham, your beloved."[21] This text too combines two motifs: (1) the land is given to the seed of Abraham; and (2) Abraham as the beloved of God (see also, e.g., Isa 41:8; 4Q176 1–2 I, 10; Jas 2:23).[22]

But the combination of these two motifs need not necessarily be an argument in favour of 2 Chr 20:7 serving as a paraphrased scriptural source in 4Q252. There are no indications otherwise that the book of Chronicles had any special or authoritative meaning in the texts from the

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[19] Brooke, "4QCommentary on Genesis A," 200.

[20] See also 4Q254 1, 2–4. G.J. Brooke, "Commentary on Genesis C," in *Qumran Cave 4.XVII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 3* (G. Brooke et al.; DJD 22; Oxford 1996), 220–221.

[21] Brooke, "4QCommentary on Genesis A," 200; Brooke, "Commentary on Genesis," 300; Brooke, "Thematic Content of 4Q252," 43; Falk, *Parabiblical Texts*, 131–132.

[22] On the significance of Abraham the "friend of God" in 2 Chr 20 as standing for both the observance of the law and the separation from the people of the land, see recently R.G. Kratz, "Friend of God, Brother of Sarah, and Father of Isaac: Abraham in the Hebrew Bible and in Qumran," in *The Dynamics of Language and Exegesis at Qumran* (ed. D. Dimant and R.G. Kratz; Tübingen 2009), 80–87.

Qumran collection. Quotations and allusions to Chronicles in other texts are completely lacking. The one manuscript that is claimed to represent a copy of Chronicles (4Q118) has part of 2 Chr 28:28–29:3 in its second column, but the remains in the first column cannot be identified properly. There is thus very little evidence for the copying and use of Chronicles in the texts from Qumran.[23]

However, this lack of evident concern for Chronicles does not rule out the possibility that 4Q252 does pick up on Chronicles here. According to Falk, the writing of the name as Abraham, and not Abram as would be expected on the basis of the sequence of Genesis that the text of 4Q252 is following and indeed again gives in 4Q252 II, 10 following the passage under examination, may suggest that the writer is indeed referring to 2 Chr 20:7 and, while doing so, staying faithful to his scriptural source.[24]

What is interesting about the retelling and explanation of Canaan's curse in 4Q252 for our purposes here,[25] is the suggestion that the exclusion from divine favour of the descendants of Ham and Japheth "reflects a political wish at the time the commentary was composed for the exclusion of foreigners from the land of Israel."[26] Instead of the biblical version of Gen 9:27 where Japheth is the one to dwell in the tents of Shem, 4Q252, and *Jub*. 7:12 as well, envisage God as the one who dwells in the tents of Shem. According to Brooke this change "probably reflects an anti-Greek exclusivism (the descendants of Japheth including Javan) which is characteristic of Jubilees and is explicit in some of the community texts from Qumran."[27] The concern of the author of 4Q252 in this

[23] G.J. Brooke, "Between Authority and Canon: The Significance of Reworking the Bible for Understanding the Canonical Process," in *Reworking the Bible: Apocryphal and Related Texts at Qumran* (ed. E.G. Chazon, D. Dimant, and R.A. Clements; Leiden 2005), 88; G.J. Brooke, "The Books of Chronicles and the Scrolls from Qumran," in *Reflection and Refraction: Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of A. Graeme Auld* (ed. R. Rezetko, T.H. Lim, and W.B. Aucker; Leiden 2007), 35–48; G.J. Brooke, "Types of Historiography in the Qumran Scrolls," in *Ancient and Modern Scriptural Historiography* (ed. G.J. Brooke and T. Römer; Leuven 2007), 213.

[24] Cf. Brooke, "Thematic Content of 4Q252," 43; Falk, *Parabiblical Texts*, 132.

[25] The curse of Canaan also appears in the extant text of 4Q254. 4Q252 and 4Q254 share similarities but also differ; they are not identical compositions. It is possible that we are dealing with different recensions of a single work or different compositions of the same genre. Cf. M. Bernstein, "Contours of Genesis Interpretation at Qumran: Contents, Context, and Nomenclature," in *Studies in Ancient Midrash* (ed. J.L. Kugel; Cambridge, Mass., 2001), 69–70, 83; Falk, *Parabiblical Texts*, 121–124.

[26] Brooke, "Commentary on Genesis," 300–301.

[27] Brooke, "Thematic Content of 4Q252," 42.

section of his text is the gift of the land and who will inhabit it: it belongs to Shem and thus to Abraham and his descendants. The "proper understanding of the coming messianic age and the way that life should be lived in the land in anticipation of such an age … were matters for the men of the community alone whose attitude was clearly intolerant, particularist and exclusivist."[28] Falk suggests that "the compiler looks forward to God's intervention to eliminate the threat of foreigners and fulfil the promise to Abraham."[29]

If this is true, then the absence in 4Q252, a manuscript copied sometime in the second half of the first century BCE, of any reference to the blessing of the nations in Abraham from Gen 12:3 becomes understandable. Such a perception of the relations between Abraham and his descendants, on the one hand, and other nations, on the other hand, would be at odds in a text whose author apparently wished for the exclusion of foreigners from the land of Israel. This suggests that the sectarian author of 4Q252 from an exclusivist perspective deliberately ignored the notion that the nations were to be blessed in Abraham.

This brief discussion of the most significant non-biblical material from the Dead Sea Scrolls relating to the figure of Abraham (4Q225; 1Q20; 4Q252) is illustrative to demonstrate two tendencies. First, although Abraham makes an appearance and figures significantly in a few passages, he is not a major character in the Dead Sea Scrolls.[30] Second, Abraham and the nations is not a theme of concern in the Dead Sea Scrolls. This may be due to chance, but in the case of 4Q252 I have suggested that the passage on Abraham and the nations was deliberately ignored as a result of an exclusivist perspective on the possession of the land promised to Abraham.

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[28] Brooke, "Early Jewish Commentary," 400.

[29] Falk, *Parabiblical Texts*, 132.

[30] Evans, "Abraham," 2; C.A. Evans, "Abraham in the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Man of Faith and Failure," in *The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape, and Interpretation* (ed. P.W. Flint; Grand Rapids, Mich., 2001), 157n4. When the scope is limited to Gen alone, Abraham together with Noah are the characters most frequently alluded to in the Gen narrative material at Qumran (excluding *1 En.*), see Bernstein, "Contours of Genesis Interpretation at Qumran," 81.

3. Abraham, the Blessing of the Nations and Early Jewish Abraham Traditions

Here I will widen the scope and briefly observe other early Jewish texts that transmit Abraham traditions. This will show that the absence of the theme of Abraham and the blessing of the nations in the Dead Sea Scrolls is not an isolated phenomenon within early Judaism and should, therefore, not be considered merely an issue of chance preservation of the manuscripts from Qumran. In the early second century BCE we find two references to Abraham and the nations, in Ben Sira and in *Jubilees*.

First, Ben Sira lists the blessing of the nations as one of the characteristics of Abraham. In Sir 44:21 it says: "Therefore he [i.e., God] established by means of an oath with him that nations would be blessed by his seed."[31] Here Ben Sira takes up the blessing formula after the binding of Isaac in Gen 22:18, not the one from Gen 12:3. This is also clear from the context. Ben Sira speaks first of the covenant of circumcision from Gen 17 and the trial in which Abraham was found faithful from Gen 22 (Sir 44:20). However, unlike Gen 22:18 that has "all the nations of the earth" (כל גויי הארץ), Ben Sira only speaks of the nations (ἔθνη or גוים).

This raises the question as to which nations Ben Sira had in mind here. In Sir 44:19 it is said that Abraham was a great father of a multitude of nations (in the Genizah manuscript B אב המון גוים; in Greek μέγας πατὴρ πλήθους ἐθνῶν). This is based on Gen 17:4–5 where Abram's name is changed to Abraham as he shall be an ancestor of a multitude of nations (אב המון גוים). Becoming an ancestor of numerous nations is, of course, presumed to happen through Abraham's sons Ishmael and Isaac.

The suggestion may be put forward, therefore, that while Gen 12:3; 22:18 may have in mind all the families/nations of the earth, and more specifically those listed in the table of nations in Gen 10, Ben Sira may have thought only of those nations that came through Abraham's sons Ishmael and Isaac. Furthermore, concerning the Hebrew text of Ben Sira it is possible that the next line immediately after "to bless the nations in their seed" (לברך בזרעו גוים), namely "to give them an inheritance" (להנחילם), is a further explication of this. If this is true, then Ben Sira

[31] Translation from B.G. Wright in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under That Title* (ed. A. Pietersma and B.G. Wright; New York 2007).

would presumably say that the descendants of Ishmael and Isaac shall inherit "from [s]ea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth" (Sir 44:21), which could be taken to mean the large area between the Euphrates and the Nile.[32]

The second early Jewish text that mentions Abraham and the blessing of the nations is *Jubilees*. *Jubilees* 12:23 is based on Gen 12:3 but differs slightly in wording and also in the order in which Gen 12:3 appears. And *Jubilees* again refers to this blessing with regard to Jacob in *Jub*. 27:23 that takes up Gen 28:14.[33] It is interesting in itself that the author of *Jubilees* did not simply omit the passage concerning the blessing of the nations altogether, as in other parts of the book he clearly thinks highly negatively of the Gentiles. For example, the distinction between Israel and the other nations is brought to the fore in *Jub*. 16:17–18 where the seed of Ishmael's sons should be reckoned with the Gentiles, whereas Isaac's descendants should become a holy seed, not reckoned with the Gentiles, but God's possession alone above all other nations as a holy nation. In *Jub*. 30 the marital laws aim to enforce this distinction. It is not altogether clear whether this incorporation of the blessing of the nations should be understood somehow as a universalistic streak in *Jubilees*.

In addition to these two early second-century BCE texts, Ben Sira and *Jubilees*, in the first century CE there is Philo of Alexandria who deals with Gen 12:3 in his characteristic manner.[34]

Apart from these three instances I was unable to find any other occurrence of Abraham and the nations in early Jewish Abraham traditions.[35] The book of Judith, probably written around 100 BCE in Palestine,

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[32] I thank Eibert Tigchelaar for raising these possibilities.

[33] See also *Jub*. 18:16; 20:10; 24:11. See the contribution by Jacques T.A.G.M. van Ruiten to this volume.

[34] See the contribution by Phoebe Makiello to this volume.

[35] On the figure of Abraham in early Judaism, see, e.g., N. Calvert-Koyzis, *Paul, Monotheism and the People of God: The Significance of Abraham Traditions for Early Judaism and Christianity* (London 2004); Evans, "Abraham in the Dead Sea Scrolls"; J.L. Kugel, *The Bible as It Was* (Cambridge, Mass., 1997), 133–148, 165–178; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, "Abraham the Convert: A Jewish Tradition and Its Use by the Apostle Paul," in *Biblical Figures outside the Bible* (ed. M.E. Stone and T.A. Bergren; Harrisburg, Pa., 1998), 151–175; 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; A. Roitman, "The Traditions about Abraham's Early Life in the Book of Judith (5:6–9)," in *Things Revealed: Studies in Early Jewish and Christian Literature in Honor of Michael E. Stone* (ed. E.G. Chazon, D. Satran, and R.A. Clements; Leiden 2004), 73–87.

contains some traditions about Abraham's early life, but makes no mention of Abraham and the blessing of the nations. This is perhaps not to be expected in the historical survey of Israel that is given by Achior, the leader of the Ammonites. At the same time, such a positive remark about the nations being blessed in Abraham would be at odds with the clear message that Judith conveys at the end of the book. Judith 16:17 is openly negative about the nations who plot against Israel:

> Woe to the nations who plot against my race; the omnipotent Lord will punish them in the day of judgment, to send fire and worms for their flesh, and they will wail in full consciousness forever. (Jdt 16:17)

Prior to the first century BCE, Pseudo-Eupolemus presents Abraham as a teacher of astrology and other sciences to the Phoenicians and the Egyptians, and he briefly recounts the events from Gen 14, albeit in a somewhat different version. But although he has Abraham interact with other nations, in Eusebius' text Pseudo-Eupolemus does not make any reference to the nations being blessed in Abraham. The *Orphica* (second century BCE-first century CE) also connect Abraham with astrology (25–31), but not with the nations. In the latter half of the first century CE Josephus does not deal with the issue of Abraham and the blessing of the nations (*Ant*. 1.157–158), although he too connects Abraham with astrology. Josephus mentions Abraham's move from Chaldea to Canaan, but he ignores Gen 12:1–3 and relates that Abraham, once he had settled, built an altar for God and made a sacrifice to him. Pseudo-Philo has some colourful traditions about Abraham's early life (*L.A.B*. 6:3–8:3). Following the story of the tower of Babel (Gen 11:9), the narrative continues with Gen 12:4 and Abraham's move to Canaan. Pseudo-Philo briefly relates some material from Gen 13; 16; 17; 21; 25, but passes over Abraham and the blessing of the nations. The *Apocalypse of Abraham* (first-second century CE) relates that Abraham has to leave Terah, but immediately continues with the covenant of the pieces from Gen 15 (*Apoc. Ab*. 8:4–9:5), leaving out Abraham and the nations. Finally, the *Testament of Abraham* (first-second century CE) also ignores the theme of Abraham and the nations, although it does recount the blessing made to Abraham and his seed (*T. Ab*. 3:6), albeit without further specifying it.

This short overview of early Jewish Abraham traditions shows that the theme of Abraham and the blessing of the nations was not a major issue in early Jewish texts. If we do not take into account the unique reception of Gen 12:3 by Philo, we may observe that only two early Jewish texts from the second century BCE refer to Abraham and the blessing of the

nations: Ben Sira and *Jubilees*. The theme does not occur in other early Jewish texts from a later date. Interestingly, this latter situation contrasts with Paul's letter to the Galatians (3:8) and with Acts (3:25).[36] For now, it may be surmised that these early Christian texts refer to Abraham and the blessing of the nations because they are directed at a non-Jewish audience. This universalistic tendency, that is, to mention the inclusion of other nations in the blessings promised to Abraham, is largely absent from early Jewish texts that transmit Abraham traditions. This may have to do with positions taken vis-à-vis other nations in different streams of early Judaism, or at least in different early Jewish texts.

From this brief survey it is evident that the absence of the theme of Abraham and the blessing of the nations in the Dead Sea Scrolls was not an isolated phenomenon at the time. Abraham and the nations was apparently not a theme of much concern in the early Jewish texts that we know of.

4. Abraham and the Nations in Two Scrolls from Qumran?

Up until now I have said that Abraham and the nations do not occur as a theme of concern in the Dead Sea Scrolls. That is true in as far as the blessing of the nations in Abraham is concerned. But it does not mean that they never occur together. There are two intriguing instances where Abraham and the nations may indeed occur in close proximity to each other. These examples may show us how the nations are to be excluded from access to God's laws, and presumably from the covenant that God made with Abraham. The covenant with Abraham, in this case the promise of the land, stands in contrast to the nations.

4QNarrative and Poetic Composition^{b} (4Q372)

4Q372 is one of five manuscripts that present the remains of a Hebrew composition which withstands easy scholarly characterization regarding its content, meaning and genre.[37] The text is a so-called parabiblical

[36] See the contribution by Birgit van der Lans ("Belonging to Abraham's Kin") to this volume.

[37] In addition to 4Q371–373 (4QNarrative and Poetic Composition$^{a–c}$), 2Q22 (*Apocryphon of David*[?]) and frgs. 1–3 from PAM 43.680 (= 4Q373a, 4QNarrative and Poetic Composition^{d}) are the other manuscripts that contain the extant text. For 4Q371–373 see E. Qimron, "Observations on the Reading of 'A Text about Joseph' (4Q372, 1)," *RevQ*

text.[38] As in the case of most non-biblical texts from Qumran, the manuscripts give no indications that this composition was authored within the community or communities that stand behind the collection of manuscripts found near Qumran. The manuscript of 4Q372 dates to around the middle of the first century BCE, but another manuscript copy, 4Q371, is dated to the first half of the first century BCE. The composition itself may therefore indeed date from the second century BCE, and if the editors are correct in their interpretation it should date before the attack of John Hyrcanus on Shechem in 111 BCE.[39]

In the official publication the editors speak of a puzzling composition.[40] It was first named *Apocryphon of Joseph*, because Joseph appears as a central figure in the largest remaining part of the text in 4Q372 1 (with overlapping text in 4Q371 1). But the fragmentary nature of the manuscripts makes it difficult to determine the relationship of the Joseph fragment with the rest of the text. A salient feature of the composition is its combination of narrative with psalm-like texts. And although the exact nature of the juxtaposition of prose and poetry is not yet fully understood,[41] this characteristic has earned the composition its official and more generic name 4QNarrative and Poetic Composition[b].

15/60 (1992): 603–604; E. Schuller, "4Q372 1: A Text about Joseph," *RevQ* 14/54–56 (1990): 349–376; E. Schuller and M. Bernstein, "371–373: 4QNarrative and Poetic Composition[a–c]," in *Wadi Daliyeh II: The Samaria Papyri from Wadi Daliyeh and Qumran Cave 4.XXVIII: Miscellanea, Part 2* (D.M. Gropp, M. Bernstein et al.; DJD 28; Oxford 2001), 151–204. For 2Q22 see M. Baillet, "22: Un apocryphe de David (?)," in *Les 'petites grottes' de Qumrân* (M. Baillet et al.; DJD 3; Oxford 1962), 81–82. For 4Q373a see E. Tigchelaar, "On the Unidentified Fragments of DJD XXXIII and PAM 43.680: A New Manuscript of 4QNarrative and Poetic Composition, and Fragments of 4Q13, 4Q269, 4Q525 and 4QSb(?)," *RevQ* 21/83 (2004): 481–483.

[38] For a lucid discussion of the taxonomic term "parabiblical," with references to other positions and literature, see Falk, *Parabiblical Texts*, 1–25.

[39] But see H. Eshel, "John Hyrcanus," *EDSS* 1:418; H. Eshel, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Hasmonean State* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 2008), 81n54; H. Eshel, "The Prayer of Joseph, a Papyrus from Masada and the Samaritan Temple on ΑΡΓΑΡΙΖΙΝ," *Zion* 56 (1991): 125–136 (Hebrew).

[40] Schuller and Bernstein, "4QNarrative and Poetic Composition[a–c]," 151.

[41] Cf. M.J. Bernstein, "Poetry and Prose in 4Q371–373 *Narrative and Poetic Composition*[a, b, c]," in *Liturgical Perspectives: Prayer and Poetry in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. E.G. Chazon, R. Clements, and A. Pinnick; Leiden 2003), 19–33. Specific attention has been given to the prayer of Joseph in 4Q372 1. See, e.g., E. Chazon, "Dialogue with Scripture in Hymns and Prayers from Qumran," *Megh* 1 (2003): 59–70 (Hebrew); E.M. Schuller, "The Psalm of 4Q372 1 within the Context of Second Temple Prayer," *CBQ* 54 (1992): 67–79; J. Vázquez Allegue, "4Q372: Dios como Padre en Qumrán," in *Dios Padre envio al mundo a su Hijo* (ed. N. Silanes; Salamanca 2000), 53–72.

4Q372 consists of twenty-six fragments, but only three fragments are of a considerable size. Only the first and third fragment will be of concern here.

The first fragment of 4Q372 deals with the figure of Joseph and also contains a psalm by him. Joseph is mentioned explicitly twice. In line 10 it is said that "Joseph was cast into lands he did not k[now . . .],"[42] and in lines 14–15 it says that "Joseph [was given] into the hands of foreigners." According to Schuller, in the first fifteen lines the text adheres to a chronological Sin-Exile-Return pattern, but she admits that lines 8–9 "are the least easily explained of the whole section by this interpretation."[43] Schuller argues for this chronological framework in the first part of the text on the basis of the supposition that the composition is not based upon the figure and story of Joseph in Gen 37–45, but instead that "Joseph" designates the northern tribes of Israel.[44] Accordingly, the text conjures up the context of the exile of the northern kingdom of Israel, the nine northern tribes.[45] In the beginning of the text the Most High is said to have given them into the hands of the nations (line 4) and to have exterminated them from the land (line 6). In light of the above, it seems that the plural "them" here refers to the northern tribes of Israel.[46]

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[42] D.C. Mitchell, "A Dying and Rising Josephite Messiah in 4Q372," *JSP* 18 (2009): 194–195, 201–204 questions the translation here of Schuller and Bernstein, "4QNarrative and Poetic Composition^{a-c}," 169, 174, and doubts whether this line contains a reference to Joseph's exile. But he concedes that in 4Q372 1 5 ארצות refers to the lands of foreign nations and thus may also have that sense in 4Q372 1 10, with an exile of the Joseph figure in mind.

[43] Schuller, "Text about Joseph," 359, 370; Schuller and Bernstein, "4QNarrative and Poetic Composition^{a-c}," 171, 174.

[44] Schuller, "Text about Joseph," 367–376; Schuller and Bernstein, "4QNarrative and Poetic Composition^{a-c}," 170–172. F. García Martínez, "Nuevos textos no bíblicos procedentes de Qumrán," *EstBib* 49 (1991): 121–122 argues that Joseph appears in 4Q372 1 both as patriarch and as representing the northern tribes, whereas M.A. Knibb, "A Note on 4Q372 and 4Q390," in *The Scriptures and the Scrolls: Studies in Honour of A.S. van der Woude on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (ed. F. García Martínez, A. Hilhorst, and C.J. Labuschagne; Leiden 1992), 170 objects that there is "nothing in the psalm, or in the fragment as a whole, that reflects in any concrete way the story of Joseph in Genesis." I was unable to consult M. Rossetti, *Giuseppe negli scritti di Qumran: La figura del patriarca a partire da 4Q372 1* (Rome 2007).

[45] Nine northern tribes, because Levi, Judah and Benjamin (line 14) represent the three southern tribes in this text, as they do too in *1 En.* 98:72–73, 1QM I, 2, and *T. Jos.* 19:2.

[46] Mitchell, "Josephite Messiah in 4Q372," 192–193 argues for a different understanding of the imperfect tense of the verbs used, and renders them as the English future.

Not surprising perhaps, the nations appear in a negative role in 4Q372 1. They are associated with "the valley of the vision" (line 7), although the precise interpretation of this line is very uncertain. The phrase "valley of the vision" (גי החזון) comes from Isa 22:1, 5 (גיא חזין). For the author(s) of 4Q372 this reference to Isaiah here most probably invoked the setting of Jerusalem and its destruction, as becomes clear from the immediate context that mentions Zion and Jerusalem.[47] Although the text is damaged, it is likely that the nations are the ones who turned Jerusalem into ruins and the mountain of God into "woo[ded] heights" (line 8). When the scene shifts from the narrative to the psalm by Joseph, Joseph is said to have cried out to God to save him from the hands of the nations (line 16). Also, Joseph complains in his prayer of a hostile people that live in the land (line 20). Thus, 4Q372 1 seems to make a distinction between nations (גוים) farther away, where Joseph is in exile, and a hostile people (עם אויב)[48] in the land itself from where Joseph was exiled. Furthermore, in light of the above discussion regarding the *Commentary on Genesis A*, where Abraham was called God's friend in the context of a concern about the gift of the land and who will inhabit it, it is interesting to note that in 4Q372 1 Jacob too is referred to as God's friend (line 21) in the context of a debate about the possession of the land.[49]

Schuller argues that 4Q372 1 is part of an inner Jewish polemic against Samaritan claims to be the descendants of Joseph. There are several elements in the text that suggest identifying the adversaries with the Samaritans and that the text's aim is to deny their descent from Joseph, but that need not be discussed here. Thus, the text is taken as an anti-Samaritan polemic against the Jewish community around Shechem with its cultic centre atop Mount Gerizim, arguing that Joseph, whose true

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Instead of a reference to a past exile of the Josephite tribes, the text could also be "a proleptic summary of the fate in store for the southern tribes, or even for all Israel, after Joseph's demise."

[47] Qimron, "Observations," 604; Schuller, "Text about Joseph," 358; Schuller and Bernstein, "4QNarrative and Poetic Composition^{a-c}," 173. In the Dead Sea Scrolls the phrase only appears in one other manuscript copy of this text, 4Q371 1 4.

[48] This phrase does not occur in the Hebrew Bible. R.A. Kugler, "Joseph at Qumran: The Importance of 4Q372 Frg. 1 in Extending a Tradition," in *Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, and the Septuagint Presented to Eugene Ulrich* (ed. P.W. Flint, E. Tov, and J.C. VanderKam; Leiden 2006), 274 refers to 1QM X, 4 as another occurrence of this phrase, but there עם is the particle "with," not the noun "people."

[49] Schuller and Bernstein, "4QNarrative and Poetic Composition^{a-c}," 177.

descendants are the group with whom the author identifies, is still in exile, which would have invalidated Samaritan claims of Josephan ancestry.[50]

In the text of 4Q372 1 the nations have their stereotypical role to play as the ones who are responsible for destruction and exile. These nations are not further specified, but if the interpretation of Schuller and others is correct then it is possible that they also include a people living near to the author(s) of 4Q372. According to biblical tradition a difference was to be made between nations living nearby and those farther away. The rules of war in Deut 20 are exemplary in this respect. One should, therefore, allow for the possibility that this distinction was also made in 4Q372 1 between the Samaritans living nearby, the hostile people inhabiting the land (line 20), and other nations farther away, who invaded the land and took Joseph into exile.

However, when we turn to 4Q372 3, the question is whether the Joseph figure, what it represents as well as the occurrence or nonoccurrence of polemics against the Samaritans continue to play a role in that part of the text. The fragmentary nature of the manuscripts makes it very difficult to relate the Joseph fragment to the rest of the text. It is, therefore, not clear whether Joseph is still the protagonist in the third fragment. In the extant manuscript the "I" of the text is not identified. Adopting wisdom language, the protagonist in 4Q372 3 says that Yhwh has opened his mouth and that Yhwh's word is in him to announce (line 7). The first part

[50] Schuller, "Text about Joseph," 367–376; Schuller and Bernstein, "4QNarrative and Poetic Composition[a–c]," 170–172. Other interpretations of 4Q372 1 have been put forward. Kugler, "Joseph at Qumran," argues that the polemic of the text may have been understood on a different level within the community of Qumran and that the community could identify with the Joseph figure from 4Q372 1. Kugler suggests that the Joseph figure was read, heard and understood in the Qumran community as an ideal figure and scriptural archetype for the community's own experience of living in exile from the temple while confident of return and vindication. M. Thiessen, "4Q372 1 and the Continuation of Joseph's Exile," *DSD* 15 (2008): 380–395 argues that the anti-Samaritan polemic was not the primary concern of the text's author. Rather, influenced by Deut 32 and its promised but unfulfilled deliverance of the northern tribes and reacting against Ps 78 and its perspective of God's rejection of Joseph, the emphasis in 4Q372 1 is on the significance of the true Joseph's continuing state of exile and its importance for those in the south. Finally, Mitchell, "Josephite Messiah in 4Q372," argues against the prevailing interpretation of seeing 4Q372 1 as referring to the fall and exile of the northern kingdom and against the anti-Samaritan hypothesis. He suggests instead understanding the Joseph figure as a messianic character and 4Q372 not as a historical overview but as a prophecy, drawing from Ps 22; 38; 89, of future events.

of this fragment represents a wisdom composition (lines 1–7), whereas in the second part (lines 8–12) the topic shifts to a description of God's relationship with Israel.

It is therefore possible, but not certain, that the protagonist in 4Q372 3 is Joseph who embodies or represents Israel as the receiver of God's covenant. Be that as it may, the text is very clear about the nations. For it is said that God "will not give to another nation (לגוי אחר) his statutes, and will not crown any stranger (זר) with them" (line 8). The notion that God will not give his laws to any other people but Israel is emphasized in Ps 147:19–20 (cf. Deut 4:5–8). The idea of the law as a crown is known from rabbinic literature, but that is different from the image drawn in 4Q372 3.[51] The point in any case is clear that God's laws are for Israel only, not for any other nation.

In addition to the negative portrayal of the nations in 4Q372 1, the third fragment not only excludes other nations from access to God's laws, but also possibly puts Abraham in relation to the nations: "[… the covenant of A]braham, which he made with Jacob, is to be with him forever[…]" (lines 8–9).[52] Contrary to what Paul will later argue in the letter to the Galatians, 4Q372 3 makes clear that the covenant with Abraham was not meant for any other nation, to include them, but for Israel only. If the nations are excluded from access to God's laws, then presumably that also applies to the covenant.[53] The notion that the nations are blessed in Abraham would, therefore, hardly come to the minds of the people behind the composition of 4Q372; they would probably oppose the very idea or simply ignore it. The nations do not share in this blessing. The negative portrayal of the nations is continued in 4Q372 3 by referring to the nations as those who are intent on harming God's inheritance, i.e., Israel (line 10), and by stating that God will demand their blood from their hand (line 11). This handling of the nations by God is reinforced

[51] Schuller and Bernstein, "4QNarrative and Poetic Composition^{a-c}," 183.

[52] Schuller and Bernstein, "4QNarrative and Poetic Composition^{a-c}," 181–183 read נ֯יהם[ב] ("their [so]ns"), but also suggest the reading בֿ֯רהם[א as a possibility, although the slant of the horizontal stroke is not typical for *bet*. They note that a combination of Abraham and Jacob would be more unusual in light of the many passages that speak of God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But that does not exclude the possibility that the name of Abraham is to be read at the beginning of line 9 in 4Q372 3. See also below on 4Q393 3 7 where only Abraham and Israel (Jacob) are mentioned.

[53] The exclusivity of the covenant would still stand if Abraham were not the correct reading in line 9. Then it would be with reference to Jacob only.

through an exhortatory reference to the defeat of Midian (lines 11–12), which is often used as a paradigm of God's dealings with the nations (cf. Ps 83:10; Isa 9:3).[54]

In 4Q372 3, where Abraham and the nations may appear in close proximity to each other, a point is made that other nations do not share in the covenant with Abraham. The idea that the nations are to be blessed in Abraham would most likely have been alien to its thinking.

4QCommunal Confession (4Q393)

In another Hebrew composition we also come across Abraham and probably the nations. 4QCommunal Confession, the manuscript of which dates to around the turn of the era, has the character of a penitential prayer spoken from the first person plural and in form and content it belongs to a group of postexilic prayers of communal confession.[55] The prayer in 4Q393 is based on the prayer of Moses in Deut 9:26–29, but creatively modifies the Mosaic prayer using both biblical and extra biblical traditions. In the third fragment of 4Q393 the prayer from Deut 9:26–29 is modified in the light of Ps 94:14 in combination with the phrase בשרירות לב הרע from Jeremiah. Also, 4Q393 3 4b–9 follow the pattern of Neh 9:16–25 but for the important modification that God has forsaken his people instead of the assertion from Neh 9:17 that God did not abandon his people. Furthermore, the text's editor, Falk, has noted this passage's strong resemblance to *Jub*. 1:19 in particular and *Jub*. 1:4–25 in general, which either may have been a source for the reworking of the Mosaic prayer or its interpretative tradition may have served as a counter text for a prayer which was patterned on Neh 9.[56]

In the third fragment of 4Q393 the protagonists ask Yhwh, who has chosen their fathers long ago, to raise them up as a remnant and to give them what he established with Abraham and with Israel:

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[54] Schuller and Bernstein, "4QNarrative and Poetic Composition[a–c]," 184.

[55] For the *editio princeps* see D. Falk, "393: 4QCommunal Confession," in *Qumran Cave 4.XX: Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part 2* (E. Chazon et al.; DJD 29; Oxford 1999), 45–61. See also J.A. Emerton, "A Note on Two Words in 4Q393," *JJS* 47 (1996): 348–351; D.K. Falk, "4Q393: A Communal Confession," *JJS* 45 (1994): 184–207; D.K. Falk, "Biblical Adaptation in 4Q392 *Works of God* and 4Q393 *Communal Confession*," in *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Technological Innovations, New Texts, and Reformulated Issues* (ed. D.W. Parry and E. Ulrich; Leiden 1999), 126–146.

[56] Falk, "Biblical Adaptation," 142–145.

> [7]May you confirm us as a remnant for them to give to us (that which) you established with Abraham (and) Israel, dispossessing [8]b[e]fore them [great nations], valiant warriors and those mighty in strength, to give to us houses full [9][of all good things, hewn cisterns and reservoir]s of water, vineyards and olive trees, the heritage of a people [ ].[57] (4Q393 3 7–9)

The protagonists ask God to drive out valiant warriors and those mighty in strength in order for them to enjoy their inheritance, the land and its fruits. But before the valiant warriors are mentioned a lacuna unfortunately occurs in the manuscript. The lacuna possibly contained a reference to "great nations" ([גוים גדולים]). This restoration fits the space available in the lacuna. The typical use of ירש Hiphil makes this restoration likely too. Also, if the interpretative tradition from *Jub*. 1 informed 4Q393 3, then the negative occurrence of the Gentiles in *Jub*. 1 may provide further support for the restoration "great nations" ([גוים גדולים]) in line 8 as a negative appearance of the nations in 4Q393. Although the phrase גבורי החיל usually refers to Israelite warriors, it is also used of the armies of Assyria (2 Chr 32:21) and Jericho (Josh 6:2)[58] and in 1QM XI, 1 of Goliath.[59] We find here again the combination of the promise of the covenant with Abraham and Israel (Jacob), the possession of the land and the exclusion of other nations. Falk also notes that although the reference to Abraham and Israel, omitting Isaac, is unusual Isa 63:16 likewise limits its scope to these two patriarchs,[60] as does 4Q372 3 9, we may add.

Thus, we have here another instance where the covenant with Abraham, in this case the promise of the land, stands in contrast with the nations. If this interpretation of 4Q393 3 is correct then it may present an interesting parallel to 4Q252 where possession of the land, being descendants of Abraham and the presence of foreigners/other nations also determine an exclusivist perspective.

In addition, the text may be suggestive of another sort of identity boundary being made, namely an identity boundary within Israel. In the Dead Sea Scrolls and also in other Second Temple Jewish texts the notion of a remnant of Israel highlights divisions within Jewish society where some Jewish movements claimed to be the only true Israel. In addition to different positions being taken vis-à-vis other cultures and other nations, Jewish society in the late Second Temple period also clearly

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[57] Falk, "4QCommunal Confession," 55.
[58] Falk, "4QCommunal Confession," 58.
[59] See also 4Q169 3–4 III, 10–11.
[60] Falk, "4QCommunal Confession," 58.

evinces internal divisions and positioning between different groups. The notion of a remnant of Israel was one of the means of positioning that Jews could use to distinguish themselves from other Jews. In 4Q393 3 the request by the protagonists may imply this inner Jewish distinction. They ask God to raise *them* up as the remnant (line 7).

The two texts of 4Q372 and 4Q393 are the only two from the Dead Sea Scrolls where Abraham and the nations occur in close proximity to each other. They show that the nations could not be part of the covenant of Abraham. In various ways, they are instead excluded from the benefits of this inheritance.

5. The Exclusion and Inclusion of the Nations in the Dead Sea Scrolls

While Abraham was perhaps not a figure of major concern in the Dead Sea Scrolls, as discussed above, other nations do appear in a significant way. The different ways in which the nations appear in the various Scrolls show too that the absence of Abraham and the blessing of the nations among these texts is probably not a coincidence.

The nations figure prominently in eschatological texts. Here they are the typical archenemy of Israel or an elected part thereof. Especially in sectarian texts there is a strong rhetoric of the elect of Israel fighting the nations.[61] For example, the *Rule of the Congregation* from Cave 1 refers to the regular members going out to war to subdue the nations (1QSa I, 21). And in the *Pesher Habakkuk* from Cave 1:

> God will not let his people (עם) be destroyed by the nations (גוים), but in the hand of his chosen ones he will place judgment over all the nations. (1QpHab V, 3–4)

In 1QpHab XII, 10–XIII, 4 the point is made that all the idols of the nations will not save them on the day of judgement, when God will destroy all idol worshippers.

The sectarian notion of being elected is also particularly clear in the *War Scroll* from Cave 1 and its Cave 4 copies, where the sons of light fight the sons of darkness. The sons of light are aided by God, whereas the sons

[61] Cf. also L.H. Schiffman, "Non-Jews in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 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 1997), 166–168.

of darkness, a host of different nations,[62] most notably the *Kittim*, have Belial as their leader. But after more than three decades of battle God will destroy the enemies of his elect ones. God has raised the assembly of the nations for destruction with no remnant to be left (1QM XIV, 5 // 4Q491 8–10 I, 3). All the wicked nations shall be destroyed; none of their heroes will remain standing (1QM XIV, 7–8 // 4Q491 8–10 I, 5–6). The end time is a time of suffering for Israel and of war against all the nations (1QM XV, 1), a time of God's war against "all the n[ations]" (1QM XV, 12–13), when destruction awaits for all the wicked nations (1QM XV, 2). God has summoned the sword against all the nations (1QM XVI, 1) and the weapons of war shall not be blunted until every wicked nation is destroyed (1QM XVII, 1). These examples from the *War Scroll* may prove my point that in sectarian texts such as the *Pesher Habakkuk* and the *War Scroll*, the nations figure primarily as the enemies to be destroyed at the day of judgement and in the final battle at the end of days.

More sectarian texts could be adduced to support this point, but also nonsectarian texts. This is important for it shows that such eschatological ideas about the nations were not limited to the Jewish group or groups behind the collection of manuscripts from Qumran. These ideas were also prevalent among other streams of Jewish tradition, as is clear too from texts like *1 Enoch* or the *Psalms of Solomon*.[63] In the so-called Pseudo-Ezekiel texts, the composition of which may date to the second century BCE, there is a fragment that is based on Ezek 30, but that reworks the material. Significant for our purposes is the fact that before the prophecies of doom against specific nations begin, there is an important addition or explication by use of the non-biblical collocation יום אבדן גוים, building on Ezek 30:3 and resembling the rendering in the Septuagint. The prophet is ordered to prophesy: "See, the day of destruction (יום אבדן) for the nations is coming" (4Q385b 1 2).[64]

These eschatological and apocalyptic texts give further context to the absence of Abraham and the blessing of the nations among the Dead Sea Scrolls, making it probable that this absence is not a coincidence. Of course, the nations and Gentiles are here treated as an amorphous

[62] See a listing in, e.g., 1QM I and 4Q554 2 III.

[63] In some texts the Gentiles, being agents of demonic power, are also seen to play a negative role in subduing Israel before they are punished. See, e.g., D. Dimant, "Israel's Subjugation to the Gentiles as an Expression of Demonic Power in Qumran Documents and Related Literature," *RevQ* 22/87 (2006): 373–388.

[64] See D. Dimant, "385b: 4QPseudo-Ezekiel^{c}," in *Qumran Cave 4.XXI: Parabiblical Texts, Part 4: Pseudo-Prophetic Texts* (D. Dimant; DJD 30; Oxford 2001), 73.

unity, whereas individual texts also distinguish between different nations. But the general and negative sense in which the nations often appear may illustrate the stereotype character they have in these texts, which is sufficient for our purposes to understand the non-reception of the blessing of the nations, which is also only a general designation.

To be sure, there are a few instances in the Dead Sea Scrolls in which the nations seemingly play a more positive role. For example, according to 1QH[a] XIV, 14–15 (VI, 11–12) the men of God's council, the elect, are to recount to everlasting generations God's wonders so that all the nations (גוים) may acknowledge God's truth and all the peoples (לאומים) his glory.[65] And in 11Q5 XXIV, 8–9, also known from later Syriac tradition as a noncanonical Psalm but in this first-century CE scroll from Qumran preceded by Ps 144 and followed by Ps 142, the psalmist requests God:

> Instruct me, Yhwh, in your law, and teach me your precepts. That many may hear of your deeds and peoples (עמים) may honour your glory.
> (11Q5 XXIV, 8–9)

Holtz has argued in a recent article that the Dead Sea Scrolls, apart from the dominant strand of exclusivism, reveal clear inclusivist features, understanding inclusivism to mean "any attempt on the part of the Community to reach out beyond its own confines and to open up for the outside world."[66] She takes this inclusivist tendency to be directed primarily at the Jewish noncommunity members and thus having a pan-Jewish/Israelite perspective. In addition to 1QSb IV, 24–28, which Holtz gives as an example of a universal dimension, she briefly discusses 1QH[a] XIV, 13–16 to argue that the destiny of the nations is somehow bound up with the Qumran community.[67] But for our purposes the examples that Holtz adduces do not alter much the predominant exclusivist tendency towards other nations in the Qumran texts.[68]

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[65] See now H. Stegemann, E. Schuller, and C. Newsom, *Qumran Cave 1.III: 1QHodayot[a] with Incorporation of 1QHodayot[b] and 4QHodayot[a–f]* (DJD 40; Oxford 2009), 182, 196.

[66] G. Holtz, "Inclusivism at Qumran," *DSD* 16 (2009): 25. Furthermore, with regard to the exclusivist features she argues that "the self-centeredness and reclusiveness of Essene Judaism as represented in Qumran literature is not characteristic of the whole group as scholars often assume, but of one subgroup, namely the community behind S" (52). See also G. Holtz, *Damit Gott sei alles in allem: Studien zum paulinischen und frühjüdischen Universalismus* (Berlin 2007), 87–137, 309–378.

[67] Holtz, "Inclusivism at Qumran," 28–29. She overlooks 11Q5 XXIV, 8–9.

[68] Discussing some of the legal evidence, Holtz, "Inclusivism at Qumran," 47–49 argues that the laws on dealings with the Gentiles are mainly concerned with the protection of the Jewish religious and national concerns. Members of the Qumran

In his argument for noticing universalistic patterns in early Judaism over and against the strongly particularistic picture drawn by an older form of (primarily Christian) scholarship, Donaldson understands 11Q5 XXIV, 8–9 to exemplify Gentile sympathizing with Judaism, since the nations are to honour God's glory, whatever form that may take.[69] However, one may question whether this feature in 1QH^a XIV, 14–15 (VI, 11–12) and 11Q5 XXIV, 8–9 of other nations knowing of God's great deeds and paying homage to him implies that the Jewish authors behind these texts envisaged non-Jews somehow participating in the religious requirements of their cult. Rather, it seems that the theme of the Gentiles knowing God's deeds and honouring him in these texts may simply be determined by scriptural language (e.g., Ps 96:3; 97:6; 105:1; Isa 49:6; 62:2; 66:18–19),[70] and may also be the case in 1QM and 4Q504, to which we now turn.[71]

In 1QM XII, 14 the wealth of the nations is to be brought to Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah. They should open their gates continuously (see also 4Q492 1, 6). This means that plunder and booty from the nations is to go the land of Israel (see e.g., Isa 60:5, 11; 61:6; Hag 2:7; Zech 14:14). A similar notion occurs in another text from Cave 4. In 4Q504 we can read the following:

> And all the nations have seen your glory, for you have made yourself holy in the midst of your people, Israel. And to your great name they will carry their offerings: silver, gold, precious stones, with all the treasures of

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community are to keep away from the nations. In addition to the texts that Holtz mentions, one should add the following passage from the list of transgressions in a Cave 4 copy of the *Damascus Document* concerning "revealing a secret of the people to the gentiles" (4Q270 2 II, 13). This transgression also appears in the *Temple Scroll*, where one who passes on information against his people or betrays his people to a foreign nation will be hung on a tree to die, as will also someone who commits a capital offence, escapes amongst the nations and curses his people (11Q19 LXIV, 7–13 // 4Q524 14 2–5). See also Schiffman, "Non-Jews in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 155–165.

[69] T.L. Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE)* (Waco, Tex., 2007), 198–199. He overlooks 1QH^a XIV, 14–15 (VI, 11–12).

[70] Cf. also Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 198–199; S. Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot: Psalms from Qumran* (Aarhus 1960), 114.

[71] For the most recent discussion of the motif of the worship of God by all humanity in *1 En.* 10:21 (although it is not mentioned that this is to happen in Jerusalem), see L.T. Stuckenbruck, "The Eschatological Worship of God by the Nations: An Inquiry into the Early Enochic Tradition," in *With Wisdom as a Robe: Qumran and Other Jewish Studies in Honour of Ida Frölich* (ed. K.D. Dobos and M. Kőszeghy; Sheffield 2009), 189–206.

> their country, to honour your people and Zion, your holy city and your wonderful house. And there will be no opponent or evil attack, but peace and blessing. (4Q504 1–2 IV, 8–13)[72]

So on the one hand, the nations are there to be destroyed. On the other hand, their wealth is to be brought to the land of Israel—either by their victors, the sons of light (1QM), or by themselves (4Q504).

But despite some texts that, in the tradition of Isa 56; 60 and Zech 14, picture the nations coming to Jerusalem to pay homage, the overwhelming impression of the nations in the Dead Sea Scrolls remains negative, not positive, as both Donaldson and Holtz acknowledge too. Notwithstanding some possibly inclusivist tendencies, although those directed towards other nations are really weak in comparison to the possibility of a pan-Jewish/Israelite perspective, the exclusivist strand remains dominant. The nations are to be totally destroyed; no remnant left. Their function is that of end-time adversary so that Israel may rule. According to 4Q381 76–77 14–16 Israel was chosen by God "from m]any [peoples] and from great nations to be his people, to rule over all[hea]ven and earth, and as most high over every nation of the earth." The language used is Deuteronomistic (Deut 28:1 is quoted), with parallels in other non-biblical retellings of the divine choice of Israel (e.g., 1QM X, 9; 4Q504 1–2 III, 9–10; 1–2 IV 3–6).[73] The poetic text 4Q434 adds an eschatological perspective. It says that God will destroy nations (גוים) and cut down peoples (לאומים), and that God will renew the works of heaven and earth (4Q434 2, 2–3).[74] Destruction and judgement is what awaits the nations in the last days. In 11Q13 the Day of Atonement at the end of the tenth jubilee "is the time for the year of grace of Melchizedek and of [his] arm[ies, the nati]on [of] the holy ones of God, of the

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[72] M. Baillet, "504: *Paroles des Luminaires* (premier exemplaire: DibHam[a])," in *Qumrân Grotte 4.III (4Q482–4Q520)* (M. Baillet; DJD 7; Oxford 1982), 143–145. Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 202–203 argues that, although the description is similar to the eschatological pilgrimage tradition, 4Q504 1–2 IV, 8–13 has a pilgrimage in view that had already taken place in the ideal (Davidic) past. Cf. also E.G. Chazon, "4QDibham: Liturgy or Literature?" *RevQ* 15/57–58 (1991): 447–455; J.R. Davila, *Liturgical Works* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 2000), 258–260.

[73] See Schiffman, "Non-Jews in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 168–169; E. Schuller, "381: 4QNon-Canonical Psalms B," in *Qumran Cave 4.VI: Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part 1* (E. Eshel et al.; DJD 11; Oxford 1998), 158.

[74] See M. Weinfeld and D. Seely, "434: 4QBarkhi Nafshi[a]," in *Qumran Cave 4.XX: Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part 2* (E. Chazon et al.; Oxford 1999), 280–281.

administration of judgement." And the text quotes from Ps 7:8–9: "And] above [it,] to the heights, return: God shall judge the nations" (11Q13 II, 7–11).[75]

These eschatological and apocalyptic texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls where the nations appear hardly provide an atmosphere or a context conducive for the reception of the blessing of the nations through Abraham from Gen 12. The dominant exclusivism may explain the absence of a reception history for Gen 12:3 in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

6. Conclusion

The texts from Qumran show no evidence for a reception history of Gen 12:3. Usually, silence of evidence does not imply evidence of silence, but in this case, as I have argued, other contextual evidence may demonstrate that a reception history for Gen 12:3 was indeed absent in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the contextual evidence can also inform us about the reasons for this absence. Moreover, the absence of the theme of Abraham and the blessing of the nations in the texts from Qumran was not an isolated phenomenon at the time, as is demonstrated by the fact of it being largely absent from other early Jewish texts outside the Dead Sea Scrolls corpus.

Scrolls that are patterned one way or another on the Abraham narrative in Genesis, and of which it could therefore be expected that they refer to Gen 12:3, either do not have enough extant text (1Q20; 4Q225), or do not refer to the verse. Some even deliberately ignore it because of contemporary claims to the land at the exclusion of non-Jews (4Q252). Two other texts have shed further light on the line of thinking expounded in 4Q252. 4Q372 3 makes the point that other nations do not share in the covenant with Abraham. In 4Q393 3 the covenant with Abraham, rendered concrete as the promise of the land, also stands in contrast with the nations, thus paralleling 4Q252 where possession of the land, being descendants of Abraham and the presence of foreigners/other nations also determine an exclusivist perspective. These texts show that the nations were excluded from the covenant of Abraham. Such a line of thinking hardly allows for a view of the nations sharing in Abraham's blessings. Finally, the stereotypical role of the nations in apocalyptic and

[75] See F. García Martínez, E.J.C. Tigchelaar, and A.S. van der Woude, "13: 11QMelchizedek," in *Qumran Cave 11.II: 11Q2–18, 11Q20–31* (F. García Martínez, E.J.C. Tigchelaar, and A.S. van der Woude; DJD 23; Oxford 1998), 231.

eschatological texts as the archenemy of Israel, only awaiting final judgement or to be destroyed at the end of times, also makes the non-reception of the blessing of the nations in the Dead Sea Scrolls understandable. These aspects from the texts explain the absence of a reception history for Gen 12:3, while historical circumstances of the late Second Temple period may inform us further why texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls and other early Jewish texts exclude the nations from the covenantal blessings of Abraham to live peacefully and share in the land.[76]

[76] I thank Jan Bremmer and especially Eibert Tigchelaar for commenting upon an earlier version of this paper.

ABRAHAM AND THE NATIONS IN THE BOOK OF *JUBILEES*

Jacques T.A.G.M. van Ruiten

1. The Nations in the Book of *Jubilees*

The theme of the nations in relation to Israel touches the very heart of the book of *Jubilees* because the nations play a very important role in the book, although a negative one. In many places the author refers to the nations, and in most cases he creates a dichotomy between the nations and the nation par excellence (Israel). The author is erecting sharp boundaries between Israel and other people, between insiders and outsiders. Israel is summoned to separate from the nations. The people of Israel should stay far away from them, and from their customs and their practices.

The theme of the status of the nations for Israel is not only an important issue for the book of *Jubilees*, but also for the whole spectrum of Jewish movements in the Second Temple period. In his source-book *Judaism and the Gentiles* (2007), Donaldson points to the fact that questions with regard to the religious status of non-Jewish people were inevitable for Jews in the Graeco-Roman world, due to both intrinsic and extrinsic circumstances.[1] Jews could not tell their own self-defining story without pointing in one way or another to other nations. Despite the differences in interpretation, one can say that in the biblical story the cosmic and the universal are interwoven with the national and particular. There is the one universal God, who had created the whole world and who had continued to exercise power over the created order and all the nations within it. On the other hand, this God had chosen Israel *from out of all nations* of the world to be a special people. God's will had been revealed uniquely in Israel's Scriptures; despite the fact that God had created the whole cosmos, he was nevertheless uniquely present in the temple of

[1] T.L. Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE)* (Waco, Tex., 2007).

Jerusalem. Despite temporal misfortunes, Israel would be vindicated in the end and exalted to a position of pre-eminence *over all other nations*.

The question of the extent to which Jews could adopt Gentile ways or accommodate their life to the wider non-Jewish world was a very important and defining issue (see the Maccabean revolt and the wars against Rome), but the ways in which the Gentiles could participate in the Jewish way of life, on the other hand, were probably of less interest to the Jewish people.

In his work, Donaldson collected many early Jewish texts in which this second element (participation of non-Jews in Jewish life) plays an important part, and he managed to give a classification of four Jewish patterns of universalism up until the 2nd century CE: sympathizers; converts; ethical monotheists; and participants in the eschatological redemption.

It comes as no surprise that the book of *Jubilees* plays no role in this universalistic spectrum. Not a single page is devoted to this book in Donaldson's collection because *Jubilees* opts for a sharp exclusion of other nations. There are other early Jewish works that establish the culpability of the Gentiles (and therefore a justification of divine punishment of the nations, as for example in *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, the *Apocalypse of Abraham* and the *Testament of Moses*), but the book of *Jubilees* occupies by far the most extreme position on the negative side of the spectrum. For the author of this work, the only way to please God is to abide by the Torah, the ancestral laws, in its totality. Because, according to *Jubilees*, the Torah demands that a man be circumcised by the eighth day, Gentiles are excluded right from the beginning. The author does not explain the reason for this exclusion, it is just axiomatic.

Anybody who reads the book of *Jubilees* discovers right from the beginning that the theme of the nations is not restricted to Abraham. It plays a role everywhere. However, most texts that speak about the erection of the boundaries between Israel and its environment can be found in the so-called farewell speeches, thus in material that is *added* to the rewriting of Genesis 1—Exodus 19, just before the patriarchs die. It concerns the testaments of Noah, of Abraham, of Rebekah, and of Isaac. In these speeches, it is the sons of the patriarch who are addressed, and in this respect it is Jacob in particular who plays an important role.[2] Further, the separation from the nations also plays an important role

[2] On *Jub.* 22, see J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, "Abraham's Death in the Book of *Jubilees*," in *Rewritten Biblical Figures* (ed. E. Koskenniemi and P. Lindqvist; Studies in Rewritten Bible 3; Winona Lake, In., 2010), 57–84.

in the addition to the creation story (in relation to the inauguration of the sabbath),[3] and in *Jubilees* 30, which deals with intermarriage. And, of course, the separation plays a part in the covenant relationship between God and Israel: there is one eternal covenant with a growing set of stipulations, from Noah to Abraham and Israel, and this means exclusion from the nations.[4]

2. The Rewriting of Gen 12:1–3 in *Jub.* 12:22b–24

The fact that Israel is summoned to separate from the nations, and that the people of Israel should stay far away from their customs and their practices (cf. *Jub.* 22:16), is apparently no reason to omit the expression "All the peoples of the earth will be blessed in you" (Gen 12:3; *Jub.* 12:23). This is all the more striking because the blessing of the nations (Gen 12:3) plays hardly any role in early Jewish Abraham traditions.[5]

I shall focus here on the rewriting of the passage of Gen 12:1–3 in *Jub.* 12:22b–24, which is part of the stories about Abraham's youth.[6] *Jubilees* 11:14–12:31 deals with the first stages in Abraham's life, from his birth until his departure from Haran. Abraham at an early age renounces the services of the many gods and their idols, and he testifies to his belief in the one true God.[7] The fight against idolatry is related to the fight against demons, and both are related in the broader context of *Jubilees*.

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[3] See J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, *Primaeval History Interpreted: The Rewriting of Genesis 1–11 in the Book of* Jubilees (JSJSup 66; Leiden 2000), 47–66; idem, "La filiación en el libro de los *Jubileos*," in *Filiación: Cultura Pagana, Religión de Israel, Origines del Christianismo III* (ed. J.J. Ayan Calvo; P. Navascués Benlloch, and M. Aroztegui Esnaola; Madrid, 2010; in press).

[4] See, e.g., E. Schwarz, *Identität durch Abgrenzung: Abgrenzungsprozesse in Israel im 2. Vorchristlichen Jahrhundert und ihre traditionsgeschichtliche Voraussetzungen. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Erforschung des Jubiläenbuches* (Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe XXIII, 162; Frankfurt a/M. 1982); C. Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud* (Oxford 2002). For the separation of Israel and the nations in *Jub.* 15, see, e.g., M. Segal, *The Book of* Jubilees: *Rewritten Bible, Redaction, Ideology and Theology* (JSJSup 117; Leiden 2007), 229–245; J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, "The Book of *Jubilees* as Paratextual Literature," in *Palimpsests: An International Symposium on Paratextual Literature in Ancient Near Eastern and Ancient Mediterranean Cultures and Its Reflections in Medieval Literature, Vienna, February 25–27, 2007* (ed. A. Lange and R. Pillinger; Leiden, 2010; in press).

[5] See for this observation the contribution by Mladen Popović to this volume.

[6] I will consistently use "Abraham," except for direct quotations from the biblical text.

[7] See, e.g., G.W.E. Nickelsburg, "Abraham the Convert: A Jewish Tradition and Its Use by the Apostle Paul," in *Biblical Figures outside the Bible* (ed. M.A. Stone and T.A. Bergren; Harrisburg, PA, 1998), 151–175 (esp. 156).

The rewriting of Gen 12:1–3 in the book of *Jubilees* is strongly integrated in a description of the events that took place around Abraham's prayer (12:16–27): Abraham observes the stars (12:16–18); Abraham's prayer (12:19–22a); God's answer (12:22b–24); and Abraham learns Hebrew (12:25–27). The third pericope in which God answers Abraham's prayer can be considered a rewriting of Gen 12:1–3, the call to go to Canaan. All the other passages can be considered as an addition with regard to the biblical text of Genesis. I will now put both texts (Gen 12:1–3; *Jub.* 12:22b–24) side by side.[8]

Genesis 12:1–3		Jubilees *12:22b–24*	
1a	*And* [ ] *the Lord said to Abram:*	22b	*And* BEHOLD, THE WORD OF *the Lord was sent to him through my hand, saying*:
1b	"*Go from* your land and your family and your father's house to the land that I will show you.	c	"*Now you, come* from your land, from your family, and your father's house to the land that I will show you.
2a	I will *make* of you a great [ ] people.	d	I will *establish* you into a large AND POPULOUS people.
2b	I will bless you,	23a	I will bless you,
2c	and make your name great,	b	and make your name great.
2d	You will become a blessing [ ].	c	You will become blessed IN THE LAND.
		d	All the *peoples* of the land will be blessed in you.
3a	I will bless those who bless you,	e	Those who bless you I will bless,
3b	and *him* who curses you I will curse;	f	and *those* who curse you I will curse.
3c	and all the *families* of the land will be blessed in you." [ ]		[ ]
		24a	I WILL BECOME GOD FOR YOU, YOUR SON, YOUR GRANDSON, AND ALL YOUR SEED.
		b	DO NOT BE AFRAID.
		c	FROM NOW UNTIL ALL THE GENERATIONS OF THE LAND I AM YOUR GOD."

[8] All translations of *Jubilees* are based on J.C. VanderKam, *The Book of* Jubilees, *II* (CSCO 511; Scriptores Aethiopici 88; Leuven 1989), and all translations of the biblical text on the Revised Standard Version. However, I have felt free to deviate from these translations in order to do justice to the repetition of words. In the synoptic overview, I have tried to present a classification of the similarities and dissimilarities between Genesis and *Jubilees*. I have used small caps to highlight those elements of Genesis which do not occur in *Jubilees*, and vice versa, i.e., the omissions and additions. I have used "normal

Jubilees 12:22b–24 shows a poetical structure. This is reflected in the balance between the two subsequent lines (12:22c and 12:22d; 12:23a and 12:23b; 12:23c and 12:23d; 12:23e and 12:23f; 12:24a and 12:24c). One line is not balanced, namely 12:24b ("do not be afraid"). With regard to the text of Gen 12:1–3, *Jub*. 12:22b–24 shows additions (12:22d; 12:23c; 12:24), variations (12:22b, 22d) and rearrangement (12:23d).

Jub. 12:22b can be considered as a variation of Gen 12:1. In fact, it also has some additions: "and behold"; "the word of"; and "saying," in addition to the variation "was sent through my hand," instead of "said," and "to him," instead of "to Abram." This rewriting results in an avoidance of a direct contact between God and Abraham. It is the angel who mediates between them. This mediation also occurs in the addition 12:25–26. In *Jub*. 13:3 (cf. Gen 12:7), just after Abraham enters the land of Canaan, the Lord here speaks directly to Abraham without the intermediary of an angel. From then onwards God addresses Abraham directly.

Jub. 12:22d uses the word "to put; to establish" (*rassaya*), where Gen 12:2a has "to make" (עשה; LXX: ποιέω). The same word is used in Abraham's prayer (12:20c). Possibly, the use of *rassaya* has been influenced by the blessing in Gen 13:16 ("I will establish [שום] your descendants like the dust of the earth") for which *Jub*. 13:20b reads: "I will establish [*rassaya*] your descendants like the sands of the sea".[9] Also, the addition "and populous" in *Jub*. 12:22d is possibly influenced by a parallel passage. I refer to Gen 18:18 (לגוי גדול ועצום: "a great and populous people"). Also, one textual witness to the Septuagint Gen 12:2a (*d* 458) adds "and populous" (και πολυ).[10]

Jub. 12:23c shows a combination of variation ("blessed" instead of "a blessing") and addition ("in the land"). This transformation stresses the fact that Abraham is the one who is blessed. It does not focus on his role as a blessing *for others*, as can be argued from Gen 12:2d.[11] Moreover,

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script" for the corresponding elements between both texts, i.e., the verbatim quotations of one or more words from the source text in *Jubilees*, besides additions or omissions. Sometimes there is a rearrangement of words and sentences. I have underlined those elements.

[9] See also Gen 21:18 ("I will make him [אשימנו] a great nation", where *Jub*. 17:7 reads: "I will make him [*rassaya*] into a great nation"). Compare Gen 46:3 ("for I will there make of you [לגוי גדול] a great nation," where *Jub*. 44:5 reads: "I will make [*sarʿa*] you into a great nation there"), but the difference between the Ethiopic verbs *rassaya* and *sarʿa* seems to be very small. Cf. VanderKam, *Book of* Jubilees, *II*, 289.

[10] Cf. VanderKam, *Book of* Jubilees, *II*, 73.

[11] R.W.L. Moberly, *The Bible, Theology, and Faith: A Study of Abraham and Jesus* (Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine 5; Cambridge 2000), 124, and K.N. Grüneberg,

Jubilees adds that Abraham is blessed *wəsta mədr*, which I have translated here and in 12:23d with "in the land."[12] This is in conformity with the translation of *mədr* in 12:22c. Moreover, both in Genesis and in *Jubilees* the blessing of Abraham is related to his entrance into the land, whereas the promise of an abundance of offspring is combined with the promise of the land.[13]

The rearrangement of Gen 12:3c in *Jub.* 12:23d is possibly due to a specific view of the poetic structure of the passage. In Gen 12:1–3 one can point to a balance between 12:1b and 12:2a; 12:2b and 12:2c; 12:3a and 12:3c. In this structure neither Gen 12:2d nor 12:3c is balanced by any adjacent line. By putting Gen 12:3c after Gen 12:2d (in *Jub.* 12:23cd) and, moreover, by adding the words "in the land" to Gen 12:2d, *Jubilees* strengthens the balance between these lines (Gen 12:2d, 3c). The use of "*peoples*" (*'aḥzāb*) instead of "families" (משפחת; Eth. *'azmād*) is possibly influenced by the use of "peoples" in comparable contexts: Gen 18:18 ("and all the *peoples* of the land will be blessed in him"), and Gen 22:18 (cf. Gen 26:4) ("and in your seed will all the *peoples* of the land bless themselves"). Note, however, that Gen 28:14 uses the word "families" ("and in you and your seed will all the *families* of the land be blessed").

The reading in *Jub.* 12:23f ("*those* who curse you"; plural) instead of the Masoretic Text of Gen 12:3b ("*him* who curses you"; singular) reflects the plural reading that is also found in the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Septuagint, and the Peshitta. It is not necessary, therefore, to consider this as a variation.

Abraham, Blessing and the Nations: *A Philological and Exegetical Study of Genesis 12:3 in Its Narrative Context* (BZAW 332; Berlin 2003), have argued that Gen 12:2d does not make Abraham a source of blessing to others, but rather promises that he will be signally blessed in such a way that others will notice.

[12] So also O.S. Wintermute, "*Jubilees*: A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, II* (ed. J.H. Charlesworth; London 1985), 81. However, in *Jub.* 12:23d he translates this by "of the earth." R.H. Charles, *The Book of* Jubilees *or the Little Genesis. Translated from the Editor's Ethiopic Text* (London 1902), 95, and VanderKam, *Book of* Jubilees, *II*, 73, translate *mədr* in both cases by "the earth." K. Berger, *Das Buch der* Jubiläen (JSHRZ 2.3; Gütersloh 1981), 395, reads "auf der Erde."

[13] Israel has the status of God's people from the creation onwards. Israel is separated from the other peoples and lives in a sacred space. For the centrality of the land in the book of *Jubilees*, see J.M. Scott, *On Earth as in Heaven: The Restoration of Sacred Time and Sacred Space in the Book of* Jubilees (JSJSup 91; Leiden 2005), 161–209. Scott stresses that the holy land of Israel with its central sanctuary is the focal point of the concept that the goal of history is the realignment of sacred space with sacred time so that everything will become "on earth as in heaven."

Finally, the most striking element in the rewriting is the addition of *Jub*. 12:24. In Gen 12:1–3 there are no clues that could explain this addition. One could, of course, think of a possible influence from comparable passages, especially from the introduction to the conclusion of the covenant in Genesis 17 (Gen 17:1–8). Apart from the promise of the land and of numerous offspring, the conclusion of the covenant includes a promise that God makes to Abraham and his descendants (Gen 17:7–8: "And I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your descendants after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, *to be God to you and to your seed after you*. And I will give to you, and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, *and I will be their God*").[14] Although I would not exclude the possibility that 12:24 alludes to the covenant of Genesis 17, God's answer in 12:24 is a confirmation of Abraham's supplication in the first place and reflects the multiple invocation of "My God, my God, God most high. You alone are my God" (12:19cd).

3. The Literary Context of *Jub*. 12:22b–24

The passage that rewrites Gen 12:1–3 is well integrated in its literary context (*Jub*. 12:16–27), i.e., there is coherence in this passage as a whole. In the first place, it is located in Haran. In the second place, one can point to a unity of time to a great extent. The events take place when Abraham was seventy-five years of age (cf. 12:16: "In the sixth week, during its fifth year," which is AM 1951. The destruction of the house of idols in the preceding passage took place in the sixtieth year of Abraham's life (12:12), after which it is mentioned that they stayed for fourteen years in Haran (12:15). In the following passage his departure is dated two years after the prayer (cf. 12:28: "In the seventh year of the sixth week"). The aspect of time is specified in that the observation of the stars and the prayer took place during the night (cf. 12:16a, 19a) and the studying of the books during a period of six months (cf. 12:27f). Moreover, both in the beginning and at the end the text refers to climatological circumstances, namely the rain (cf. 12:16a, 18, 27). In the third place, one can point to the use of people. Both in the preceding (12:12–15) and in the following passage (12:28–13:6) several members of Abraham's family are

[14] The rewriting of Gen 17:7–18 in *Jub*. 15:9–10 is very literal.

mentioned,[15] whereas in 12:16–27 it is mainly Abraham who is the person acting. One sees him watching the stars all alone (12:16–18), after which he addresses God in prayer (12:19–22a). God answers Abraham's prayer through an angel (12:22–24, 25–26). Finally, it is Abraham who copies and studies the Hebrew books (12:27).[16]

God's answer (12:22b–24) is particularly interrelated with Abraham's prayer (12:19–22a). Abraham's questioning of whether he has to return to Ur of the Chaldeans (12:21bc: "Shall I return to Ur of the Chaldeans who are seeking me to return to them? Or am I to sit here in this place?") not only refers back to the burning down of the house of idols (12:12–14), but also prepares for God's call to leave his land and his father's house in order to go to the land that he will show him (12:22c). The supplication in 12:20c ("Do establish me and my seed until eternity") is reflected in the promise that God will bless Abraham in this land and establish him as progenitor of a large and populous people (12:22d–23). The multiple invocation of "My God, my God, God most high. You alone are my God" (12:19cd) is reflected in God's answer "I will become God for you" (12:24a). The supplication to save him from the hand of the evil spirits (12:20ab: "Save me from the hand of the evil spirits who rule the thoughts of the people's heart. May they not lead me astray from following you, my God") is not answered explicitly. However, the call to leave his father's house to go to the land that God will show him (12:22c) can be understood as a liberation from the power of the evil spirits. In the new land Abraham will prosper and be blessed. He need not be afraid. Several elements in the prayer and its answer are put chiastically in the text, as is shown in the following table:

A You alone are my God (12:19d)
B Establish me and my seed (12:20c)
C Shall I return to Ur of the Chaldeans or sit in this place (12:21bc)

C' Come from your country (12:22c)
B' I will establish you into a large and populous people (12:22d–23)
A' I will become God for you (12:24a, c)

[15] In 12:12–15: "Haran" (14a); "his father Terah" (14d); "Terah" (15a); "he and his sons" (15a); "his father" (15d). In 12:28–13:7: "his father" (12:28a); "his father Terah" (12:29a); "Lot the son of your brother Haran" (12:30d; 13:1b); "your brother Nahor" (12:31a); "his wife Sarai" (13:1b).

[16] In addition, one can point to the repetitions of some words that occur in more than one passage: "night" (12:16a, 19a); "to sit" (12:16a, 16b, 21c); "(all / everything in his)

4. Idolatry and Evil Spirits

The polemic against foreign gods is deeply rooted in the Hebrew Bible.[17] One can point to Deuteronomy, but also to the prophetic literature, such as Second Isaiah and Jeremiah. The renouncing of idolatry is thus not an invention of *Jubilees*. What is striking, however, is the fact that *Jubilees* connects these anti-idol polemics with Abraham. This characteristic seems to be a traditional one.[18] In any case, one can see that Josh 24:2–3 refers to the idolatry of the fathers on the other side of the river ("Your fathers lived of old beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his offspring many"; cf. also Josh 24:14, 15). Differing from Genesis, here Ur of the Chaldeans is the point of departure for Abraham's journey to Canaan. Moreover, the departure from Ur is on God's initiative and not on Terah's. It is not completely clear whether it is meant in Josh 24:2–3 that Abraham also served other gods, or only that Terah and Nahor did ("they served other gods"). *Jubilees* does not follow the tradition of Joshua that on God's initiative Abraham departed from Ur without his family. It follows the text of Genesis instead. *Jubilees* does follow Joshua in the connection that is made between Abraham and the renouncement of idolatry, however. Also, Jdt 5:6–9 speaks about Abraham's early life and connects Abraham with the anti-idol polemic.[19] Comparable to *Jubilees*, the departure from Ur is related to the renouncing of the foreign gods ("they would not follow the gods of their fathers"). They left the way of their parents and "worshiped the God of heaven, a god whom they had come to know" (cf. Jdt 6:8). Because of this, they were driven out of Ur. This tradition concerning Abraham's transition from idolatry to monotheism is quite similar to that of *Jubilees*. Even though *Jubilees* does not say that the family is expelled from Ur, there are some traces of the tensions between Abraham's family and the Chaldeans

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hand" (12:17c, 18e, 19f; cf. 12:20a, 21d, 22b); "to seek" (12:17d, 21b); "seed" (12:20c, 24a); "to establish" (12:20c, 22d); and "heart" (12:17a, 20a, 21e).

[17] See, e.g., *ABD*, 3.376–381.

[18] Apart from his early years, one can point to Abraham's testamentary speeches (20:7–9; 21:3–5, 21–23; 22:16–22).

[19] A. Roitman, "The Traditions about Abraham's Early Life in the Book of Judith (5:6–9)," in *Things Revealed: Studies in Early Jewish and Christian Literature in Honor of Michael E. Stone* (ed. E.G. Chazon, D. Satran, and R.A. Clements; JSJSup 89; Leiden 2004), 73–87.

(12:6–8, 21). Also the fact that the departure from Ur is put immediately after the fire in the house of idols points in the direction of a flight.[20]

There is a strong connection between Abraham's prayer (*Jub*. 12:16–27) and the other prayers in the book of *Jubilees* (1:19–21; 10:1–14; 19:26–29) both in structure and in content. The prayers are caused by the threat of evil spirits. In God's answer to the supplication in Abraham's prayer to save him from the evil spirits, several means are put into play, such as dictating from the heavenly tablets, binding ninety percent of the evil spirits, teaching about medicines, copying and studying books, and making a promise to live in the land. In the Bible there is no demonology. In Genesis one finds nothing about demons. Within *Jubilees*, however, demons occur in several places, especially in relation to the spread of mankind on the earth after the flood. They belong to the time of Noah and early Abraham, although they continue to operate in later times. Apart from the term "demon" (1:11c; 7:27; 10:1, 2; 22:17) "(evil) spirit" is also used (10:3, 5, 8, 11, 13; 11:4, 5; 12:20; 15:31, 32; 19:28). The demons are charged with causing bloodshed and with inciting people to kill each other. In this respect, *Jubilees* seems to be influenced by other sources. The teaching about the demons seems to be part of the wider influence of material originating from the Enochic traditions.[21] One can point to the influence of *1 Enoch* (*Book of Watchers*). *Jubilees* shares the fundamental pattern of the *Book of Watchers* in which the angels descended from heaven, married women and sinned with them. Their children were the giants. In *1 Enoch* 15:8–16:1 it is described how the evil spirits came out of

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[20] For a development of this tradition, most of it from somewhat later sources: Pseudo-Eupolemus (*Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.17.2–9; 9.18.2); *Orphica* (25–31; long recension); Philo, (*De Abrahamo*, 68–88; *De migratione Abrahami*, 176 ff.; *De somniis*, 1.44 ff. etc.); Flavius Josephus, *Ant*. 1.7.1–2; Pseudo-Philo, *LAB* 6–7; *Apoc. Ab*. 1–8; Acts 7:2–4; *Targum Neofiti* 1 and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* (*passim*). Cf. Roitman, "Traditions," 74; Nickelsburg "Abraham the Convert," 159–171; Kugel, *Bible*, 133–148.

[21] For the influence of Enochic traditions in the book of *Jubilees*, see especially J.C. VanderKam, "Enoch Traditions in *Jubilees* and Other Second-Century Sources," *SBLSP* 1 (1978), 229–251 (reprinted in idem, *From Revelation to Canon: Studies in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature* [JSJSup 62; Leiden 2000], 305–331). This work influenced his *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition* (CBQMS 16; Washington, 1984), 179–188, and formed the basis of a chapter in *Enoch: A Man for All Generations* (Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament; Columbia, South Caroline 1995), 110–121. See also some of his predecessors: Charles, *The Book of* Jubilees, xliv, 36–39, 43–44; P. Grelot, "La légende d'Henoch dans les apocryphes et dans la Bible: Origine et signification," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 46 (1958) 5–26; 181–210; J.T. Milik, *The Book of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford 1976). VanderKam is followed by, e.g., G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch: 1. A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36; 81–108* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis 2001), 71–76.

the carcasses of the giants and how they were threatening humanity: they are violent, cause desolation, attack and wrestle and hurl upon the earth.[22] *Jubilees* seems not to be completely consistent here in that the demons are mentioned as the emanations from the angels themselves (10:5: "your watchers, the fathers of these spirits"), whereas it also understands the giants as the sons of the watchers (5:1, 6–10).[23] Moreover, it shows some deviations from its source text; for example, the demons are put under the authority of Mastema (10:8; 11:5; 19:28; 49:2; cf. 11:11; 17:16; 18:9, 12; 48:2, 3–4, 9, 12–18). This leader of the demons is probably not a demon himself but a sort of evil angel. He is, however, not one of the watchers, because they are tied up in the depths of the earth until the great day of judgment (5:6–11). The demons do everything Mastema tells them, so that he is able to exercise the authority of his will among mankind to punish them for their evil (cf. 10:8).

5. Concluding Remarks

The book of *Jubilees* occupies the most extreme position on the negative side of the universalistic spectrum of early Jewish texts. The book opts for a sharp exclusion of other nations. In *Jubilees*, idolatry, spirits and impurity are associated with the other nations, and Israel has to keep far away from them. Also, Abraham is connected with these anti-idol polemics. The analysis of the rewriting of Gen 12:1–3 revealed that Abraham's moving from his homeland and his father's house is in fact his departure from the impure world of idolatry.

Apparently, the author of *Jubilees* sees no contradiction between his particularistic theology, his abhorrence of other people, and his borrowing of the universalistic expression from the book of Genesis to bless these nations. Also, at other places where the blessing of the nations occurs, *Jubilees* takes it over literally. With regard to Abraham's seed, *Jub*. 18:16ab takes Gen 22:18 up literally. *Jubilees* adds to the text of Genesis "I have made known to everyone that you are faithful to me in everything that I have told you" (*Jub*. 18:16cd). With regard to Isaac, *Jub*. 24:11 takes

[22] J.C. VanderKam, "The Demons in the Book of *Jubilees*," in *Demons: The Demonology of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literature in Context of their Environment*, (ed. A. Lange, H. Lichtenberger, and K.F. Diethard Römheld; Tübingen 2003), 339–364 (esp. 348–350); Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 267–275.

[23] *Jubilees* possibly preserves several older traditions about the watchers. Cf. Segal, *Book of* Jubilees, 109–118.

up the blessing of Gen 26:4, and with regard to Jacob *Jub*. 27:23 takes up the blessing of Gen 28:14. See also Abraham's farewell speech to Ishmael and his twelve children, Isaac and his two children, and the six children of Keturah: "You will become a blessing on the earth, and all the nations of the earth will be delighted with you" (*Jub*. 20:10).

It is important to note, however, that these expressions to bless the nations are adopted in *Jubilees* more or less literally. Moreover, there are no additions in the book with regard to Genesis that run counter to the particularistic view. That means that the universalistic strains in the book are mainly derived from Genesis and completely subordinated to its particularistic emphasis on Israel.

HAGAR IN THE BOOK OF *JUBILEES*

Jacques T.A.G.M. van Ruiten

1. Introduction

This contribution will focus on the transformation of the story of Hagar found in Genesis into the form found in the book of *Jubilees*. I will concentrate on the rewriting of Gen 16:1–16 and 21:8–21 in *Jub*. 14:21–24 and 17:1–14, respectively. However, before I turn to the book of *Jubilees*, I will briefly examine the text of the stories related to Hagar in the book of Genesis. Both stories are part of the central plot, the storyline of the narratives about the patriarchs, especially the story of Abraham, which deals with the promise of numerous offspring who will inherit the promised land, a promise which continually hangs by a thread.[1] This main intrigue is apparent at the very start of the Abraham story (Gen 11:27–32), where it is said that Abraham's wife Sarah was infertile. Stating this fact twice (Gen 11:30: "Now Sarai was barren; she had no child")[2] underlines the pivotal role of her barrenness in the story and the hopelessness of the couple's situation.[3] The narrator reveals Sarah's

[1] For a synchronic study of the plot of the story of Abraham, see, e.g., L.A. Turner, *Announcements of Plot in Genesis* (JSOTSup 96; Sheffield 1996), 51–114. See also E.A. Phillips, "Incredulity, Faith, and Textual Purposes: Post-Biblical Responses to the Laughter of Abraham and Sarah," in *The Function of Scripture in Early Jewish and Christian Tradition* (ed. C.A. Evans and J.A. Sanders; JSNTSup 154; Sheffield 1998), 22–33, esp. 22–27; P. Trible, "Ominous Beginnings for a Promise of Blessing," in *Hagar, Sarah, and Their Children: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives* (ed. P. Trible and L.M. Russell; Louisville, Ky. 2006), 33–69.

[2] I will use the names Abraham and Sarah consistently except in the quotations of biblical texts that speak about Abram and Sarai, before the change of names (Gen 17:5, 15).

[3] See, e.g., W.H. Gispen, *Genesis II, Genesis 11:27–25:1* (COT; Kampen 1979), 20; N. Rulon-Miller, "Hagar: A Woman with an Attitude," in *The World of Genesis: Persons, Places, Perspectives* (ed. P.R. Davies and D.J.A. Clines; JSOTSup 257; Sheffield 1998), 60–89, esp. 69; H. Seebass, *Genesis II: Vätergeschichte I (11,27–22,24)* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1997), 7; Trible, "Ominous Beginnings," 34–36; G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* (WBC 1; Waco, Tex., 1987), 273; C. Westermann, *Genesis II, Genesis 12–36* (BKAT 1.2; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1999), 159.

sterility even before God commands Abraham to leave Mesopotamia.[4] Elsewhere, too, Sarah's infertility is further emphasized (cf. Gen 16:1–2), and Abraham complains about his childlessness (cf. Gen 15:2–3). In apparent contrast with this, time and again God promises Abraham offspring (e.g., Gen 12:7; 15:1–6, 18; cf. 17:2–6).

Sarah's continuing barrenness was the justification for giving her Egyptian slave girl Hagar to Abraham as a surrogate (Gen 16:1–2, 4), but after the ensuing birth of Ishmael (Gen 16:15–16) it becomes clear to Abraham that Ishmael is not the promised child.[5] He should come from Sarah (Gen 17:15–21; 18:1–15; 21:1–3). Thus, Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian slave girl, is the biological half-brother of Isaac, the son of Sarah, with whom God has chosen to establish his covenant. This displacement of the firstborn by the younger connects the story of Ishmael with another central motif found in the book of Genesis, namely the election of the younger child, which can also be found in the story of Cain and Abel, Esau and Jacob, Leah and Rachel, and Ephraim and Manasseh.[6] Compared to the rivalry between Cain and Abel and that between Esau and Jacob, the relationship between Ishmael and Isaac remains friendly, despite the dismissal of Hagar and Ishmael after the feast of Isaac's weaning (Gen 21:8–21). Ishmael plays with Isaac at this weaning feast (Gen 21:9), while Isaac and Ishmael bury their father together (Gen 25:9).

It is not only Ishmael's relationship with Isaac that is described positively in Genesis, other positive events are also connected to Ishmael. The announcement of his birth to Hagar is mediated by an angel (Gen 16:11–12) and numerous offspring are promised to Ishmael (Gen 16:10; 17:20; 21:13, 18; cf. 25:12–18). Abraham shows his concern for Ishmael (Gen 17:18; 21:11) and circumcises him on the same day that he circumcises himself (Gen 17:23–27). God's command to send Hagar and Ish-

[4] According to Phillips, "Incredulity," 22–23, they had had a sufficient number of years to experience their childless estate, since Abraham was seventy-five-years old (Gen 12:4) and Sarah sixty-five when they left Mesopotamia. However, when the Abraham story is read against the background of the story of the forefathers (Gen 5:1–32; 11:10–32), these ages are not excessively old.

[5] Cf. Phillips, "Incredulity," 23.

[6] See C. Bakhos, *Ishmael on the Border: Rabbinic Portrayals of the First Arab* (New York 2006), 13–23; F. Greenspahn, *When Brothers Dwell Together: The Preeminence of Younger Siblings in the Hebrew Bible* (New York 1994), 84–110; D. Steinmetz, *From Father to Son: Kinship, Conflict and Continuity in Genesis* (Louisville, Ky. 1991); R. Syren, *The Forsaken First-Born: A Study of a Recurrent Motif in the Patriarchal Narratives* (JSOTSup 133; Sheffield 1993).

mael away (Gen 21:8–21) not only precedes God's command to sacrifice Isaac (Gen 22:1–19), but also has several parallels to it, for example, at the point that Ishmael seems to be dying, God intervenes by way of an angel (Gen 21:17–20), just as he intervenes at the point where Abraham is about to kill Isaac (Gen 22:11–12).[7]

Whereas in later literature the conflict between Abraham's sons is sometimes stressed,[8] in Genesis it is difficult to find any conflict between the brothers. There is nothing in the story that would lead to the conclusion that they are in conflict with each other. While God prefers Isaac as the chosen son of Abraham, this does not lead to a conflict between the half-brothers in the biblical story.

Many commentators stress that both of the Hagar narratives, Gen 16 and 21,[9] are in one way or another related to each other.[10] Despite the fact that Gen 21, which is set after the weaning of Isaac, is later in the narrative than Gen 16, which is set before his birth, both narratives show many agreements with regard to style and content. The same people are involved in both texts: a jealous Sarah, a tolerant Abraham, and the Egyptian slave girl Hagar, who produces Abraham's child for her mistress, the child being named Ishmael.[11] Despite these agreements between both texts, there are also disagreements.[12] Firstly, in Gen 16, Sarah is jealous of the overconfident slave girl who had been elevated to become a concubine. In Gen 21 she does not act out of jealousy towards Hagar, but out of interest for her son. She is jealous of the son of the slave girl and refuses to allow him to inherit with her own son. Secondly, both

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[7] See, e.g., Y. Zakovitch, "Juxtaposition in the Abraham Cycle," in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom* (ed. D.P. Wright, D.N. Freedman, and A. Hurvitz; Winona Lake, Ind. 1995), 509–524, esp. 519–520. See also the chapter by Ed Noort, "Created in the Image of the Son: Ishmael and Hagar," in this volume.

[8] See, e.g., Gal 4:29; *t. Sotah* 6:6; *Gen. Rab*. 53. Cf. P. Söllner, "Ismael und Isaak—muss der eine den anderen denn immer nur verfolgen? Zum Verhältnis der beiden Abrahamssöhne im Jubiläenbuch," in *Religionsgeschichte des Neuen Testaments: Festschrift für Klaus Berger zum 60. Geburtstag* (ed. A. von Dobbeler, K. Erlemann, and R. Heiligenthal; Tübingen 2000), 357–378, esp. 357–358.

[9] Beyond Gen 16 and 21, Hagar is only mentioned in Gen 25:12.

[10] Cf. T.D. Alexander, "The Hagar Traditions in Genesis XVI and XXI," in *Studies in the Pentateuch* (ed. J.A. Emerton; VTSup 41; Leiden 1990), 131–148; E.A. Knauff, *Ismael: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Palästinas und Nordarabiens im 1. Jahrtausend v.Chr*. (ADPV; Wiesbaden 1985), 16–25.

[11] See, e.g., H. Gunkel, *Genesis: Übersetzt und erkärt* (HKAT 1.1; Göttingen 1977), 231–232.

[12] See Knauff, *Ismael*, 19–21.

in Gen 16 and Gen 21 Hagar is removed from Abraham. However, in Gen 16 Hagar is also to blame for her destiny for it is her own decision to run away (cf. Gen 16:6d, 8e). In Gen 21, she is not to blame for her destiny, as Abraham sends her away against her will (cf. Gen 21:14c). Thirdly, Abraham submits to Sarah in both texts. However, in Gen 21 he is explicitly required to do so by Elohim (Gen 21:12–13). Fourthly, in Gen 16 (1b, 2c, 5c, 6b, 8b) Hagar is called שִׁפְחָה ("maidservant"), whereas in Gen 21 (10b, 10c, 12b, 13a) she is called אָמָה ("slave girl"). Finally, in both texts Ishmael is promised a great future, he will become a large nation. In Gen 16, however, this is said to Hagar by the angel of Yhwh (cf. Gen 16:10bc) and is not related to Abraham, while in Gen 21 it is said directly to Abraham, and the reason for it is also mentioned (Gen 21:13: "because he is of your seed").

These agreements and disagreements have led to several assumptions with regard to the relationship between Gen 16 and Gen 21. For example, it is argued that while the chapters should be seen as distinct from each other, they borrow their material from a common source.[13] Another position taken is that Gen 21 cannot be understood on its own but only in relation to Gen 16, and in fact is a rewriting of Gen 16 designed to answer unsolved problems.[14]

2. Ishmael's Birth in *Jub.* 14:21–24

Jubilees 14:21–24 is an abbreviated version of the first account of Hagar in Gen 16. This story is very much integrated into the preceding part of the text, in which the interrelated promises of progeny and land play an important role:[15] *Jub.* 14:1–20 is a rewriting and interpretation of the first conclusion of the covenant of God and Abraham as described in Gen 15.[16]

Jubilees 14 as a whole is demarcated from the preceding pericope (*Jub.* 13:22–29) by a new beginning in 14:1a ("after these things") and by an

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[13] Knauff, *Ismael*, 16–17.

[14] Knauff, *Ismael*, 18–19.

[15] For the theme of land in Gen 15, see E. Noort, "'Land' in the Deuteronomistic Tradition: Genesis 15: The Historical and Theological Necessity of a Diachronic Approach," in *Synchronic or Diachronic? A Debate on Method in Old Testament Exegesis* (ed. J.C. de Moor; OTS 34; Leiden 1995), 129–144.

[16] See my "Land and Covenant in *Jubilees* 14," in *The Land of Israel in Bible, History, and Theology: Studies in Honour of Ed Noort* (ed. J. van Ruiten and J.C. de Vos; VTSup 124; Leiden 2009), 259–276.

explicit dating. The events of this chapter take place in the fourth year of the first week of the forty-first jubilee (AM 1964; cf. 14:1a). The events in *Jub*. 14:20–24 are also connected to this year, since the naming of Ishmael is dated "in the fifth year of this week" (14:24d; AM 1965).[17] This means that Sarah gives Hagar to Abraham in AM 1964, with the subsequent conception of Ishmael taking place in the same year. Therefore, the conception and birth of Ishmael are closely related to God's promises of progeny and land to Abraham.[18] The events of the next pericope (*Jub*. 15:1–24) are placed twenty-one years later, namely in the fifth year of the fourth week of the same jubilee (AM 1986).

Apart from the fact that the events in *Jub*. 14 are dated to a certain year, they are also related to a specific period. The first dialogue between the Lord and Abraham takes place "on the first of the third month" (14:1a), whereas the second dialogue happens "in the middle of the month" (14:10a), "on that day" (14:18a), "during this night … during this month" (14:20a).

The passage can be divided into three units: (a) 14:1–6, (b) 14:7–20, (c) 14:21–24. The first unit consists of the first dialogue between the Lord and Abraham, in which the promise of progeny and the problem of inheritance are the central issues. The second unit presents a second dialogue between the Lord and Abraham, in which the promise of land is the central issue. Apart from the dialogue, Abraham also brings sacrifices (14:11–12, 19), while the promise of land is interpreted as the conclusion of the covenant (14:18, 20). In the third passage, the relationship between Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar is the central point. Sarah gives Abraham her slave girl and he produces a son with her.

The coherence of the chapter is expressed by the parallel structure of the first and second units, by the fact that the events in these units are

[17] There seems to be an internal contradiction with regard to the dating of the events. According to *Jubilees*, Abraham was born in AM 1876 (*Jub*. 11:15) and entered Canaan in AM 1954 (*Jub*. 13:8). This means that, according to the internal system of *Jubilees*, Abram was eighty-*nine* years old when he named Ishmael in AM 1965. According to *Jub*. 14:24e, however, the naming took place when Abram was eighty-*six* years old. The mention of eighty-six years agrees with Gen at this point (Gen 16:16a). The internal contradiction seems to originate from the fact that the author of *Jubilees* is following Gen in this passage without paying attention to the inconsistency. The number, eighty-six, given in both texts, is the same. The fifth year in this week (AM 1965) is the eleventh year after the arrival of Abram in Canaan (AM 1954). This corresponds with the "ten years" in Gen 16:3, which is omitted by the author of *Jubilees*.

[18] See *Jub*. 14:21ab: "Abram was very happy and told all these things to his wife Sarai. He believed that he would have seed."

dated in the same month of the same year, and by the strong thematic coherence between the first and third units, which can be seen in the following scheme:

A	14:1a	"in the fourth year of this week"
B	14:2c–e	childless, no seed
C	14:2f	give me seed
D	14:6a	He believed the Lord
CD	14:21a–c	He believed that he would have seed
B	14:21d	she bore no children
	14:22–24	Hagar gave birth to Ishmael
A	14:24d	"in the fifth year of this week"

The following synoptic overview reveals how Gen 16:1–16 has been rewritten in *Jub*. 14:21–24:

Genesis 16:1–4, 15–16		Jubilees *14:21–24*
		21a ABRAM WAS VERY HAPPY
		b AND TOLD ALL THESE THINGS TO HIS WIFE SARAI.
	[ ]	c HE BELIEVED THAT HE WOULD HAVE SEED.
1a	*Sarai, Abram's wife*, bore HIM no children.	d *She* bore [ ] no children.
b	SHE HAD AN EGYPTIAN SLAVE-GIRL WHOSE NAME WAS HAGAR;	[ ]
2a	[ ]	22a And Sarai advised her husband Abram
	and *Sarai* said to *Abram*:	b and *she* said to *him*:
b	"BEHOLD NOW, YHWH HAS PREVENTED ME FROM BEARING CHILDREN;	[ ]
c	go in to my [ ] slave-girl [ ];	c "Go in to my EGYPTIAN slave-girl HAGAR;
d	Perhaps I will *be built up* [ ] from her."	d Perhaps I will *build up* SEED FOR YOU from her."
e	Abram listened to the voice of Sarai [ ].	23a Abram listened to the voice of Sarai, HIS WIFE
		b AND SAID TO HER:
		c "DO (AS YOU SUGGEST)."
3a	Sarai, ABRAM'S WIFE, took her Egyptian slave-girl Hagar,	d Sarai [ ] took her Egyptian slave-girl Hagar,
b	AFTER ABRAM HAD DWELT TEN YEARS IN THE LAND OF CANAAN,	[ ]

c	and gave her to her husband Abram *as a wife*.	e	and gave her to her husband Abram *to be his wife*.
4a	And he went in to *Hagar*,	24a	And he went in to *her*,
b	and she conceived; [GEN 16:4C–14]	b	and she conceived, [ ]
15a	And *Hagar* gave birth TO ABRAM to a son.	c	and *she* gave birth [ ] to a son.
b	*Abram* called the name OF HIS SON, WHOM HAGAR BORE, Ishmael [ ].	d	*He* called the name [ ] Ishmael IN THE FIFTH YEAR OF THIS WEEK.
16a	*Abram was eighty-six years old*,	e	*That year was the eighty-sixth year in Abram's life*. [ ]
b	WHEN HAGAR BORE ISHMAEL TO ABRAM.		

The text of Genesis is very much abbreviated in *Jubilees*, mainly because Gen 16:4c–14 is omitted. In addition to this major omission, *Jubilees* also has some other smaller omissions (Gen 16:1b, 2b, 3b, 16b; elements in 16:1a, 3a, 15ab), but also some additions (*Jub*. 14:21a–c, 22a, 23bc; elements in 14:20cd, 22d, 23a, 24d), some variations which are concerned with the replacement of a proper name by a personal noun (*Jub*. 14:21d, 22b, 24a, 24cd), and some other small variations (14:23e, 24e). *Jubilees* 14:22c can be considered as a conflation of Gen 16:2c with Gen 16:1b. This corresponds with the omission of Gen 16:1b and the additions in *Jub*. 14:22c. The omission of Gen 16:3b ("After Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan") corresponds with the additions in *Jub*. 14:10b, 24d ("in the fifth year of this week").

Due to the lack of an explicit dating of the events at the beginning and through mention of "all these things" (*Jub*. 14:21b), the story of Hagar is closely related to the preceding passage. The story in which Sarah gives Hagar to Abraham takes place in the same year as the concluding of the covenant. In a certain sense it can be seen as the conclusion of this passage. Abraham complains to God that he has no children and that the son of Maseq is going to be his heir. God assures him that he will have numerous offspring and that he and his offspring will inherit Canaan. Therefore, God establishes a covenant with Abraham.

It is made clear that Abraham was happy with the promise of many offspring (*Jub*. 14:21a–c). We may suppose that he thought that he would achieve this with his wife Sarah. Ultimately, they would have children. One should realize that in the book of *Jubilees*, prior to the scene with Hagar, the author does not provide any clue to the fact that Sarah could

not bear children.[19] As we have seen, in Genesis, the first thing said about Sarah is that she was infertile (Gen 11:30).[20] In his rewrite (*Jub*. 12:9), the author of *Jubilees* fails to mention that Sarah was barren. Rather than establish her barrenness as a central issue, the focus is on her descent: her origin.[21]

When Sarah remains unable to have children (*Jub*. 14:21d), she advises Abraham to try with her slave girl Hagar (*Jub*. 14:22). It seems that it is Sarah's wish to protect Yhwh's promise made to Abraham (*Jub*. 14:1–6) which makes Abraham so happy. It is significant that Gen 16:2b ("Behold now, Yhwh has prevented me from bearing children") is omitted in *Jubilees*. This indicates that, according to *Jubilees*, Sarah is probably not really convinced that she would never be able to bear children.

The author of *Jubilees* seems to have changed the picture of Sarah in comparison to Gen 16. In Genesis, it seems that Sarah also acts for selfish reasons.[22] The text not only reads "Behold now, Yhwh has prevented *me* from bearing children" (Gen 16:2b), but also "Perhaps I will be built up from her" (Gen 16:2d). Whatever the exact meaning of this phrase, it focuses attention on Sarah or on Sarah's interest.[23] Sarah seems not to make a connection between the offspring promised *to Abraham* and her own acts in these verses. These elements are changed in *Jubilees*, which not only not takes over the phrase "Yhwh has prevented me," but also changes the phrase "Perhaps I will be built up from her" into "Perhaps I will build up *seed for you* from her" (*Jub*. 14:22d). With these small alterations, *Jubilees* shows how Sarah acts out of concern for Abraham, which is ultimately in the interest of God. She does not act for her own sake. It is interesting to see that Abraham explicitly asserts what his wife proposes: "Abram listened to the voice of Sarai, his wife, and said to her: 'Do (as you suggest).'" (*Jub*. 14:23). *Jubilees* stresses that the marriage of Abraham and Sarah is an ideal marriage. The partners work together harmoniously to fulfil the promise of God.[24]

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[19] B. Halpern-Amaru, *The Empowerment of Women in the Book of* Jubilees (JSJSup 60; Leiden 1999), 50, 100.

[20] See n. 3.

[21] This aspect of the rewriting of *Jubilees* is stressed emphatically by Halpern-Amaru, *Empowerment of Women*, 34–35.

[22] See, e.g., P.R. Drey, "The Role of Hagar in Genesis 16," *AUSS* 40 (2002): 179–195, esp. 189.

[23] See, e.g., G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50* (WBC 2; Waco, Tex., 1994), 6–7.

[24] See Halpern-Amaru, *Empowerment of Women*, 50–51, 60, 70.

In Genesis, there is an interlude (Gen 16:4c–14) between the conception and the birth of Ishmael. In this passage the author deals with the tension between Hagar and Sarah (Gen 16:4c–6) and the former's flight into the desert (Gen 16:7–14). This is completely omitted in *Jubilees*. There may be several reasons for this. It would probably have contradicted Sarah's decision to give Hagar to Abraham and the latter's positive assertion. By omitting these verses, the author of *Jubilees* again stresses his positive view of Sarah. The hostile reproach of Sarah is omitted (Gen 16:5: "And Sarai said to Abram: 'May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my maidservant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May Yhwh judge between you and me!' "). Everything that overshadows the positive image of Sarah and the harmonious cooperation of wife and husband, united in an exemplary marriage, is omitted by *Jubilees*,[25] as is the fact that Abraham leaves Hagar under the authority of Sarah, who humiliates her (Gen 16:6: "But Abram said to Sarai: 'Behold, your maidservant is in your power; do to her as you please.' Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her"), for Sarah's abuse of her slave girl would not be conducive to a positive picture of Sarah. In the biblical text, the humiliation gains divine approval (Gen 16:9: "The angel of Yhwh said to her: 'Return to your mistress, and submit to her' "), however, this passage is not included either.

At the same time, it is not only the picture of Sarah that changes by omitting this large passage, but also the picture of Hagar. Genesis pictures the arrogance of Hagar after she became pregnant (cf. Gen 16:4: "And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress"). This incriminates Hagar and is possibly the reason why it is left out of *Jubilees*.[26] The long narrative passage in the desert, in which there is a dialogue between Hagar and the angel of Yhwh, is also omitted (Gen 16:7–14). This probably follows from what has been said thus far. If the arrogance of Hagar is omitted, if Sarah does not reproach Abraham, and if Hagar is not humiliated by Sarah, then it is not necessary for Hagar to depart. The family of Abraham thus lives in great harmony, not only Abraham and Sarah, but his whole household.

By omitting this passage, everything that raises the status of Hagar is also omitted. I refer to her direct communication with the angel about her son (as a sort of birth report, which elsewhere in Genesis is reserved only

[25] Cf. Halpern-Amaru, *Empowerment of Women*, 51.
[26] Cf. Söllner, "Ismael und Isaak," 357–378, esp. 361.

for the patriarchs, not for women, let alone a slave woman).[27] Moreover, in Gen 16:13 Hagar seems to suggest that she has seen God: "So she called the name of Yhwh who spoke to her: 'You are a God of seeing'; for she said: 'Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?'" She would have been the only woman in Genesis and Exodus who had encountered God, and this was probably too much honour accorded to a slave woman.

The story of Ishmael's birth (*Jub*. 14:21–24) is presented as a first response to Abraham's demand for descendants at the beginning of the chapter, which was followed by the promise of descendants (14:1–16) and the promise of land (14:7). In the following chapter, *Jub*. 15, the announcement of Isaac's birth occurs (15:15–22), also after a promise of descendants (15:6, 8) and land (15:10).[28] The parallel structure seems to point to the fact that Ishmael is of equal status to Isaac, but this is refuted more powerfully in *Jubilees* than in Genesis. *Jubilees* 15 stresses the superiority of Isaac more than Gen 17. It is not only said that God will conclude a covenant with Isaac alone (*Jub*. 15:18–22; cf. Gen 17:18–22), but the multiple mentions of Ishmael with regard to the circumcision of Abraham and his house (*Jub*. 15:23–24; cf. Gen 17:23–27) are also pushed into the background. Moreover, in the halakic addition it is explicitly mentioned that God did not choose Ishmael (*Jub*. 15:30: "For the Lord did not draw near to himself either Ishmael, his sons, his brothers, or Esau. He did not choose them (simply) because they were among Abraham's children, for he knew them. But he chose Israel to be his people"). Therefore, the rewriting and interpretation of Gen 15 and 16 by the author of *Jubilees* clearly states how God's covenant with Abraham and the promises of land and progeny are fulfilled in the birth of Isaac.

3. The Expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael in *Jub*. 17:1–14

Jubilees 17:1–14, the rewriting of Gen 21:8–21, deals with Isaac's weaning and the related expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael. It is clearly demarcated in the literary context. The preceding passage deals with the birth of Isaac (*Jub*. 16:10–14), followed by two additions (*Jub*. 16:15–19, 20–31). The following passage (*Jub*. 17:15–18:19) describes the binding of Isaac (cf. Gen 22:1–19). The intermediate passage in Genesis, the encounter

[27] Cf. Halpern-Amaru, *Empowerment of Women*, 107.
[28] The commandment of circumcision (*Jub*. 15:11–14) has no parallel in *Jub*. 14.

between Abraham and Abimelek (Gen 21:22–34), is omitted in *Jubilees*. As far as the dating is concerned, the events in *Jub*. 16:15 are dated to the fourth week, sixth year, those of *Jub*. 17:1 to the fifth week, first year, and those of *Jub*. 17:15 to the seventh week, first year, first month.

It is striking that Ishmael is not mentioned by name in Genesis but is in *Jubilees* (*Jub*. 17:2a, 4a, 4c). In this part of the narrative there is a certain interaction between Isaac and Ishmael (*Jub*. 17:4a; cf. Gen 21:9) which results in the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael (*Jub*. 17:4c–14; cf. Gen 21:10–21). In the text of Genesis there is no explicit connection made between the feast of Isaac's weaning and Ishmael and Isaac playing together, although it is implied. In *Jubilees*, however, this connection is explicit. As can be seen in the following synoptic overview, *Jub*. 17:1–14 is a rewriting of Gen 21:8–21.

Genesis 21:8–21		Jubilees *17:1–14*
		[ ]
8a	AND THE CHILD GREW,	1a IN THE FIRST YEAR OF THE FIFTH WEEK, IN THIS JUBILEE, *Isaac* was weaned.
	[ ]	
b	AND *he* was weaned.	b Abraham made a great banquet IN THE THIRD MONTH, on the day when HIS SON Isaac was weaned.
c	Abraham made a great banquet [ ] on the day when [ ] Isaac was weaned.	
	[ ]	2a ISHMAEL, THE SON OF HAGAR THE EGYPTIAN, WAS IN HIS PLACE IN FRONT OF HIS FATHER ABRAHAM.
		b ABRAHAM REJOICED
		c AND BLESSED THE LORD
		d BECAUSE HE SAW HIS OWN SONS
		e AND HE HAD NOT DIED WITHOUT SONS.
		3a HE REMEMBERED THE WORD WHICH HE HAD TOLD HIM ON THE DAY WHEN LOT HAD SEPARATED FROM HIM.
		b HE REJOICED
		c BECAUSE THE LORD HAD GIVEN HIM SEED IN THE LAND TO INHERIT THE LAND.
		d WITH HIS ALL HIS MOUTH HE BLESSED THE CREATOR OF EVERYTHING.

9a	Sarah saw *the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham*, playing.	4a	Sarah saw *Ishmael* playing AND DANCING,
	[ ]	b	AND ABRAHAM REJOICED WITH GREAT JOY.
		c	SHE BECAME JEALOUS OF ISHMAEL.
10a	She said to Abraham:	d	She said to Abraham:
b	"Banish this maidservant and her son	e	"Banish this maidservant and her son
c	because the son of this maidservant will not inherit with my son, WITH Isaac."	f	because the son of this maidservant will not inherit with my son [ ] Isaac."
11a	The word was VERY *displeasing* in the sight of Abraham because of [ ] his son.	5a	The word was [ ] *saddening* in the sight of Abraham because of HIS MAID AND BECAUSE OF his son
	[ ]	b	—THAT HE SHOULD BANISH THEM FROM HIMSELF—.
12a	God said to Abraham:	6a	The Lord said to Abraham:
b	"Let it not be *displeasing* in your sight because of the *lad* and because of *your* maidservant.	b	"Let it not be *sad* in your sight because of the *child* and because of *the* maidservant.
c	Everything that Sarah says to you,	c	Everything that Sarah says to you,
d	listen to her *voice*,		listen to her *speech*,
	[ ]	d	AND DO (IT)
e	because through Isaac shall be named for you [ ] a seed.	e	because through Isaac shall be named for you A NAME AND a seed.
13a	But *also* the son of *the* maidservant, I will make him a [ ] nation	7a	But *with regard to* the son of *this* maidservant, I will make him into a LARGE nation
b	because he is of your seed."	b	because he is of your seed."
14a	Abraham rose early in the morning,	8a	Abraham rose early in the morning,
b	and took bread and a bottle of water,	b	and took bread and a bottle of water,
c	AND GAVE (IT) TO HAGAR,		[ ]
d	placed them *on her shoulder, along with* the child,	c	placed them *on the shoulders of Hagar and* the child,
e	and sent her away.	d	and sent her away.
f	She went,	9a	She went
g	and wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba.	b	and wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba.
15a	When the water in the bottle was gone,	c	When the water in the bottle was gone,

	[ ]	d	THE CHILD GREW THIRSTY.
		e	HE WAS UNABLE TO GO ON,
		f	AND FELL.
		10a	HIS MOTHER TOOK HIM
b	she threw *the child* under one of the *bushes*.	b	AND SHE WENT
16a	She went,	c	she threw *him* under an *olive tree*.
b	and sat opposite [ ] A GOOD WAY OFF, at a distance of a bowshot;	d	She went
c	for she said:	e	and sat opposite HIM [ ], at a distance of a bowshot;
d	"May I not see the death of *the* child."	f	for she said:
e	She sat down OVER AGAINST HIM,	g	"May I not see the death of *my* child."
f	AND SHE LIFTED UP HER VOICE	h	She sat down [ ]
g	and she cried.		[ ]
17a	AND GOD HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LAD;	i	and she cried.
b	and an angel of God [ ] CALLED TO HAGAR FROM HEAVEN,		[ ]
c	AND said to her:	11a	And an angel of God,—ONE OF THE HOLY ONES—, [ ]
d	"*What troubles you*, Hagar?		said to her:
e	FEAR NOT;	b	"*What are you crying about*, Hagar?
f	because God has heard the voice *of the lad where he is*.		[ ]
18a	Get up,		[cf. *Jub*. 17:11fg]
b	take the lad,	c	Get up,
c	and hold him with your hand;	d	take the lad,
d	FOR I WILL MAKE HIM A GREAT NATION."	e	and hold him with your hand,
	[cf. Gen 21:17f]		[ ]
		f	because the Lord has heard *your* voice,
		g	*and has seen the child*."
19a	And *God* opened her eyes,	12a	And *she* opened her eyes,
b	and she saw a well of water.	b	and she saw a well of water.
c	She went,	c	She went,
d	filled *the* bottle with water,	d	filled *her* bottle with water,
e	and gave *the* lad a drink.	e	and gave *her child* a drink.
	[ ]	f	SHE SET OUT
		g	AND WENT TOWARD the wilderness of Paran.
20a	And God was with *the lad*.		[cf. *Jub*. 17:13c]
b	*He* grew up,	13a	*The child* grew up.
c	AND HE LIVED IN THE WILDERNESS.		[ ]

d	He became an archer. [cf. Gen 21:20a]	b	He became an archer,
21a	HE LIVED IN the wilderness of Paran.	c	and the Lord was with *him*. [cf. *Jub*. 17:12g]
b	His mother took a wife for him *from the land* of Egypt. [ ]	d	His mother took a wife for him *from the girls* of Egypte.
		14a	SHE GAVE BIRTH TO A SON FOR HIM,
		b	AND HE NAMED HIM NEBAIOTH;
		c	FOR SHE SAID:
		d	"THE LORD WAS CLOSE TO ME WHEN I CALLED TO HIM."

The text of *Jubilees* is very much parallel to the biblical text. Some deviations in *Jub*. 17:1–14 with regard to the Masoretic Text of Gen 21:8–21 are due to the fact that the author of *Jubilees* uses a biblical text that differs from the Masoretic. In these cases, deviations in *Jubilees* vis-à-vis the Masoretic Text can also be found in the biblical texts of, for example, the Septuagint or the Samaritan Pentateuch, therefore, we should consider these deviations as variations of the biblical text. VanderKam suggests that a biblical text of Genesis-Exodus that agreed more with the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch than with the Masoretic Text existed in Palestine as an independent witness.[29]

Mostly the variations are minor.[30] The Masoretic Text of Gen 21:8c reads "on the day when Isaac was weaned," whereas *Jub*. 17:2b reads "on the day when *his son* Isaac was weaned." This reading of *Jubilees* is also found in the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint. The Masoretic Text of Gen 21:10c reads "with my son, *with* Isaac," whereas *Jub*. 17:4f reads "with my son Isaac." This reading of *Jubilees* can also be found in the Septuagint. The Masoretic Text of Gen 21:11a reads "The word was *very* displeasing," whereas *Jub*. 17:5a reads "The word was saddening." This reading of *Jubilees* (without "very") can also be found in some manuscripts of the Septuagint. The Masoretic Text of Gen 21:12b reads "because of *your* maidservant," whereas *Jub*. 17:6b reads "because of *the* maidservant." This reading of *Jubilees* also occurs in the Septuagint. The Masoretic Text of Gen 21:13a reads "*the* maidservant," whereas *Jub*.

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[29] See, e.g., J.C. VanderKam, "*Jubilees* and the Hebrew Texts of Genesis-Exodus," *Text* 14 (1988): 71–85; repr. in *From Revelation to Canon: Studies in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature* (JSJSup 62; Leiden 2000), 448–461, esp. 460.

[30] For the following see J.C. VanderKam, *Textual and Historical Studies in the Book of* Jubilees (Missoula 1977), 142–198; see also the textual notes in J.C. VanderKam, *The Book of* Jubilees (CSCO 511; ScrA 88; Leuven 1989), 2:102–104.

17:7a reads "*this* maidservant." This reading of *Jubilees* also occurs in the Samaritan Pentateuch. The Masoretic Text of Gen 21:13a reads "I will make him a *large* nation," whereas *Jub*. 17:7a reads "I will make him a nation." This reading of *Jubilees* also occurs in the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint. The Masoretic Text of Gen 21:16b reads "and sat opposite," whereas *Jub*. 17:10e reads "and sat opposite *him*." This reading of *Jubilees* also occurs in the Septuagint. The Masoretic Text of Gen 21:16b reads "and sat opposite a good way off," whereas *Jub*. 17:10e reads "and sat opposite *him* a good way off." This reading of *Jubilees* also occurs in some manuscripts of the Septuagint. The Masoretic Text of Gen 21:16d reads "the death of *the* child," whereas *Jub*. 17:10f reads "the death of *my* child." This reading of *Jubilees* also occurs in the Septuagint. The Masoretic Text of Gen 21:20c reads "and he lived in the wilderness." *Jubilees* omits this phrase. This omission also occurs in some manuscripts of the Septuagint.

In Gen 21:8–21 Ishmael is not named. In the Masoretic Text and the Samaritan Pentateuch Ismael is called "son" (בן: 21:9a, 10b, 10c, 11a, 13a),[31] but also "lad" (הנער: 21:12b, 17a, 17f, 18b, 19e, 20a) and "child" (הילד: 21:14d, 15b, 16d). In the Septuagint of Gen 21:8–21, בן is rendered with a form of ὁ υἱὸς ("the son"), whereas both הנער and הילד are rendered by a form of τὸ παιδίον ("the child").[32] Also, *Jub*. 17:1–14 has only two designations, namely *wald* ("son": 17:2a, 2d, 2e, 4e, 4f, 5a, 7a) and *ḥaḍana* ("child": 17:6b, 8c, 9d, 10f, 11d, 11g, 12e, 13a). However, *Jubilees* also mentions Ishmael by name (*Jub*. 17:2a, 4a, 4c).

In some places a noun is replaced by a personal pronoun, or vice versa, usually as a consequence of an addition or omission: Gen 21:15b (*Jub*. 17:10c); Gen 21:20a (*Jub*. 17:13c); Gen 21:20b (*Jub*. 17:13a).

In the Masoretic Text and the Samaritan Pentateuch of Gen 21:11–12, the expression רעע בעיני ("be displeasing in the sight of") occurs twice. In the Septuagint of Gen 21:11–12 this is rendered with σκληρὸς … ἐναντίον. σκληρὸς, meaning "dry, hard, inflexible," which occurs in the Septuagint fifty times, as a rendering of several Hebrew roots (אמיץ, עז, פריץ, קשׁה, רעע). In addition, רעע has several Greek equivalents.

The Masoretic Text and the Samaritan Pentateuch of Gen 21:12d read שׁמע בקלה ("listen to her voice"). The Septuagint of Gen 21:12d renders

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[31] This takes several forms: "the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham" (21:9a); "her son" (21:10b); "the son of this maidservant" (21:10c); "his son" (21:11a); "the son of the maidservant" (21:13a).

[32] Eth. Gen 21:8–21 renders בן (ὁ υἱὸς) with *wald*, whereas both הנער als הילד (τὸ παιδίον) are rendered by a form of *ḥaḍana*.

this literally (ἄκουε τῆς φωνῆς αὐτῆς). *Jubilees* 17:6c reads *səmāʿ nəbābā* ("listen to her speech"). The Ethiopic text of Gen 21:12d has no equivalent of שמע בקלה.

The Masoretic Text and the Samaritan Pentateuch of Gen 21:9a read "And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, *playing* (מצחק)." The Septuagint of Gen 21:9a has a somewhat different reading: "And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, *playing with her son Isaac*." *Jubilees* 17:4a reads "Sarah saw Ishmael *playing and dancing*." Apart from the rendering of "the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham" with the proper name "Ishmael," there is an addition at the end: "and dancing." The Latin text of *Jubilees* reads "with Isaac." Possibly the Hebrew מצחק ("playing") is the basis for the first verb (*jətwānaj*) in the Ethiopic text of *Jub*. 17:4a.[33] The second verb (*wajazefen*; where the Latin text has *cum isac*) is a corruption of *bejishaq*.[34] Charles therefore considered the Masoretic Text of Gen 21:4a defective, the Septuagint of Gen 21:9a representing the more original text. According to VanderKam, it could be true that the combination of a preposition and a name (which is somewhat unusual) was misread at some point as a verb.[35] At the same time, the Latin version of *Jubilees* may have been influenced by the Septuagint tradition later on in the textual transmission of *Jubilees*. Finally, it may not be irrelevant that the Greek verb παίζω could mean both "to play" and "to dance." Moreover, perhaps one should add that the proper name "Isaac" and the verb "to play" have the same root.[36]

As has been pointed out, many differences between the Masoretic Text of Gen 21:8–21 and *Jub*. 17:1–14 can be attributed to the fact that the author of *Jubilees* had a *Vorlage* of Gen 21:8–21 which deviated at certain points from the Masoretic Text. Nevertheless, one can point to some transformations which cannot be attributed to a different *Vorlage*. There are some *additions* (*Jub*. 17:1ab [elements], 2a–3c, 4bc, 5a [elements], 5b, 6d, 6e [elements], 9d–10b, 11a, 12fg, 14a–d), *omissions* (Gen 21:8a, 14c, 16f, 17a, 17e, 18d, 20c and small elements in 21:4f, 5a, 16b, 16e, 17b), and

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[33] R.H. Charles, Mashafa kufale *or the Ethiopic Version of the Hebrew Book of* Jubilees (AnOx; Oxford 1895), 60–61n29–30; R.H. Charles, *The Book of* Jubilees or the Little Genesis *Translated from the Editor's Ethiopic Text* (London 1917), 119n.

[34] Charles, *The Book of* Jubilees, 119n.

[35] VanderKam, *The Book of* Jubilees, 2:103.

[36] See, e.g., J.S. Kaminsky, "Humor and the Theology of Hope: Isaac as a Humorous Figure," *Int* 54 (2000): 363–375, esp. 366; J. Schwartz, "Ishmael at Play: On Exegesis and Jewish Society," *HUCA* 66 (1995): 203–221.

some *variations* (*Jub*. 17:1a, 4a, 4e, 5a, 6b, 7a, 8c, 10b, 11fg, 12a, 12de, 13a, 13c, 13d). There are also a few *permutations*: Gen 21:7f in *Jub*. 17:11fg; Gen 21:20a in *Jub*. 17:13c; elements of Gen 21:21a in *Jub*. 17:12g.

4. Abraham's Gratitude at the Banquet in *Jub*. 17:1–3

Jubilees 17:1–3 takes up the celebration of the banquet on the occasion of Isaac's weaning described in Gen 21:8 and extends it significantly. The first additional element is the dating of the banquet ("in the first year of the fifth week, in this jubilee"). This jubilee is the forty-first jubilee, which means that the banquet is dated to AM 1989. According to *Jub*. 16:12, Sarah became pregnant in the sixth month of AM 1986, and bore a child in the third month of the next year (AM 1987; cf. *Jub*. 16:13).[37] According to the absolute dating system of *Jubilees*, Ishmael was born in AM 1965 (cf. *Jub*. 14:24) and thus must have been twenty-four-years old at the moment of Isaac's weaning. This is apparently eight years too high, and due to a miscalculation in *Jub*. 15:1.[38]

Moreover, the story is not only dated to a specific moment in history, but also to a specific moment in the year, namely the third month. Isaac was born in the same month (*Jub*. 16:13) in which the two covenants between God and Abraham were established (*Jub*. 14:1, 10; 15:1).[39] It was the time when the feast of the first fruits was celebrated, the Feast of Weeks (*Shebuot*), which is in fact the feast of the renewing of the covenant.[40]

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[37] J.C. VanderKam, "Studies in the Chronology of the Book of *Jubilees*," in *From Revelation to Canon: Studies in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature* (ed. J.C. VanderKam; JSJSup 62; Leiden 2000), 538. According to *Jub*. 16:15, Sarah became pregnant in AM 1987 and Isaac was born in AM 1988. According to VanderKam, this inconsistency is possibly due to the fact that the episode in *Jub*. 16:15–19 is a flashback.

[38] Ishmael was circumcised at the age of thirteen (cf. Gen 17:25). However, according to the absolute dating system in *Jub*., the circumcision took place in AM 1986, which is in fact twenty-one years after his birth! These miscalculations influence the later narratives. Cf. VanderKam, "Studies in the Chronology," 539.

[39] Cf. the preceding section on *Jub*. 14:21–24.

[40] According to the author of *Jubilees*, the date of the Festival of Weeks is in the third month. In *Jub*. 6, it is merely "in the third month" (*Jub*. 6:17, 20; cf. *Jub*. 6:1, 11), but later he becomes more precise, placing it in the middle of this month (*Jub*. 15:1; 16:13). The most exact date is given in *Jub*. 44:1–5, although this is not stated explicitly: Jacob is said to make an offering on the seventh of the third month (*Jub*. 44:1), after which he remained at this place for seven days (*Jub*. 44:3), then celebrated the harvest festival—the first fruits of the grain (*Jub*. 44:4). Finally, the Lord appeared to him on the sixteenth of this month (*Jub*. 44:5). Therefore, a date of the fifteenth of the third month is implied. If this is true,

In the depiction of the banquet, Abraham's feelings of happiness are strongly emphasized (*Jub*. 17:2b, 3b; cf. 17:4b), as well as his gratitude towards God (*Jub*. 17:3bc). Abraham does not refer to Isaac in particular, since the plural form "sons" is used. It seems as if in the eyes of Abraham, the promise of offspring and land is referred to both sons, not only Isaac. He was happy not only because Isaac was born and weaned, but also because he had sons, which includes Ishmael. His seed will inherit the land (*Jub*. 17:3b), which refers to what was said earlier with regard to Lot (cf. *Jub*. 13:19–21), that is, God said to Abraham that he would give land to his seed. The use of the plural "sons" can be easily understood as a promise to both his sons, despite what is said in *Jub*. 15:15–22.

In connection with the feast of the weaning of Isaac, *Jubilees* mentions Ishmael to a greter extent than Genesis. Ishmael is not only present at the banquet. In contrast to Genesis, he is referred to by name (*Jub*. 17:2a, 4a, 4c). Moreover, Ishmael was "in his place in front of his father Abraham" (*Jub*. 17:2a). Apparently, Abraham is also happy because there is harmony between the two sons.

5. Sarah's Jealousy in *Jub*. 17:4–7

The subsequent passage in which Sarah demands Ishmael's expulsion is very much parallel in both texts (Gen 21:9–13; *Jub*. 17:4–7). Sarah demands Ishmael's expulsion, there is a negative reaction from Abraham, and a response from God telling Abraham to concede to Sarah. However, there are some deviations in the text of *Jubilees*, mainly consisting of a few additions (cf. *Jub*. 17:4bc, 5b, 6d, and elements in 17:5a, 6e).

The emotions of Abraham and Sarah seems to be placed in greater contrast than in Genesis. On the one hand, the author of *Jubilees* stresses Abraham's extreme happiness (*Jub*. 17:2b, 3b, 4b), on the other, Sarah's jealousy is also made explicit (*Jub*. 17:4c). This jealousy is directed

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"the morrow after the Sabbath" should have been on the twenty-sixth of the first month, assuming a calendar of 364 days (cf. *Jub*. 6:28–37), which is the first Sunday after the Festival of Unleavened Bread. The author of *Jubilees* does not mention this explicitly. Cf. W. Eiss, "Das Wochenfest im Jubiläenbuch und im antiken Judentum," in *Studies in the Book of* Jubilees (ed. M. Albani, J. Frey, and A. Lange; TSAJ 65; Tübingen 1997), 165–178, esp. 168; A. Jaubert, *La notion d'alliance dans le judaïsme aux abords de l'ère chrétienne* (Paris 1963), 101–104; J.C. VanderKam, "Weeks, Festival of," *ABD*, 6:895–897, esp. 896; J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, *Primaeval History Interpreted: The Rewriting of Genesis 1–11 in the Book of* Jubilees (JSJSup 66; Leiden 2000), 249.

towards Ishmael. The decisive psychological reason for the request for expulsion was Sarah's jealousy with regard to the playing and dancing Ishmael. The goal of the expulsion is the same as in Genesis: Ishmael may not inherit with Isaac. Her demand for Ishmael's banishment evokes sadness in Abraham (*Jub*. 17:5). The text of Genesis does not refer to the happiness of Abraham, nor is anything said about Sarah's emotions. The text merely reports that Abraham held a great banquet on the day that Isaac was weaned. Subsequently, Sarah saw Ishmael playing, and this motivated her request. *Jubilees* is no more explicit.[41]

Abraham is promised numerous progeny (Gen 12:1–3; 13:16; 15:1–6; 17:2–6; cf. *Jub*. 12:22–24; 13:20; 14:1–6; 15:4–8). Moreover, Abraham and his descendants are promised possession of the land (Gen 13:14–15, 17; 15:7, 18–21; 17:8; *Jub*. 13:19–20a, 21; 14:7, 18; 15:10 cf. also *Jub*. 17:3). In Gen 17:19–21 (*Jub*. 15:19–21) it is made clear that despite the fact that God will bless Ishmael and make him into a large nation, he will nevertheless establish his covenant with Isaac. This is confirmed in Gen 21:12e–13. Although Gen 21:12e ("because through Isaac shall be named for you a seed"; cf. *Jub*. 17:6e) is rather difficult to understand, its general sense is that Abraham's line of promise will be continued exclusively through Isaac.[42] Genesis 21:13 (cf. *Jub*. 17:7) reiterates the promise made to Abraham about Ishmael in Gen 17:20 (cf. *Jub*. 15:20).[43]

God tries to alleviate Abraham sadness with regard to Sarah's request to send away Hagar and Ishmael (Gen 21:11; cf. *Jub*. 17:5) by showing him that Sarah's request is in conformity with what God had said to Abraham earlier (see Gen 17:19–21; *Jub*. 15:19–21). Genesis 21:12e (*Jub*. 17:6e) differs from Gen 17:19, 21 in that the covenant between God and Abraham is not explicitely mentioned. It is merely stated that Abraham's line of promise will be continued exclusively through Isaac. This promise is of course closely connected with the covenant. Ultimately, the reason that Ishmael has to leave Abraham's house is so as not to inherit the land alongside Isaac. While Sarah's self-interest or her concern for her son could be at stake here,[44] it is also in conformity with the divine revelation

[41] For the problem of Ishmael's activities as the reason for Sarah's actions, see the literature mentioned in n. 36.

[42] Cf. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 83; Westermann, *Genesis II*, 416–417; P.R. Williamson, *Abraham, Israel and the Nations: The Patriarchal Promise and Its Covenantal Development in Genesis* (JSOTSup 315; Sheffield 2000), 165.

[43] Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 83; cf. Westermann, *Genesis II*, 417.

[44] Cf. Drey, "The role of Hagar," 179–195, esp. 189.

as described in Gen 17 (*Jub*. 15). The addition at the beginning of the text (*Jub*. 17:3–4) makes it clear that *Jub*. 17 also deals with the inheritance of the land.

At the moment he sees both of his sons, it is mentioned that Abraham remembers that God has given him seed to inherit the land (*Jub*. 17:3c). *Jubilees* 17:3 seems to suggest that Abraham would prefer that both of his sons inherit the land, but Sarah reminds him of her request (Gen 21:10; *Jub*. 17:4d–f), and of the fact that the exclusivity of the covenant with Isaac also involves God's promise of the land being reserved for Isaac and not for Ishmael. Sarah's jealousy seems to be a response to Abraham's happiness, which threatens the divine promise that Isaac will be the true heir to Abraham and Sarah. *Jubilees* 17:1–3 suggests that Abraham not only expects Sarah's son Isaac to inherit, but also Ishmael. Sarah seems to correct Abraham here, who is probably overwhelmed by his fatherly feelings for both his sons. Subsequently, God affirms Sarah's action. He says: "Everything that Sarah says to you, listen to her speech," and as if not really convinced, the text continues with "and do it." Sarah is thus presented as the real partner of God.[45]

The sadness of Abraham, which concerns both Ishmael and Hagar, is more pronounced in *Jubilees* due to the happiness of Abraham being mentioned immediately prior to this. Abraham is obedient to his wife Sarah, and therefore to God. Nevertheless it hurts him. In the passage that follows the banishment of Hagar and Ishmael and which introduces the sacrifice of Isaac (*Jub*. 17:15–18), it is said that this banishment was one of the ways that God tested Abraham: "And he had tested him through Ishmael and his servant girl Hagar when he sent them away."

6. The Banishment of Hagar and Ishmael in *Jub*. 17:8–14

The passages on the banishment of Hagar and Ishmael and their stay in the desert are very much parallel in Genesis and *Jubilees*. Nevertheless, there are some small transformations. Firstly, there are some problems in the understanding of Gen 21:14 ("Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it to Hagar, placed them on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away"). The phrase ויתן אל הגר שם על שכמה ואת הילד especially raises some problems.[46] The first part

[45] Cf. Halpern-Amaru, *Empowerment of Women*, 76.
[46] Cf. Gispen, *Genesis II*, 217–218; Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 84.

of it reads ויתן אל הגר ("he gave to Hagar"), but what did he give Hagar? Probably the previously mentioned objects, "bread and a bottle of water," although they are not mentioned explicitly. The second part reads שׂם ("he placed [them]"), but what did he place? The answer could be the same, "the bread and the bottle of water." However, had he not just given these to her? Or was it the child, which is preceded by the *nota-accusativi*, but then it is strange that there is also a copula ו (ואת הילד). This could suggest of course that he put both the bread and the bottle *and* the child on her shoulders. This is the opinion of many modern commentators and is reflected in many translations.[47] The Septuagint of Gen 21:14cd presents the phrase as: "And he gave it to Agar, and he placed her also the child on the shoulder." The fact that Ishmael is either sixteen or perhaps even twenty-four-years old is probably of no importance. Another suggestion is that ואת הילד still depends on ויתן. In this case, the translation should be: "and he gave it (i.e., bread and water) to Hagar, placed them (bread and water) on her shoulder, and he gave (to her) also the child." *Jubilees* 17:8 attempts to solve all these problems by simplifying the phrase: "He took food and a bottle of water and he placed them *on the shoulders of Hagar and the child*." In any case, the author of *Jubilees* must have realized that it would have been quite difficult to put a son, who, according to the absolute dating system of *Jubilees* was already twenty-four-years old, on the shoulders of his mother, together with the food and the water.

Despite his age, in this part of the text *Jubilees* calls Ishmael "child," as does Genesis (הילד). Moreover, the author does not hesitate to dwell on the fate of Ishmael as he and his mother wander in the desert. In fact, he emphasizes the dependence of Ishmael on his mother, as can be seen in the additions of *Jub*. 17:9d–10b.

Jubilees eliminates an inconsistency in the biblical text of Gen 21:16–17, in which Hagar cries out, while God hears the voice of the boy: "She sat down over against him, and she lifted up her voice and she cried. And God heard the voice of the lad." In *Jubilees*, it is an angel of God who informs Hagar that "the Lord has heard *your* voice, and *has seen* the child" (*Jub*. 17:11fg). Subsequently, it is Hagar *herself* who opens her eyes, and not God, as in the biblical text. Whatever the meaning, there is no direct contact between God and Hagar. This is in line with the omission of the desert passage of Gen 14, where Hagar says that she has seen God.

[47] See, e.g, Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 84.

7. Conclusion

In this contribution, we have looked at the way in which the story of Hagar in Genesis 16 and 21 was rewritten in the book of *Jubilees*. In summary, it can be said that *Jubilees* alters the first account (Gen 16:1–16; *Jub*. 14:21–24) mainly through omissions. According to *Jubilees*, Abraham's entire family lives in great harmony and not only Abraham and Sarah. It does not report the tension between Hagar and Sarah, and therefore it is not necessary to speak about Hagar's flight into the wilderness and her subsequent return. This, consequently, changes the picture of both Sarah and Hagar in *Jubilees*. Sarah is depicted more positively, and while Hagar's status is neither raised nor lowered, her relationship to Sarah is altered. Moreover, the birth of Ishmael is closely connected to the concluding of the covenant and its promises of progeny and land. The second account in *Jubilees* is very much parallel to the biblical text (Gen 21:8–21; *Jub*. 17:1–14), although there are some deviations. On the occasion of the feast celebrating Isaac's weaning, both Ishmael and his mother Hagar are present. *Jubilees* pays more attention to Ishmael when describing this feast than does Genesis. Ishmael is not only present at the banquet but is also referred to by name and is reported to be "in his place in front of his father Abraham" (*Jub*. 17:2a). Abraham is also said to be happy because of this family harmony. This happiness seems to trigger Sarah's jealousy because it threatens the divine promise that Isaac will be the true heir of Abraham and Sarah. God affirms Sarah's right to send Hagar and Ishmael away. In anticipation of Isaac's binding, the banishment of Hagar and Ishmael is also said to be one of the ways that God tested Abraham (*Jub*. 17:15).

ABRAHAM AND THE NATIONS IN THE WORKS OF PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA

Phoebe Makiello

1. Introduction

Throughout his works, Philo understands Abraham to be not only the historical personage described in the Bible, who, for him, represents the ideal proselyte, but also interprets the biblical character as symbolising a type of soul, which learns through teaching in order to progress towards perfect virtue. In this context, I will demonstrate that Philo understands the blessing of the nations in Abraham to refer to the gifts of God, which he bestows upon the whole world through the agency of wise men who have a relationship with him. I will evaluate whether or not Philo believes these wise men to be exclusively Jewish or not, and in the course of this discussion I will comment upon his attitude towards proselytes.

Philo quotes Gen 12:3 in only three passages, all contained in the treatise *De migratione Abrahami* which concerns itself with Abraham's departure from body, sense perception and self in his quest for knowledge of God. In this manner, he is, like Tamar, presented as the archetypal and ideal proselyte, as well as being, according to Philo, the founder of the race that sees God.

Before analysing Philo's interpretation of Gen 12:3 in *De migratione Abrahami*, I will concentrate first upon Philo's construal of the term εὐλογία, "blessing," in the context of his discussion of Gen 12:2. I will then focus upon his interpretation of Gen 12:3 in *Migr.* 109–127.

2. Philo's Interpretation of "Blessing"

In *Migr.* 70, Philo explores the meaning of Gen 12:2 (καὶ εὐλογήσω σε "and I will bless you"), which he construes as the third gift from God. Philo initially recapitulates the two divine gifts that have already been spoken of: a hope held out of a life of contemplation, and progress

towards abundance and greatness of things fair and beautiful.[1] One ought to underline here that Philo's understanding of the second gift, also related to the divine promise, in Gen 12:2, strips the original sense of the verse of ethnic particularity altogether. Indeed, God's promise to make of Abraham a great nation is taken to mean that God will provide progress in the principles of virtue, alike as regards numbers and greatness.

In elucidating the nature of the third gift, Philo argues that blessing, which he understands to mean excellence of reason and speech, is necessary in order to make the first two gifts secure. It is from the formation of the word "blessing" or "eulogy," which is compounded of "well" and "*logos*," that Philo interprets the promise of Gen 12:2 as indicating that God will endow the addressee ("you") with a praiseworthy *logos*. By this Philo means that God's blessing is the gift of both an excellent mind as well as excellent speech. Indeed, Philo argues in *Migr*. 71 that *Logos* has two aspects, reason and speech: "*Logos* in the understanding resembles a spring and is called reason, while utterance by mouth and tongue is like its outflow and is called speech."[2] Similarly, in *Migr*. 73 Philo plays with the connotation of "*logos*-excellence" for εὐλογία when he declares that God sends the blessing or *logos* excellence into both divisions of *logos*. This in turn serves to demonstrate that God does not bestow imperfect boons upon those who obey him; all his gifts are full and complete.[3] The same sentiment is apparent in *Post*. 107 where Philo also states that good speech when put in motion by a worthless mind is inharmonious.

Although this is probably the closest association between blessing and the reasoning faculty in Philo's works since, as explained above, he understands the gifting of a praiseworthy mind and speech to be the meaning of εὐλογήσω, the interpretation of "blessing" as "*logos* excellence" or "good reasoning/speech" in *Migr*. 70–71 is not an isolated occurrence in the Philonic corpus. Indeed, in several other passages belonging to the so-called Allegorical Commentary (rather than the

[1] This is an allusion to *Migr*. 35–67 where Philo, starting from the words in Gen 12:1 ("the land that I will show you"), points out that the showing is future, thus calling for Abraham's faith. He determines (*Migr*. 36–42) that the thing shown is the perfect good, that the shower is God and that the person who sees is the wise man. The first gift is therefore the showing of things immortal and the power to contemplate them (*Migr*. 53). The understanding of the second gift is also related to the divine promise in Gen 12:1–3. Here, God's promise to make of Abraham a great nation is taken to mean that God will provide progress in the principles of virtue, alike as regards numbers and greatness.

[2] *Migr*. 71: λόγος δὲ ὁ μὲν πηγῇ ἔοικεν, ὁ δὲ ἀπορροῇ, πηγῇ μὲν ὁ ἐν διανοίᾳ, προφορὰ δὲ ἡ διὰ στόματος καὶ γλώττης ἀπορροῇ.

[3] *Migr*. 73.

Exposition), Philo understands *eulogos* to mean "happy in the use of reason and/or speech."

Thus, in *Sobr*. 17–18, Philo perceives a connection between Abraham's divine blessing and his being called an elder in Gen 24:1. Philo understands the soul to be blessed when two things occur. First, it is blessed when, through the thoughtfulness or providence of God the rational part of the soul (τὸ λογικὸν τῆς ψυχῆς μέρος) is made to be of good disposition (εὖ διατεθῇ) and secondly, when it reasons not according to one particular kind,[4] but about everything which is presented to it. Thus, Philo equates being blessed with acquiring the divine gift of a well-disposed mind. The sign of this blessing is the ability to reason about everything, drawing upon older opinions, hence the wise man is called an elder. Indeed, the soul is blessed (εὐλογιστέω) when the thoughtfulness (ἐπιφροσύνη) of God is said to produce a good disposition in the mind (λογικὸν) of the man who receives the blessing.

In *Leg*. 3.215 Philo outlines the reason for and result of a divine blessing when interpreting Exod 20:24. He writes that, if a thought of God enters the mind, God immediately blesses that mind and heals its sicknesses. Indeed, In *Migr*. 71 and *Mut*. 128 Philo brings *eulogia* (blessing) in close connection with *eulogistia* (which normally denotes circumspection or prudence).[5] In the former passage, following the interpretation of blessing as the bestowing of a praiseworthy mind and speech, Philo argues that the mind might be improved by exerting soundness of reason in everything. In the latter passage, the association is even more evident. Philo writes in *Mut*. 128 that to bless others is reserved for the few: to procure the good gift (i.e., blessing) for others is reserved for the god-inspired, more perfect soul, so that one ought to be content if it be granted to be endowed with right reasoning/blessing oneself, as opposed to blessing others which is the greater gift. It is clear that Philo is playing upon the different meaning of *eulogistia* which can denote "blessing," though it is likely that we should read "right reason" here given the use of χράομαι. This impression is reinforced by the reference to the one who can bless others as wise.

The connection between blessing and right reason appears to be confirmed upon examination of *Conf*. 66, where Philo associates one who

[4] Philo may be thinking about outward appearance here, so that the soul which is blessed reasons no longer according only to outward appearances. This is not however entirely clear from the passage.

[5] Cf. *SVF* 3.264; Plutarch, *Cons. Apoll.* 103a.

curses and opposes the will of God with the setting of *eulogistia*. That *eulogistia* denotes sound reason in this passage is not in doubt since the context refers to the mind of Balak being overwhelmed. Thus, one might well concur with Colson who points out that, for Philo the *eulogia* of God necessarily produces *eulogistia* in man.[6]

It appears that Philo is attempting to equate an ideal of Stoic ethics with the divine blessing. Thus, in Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum* 7.88 we learn that according to Diogenes, the end goal is to act with good reason (τὸ εὐλογιστεῖν) in the selection of what is natural, and moreover that to live in accordance with nature is to follow the law of right reason, identical with Zeus, lord and ruler of all there is. For Stoic philosophers, the virtue of the happy man thus consists in promoting harmony between the spirit of the individual man and the will of him who orders the universe. Thus, Philo draws upon the Stoic ideal of harmonising one's good reason with the universe, and, replacing in his own interpretation the universe with the reason of God, identifies this ideal as the gift which God bestows on worthy souls. This explains why the divine blessing is necessary in order to secure the other gifts from God: without sound reason (and excellent speech) there would be no possibility of contemplating the intelligible universe or pursuing virtue.

In *De migratione Abrahami* Philo does not focus upon the act of blessing alone, or argue at length over the identity of the true heirs to the promises of Abraham as does Rom 4. Instead, his purpose in interpreting Gen 12:2–3 is to demonstrate the nature of the gifts which God bestows, and the necessity of turning to divine inspiration rather than self-reliance. Indeed, these gifts are given to one who obeys the command in Gen 12:1 to depart from—in Philo's understanding of the verse—body, sense and speech, and finally, from the self. Thus, the account of the divine gifts is preceded by a reflection that the offspring of the soul's own labours are for the most part poor abortions, whilst the showers of blessing, the snows of heaven with which God waters, come to birth perfect. The first part of *De migratione Abrahami* is a call to rely upon divine inspiration and gifts rather than the endeavours of our own minds. Indeed, in order to illustrate this point, Philo's draws upon his own experience comparing occasions when his understanding was incapable of giving birth to a single idea with moments when ideas fell from above and, under the influence of divine possession, he has obtained language, ideas, keen-

[6] *Philo* (trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker; 12 vols.; LCL; Cambridge 1988), 3:510 ("Appendix to *De Sobrietate*").

est vision and pellucid distinctness of objects.[7] Philo's interest in blessing in *Migr*. 70–71 is focused upon the perfection of God's gift and the relationship between the two different yet interdependent parts of the human *logos*.[8] He intimates the importance of blessing, understood as excellent reason and speech, whilst emphasising its divine provenance: a good mind is a gift from God to those souls which are worthy, that is, those that entertain thoughts of God.

In *Migr*. 106–107 Philo shifts his emphasis away from the interpretation of blessing as the divine gift of excellence for the human *logos*. Indeed, "you will be one to be blessed" (ἔσῃ … εὐλογητός) is a sign of being by nature worthy of blessing. It is thus the gift of being rather than seeming, which was the keynote of the fourth gift: "The fifth gift is that which consists in simply being only," and surpasses other gifts, "for what could be more perfect than to be by nature good and free from all pretence and worthy of blessing." As Philo makes clear from *Migr*. 107, this is particularly so in relation to the fourth gift which related to being blessed by other men: "For he says, 'thou shalt be one to be blessed' [cf. Gen 12:2], not only 'one who has been blessed,' for the latter is reckoned by the standard of the opinions of the many, but the former by that of Him who is in reality 'blessed.'" In similar vein, Philo concludes in *Migr*. 108 that being blessed by men is inferior to natural worthiness of blessing. Interestingly, being blessed in this passage appears to be taken at face value, without explicitly having the interpretation of *Migr*. 70 superimposed upon the meaning of the Genesis text. Rather, Philo's focus is upon the distinction between the regard of other men, which pales in comparison to the reckoning of God. Nevertheless, since God is here described as in reality blessed, and, given the distinction between seeming and being, one might perhaps connect this to the comment in *Migr*. 40 that God is the possessor of knowledge where men only seem to know. This in turn provides some link to Philo's understanding of blessing as excellence of reason and of speech (which for God are, in Philo, not distinct). Indeed, all of these gifts, including the blessing which is a reflection of the truly blessed God are summed up in *Migr*. 109 as the prizes which he bestows upon him who is to become wise (cf. Gen 12:2).

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[7] *Migr*. 34–35.

[8] *Migr*. 81: ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν λόγος ἑρμηνεὺς διανοίας πρὸς ἀνθρώπους, ἡ δὲ διάνοια γίνεται τῷ λόγῳ τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν, ταῦτα δέ ἐστιν ἐνθυμήματα, ὧν μόνος ὁ θεὸς ἐπίσκοπος.

It does therefore appear that throughout the treatise, blessing is understood as the gift of excellent reason and speech, or at least as a gift which, when bestowed upon the truly worthy, is connected with being rather than seeming, and leads to wisdom.

3. Philo's Interpretation of Gen 12:3

Given Philo's interpretation of the blessing in Gen 12:2 as the gift of excellent mind and speech, and his wider understanding of the dual meaning of *eulogos* and related terms as "sound/excellent reason," it will be interesting to observe whether this interpretation underlies his reading of the blessing in Gen 12:3.

Philo's interpretation of Gen 12:3 is twofold. In the first instance it is interpreted as indicating that, not only the virtuous or those destined to be wise are to be blessed, but that those who are not so may experience God's beneficence through the wise man. Philo understands the second part of the verse to demonstrate that the wise/virtuous man is the foundation upon which the rest of humanity rests. He also interprets it allegorically as it indicates for him that the perfect mind will sanctify all its tribes that is, all its faculties.

3.1. *Through the Wise Man Others May Obtain Divine Gifts*

a. *Interpretation of Gen 12:3a: The Purpose of the Blessings and the Identity of the Beneficiaries*

In *Migr*. 109, Philo quotes Gen 12:3a (εὐλογήσω τοὺς εὐλογοῦντάς σε, καὶ τοὺς καταρωμένους σε καταράσομαι) and understands it as referring to one of the gifts bestowed for the wise man's sake. He states in *Migr*. 110 that its promises are made for the righteous man's sake, in order to show him honour. He intimates that this interpretation is not unique to him, remarking that it is clear to everybody (παντί τῷ δῆλον). If one takes Philo's claim at face value, it appears to point to a reading of the Genesis verse which was widely recognised, at least amongst Alexandrian Jewish exegetes. Alternatively the claim that the interpretation is clear to everybody might constitute a rhetorical device, intending to exclude from the mainstream those who do not agree. However, it is likely that Philo's assertion is, for the main part, to be taken at face value, since he follows it with an understanding which is more particular to him. Indeed, he argues that the promises to Abraham are set forth not only to honour the righteous man, but also on account of harmonious consequences

which exist in things. The word 'harmonious' (εὐάρμοστος) is in Philo an important sign of God's creative and benign activity in the world, so that the point of the promises in Gen 12:3a is not only to accord honour to the righteous, but also to demonstrate that God's beneficence is effective in human activities, by investing human life with harmony just as he ordered the disordered and inharmonious universe.[9]

Further, those who are rewarded by being blessed are those who not only bless the righteous Abraham soul but more importantly, those whose intentions towards him are also laudable. Here Philo provides the counterexample of Balaam, who praised God and blessed Israel but whose intentions were vile: such as he will not, according to Philo, be rewarded. This is also a feature which appears in several of Philo's works, for instance in *Post.* 88, where one who brings speech into harmony with intent is considered perfect and of truly harmonious character. Even more relevant is Philo's argument in *Leg.* 3.210 that some people perform many acts worthy of blessing, but not in such a manner as to obtain a blessing. Here also, Philo's focus is upon the intention of the mind, since infants may act and speak as reasonable men do, but lack a rational nature. Philo thus emphasises that Moses wishes the wise man to be accounted worthy of blessing as a result of a fixed state and blessed (εὐλόγιστός) or perfectly rational disposition (διάθεσις). The dual meaning of εὐλόγιστός allows Philo to suggest a connection between being truly blessed and possessing a sound reason, whilst his use of the term διάθεσις uncovers his probable dependence upon Stoic ethics in this passage, as it is the technical term Stoicism used to define a state which does not admit within itself variations of degree: man is either perfectly virtuous or not virtuous at all (and therefore mad) for the Stoics. Though Philo might not entirely concur with that dogma he nonetheless associates blessing with excellent reason and virtue. In *Migr.* 111–117 this sentiment turns into a rather long digression, showing that Philo's main interest in the verse is not only that it indicates God's intent to honour the righteous, but that its justice strikes Philo as another proof of the harmony with which God invests the whole world, rewarding intent rather than speech.[10] Although the importance of correct intent for a right action was common to many schools of philosophy in the ancient world, it was a feature

[9] See *Opif.* 22.

[10] *Migr.* 117: μηδὲν … ἐπὶ τὰς ἐν προφορᾷ διεξόδους ἀναφερέσθω μᾶλλον ἢ διάνοιαν, ἀφ᾽ ἧς ὥσπερ ἀπὸ πηγῆς ἑκάτερον εἶδος τῶν λεχθέντων δοκιμάζεται.

upon which Stoic ethics placed particular emphasis.[11] Thus, Philo's understanding of blessing as related to an excellent mind and, as a logical extension of this, his insistence upon the necessity of right intent are both features of Stoic moral philosophy which he believes concur remarkably well with the text of Genesis. It must nonetheless be pointed out that he does not share the premise which underlies much of Stoic ethics, that the universe is a rational nature endowed with wisdom, since he argues against this very proposition in *Aet*. 94.

There is no overt mention of the need to be wise or believe in God in order to be blessed on account of the righteous man in *Migr*. 109–117, but given the importance of intent to Philo, and his comments elsewhere that only those who perform actions out of a fixed and perfectly rational nature are worthy of blessing, it remains ambiguous whether, in these circumstances, any unwise or non-virtuous person would actually bless a righteous man in good faith. It might nonetheless be possible to understand Philo as mitigating the stance which he adopted in passages such as *Leg*. 3.210, finding a position more accommodating to those who are not yet perfected but are still progressing in virtue. There is no indication whether this blessing is applied only to Jews, or to a sub-category of particularly virtuous Jew. If it is correct that Philo ought to be seen as designating a way in which the well-intentioned but as yet imperfect character might receive divine gifts, it is all the more likely that he could consider the blessing to be available to well-intentioned non-Jews and Jews alike.

The idea in *Migr*. 109–110 is that, by Gen 12:3a, one ought to recognise that other (well-intentioned) men are blessed for the sake of the wise man, in order to show him honour. This is perhaps somewhat analogous to the Psalmist's application of this blessing to the king, in the Septuagint version of Ps 72:17. Indeed, in the Hebrew, וְיִתְבָּרְכוּ is a Hitpael and so ought probably to be given a reflexive sense in translation ("they will bless themselves"),[12] whereas in the Greek, ἐνευλογηθήσονται is simply a passive; as in the Septuagint version of Gen 12:3 followed by Philo, the sense is that all the families of the earth will be blessed in him (in Ps 72 this refers to the Davidic king, and in Gen 12:3 to Abraham). Significant for our discussion is the phrase that follows, since the Psalmist

[11] Cf. *SVF* 3.516–517.

[12] This is even more likely than in the Gen 12:3 version of the blessing where the Hebrew text has a Niph. which can have a reflexive sense but can also be used as a simple passive.

writes that all the nations (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) will consider or call the king blessed (or happy). This is what Philo intimates in *Migr*. 109 when he asks what benefits are accorded to others for the wise man's sake. Indeed, this impression is confirmed by *Migr*. 110, where Philo states that the promises are made in order to show honour to the righteous man. As in Ps 72, the focus is upon the wise man or king, and the enhancement of his reputation.

In *Migr*. 118, 120–123, Philo maintains his interest in the wise man, though he concentrates more upon his role than his reputation amongst men, which remains an implicit theme, and places him at the heart of his community, offering examples of his effect upon others. In his interpretation of Gen 12:3b (ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς) Philo emphasises that the blessing conferred by the Abraham soul is not restricted to those who know its value: the righteous man is a boon to all those in his community. Here, membership of a group takes the place of good intent as the factor which determines whether one might receive a blessing through the righteous man. Indeed, *Migr*. 120–121 emphasise that Gen 12:3b imparts news of a wider blessing, directed not only at those who praise the virtuous man, but to all the members of his community. In *Migr*. 120, Philo does not specify whether the righteous man benefits only the members of his own community or whether his blessing extends to a wider group. He does however mention that many groups have benefited from the virtue of an individual, and it appears that the benefits of a noble character are not assumed to be particular to Jews only, since Philo includes amongst the beneficiaries whole nations and regions of the earth (by which he cannot mean Israel or Judea alone) within the sphere of those who benefit from the presence of a single virtuous man. It is interesting that Philo emphasises the actual fulfilment of the blessing by referring to groups, of varying size, all of whom are claimed to have already profited from the nobility of character and the prudence of an individual. He restricts the scope of those who enjoy prosperity through a single righteous man neither in terms of ethnicity, nor according to the size of the group. Thus, he is able to reinforce his point that the righteous man is the foundation upon which the whole of humanity rests.[13]

[13] *Migr*. 121–122.

b. *Interpretation of Gen 12:3b: The Role and Nature of the Truly Virtuous Man*

Philo's interest in Gen 12:3b lies largely in its application to the righteous man rather than in those who might benefit from his virtue. Indeed, Philo focuses upon his role as a mediator between God and the rest of humankind. Thus, in *Migr*. 120 Philo describes the man of noble character as one who has received divine gifts. Indeed, upon such a man has God bestowed not only good purpose, but also irresistible power. It is not clear here whether Philo intends the reader to understand this as political power or whether it is instead the power to act as an intercessor for the rest of mankind. It is nevertheless likely from the following discussion, which concerns itself with the intercession of the man of noble character for the rest of humanity, that Philo intends, in *Migr*. 120, to refer to the excellence of reason and virtue (which are practically inseparable in Philo) as divine gifts which allow the righteous man to benefit the remainder of humanity. This impression is borne out by the use of the phrase in *Abr*. 243, where Philo employs δύναμιν ἀναναγώνιστον to describe the power of the virtues and their doctrines and contemplations, which together act as the armour of the mind. It is therefore probable that Philo's focus is upon the character and mind of the virtuous man rather than upon his political power, all the more so given Philo's stance in many of his treatises towards the political life, which he regards as inferior to living a contemplative life.

Philo underlines the reliance of the righteous man upon divine gifts by comparing him with the musician to whom God gives the instrument which his art requires, and to the fire which needs logs. Here, the divine gifts are good intention and irresistible power, probably referring to the power of the virtues. Although this may appear to be a rather deterministic understanding of nobility of character, Philo's main interest in this passage is to point out that such a man, blessed by God, brings benefits to the community (ὅσα … αὐτὸς ἔχει, προφέρων εἰς μέσον ἐπ' ὠφελείᾳ τῶν χρησομένων ἄφθονα δίδωσιν). Furthermore, what the righteous man does not find in himself, he asks from God (ὅσα δ' ἂν μὴ εὑρίσκῃ παρ' ἑαυτῷ, τὸν μόνον πάμπλουτον αἰτεῖται θεόν). This offers an opportunity for Philo once again to reaffirm that God is the source of all good things, which the people obtain through the virtuous man who supplicates God on their behalf. The same phenomenon occurs when the high priest officiates on behalf of the people (*Somn*. 2.189): he is neither man nor God but touches both these extremities. Philo's allegorical explanation of the biblical reference to Moses being a God to Pharaoh in *Leg*.

1.40 might further clarify both Philo's understanding of the mediating role and the nature of the parallel which he perceives between the wise man in the human race and the mind in the soul. Indeed, Philo writes that the mind gives certain qualities to the soul, which it has ultimately received from God. The mind vivifies the irrational part of the soul and is itself vivified by God. Thus, God is the source of the good qualities in the soul, which are mediated to it through the mind: the mind is as a God to the irrational part of the soul.

Thus, according to Philo, Gen 12:3b is a sign that the common good usually depends upon a righteous man who acts as a mediator between God and humanity. On the one hand, his presentation makes no reference to ethnic or even religious particularity, whilst on the other hand he asserts that such a righteous man is blessed by a God whom he supplicates. Although the benefactors of his virtue are not necessarily Jews or even monotheists, the righteous man who pleads with God for the sake of others is strongly reminiscent of both Abraham and Moses. Indeed, in *Migr*. 122, Philo refers to Moses' intercession for the people and considers Num 14:20 (ἵλεως αὐτοῖς εἰμι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου, "I am favourable to them, according to your word") to be equivalent to Gen 12:3b. In this choice of verse, Philo emphasises the intercession of the righteous man with God and the dependence of the community upon his word. This is followed by an appeal to the example of Abraham, who believed that for the sake of a small relic of virtue, God would look with pity upon the rest.[14]

It appears from *Migr*. 126 that Philo wishes to intimate the rarity of such a righteous man, since he stresses the hidden nature of virtue, which is only revealed in due season when Sarah or wisdom gives birth to a male child; this child is presumably Isaac, who Philo in other places construes as a symbol for a soul which is virtuous by nature rather than through teaching or practice. That Philo intends his readers to draw the conclusion that a man who may mediate divine blessings to others is a rare man indeed is not inconsistent with his other writings on the subject. Indeed, in *Mut*. 32 he insists that God was the maker of the good and wise men only, having made use in *Mut*. 30–31 of the plural in Gen 1:26 (ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν, "Let us make man after our own image") to imply that the bad qualities in humans are due to the presence of other creators.[15] He seems to suggest that one might become

[14] Gen 18:24 ff.
[15] Cf. *Opif*. 72 ff.; *Conf*. 168–169; *Fug*. 68 ff.

such a wise man in *Mut*. 34 since he explains that when the mind has a fixed purpose to please God, it strips the earthly element away. However, Philo is careful to specify that such men are very rare, although their existence is not impossible. Philo focuses in *Migr*. 126 upon the divine gift of virtue, the difficulty of obtaining it, and the role of reason and of wisdom, although it is difficult to determine whether he implies here that one might become fully virtuous or whether instead he understands the righteous to be born so.

In some passages, it appears that Philo blurs the distinctions between the righteous man and the virtuous inclination in the soul. This is indeed the impression conveyed by *Migr*. 124, where God's gracious power is entrusted to his suppliant to use for the deliverance of those who are sickly, that he may apply it on their soul-wounds. Philo views the righteous man as one able to benefit the rest of humankind by healing soul-wounds, left by the sword edge of vices. It is in this context that Philo moves beyond his previous understanding of the virtuous individual who may benefit the rest, describing him also as a supplicant and worshipper of God. Here two points of interest must be raised.

First of all, this is not the only passage in Philo which describes a connection between being a divine supplicant and worshipper, and healing soul-wounds. Interestingly, the divine *Logos* is described both as a suppliant on behalf of human race[16] as well as curing soul-wounds.[17] Thus, the activity of the righteous man mirrors that of the divine *Logos*, and his effect centres upon the health of the soul. Curing soul-wounds is moreover understood by Philo as equivalent to restoring someone's reason, which is a prerequisite for any apprehension that there is a God,[18] the first step towards a virtuous life. That Philo writes of those, whom he understands to be blessed in the righteous man, as wounded in their souls is an indication that there is no requirement for those who are blessed to be in any way virtuous. On the contrary, they are healed by the righteous man because their souls have in some way succumbed to vice and thus injured their reason. The virtuous man therefore acts as a conduit for God's benevolence towards the whole of humanity.

The second point of interest is the identity of the supplicant and worshipper. It has already been proposed that those on whose behalf the wise man supplicates are not exclusively Jews or entirely virtuous, so

[16] In *Her*. 205.
[17] In *Somn*. 1.112.
[18] See *Somn*. 1.112; *Mut*. 203; *Det*. 50.

that Philo conceives the divine benevolence as extending to all humanity through the wise man. I have also suggested the possibility that such a wise man need not necessarily be Jewish. At this juncture, it is useful to consider Philo's use of the term ἱκέτης, "Levite." In *Sacr*. 119, Philo, having described the Levites as those who worship God, interprets the term "Levite" in Num 3:12–13, as standing for the reason (λόγος) which fled to God and became his suppliant. Here, the allegorical interpretation allows the notion of supplication to God, which Philo sees as a characteristic of the Levites to be applied to the rational part of the mind, thus universalising its scope. However, in *Det*. 62, Philo refers to the Levites as having found refuge in God, whom they supplicate and worship. He specifies that they show their love for God and their service to him by observing all his commands, suggesting that supplication and worship imply observance of the divine laws. However, it appears from *Det*. 63 that Philo understands the term "Levite" to designate anyone who has fled to become the suppliant of God, even though in *Her*. 124 he appears to suggest that the tribe of Levites embodies this particular calling. There are several points of contact between passages which describe the Levites as suppliants and worshippers of God and *Migr*. 124 and its context. Indeed, in *Sacr*. 120, Philo states that the suppliant of God is a man who has reached perfect virtue, and adds that such a man, in making God his refuge, forsakes all worldly created things. The same concern is apparent in *Mut*. 127–128 where Philo exalts the ability to bless other people above the gift of being blessed oneself. In this context he argues that to pray and to bless are gifts bestowed only upon one who has no eyes for his kinship to created beings but has given himself up entirely as a portion of God. The ability to bless another is such an exalted gift that a good disposition is not enough: one must be inspired by God. In *Sacr*. 121, Philo argues that, by designating Levites as a ransom, Moses was suggesting another truth: that every wise man is a ransom for the fool, whose existence could not endure for an hour if the wise did not provide for his preservation by compassion and forethought. Thus, it appears that the wise man is considered as preserving others, and it cannot be a coincidence that in *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* also this compassionate role is accompanied by mention of his function as suppliant and worshipper of God.

Philo does not consider only Levites to be suppliants of God, neither does he insist that only Jews might fulfil this function. On the contrary, in *Fug*. 55–56, Philo suggests that those who lead virtuous lives are suppliants of God and immortal. Indeed, in *Fug*. 55 he writes that the good are immortal and in *Fug*. 56 refers to those who do not die as

the ones who have sought refuge in God and become his suppliants. Furthermore, in *Spec*. 1.309 Philo depicts proselytes as suppliants of God, excluding genealogy, though not adherence to the Jewish faith, as irrelevant.

In *Virt*. 79, being a suppliant to God is explicitly coupled to the notion of enjoying a close relationship to God. Although Philo views those who are suppliants as loving virtue and piety and thirsting after wisdom, and states that a relationship with God is more important than any blood tie, it is not thereby legitimate to conclude that blood ties are necessarily unimportant, nor does Philo restrict Judaism to those who are born into the Jewish nation. Rather blood is viewed by Philo as of lesser importance than belief in and correct worship of God, hence his welcoming attitude to proselytes. Furthermore, Philo's references to blood often imply bodily ties, as for instance in *Her*. 52–57, where those who exist according to blood and the pleasures of the flesh are opposed to those men who live by the divine spirit and reason. Thus, in *Virt*. 79–80 it appears that Philo wishes to stress the importance of the virtuous mind rather than belonging to the Jewish nation as the important factor in being a suppliant to God. Nevertheless, following his account of supplication to God on behalf of others, Philo writes in *Virt*. 79–80 that Moses' philanthropy and fellow feeling, which led him to intercede for his people, were bestowed upon him not only through the gift of a good nature, but also through the guidance of the holy words. Although Philo does not refer explicitly to the importance of Jewish beliefs or practices here, it is nonetheless significant that the archetypal supplicant, Moses, possesses a philanthropic nature as a result of divine instruction, all the more so given that Philo follows this mention with a reference to the ordinances which Moses passed on to posterity: the writings of the Pentateuch. If Philo considers a good nature enough to endow one with the philanthropic feeling required in order to supplicate on behalf of others, one must ask why he mentions the additional gift of guidance by the holy word. This passage is of importance as the role of Moses, gifted with a good nature and the guidance of divine words, supplicating on behalf of his nation, mirrors to an extent that of Abraham/the righteous man of Gen 2:3 as understood by Philo. It might thus enable one to draw conclusions both as to his function and with regard to any ethnic or religious affiliation. On the other hand, it might just be that Philo views Moses as an example of such a man, quite possibly the greatest exemplar of supplicants.

As in *Migr*. 118 ff., it is rather difficult to draw conclusions as to the Jewishness or otherwise of the virtuous person who supplicates on behalf of others. Indeed, throughout his writings, Philo has a tendency to muddy the waters in this respect, avoiding any overt or firm position on the matter. In fact, it appears that, although Philo views the Jews as having exceptionally virtuous ancestors, and implicitly, in certain passages, as also living by a high standard of virtue, he nevertheless appears to believe that God's providence is available to all those who believe in him and attain a high standard of righteousness.[19] Through the intercession of such virtuous people, God's blessings are available to all human beings, who share a close kinship with God by virtue of their faculty of reason.[20] Indeed, in *Virt*. 188 Philo writes that, when wishing to establish the good among humans, God found no worthier temple on earth than the reasoning faculty. That Philo believes that one needs to worship God in order to be fully righteous is quite clear. Indeed, in *Virt*. 185, he describes one who chooses to serve the Existent, and God as hastening to take the suppliant to himself: Philo here stresses choice to serve God rather than Jewish birth as the important factor in becoming a suppliant to God and thus the ability to benefit others. Indeed, instead of seeing in Deut 26:17–18 a reference to the Jewish nation, Philo instead chooses to interpret the statement that "God has chosen you to be a people to him" as a sign that the suppliant is the whole people, inasmuch as he is equal in value to a whole people. Whilst remaining vague concerning the Jewishness or otherwise of the suppliant Philo also emphasises his role as an intercessor for the whole of humanity.

Whether in order to worship God one must turn to the Jewish faith is never stated explicitly, although if that were not the case, his praise of proselytes who leave behind family and customs seems somewhat superfluous. It is telling that in *Spec*. 1.309 Philo describes the proselytes who have abandoned their homelands and come over to piety as having become suppliants and worshippers of the true and living God. Ethnic origin is not as significant to Philo as is true belief and genuine piety, although it remains the case that, only once they have crossed over into service of the Jewish God, are the proselytes described as becoming his suppliants and worshippers. Interestingly, in *Congr*. 105, it is the priest who is described as paying honour to God the creator of the world, being anxious to be his suppliant and worshipper, and on this

[19] Cf. *Spec*. 4.179–182.
[20] Cf. *Spec*. 4.14.

account offering up a tenth everyday. Such a man is described as perfect, and it can be no coincidence that Philo links the perfection of the Jewish priest who offers a daily tithe, with the role of suppliant and worshipper.

It is not impossible that Philo understands all humans as potentially virtuous and able to enjoy a relationship with God, whilst holding that in actual fact, the Jews are most likely to achieve this ideal. This would account for some of the statements which suggest that the biblical Israel enjoyed a special relationship with God[21] and that the Jews are a nation of suppliants to the God of the Universe.[22] This explains why Philo refers to the Jewish people as the nation which holds the highest rank under God,[23] and why he views the divine oracles as directed at the race that worships God.[24] Most significantly, Philo states in *Spec.* 2.165–166 that although some Greeks and barbarians also recognise the supreme God, only the Jews worship him. Indeed, this passage offers the strongest indication that, whether Philo allows that non-Jewish perfectly virtuous men may supplicate God on behalf of humanity and heal soul-wounds, he certainly views the Jewish nation as a whole as performing such a mediatory role. Thus, he argues that the error of the Greeks and barbarians was to worship gods other than the supreme creator of the universe whom they all recognise. This mistake was avoided by the Jewish nation (τὸ Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος) which passed over all created things and worships only the eternal uncreate. Remarkably, in the following paragraph, Philo links this service to God to the fellowship and goodwill which the Jews demonstrate towards others, as they offer prayers, festivals and firstfruit offerings as a means of supplication for the human race in general: thus they perform homage to God in the name of those who have evaded their duty. Here, Philo links Jewish religious practices and worship of the supreme God to their supplication on behalf of other, blameable people. It is clear that there is an apologetic tone to the passage, as Philo declares his amazement that some dare to accuse the Jewish nation of misanthropy.[25] Nevertheless, given Philo's remarks in other passages that the wise and perfectly virtuous man is of a very rare kind, it would not be surprising to

[21] Cf. *Mos.* 1.279.
[22] Cf. *Legat.* 3.
[23] Cf. *Virt.* 77.
[24] Cf. *Abr.* 98; *Mos.* 2.189.
[25] *Spec.* 2.167: διὸ καὶ θαυμάζειν ἐπέρχεταί μοι, πῶς τολμῶσί τινες ἀπανθρωπίαν τοῦ ἔθνους κατηγορεῖν.

find that he also happens to follow those Jewish practices which demonstrate an abandonment of the created world and allow the virtuous to mediate divine beneficence to those who are less righteous.

3.2. *Genesis 12:3 Interpreted in Terms of the Soul-Allegory*

Philo reiterates in *Migr*. 118 what he designates as the more common understanding of Gen 12:3a, namely, that it relates what befalls others for the virtuous man's sake, whenever they bless or curse him. Philo then introduces Gen 12:3b, which in his view imparts an even greater lesson. According to Philo, with the words "in you shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed" (ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς) God indicates that when they are silent, still no part of the rational nature is left without participation in the benefits or kindness of God. That is, even those who do not bless the righteous man will not be left without a share in divine goodness. It is slightly unclear why Philo chooses to emphasise the rational nature rather than speaking of the whole person. It is possible that this is simply a function of his high regard for the mind which he considers far more important than the body, but the designation "rational nature" (φύσεως λογικῆς) implies that he also leaves out the senses. This seems to point towards an influence of his interpretation of the passage according to the allegory of the soul upon his other understandings of the Genesis verse. Indeed, the statement that no part of the rational nature will be left without a share of divine benefits is immediately followed by a reference to the soul allegory, so that both the idea that through the wise man, all humans benefit from divine benefaction and the understanding of the verse as relating to the mind cannot be considered as entirely separate in Philo.

In Philo, a rational nature and a mind which blesses God or is of general good intent are often associated. This is no surprise as Philo regards God as the archetypal pattern of rational nature.[26] What is more surprising in *Migr*. 118 is that Philo appears to be stating that even the mind which does not bless the righteous man will not be denied God's beneficence. Thus, it seems that unlike Paul's view in Galatians, for Philo it is not only those who believe who are blessed with Abraham who believed. Philo concentrates upon the purely psychological understanding of the Genesis verse in *Migr*. 119, arguing that "in you shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed" implies that "if the mind continues free from harm and

[26] Cf. *Det*. 83; *Plant*. 135.

sickness, it has all its tribes and powers in a healthy condition." Thus, Abraham is understood to represent the rational part of the soul, the mind, whilst all the tribes of the earth are a symbol for the tribes' powers of the mind. Amongst these, Philo includes all the powers of sensory perception, mentioning in particular those which he values the most, seeing and hearing. He also includes those aspects of the soul which can pull against its rational part, that is pleasures and desires. Here, we might comprehend what Philo means when he refers to the healing of soul-wounds by the righteous man: through him, all souls are potentially open to being cured of disease brought about by the hegemony of the senses and the passions, which seek to undermine the ruling faculty, the mind. Thus, Philo establishes a parallel between the role of the righteous human in the world and the excellent mind in the soul, a parallel which he renders explicit in *Migr*. 124, when he prays that, "like a central pillar in a house, there may constantly remain for the healing of our maladies the righteous mind in the soul and in the human race the righteous man."

That this analogy between righteous man and virtuous mind is somewhat blurred is apparent from *Migr*. 125, where Noah is understood in the first part of the paragraph to stand for the righteous mind in the soul, whilst in the latter section, he stands rather for the righteous man in the race, being depicted as having benefited mankind as the root of wisdom's breed. Philo, in (to the modern reader) rather obscure terms writes that this plant, when attaining fertility, bore the threefold fruits of the seeing one, Israel, which are Abraham, Jacob and Isaac. Whether one ought to understand this as a reference to the Jewish nation or whether Philo rather refers to a journey which all souls might potentially undertake is unclear. It is worth bearing in mind Philo's common allegorical interpretation of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as three different types of soul which might come to believe in and even see God: the soul which becomes virtuous through teaching, that which is so by nature, and that which becomes so through practice. It is also important to remember that in the Allegorical Commentary, of which *De migratione Abrahami* is a part, Philo never uses Israel to refer to contemporary Jews, interpreting it etymologically, as *Migr*. 125 does, as "the seeing one." It is therefore likely that this passage refers to the possible accomplishments of the righteous mind, which might attain a vision of God. That Philo hints here at the progress of the individual soul, and perhaps at the possibility of a vision is rendered more probable by the reference in *Migr*. 126 to virtue, which was covered by a shadow, and which might be brought to light by an attendant of God. Philo also refers to Sarah, which for him symbolises

wisdom, bringing forth a male child, who given Philo's understanding of Isaac as a naturally virtuous soul that needs no instruction as well as being a symbol of happiness,[27] might well be virtue itself. Indeed, it might be worth bearing in mind the analogous sentiment of *Her*. 53, where Philo refers to those who really live, who have wisdom for their mother, and are opposed to those who live according to the senses. If my understanding of this rather difficult passage is correct, Philo argues that the mind which attends to God, might hope, through the effect of wisdom, to bring forth virtue, which constitutes happiness.

In *Migr*. 126, Philo describes virtue, having been obscured among men, as being revealed again by a minister of God. The mention of a minister of God (ὀπαδὸς θεοῦ) occurs also in *Migr*. 175, where the term describes at once the man who has arrived at full knowledge as well as the divine word which he had previously followed when he still fell short of perfection.[28] This is clearly meant to refer to Abraham, who, in *Migr*. 173 is understood by Philo to have not only travelled with but also escorted angels. Genesis 18:16 is interpreted to mean that Abraham is regarded as equal to the angels, since Philo writes that he was giving what he had received. In *Gig*. 64, Abraham is also described as becoming a minister of God, having been purified and his name having been changed. The crucial point in this passage is that Abraham represents the good man's reasoning (ὁ τοῦ σπουδαίου λογισμός), because the God of the universe has become his personal God. It is as a result that he is referred to as a man of God and is assigned to him as his minister (ὁ δὲ τοιοῦτος τῷ ἐνὶ μόνῳ προσκεκλήρωται θεῷ, οὗ γινόμενος ὀπαδὸ). The divine reason is described as a minister to God, not only in *Migr*. 175, but also in *Her*. 234, a passage where Philo argues that the reasoning power in humans is indivisible from the divine reason above us. This is why, in *Mut*. 270, Philo argues that the wise man is naturally an attendant of God, and as he associates wisdom and virtue, this also explains why Philo considers it necessary that the good man be an attendant to God.

In *Her*. 76, Philo refers to one who does become such a divine attendant, implying that this is not only a function reserved for biblical patriarchs: one who quits body, senses and speech and dedicates all three to God, who is the true source of apprehension, thus demonstrates a desire to be God's attendant. It therefore appears that the role of minister of God is not reserved for Abraham alone, but rather that it is seen as a

[27] *Leg*. 2.82.
[28] Cf. *Migr*. 174.

way of emulating the role of the divine reason, of which the human mind is an effulgence. In this way, Philo leaves open the possibility that anyone might become an attendant of God, although this requires that one follow the divine *logos* and attain perfection and full knowledge, quitting all that is bodily and sensory. In *Migr*. 125–126, Noah, buffeted by the storm, represents the mind which is still progressing towards virtue, whilst the threefold fruit of Israel are those souls who have, through different ways, attained perfection and a vision of God, through intercourse with wisdom which bears virtue. Thus they become attendants of God, and it is as such that they may intercede for others. Significantly, in *Prov*. 2.6, Philo depicts God as the father of all rational understanding, and asserts that he takes care of all beings endowed with reason, including those who live in a blameable manner, giving them an opportunity of correcting their errors. It is in this context that virtue and philanthropy are described as the attendants of God. Philo associates virtue with philanthropy, and associates both with divine service in a passage which concerns itself with divine providence for those who lead blameable lives. In this light, one might understand his reading of Gen 12:3b to offer an indication that all men are beneficiaries of the divine gift of providence, some directly, who are perfectly righteous and philanthropic, and others, through the supplications of those who embody virtue. There is no clear indication that in order to be such a perfect suppliant and minister of God one needs to be Jewish, although Philo's notion of virtue includes belief in and reliance upon God, and he considers the Jews to be the only nation that worships the one universal God. Nevertheless, even if it is most likely that Philo regards perfectly virtuous Jews as those through which all humanity might receive divine blessings, he is particularly welcoming to those proselytes who have faith in God and choose to worship him as Jews, and he acknowledges the difficulties which they face in abandoning homeland and customs in the process of conversion.

In *Migr*. 119, Philo appears to go further than the drawing of an analogy between the excellent mind and the virtuous man, implying that in continuing free from disease, that is, in standing firm against the passions, the mind (represented by Abraham in Gen 12:3) might maintain its faculties of sense perception as well as its desires and passions under control. Philo thus offers an interpretation of Gen 12:3 which not only allows for the blessing of any human being, regardless of ethnicity or religion, through the supplication of the righteous, who are not clearly designated as Jews, but further removes itself from any explicitly religious understanding of the biblical text by exploiting the construction of

"blessing," which can be construed as "*logos* excellence." In this manner, Philo understands Gen 12:3b to indicate that it is through an excellent mind that the senses and passions can remain under control. This truth is one that can apply to all men, regardless of ethnic appurtenance or religious faith, although it is not improbable that Philo regarded the beliefs and practices of Judaism as the straightest path towards a healthy mind, free from the influences of the passions. Indeed, although there is no indication as to how the mind might continue to remain free from harm or sickness, he does indicate how it might be returned to that state. He states that the saving God holds out the most all-healing remedy, his gracious power, thus focusing once more on the theocentric nature of the blessing, and clarifying the necessity of reliance on God. It is the gracious power of the God, whom Philo designates as a saviour, which can return the soul damaged by vices to health, through the intercession of the righteous. Even when concentrating upon the individual soul, Philo still does not allow that human beings alone are capable of attaining a virtuous state, especially if they have fallen prey to the lure of the passions: a reliance upon divine beneficence is necessary.

4. Summary and Conclusions

(1) Having examined Philo's understanding of the term "blessing" (εὐλογία), it is possible to conclude that, not only in *De migratione Abrahami* but throughout his works, Philo associates blessing with reason, and sometimes also with the instrument of reason, speech. This is in part due to Philo's belief that the human mind is an effulgence of the divine reason, as well as to the importance for Philo of harmony between the human mind and the divine *logos*.

One of the important themes of *De migratione Abrahami* is the necessity of placing one's trust and faith in God, and so abandoning one's senses, speech and body (Philo's interpretation of the meaning of Gen 12:1) and eventually one's own self. Thus, in his discussion of Gen 12:2–3, it is apparent that Philo wishes to emphasise the divine provenance of the blessings, which follow upon obedience of divine commands. In his discussion of Gen 12:2, Philo insists not only upon the necessity of relying upon God, but also upon the perfection of his gifts, since εὐλογία denotes for Philo the gift of excellence to the twofold *logos*: both reason and speech are thereby perfected. There is little or no emphasis upon the importance of religion or ethnicity in the interpretation of Gen 12:2–3.

In fact, Philo reinterprets the promise to make of Abraham a great nation, insisting that this is a promise that God will provide progress in virtue.

(2) In *Migr*. 109, Philo quotes Gen 12:3a (εὐλογήσω τοὺς εὐλογοῦντάς σε, καὶ τοὺς καταρωμένους σε καταράσομαι) and understands it as referring to one of the gifts bestowed for the wise man's sake. However, it is noticeable that Philo's interest in the verse centres upon God's desire for harmony, certainly where human affairs are concerned. As a result, the intention of one who blesses is accorded far greater importance than the words which he utters. This accords well with Philo's interpretation of blessing as the gift of excellent reason. That those who bless a righteous man in intent as well as in words are thereby also blessed suggests that Philo wishes to accommodate within the sphere of divine beneficence those who are still progressing in virtue, without being yet perfect. This also allows for a distinction to be made between those who are not yet perfect, but are growing in virtue, and those who are in no way meritorious, but are still the objects of providential care as a result of the intercessions of the fully virtuous.

(3) In *Migr*. 109–110 Philo focuses upon the righteous man, asking what benefits might be accorded for his sake, and stating that the promises made in Gen 12:3a were made in order to show honour to the righteous man, a concern that can also be found in Ps 72:17 LXX.

(4) In *De migratione Abrahami*, two distinct interpretations of Gen 12:3b emerge. Philo offers one reading of Abraham in Gen 12:3 as a symbol of the wise and fully virtuous man, who may thus intercede on behalf of the rest of humanity. Thus, he demonstrates through his exegesis of Gen 12:3 that God's providential care extends to the unworthy as well as to the virtuous and well intentioned. In his role as suppliant and worshipper on behalf of humanity, the man of noble character mirrors the actions of the divine *logos*, who is also described as healing wounds. Although Philo is never explicit regarding the Jewishness or otherwise of such an intercessor, it is certain that he understands him to be a rare type of man, and a virtuous and God-believing man. The reference to worship might be an indication that Philo probably construes him as Jewish, given his understanding in *De specialibus legibus* of the Jews as the only people who worship God. That they worship and supplicate God on behalf of all humanity, out of fellowship, renders that supposition all the more likely.

Philo also construes Abraham as a symbol for the righteous mind and its effects upon the entire soul, which he sees as paralleling the actions of the righteous man in the human race. Philo, in the course of his allegory of the soul seems to argue that the mind which attends to God can

hope, through the effects of wisdom, to become virtuous. This certainly includes proselytes, although whether Philo allows for fully perfected, virtuous non-Jews is not entirely clear. In this context he argues that a virtuous mind may confer many benefits upon the irrational part of the soul, especially in the area of sense perceptions. Here, Philo's allegorical interpretation of Gen 12:3 appears to abandon all religious particularism, since the effect of a virtuous mind upon the senses surely applies to all. Nevertheless, the crux of the matter resides once more with Philo's conception of perfect virtue: it is certain that this includes faith in and reliance upon the supreme God, and not unlikely that Philo might require of the perfectly wise and virtuous that he also worship the God of the Universe, though he never states this explicitly.

HAGAR AND THE *ENKYKLIOS PAIDEIA* IN PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA

Abraham P. Bos

1. How Is Hagar Presented by Philo of Alexandria?

The figure of Hagar occurs fifteen times in the work of Philo of Alexandria,[1] alongside twelve mentions of her name in *De congressu eruditionis gratia*,[2] and apart from the passages in *QG* 3.13 and following. Philo who lived from about 15 BCE to 45 CE,[3] etymologizes her name as "foreigner," "asylum-seeker."[4] He knows that she is the *progenetrix* of the people characterized by its conflict with the people of Israel. But Philo is opposed to drawing historical lines from the "sons of Abraham" to modern Israel and the Arabic world, as the American *Time Magazine* did a few years ago.

Philo does not draw any historical lines at all.[5] His constant concern is to transcend concrete, everyday, temporal reality and to exchange it for what he considers to be an eternal reality. Philo completely ignores the fact that the book of Genesis is about "generations" and that the

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[1] P. Borgen, K. Kuglseth, and R. Skarsten, eds., *The Philo Index: A Complete Word Index to the Writings of Philo of Alexandria* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 2000): *Leg*. 3.244; *Cher*. 3, 6, 8; *Sacr*. 43 (bis); *Post*. 130 (bis), 137; *Sobr*. 8; *Fug*. 2, 5, 202; *Mut*. 255; *Somn*. 1.240.

[2] *Congr*. 1, 11, 20, 23 (bis), 24, 71, 88, 121, 122, 139, 180.

[3] See D.T. Runia, "Philo, Alexandrijn en jood," *Lampas* 22 (1989): 205–218; repr. as "Philo, Alexandrian and Jew" in *Exegesis and Philosophy: Studies on Philo of Alexandria* (Aldershot 1990), 1–18.

[4] *Leg*. 3.244; *Opif*. 20. See the dissertation by R.A. Bitter, *Vreemdelingschap bij Philo van Alexandrië: Een onderzoek naar de betekenis van* πάροικος (Ph.D. diss., University of Utrecht, 1982). P. Borgen, "Some Hebrew and Pagan Features in Philo's and Paul's Interpretation of Hagar and Ishmael," in *The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism* (ed. P. Borgen and S. Giversen; Aarhus 1995), 154 makes an etymological connection with the word for "proselyte." See also G. Sellin, "Hagar und Sara: Religionsgeschichtliche Hintergründe der Schriftallegorese Gal. 4,21–31," in *Das Urchristentum in seiner literarischen Geschichte: Festschrift für J. Becker* (ed. U. Mell and U.B. Müller; Berlin 1999), 75. Although Philo often provides us with a correct etymology of Hebrew names it is mostly assumed that he himself read the Jewish Bible in its Greek translation only. See now also S.J.K. Pearce, *The Land of the Body: Studies in Philo's Representation of Egypt* (WUNT 208; Tübingen 2007), 167–177.

[5] Philo declares in *Congr*. 44 that no sane person could be so stupid as to think that Moses was recording historical genealogies. In *QG* 3.19 he does discuss the "literal

births of Ishmael and Isaac are an important part of these generations. Abraham's children of flesh and blood and his wives of flesh and blood with their limitations and all too human character traits are exchanged for children of the spirit and for partners in a spiritual wedlock. This is broadly elaborated in *De congressu eruditionis gratia*. But the many references to this theme in other writings, too, indicate that this was an essential matter to Philo.

Let us first look at a few casual mentions of Hagar in Philo's writings. *Legum allegoriae* 3 makes a striking connection between Abraham's passage through various bridal chambers and his knowledge of God. Chapter 3.244 mentions that Abraham followed Sarah's suggestion to take her handmaiden[6] Hagar as a wife (or concubine) when he was not yet *teleios* and was still studying celestial phenomena. This was in the time before he was called "Abraham" and still bore the name "Abram." Children need to be fed with milk first and only at a later stage with solid food. The encyclical disciplines may be compared with food for children. The school of Wisdom is destined for adults and "for men."[7]

In *Sobr*. 8–9 Hagar with her son Ishmael is mentioned once in passing. Ishmael is presented as a "sophist," in contrast to Isaac as the heir to wisdom. This is inferred from the fact that Ishmael is called a "child" (*paidion*) three times in Gen 21, though in Philo's calculation he must have been already twenty years old. Philo concludes this pericope by commenting that the sophist relates to the wise man as the encyclical curriculum relates to the science that goes hand in hand with virtue. In his discussion in *QG* 3.33 he adds that Ishmael opposes all established views just as the Academicians and the Sceptics aim their shafts at all the dogmas of philosophical schools.[8] For Philo there is a direct connection between the activity of the sophists[9] and man's imprisonment in the

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meaning" of the story. But then Philo says of Sarah: "she did not think it right to let her husband's household suffer from childlessness, for she valued his gain more than her own standing" (Marcus, LCL).

[6] Philo does not seem to have known the tradition that Hagar was an Egyptian princess, a daughter of the Egyptian king who tried to gain Sarah as a wife (Gen 12:10–20).

[7] *Congr*. 19; cf. *Gos. Phil*. 119 on "perfect instruction" (for the children!).

[8] Cf. *Fug*. 209, where this attitude is connected with the text from Gen 16:12: "his hands shall be against all men, and all men's hands against him." By the way this may remind us that "Hellenization" is always selective. Facets of the Greek intellectual world are open to criticism in Antiquity too.

[9] On this topic see esp. G.H. van Kooten, "Balaam as the Sophist *Par Excellence* in Philo of Alexandria: Philo's Projection of an Urgent Contemporary Debate onto Moses'

world of the senses. Plato already underlined that connection in his famous battle of the Giants and the "friends of the Ideas" in his dialogue *Sophista* (246a ff.). He was followed by the fathers of the church Clement of Alexandria and Origen, who identified Christian philosophy with a "philosophy of the Transcendent." Therefore they could argue that Paul in his rejection of the "wisdom of the world" in 1 Cor 1:20 was not criticizing Plato and his kind but Epicureans and Stoics.[10]

In mentioning Hagar, *Mut*. 255 (cf. *Congr*. 36–37) emphasizes the fact that she stands for the product of instruction. By contrast, Sarah stands for the insight that arises out of itself. Hagar is also referred to as a symbol of "secondary" instruction. Philo (*Mut*. 257) stresses that our senses, our imagination, and our mind need not be apprenticed to an instructor to carry out their activities. In this connection Philo mentions the blessing for Ishmael in Gen 17:20, which announces that twelve peoples will spring from Ishmael: these twelve peoples stand for "the entire circle and choir of sophistic propaedeutics."[11]

Philo's work *De congressu eruditionis gratia* is entirely devoted to the story of Sarai and Hagar, as told in Gen 16:1–6. At first sight the title *On Mating with the Preliminary Studies* which Colson gives to his English translation might seem indecent and embarrassing. But the last thing

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Pentateuchal Narratives," in *The Prestige of the Pagan Prophet Balaam in Judaism, Early Christianity and Islam* (ed. G.H. van Kooten and J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten; TBN 11; Leiden 2008), 131–161; B.W. Winter, *Philo and Paul among the Sophists* (Cambridge 1997; repr., Grand Rapids, Mich., 2002).

[10] See Clement of Alexandria, *Strom*. 1.11, 50 and A.P. Bos, "Clement of Alexandria," in *Bringing into Captivity Every Thought: Capita Selecta in the History of Christian Evaluations of Non-Christian Philosophy* (ed. J. Klapwijk, S. Griffioen, and G. Groenewoud; Lanham 1991), 15–28. This is insufficiently recognized by G.H. van Kooten, *Het evangelie: "Dwaasheid voor de Grieken"?: Christus en Herakles in de antieke opiniepeilingen* (inaugural address; University of Groningen 2006), 5–9.

[11] *Mut*. 263. It may be noted that Philo in *Congr*. 18 mentions that dialectics, one of the encyclical arts, "refutes all sophistic arguments" which he qualifies as "a serious illness of the soul." In this way he underlines the ambivalence of the "liberal arts": when they do not serve to acquire Wisdom they degenerate and lose value. See also *QG* 3.59, where Philo associates the number twelve and the term *enkyklios* with a cycle: the cycle of twelve hours in a day and of twelve months in a year (cf. *Fug*. 182–183). Incidentally, Philo does not mention twelve preparatory sciences anywhere. In *Mos*. 1.23, however, he comes quite close. According to H.I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* (Paris 1948; 6th ed. Paris 1965; English translation New York 1956), 245, it was common practice from the first century before Christ to talk about seven propaedeutic subjects, like later in the Middle Ages, when a *trivium* came to be distinguished from a *quadrivium*. A. Mendelson, *Secular Education in Philo of Alexandria* (HUCM 7; Cincinnati 1982), 4–24 reviews how six separate subjects are discussed in Philo's writings.

Philo wants is to offer a charter for libertinism. It is true that the proposal of Sarai, Abraham's wife, that he should take her slave Hagar as his concubine should be seen as an improper proposal and an all too human attempt to beget offspring for Abraham (and Sarai herself!), even though this requires the enlistment of an Egyptian slave as surrogate mother. But Philo, in a unique instance of spiritualizing exegesis, interprets this in such a way that Sarai's proposal is not sinful lack of faith but supreme wisdom and divine ordinance.[12] Immediately at the start of his treatise he signalizes a contradiction in the text of the Bible that calls Sarai "unfertile" (*steira*) on the one hand but at the same time "most fertile" because of God's promise that she will be the mother of many nations.[13] This can only be explained according to Philo by saying that Sarai does not bear children to those who have not the required (spiritual) adulthood (*Congr.* 6, 9). Abraham, symbol of the soul in search of knowledge, must necessarily, before he can achieve a truly fruitful possession of wisdom, first address himself to study of the "preparatory disciplines," which together form the propaedeutics of wisdom. This is why the encyclopaedic sciences, though secondary, seem "earlier" and older as a phase on the way towards knowledge.[14] The parts Philo lists there are "grammar, geometry, astronomy, rhetoric, theory of music, in short all the *rational* (discursive) studies of which Hagar is the symbol" (*Congr.* 11).

The treatise *De fuga et inventione* is next after *De congressu eruditionis gratia* in the series of allegorical commentaries on the book of Genesis. It explicitly refers to *De congressu eruditionis gratia* by saying that in the foregoing "the preparatory disciplines and mistreatment" have been discussed sufficiently. Philo has in mind there the text of Gen 16:6, where

[12] Cf. *Congr.* 63; *Leg.* 3.244. On Sarai's good motives see also *Abr.* 248–253. Josephus in his *A.J.* 1.187 also speaks about "an order of God" that Sarai followed. On this, see the contribution on Hagar by Birgit van der Lans in this volume. Philo sometimes adapts the text of Moses to his purposes as well. When he cites the text of Gen 16:2 LXX ("Go in to my maid, that you may beget children by her") in *Congr.* 14, he does not hesitate to change it to: "that you may *first* beget children by her." Thus philology becomes the handmaiden of theology. In that case there is of course no concern on Sarah's part about her own infertility. In chs. 1 and 12 he had reproduced the Bible text correctly.

[13] *Congr.* 3. The contrast between "childless" and "rich with children" also appears in Paul's Gal 4:21–31. See the papers by George H. van Kooten and Bas van Os in this volume.

[14] *QG* 3.35. For Philo this "wisdom" is "metaphysics," which also presupposes study of "physics."

it was said that Sarai "mistreated" Hagar in such a way that Hagar could bear it no longer. *De fuga et inventione* discusses the topic of "flight" in such a way that it covers "the flight" of Gen 16:6–15 as well as the "banishment" of Hagar and Ishmael from Gen 21:8–21.[15]

2. Which Other Fundamental Themes from Philo's Work Did He Connect with the Figure of Hagar?

Philo's theme of the distinction between wisdom and the *enkyklios paideia* therefore has various connections with other fundamental motifs in his work. In the first place with his interpretation of "Abraham's migration." Philo sees it as the soul's ascent from the world of materiality and sense-perception to the immaterial reality of the divine ideas.

A related theme is Abraham's migration from the land of the Chaldeans. This is the great breakthrough which frees Abraham from worship of the cosmic gods (the stars and planets) and makes him the first worshipper of a transcendent, metacosmic God.[16] Abraham is the first practitioner of a "philosophy of the Transcendent," as Plato and Aristotle would later be among the Greeks.[17] Nahor, who did not accompany

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[15] *Fug*. 1–2, 119, 177, 202–213; cf. Philo, *De fuga et inventione* (introd., trans., and comm. E. Starobinski-Safran; OPA 17; Paris 1970). On the relation of these two desert stories, see Ed Noort in this volume.

[16] Philo sees the antithesis between the Chaldeans and Abraham/Israel as the antithesis between physics and metaphysics or between cosmic theology and meta-cosmic theology. It is the most fundamental point which he discusses in the Prolegomena to *Opif*. (7–11; cf. 171; *Fug*. 7–14). His criticism is certainly not aimed at Aristotle, as many scholars used to believe, e.g., A.H. Chroust, "A Fragment of Aristotle's *On Philosophy* in Philo of Alexandria, *De opificio mundi* I 7," *DivThom* 77 (1974): 224–235; Philo, *De opificio mundi* (introd., trans., and comm. R. Arnaldez; OPA 1; Paris 1961). Cf. A.P. Bos, "Philo of Alexandria: A Platonist in the Image and Likeness of Aristotle," in *The Studia Philonic Annual: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism, Volume 10* (ed. D.T. Runia; BJS 319; Atlanta 1998), 67–70; D.T. Runia, *Philo: On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses* (introd., trans., and comm.; PACS 1; Leiden 2001), 111, 122.

[17] Up till now Philo usually is qualified as a "Platonist." See, e.g., J.M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism 80 BC to AD 220* (London 1977), 139–183; Runia, *Philo: On the Creation of the Cosmos*, 110–111, 115; D. Winston, "Philo's *Logos* Doctrine against Its Platonic Background," in Idem, *Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria* (Cincinnati 1985), 9–25. However, the distinction between God as pure Intellect (cf. *Opif*. 8; *Fug*. 10) and the *Logos* as God's power active within the cosmos is the result of Aristotle's criticism of Plato's concept of a divine Demiurge. Then God is no longer the "Producer" of the cosmos but the "Father" and "Begetter" of the *Logos*, who relates to God as the vitalizing power which by a male exemplar is imposed on "matter," provided by a female partner. After Aristotle there is in fact no more "Platonic" theology while the scheme of

Abraham to the land of Canaan, is described by Philo as the man who has not left the Chaldean land and has not broken with the observation of astronomical phenomena. He attributes more value to the world of generation than to its Maker, and to the cosmos more than to God. He views the cosmos as the only powerful god rather than as a product of the only powerful God.[18]

Philo's motif of the "changing of names" is closely related to this too. In their initial situation Abram and Sarai were obsessed with the concrete, visible reality of individual things. Study of the "preliminary sciences" led them to recognize the unity of things and cosmos through awareness of the one Cause of all things and the Ideas of the *Logos*, which form the basis for all concrete things. Only then do they receive new names, which are entirely appropriate to their new spiritual condition. This change of names stands for a change of perspective and a reorientation of their souls (cf. *Cher*. 4; *Gig*. 62–64).

Note in this connection that Philo also links the propaedeutic sciences symbolized by Hagar to knowledge of individual things and to limited vision.[19] According to Philo, Hagar's Egyptian origin is connected with perception, because perception always depends on the material organs of perception and the soul's material shell (*Congr*. 21). He contrasts Hagar with true science and wisdom as the only "world citizen." Wisdom has a comprehensive perspective (cf. *Congr*. 22; *Cher*. 6).

3. Is Philo Original in His Treatment of Hagar?

It is clear that this exegesis of the biblical story introduces elements which do not derive, and cannot be derived, from the story itself. There is no question of "science" before Parmenides of Elea, let alone of "propaedeu-

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the unchangeable transcendent Intellect that acts upon the cosmos through the World Soul as intermediary has been accepted by all Platonists. Cf. A.P. Bos, "Philo on God as '*archê geneseôs*,'" *JJS* 60 (2009): 32–47.

[18] *Congr*. 48–49; cf. *Opif*. 7. Philo's scheme is transformed by Christian authors following their common tendency to present Greek wisdom as "propaedeutics" for Christian faith and as "*paideia* of the world." Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom*. 1.5, 9–10, 29, with a literal citation of Philo, *Congr*. 77.

[19] Cf. *Congr*. 19, where Alexandre translates: "les connaissances dependant de chacune d'elles" (Philo, *De congressu eruditionis gratia* [introd., trans., and comm. M. Alexandre; OPA 16; Paris 1967]). So also Colson, LCL. But what Philo means is: "the knowledge of concrete, individual reality," as appears from his exposition in the next paragraphs on Egypt as the realm of sense perception.

tic sciences." So we must be dealing with "Hellenization" by Philo. Since Runia's study on Philo's use of Plato's *Timaeus* we know that various levels and degrees of derivation can be distinguished.[20]

The origin of the method of Philo's exegesis is open to debate. Was it common practice in Jewish circles to explain the texts of the Septuagint allegorically? Clearly the answer to this question must be affirmative.[21] But we are dealing here with "philosophical" allegoresis. Did this exist before Philo? Wolfson was clear on this point: this is a new development specific to Philo's work. Philo opened the door wide to an explanation of biblical texts in the sense of a philosophical world view.[22] It is interesting to see that Philo repeatedly shows awareness that there were listeners/readers of his explications who were critical of his "modernism." Some of his fellow Jews did not look for the foundation of their certainty where Philo had found it.[23] Certainly, therefore, Philo borrowed the method of philosophical allegoresis from the Greek literary tradition. Since Metrodorus of Lampsacus in the sixth century BCE this tradition had gained impetus as a favourite way of "updating" old, venerated texts of Homer and Hesiod. In the Derveni papyrus from north Greece (400 BCE) we already find such an explanation applied to a poem attributed to Orpheus.[24]

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[20] D.T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the* Timaeus *of Plato* (Leiden 1986), 399 ff.

[21] Cf. F. Buffière, *Les mythes d'Homère et la pensée grecque* (Paris 1956); D. Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley 1992); J. Pépin, *La tradition de l'allégorie: De Philon d'Alexandrie à Dante: Études historiques* (Paris 1987); J. Pépin, *Mythe et allégorie: Les origines grecques et les contestations judéo-chrétiennes* (Paris 1958); J. Pépin, "Remarques sur la théorie de l'exégèse allégorique chez Philon," in *Philon d'Alexandrie: Colloques nationaux du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Lyon, 11–15 sept. 1966* (ed. R. Arnaldez, C. Mondésert, and J. Pouilloux; Paris 1967), 131–167; H.A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (2 vols.; Cambridge, Mass., 1947), 1:115–137.

[22] H.A. Wolfson, *Faith, Trinity, Incarnation* (vol. 1 of H.A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Churchfathers*; SGPSPS 3.1; Cambridge, Mass., 1956), 24, 36.

[23] Wolfson, *Philo*, 1:55–86. For Wolfson's explanation of *Congr*., esp. *Congr*. 73–80, in which he awards a very special place to Philo, because he was the first to characterize philosophy as the "handmaiden of theology," see Wolfson, *Philo*, 1:143–154, and the endorsement of Mendelson, *Secular Education*, xix, and the criticism of A. Terian, "A Critical Introduction to Philo's Dialogues," *ANRW* 2.21.1, 292, who quotes D. Winston: "far from subordinating philosophy to Scripture, Philo is rather identifying the Mosaic Law with the summit of philosophical achievement." See also A.P. Bos, *Geboeid door Plato: Het christelijk geloof bekneld door het glinsterend pantser van de Griekse filosofie* (Kampen 1996), 30–36.

[24] This papyrus was found in 1968 at the cremation site of an important personage. Used to light the fire, the scroll was preserved between the remains and is fairly legible. Cf. G. Betegh, *The Derveni Papyrus: Cosmology, Theology and Interpretation* (Cambridge

But the theme of the "encyclical sciences" as preliminary to a higher level of knowledge is undoubtedly Greek too.[25] In fact this theme is no older than Plato, who was the first to distinguish two scientific disciplines, mathematics and dialectics, and who considered mathematics indispensable to the curriculum of the select group admitted to the "Institute of Higher Learning" of dialectics.[26] In mathematics he already distinguished arithmetics, geometry, and stereometry. But Philo uses a later concept of propaedeutic sciences, in which the disciplines are directed at sense-perceptible reality (which for Plato can never be the object of scientific knowledge). It has often been argued that the Stoa used a similar framework, in which Penelope and her bondmaids symbolized Wisdom and the branches of science.[27] But the Stoa may well go back to an earlier source. The notion of philosophy as the truly "free" science and the other sciences as her handmaidens, subordinate to her, is already found in Aristotle's *Metaphysica*.[28] We know that his dialogue the *Eudemus* focused on the theme of Eudemus who, after years of wandering, desires to return to his homeland Cyprus and whose death in the battle before Syracuse in 353 BCE makes him representative of the soul that desires "to return home" but, in its attempt to do so, like Odysseus, suffers all kinds of adversity.[29]

2004); T. Kouremenos, G.M. Parássoglou, and K. Tsantsanoglou, ed., introd., and comm., *The Derveni Papyrus* (STCPFGL 13; Firenze 2006); A. Laks, "Between Religion and Philosophy: The Function of Allegory in the Derveni Papyrus," *Phron* 42 (1997): 121–142; A. Laks and G.W. Most, eds., *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus* (Oxford 1997).

[25] It would be interesting to investigate where the text of the Bible corrected Philo's philosophical preconceptions. His concept of *pneuma* comes to mind. Philo offers a new interpretation of this concept according to G. Verbeke, *L'évolution de la doctrine du* Pneuma *du Stoïcisme à St. Augustin: Étude philosophique* (Paris 1945), 543. But it is arguable that the influence of Gen 2:7 led to use of the term *pneuma* rather than the philosophical concept of *nous*. Cf. J. Moreau, "Platon et l'idéalisme chrétien," *REA* 49 (1947): 72–75; G.H. 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 2008), ch. 5, 269–312.

[26] Plato, *Resp*. 6–7.

[27] Cf. Alexandre in her edition of Philo, *De congressu*, 61–71. See also R. Lamberton, *Homer, the Theologian: Neoplatonic Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition* (Berkeley 1986); J. Pépin, "The Platonic and the Christian Ulysses," in *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought* (ed. D.J. O'Meara; Albany 1982); W.B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero* (Oxford 1954).

[28] Aristotle, *Metaph*. A 2, 982b24–983a10.

[29] See also Plotinus, *Enn*. 1.6.8 and P. Boyancé, "Écho des exégèses de la mythologie grecque chez Philon," in *Philon d'Alexandrie: Colloques nationaux du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Lyon, 11–15 sept. 1966* (ed. R. Arnaldez, C. Mondésert, and J. Pouilloux; Paris 1967), 169–173.

In passing we can add that the relation of the propaedeutic sciences to Penelope's bondmaids or to Hagar, Abraham's handmaiden, does not mean that study of these branches of science is a "slavish" activity. There is no conflict with Seneca's description of these sciences as *liberalia studia, quia homine libero digna*.[30] But there is a hierarchical subordination of all "free" sciences to the "most free" science of philosophy. Seneca also assigns this value to philosophy.

Another issue is that the propaedeutic sciences are "tied to," "imprisoned in" visible and material reality. "Free" sciences are thus "liberating" sciences as well. This point is particularly emphasized by Augustine after his first conversion, which followed his reading of Cicero's *Hortensius*. From then on Augustine likes to describe himself as the "lost son" who goes in search of his Father's House and his Fatherland.[31]

In this connection we can usefully refer to another text in Philo. Hagar is absent in *Gig*. 60, but it does discuss the "encyclical" sciences. The context is a distinction of three types of people, related to the earth, the stars, and God respectively. The "earth beings" are pleasure-seekers; the celestial beings are those who devote themselves to the "encyclical" sciences; the divine beings are the priests and prophets, those who have transcended the visible world and dedicate themselves to the intelligible world. They are the "spiritual" people who direct their human intellect unto the divine *Logos* with whom they are akin.[32] This adds an extra dimension to the "intermediate" position of the propaedeutic sciences as "secondary" instruction.

4. Why Does the Term *enkyklios paideia* Not Include the Highest Science (Like the Term *artes liberales*)?

This brings us to the intriguing question: what is the original meaning of the term *enkyklios* and why doesn't this term, in combination with the term *paideia* or "sciences," include all sciences? Somebody with "encyclopaedic" learning is nowadays considered to be someone without gaps

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[30] Seneca, *Ep*. 88.2. Cf. A. Stückelberger, *Senecas 88. Brief: Über Wert und Unwert der freien Künste* (Heidelberg 1965). See also Seneca, *Ep*. 88.23: *hae artes, quas* ἐγκυκλίους *Graeci, nostri liberales vocant*.

[31] Augustine, *Conf*. 3.4.7. Cicero's *Hortensius* has often been seen as a Latin remake of a protreptic work by Aristotle.

[32] Sellin, "Hagar und Sara," 76–84 notes that there is some kind of analogy here with Paul's distinction between the child born according to the flesh and the child born according to the spirit in Gal 4:29.

in his knowledge.[33] If we are dealing here with a "cycle," a "ring" of courses of instruction, why isn't this ring closed? (The later term *artes liberales* has the same curious feature. It does not include the highest science either.) The well-known Dutch scholar de Rijk tried to shed light on this matter. In an extensive study he suggested that the term derived from the musical ideal of the Pythagoreans and from the custom of teaching children to perform songs and choral works.[34] In his view, it originally stood for "education in general." Others have made alternative proposals.[35] But there is something peculiar about the discussion on the origin of the term *enkyklios paideia*. Perhaps it is caused by a kind of slavish respect for what the written tradition tells us in black on white and as if beyond question. This is something that particularly affects classicists. But sometimes the plausibility of the results seems to be taken less into account. Usually scholars note that the presence of the concept *enkyklios paideia* cannot be convincingly demonstrated before the period of the Stoa.[36] It can, however, be indicated in Stoic authors. Some scholars therefore conclude that the concept must be Stoic. But the concept cannot be Stoic! For the setting of the term is a philosophy of the Transcendent. And the Stoa advocated the "end of metaphysics."

In my view, Philo's work contains important indications that deserve to be tied into the discussion and that indicate its origin in Aristotle's work.

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[33] D.A. Russell, "Arts and Sciences in Ancient Education," *GR* 36 (1989): 211: "whereas the modern word connotes comprehensiveness, the exact sense of the ancient one is not certain."

[34] L.M. de Rijk, "*Enkyklios paideia*: A Study of Its Original Meaning," *Viv* 3 (1965): 24–93.

[35] Cf. A. Dihle, "Philosophie—Fachwissenschaft—Allgemeinbildung," in *Aspects de la philosophie hellénistique: Neuf exposés suivis de discussions* (ed. I.G. Kidd and H. Flashar; EAC 32; Genève 1986), 185–231; H. Koller, "Enkyklios paideia," *Glotta* 34 (1955): 174–189; F. Kühnert, *Allgemeinbildung und Fachbildung in der Antike* (Berlin 1961); Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation*; H.I. Marrou, "Les arts libéraux dans l'Antiquité classique," in *Arts libéraux et philosophie au Moyen Âge* (Institut d'Études Médiévales; Montreal 1969), 5–33. See earlier H.I. Marrou, *St. Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (4th ed.; Paris 1958), 211–235. In Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation*, Marrou disputes de Rijk's view of *enkyklios paideia* as an ordinary education for everybody and of a link with choral activities. He too interprets the term *enkyklios* as "ordinary," "everyday," "standard," but applies it to the level of scientific study. In his view, a distinction is drawn between these "ordinary studies" and "philosophy" for the first time in Aristippus of Cyrene and perhaps Xenocrates, the successor of Speusippus as leader of the Academy.

[36] Marrou remarked in H.I. Marrou, Mousikos anēr: *Étude sur les scènes de la vie intellectuelle figurant sur les monuments funéraires romains* (Grenoble 1937), 221 that it seemed likely that Heraclides Ponticus and Xenocrates (frg. 2 Heinze; frgs. 56, 57 M. Isnardi Parente) had already used the notion of *enkyklios paideia*. In Marrou, "Les arts

In the first place, Philo describes the propaedeutic sciences as matters which are learnt through teachers. By contrast, wisdom is not achieved through contact with other people.

Second, Philo repeatedly connects Hagar with sense-perception. The disciplines associated with Hagar are all directed at the reality of the cosmos. A related theme here is that Abraham was still a Chaldean, a follower of cosmic religion, when he took Hagar as his wife. Sarah, on the other hand, stands for knowledge of the intellect, knowledge which rises to the principle of the cosmos and to the Transcendent.[37] Sarah does not stand for the discursive rational activity required for the disciplines. These disciplines are also understood, in their relative lack of value, by someone who has transcended their level. Such a person has made contact with knowledge of a different order. He has gained insight into matters which cannot be perceived by the senses. This intuitive knowledge of the intellect (*nous*) is both the highest kind of knowledge and the knowledge which cannot be learnt, named, expressed in language. In addition, Philo repeatedly associates the propaedeutic sciences with the reality of individual things. Wisdom, however, rises to the universals and the totality.

Philo's concept of the disciplines and Wisdom therefore implies a non-Stoic epistemology. In effect Philo is the first "Gnostic," in the sense of somebody who privileges *gnōsis* of a kind which is incommensurable with the knowledge of ordinary mortals.[38] Remarkably, he also introduces a clear distinction between the highest, all-governing God and a lower, executive entity, the *Logos* or the Powers of God, parallel to the distinction between Intellect and Soul. Philo is the first in whom such a theory can be traced, unless we must conclude that the new conception was not his own but a view borrowed from an earlier Greek philosopher.

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libéraux," he also mentions Aristippus (in Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum* 2.79). According to I. Hadot, *Arts libéraux et philosophie dans la pensée antique* (Paris 1984), however, the notion is often projected back on to earlier authors. In her view, Cicero does not yet endorse a set group of seven studies.

[37] The reference to Hagar in *Somn*. 1.240 is also found in a context discussing the various stages of contact with the divine/God. Souls that have turned away from the material world attain to knowledge of his existence. But souls that are still trapped in the corporeal have, at most, contact with an angel (232). Hagar, as symbol of the *enkyklios paideia*, is rated among the lower category. She lacks the intellectual capacity to see the highest Cause.

[38] Cf. R. McLachlan Wilson, "Philo and Gnosticism," in *The Studia Philonic Annual: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism, Volume 5* (ed. D.T. Runia; BJS 287; Atlanta 1993), 84–92; B.A. Pearson, "Philo and Gnosticism," *ANRW* 2.21.1, 295–342.

Now all these elements form a perfect match with the Greek philosopher Aristotle.[39] He is the first author of whom we know that he used the term *enkyklioi logoi*, though opinions differ widely on what precisely he meant by this.[40] He is also the one who used *enkyklios* as a technical term for the supralunary beings in the cosmos and for the motion of the special, fifth element.

He has good credentials, too, as the author who first distinguished study of the reality that sur*round*s us (*enkyklios*) by means of human discursive reason (*dianoia*; *anima rationalis*) and the knowledge which man most deeply desires, knowledge of the transcendent reality "beyond." Aristotle was also the one who sharply separated all activity of the soul and the activity of the intellect, which is not connected with any material reality and represents the truly divine in man. This is also expressed by the profound remark in book Alpha Minor of the *Metaphysica*, which says that by nature man is as receptive to what is most knowable as a bat is to daylight.[41] For scholars this image of the bat clearly links up with the climax of Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus' return to Ithaca, his reunion with Penelope, and the execution of Penelope's suitors. Book 24 of the *Odyssey* starts with the description of how Hermes *Psychopompos* carries off the souls of Penelope's dead suitors and how these souls are like squeaking "bats" in a dark cave.[42] For Aristotle, earthly man is a creature that, by being born, has been sent into exile, into an underworld situation, but who always harbours a desire for his true Fatherland.

Rembrandt, in a stroke of genius, when asked by the Sicilian Antonio Ruffo to paint a portrait of a philosopher, represented Aristotle standing before the bust of Homer. I think that the great "golden chain" which Aristotle wears in the picture should not (or not only) be seen as a gift from Alexander the Great. Though there is a broad tradition that Aristotle initiated Alexander into the beauty of the world of Homer's

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[39] For Aristotle's influence on Gnosticism with its doctrine of special *gnōsis*, its double theology, and its depreciation of the Creator-god, see A.P. Bos, "Die Prägung des Gnostizismus durch den Aristotelischen Dualismus," in *Philosophische Religion: Gnosis zwischen Philosophie und Theologie* (ed. P. Koslowski; München 2006), 37–55.

[40] We also find the term *exōterikoi logoi* in his work. See A.P. Bos, "*Exôterikoi logoi* and *enkyklioi logoi* in the *Corpus Aristotelicum* and the origin of the idea of the *enkyklios paideia*," *JHI* 50 (1989): 179–198.

[41] Aristotle, *Metaph*. A 1, 993b9.

[42] See the Gnostic elaboration of this text by the Naassenes as described by Hippolytus, *Haer*. 5.7.30–33. Elias, *Eliae (olim Davidis) in Aristotelis categorias commentarium* 8 has no trouble attributing to Aristotle the comparison of the encyclical sciences with Penelope and her handmaidens, in relation to philosophy.

Iliad, there is no record of such an unphilosophical present for his teacher. But we do know that Aristotle profoundly explained Homer's playful tale about the "golden chain" as a symbol of the creation's complete dependence on its metacosmic principle.[43] In this way Aristotle elevated the blind poet Homer to the status of a visionary philosopher! And this *is* recorded in black on white by the tradition! As a result, the motif of the "great chain of being" was widely disseminated.[44] Philo shares Aristotle's admiration for Homer, as some sixty quotations from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* bear witness. And he shares Aristotle's monarchianism, which, like Aristotle, he expresses in a line from Homer.[45] Philo must have borrowed the idea of the *enkyklios paideia* from the lost dialogues of Aristotle that he knew quite well.

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[43] Cf. Aristotle. *Mot. an*. 4.699b32–700a6, quoting Homer, *Il*. 8.20–22, and Theophrastus, *Metaphysica* 9.5b15–17. See L. Brisson, *Einführung in die Philosophie des Mythos: Antike, Mittelalter und Renaissance* (Darmstadt 1996), 53–54; L. Edelstein, "The Golden Chain of Homer," in *Studies in Intellectual History* (ed. G. Boas and H. Cherniss; Baltimore 1953), 48–66; P. Lévêque, *Aurea catena Homeri: Une étude sur l'allégorie grecque* (Paris 1956; repr. 1973). Edelstein, "Golden Chain," 51 notes: "From the fifth century BC this passage seems to have been of singular importance to all allegorizers." And p. 59: "the *aurea catena Homeri* was established by the Middle Platonists as a figurative expression of the Scale of Being."

[44] Cf. A.O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study in the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936; repr. 1976). See also M.L. Kuntz and P.G. Kuntz, eds., *Jacob's Ladder and the Tree of Life: Concepts of Hierarchy and the Great Chain of Being* (New York 1987).

[45] See Philo, *Conf*. 170 and Aristotle, *Metaph*. Λ 10, 1076a4 and compare Philo, *Decal*. 155 (where Philo sets God's *monarchia* against all oligarchies and ochlocracies); *Spec*. 1.13–20. The concept of the "chain of being" is prominent in Philo, *Deo* 5: "The Father above the powers does not himself depend on anything, but everything depends on him." See F. Siegert, *Philon von Alexandrien: Über die Gottesbezeichnung "wohltätig verzehrendes Feuer"* (De Deo): *Rückübersetzung des Fragments aus dem Armenischen, deutsche Übersetzung und Kommentar* (Tübingen 1988); F. Siegert, "The Philonian Fragment *De Deo*: First English Translation," in *The Studia Philonic Annual: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism, Volume 10* (ed. D.T. Runia; BJS 319; Atlanta 1998), 5, 16.

JOSEPHUS ON ABRAHAM AND THE NATIONS

Martin Goodman

The divine promise to Abraham that because of him a blessing would come to all the world might seem a perfect proof text for earnest Jews intent on explaining to non-Jews the excellence of Judaism and the unfairness of accusations that Jews were hostile to the outside world. The notion that Jews indulged in a great deal of such apologetic in the late Second Temple period was once taken for granted,[1] but most of the Greek Jewish writings which used to be identified as belonging to this literary genre can now be seen to have a Jewish readership in mind,[2] or, like the claim of the disguised Jewish author of the third book of the *Sibylline Oracles* that "the people of the great God … will be guided in life for all mortals," to provide too obscure a message to Gentile readers for them to pick up anything much at all about the Jewish message to the world.[3] Philo's *Hypothetica* was described by Eusebius in the fourth century as an apologetic writing,[4] but the generic ascription may well have been assigned to the work not by Philo but by Eusebius, for whom apologetic was a familiar genre because of the efforts of Christian apologists since the second century.[5] Of all Jewish writings in the first century, only those of Josephus can be placed unequivocally in the category of apologetic aimed at a Gentile readership: in all of his extant works he takes for granted that some at least of his readers are non-Jews.[6] *Contra Apionem* is presented like a defence speech in a courtroom, employing with considerable skill the techniques of forensic rhetoric to defend the Jewish tradition against its

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[1] E. Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (ed. and trans. G. Vermes et al.; 4 vols.; Edinburgh 1973–1986), 3.1:609–616.

[2] V.A. Tcherikover, "Jewish Apologetic Literature Reconsidered," *Eos* 48 (1956): 169–193.

[3] *Sib. Or.* 3.194–195; cf. E. Gruen, "Jews, Greeks and Romans in the Third Sibylline Oracle," in *Jews in the Graeco-Roman World* (ed. M. Goodman; Oxford 1998), 15–36.

[4] Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 8.5 (end), on Philo's *Hypothetica sive Apologia pro Judaeis*.

[5] See M. Goodman, "Josephus' Treatise *Against Apion*," in *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews and Christians* (ed. M. Edwards, M. Goodman, and S. Price; Oxford 1999), 45–58.

[6] P. Bilde, *Flavius Josephus between Jerusalem and Rome: His Life, His Works, and Their Importance* (Sheffield 1988).

detractors, and the *Antiquities* are a fine example of apologetic history.[7] What use, then, does Josephus make in these works of the depiction of Abraham and his universal significance in Gen 12:1–3?

That the option was available to Josephus to make a great deal of the significance of Abraham while reaching out to Gentiles is clear. He knew that the name of Abraham was not unknown in the wider world, and that he had a reputation as a wise man with expertise in magic and astrology and was known to respectable intellectuals like Alexander Polyhistor, teacher of Cicero in the mid first century BCE.[8] It is uncertain how much he had read of the works of Philo, but he may have been aware that Philo had written about Abraham in his Exposition in a fashion comprehensible to non-Jews, although how many non-Jews actually studied Philo's obscure ruminations about the deep philosophical and moral significance of the biblical narrative about the patriarch is unknown.[9] More helpful may have been Philo's treatment of criticism of the biblical narrative from within the Jewish community, such as the vitriol poured on the "godless and impious" scoffer whose punishment for his sarcasm (about the suggestion in the biblical text that the divine gift to Abram consisted in no more than an extra alpha to enable him to change his name) was an untimely and inglorious suicide by hanging[10]—if Jews were inclined to mock at this part of the story, all the more so, outsiders. Unlike Moses, about whom Gentiles thought they knew a great deal (by no means all of it favourable),[11] Gentiles knew much less about Abraham, but Josephus believed (or purported to believe) that the people of Pergamum thought that they had been friendly with the ancestors of the Jews in the time of Abraham, "who was the father of all Hebrews," and that the Spartans had asserted in the past that they shared descent from the patriarch,[12] and emphasising his remarkable impact on the well-being of the world might have seemed a good idea, particularly in the anti-Jewish atmosphere of Rome in the

[7] See esp. the commentary on *Contra Apionem* by J.M.G. Barclay, *Against Apion* (vol. 10 of *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*; ed. S. Mason; Leiden 2007); on the *Ant*., see G.E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke-Acts, and Apologetic Historiography* (Leiden 1997).

[8] On Abraham in wider society, see J.S. Siker, "Abraham in Graeco-Roman Paganism," *JSJ* 18 (1987): 188–208, and Pieter W. van der Horst in this volume; for Josephus' awareness of Alexander Polyhistor on Abraham, see Josephus, *Ant*. 1.240.

[9] On Philo, see Phoebe Makiello in this volume.

[10] Philo, *Mut*. 61–62.

[11] J.G. Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Nashville 1972).

[12] Josephus, *Ant*. 14.255 (Pergamum); 12.226 (from 1 Macc 12:20).

eighties and nineties CE, when, in the aftermath of the Jewish war of 66–70, the city was filled with monuments which depicted the Jews as enemies of the Roman order[13] and the Gentile views which prevailed were those expressed by Tacitus, that the Jews were opposed to everything held in high regard by civilized nations.[14]

So much for what might be expected. What is actually found? In *Contra Apionem*, the most straightforward example of apologetic, the answer is: nothing at all. That not much opportunity arose to discuss Abraham in the first section of the work is perhaps not so surprising, since for the most part this consists of responses to polemic against the Jews, and we have seen that Abraham was not a subject of such attacks, unlike other parts of the Jewish tradition,[15] but more remarkable is the total absence of Abraham from the second half of the second book of *Contra Apionem*, in which Josephus himself went on the attack and described the excellence of the Jewish constitution: throughout this description, the revered legislator of the Jews is Moses, and there is no hint of the role of any of the earlier patriarchs, including Abraham.[16]

Omitting Abraham was hardly possible in the *Antiquities*, in which Josephus set himself to lay out in twenty books all of Jewish history from the creation to the outbreak of war in 66 CE, closely following the biblical narrative for the first ten books,[17] and the space devoted to the story of Abraham is indeed considerable.[18] Josephus seems to have seen no difficulty in manipulating the story as seemed to him most likely to appeal to his readers. So, for instance, he left out of account altogether the change of Abram's name to Abraham which had so failed to impress the unfortunate critic who so much annoyed Philo.[19] But, as we shall see, the picture of Abraham which Josephus chose to paint fell far short of the depiction of a figure of universal significance which might have been expected.[20]

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[13] F. Millar, "Last Year in Jerusalem: Monuments of the Jewish War in Rome," in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (ed. J. Edmondson, S. Mason, and J. Rives; Oxford 2005), 101–128.

[14] Tacitus, *Hist*. 5.4.1.

[15] See the introduction to *Contra Apionem* by Barclay, *Against Apion*.

[16] Josephus, *C. Ap*. 2.151–186.

[17] Bilde, *Flavius Josephus*, 80–104.

[18] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.149–256.

[19] Omission noted by L.H. Feldman, *Judaean Antiquities 1–4* (vol. 3 of *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*; ed. S. Mason; Leiden 2000), 72n594.

[20] The discussion which follows is much indebted to the detailed and learned commentary on this part of Josephus' *Antiquities* by Feldman, *Judaean Antiquities 1–4*.

Josephus' story begins promisingly. Abraham was

> … a man of ready intelligence on all matters, persuasive with his hearers, and not mistaken in his inferences. Hence he began to have more lofty conceptions of virtue than others, and decided to reform and change the idea of God which was universally current. (Josephus, *Ant*. 1.154–155.)

That the inference which led him to monotheism was the irregularity of celestial phenomena (rather than, as more common in arguments for the existence of a divine force behind nature, their regularity) has long been noted.[21] Such ideas, Josephus implies, are evidence of virtue, but he rather surprisingly goes on to say that it was because of those opinions that the Chaldeans and other peoples of Mesopotamia rose up against Abraham, leading, "with the will and help of God," to his departure for Canaan;[22] Josephus had earlier ascribed Abraham's migration simply to God's command,[23] and adding this information about opposition to Abraham's monotheism might seem unhelpful in a work intended to show that Jews could live peacefully in the polytheistic environment of the Roman empire.[24]

Josephus next seeks to provide external confirmation of the story of Abraham, but not really with much success. He cites three authors, none of them very effectively: Josephus claims that Berossus "mentions our father Abraham without naming him," which might well encourage the sceptical reader to ask if the "just man and great and versed in celestial lore" should indeed be taken as Abraham just because he lived "among the Chaldeans";[25] Hecataeus is said to have put together a book about Abraham which is still extant (but Josephus strikingly fails to cite anything from it, possibly because it was almost certainly a Jewish forgery);[26] assertions about Abraham by Nicolaus of Damascus (who had, after all, lived not so long ago, in the time of Herod and Augustus) are by contrast cited, which makes it all the more disconcerting that Abraham is described not just as the Jewish patriarch but as king of Damascus, "an invader who had come with an army from … the land of the Chaldees …"[27] This tradition that Abraham belonged originally in Damascus, where "the name of Abram is still celebrated … and a

[21] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.156; cf. Feldman, *Judaean Antiquities 1–4*, ad loc.
[22] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.157.
[23] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.154.
[24] Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*.
[25] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.158.
[26] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.159.
[27] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.159.

village is shown that is called after him 'Abram's Abode,' "[28] is found also in Pompeius Trogus, a contemporary of Nicolaus (not cited by Josephus), so it was evidently part of the Gentile image of Abraham (but not of much help to Josephus in his apologia for the Jews).[29]

Nor, one would think, was much to be gained by Josephus' depiction of how Abraham proceeded to disseminate the remarkable insights he had so impressively achieved. Having failed in Mesopotamia, from which he was expelled, all he did in Canaan was to build an altar and offer a sacrifice to God,[30] and when, in due course, he was compelled by a famine to go to Egypt because of the prosperity of the Egyptians, it was not to spread the word but "alike to profit by their abundance and to hear what the priests said about their gods—intending, if he found their doctrine more excellent than his own, to conform to it, or else to convert them to a better mind should his own beliefs prove superior."[31] Such open-mindedness may well be the mark of a Greek philosopher,[32] but it does not fit well with Josephus' earlier depiction of Abraham's revolutionary discovery about God,[33] and Abraham's significance is brought even more into question by his actions when he discovers that the ideas of the Egyptians were indeed "idle and contained nothing true,"[34] as a result of which he gained the admiration of the Egyptians as "a man of extreme sagacity, gifted not only with high intelligence but with power to convince his hearers on any subject which he undertook to teach."[35] The reader expects to be told that the next step was the conversion of the Egyptians to monotheism, but what follows is banal: Abraham is said simply to have introduced them to arithmetic and astronomy.[36] Josephus may have been encouraged to this bathos by an earlier Jewish tradition about Abraham's expertise in these intellectual fields,[37] and perhaps by the obvious fact that Egyptians in later generations had failed to abandon polytheism.

Not much, to this point, to suggest that the figure of Abraham had any importance beyond the confines of purely Jewish history. The wider perspective, when it comes, involves neither Abraham's message nor,

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[28] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.160.
[29] Pompeius Trogus, *apud* Justinus, *Historiae Phillipicae* 36, *Epitome* 2.1–3.
[30] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.157.
[31] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.161.
[32] See L.H. Feldman, "Abraham the Greek Philosopher," *TAPA* 99 (1968): 143–156.
[33] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.155.
[34] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.166.
[35] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.167.
[36] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.167.
[37] Siker, "Abraham," and Pieter W. van der Horst in this volume.

more broadly, the divine blessing mediated through him, but through his non-Jewish descendants whose lineage was traced back not to Sarah but either to his concubine Hagar or to his second wife Keturah. Josephus chooses to tell his readers a remarkable amount about Ishmael and Ishmael's offspring, informing them that Abraham was reassured that Ishmael would become the father of great nations,[38] that he was the "founder of the *ethnos*" of the Arabs, who all circumcise their sons at the age of thirteen because that was Ishmael's age when he was circumcised,[39] and that Ishmael had twelve sons, who "occupied the whole country from the Euphrates to the Red Sea and called it Nabatene; and it is those who conferred their names on the Arabian nation and its tribes in honour both of their own virtue and the reputation of Abraham."[40] One wonders how this picture of Abraham as ancestor of the Nabatean Arabs was meant to appeal to the Spartans to whom Jews were said to have appealed on grounds of common Abrahamic descent;[41] it is hard to know whether the fact that the story of the kings of Arabia being descended from Abraham was known also to Apollonius Molon,[42] described elsewhere by Josephus as immensely hostile to the Jews,[43] was a reason to include or to exclude this aspect of the Abraham tradition.

Nothing further is done by Josephus in the rest of the *Antiquities* to build upon this picture of "our father" Abraham as ancestor also of the Arabs. Equally left hanging in the air are his remarkable claims about the descendants of Abraham and Keturah, whom Abraham married after Sarah died and was buried at Hebron.[44] (The burial place, which in due course became also the burial place of Abraham, will have been one of the better known traditions about the patriarchs in Josephus' time because of the monumental edifice erected at the tomb, probably by Herod the Great.)[45] Keturah is said to have given birth to six sons to Abraham, all of them "strong to labour and quick of understanding."[46] According

[38] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.193.
[39] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.214.
[40] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.221.
[41] See above, n. 12.
[42] On Apollonius Molon, see M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (3 vols.; Jerusalem 1974–1984), 1:148–156.
[43] Josephus, *C. Ap*. 2.145, 148, 236, 255, 295.
[44] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.237–238.
[45] On Herod's probable building of the monuments at the tomb of the patriarchs in Hebron and at the site of Mamre, see D.W. Roller, *The Building Program of Herod the Great* (Berkeley 1998), 162–164, 186–187.
[46] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.238.

to Josephus, all these sons were sent out, with his grandsons, to found colonies, as a result of which they settled in Troglodytis and Arabia Felix, and, in due course, Libya, so that the country of Africa was named after Abraham's grandson Eophres.[47] In confirmation of this story Josephus calls in the support of Alexander Polyhistor, whose own citation of a certain Cleodemus Malchus "the prophet" Josephus proceeds to quote.[48] Modern scholars agree that this Cleodemus must have been a Jewish author, but there is no hint of this in Josephus' citation of his words, by which he clearly expects his Gentile readers to be impressed.[49] It is, in effect, the culmination of Josephus' picture of the patriarch, which ends with a small eulogy: "Not long after Abraham died, a man in every virtue supreme, who received from God the due meed of honour for his zeal in his service."[50]

It is hard not to feel that Josephus' account of Abraham in the *Antiquities* was an opportunity missed. It was early in his ambitious project and there are reasons to believe that he had not wholly envisaged the shape of the work before he started writing.[51] Perhaps he had not yet decided how to deal with tricky issues such as Abraham, and he would have found it easier after composition of his summary of the legislation of Moses in book 4 of the *Antiquities*.[52] But one fact that emerges rather clearly is negative—Josephus could hardly have written as he did if he expected the reputation of Abraham as the source of blessings to the whole world to be known to his Gentile readers. And if Josephus could not take this for granted in the eighties CE, nor could Paul when he addressed his Gentile Christian communities a few decades earlier. The silence of Josephus about this aspect of Abraham in his apologetic writings has significance far beyond the study of Josephus himself.

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[47] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.239.

[48] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.240–241.

[49] On Cleodemus Malchus, see C.R. Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors* (4 vols.; Chico, Calif., 1983–1996), 1:245–259.

[50] Josephus, *Ant*. 1.256.

[51] For discussion of the composition and shape of Josephus' *Antiquities*, see S. Mason, "Introduction to the *Judean Antiquities*," introduction to L.H. Feldman, *Judaean Antiquities 1–4* (vol. 3 of *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*; ed. S. Mason; Leiden 2000), xx–xxii (expressing greater optimism in the coherence of the work than some other readers).

[52] Josephus, *Ant*. 4.196–301.

HAGAR, ISHMAEL, AND ABRAHAM'S HOUSEHOLD IN JOSEPHUS' *ANTIQUITATES JUDAICAE*

Birgit van der Lans

1. Introduction

By the time Flavius Josephus completed his account of the ancient history of the Jewish people he had lived in Rome for about twenty years.[1] After the Jewish revolt, he accompanied Titus back to Rome in 71 CE and was provided with accommodation, a pension and Roman citizenship by Vespasian (*Vita* 423). It is therefore reasonable to expect that Josephus was not only thoroughly familiar with Roman customs and cultural practices, but that his Roman context will also be visible in his *Antiquitates judaicae* and other works. While the relationship between Hellenism and Judaism in Josephus' works has been studied extensively, the Roman context has received considerably less attention.[2]

In the brief discussion of Josephus' retelling of the Hagar and Ishmael narrative presented in this paper, we will see that he indeed presents a Hellenized account of the Jewish scriptures, visible especially in the portrayal of the main characters. Examples of the ways in which Josephus presents a Hellenistic version of Jewish history have tended to be accompanied by purely instrumentalist explanations which create the impression that Josephus deliberately "Hellenized" Jewish scriptures to appeal to his (Jewish, Roman, Greek) audience. Yet, as Spilsbury remarks, it is important to keep in mind that the "instances of Hellenization in the *Antiquities* are [not] always to be taken as propaganda … but that they are just as likely to be genuine expressions of Josephus' own (Hellenized)

[1] I wish to express my gratitude to Prof. Bernard H. Stolte, Prof. Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, and Dr Mladen Popovic for their valuable comments on a previous version of this paper.

[2] An important exception is the collection of articles in J. Edmondson, S. Mason, and J. Rives, eds., *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (Oxford 2005). Josephus' Roman context is especially noticed in discussions of *Contra Apionem*, see J.M.G. Barclay, "Judaism in Roman Dress: Josephus' Tactics in the *Contra Apionem*," in *Internationales Josephus-Kolloquium Aarhus 1999* (ed. J.U. Kalms; Münster 2000), 231–245.

understanding of the biblical narrative."[3] This paper, following a general discussion of Josephus' treatment of this episode, will therefore focus on a specific element which particularly reveals Josephus' participation in, and not merely instrumental use of, contemporary Graeco-Roman cultural practices. This specific element of the narrative—the relationship between Isaac and Ishmael—has received little attention, but demonstrates that a number of aspects of Josephus' treatment of this episode can be clarified by considering his adoption of contemporary laws and customs concerning slavery, concubinage and inheritance. This perspective reveals another dimension to Josephus' rewriting of this narrative and draws greater attention to his Roman context.

2. Hagar and Ishmael in the *Antiquitates judaicae*

As Josephus' rewriting of this narrative has been discussed by others,[4] I will limit my comments to a general outline of the most important elements of the text which are relevant to the second part of this paper. Josephus introduces the episode with a flashback to Gen 15:2–7, where Abraham is said to be distressed at still being childless and God reassures him (*A.J.* 1.187). Offering an abridged version of Gen 16:1–3, Josephus relates that Sarah, at God's command as he adds, caused Abraham to lie down with the handmaiden Hagar. He then elaborates on Hagar's reaction to her pregnancy (1.188). Whereas the biblical description is limited to "she looked with contempt on her mistress" (Gen 16:4), Josephus greatly emphasizes Hagar's insolence by characterizing her behaviour as ὕβρις. In classical Greek literature, ὕβρις entails a violation of divine and human right, a trespassing beyond one's own sphere.[5] This Hagar does

[3] P. Spilsbury, *The Image of the Jew in Flavius Josephus' Paraphrase of the Bible* (TSAJ 69; Tübingen 1998), 34.

[4] See esp. J.L. Bailey, "Josephus' Portrayal of the Matriarchs," in *Josephus, Judaism and Christianity* (ed. L.H. Feldman and G. Hata; Leiden 1987), 154–179; B.H. Halpern-Amaru, "Portraits of Biblical Women in Josephus' *Antiquities*," *JJS* 39 (1988): 143–170; and the comments made by Feldman in the Brill edition of the *Jewish Antiquities*: L.H. Feldman, *Judaean Antiquities 1–4* (vol. 3 of *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*; ed. S. Mason; Leiden 2000). I have used this translation, with adaptations.

[5] See D.B. Levine, "*Hubris* in Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* 1–4," *HUCA* 64 (1993): 51–87. Levine quotes a number of ancient definitions that connect ὕβρις with dishonour (ἀτιμία). The LXX also connects Hagar's behaviour with dishonour: she dishonours (ἠτιμάσθη) her mistress (Gen 16:4 LXX). Perhaps this triggered Josephus' introduction of the term ὕβρις.

by usurping Sarah's position in "assuming queenly airs" (βασιλίζουσα), thinking that leadership would pass to her child.[6] Furthermore, ὕβρις is always followed by (divine) retribution. By employing the concept of ὕβρις, Josephus makes Hagar's harsh punishment by Sarah more acceptable. He also omits Sarah's reproach to Abraham in Gen 16:5, since this does not concord with his portrayal of Sarah as a submissive wife. Hagar then flees into the wilderness (1.189), where the angel does not simply tell her, as in Gen 16:9, to return to her mistress, but lectures her that she was to blame for her own suffering because of her own stubborn (αὐθάδη) and thoughtless (ἀγνώμονα) behaviour and that she should act with greater self-control (σωφροσύνη). The terms Josephus employs to characterize Hagar's behaviour appear regularly in Greek literature in connection with the opposition of ὕβρις and self-control. Self-control is one of the cardinal virtues and was a widespread ideal in Hellenistic ethical philosophy. This moralizing addition is typical of Josephus' approach: he offers a biographical, moralizing history and draws moral lessons of virtue and vice through the portrayal of his main characters.[7] The idiom he employs here shows that Josephus shares common moral-philosophical assumptions of his time and applies these concepts to his interpretation of Jewish scriptures.

The angel then urges Hagar to return to Abraham and Sarah, explaining that "if she disobeyed God and went further on her way, she would perish whereas if she returned she would be the mother of a son who would be king of that land" (*A.J.* 1.190).[8] In this addition, Josephus seems to recast the angel's words into one of his central themes: that obedience to God leads to happiness and disobedience to misfortune.[9] He adds that Hagar indeed obeyed and stresses the forgiving nature of Abraham and

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[6] The term βασιλίζουσα may be an allusion to the Hebrew meaning of the name Sarah, "princess" or "queen." In the *B.J.*, Josephus speaks of Sarah as "our queen (βασιλίδα), the mother of our nation" (5.379). Philo also attests to "princess" (ἄρχουσα) as the meaning of Sarah's name in *Cher.* 7; *Migr.* 99; *Mut.* 77.

[7] S. Mason, "Introduction to the *Judean Antiquities*," introduction to L.H. Feldman, *Judaean Antiquities 1–4* (vol. 3 of *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*; ed. S. Mason; Leiden 2000), xxxii. Mason considers these emphases as characteristic of Roman historiography, see S. Mason, "Flavius Josephus in Flavian Rome: Reading on and between the Lines," in *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text* (ed. A.J. Boyle and W.J. Dominik; Leiden 2003), 569–573.

[8] For Josephus' omission of the prophecy that Ishmael will be a wild ass of a man (Gen 16:12), see below.

[9] See H.W. Attridge, *The Interpretation of Biblical History in the* Antiquitates Judaicae *of Flavius Josephus* (HDR 7; Cambridge 1976).

Sarah by noting that she obtained a pardon. The first part of the Hagar and Ishmael narrative then ends with the birth of Ishmael.

In his rewriting of the second part of the narrative (Gen 21), Josephus further softens the biblical image of the matriarch. In an addition to the biblical account, he states that before Isaac's birth Sarah cherished Ishmael as her own son, "for he was being nurtured for the succession to the rule" (*A.J.* 1.215). Josephus here provides an elaborate explanation of Sarah's motives for sending away Ishmael: instead of being jealous, as Genesis seems to suggest, he writes that she fears for the life of her own son Isaac, because Ishmael might harm him after Abraham's death. It is for this reason that Sarah did not deem it proper that Ishmael should be reared (παρατρέφεσται) with Isaac and thus kept attempting to persuade Abraham to send him away with his mother (1.216). This insistence of Sarah, a task she "pursues with zeal," improves the image of Abraham, who is very reluctant to send Hagar and Ishmael away, more so than is the case in Genesis, as he first refuses and only yields after he has learned of God's approval. Josephus portrays Abraham as a man who is concerned with humankind in general: he is distressed because of the general inhumanity he sees in the act of sending away a child and a woman "destitute of the necessities of life" (1.216–217).[10]

To sum up, Josephus emphasizes Sarah's submissiveness and maternal concern as well as Abraham's humanitarian concern and the obedience of both to God. Both parts of the narrative are retold to show them in a better light and justify their behaviour towards Hagar and Ishmael. This corresponds to his idealistic portrayal of Sarah and the other matriarchs in general, who are portrayed as exemplary representatives of the Jewish people.[11] The portrait of Sarah serves to enhance the portrait of Abraham, who in the *Antiquitates judaicae* appears as a national hero, with, as Feldman has argued, emphasis on his qualities as a philosopher, scientist and general.[12]

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[10] Halpern-Amaru, "Portraits of Biblical Women," 143–170.

[11] See Bailey, "Josephus' Portrayal of the Matriarchs," 154–179; Halpern-Amaru, "Portraits of Biblical Women," 143–170, who argues that Josephus models Sarah along the lines of the Hellenistic ideal of the traditional wife.

[12] L.H. Feldman, "Abraham the General in Josephus," in *Nourished with Peace: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism in Memory of Samuel Sandmel* (ed. F.E. Greenspahn, E. Hilgert, and B.L. Mack; Chico, Calif., 1984), 43–49; L.H. Feldman, "Hellenizations in Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*: The Portrait of Abraham," in *Josephus, Judaism and Christianity* (ed. L.H. Feldman and G. Hata; Leiden 1987), 133–153; L.H. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible* (Berkeley 1998), 223–289.

What happens to Ishmael? Josephus relates that having, with God's help, escaped dying of hunger and thirst (*A.J.* 1.218–219), Hagar finds Ishmael an Egyptian wife (1.220). Their twelve sons "dwelt in all the country extending from the Euphrates to the Erythrean Sea and called it Nabatene" (1.221).[13] As in 1.214, Josephus connects the Arabs with the descendants of Ishmael, "the founder of their race."[14] Yet this is not the final reference to Ishmael in the *Antiquitates judaicae*. The remainder of this paper will focus on the relationship between the concubine's son and Isaac in respect of which Josephus seems to foresee a future conflict between them over the succession to Abraham's rule.

3. The Illegitimacy of Ishmael

Hagar is described by Josephus as a handmaiden (θεραπαινίς; 1.187, 188), a servant (δούλη; 1.215) and a concubine (παλλακή; 1.214). In other biblical cases of children born to concubines or slaves, Josephus consistently makes a distinction between these children and the children born to the man's spouse, applying the term γνήσιος, meaning "lawfully begotten" or "legitimate."[15] Although Josephus does not explicitly make this distinction in our case, there are three arguments that support my observation that Josephus did in fact consider Ishmael to be an illegitimate child.

Firstly, as I mentioned above, in all other references to children born to concubines or slaves, Josephus distinguishes them from other chil-

[13] In Gen, Ishmael's descendants are mentioned in Gen 25:12–16 and after the enumeration of Abraham's descendants by Keturah in Gen 25:1–6. By mentioning Ishmael's descendants immediately after his account of the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael, Josephus follows one of his own basic principles in the rearrangement of Pentateuch material, dealing with one topic in detail before proceeding to the next. See L.H. Feldman, "Rearrangement of Pentateuchal Narrative Material in Josephus' *Antiquities*, Books 1–4," *HUCA* 70 (2000): 129–152.

[14] In *A.J.* 1.214, Josephus explains the shared Arab and Jewish custom of circumcision in terms of their common descent from Abraham: "and from that time on the Jews have a custom to perform circumcision after so many days. And Arabs do so after the thirteenth year. For Ismaelos, the founder of their race, born from a concubine to Habramos, was circumcised at that time. Concerning this I shall expound the entire subject with much exactness." This identification of Ishmaelites and Arabs is also found in *Jub.* 20:13 and Apollonius Molon (*apud* Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.9.1–3). For a detailed discussion, see F. Millar, "Hagar, Ishmael and the Origins of Islam," *JJS* 44 (1993): 23–45.

[15] Cf. *A.J.* 1.153, 344; 2.5; 5.233; 7.70.

dren who are called "legitimate." For example, in his enumeration of the children of Jacob (*A.J.* 1.344; cf. Gen 35:22–26), Josephus starts by saying: "eight of these were legitimate," that is, the children born to his wives Leah and Rachel, and then lists the four children that were born from the handmaidens (θεραπαινίς). The same qualification γνήσιος is found in his mention of the children of Abraham's brother Nachor (*A.J.* 1.153), King David (7.70) and the seventy legitimate sons of Gideon (5.233). In the case of Isaac and Ishmael, Josephus makes no such distinction.

Secondly, Josephus avoids referring to Ishmael explicitly as the son of Abraham. Whereas Genesis speaks of Ishmael as Abraham's son several times, Josephus omits this or describes their relationship indirectly, as we can see in *A.J.* 1.191. Whereas Gen 16:15 twice explicitly designates Ishmael as Abraham's son, Josephus avoids this by speaking of "the aforementioned" (ὁ προειρημένος).[16] Another example concerns a section that we have seen before (1.216). When Josephus speaks of Abraham's general humanitarian concern for a child and a woman, he is able to omit the biblical reason for Abraham's hesitation: that it was "distressing to him on account of his son" (Gen 21:11).[17]

Thirdly, in his introduction to the episode of the sacrifice of Isaac, Josephus refers to Isaac as an only child (*A.J.* 1.222). Although the term he uses, μονογενής, also means "unique," Josephus never uses it in this sense.[18] Furthermore, he could have chosen to follow the Septuagint, in which Isaac is designated as "the beloved" (τὸν ἀγαπητόν; Gen 22:2 LXX). Instead, Josephus' description is similar to the Masoretic Text which has "your only one" (יחידך). This seems to have posed a problem for later interpreters of Genesis. While ἀγαπητός in combination with "son"

[16] This is not immediately clear from the most important translations of the *Antiquitates judaicae* by Thackeray (1926), Whiston (1987), and Feldman (1999), which all read "the aforementioned *son*."

[17] See further *A.J.* 1.191, 214, 216. A possible exception may be 1.215, where Josephus speaks of Abraham as "*their* father" (τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῖς), although Ishmael is still not designated as Abraham's son.

[18] There are three other instances of μονογενής in Josephus' works. In *A.J.* 2.181 it refers to Chusim, the only son of Dan; in 5.264 it refers to Jephthah's only daughter (cf. Judg 11:34; both the Hebrew יחידה and Greek μονογενής indicate that there was only one daughter). Finally, in *A.J.* 20.20 μονογενής refers to Izates, who was not an only child. In this case however, it is further qualified by ὡς: Monobazus loved his son Izates "as if he were his only child."

can also designate an only, unique child, it could be a way of avoiding referring to Isaac as such.[19] The description of Isaac as the only son also occurs in 4Q225 2 I, 11. Here, however, the Ishmael narratives between Gen 15 and the sacrifice of Isaac are omitted altogether. Through such a reconstruction, Isaac actually is the only son.[20] Apparently, Josephus has no problem referring to Isaac as an only child.

On this basis it can be argued that Josephus indicates a difference in legal status between Ishmael and Isaac. The latter is Abraham's only *legitimate* son because Ishmael was born to a concubine. This distinction between legitimate children and children born from concubines is not found in the Hebrew Bible or the LXX. It is most likely that Josephus' introduction of this distinction is an expression of his adoption of contemporary family law.[21] In both Greek-Hellenistic and Roman law, the children of a concubine were considered illegitimate. These children were entitled to inherit through their mother's family and had no claim on their father's possessions. Most Roman men consorting with concubines probably did so in order to avoid legitimate offspring and the resulting additional claims on their property. The solution to childlessness was not sought in concubinage, but in divorce or adoption.[22]

Furthermore, Roman marriage laws dictated that a free man could not legally marry a slave, while sexual contact was allowed. Josephus also

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[19] C.H. Turner, "ο υιος μου ο αγαπητος," *JTS* 27 (1926): 113–129.

[20] See further B. Halpern-Amaru, "A Note on Isaac as First-Born in *Jubilees* and Only Son in 4Q225," *DSD* 13 (2006): 127–133.

[21] I have chosen to use the term *contemporary* law in this case and not *Roman* law specifically, since it is notably difficult to determine whether a legal matter was specifically Roman or more widespread. The Romans adopted many features of the Greek-Hellenistic system of law. Furthermore, Roman legal practices were widely diffused through the provinces, but there were many local variations across the empire. From the scrolls found in the Babatha archive—a group of documents deposited in the Cave of Letters at the time of the Bar Kokhba revolt—it is clear that Roman law was being applied in Arabia and that Jews made use of foreign laws and practices as well as their own (see D. Johnston, *Roman Law in Context* [Cambridge 1999], 9–11). For the problems concerning the identification of specific legal practices as either Roman, Hellenistic or Jewish, see esp. R. Katzoff and D. Schaps, eds., *Law in the Documents of the Judaean Desert* (JSJSup 96; Leiden 2005).

[22] R. Friedl, "Konkubinat," *RAC* 21:418, 425; C. Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity* (Oxford 2005), 192–195; P. Trams, "Kinderlosigkeit," *RAC* 20:950–951.

prohibits a free man marrying a slave, diverging in this respect from the biblical marriage laws (*A.J.* 4.224). The fact that Josephus makes this legal aspect of the biblical text accord with contemporary customs shows that it is at least possible that he would do the same in other cases. It also provides an explanation for his omission of the formula that is used to describe the change of Hagar's status in Gen 16:3. As is clear from the Hebrew Bible, if a wife remained childless she could give her handmaiden or slave to her husband as a wife (נתן אשה).[23] In his paraphrase of this section, Josephus omits the biblical phrase which says that Sarah gave Hagar to her husband as a wife, since from his perspective such a marriage would not be possible.[24] He also transforms Gen 16:2, which says that the children which Hagar conceived would be considered Sarah's, into the more neutral claim "that Abraham will procreate children by her" (*A.J.* 1.187).

However, Josephus seems to have a problem: in Roman law, as we have just seen, children born to concubines were not considered legitimate members of the householder's family and could not inherit. In this context, there is really no point using a concubine to resolve the problem of childlessness, as happens in Gen 16. Josephus' wish to retell this biblical narrative thus conflicts with contemporary norms. This conflict readily explains the fact that Josephus in this case only hints at the distinction between legitimate children and children born of concubines, a distinction he makes explicit in all similar cases.

4. The Sons of Keturah

Another aspect of the relationship between Isaac and Ishmael and especially of Ishmael's expulsion comes to light when we include Abraham's other children in our discussion: the sons he had with Keturah, whom he married after Sarah had died (Gen 25:1–6; *A.J.* 1.238–239). Josephus apparently considers this a legal marriage (unlike Genesis he does not refer to Keturah as a concubine) and there is no indication that he thought of their sons as illegitimate. Nevertheless, they do share Ishmael's fate.

[23] Cf. Gen 29:28; 30:4, 9; 34:12; 41:45.
[24] See also *A.J.* 1.305–306 with Gen 30:3–4.

Gen 25:1 Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah.	*A.J.* 1.238 And he later married (γαμεῖ) Keturah, FROM WHOM SIX CHILDREN WERE BORN TO HIM, BOTH STRONG FOR LABORS AND CLEVER IN UNDERSTANDING:
2 She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.	Zembranes, Iazares, Madanes, Madianes, Lousoubakos, and Souos.
3 Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan. The sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim. 4 The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.	AND CHILDREN WERE BORN ALSO TO THESE. From Souos were born Sabakines and Dadanes; and from the latter Latousimos, Assouris, and Lououris. And from Madanes, Ephas, Eophren, Anochos, Ebidas, and Eldas.
5 Abraham gave all he had to Isaac. 6 But to the sons of his concubines Abraham gave gifts, while he was still living, and he sent them away from his son Isaac, eastward to the east country.	239 ABRAHAM CONTRIVED EXPEDITIONS OF COLONIES (ἀποικιῶν στόλους μηχανᾶται) FOR ALL THESE CHILDREN AND GRANDSONS, AND THEY TOOK POSSESSION OF TROGLODITIS AND THE PART OF ARABIA FELIX THAT EXTENDS TO THE ERYTHREAN SEA [. . .].[25]

In *A.J.* 1.239, Josephus tells us that Abraham "contrived expeditions of colonies for all these children and grandsons, and they took possession of Trogloditis and the part of Arabia Felix that extends to the Erythrean Sea." This is a very interesting rewriting of Gen 25:5–6, with the original stating that Abraham gave all he had to Isaac, while to the sons of his concubines he gave gifts and sent them away from his son Isaac, "to the east country."[26] In Genesis, these other sons are sent away to ensure that Isaac would be the only heir. Josephus omits every reference to Isaac, but does not provide us with a further explanation of why Abraham sent his other sons away to found colonies. In addition, while Genesis gives a vague geographical designation—the east—Josephus gives a more exact

[25] Additions to the biblical text are rendered in SMALL CAPS.

[26] The practice of giving possessions before one's death is attested to in several papyri found in the Judean Desert and gave the beneficiary immediate entitlement to the property, as opposed it to being bequeathed *post mortem*. See Y. Rivlin, "Gift and Inheritance Laws in the Judaean Desert," in *Law in the Documents of the Judaean Desert* (ed. R. Katzoff and D. Schaps; JSJSup 96; Leiden 2005).

location: the sons of Keturah took possession of Trogloditis, that is the Arabian part of the Red Sea, and a part of Arabia Felix, the southwest coast of the Arabian peninsula.

The words with which Josephus describes the sending away of Keturah's sons are very revealing: Abraham prepared or devised expeditions of colony settlements (ἀποικιῶν στόλους μηχανᾶται). This gives the impression of a very well considered, strategic decision. This is relevant for our discussion of the Hagar and Ishmael narrative, since Josephus employs the exact same word to describe the "expulsion" of Hagar and Ishmael in *A.J.* 1.216. Here he writes that Sarah persuaded Abraham to send Ishmael away with his mother to a colony settlement (εἰς ἀποικίαν ἐκπέμπειν). That there is a significant and deliberate connection between the relocation of all of Abraham's children is confirmed in the second book of the *Antiquitates judaicae*, *A.J.* 2.213, where we are told that Abraham had "bequeathed (καταλιπεῖν) to Ishmael and to his posterity the land of the Arabians, and Trogloditis to his sons by Keturah, and to Isaac, Canaan":

> He recalled that Abraham who had set out alone from Mesopotamia to Canaan, was blessed both in other respects and in the fact that his wife, who had formerly been barren, afterwards, in accordance with his will, had become fertile, and that he had fathered sons and bequeathed (καταλιπεῖν) to Ishmael and his descendants the land of the Arabians, and Trogloditis to his descendants from Keturah, and Canaan to Isaac.
>
> (Josephus, *A.J.* 2.213)

We may find a clue as to why this would be necessary in the specific meaning of ἀποικίζω. The establishment of colonies was a means to avoid internal conflicts, that could arise, for example, in cases of overpopulation. For instance, in *A.J.* 1.110, God bids the sons of Noah to establish colonies because of their large population, "in order that they might not engage in civil strife with one another." Josephus gives us the impression that both Ishmael and the sons of Keturah are sent away to avoid conflict, probably involving Abraham's inheritance. The existence of the bond of common descent between the descendants of Keturah, Ishmael and Isaac also offers a plausible explanation for Josephus' omission of the prophecy in Gen 16:12, that Ishmael "will be a wild ass of a man, who shall live at odds with his kin," with his brothers. The reason Abraham's offspring were sent away was precisely to avoid these conflicts![27]

[27] This does not exclude Feldman's explanation of Josephus' omission of this prophecy

The expression connected with the founding of colonies in *A.J.* 2.213 is καταλείπω ("to bequeath"). This word is often used in the context of inheritance in the sense of "to leave or give by will after one's death."[28] Thus, as a kind of testament or inheritance arrangement, Josephus has Abraham divide territory among his offspring, giving the impression that the lands of Arabia, Trogloditis and Canaan were equal shares.

With this issue of inheritance in mind, it is remarkable that Josephus omits the biblical remarks that ascribe to Isaac the sole right of inheritance, as we have seen in his rewriting of Gen 25:5–6 (*A.J.* 1.239). Likewise, in describing Sarah's motives for sending away Hagar and Ishmael (1.215), he omits Sarah's harsh verdict: "for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac" (Gen 21:10). However, it becomes clear in *A.J.* 1.253, 255 that it is Isaac who has the birthright according to Josephus. In this passage, Abraham sends a servant to look for a wife for Isaac. Josephus elaborates on the speech with which the servant addresses Rebecca's family in an attempt to persuade them to permit Isaac to marry Rebecca.

Gen 24:36 And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and he has given him all that he has.	*A.J.* 1.253 This one, therefore, sends me to you to ask to take this maiden in marriage for his child, who is his lawful (γνήσιός) son and who has been nurtured to inherit everything (μόνος ἐπὶ τοῖς πᾶσι τεθραμμένος) …
–	1.255 … And Isaac married her, the estate having come into his hands (τῶν πραγμάτων εἰς αὐτὸν ἀφικομένων). For the sons by Keturah had departed to their colonies (εἰς τὰς ἀποικίας ἐξεληλύθεισαν).

Isaac is designated as the legitimate son (γνήσιός) in 1.253 and, furthermore, he is said to have been nurtured to inherit everything alone (μόνος ἐπὶ τοῖς πᾶσι τεθραμμένος). Furthermore in 1.255, Josephus says that when Isaac married Rebecca, the estate had already come into his hands,

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which is that Josephus wants to avoid attacks on non-Jews and therefore leaves out this unfavourable statement about the ancestor of the Arabs (Feldman, *Judaean Antiquities 1–4*, 71n591).

[28] Cf. *A.J.* 17.188, 244, 322; *B.J.* 2.98, 99 for καταλείπω in combination with διαθήκη ("testament").

as the sons of Keturah had departed for their colonies (εἰς τὰς ἀποικίας ἐξεληλύθεισαν). The first section seems to allude to Ishmael. In contrast to Isaac, he was not legitimate and had been sent away, as we have seen, because Sarah did not deem it proper for Isaac to be nurtured with him (*A.J.* 1.215; Josephus uses the same verb παρατρέφεσθαι). The second section in particular makes clear that Josephus casts the narrative of Hagar and Ishmael in terms of inheritance and the question of Abraham's succession. The reason that the estate has already come into Isaac's hands is that the sons of Keturah had already departed and thus they no longer had a claim to the estate. To make this statement at this point, Josephus had to rearrange the biblical order. While Genesis first relates the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca in Gen 24 and then mentions the sons of Keturah in Gen 25, Josephus reverses this order, with the sons of Keturah having already departed and with Isaac having full rights to the property when he marries.

This shows how much effort Josephus puts into giving the impression that the succession to Abraham's rule proceeded properly.[29] In Genesis, the fact that God says that he will continue his covenant with Isaac probably provided a sufficient reason to exclude the other children. However, since Josephus consistently avoids reference to the covenant, he has to find another way to justify Isaac as the sole successor to Abraham.[30] Feldman connects Josephus' omission of the distribution of Abraham's property in Gen 25:5–6 with his tendency to stress justice as one of Abraham's main qualities.[31] Surely Josephus wants to avoid the impression that Abraham treated his children unequally, but the reason Josephus cares so much about proper inheritance may again be found in his adoption of Roman law. The Roman *pater familias* was entirely free to disinherit some of his children, but it was not readily accepted socially unless there were very good reasons. Furthermore, if children were not formally and explicitly disinherited in a will, they could dispute the will and the share due to them if their father died intestate. In that

[29] The impression that Josephus is occupied with Abraham's succession is reinforced by the fact that Abraham adopts Lot in *A.J.* 1.154 because he lacked a legitimate son. See Feldman's comments concerning this point, suggesting that Josephus may have been "inspired by an institution known to him from Roman law" (Feldman, *Judaean Antiquities 1–4*, 55n494).

[30] For the lack of covenantal language in Josephus, see B. Halpern-Amaru, *Rewriting the Bible: Land and Covenant in Postbiblical Jewish Literature* (Valley Forge, Pa., 1994), 95–115.

[31] Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation*, 239.

case the children had equal rights to the estate.[32] An important motive for making a will could therefore be the desire to treat children unequally, for example, to avoid fragmentation of the estate.[33] If Josephus had these legal practices in mind, he could not simply disinherit Abraham's other children, because this would seem unfair to his Roman readers and, given his own Roman situation, perhaps also to himself. To enable Isaac's inheritance of Canaan, he introduces Abraham's "will," in which Arabia is bequeathed to Ishmael, Trogloditis to the sons of Keturah and Canaan to Isaac (*A.J.* 2.213). In this way, Isaac's inheritance of Canaan is guaranteed, which would not have been the case had Abraham died intestate. At the same time, Josephus avoids the impression that Abraham treated his children unequally, presenting these lands as equal shares.[34]

This does not explain as yet why Josephus chose to cast this inheritance in terms of a *colonization movement*. Some suggestions have been put forward concerning the background to this expression. Halpern-Amaru connects the colonization theme in *A.J.* 2.213 with Josephus' omission of the biblical concept of the promised land and its covenantal context. As Halpern-Amaru observes, it is Abraham and not God who grants territories to his children. She argues that Josephus' use of the term "colony" in this context is related to his conception of a blessed Diaspora, which might be characterized as colonial in character, existing alongside the Jewish homeland.[35] The lack of distinction between Canaan and the other regions mentioned in *A.J.* 2.213 could indeed be a way of diminishing the

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[32] J.A. Crook, *Law and Life of Rome* (London 1967), 122.

[33] Johnston, *Roman Law in Context*, 52.

[34] A possible objection to this interpretation could be that Josephus does not have to include Ishmael at all, since he is not automatically entitled to his father's inheritance being the son of a concubine. Since Ishmael is absent in *A.J.* 1.253, 255, it appears that it is indeed not necessary to mention Ishmael explicitly in a discussion of Abraham's inheritance. The fact that Josephus does include Ishmael in 2.213, where Abraham bequeaths the land of the Arabians to him, can be explained in different ways, which are not mutually exclusive: (1) It could be a way of dealing with Gen 25:18 and the biblical tradition of the presence of the Ishmaelites in the region "from Havilah to Shur." The fact that Josephus identifies the Ishmaelites with the Arabs of his day, suggests that this was a more or less current tradition, which Josephus perhaps wants to account for. (2) Abraham's inclusion of Ishmael in the division of this property, even though it is not necessary, makes him even more righteous and just.

[35] Halpern-Amaru, *Rewriting the Bible*, 101, 113–115. According to Halpern-Amaru, Josephus wants to avoid any revolutionary implications that may be contained in the theology of covenanted land, because of its importance for Davidic messianism. See also L.H. Feldman, "The Concept of Exile in Josephus," in *Judaism and Hellenism Reconsidered* (ed. L.H. Feldman; Leiden 2006), 695–721.

importance of the former, making it merely one section of the property that Abraham happened to bestow on one of his sons. Sterling, commenting on this section, points to parallels in Greek historiography in which other people are presented as originating from Greek colonies.[36] Indeed, Josephus stresses the affinity between the Arabs and Jews by describing them as virtuous, strong for labours and clever in understanding, qualities that he also applies to Abraham (*A.J.* 1.154, 221, 238).[37] I would like to suggest a third aspect to his use of the term "colony" that may explain why he uses it in this specific case.

The sending away of Ishmael and the sons of Keturah to found colonies may be compared with the Roman practice of emancipation. *Emancipatio* entailed the release of an individual from fatherly power and ended membership of the *familia*. Emancipation therefore meant an end to the automatic right to a share of the inheritance. The reasons for emancipation varied from expulsion from the family as punishment, to, more common, practical and economical reasons. One of the reasons for this practice, mentioned by Gardner in her book on Roman family law, is that the land no longer sufficed for the family's needs. One or more of the children might be emancipated so that they could leave and *establish a colony*.[38] In this way, emancipation could be used as part of a strategy of planning for the future of the family.[39] Josephus may have had this practice in mind when he had Ishmael and the sons of Keturah found colonies. This meant that Isaac was left as the sole heir without giving the impression of unequal or unjust treatment.

While this suggestion requires further investigation, I believe that a more detailed comparison with ancient family law will clarify other aspects of Josephus' rewriting of this narrative and give us an indication of the degree to which Josephus applied contemporary law in general or Roman law in particular to his interpretation of Jewish scriptures. The present paper has argued that Josephus retold the biblical narrative keeping in mind contemporary family law concerning marriage and inheritance. Some of the modifications to this story that arise as a result of

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[36] G.E. Sterling, *Historiography & Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke-Acts, and Apologetic Historiography* (Leiden 1992), 259.

[37] As noted by Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation*, 229.

[38] J.F. Gardner, *Family and* Familia *in Roman Law and Life* (Oxford 1998), 1–20.

[39] Johnston, *Roman Law in Context*, 32. Since Johnston notes that it is not known how common emancipation was, it is difficult to ascertain the likeliness of Josephus' familiarity with this practice.

this perspective are minor—such as the omission of the biblical claim that Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham "as a wife." Other aspects of contemporary law, such as the illegitimacy of children born of concubines, seem to have posed a problem for Josephus: there was no point in conceiving children with a concubine as a solution to childlessness when such a child could not inherit. Josephus updated the biblical account, altering it so that it corresponded with contemporary (Roman) law and custom, a demonstration of Josephus' high level of acculturation. Furthermore, Josephus' concordance with the Roman legal situation can be connected with his wish to show that Judaism was not incompatible with Roman society, as was being claimed by Flavian propaganda after the Jewish War.[40] At the same time, this does not mean that Josephus was not convinced of the veracity of the alterations he made: the simple fact of his living in Rome for twenty years, in which he had to manage in the Roman legal environment, provides sufficient reason for the appearance of Roman legal practices in his rewriting of the Hagar narrative.

[40] See M. Goodman, "Josephus' Treatise *Against Apion*," in *Apologetics in the Roman Empire* (ed. M. Edwards, M. Goodman, and S. Price; Oxford 1999), 57–58.

RABBINIC JUDAISM

CONVERTING THE MISSIONARY IMAGE OF ABRAHAM: RABBINIC TRADITIONS MIGRATING FROM THE LAND OF ISRAEL TO BABYLON

Moshe Lavee

1. Introduction

This paper compares the traditions from the two divergent rabbinic milieus of Late Antiquity—Babylon and the land of Israel (Palestine), and shows a change in the image of Abraham as a proselytizer. The past decades have seen an important development in the study of rabbinic literature, leading to a growing recognition of the contribution of late redactors and transmitters to the shaping of rabbinic traditions.[1] Accordingly, we will examine the rabbinic narratives concerning Abraham's mission to the nations, recognizing that rabbinic literature is a literary corpus that evolved through centuries of creative redaction and the flexible transmission of orally cited materials. Such an approach will shed new light on the place of the missionary image in rabbinic thought. By uncovering the work of late redactors and transmitters, we will be able to portray the important shift that occurred, as rabbinic traditions migrated from the land of Israel to Babylon, during the first half of the first millennium. Only after identifying the literary processes demonstrated in the rabbinic corpus can we reconsider their implications concerning the question of the missionary nature of Judaism in Late Antiquity.[2]

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[1] S.J.D. Cohen, ed., *The Synoptic Problem in Rabbinic Literature* (BJS 326; Providence, R.I., 2000); J.R. Rubenstein, ed., *Creation and Composition: The Contribution of the Bavli Redactors* (Stammaim) *to the Aggada* (Tübingen 2005).

[2] Throughout this paper, I will use descriptive language, showing how traditions from the land of Israel were "treated" in the Babylonian Talmud. I will claim, for example, that the Babylonian Talmud replaced traditions about Abraham with others, speaking about Torah scholars. My language should not be misunderstood as a reconstruction of the intentional deeds of a certain Babylonian redactor. I do not intend to claim that someone held the rabbinic Palestinian texts, as we witness them today, and deliberately changed them. I only wish to portray the end result of the complicated and multifaceted processes

The image of Abraham's mission to the nations was very popular in traditions preserved in classical rabbinic literature. Abraham is portrayed as proclaiming the name of God in public; leading people to recognize the monotheistic belief; practicing common missionary acts; serving food and taking care of people's needs in order to, or in a manner that, brought them near (to the faith, to God, to the Jewish people, etc.), and so on. Such portrayals are found in various rabbinic works, from the early Tannaitic midrashim of the third century, to the latest midrashic compilations, redacted and reworked even in the dawn of the first millennium.[3] They are present in liturgical poetry and Targum traditions[4] and continued to live in Jewish cultures through the mediation of various medieval manifestations, such as in biblical commentaries and Jewish thinkers' contemplations.

2. "Love the Lord, Thy God." From Active Missionary to an Appealing Way of Living

The earliest presentation of Abraham's mission to the nations is found in the Tannaitic midrash *Sifre on Deuteronomy*, probably redacted in the third century:

> Another interpretation: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" (Deut 6:5): Make him beloved to creatures, as did your father Abraham, as Scriptures say: "And the persons that they had made in Haran . . ." (Gen 12:5). But is it not true that if all the inhabitants of the world came (together in an effort) to create a single mosquito, and endow it with a soul, they could not (do so)? Hence we learn that Abraham converted people, and gathered them under the wings of the *Shekinah* [i.e., the divine presence].[5]
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> (*Sifre Deut* 32)

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of transmission and reworking of sources. A detailed reconstruction of this process is beyond my scope here.

[3] W.G. Braude, *Jewish Proselyting in the First Five Centuries of the Common Era: The Age of the Tannaim and Amoraim* (BUS 6; Providence, R.I., 1940), ch. 10; B.J. Bamberger, *Proselytism in the Talmudic Period* (Cincinnati 1939), ch. 3; M. Simon, *Verus Israel: A Study of the Relations between Christian and Jews in the Roman Empire (135–425)* (trans. H. McKeating; LLJC; London 1986), 271–305; L.H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton 1993), chs. 9–11; L.H. Feldman, "Conversion to Judaism in Classical Antiquity," *HUCA* 74 (2003): 115–156; M. Goodman, *Mission and Conversion: Proselytizing in the Religious History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford 1994), ch. 7.

[4] R. Hayward, "Abraham as Proselytizer at Beer-Sheba in the Targums of the Pentateuch," *JJS* 49 (1998): 24–37.

[5] Translated on basis of Genizah fragment (M.I. Kahana, *The Genizah Fragments*

We should read our texts with the helpful typology, proposed by Goodman, for the study of missionary phenomenon in Antiquity.[6] In order to support a claim for a "strong" missionary undercurrent in a text, we should demonstrate an intentional effort to spread the religious belief of a certain group, accompanied by the rejection of the other's religious practices, and aimed at full conversion of all non-members into the group. Such a strong missionary approach should be differentiated from more modest modes of missionary activity. An educational mission, for example, only disseminates some values and convictions, but does not lead to a change of affiliation and belonging of non-members. The diffusion of cults, which was common in the Greco-Roman milieu prior to Christian dominance, is also differentiated from missionary activity of the strong definition described by Goodman's typology. We should also ask whether the text is actually preaching for missionary activity and institutionalizing it or, on the other hand, only presenting the missionary activity as a projection of the nostalgic biblical past or the eschatological future—which are actually two sides of the same coin.

According to such strict criteria, the midrash, as presented in the *Sifre*, is the clearest (and only?) early rabbinic manifestation of a proactive missionary tradition. The text is found in a halakic midrash, a text mainly occupied with the commandments and the legal implications of the Torah (though in a haggadic section of it).[7] In a typical midrashic manipulation of the biblical text, instead of reading the word (וְאָהַבְתָּ) in the first conjugation ("love [thy God]!"), it prefers to vocalize it in the second conjugation (וְאֹהַבְתָּ "you should make him beloved"). It is a commandment to make God beloved by "all the inhabitants of the world" (כל באי עולם), a phrase commonly used to include non-Jews. Abraham is the exemplar for the fulfillment of this divine expectation, presenting "strong" missionary activity. Abraham converted people (גייר),

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of the Halakhic Midrashim [Jerusalem 2005]), 253, reading מכנסן ("gathering"), rather than מכניסן ("letting them in"). For the text of *Sifre on Deuteronomy*, see *Siphre ad Deuteronomium* (ed. L. Finkelstein; CTan 3.3; New York 1969), 54.

[6] Goodman, *Mission and Conversion*, ch. 1. For an earlier effort to use a typology in discussing the question of Jewish missionary, see Cohen, *Synoptic Problem*.

[7] *Sifre on Deuteronomy* includes three units: 1–54 (mainly haggadic), 55–303 (mainly legal), 304–357 (mainly haggadic), and thus our portion is in the first haggadic unit. For the identification of the units with different schools see G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (Edinburgh 1991), 296. See also A. Yadin, *Scripture as* Logos: *Rabbi Ishmael and the Origins of Midrash* (Philadelphia 2004), x–xii.

proselytized them. The biblical "making" of people (עשו), which probably meant the purchasing of slaves, is reinterpreted. I should note that this alludes to the only aspect of the strong definition of missionary activity that might not be fulfilled in this midrash, since our midrash can be also interpreted as referring to the conversion of Abraham's household, limiting the target audience of his mission. However, such a reading of the midrash, explicitly presented in medieval rabbinic works seems less plausible.[8]

We should also comment on the question of dating this source. Presented in the *Sifre*, it is supposed to be of Tannaitic origin, up to the early third century. However, the parallel in *Genesis Rabbah* attributes it to later third century sages.[9]

This midrash about Abraham was very popular. It frequently appears in later midrashic works. None of them adds the portrayal of Abraham to a commandment, aimed at the addressee of the midrash, as it is done here, but all preserve a memory of Abraham as a proselytizer, and interpret the biblical עשו as conversion.[10] The later sources intensified the missionary undercurrent by gathering together various traditions.[11]

All these late variations are found in Palestinian rabbinic compilations, namely in works that were redacted in Galilee around the fifth century and later, or in a slightly later Byzantine milieu, in times and places in which the Palestinian rabbinic culture was still dominant during most of the second half of the first millennium. However, when searching for the imprint of this tradition in the Babylonian Talmud, important variations are noticeable. This variation corresponds to two components of the tradition in the *Sifre*: (1) the interpretation of the demand to love God as a demand to make him beloved; (2) the presentation of Abraham the proselytizer as an exemplar for that.

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[8] E.g., *Sechel Tob: Commentar zum ersten und zweiten Buch Mosis von Rabbi Menachem ben Salomo verfasst i.J. 1139* (ed. S. Buber; Berlin 1900–1901), 233 (on Gen 37).

[9] *Midrash Bereshit Rabba* (ed. J. Theodor and C. Albeck; 3 vols.; Berlin 1912–1936), 1:378–379 (*Gen. Rab*. 39:14); Goodman, *Mission and Conversion*, 145.

[10] *Gen. Rab*. 84:4, 1004; *Tanh*., *Lek Leka* 12 (21a), cf. *Tanh*. (Buber), *Lek Leka* 15 (36b), and n. 158; *Esth. Rab*. 6:2; *Pesiqta Rabbati: Midrasch für den Fest-Cyclus und die ausgezeichneten Sabbathe* (ed. M. Friedman; Vienna, 1880), 53 (181a–b).

[11] E.g., *Cant. Rab*. 1:3:3 bringing our *Sifre* together with texts known from *Gen. Rab*. 39:2, 366; *t. Horayot* 2:7; *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael* (ed. H.S. Horowitz and I.A. Rabin; Frankfurt A.M., 1931), 1:188–189 (*Amaleq*).

In the parallel *Bavli* variation of our text, there is a different example of the demand to make God beloved, replacing the midrash about Abraham the proselytizer by a different model:

> Abeye said: as it was taught "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God" (Deut 6:5) i.e., that the Name of Heaven be beloved because of you. Who ever has read and studied, and served the sages, and is honest in business, and speaks pleasantly to persons, what do people say concerning him? Happy is so and so that study Torah. Happy is his father who taught him Torah. Happy is his teacher who taught him Torah, woe unto people who have not studied the Torah; for this man has studied the Torah, look how fine his ways are, how righteous his deeds! Of him does scripture say: "And he said unto me: 'Thou art my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.'"
>
> (*b. Yoma* 86a; MS NY JTS ENA 218)

Here, the scene is set in a different context, the emphasis is on the admired scholar of the Torah, and the people who are expected to appreciate him are probably members of the Jewish group. The "us and them" of the text are different. The "us" are the sages, the "them" are Jews, and the sages have to spread their own dignity, importance and the centrality of their idea of Torah study within the Jewish group. We should also note a slight but significant change in the conjugation used for the verb א.ה.ב.—the second proactive conjugation אהבת in the *Sifre* ("you should make him beloved"), and the reflexive מתאהב in the Talmud ("he should become beloved by you"). It is as if the *Bavli* version says: you should not invest proactively in your missionary goal; the task will be fulfilled as a consequence of your exemplary behavior. Not only has the text shifted the missionary goal from a mission to the nations to one aimed at establishing the status of the sages and the study of the Torah *within the remits of the Jewish group*, but it also lowered the degree of activity, suggesting a passive, rather than proactive, model of influence.

There are some clues that might suggest an earlier version of this text did refer to Jews and Gentiles, as hinted in the biblical context of the verses quoted later in the text. The verses are taken from Isa 49, addressed to the nations, and from Ezek 36, where we can find the idea that "the nations shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezek 36:23). Similarly, the use of the word בריות ("creatures") has a universalistic connotation. However, as phrased in the *Bavli* this assumed missionary background of the text is lost.

The text in the *Bavli* is presented as Tannaitic and is believed to be so on the basis of a reconstruction of lost Tannaitic texts from the medieval

anthology *Midrash Hagadol*,[12] but such a reconstruction is doubtful, as the medieval anthologist might have used the *Bavli* version.

3. The "Making" of Souls: From Converting Gentiles to Teaching Jews

The second component of the midrash from *Sifre Deut* 32, that based the tradition about Abraham the proselytizer on the reading of "making" as "converting," also underwent some significant changes in the Babylonian Talmud. The verse of Gen 12:5 was also "converted" into intra-Jewish relations. The following chart presents a comparison of variations of that midrash, as they appear in: the Babylonian Talmud; *Genesis Rabbah*, a classical Amoraic Palestinian midrash of the fifth century; *Avot of Rabbi Nathan*, a work that stems from the Tannaitic era (third century Palestine), though in some cases reworked by late transmitters, even in the Gaonic era during the second half of the first millennium (notice the resemblance to the Babylonian Talmud in our case).

Babylonian Talmud *Sanhedrin* 99b	*Avot of Rabbi Nathan*, version B.26	*Genesis Rabbah* 39:14[13]
אמר ריש לקיש: כל המלמד את בן חבירו תורה מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו עשאו, שנאמר ״ואת הנפש אשר עשו בחרן״	דבר אחר כל המכניס בריה אחת תחת כנפי שמים[14] מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו בראה כאילו יצרה שנאמר ״ואת הנפש אשר עשו בחרן״	״ואת הנפש אשר עשו״? אלא אילו הגרים ... שכל מי שמקרב את הגוי כילו בראו,
Resh Lakish said: "Everyone who teaches Torah for *his friends' son*, the Scriptures accounts him as though he made him, as it is written: 'And the people that they had made in Haran …'" (Gen 12:5).	Another interpretation. Everyone who brings o*ne person* under the wings of heaven, the Scripture accounts him as though he created him and formed him, as Scriptures says: "And the people that they had made in Haran … " (Gen 12:5).	"And the people that they had made?" (Gen 12:5) Rather, these are the proselytes …. Everyone who brings *a Gentile* near, is as though he created him ….

[12] *Midrash Tannaim on Deuteronomy* (ed. D. Hoffman; Berlin 1909), 6:5, 25 based on *Midrash Hagadol*, *Deuteronomy* (ed. M. Margalioth; Jerusalem 1973), 125.

[13] *Midrash Bereshit Rabba* (ed. Theodor and Albeck), 1:379.

[14] MS Vatican 303 reads שכינה. See H.J. Becker, *Avot de-Rabbi Natan: Synoptische Edition beider Versionen* (Tübingen 2006), 358.

While the Palestinian tradition preserves the explicit reference to conversion known from the *Sifre*, and *Avot of Rabbi Nathan* still uses an idiom commonly used to imply converts (under the wings of heaven/*Shekinah*), the Babylonian Talmud offers a different model of a spiritual making of a person—teaching him Torah. We should notice that the person mentioned in the Talmud teaches "his friends' son"—a clear emphasis of the intra-Jewish setting of the text. The concept of spiritual parenthood of both Torah students and "people who come under the wings" is found in an earlier, Tannaitic source (*t. Horayot* 2:5). What is innovative in the Talmud is the correlation of the two different models of spiritual making to the tradition about Abraham in Gen 12:5. This point demonstrates the schism of Palestinian and Babylonian Jewish milieus. The first connected the verse to converts; the second to the study of the Torah. Indeed, the Babylonian Talmud attributed this tradition to a prominent Palestinian sage, Resh Laqish. However, it still should be considered as a Babylonian version of a Palestinian tradition. Even without questioning the validity of attributions in rabbinic literature, and especially in the Babylonian Talmud,[15] we should consider the importance of the choices that were made by redactors, and the sources that have survived in the texts as presented to us today. The text, as presented to us, teaches us about the tendencies at the time of their redaction (or creative transmission), and may be considered as sources for the portrayal of Babylonian versus Palestinian rabbinic cultures.[16]

4. The Diffuser of Fragrance: From Abraham as Proselytizer to Abraham as Torah Scholar

My third example will show the consistency of the shift from the image of Abraham's mission to the image of the Torah scholar. The following Palestinian midrashic tradition has a missionary undercurrent and appears differently in the Babylonian Talmud:

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[15] M. Bregman, "Pseudepigraphy in Rabbinic Literature," in *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Proceedings of the International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 12–14 January, 1997* (ed. E.G. Chazon and M. Stone; STDJ 31; Leiden 1999), 32n24.

[16] There is a significant body of haggadic statements by Resh Laqish in the Babylonian Talmud, many of them unknown from the Palestinian sources, and the study of them might support our claim here.

Genesis Rabbah 39:2[17]

ר׳ ברכיה פתח:
״לריח שמניך טובים וגו׳ ״ (שה״ש א 3) אמר ר׳ ברכיה
למה היה אברהם דומה
לצלוחית שלפפלוסימון מוקפת צמיד פתיל ומונחת
בזוית ולא היה ריחה נודף, כיון שנטלטלה נדף ריחה, כך אמר הקב״ה לאברהם [טלטל עצמך ממקום למקום ושמך מתגדל בעולם] לך לך וגו׳.

R. Berechia commenced:

"Thine ointments have a goodly fragrance" (Song 1:3) Said R. Berechia:
"To what was *Abraham* compared?
To a flask of foliatum, closed with a tight fitting lid, and lying in a corner, so that its odor does not diffuse; as soon as it was taken up (or: shaken), its odor was diffused.
Similarly, the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Abraham: 'Travel from place to place, and thy name will become great in the world.'"

Babylonian Talmud *Avodah Zarah* 35b[18]

דרש רב נחמן בריה דרב חסדא, מאי דכתיב:
״לריח שמניך טובים״, (שה״ש א 3)

למה ת״ח דומה?
לצלוחית של פלייטין,

מגולה ריחה נודף, מכוסה אין ריחה נודף;

R. Nahman the son of R. Hisda expounded: "What is the meaning of the verse, 'Thine ointments have a goodly fragrance' (Song 1:3)
To what may a *scholar* be compared?
To a flask of foliatum:
When opened, its odor is diffused,
but if covered up its odor does not diffuse."

The midrashic image of the flask of foliatum is used for the opening verse of a proem leading to the figure of Abraham in the Palestinian source. The textual unit was subject to an act of recombination, placing it in a midrash about a Torah scholar in the Babylonian Talmud. It is no longer Abraham who bears good fragrance, hinted at in the Cant 1:3, rather a Torah scholar. The reading of the Palestinian source as evidence of a strong missionary tradition is also supported by the image of Abraham moving from place to place, a known motif in images of early Christian missionary activity. The redactor of the slightly later collection *Song of Songs Rabbah*, placed this unit in a sequence of missionary traditions, mentioned above. As in the first example, we can find early Palestinian sources that explain the new version in the Babylonian tradition; the words of Torah were compared to fragrant oil (*Sifre Deut* 48).[19] However,

[17] *Midrash Bereshit Rabba* (ed. Theodor and Albeck); 1:66. Parallels can be found in: *Tanh* (Buber), *Lek Leka* 3 (30b); *Cant. Rab.* 1:3:3. Cf. the contribution by Joanna Weinberg to this volume.

[18] The text is presented on the basis of MS NY JTS 15.

[19] For the text see *Siphre ad Deuteronomium* (ed. Finkelstein), 111.

it is the new setting of the *Bavli* that transforms the fragrance of the words of the Torah to the sage, and at the same time eradicates the affinity of this motif to Abraham as a missionary.

There is another phenomenon, found also in the first example. Again, here the verses used in the Babylonian text hint at its probable origin in missionary traditions, as its next section (not quoted here) interprets the following verse "therefore do the maidens loved thee," which appears in Tannaitic tradition as suggesting martyrdom and its missionary effect.[20] As in all other examples, the Babylonian Talmud reinterpreted the verse as referring to a Torah scholar.

5. Sarah Has Suckled Sons: From Mission to Polemic

All the texts presented so far have shifted images related to the Abrahamic mission to the nations into a rabbinic mission of Torah study and the importance of sages within the Jewish group. My next example provides a different model of a departure from the missionary tendencies of Palestinian sources. In the following case, the Palestinian sources depict the missionary act of showing the nations the divine power, leading them both to recognize him and to a certain affiliation with the Jewish group. This image was replaced by another model of inter-group relations, a model of polemics and rivalry, in which the importance of showing God's power lay in the wish to prove the nations that they are wrong. A polemical setting is utterly different from a missionary one. No change of the other is expected in polemics, rather the perpetual thickening and emphasizing of the boundaries of identity.[21]

This picture stems from the variations of the exegetical narrative,[22] retelling the biblical events around the birth of Isaac. According to the early Palestinian tradition, as presented in *Gen. Rab.* 53:9, Abraham told

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[20] See *Mek.*, *Shirah* 3, 127; *Cant. Rab.* 1:3:3; *Tanh.* (Buber), *Yitro* 2 (35b). See also *Cant. Rab.* 6:8:4, reading "Young maidens, without a number" in Cant 6:8, as "Many converts who joined in."

[21] For a more detailed account see M. Lavee, "Sarah Would Have Suckled Sons: Different Models of Jews-Gentiles Relations in One Midrashic Tradition," in *By the Well: Studies in Jewish Philosophy and Halakhic Thought Presented to Gerald J. Blidstein* (ed. U. Ehrlich et al.; Beer Sheva 2008), 269–291.

[22] By exegetical narrative I mean the rabbinic genre of retold biblical narratives, presented alongside a quotation of verses and some of the exegetical considerations that lead to the development of the story. See J. Levinson, "Dialogical Reading in the Rabbinic Exegetical Narrative," *PT* 25 (2004): 497–528.

Sarah at the birth of Isaac that this was no time for modesty, and she should uncover her breasts, so that all people will know God has begun to perform miracles. Many noblewomen came and declaring themselves unworthy for it, they brought their children to her for suckling. Consequently, the babies fed by Sarah became God-fearers. This exegetical narrative is a brilliant example of the classical midrash's capacity for indirect speech. Speaking about biblical figures, the text had in mind a certain topic, not explicitly presented. Every detail can be explained as a symbol for, or a dramatization of, concepts and ideas related to mission and conversion. The story should be read with the traditions about Abraham as a proselytizer in mind, especially the emphasis of Sarah's role in it (*Gen. Rab*. 39:14, and parallels). Abraham and Sarah are not only individuals, nor merely the forebears of the Jewish group. They represent the group itself, and their contacts with their social surrounding offers a model for Jews' relations with non-Jews. The noblewomen, and their babies, represent the non-Jews. The declaration "I am unworthy" is a dramatization of what is expected from converts, according to the rabbinic conversion procedure (*Gerim* 1:1; *b. Yebamot* 47a).[23] In uncovering her breasts, Sarah echoes the idea of revealing the Torah, perceived as a mystery, usually hidden from the Gentiles.[24] The possible correlation of the idea of Torah as mystery with conversion, implied in our narrative, hints at the connection of the rabbinic model of conversion to rites of passage known from Greek mystery cults. The transference of the babies from their biological mothers to Sarah might be a dramatization of the concept of conversion as separation from one's family and immersion into a new family—Israel.[25] Abraham wanted all people to know about God's miracle. Indeed, miracles were clearly an influential tool in missionary efforts in the close surrounding of the Palestinian rabbis.[26]

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[23] Since the procedure is only documented in the Babylonian Talmud, and in the extra-canonical tractate *Gerim*, it is unclear whether such a declaration was common in Palestine in the time of *Genesis Rabbah*. We should consider our story as indirect evidence for its use.

[24] M. Bregman, "Mishna and LXX as Mystery: An Example of Jewish-Christian Polemic in the Byzantine Period," in *Continuity and Renewal: Jews and Judaism in Byzantine-Christian Palestine* (ed. L.I. Levine; Jerusalem 2004), 333–342.

[25] Cf. the Quranic notion of "milk-mothers" and "milk-sisters." A. Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses: Medieval Islamic Views on Breastfeeding and Their Social Implications* (Leiden 1999), 21.

[26] J.A. Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission: The Authentication of Missionaries and Their Message in the Longer Ending of Mark* (Tübingen 2000).

The story does not refer explicitly to its implied meaning. It speaks about Abraham, Sarah and the noblewomen, and the audience is expected to realize that they are symbols for the distinctive identity of the Jews and their surrounding society. An explicit reference to the story as occupied with a change of identity only appears in a reflective comment on it attributed to the sages: "those who came for the sake of heaven became God-fearers." The suckling by Sarah shaped the identity of the infants and their descendents. They became God-fearers, i.e., non-Jews adhering to the Jewish God, performing a choice of Jewish practices and attached to Jewish communities.[27] This stands as a complementary inversion to the praise of Abraham, in another midrash, this time as an archetypical proselyte. Abraham made his way towards God, even though "breasts did not feed him, neither with commandment nor with good deeds" (*Gen. Rab*. 39:3, 367).[28]

Although the text alludes to Abraham and Sarah being proselytizers, their missionary activity is limited, it is only about showing that God has begun to make miracles, an educational missionary according to Goodman's typology. Indeed, it only ends with acquiring God-fearers and not with converts. Only a late version of the text, in *Pesiq. Rab*. 43:5, explicitly suggests that those infants who where brought for the sake of heaven were converted.[29]

The Babylonian version of this account offers another setting (*b. Bava Metzi'a* 87a). Here the act of breast feeding the noblewomen's sons is presented in an atmosphere of an ongoing quarrel with the Gentiles, now explicitly mentioned as Abraham's and Sarah's antagonists. They claimed that the elderly Sarah and Abraham could not beget Isaac and that it is time to show them that they are wrong. As in other texts, the story presents an interesting literary phenomenon in *Bavli* narratives, in which the dialectical nature of the legal discourse penetrates the plots of the stories. This literary phenomenon only serves to emphasize the polemical

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[27] Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 342–382.

[28] Another example of the belief in the role of breast feeding in shaping the character and identity of the infant is given in the exegetical narrative about Rebecca's funeral, and the fear that seeing Esau people will say "O cursed are the breasts the fed such a person" (*Pesiq. Rab Kah*., *Zakor* 40 and parallels, following *Gen. Rab*. 5:9, 39 and parallels).

[29] The dating of the text is obscure. It should be counted among the "late Midrash," namely from the second half of the first millennium, but it is difficult to discern how late this piece is. *Pesiqta Rabbati* is known to be composed of pieces taken from various midrashic works. Our section belongs to the layer within the *Pesiqta* of materials not known from other sources. However, it resembles the *Tanhuma* /*Yelammedenu* style.

mood of relations between Abraham and his neighbors.[30] Even after they were shown the truth, they continuously held their false convictions: "Yet they still scoffed, saying, 'Granted that Sarah could give birth at the age of ninety, could Abraham beget [a child] at the age of a hundred?' "

The claims of the Gentiles are also scattered in Palestinian sources.[31] However, only the Babylonian Talmud offers the full account, colored with a polemical twist. The polemical mode is also presented in the Palestinian version of the story in *Pesiqta of Rab Kahana*. However, there the story appears within the context of a positive model of Jew-Gentile relations: even non-Jews enjoy the miracles God performs for Israel.

The Babylonian setting of the story, within the framework of a polemical atmosphere, is another brick in the wall of rejection of the missionary model. Polemics are not about the content of the debate. Those involved in polemics are not expecting to educate the other and change his beliefs or affiliations. Polemics are mainly about setting clear boundaries and differences between groups.[32] For the Jewish audience of the Babylonian Talmud, the suckling narrative established another imagined victory upon the nations, it no longer suggests a shift in the Gentiles' stance before God.

There is another potential reading of suckling, not as an act of giving and inspiring the other, but rather as an act that inverts the power relations of the Jews and the Romans (Sarah and the noblewomen). The submissive nursing girl governs her matron lady, by influencing her child. The dominated has conquered the conqueror. Indeed, other midrashic texts explicitly picture an eschatological inversion using the image of the Matron who finds herself as the nursing maiden of Israel, following Isa 49:23: "And kings shall be your nursing fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers" (*Midrash Tannaim*, *Deut* 26:19). However, even if the wish to influence the Gentiles can be read into a model of a political rebellion, it still represents a kind of missionary wish.

[30] In the study of Talmudic texts, it is quite common to perceive explanation of literary processes as excluding our understanding of the content. According to such perception, if it is common that characters in narratives in the Babylonian Talmud indulge in everlasting debates, than the appearance of this motif here has nothing to do with the specific issue of our stories (Jew-Gentile relations). I prefer to see the literary phenomena as the carrier of the conceptual, social and ideological developments, rather than an accidental literary development. Even if it was such, its importance lies in the new images it creates. In our case it evokes the image of an everlasting polemic between Jews and Gentiles.

[31] E.g., *Midrash Bereshit Rabba* (ed. Theodor and Albeck), 2: 559–561 (*Gen. Rab*. 53:5–6).

[32] G. Stroumsa and O. Limor, Contra Iudaeos: *Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews* (Tübingen 1996).

6. Timna: From Missionary to Selective Acceptance of Converts

The traditions surveyed here are only part of the corpus of texts with a theme of Abraham and Sarah as proselytizers, not to mention that they are not the only biblical figures presented in rabbinic literature as undertaking that or another kind of missionary activity. For example, Jacob and Isaac are presented as converting people.[33] It is interesting therefore, to find the following tradition in the Babylonian Talmud, blaming them for not converting Timna. According to the biblical account, Timna was the concubine of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, and the mother of Amalek (Gen 36:12). She was also the sister of Lotan, who is mentioned in the list of governors of Edom: "the chief of Lotan" (36:29). The Palestinian sources used this information to construct the following argument: if people from a leading social strata, such as Timna, wish to cleave unto Esau, it is more likely that they should wish to cleave unto Jacob.[34] This picture probably alludes to a phenomenon of noble Romans or Greek pagans, and especially women, who were interested in Judaism and showed a certain degree of affinity to its customs and beliefs.[35] The Palestinian rabbinic sources perceived Timna as an example of a daughter of noble families that wished to cleave to the "house" of Abraham.[36] However, in the Babylonian Talmud a new version of the account is found, given in Babylonian Aramaic it is clearly a late reworking of the Palestinian tradition:

> Timna was a daughter of kings .... She wished to convert. She went to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and they did not convert her. So she became the concubine of Esau. She said: It is better to be a worthless slave to this nation, and not to be a lady in another nation. Amalek, who brings sorrow to Israel was born from her. (*b. Sanh*. 99b)

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[33] *Midrash Bereshit Rabba* (ed. Theodor and Albeck), 3:1004 (*Gen. Rab*. 84:4).

[34] *Sifre Deut* 336 (ed. L. Finkelstein; 385–386); *Midrash Bereshit Rabba* (ed. Theodor and Albeck), 3:992–993 (*Gen. Rab*. 82:12).

[35] S. Matthews, *First Converts: Rich Pagan Women and the Rhetoric of Mission in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Stanford 2001).

[36] If the narrators of this exegetical narrative already had in mind the identification of Esau with Christianity, than the text leads to a surprising idea: pagans who cleave unto Christianity were perceived as making a step towards a desired proximity to Judaism. This aspect of the narrative deserves a study devoted only to it. My hypothesis is that the text is emblematic of a transitional stage within the Judeo-Christian schism, in which the groups were not yet perceived in binary and oppositional terms. Other rabbinic traditions about the "cleaving" of Esau himself to Jacob should be analyzed within the same framework.

The Babylonian narrative contains some components that distinguish it from the Palestinian traditions, to which we shall now turn.

a. *The Patriarchs' Refusal to Accept Timna as a Convert*

How should we understand the patriarchs' refusal to accept Timna as a convert, against the background of the Palestinian traditions, that present them as people who were occupied with missionary activity and conversion? What is the relationship between the traditions found in the two different scholarly centers? The very person who was famous in Palestinian traditions for actively approaching non-Jews and converting them became notorious, in Babylon, for not accepting a self-initiating convert.

A complementary reading is one possibility here. The sources are two parts of coherent preaching for the purposes of missionizing and conversion. The Palestinian sources present the positive ethos of active proselytizing, while the Babylonian Talmud uses the figures of the patriarchs as negative examples showing the damage of a reluctant attitude towards conversion. Their failure to convert her brought damage to the people of Israel. This is a plausible reading, but it seems to neglect the importance of the change of rhetoric.

The Babylonian Talmud's choice of a negative portrayal should be considered. It is also possible to read the text, as an effort to reject the image of Abraham as proselytizer. Not only did he not appeal to the nation, but he was also reluctant to convert those who were interested in doing so and initiate the procedure. The negative rhetoric of the Babylonian Talmud plays a double role: on the one hand it preserved the Palestinian missionary ethos, on the other it undermines, if not even ridiculing, it.

We should also consider the possibility that those who presented the tradition in Babylon were no longer aware of the image of Abraham as proselytizer, as this image was not preserved in the Babylonian traditions.[37]

[37] This option depends on the extent to which Palestinian traditions not documented in the Babylonian Talmud were known in Babylon during the redaction and reworking of the work in the sixth to seventh centuries, an unsolved question that lies much beyond the goals of this paper.

b. *From Personal Conversion to Procedural Conversion*

Another importance of the Babylonian setting of Timna's tradition lays in the shift of the conceptual frameworks. The Palestinian traditions were speaking in a Greco-Roman context, of noble strata attracted to Judaism and cleaving unto the house of Abraham. This presentation does not necessarily refer to conversion. In contrast, the Babylonian Talmud explicitly mentions conversion. There are two important elements here. Firstly, there is binary division of identity. One can either be a Jew or Gentile, a full convert or a non-Jewish. There is no option of "cleaving unto." The model of God-fearers, implied in the Palestinian tradition is unknown to the Babylonian Talmud. It is important to note that in the suckling tradition the idea of God-fearer disappeared from the Babylonian Talmud.[38] Secondly, there is an institutionalized approval of conversion. In the Babylonian narrative the conversion of Timna was subject to an approval by the patriarchs. This alludes to a procedural model of conversion, in which the power is in the hand of the group, and not in the hand of the convert himself. This power is exercised by authority figures. Some Palestinian sources already testify to the presence of the sages' role in conversion and to rabbinic involvement in questioning the validity of conversions. However, it is only in the external tractate *Gerim*, and in the Babylonian Talmud, where a full conversion procedure is depicted. The institution of a court for conversion only appears in the Babylonian Talmud.[39] The Babylonian version of Timna's story is a dramatization of this legal development. It is a common Talmudic literary device used here, "the rhetoric of the obvious." At the very moment that the story criticized the patriarchs for not accepting Timna, it granted them with the authority to do so. The cultural "work" of the story lies exactly here. What is obvious in this text is that people might wish to convert and that it is in the hand of an authoritative Jew to accept them or not.

A similar analysis applies to the well known tradition about Hillel's positive approach towards accepting converts. Prior to preaching for the acceptance of converts, as this text was always read, it sets a scene in which conversion is subject to the sage's will to accept the con-

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[38] Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 353.

[39] M. Lavee, *A Convert Is like a Newborn Child: The Concept and It's Implications in Rabbinic Literature* (Ph.D. diss., Ben-Gurion University of the Negev 2003), 238 (Hebrew); J. Kulp, "The Participation of a Court in the Jewish Conversion Process," *JQR* 94 (2004): 437–470.

vert. The transition from a missionary model towards a new dominant model of a guarded and secured gate of entrance is achieved (cf. *b. Shabb.* 31a with *Qoh. Rab.* 1:4; 7:8).

7. The Babylonian Models for Turning from the Missionary Image

The Babylonian Talmud preserved a coherent and almost utterly consistent tendency to depart from earlier Jewish Palestinian traditions encouraging missionary activity. The tendency was accomplished using the following four literary strategies.

a. *Internalizing the Mission*

This strategy is the most prominent in the traditions concerning Abraham. The very same verses, motifs and interpretations that were used to describe Abraham's work among the Gentiles are now used to describe the role of the Sage or the Torah scholar within the Jewish group.

b. *From Preaching to Polemics*

This strategy was found in the narrative about Sarah. Here, the mode of communication of Jews with their surroundings was shifted from preaching, educating, and granting new identity to polemics, an endless debate only establishing the differences between Jews and Gentiles.

c. *Non-Jews as a Reflecting Mirror*

This strategy is found in a tradition about other biblical characters, and thus not surveyed here. According to it, the exposure of non-Jews to Jewish ideas reflected back towards the Jews, and hence influenced them. This is shown in traditions about the miracle made for Hannaiah, Mishael and Azariah (identified by the rabbis as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego), when they were sent to the furnace (Dan 3:19–30). According to the Palestinian text the miracle led *many* non-Jews to convert (*Cant. Rab.* 1:3:3) implying mass conversions. According to the Babylonian Talmud the non-Jews turned to the Jews, saying: "You have such a God, yet you worship an idol?" (*b. Sanh.* 93a).

d. *Silencing Missionary Traditions*

An argument from silence is always doubtful, but it may be used to support core evidence. Many Palestinian rabbinic sources with a missionary undercurrent are simply missing in the Babylonian corpus. In some cases they were replaced and reused serving other ideas as presented here. Other traditions simply did not survive in the Babylonian corpus: Joseph coerced the Egyptians to circumcise;[40] Jethro went back to his place to convert his people;[41] Many non-Jews were astonished by the successful agricultural production of the tribe of Issachar, and when they realized it came as a result of devotion to the Torah, they converted and more.[42]

In one demonstrative example, a small unit suggesting missionary activity was clearly omitted from a full haggadic unit that was preserved in the Babylonian Talmud. In order to present this example I should make a clarification about the nature of long shared units in divergent rabbinic texts. In many cases, the Babylonian and Palestinian rabbinic sub-corpora preserved long textual units that seem to stem from one original unit. Some links in the long chain of traditions are shared, and others are only presented in one text, either in the Babylonian or in the Palestinian material. This is the case of the midrashic unit concerning King Hezekiah's prayer. He prayed for his healing, standing against a wall. The wall, according to the sages, functioned as a reminder to God, creating a connection to former events in the history of Israel.[43] One link connected the wall to Rahab (another rabbinic archetype for converts), who saved two people, and thus should be a reminder of Hezekiah's forefathers who "brought near to you all those converts." In the Babylonian parallel only an obscure comment was left from this unit: "[he prayed] regarding the matters of the wall."

Before discussing my findings, I should make some comments and reservations. What I have shown here is the *governing tendency* in the development of rabbinic traditions about proselytizing in the rabbinic west and east. However, within the eclectic and collective nature of the rabbinic corpus one should not be surprised to encounter here and there sources

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[40] *Midrash Bershit Rabba* (ed. Theodor and Albeck), 1:1106 (*Gen. Rab*. 90:6); 1:1119–1120 (*Gen. Rab*. 91:5) Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 298, 409.

[41] *Mek*., *Jethro* 2, 200 and parallels.

[42] *Gen. Rab*. 78:12, 1263.

[43] Cf. *b. Ber*. 10b with Palestinian Talmud *y. Ber*. 4:4, 8b; *y. Sanh*. 10:2, 28c.

that go against this governing tendency. There is at least one example of a missionary tradition that was partially preserved in Babylon.[44] In other cases, I have pointed to the building blocks that were used for the revised Babylonian traditions scattered here and there in the Palestinian corpus. Considering the processes of formation of rabbinic literature it would not be helpful to expect over encompassing consistency, and the differences demonstrated here are sufficient, in my mind, for establishing the prevailing tendencies.

8. The Cause of Change: Geography and/or Chronology?

How should we explain the literary findings presented here? What was the cause for the consistent rejection of missionary traditions in Babylon? We should consider both the geo-cultural and chronological aspects. The differences between the two corpora are also due to the different durations of formation. The Palestinian Talmud and the early midrashic works cited here were probably sealed by the fifth century. The Babylonian Talmud continued to evolve throughout the fifth and sixth centuries, and underwent an undefined period of unstable oral transmission. Hence, creative transmission, the gathering of materials, reorganization and recombination of texts, rephrasing and reshaping of traditions continued for more than two centuries after the redaction of the Palestinian Talmud and the classical Palestinian midrashic works.

The geo-cultural context of the works also played a role here, the gradually Christianized Roman Empire in Palestine on the one hand and the Sassanian dynasty and the Zoroastrian religion in Babylon on the other.

There are many other differences between the two corpora concerning conversion and other aspects relating to group boundaries and the demarcation of identity: the procedure of conversion, the approach towards converts, the implications of the perception of conversion as new birth or new creation and more. It is difficult to distinguish between the weight of the geo-cultural and chronological factors. However, in the case of the missionary traditions we have also some of the late Palestinian midrashic texts, that tend to *intensify* the missionary traditions in con-

[44] *The Midrash of Genesis* 21:33: "And Abraham planted a tamarisk-tree in Beer-sheba." Hayward, "Abraham as Proselytizer," 24–37.

trast to the Babylonian inclination to reject them.[45] Hence, in this case, we should assume that the geo-cultural aspect is more significant than the chronological one.

9. Conclusions: The Historical Significance

Only now, after establishing the literary process, we can turn to the question of the historical significance of our sources. The missionary traditions in rabbinic sources played a role in the scholarly construction of the allegedly missionary nature of Judaism during the late phases of Second Temple period. The image of Abraham was perceived as reminiscent of an old Jewish practice, no longer valid in later Judaism. Victorious Christianity inherited the missionary component of the old Judaic religions, while the Jews ceased their efforts to proselytize due to their political weakening following the destruction of the Second Temple and the failure of the Bar Kokhba rebellion. Studies from the mid 20th century began to question this perception, starting with Simon's *Verus Israel* and continued in recent publications of Cohen, Goodman, and others. While Simon, and later Feldman, have argued for continuity of Jewish missionary trends well into the rabbinic period, Goodman and Cohen ask "was Judaism in antiquity a missionary religion?" Goodman undermined the perception of early Jewish missionizing, using the definition of "strong" missionary activity.[46]

So what contribution can our findings provide to the question of Judaism as a missionary religion in antiquity? The answer is very limited. Looking at the dating of the sources we can only say: rabbis in the land of Israel, from the second or the third century, pictured Abraham as a proselytizer. We should notice that the earlier, allegedly Tannaitic, statement presented in my first example, the *Sifre* is ascribed in *Genesis Rabbah* to an Amora, and thus casting doubt on a second century dating. The model of mission used in the Palestinian sources was mostly partial, educational or informative, although the earliest source, as well as the

[45] As in the explicit mention of conversion concerning the infants suckled by Sarah (*Pesiq. Rab*. 43), or in the gathering together of many missionary traditions in *Canticles Rabbah*, an act of literary redaction that hints at the reading of these scattered traditions as a cluster of evidence for Abraham's mission to the Gentiles.

[46] Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*; Idem, "Conversion to Judaism," 115–156; Goodman, *Mission and Conversion*; A.I. Baumgarten, "Marcel Simon's *Verus Israel* as a Contribution to Jewish History," *HTR* 92 (1999): 465–478.

latest sources hint at full fledged missionary activity ending with conversion to Judaism. Migrating from the land of Israel, these traditions lost their missionary flavor. They were "converted" in Babylonian circles to deal with the intra-Jewish rabbinic mission for rabbinic dominance.

The Palestinian sources could be an echo of an old Jewish missionary practice, one that was common in the end of the Second Temple period and was later eradicated. The Babylonian text thus pictures the later turn from the missionary practice. However this possibility is quite weak. If the Jewish missionary activity of Second Temple days disappeared due to the change of the political status of the Jews during the first and second centuries, it is quite awkward that third century Palestine texts still preserved (if not even began to develop!) such images, and only later Babylonian sources rejected them. It is more plausible that the missionary traditions from Palestine are literary images that spread in Palestine, reflecting fantasies about, or missionary goals of, the rabbis. Rabbinic sources, I'm afraid, cannot give us good answers for questions dealing with the Judaism of the Second Temple. The sources teach us more about the concerns of the Babylonian against those of the Palestinian sages, and should be explained as cultural developments within the Jewish self-perception and demarcation of identity.

The Babylonian Talmud, here and in other topics, demonstrates a tendency to thicken the boundaries of the Jewish group, to make clear who belongs and who does not. The image of Judaism withdrawing into itself is true, but it was not a process of the turn from the Second Temple to the rabbinic period, as the old model of Judaism as missionary religion claimed, rather that of Babylonian Judaism of the third to the seventh centuries, the period of formation of the Babylonian Talmud. We should not consider such cultural changes as the immediate consequence of political changes, rather as products of process of the *longue durée*. The rabbinic project of defining Judaism began with the Tannaim of the land of Israel but achieved its mature status with the later redactor of the Babylonian Talmud.

ABRAHAM, EXILE, AND MIDRASHIC TRADITION

Joanna Weinberg

An eloquent preacher and commentator on the Bible Calvin brooked no compromise when allegiance to his Reformed Church was at stake; in unequivocal terms he denounced the Nicodemism of some of his Reformed followers.[1] Both in his sermons and commentary on Gen 12 and Acts 7 Calvin expatiated on the theme of Abraham and his exile. Calvin—as Moehn has ably demonstrated—drew lessons for his own day from the biblical narrative.[2] No simulation in religious practice should be permitted, he asserted, not even for the sake of self-preservation. If it was not possible to worship God, no alternative should be sought but to leave one's native-land. With a healthy dose of empathy—not surprising given that he himself had left France for Geneva—Calvin asserts in a sermon on Acts 7: "It is as if God wants to probe the heart with a knife saying, 'I know that it is really difficult and upsetting to leave your country and father's house and your loved ones, but it is necessary to leave.' "[3]

Abraham, therefore, whose call for Calvin was simply a manifestation of God's grace, becomes the role model for all believers who cannot confess their faith in their native country. The connection between Abraham and exile becomes transformed into a major theme in his sermon

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[1] When George H. van Kooten kindly invited me to participate in the conference devoted to the exegesis of Gen 12:1–3 he offered me the choice of either speaking on the designated theme in relation to early modern literature, or else to select a relevant topic from the vast midrashic literature. This paper focuses on midrash, but with a nod in the direction of sixteenth-century exegesis.

[2] This text has been discussed by W.H.T. Moehn, "Abraham—Père de l'église de Dieu," in *Calvinus praeceptor ecclesiae* (ed. H.J. Selderhuis; Geneva 2004), 287–301. Calvin lectured on Genesis from 1550–1552 and started his commentary in 1550, but it only appeared in 1554. The Genesis commentary was printed as part of Calvin's 1563 Pentateuch commentary. See A. Lane, *John Calvin Student of the Church Fathers* (Edinburgh 1999), 226–229.

[3] Cited by Moehn from the Sermon on Acts 7 in J. Calvin, *Sermons on the Acts of the Apostles* (ed. W. Balke and W.H.T. Moehn; SupCalv 8; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1994), 238: "Comme si Dieu le voulloit sonder d'une lancette dedans le coeur pour dire, 'Je sçay que ces choses te seront bien dures et fascheuses de laisser ton pays, la maison de ton pere et ceulx de ta congnoissance, je sçay que cela te semblera bien estrange, mais il fault tout quicter.' "

on Genesis delivered in January 1560.[4] Calvin weaves his homily around the various ways in which the church could be compared to Abraham. Particularly noteworthy and germane to this paper is the following passage from this long sermon:[5]

> Which path does God wish us to pursue? It is not identical to Abram's but it is similar in that we, too, have to get out .... We should follow his example, for we see what is said in Psalm 45[:11]: 'Listen, my daughter, and give ear. Forget your people and your father's house.' This verse appears to be addressed to the wife of Solomon, but in reality relates to the church. Further on it adds that the king will honour his spouse once she has left her home. This shows us that we can only be Christians, be ready to serve God and to fulfill our duty to him once we have renounced that which is of this world .... We should not be attached to the land. We should bear this all patiently—for we see that several persons have left behind the peace of their birthplace on account of the terrible captivity suffered there because they are unable to worship God purely but are dragged down by the abominations of the papacy. So when God wishes us to act in accordance with what was said to Abraham we must follow him resolutely ... for nothing is preferable to obeying God's call. We should endeavour to act as Abram's children ....[6]

Calvin's political and religious ideology need not detain us here. Worthy of consideration, however, is his juxtaposition of Gen 12 with Ps 45. As Jacobs has demonstrated the composers of the classical midrashim

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[4] J. Calvin, *Sermons sur la Genèse chapitres* 11,5–20,7 (ed. M. Engammare; SupCalv 11.2; Neukirchen-Vluyn 2000), 586–598.

[5] Calvin, *Sermons sur la Genèse*, 586–587: "... quel chemin il veut que nous tenions .... Or il est vrai que nous n'aurons pas un commandement du tout pareil à celui qui a esté fait à Abram nostre père .... Il faut donc que nous suivions tous son exemple, comme nous oions qu'il est dit au pseaume 45e 'Escoute fille et preste l'oreille. Il te faut oublier la maison de ton pere et tout ton parentage.' Cela est dit souz la figure de la femme de Salomon, mais il apartient à l'Eglise. Et là dessus il est adjousté que le roy honorera son epouse, quand elle aura ainsi quité son parentage. C'est pour nous monstrer en somme que nous ne povons estre chrestiens, et ne povons estre disposez à servir à Dieu, et ne luy povons nullement complaire, jusques à ce que nous aions renoncé à tout ce qui est du monde ... nous ne soions point attachez a la terre .... Et puis ... c'est que, s'il plaist a Dieu du nous fair mieux sentir comme nous sommes estrangiers en ce monde, que nous portions encoures cela patiemment. Comme nous voions aujourd'huy, qu'il faut que plusieurs quictent le pais de leur naissance à cause de l'horrible captivité qui est là, et qu'il ne leur est point licite d'adorer Dieu purement, mais qu'ils seront traisnez apres les abominations de la papauté. Quand donc nostre Seigneur nous veut faire practiquer ce qui est dit de nostre pere Abram, il faut que nous soions resolus de suivre ... que nous ne preferions tousjours la vocation de Dieu à tout le reste. Voilà donc les trois points, ausquels il nous faut tendre, pour estre vrais enfans spirituels d'Abram ...."

[6] In his interpretation of the Psalm Calvin frequently uses the term "*ecclesia*" as a designation for Israel.

appear to have been the heirs to a tradition—there were others,[7] for there is no such thing as a sole midrashic interpretation of a verse—which connect Ps 45 with the figure of Abraham.[8] Striking, therefore, is Calvin's discovery of an intertextual link between Ps 45:11 and Gen 12:1. Calvin's knowledge of Jewish exegesis was mostly acquired from secondary sources, but he did know Hebrew which he had learnt from the renowned Hebraist Antoine Chevalier. For the most part it would appear that he also derived knowledge of rabbinic tradition from Nicholas of Lyra and the commentaries of the Protestant scholars Paulus Fagius and Sebastian Münster.[9] In this particular case, however, I have, as yet, been unable to find a secondary source from which he may have drawn the parallel between Gen 12 and the Psalm. But for our purposes what is significant is that in attempting to make sense of God's call to Abraham Calvin notices that the structure of both verses stresses the command, not simply to leave a country, but also a parental home (בית אביך). By means of this phrase common to both texts the command to get out of his parental home addressed specifically to Abraham is partially universalized by means of the Psalm which can always be interpreted typologically or allegorically. In applying these interconnected verses to his own situation Calvin indulges in a midrashic activity.

Various midrashim probe the reason for God's call to Abraham. My purpose here is to examine one particular midrash, which in contrast to Calvin, undermines the universalistic elements that may be drawn out from the first three verses of Gen 12—indeed, whether it is using the old tradition of Ps 45 or using other proemial verses its purpose is patently particularistic. The midrash in question is the *Tanhuma*, a text which has gone through several stages of redaction both in manuscript and in print.[10] The reader of the midrash must therefore necessarily be ever attentive to the pitfalls that attend any dogmatic analysis of such

[7] The Psalm is not only understood in relation to kingship and to the wisdom of the sages but also often interpreted in a messianic key both in Jewish and Christian interpretation.

[8] I. Jacobs, *The Midrashic Process* (Cambridge 1995), 95–98.

[9] On Calvin's knowledge of Hebrew see M. Engammare, "Johannes Calvinus trium linguarum peritus? La question de l'Hébreu," *BHR* 58 (1996): 35–60.

[10] For a general overview of the scholarship on this midrash see G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (Edinburgh 1991), 329–333. For a deep study of the different stages of recension see M. Bregman, *The* Tanhuma-Yelammedenu *Literature: Studies in the Evolution of the Versions* (Piscataway 2003) (Hebrew). In this paper the purpose is not to give a comprehensive survey, but to analyse the form of the midrash as it appears in the standard recension of Mantua (1563) in which additions to the text

an unstable text. Yet what can be ascertained is that the many units of the text were composed in post-talmudic times. This is the midrash in which the provocative assertion of the supremacy of the gaonic centre in Babylon, as opposed to the poor persecuted community in Palestine is midrashically demonstrated in a most astonishing manner.[11] Containing earlier traditions it has a remarkable way of simplifying pre-existing midrashim, glossing them as it were—in the process new midrashim are produced.

The first four sections of the midrash for the pericope *lek leka*, each of which is composed according to a specific literary or rhetorical structure, sheds light on the meaning of Abraham's call in Gen 12:1. The nations, as we will see, have little or no place in the scheme of this particular exegete.

One of the characteristics of the *Tanhuma* is the use of the *yelammedenu* mode by which the inextricable link between halakah and haggadah is achieved—a legal question is raised and then solved haggadically. Avoiding complex halakic reasoning it provides the listener with an insight into the rationale for certain legal prescriptions.

The first paragraph of this midrash presents such a case.[12] The ethic dative construction of *lek leka* ("get yourself out") in the verse, "Get yourself out from your native land …" (Gen 12:1) opens up a treasure trove of interpretations. The particular phrase indicates both something personal ("for you") and a command ("to go"). The command connected with "going" is associated halakically with the Shema and the question "How should a Jew take upon himself the yoke of heaven while walking?" The homilist brings up the old argument regarding the posture in which the Shema should be recited. How literally should the Deuteronomic verse, "You shall speak about them, when you are sitting in your home and walking on your way (ובלכתך בדרך) when you get up and go to bed" be taken? Is it possible to take the yoke of heaven upon yourself while walking? This question raised in the Talmud[13] is cited here together with its solution that in order to facilitate the requisite concentration only the first line, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One" needs to be said in a stationary position. But there is more. Additional

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were made and which appears to have influenced subsequent editions. Reference to the previous editions of Constantinople (1522) and Venice (1545) (and to Salomon Buber's edition, when relevant) will be indicated when their readings substantially change the meaning of the text.

[11] See *Tanh.*, *Noah* 3.

[12] See Appendix I (סימן א).

[13] *B. Ber.* 13b and note the *Tosafot* ad loc. which cites the *Tanhuma* on this subject.

words to explain the *kavvanah*, the concentration of the worshipper, move the theologically charged obligation to recite the first line of the Shema onto another plane. A person must concentrate on heaven, we are told, "in trepidation and fear, trembling and in awe, for the unity of God (*yihud hashem*) and recite 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one . . .'." Though this litany of words denoting fear of God are used in earlier haggadic texts and in connection with the reciting of the Shema,[14] their incidence in this text (they do not occur in the original talmudic formulation in *Berakot*) make clear, if it were not clear before, that the state of mind of the individual worshipper is paramount. What is not found in the earlier texts is the phrase *yihud hashem* which is used to denote the idea of the unity of God, often in connection with martyrdom. Thus, "going" or "walking on a path" can only occur once God's oneness has been proclaimed. Abraham receives the command to walk as a consequence of his manifestation of love of God anterior to the moment of the command and enunciated in the expression "Abraham who loves me" (Isa 41:8). The midrash uses a much recycled haggadah about the patriarch's observance of the commandments, the spin on Gen 26:5 ("because Abraham kept my charge: my commandments, my laws and my *toroth*"), where the multiple *toroth* are explicated with reference to post-biblical ordinances. Abraham is said to have proved his worth by keeping the least likely of laws (*eruv tavshilin*), the prescription which permits the preparation of food on a festival day for the following Sabbath day.[15] Having worshipped God in the fullest manner among the idolaters Abraham is now ready to receive the divine call "to walk."

By means of this exegesis of Gen 12:1 new dimensions of several verses and laws are presented. The question which perturbs all commentators as to why Abraham was called is explicated, while significance is given to a law which might otherwise be neglected. Most important, however, is the discovery of the inner meaning of the prescription governing the recitation of the Shema and its actualization in the life of Abraham. Exile from his fatherland is the consequence of Abraham's perfect behaviour in a land contaminated by idolatry. "The Holy One blessed be he said to him: 'You are scrupulous in your observance of my commandments. You are living among idolaters. Leave them. Get yourself out from your land . . .'." Paradoxically, then, the reward for perfect behaviour is exile.

[14] See, e.g., *Lev. Rab*. 27:6.
[15] *B. Yoma* 28b.

The idea of *yihud hashem*, making God's name one, articulated in this section is brought to the surface in the second proem.[16] The compiler has adapted a proem found elsewhere, notably, *Gen. Rab*. 39, in which the Canticles verse "We have a little sister (*ahoth*) and she has no breasts" (Cant 8:8) is interpreted in relation to Abraham and to the widespread tradition that he was flung into Ur, the furnace of the Chaldees at decree of Nimrod, exemplifying the highest form of *yihud hashem*.[71] Quite reasonably the text itself wonders as to the identification of Abraham with "sister." The *Tanhuma*, like other parallel texts, plays with the various roots of the verb אחה (*aha*), subtly creating a new interpretation. In *Genesis Rabbah*, for example, the text reads: "Abraham was like one who mends a tear." The *Tanhuma* reads:[18] "He sewed up the world for the Holy One blessed be he like a person who makes a tear and then sews it up." The active verb used here calls for comment. What did Abraham tear? The clear allusion is to mourning practises discussed in *Mo'ed Qatan* in the Babylonian Talmud where the question is raised whether the mourner may sew up the physical manifestation of his loss—the tear which is deliberately made in the mourner's clothing—once the mourning period has come to an end.[19] Implied in the midrash, therefore, is the idea that Abraham can now put behind him the lifeless world of the idolatrous people among whom he lived.

The theme of dying for God is developed further by means of an extended exegesis of Cant 8:9–10: "If she be a wall we will build upon her a silver palace. And if she be a door we will enclose her with boards of cedar. I am a wall and my breasts are like the towers thereof. Then I was in his eyes as one that found peace." In some midrashim including one version of the *Tanhuma* the dialogue inherent in these verses is made explicit and presented as an imaginary debate between God and the quarrelsome angels.[20] But in our midrash God's discourse with his heavenly retinue is not used, an omission which may indicate that the homilist has—typical

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[16] See Appendix II (סימן ב).

[17] *Midrash Bereshit Rabba* (ed. J. Theodor and C. Albeck; 3 vols.; Berlin 1912–1936), 1:366–367 (*Gen. Rab*. 39:3). See the discussion of this tradition in G. Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies* (Leiden 1961), 66–75.

[18] This powerful image is not used in the first editions of Constantinople (1526) and Venice (1545), but it is included in subsequent editions such as Mantua (1563) and Prague (1603).

[19] *B. Mo'ed Qat*. 26a–b.

[20] See *Midrasch Tanhuma* (ed. S. Buber; 2 vols.; Wilna 1885; reprint 1964), 1:58–59 (*Tanh*. 2): "How does the verse speak in relation to Abraham? When Nimrod cast him into the furnace the Holy One blessed be he had not yet performed miracles for him.

of post-talmudic midrashim—deliberately eschewed the anthropomorphic language of the earlier texts.

The rewritten verses convey a message about Abraham and his trials: If Abraham stands the test and commits himself to the santification of God then a silver palace will be built upon the wall. The silver palace built upon the wall in the Song is connected to Ps 68:14 ("the wings of the dove covered in silver"), a verse which does not appear in the other parallels to this midrash. "The wings of the dove covered in silver" are identified as Israel. The meaning of this somewhat obscure analogy is procured by a reading of *Midrash Psalms* (68:8), another post-talmudic midrash. The text explains the analogy between the wings of the dove and Israel: "Just as a dove does not struggle when brought to the slaughter, likewise Israel do not struggle when they are killed for sanctifying God's name." In other words, Abraham's resistance to persecution to the point of martyrdom is adopted by his argent descendants, Israel. The "door" of the verse then becomes the weak-kneed (*dal*) person who cannot submit himself to martyrdom for the sake of God, whilst the imagery of the cedar board which is easily erasable suggests that God's providence over Abraham will not last. But all these negative proposals are met with firm rebuttal by Abraham "I am a wall and my breasts [understanding nipples, i.e., giving suck] like towers. Then was I in his eyes as one that found peace" (Cant 8:10). Not only does this midrash apply the verses to Abraham, and his descendants, who also were challenged to a furnace—Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah—but introduces what might appear at first sight an alien element, namely, Hananiah ben Teradion and his colleagues, who unlike Abraham and Daniel's companions did, according to rabbinic tradition, die a martyr's death.[21] But with an eye to the structure of the homily the verse from Canticles, "then I was in his eyes as one that found peace" is then brought back to Abraham's safe exit from the furnace, with a play on Gen 15:7: "I am the Lord who brought you out of the furnace [i.e., Ur] of the Chaldees (אשר הוצאתיך מאור כסדים)." But this version has even more to say about Abraham's actual departure. The text reads "so peace exited from the furnace." The word "peace" is used here not to denote "in peace,"[22] but rather as a metonymy for Abraham's action as uniting the

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The ministering angels said to the Holy One blessed be he, 'Sovereign of the world, look, Nimrod has cast Abraham into the furnace …'."

[21] There are many accounts of his martyrdom. See, e.g., *b. Abod. Zar.* 17b–18a.

[22] Although it could be read בשלום ("in peace"), which is the reading of *Genesis Rabbah*, all printed texts of this *Tanhuma* read שלום ("peace").

broken world, or bringing peace to a world in tatters. By divine mandate he is then sent on this mission and told to depart from the idolatrous environment of his father.[23]

"Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear; forget also your own people and your father's house" (Ps 45:11), is now introduced as the proemial verse.[24] Unlike the famous passage in *Genesis Rabbah* the verse is not interpreted with regard to a traveller and a conflagration,[25] but rather to a cemetery and scented perfume.[26] The addressee of the verse is Abraham who is told to leave his father's house which is simply a synonym for idolatry as the verse from Jer 2:27 clearly demonstrates—they call inanimate objects "father." The call to leave home is therefore not meant to be regarded as a personal rejection of his father *per se*, but of his father's world. The "beauty" of the following verse in the Psalm ("So shall the king desire your beauty") becomes transformed into Abraham's beauteous condition which God ensures both in this world and the world to come. In other words, Abraham's own fortune as well as his descendants are dependant on this leaving act. The mode of putting this promise into effect is here achieved—as in other midrashim—by implicitly adopting the sensuous imagery of the Psalm, "God has chosen to anoint you with oil of gladness above your peers" (Ps 45:8) and "All your robes are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia" (Ps 45:9). The person of Abraham is all sweet scented perfume that needs to be diffused. Rather than use the image of a tightly-fitting lid on a bottle of perfume as the more common midrashic motif goes,[27] the *darshan* conjures up a bottle of foliatum, a precious ointment made from spikenard, which is placed in a graveyard.[28] "Said R. Abin: It is like a bottle of foliatum which

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[23] See Jacobs, *The Midrashic Process*, 134n9.

[24] See Appendix III (סימן ג).

[25] For a recent revisionist analysis of the remarkable parable about the fire and Abraham's quest in *Midrash Bereshit Rabba* (ed. Theodor and Albeck), 1:361–363 (*Gen. Rab.* 38:13), see P. Mandel, "The Call of Abraham: A Midrash Revisited," *Prooftexts* 14 (1994): 267–284.

[26] The image of a bottle of sweet fragrance is used in *Genesis Rabbah*, but with regard to the proemial verse Cant 1:3: "What did Abraham resemble? A phial of myrrh closed with a tight-fitting lid and lying in a corner so that its fragrance was not disseminated; as soon as it was taken up, however, its fragrance was disseminated. Similarly the Holy One blessed be he said to Abraham: 'Go from place to place and your name will become great in the world . . .'." Cf. the contribution by Moshe Lavee to this volume.

[27] See previous note.

[28] Cf. *b. Sanh.* 108a where Noah is the subject of the simile of the spikenard in order to establish whether he was great only in his "generations" or for all generations. He is compared to a barrel of wine lying in a vault of acid. In comparison to the acid the wine

is placed in a cemetry and nobody can detect its fragrance. What did they do? They took it and carried it from place to place so that that its fragrance could be discerned. Similarly, Abraham was living amidst idolaters. The Holy One blessed be he said to him: 'Get out from your land and I will make your mark felt in the world . . .'." Exit from the environment of the "dead" idolaters who have no sense of smell, is the only way in which Abraham's special mark can be made in the world.

Such an image is diametrically opposed to the death contemplated by the martyr and is a variation on the common biblical and rabbinic concept that "the wicked in their life are called dead." (Also to be noted is that it is in line with the literal flow of the verse "Get out so that I can make you into a great nation.") Here the third proem ends—with the words *lek leka*. But God's statement about Abraham's mark being made in the world is not opening up his mission to the world. Rather the following sections which again use pre-existing traditions, mould them in such a way that the particularistic atmosphere of the homily is developed in ever more detail. The trials of Abraham which he passed with flying colours, with the emphasis, for the purpose of this section of his preparedness to take all his chattels and go at the drop of a hat in obedience to God's command, "And I shall make you into a great people" (ואעשך לגוי גדול). The use of the verb "to make" generates comment. The unusual use of the verb "to do/make" allows for the application (implicit) of the hermeneutical principle of *gezera shava*. In the story of creation the word "make" is used twice to denote "creation." Abraham's exit from his fatherland and progression to great nationhood is indicative of the beginning of a new era, and this new creation will come to fulfillment, according to another application of the same hermeneutical principle, when Israel, the "great nation" (גוי גדול) receives the Torah. "For what great nation (גוי גדול) is there that has laws and rules as perfect as this Torah?" (Deut 4:8). Abraham's mission is for the sake of one nation, Israel.

This reading of Gen 12:1–3 gathers momentum as it interprets the various connotations of the "blessing" in the second half of verse two: "And I will bless you and make your name great and be as a blessing."[29] The interpretation of these phrases can depend on the speaker's emphasis—and the homilist exploits this ambiguity in the text. It is I God who

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is fragrant. To prove his greatness for all generations a second simile compares him to a phial of foliatum lying in a rubbish dump whose scent becomes even more potent when placed among other spices.

[29] See Appendix IV (סימן ד).

will bless you—your reputation is enhanced through my blessing—for that reason, it is argued, Abraham's blessing in the Amidah prayer takes precedence over God's blessing for the resurrection of the dead. (Once again the rationale for certain formulae—as with the first text regarding the Shema—is offered to the pious listener of the homily.) But the unspecified blessing ("and be a blessing") also gives rise to an examination of the donors and recipients of blessing in the scriptural narrative. The exposition continues in a slightly humorous vein as it probes the meaning of the phrase addressed to Abraham "be a blessing." According to this interpretation God had done his bit where blessings were concerned and it was now given over to humans, namely, to Abraham, to continue the tradition of the benediction. But Abraham gets stopped in his tracks. And a remarkable parable, used in other midrashic contexts, brings out the strictly tribal framework in which this homily is being composed. The eagle eye of the homilist had noticed that Abraham never blesses Isaac—the explanation for this omission is that he had predicted that Esau would hail from Isaac's seed. The parable portrays Abraham's predicament with a cameo from real life—the world of the tenant-farmer, reflecting the semi-autonomous relationship which the farmer had with the landowner. As Lapin has demonstrated, rabbinic texts represent the rabbis as "sensitive to the inherent inequalities between employer and employee without trying to create rules to erase the inequalities."[30] The language of the parable may reflect reality, but there is little scope for misunderstanding. "It is like a king who had an orchard which he gave to his tenant-farmer to cultivate and tend" (The phrase to cultivate and tend (לעבדו ולשמרו) is of course an echo of Gen 2:15 when God puts Adam in the Garden of Eden in order "to cultivate and tend it.") Within the orchard was a tree producing an elixir of life, next to it was a tree of deadly poison. Said the tenant: "What shall I do? It is impossible to water the one without watering the other. I will just leave it and the owner of the orchard can do what he pleases."

Abraham was faced with the same double bind because he was unable to bless Isaac since he knew that Esau was to issue from him. Like the farmer he absolves himself of all responsibility: "So let the Lord of blessing, the Holy One blessed be he decide what to do." Indeed, it is only after the death of both Abraham and Isaac, that Jacob receives his blessing, and this takes place when his name is changed from Jacob to

[30] H. Lapin, *Early Rabbinic Civil Law and the Social History of Roman Galilee: A Study of Mishnah Tractate* Baba Metzia (Georgia 1995), 203.

Israel. "God appeared again to Jacob on his arrival from Paddan-aram and he blessed him. God said to him: 'You whose name is Jacob you shall be called Jacob no more, but Israel shall be your name'" (Gen 35:9–10). The fate of the people through the third patriarch is thus sealed by a blessing. Abraham's vacillation ensured that his legacy was to be donated in the form of a blessing to Jacob alias Israel.

Once again the midrash uses the idea of life and death as a means of defining Abraham's greater purpose in life. If the parable were to be driven to its logical conclusion Esau is described here as the poison whose growth must be eliminated rather than cultivated. Whether this fairly popular midrash[13] is intended to portray Abraham's other line in such negative terms is not clear—it may be that the agricultural analogy is useful simply as a means of describing the predicament. What is clear, however, is that the undefined "blessing" in Gen 12:2 is unequivocally interpreted in relation to Abraham and Israel. This is confirmed by a recharged interpretation of the blessing. In a typical flight of midrashic literal interpretation the phrase "I shall bless those who bless you" in Gen 12:3 is taken to refer to those responsible for the priestly benediction—the tribe of Levi—whose role was to bless Israel. Referring to the formulation of the priestly blessing in Num 6, the homilist points to the final verse which is not said by the priests, but reads "And they shall link my name with the people of Israel, and I will bless them" (Num 6:27). The time of this unified blessing is established in the midrash when God says to Israel: "In this world the tribe of Levi blesses you. In the time to come I in my glory will bless you, as it says [in relation to the restoration of Judaea], 'Then the Lord will bless you, abode of righteousness, O holy mountain'" (Jer 31:23). These phrases are synonyms for the temple. God does not bless his temple, but rather those who were responsible for benedictions in the temple, the tribe of Levi. God will do all the blessing in the happy times of a restored temple.

Thus ignoring the final part of the verse (Gen 12:3: "And all the families of the earth will be blessed through you") the midrash weaves its own understanding of the particular nature of Abraham's call within a larger framework of a history of the Jewish people which extends from Abraham to Moses culminating in the restored kingdom of Judaea.

In the closing remarks of his sermon on Gen 12:1–3 Calvin writes:

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[31] It is found in several texts including *Gen. Rab.* 61:5; *Lev. Rab.* 1:11.

> It is said that "all the nations will be blessed in Abram" .... This is a special blessing that all the nations shall be blessed through him. The Jews expound this meanly for when prosperity is sought from God they say "May God do for me what he did for Abram ...".[32] But should we not also see that in Scripture it is not so much for example as for cause ... for God is the source and the cause of all happiness, everything that is desirable? So the trustworthy exposition of the verse is that all the nations will be blessed in Abram. This is not on account of himself but because of the seed which came down from him, namely our Lord Jesus Christ.

Calvin's words about the Jews, however stereotypical, do fit not only with the prayer in tractate *Ta'anit*[33] to which he is referring, but, in particular, to this late midrash which I have attempted here to decipher. It is not possible to pinpoint the historical context in which this text was produced. What is possible is to trace the underlying themes which have been chosen for the purpose of the exposition. They do not reveal great warmth towards the nations. But it should be remembered that this is only one midrash and one exposition.

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[32] Calvin, *Sermons sur la Genèse*, 597: "Il est dit *que toutes familles de la terre eront benites en Abram*. Ceci ne se restraint pas à ceste façon de parler que nous avoun veu n'agueres, où il est dit qu'Abram seroit miroir de benediction, mais Dieu luy fait icy une promesse speciale, c'est que toutes nations de la terre seront benites en luy. Le Juifz exposent ceci maigrement que, quand on voudra demander propsperité à Dieu, qu'Abram sera mis comme exemple, pour dire: Et que Dieu me face comme il a fait à Abram .... Mais aussi en l'Escriture nous voions que ceci se prend non pas pour exemple, mais pour cause, comme benir en Dieu, benir au nom de Dieu .... Voilà en somme comme ce passage doit estre fidelement exposé, que toutes nations de la terre seront benites en Abram. Ce n'est pas au regard de luy, mais au. Regard dee la semence qui en est descendue, à savoir nostre Seigneur Jesus Christ." Calvin probably used Münster's commentary on Gen 12 (S. Münster, [Venice 1551], XVII verso): "Hebraei hunc locum sic interpretantur. Tu eris benedictio illa, qua reliqui sibi benedicent quandoquidem dicturi sunt: Ponat te Deu sicut Abraham. Nostri putant hic denominationem poni pro denominato, benedictio pro benedicto, vir benedictionis pro viro benedicto."

[33] *M. Ta'an*. 2:4: "May he that answered Abraham our father on Mount Moriah answer you and listen to the voice of your crying this day." This mishnah presents in abbreviated form a popular tradition that in response to his absolution from sacrificing Isaac Abraham instituted, as it were, the prayer invoking his name, that his descendants could use in time of trouble.

APPENDIX

TANHUMA, *LEK LEKA* 1–4

סימן א

ילמדנו רבנו: אדם מישראל מהו שיקבל עליו מלכות שמים כשהוא מהלך
רב אידי ורב הונא בשם רבי יהודה ורבי יוסי בשם ר' שמואל אמרו
אסור לקבל עליו עול מלכות שמים כשהוא מהלך אלא יעמוד במקום אחד ויכוין לבו לשמים באימה וביראה ברתת ובזיע בייחוד השם ויקרא שמע ישראל ה' אלהינו ה' אחד (דברים ו). כל אחד ואחד בכוונת הלב ואחר כך ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד. וכשמתחיל ואהבת רצה מהלך רצה עומד רצה יושב. שכך כתיב: בשבתך בביתך ובלכתך בדרך ובשכבך ובקומך. אתה מוצא כל המדקדק על המצוות שכרו מרובה שכן מצינו באברהם שדקדק על המצוות לפיכך נקרא אוהבו של הקדוש ברוך הוא. שנאמר: זרע אברהם אוהבי (ישעיה מא). אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר רבי יונתן:
אפילו עירובי תבשילין שמרו בביתו של אברהם אבינו שנאמר: וישמור משמרתי מצוותי חוקותיי ותורותיי (בראשית כו). וכי תורות הרבה והרי כבר נאמר: (שמות יב) תורה אחת יהיה וגו'.
וכתיב: תורה אחת ומשפט אחד (במדבר טו)
אלא ותורותיי אלו דקדוקי מצוות שדקדק אברהם.
אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא: אתה מדקדק במצותי ואתה יושב עם עובדי עובדי עבודה זרה, צא מביניהן, לך לך מארצך וגו':

סימן ב

ר' ברכיה פתח:
אחות לנו קטנה ושדים אין לה וגו' (שיר ח).
במה הכתוב מדבר באברהם כשהשליכו נמרוד לתוך הכבשן.
קטנה שעדיין לא עשה לו הקדוש ברוך הוא נסים. ולמה נקרא אחות
שאיחה את העולם לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא כאדם הזה שקורע ומאחה לפיכך נקרא אחות.
ושדים אין לה שעדיין לא היו לו בנים. מה נעשה לאחותינו ביום שידובר בה
ביום שאמר נמרוד להשליכו לכבשן האש. אם חומה היא נבנה עליה טירת כסף אם נותן נפשו כחומה זו שהיא עומדת בפני מלחמות נבנה עליה טירת כסף אלו ישראל שקראם כנפי יונה נחפה בכסף (תהלים סח).
ואם דלת היא אם דל הוא מלמסור נפשו על קדושת השם.
נצור עליה לוח ארז מה צורה שבלוח ארז נוח להיטשטש כך אברהם איני משגיח עליו.
אמר אברהם: אני חומה למסור נפשי על קדושת שמך ולא אני בלבד אלא ושדי כמגדלות בני בניו חנניה מישראל ועזריה ודורו של ר' חנניה בן תרדיון וחבריו שיתנו נפשם על קדושת שמך.

I

Let our Rabbi teach us: Should a Jew take the kingdom of heaven upon himself [recite the *Shema*] whilst walking?

Rav Iddi and Rav Huna in the name of Rabbi Judah, and Rabbi Jose in the name of Rav Samuel said: It is forbidden for him to take the yoke of heaven upon himself whilst walking. Rather, he should remain stationary and direct his heart to heaven in trepidation and fear, trembling and in awe, for the unity of God. He should recite: "*Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one*" (Deut 6:4)—each word said with concentration of the mind—and after that, "*Blessed be the glory of his kingdom forever and ever*". When he begins the words "*And you shall love [the Lord with all your heart] …*" (Deut 6:5) he may stand or sit as he so wishes since it is written "*when you sit in your house and when you walk on your way, when you lie down and when you get up*" (Deut 6:7).

The fact is that great is the reward of all those who are meticulous in observing the commandments. For such is the case of Abraham who was meticulous in his observance of the commandments and therefore called the beloved of the Holy One blessed by He as it is said, "*the seed of Abraham my beloved*" (Isa 41:8). Rabbi Samuel bar Nahmani said in the name of Rabbi Jonathan: "They even observed the law of *eruv tavshilin* in Abraham's household as it is said, "*because Abraham kept my charge: my commandments, my laws and my Torot*" (Gen 26:5). Are there then multiple Torot? Surely it is said "One Torah shall be to him …" (Exod 12:49) and it is also written "One Torah and one law …" (Num 15:16)? Rather, the meaning of "my Torot" refers to Abraham's meticulous ways of keeping the commandments. The Holy One blessed be He said to him: "You are scrupulous with regard to my commandments, and yet you live amidst idolaters. Depart from their midst, *Get yourself out of your land* …."

II

Rabbi Berekhiah began his homily with the verse, "*We have a little sister (ahot) and she has no breasts*" (Cant 8:8). What is the subject of the verse? It refers to Abraham whom Nimrod cast into the furnace. "*Little*"—For the Holy one Blessed be He had not yet performed miracles for him.

Why is he called "*sister*"? Because he sewed (*ihah*) up the world for the Holy one blessed be He like a person who makes a tear and then sews it up. This is why he is called "*sister*."

"*And she has no breasts*" For as yet he did not have children.

What shall we do for our sister in the day that she shall be spoken for—on the day that Nimrod ordered him to be cast into the fiery furnace.

"*If she be a wall we will build upon her a silver palace*." If he sets his life like a wall, which withstands many battles, and surrender his life for the sake of the sanctification of God's name.

"*We will build upon her a silver palace*." These are the Israelites who are called "*the wings of the dove covered in silver*" (Ps 68:14).

"*And if she be a door*." If he is too weak-kneed to surrender his life for the sake of the sanctification of God's name "*we will enclose her with boards of cedar*." For

לפיכך אז הייתי בעיניו כמוצאת שלום שיצא שלום מן הכבשן.
אתה מוצא תרח אביו עושה צלמים היה ועובד אותן.
אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא: לך לך מארצך וגו':

סימן ג

ויאמר ה' אל אברהם לך לך
זה שאמר הכתוב: שמעי בת וראי והטי אזנך ושכחי עמך ובית אביך (תהלים מה).
שמעי בת וראי והטי אזנך זה אברהם. ושכחי עמך ובית אביך זו עבודת עובדי עבודה זרה.
ואומר (ירמיה ב) אומרים לעץ אבי אתה וגו' ויתאוו המלך יופיך זה מלך מלכי המלכים
והוא חפץ לייפותו בעוה"ז ולעוה"ב. כי הוא אדוניך והשתחווי לו. אמר רבי אבין:
משל לצלוחית של פלייטון הנתונה בבית הקברות ולא היה אדם יודע ריחה.
מה עשה נטלוה וטלטלוה ממקום למקום והודיעו ריחה בעולם.
כך היה אברהם דר בתוך עובדי עבודה זרה.
א"ל הקדוש ברוך הוא: לך לך מארצך ואני אודיע טבעך בעולם.
לך לך מהו לך לך ל' שלושים כ' עשרים
הרי עולה בגימטרייה ק' רמז לו כשתהיה בן מאה תוליד בן כשר.
הדא הוא דכתיב: ואברהם בן מאה שנה וגו'
ורבי לוי אומר: ניסיון הראשון כניסיון האחרון. ניסיון הראשון בלך לך מארצך.
ניסיון האחרון בלך לך אל ארץ המוריה. אמר רבי חנינא:
בא וראה חיבתו של אברהם לפני בוראו שבן שלוש שנים הכיר בוראו שנאמר: עקב אשר
שמע אברהם וגו' (בראשית כו). ע' שבעים ק' מאה ב' שנים הרי מאה שבעים ושנים וכל ימיו של
אברהם קע"ה.
הא למדת שבן ג' שנים הכיר את בוראו.
אל הארץ אשר אראך
לא אמר ליה למקום פלוני זו ניסיון בתוך ניסיון.
יש אדם שהולך ואינו יודע לאיזו מקום הוא הולך.
מה עשה נטל את כליו ואת אשתו. וילך אברם כאשר דבר אליו

just as the engraving on the cedar board is easily erasable, so, too, Abraham, if I do not protect him, Abraham said: "*I am a wall* [*and my breasts like towers*]" (Cant 8:10), and I am prepared to surrender myself for the sake of the sanctification of Your name. This applies not only to me, but also to my *breasts like towers*, the descendants of Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah and the generation of Rabbi Hananiah ben Teradion and his colleagues who surrendered their lives for the sake of the sanctification of Your name. And that is why "*I was in his eyes as one that found peace*" (ibid.)—for peace exited from the furnace. It happened that Terah his father was a manufacturer and worshipper of idols. The Holy one blessed be He said to him [Abraham]: "*Get yourself out of your land* . . .".

III

"*And the Lord said to Abram, "Get yourself out"*. This verse must be understood in the light of the verse "*Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear; forget also your own people and your father's house*" (Ps 45:11).

"*Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear*"—this is Abraham.

"*Forget also your own people and your father's house*"—this is idolatry for it says "*you say to a tree you are my father*" (Jer 2:27).

"*So shall the king desire your beauty*" (Jer 2:12). This is the king of kings who desired to beautify him in this world and in the world to come.

"*For he is your lord and you should bow down to him*" (ibid.). Rabbi Abin said: This is to be likened to a bottle of foliatum which is put in a cemetery and its fragrance cannot be discerned by anybody. What did they do? They removed it and carried it from place to place so that its fragrance could be discerned. Similarly, Abraham was living amidst idolaters. The holy one blessed be he said to him: "*Get out from your land* and I will make your mark felt in the world . . .".

What is the meaning of *Lek leka—get yourself out*? Each letter *lamed* equals thirty and the letter *kaf* equals twenty, a total of one hundred, thereby hinting that at the age of a hundred he would beget an upright son, as it is written, "*And Abraham was one hundred yeas old when his son Isaac was born to him*" (Gen 21:5).

Rabbi Levi said: Abraham's first trial was like the last. At the first trial he was told "*Get yourself out of your land*" (Gen 12:1) and at the last one "*Get yourself to the land of Moriah*" (Gen 22:2). Rabbi Haninah said: Come and see the loving attachment Abraham had for his Creator. At the age of three years he knew his Creator as it says "*Because (eqev) Abraham listened to my voice*" (Gen 26:5). The letter *ayin* equals seventy, *quf* equals one hundred and *bet* equals two. Abraham lived for one hundred and seventy-two years. Thus you can deduce that at the age of three years he knew his Creator.

"*To the land that I will show you*" He did not tell him to go to a specific place—this constitutes a trial within a trial. What did he do? He took his things and wife *And Abram went as he had spoken to him*. "*And I will make you* [*a great nation*" (Gen 12:2)] It is not written "I will set you," but rather *I will make you*. He said to him, "I will make you," I will create you as a new creation just as it says "*And God made the firmament*" (Gen 1:7), "*And God made the two lights*" (Gen 1:16). Rabbi Phineas the priest bar Hama said: When did the Holy One blessed be He

אימתי עשה הקדוש ברוך הוא אברהם לגוי גדול
משקבלו ישראל את התורה שכן משה אמר להם: ומי גוי גדול וגו' (דברים ד).

סימן ד

ואברכך שאני בכבודי מברכך. ואגדלה שמך
ששמך מתגדל בעולם.
והי' ברכה מהו שברכתך קודמת לברכתי.
בתחילה אומרים מגן אברהם ואח"כ מחיה המתים. דבר אחר: והיה ברכה
אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא: משעה שבראתי עולמי הייתי זקוק לברך בריותיי.
ברכתי לאדם וחוה דכתיב: ויברך אותם אלוהים (בראשית א).
לנח ובניו דכתיב: ויברך אלוהים את נח ואת בניו (שם ט).
מכאן ואילך אתה הייה עשוי על הברכות.
כיון שעמד יצחק ביקש אברהם לברכו צפה שעשו ויעקב יוצאין ממנו ולא ברכו.
אמר אברהם: יבא בעל העולם ויברך מי שירצה.
משל למלך שהיה לו פרדס נתנו לאריס לעבדו ולשמרו.
היה בתוך הפרדס אילן של סם חיים ואילן של סם המות דבקים זה בזה.
אמר האריס מה אעשה להשקות אילן של חיים ולהניח את זה אי אפשר שמים שזה שותה זה מינק ממנו אלא אניח אותם עד שיבוא בעל הפרדס ומה שירצה יעשה. כן אברהם אמר שלא לברך את יצחק אי אפשר שעשו יוצא ממנו אלא הריני מניחו לבעל הברכה עד שיעשה הקדוש ברוך הוא מה שיחפוץ.
כיון שנסתלקו אברהם ויצחק ברך הקדוש ברוך הוא ליעקב לעצמו שנאמר: וירא אלוהים אל יעקב עוד בבואו מפדן ארם ויברך אותו (בראשית לה)
דבר אחר: ואברכה מברכך
אמר לו: עתיד אני להעמיד מבני בניך שבט שמברך ישראל זהו שבט לוי.
אמר לפניו: ריבונו של עולם ומי מברך לאותו שבט
אמר ליה: משהן מברכין לישראל אני מברך לאותו שבט שנאמר: ושמו את שמי על בני ישראל ואני אברכם (במדבר ו). אמר להם הקדוש ברוך הוא לישראל: בעולם הזה שבט לוי מברך אתכם ולעתיד לבוא אני בכבודי אברך אתכם שנאמר: יברכך ה' נווה צדק הר הקדש (ירמיה לא):

make Abraham into a great nation? When Israel received the Torah, for Moses said to them, "*For what great nation* (גוי גדול) [*is there that has laws and rules as perfect as this Torah*?]" (Deut 4:8).

IV

"*And I will bless you*" (Gen 12:2)—for I in my glory will bless you.

"*And I will make your name great*"—for your name will be aggrandized throughout the world.

"*And be a blessing*." What does this mean? Your blessing will precede mine. First they will say "[Blessed are you], shield of Abraham," and after that "[Blessed be he] who resurrects the dead."

Another meaning of the phrase "*And be a blessing*" is as follows. The holy one blessed be he said to him: At the time that I created My world I was bound to bless My creatures. I blessed Adam and Eve as is written, "*And God blessed them*" (Gen 1:28); I blessed Noah and his sons as it is written, "*And God blessed Noah and his sons*" (Gen 9:1). From that time onwards you [i.e. Abraham] are the maker of blessings. When it came to Isaac Abraham wished to bless him but he foresaw that Esau and Jacob would issue from him, and therefore did not bless him. Abraham said, Let the Master of the world come and bless whomsoever He wishes. It is like a king who had an orchard which he gave to his tenant farmer to cultivate and tend. Within the orchard was a tree producing an elixir of life; next to it was a tree of deadly poison. Said the tenant: What shall I do? It is impossible to water the one without watering the other. I will just leave it and the owner of the orchard can do what he pleases. Similarly, Abraham said, It is not possible to bless Isaac for Esau will issue from him. So I will leave it to the Master of blessing—let the Holy One blessed be He do whatsoever He desires. When Abraham and Isaac passed away the Holy One blessed be He himself blessed Jacob as it says, "*God appeared again to Jacob on his arrival from Paddan-Aram and He blessed him. [God said to him: You whose name is Jacob You shall be called Jacob no more, but Israel shall be your name*"] (Gen 35:9–10).

Another interpretation of "*And I will bless those who bless you*" (Gen 12:3) is the following. He said to him, In the future I will set up a tribe from your grandchildren whose task it will be to bless Israel—namely, the tribe of Levi. He said to him: Sovereign of the world, who will bless that tribe? He said to him, Whilst they bless Israel I will bless that tribe as it says, "*And they shall link My name with the people of Israel, and I will bless them*" (Num 6:27). The holy one blessed be he said to Israel: In this world the tribe of Levi blesses you, but in the time to come I in my glory will bless you as it says, "*Then the Lord will bless you, abode of righteousness, O Holy mountain*" (Jer 31:23).

ISHMAEL SACRIFICED GRASSHOPPERS

Ronit Nikolsky

1. Introduction

The interpretation of biblical verses and narratives is apparent already in the Bible itself. Certainly by the Second Temple period exegetical explanations and expansions of the biblical verses and stories were part of the Jewish culture. Such expansions and exegesis, perhaps a result of the work of small study groups, are prevalent in much of the Second Temple and Late Antique literature, such as Pseudepigrapha or the Dead Sea Scrolls. Some of this material found its way into the rabbinic literature.[1]

In the Tannaitic period, exegetical motifs are often used as an argument in a halakic debate. The motifs vary in terms of antiquity and origin. While some stem from oral traditions that were passed on from teacher to disciple since the Second Temple period, others might be late creations constructed to serve as proof-text for a current halakic-exegetical issue. Exegetical motifs, a term coined and developed by Kugel,[2] is an idea of how to explain a particular biblical verse, which is pointed out by the rabbis as needing an explanation. The classical structure of an exegetical motif is a short explanation, supported by a narrative unit which expands the biblical scene. This narrative unit is called in midrash studies a "gap-filling story." It illustrates the situation that is not told in the biblical text.

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[1] The rabbinic culture is believed to be the heir of the Pharisaic culture of the Second Temple period. It gained a place of prominence once the Temple was destroyed and the priestly class lost its ruling status which gave it authority over the Holy Text. See, e.g., C. Werman, "Oral Torah vs. Written Torah(s): Competing Claims to Authority," in *Rabbinic Perspectives: Rabbinic Literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. S.D. Fraade, A. Shemesh, and R.A. Clements; Leiden 2006), 105–107; J.L. Kugel, "Two Introductions to Midrash," *Proof* 3 (1983): 131–155.

[2] The term was coined by Kugel. In Kugel's words, "An exegetical motif is the underlying idea about how to explain a biblical text." Further descriptions of this and other terms in Kugel's narrative method can be found in J.L. Kugel, *In Potiphar's House: The Interpretive Life of Biblical Texts* (Cambridge, Mass., 1994), 1–11, 247–270; J.L. Kugel, *The Ladder of Jacob: Ancient Interpretations of the Biblical Story of Jacob and His Children* (Princeton 2006), 4–7.

Such exegetical motifs with narrative expansions are found in the rabbinic literature with regard to Hagar.

The story of the expulsion of Hagar posed a difficulty for the rabbis. The Bible tells that "… Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing" (Gen 21:9), and that Sarah then demanded the expulsion of Hagar and her son. Simply "playing" did not seem to the rabbis to be a good enough reason for expulsion. The rabbis chose, then, to expound the biblical story by explaining the meaning of the word "playing" in this passage. In the Tosefta, we find the word "playing" explained as indicating a grave sin committed by Ishmael, and this sin deservedly causes him and his mother to be expelled.

In one passage in chapter 6 of the tractate *Sotah* in the Tosefta, we find four such explanations, four different sins, which are four exegetical motifs of the word "playing" in the verse from Genesis. These are: that Ishmael was an idol-worshiper; that Ishmael's behavior was incestuous; that Ishmael was a murderer, and that Ishmael competed with Isaac on the inheritance. Each of the sins is an appropriate reason for Abraham to expel Hagar and Ishmael. One of these motifs, namely the claim that Ishmael was an idol-worshiper, appears in the previous chapter of the Tosefta as well, in chapter 5 of the same tractate.

In this article I will study the structure and the meaning of the two passages about the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael found in the two chapters of the Tosefta. As to the motif that shows Ishmael as an idol-worshiper, which appears in two separate chapters, I will try to decide which of the two contexts was the original.

2. *Tosefta Sotah* 6:6

2.1. *The Passage in Context*

The verse about Hagar, which is interpreted in the *t. Sotah* 6:6 is Gen 21:9: "and Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing." Three exegetical motifs for this verse are said to come from sages of the school of R. Akiba. Alongside R. Akiba's interpretation, we find also those of R. Eliezer, the son of R. Yose the Galilean, and R. Yishmael. All these Akibian interpretatons are challenged by R. Shimon son of Yochai (henceforth Rashbi), who offers his own interpretation which is the fourth exegetical motif of this verse.

The passage begins with the statement that "R. Shimon son of Yochai said: 'Four things R. Akiba explained [about the text] but my opinion

[about the verse] makes more sense than his,'" and then it runs as follows:[3]

1. Rabbi Akiba explained the verse "and Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian which she bore to Abraham playing," the [word] "playing"[4] used here, means "idol worshiping."
   [We learn this from the narrative about the golden calf] which says (Exod 32:6): "the people sat down to eat, and they drank, and they rose to play."
2. This teaches that Sarah our mother saw Ishmael building *bemas*,[5] and hunting grasshoppers and sacrificing and burning incense to an idol.
3. Rabbi Eliezer, the son of R. Yose the Galilean says: "The [word] 'playing'[6] means incest."
   [We learn this from the narrative about Joseph with Potiphar's wife] which says (Gen 39:17): "the Hebrew slave [which you brought to us] came to me [to play]."[7]
4. This teaches that Sarah saw Ishmael conquering the roofs and abusing the women.
5. Rabbi Yishmael says: "The word 'play' refers to manslaughter."
   [We learn this from the verse] which says (2 Sam 2:16): "[and Abner said to Joab:] 'Let the young men rise and play[8] before us.' And Joab said: 'Let them rise.' And they rose and passed by the number, and held each other's head, and [each] his sword at the side of the other, and they fell [dead] together."

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[3] The translation here is of the Vienna MSS; see S. Lieberman, *The Tosefta, according to Codex Vienna, with Variants from Codices Erfurt, Genizah Mss. and Edition Princeps (Venice 1521)* (New York 1973) (Hebrew). The differences between the Erfurt MS and the other textual witnesses have no bearing on what is said in this article. Other studies about this passage are J. Heinemann, *Aggadah and Its Development* (Jerusalem 1974), 189–190 (Hebrew); J. Fraenkel, *The Ways of the Aggadah and the Midrash* (Tel-Aviv 1996), 1:89–92 (Hebrew); R. Hammer, *Sifre: A Tannaitic Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy* (New Haven 1986), 402 (Hebrew); J.N. Epstein, *Introduction to Tannaitic Literature: Mishna, Tosephta and Halakhic Midrashim* (Jerusalem 1957), 261 (Hebrew).

[4] In the passage under discussion, the Hebrew root צחק ("to laugh"/"to play"/"to engage in a sexual act") is used interchangeably with the root שחק (of a similar meaning). These two roots are phonetically close, or even identical, in rabbinical Hebrew.

[5] The word *bema* is of Greek origin; it means (as in Greek) a high place intended for sacrifice.

[6] R. Eliezer is using the word שחק.

[7] The text does not quote the final word of the verse, but it obviously refers to this word in particular. This happens many times in midrashic texts.

[8] In the Bible the root here is שחק.

6. Teaching [us] that our mother Sarah saw Ishmael take bow and arrow and shoot it toward Isaac, as it says (Prov 26:18–19): "as a madman who throws firebrands … so is the man who deceives [his neighbor and says 'I am only playing!']"[9] etc.
7. But I say [i.e., Rashbi]: "God forbid that there will be such in the house of this pious man! Is it possible that in the house of the one about whom it is told, 'for I have chosen him that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord' (Gen 18:19) etc., there will be idol worshiping, incest and manslaughter?
   Therefore the 'laughing' which is mentioned here is about inheritance:
8. When our father Isaac was born to our father Abraham, everyone was glad, and said: 'A son is born to Abraham, a son is born to Abraham, he will inherit a double portion of the inheritance!' And Ishmael was laughing in his mind and saying, 'Do not be fools, do not be fools, I am the first-born, and I get the double portion.'[10]
9. From the continuation of the [narrative] I learn [it], as it says: "and she said to Abraham, 'send away this slave-woman and her son, so that the son of the maid servant will not inherit' etc."

In his interpretation, R. Akiba (§ 1) studies the usage of the word "playing" (*metsaheq*) in another biblical verse, namely in Exod 32:6. In Exodus the word "to play" (*letsaheq*) describes the Israelites' act of worshiping the golden calf. Rabbi Akiba learns the meaning of the word "playing" in our verse from the manner in which the word is used in the golden calf narrative. He therefore concludes that also in Genesis, the word "playing" refers to idol worshiping as it did in Exodus. We learn that Ishmael was an idol-worshiper, and therefore the expulsion of him and his mother was justified.

Rabbi Akiba then offers a gap-filling story (§ 2)[11] that describes Ishmael's idolatrous custom: Ishmael built altars, hunted grasshoppers, sac-

[9] In the Bible the root here is שחק.

[10] The description of Ishmael as "laughing" seems to parallel Isaac's name: while Abraham names his second son "laugh" (יצחק), assuming that he will be the heir, the older son (Ishmael) laughs unexpectedly, and by so doing reveals his conviction that he is the lawful heir. I thank Reuven Kiperwasser for pointing this observation out to me.

[11] A gap-filling story is a narrative, constructed by the rabbis, that fills in what is conceived as a gap in the biblical story. These help explain the wider context of the biblical narrative or add more details about it. Such narratives could take the form of a

rificed and burnt incense to idols. Hunting grasshoppers in itself, and even eating them, is not forbidden in the Jewish culture,[12] but the idea of sacrificing grasshoppers to idols is puzzling; we don't know of such a custom.[13] However, while the nature of act is not clear, the meaning of it in the passage is obvious.

In the next sections (§§ 3–6) we find two other interpretations of the word "playing," by two other Tannaitic sages, R. Eliezer son of R. Yose the Galilean and R. Yishmael. They interpret the word "playing" using an interpretive technique similar that of R. Akiba, i.e., understanding the word in our verse according to its usage in another verse, and offering a gap-filling story expanding the biblical narrative using the new meaning of the verse.[14]

Rabbi Eliezer the son of R. Yose (who lived one generation after the Bar Kokhba revolt)[15] interprets the word "playing" as referring to an incestuous act. He learns it from the word *letsaheq* in the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife (Gen 39:17), where the word refers to a sexual play. His gap-filling story relates Ishmael's incestuous behavior.[16]

The other sage, R. Yishmael (of the same generation as R. Akiba), understands the word as referring to manslaughter. The biblical narrative which R. Yishmael invokes is the young men of Joab and of Abner

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description of events which are not mentioned in the biblical text, or a dialogue between characters, which is not quoted in the Bible. The gap-filling stories are in fact a very common interpretive technique in rabbinic literature. See Fraenkel, *Ways of the Aggadah*, 287–322; J. Levinson, "Literary Approaches to Midrash," in *Current Trends in the Study of Midrash* (ed. C. Bakhos; Leiden 2006), 207–208; D. Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (ISBL; Bloomington 1994), 39–49.

[12] See, e.g., *m. Hul.* 8:1 or *m. Abod. Zar.* 2:7 for eating and *t. Shabb.* 12:5 for hunting. Maimonides even decided that sacrificing grasshoppers was not forbidden, see: *Mishne-Torah*, *Hilchot Avodat Kochavim*, 3:4, and Rabad's critical remark there. I thank Prof. Admiel Kosman, Prof. Jon Levenson, Prof. Menahem Kellner, and the (partially) anonymous K. Hain for helping me on this point.

[13] In the Talmud this act is presented as a childish game on the part of Ishmael mimicking a real sacrifice, while using grasshoppers instead of larger animals; see *b. Abod. Zar.* 51a where the context is a condemnation of grasshoppers sacrifice. Lieberman thinks that what is meant here is real idol worshiping and not a childish game; see Lieberman, *Tosefta*, 665.

[14] Some scholars think that the opinions of the two other rabbis are a late addition. Lieberman, *Tosefta*, 671 does not accept this conjecture. *Sifre on Deuteronomy*, which has this passage as well, only has R. Akiba's interpretation.

[15] G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (Minneapolis 1996), 22, 23.

[16] The idiom "conquering the roofs and torturing the women" refers to anal copulation with both male or female partners, the women being not married to him. See Lieberman, *Tosefta*, 670.

who "played" (in fact, fought) until death. The gap-filling story which R. Yishmael provides tells how Ishmael was throwing arrows at Isaac.

In this last gap-filling story, we find an extra detail absent in the others; this story has a prooftext, a verse from Proverbs (26:18–19): "as a madman who throws firebrands and death, so is the man who deceives his friend and said: 'I am only playing (*metsaheq*).'"

In section §7 Rashbi criticizes the interpretations of the other Tannaitic sages. He is not arguing directly against their interpretive method, but against the conclusions which stem from these interpretations; it cannot be imagined, says Rashbi, that such grave sins were committed in the house of Abraham, about whom it is said (Gen 18:19) "for I have chosen him that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice." From this verse we learn that Abraham was a good educator and a good manager of his household, and one cannot imagine having idol worshiping, incestuous behavior or manslaughter in his house. Rashbi's alternative interpretation (§8) is not based on comparing the use of the word "playing" in the Genesis verse to other biblical narratives. He understands (§9) the verse in Gen 21:9 from its immediate textual context, i.e., the verse following it (Gen 21:10) that reads: "for the son of this maidservant will not inherit together with my son." Since the next verse talks about inheritance, says Rashbi, we can assume that our verse also talks about inheritance. Here Rashbi offers his own gap-filling story, describing Ishmael's thoughts and intentions concerning Abraham's inheritance.

2.2. *Methods of Interpretation*

Rabbi Akiba's method of interpreting biblical verses, as it appears in the Tosefta passage just studied, involves understanding verse A by pointing to a similar lexical component in verse B, and then interpreting verse A according to the semantic field of this lexeme in verse B. This is an early rabbinic method of interpretation, which is called "analogy" (*gzera shava*); it is attributed to Hillel.[17] The method of analogy ignores, in the

[17] W. Bacher, *Die exegetische Terminologie der judischen Traditionsliterature* (2 vols.; Hildesheim 1990), under various entries; M. Kahana, "The Halakhic Midrashim," in *The Literature of the Sages II: Midrash and Targum, Liturgy, Poetry, Mysticism, Contracts, Inscriptions, Ancient Science and the Languages of Rabbinic Literature* (ed. S. Safrai et al.; CRINT 2.3b; Assen 2006), 13–26. The term usually used as a name of this method is "analogy" (*gezera shava*) in Hebrew; however, see regarding the problematic nature of the concept and this expression in Y. Bergman, "Gzera Shawa Mahi?," *Sinai* 71 (1972): 24–30 (Hebrew).

first instance, the context of the lexical components, and relies on the phonetic similarity. Later the contexts are brought into consideration. Because of this initial stage, this method can be called, using the (not very accurate but hopefully indicative) term, the "deconstructive method." The other examples of Akiba's interpretive methods are not necessarily analogies, but they also exhibit the use of a single aspect in the verse as a source for non-contextual understanding of the verse in question, thus they are also deconstructive.

These examples of the deconstructive method are actually not extreme ones, certainly not the most extreme deconstruction that R. Akiba is said to be capable of. Rabbi Akiba is known not only to take a word out of its context; he can make "mountains of interpretations" based on one letter.[18]

Rashbi, on the other hand, proposes a method of interpreting the text, which does not deconstruct it, but on the contrary, understands the meaning of a sentence from its immediate context. This method has ended up being known as "a matter understood by its context" (*davar halamed me'inyano*), or "a matter understood by its end" (*davar halamed misofo*), in the traditional lists of rabbinic interpretive techniques.[19] This method seems not to be popular in rabbinic literature; it occurs considerably fewer times in the literature than do other methods of interpretation.[20]

2.3. *The Archeology of t. Sotah 6*

The three interpretations of the school of R. Akiba put together, result in Ishmael committing what is conceived of as three grave sins of the Jewish culture: idol-worshipping, incest, and manslaughter.

These sins are part of the list of seven sins, which not only Jews but also Gentiles are expected to avoid, but they also constitute a "short list" on their own. In Tannaitic literature they are usually said to be committed by a whole society, not by a single person, and in most cases, by Gentiles (only in one case also Israelites of the early period commit them).[21] The

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[18] T. *B. Metzi'a* 29b.

[19] Bacher, *Exegetische Terminologie*, 1:142; Kahana, "Halakhic Midrashim," 14.

[20] A very superficial check resulted in 27 occurrences of "a matter understood by its context/end" in rabbinic compilations of the late antique and early byzantine period, as opposed to around 300 occurrences of "analogy" and some 650 occurrences of "*a minori ad majus*" (Hebrew: *Kal va-Homer*) in the same corpus.

[21] These three sins appear three times in the Tosefta. In (*t. Sanh*. 6:6) the Sodomites committed them, and as a result they have no share in the world to come. The Israelites of the First Temple period also sinned these three sins, and were punished by being expelled

gravity of the sins is made obvious by the seriousness of the calamities that befell the sinners. When associating Ishmael with such sins, the Tosefta presents him not only as a foreigner, a Gentile, but as a sinful one as well.

It is not necessary for Ishmael to commit all three sins in order to be declared unwanted in the house of Abraham. The existence of these three exegetical motifs certainly is an "overkill."[22] It seems that the reason behind piling up all these explanation is a literary one: constructing a list of three offenses that together form a well-known list, at least one which is known in other parts of the Tosefta. Such an accumulation creates a literary tension, which is waiting to be solved.

And indeed, following these three interpretations, we find the fourth one, that of Rashbi, which overpowers all previous interpretations and serves as the solution of the literary tension created before. It is the climax of the passage. The Tosefta passage is, then, a well structured literary text.

A closer look at the "building blocks" of the passage reveals a discrepancy in the apparent symmetry. The three exegetical motifs are not of the same exegetical value.

The second exegetical motif explains the word "playing" as an incest, an act belonging to the semantic field of negative sexual activity. Although the most common meaning of the root צחק or שחק in biblical Hebrew is to laugh, to sport or to play, this root does appear in the biblical text in a sexual connotation as well. One such case is the verse alluded to by R. Yosei (Gen 39:16); another case where the sexual connotation is also very obvious is Gen 26:8: "Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out of a window and saw Isaac fondling (*metsaheq*) Rebekah his wife." We see, then, that the interpretation of R. Eliezer, the son of R. Yosei the Galilean, is not very innovative, perhaps not an interpretation at all, but almost a straightforward understanding of the verse.

The third exegetical motif leads us in a different direction. We already noted above that the gap-filling story of this motif, unlike the others in this passage, is supported by a biblical verse from Proverbs. A more careful look reveals that the verse that is supposed to support the story

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from their country (*t. B. Metzi'a* 13:22). It is emphasized that these sins were committed in the past only, and that later, in the Second Temple period, not these but other sins caused the expulsion (namely loving money and hating each other). In the *Mek.* the three sins are attributed to Gentiles only (*Mek. Beshalach*, *Vayehi*, *Ptichta*, concerning the nations of the world; *Mek. Jethro*, *BaChodesh* 2, concerning the Egyptian). See also *t. Avodah Zarah* 8:4 (as part of the seven sins of the sons of Noah).

[22] About "overkill" in midrashic motifs see Kugel, *Ladder of Jacob*, 121–122.

and thus explain it is in itself quite obscure. The verse "As a madman who throws firebrand arrows, and death so is the man who deceives his neighbor and says 'I am only playing'" presents an unusual simile likening a warlike technique of throwing firebrand arrows executed by a madman to a person deceiving a neighbor without admitting it. Why should this verse be a proof text for the gap story which talks about Ishmael? Is it not enough that Sarah saw Ishmael throwing normal arrows at Isaac?

The connection between the gap-filling story and the verse would be more obvious if we reverse the order, and consider that we have here an exegetical motif that explains the verse from Proverbs as referring to the story of Isaac and Ishmael. The practice of showing that verses from the later books of the Bible refer to events from the Pentateuch, is common in rabbinic culture,[23] and it could be that this is what we have here. The Tosefta, then, is reversing the order of this explanation in order to incorporate it into the passage about Gen 21:9, in order to create the literary construction of three exegetical motif pronounced by three sages of the Akibian school showing Ishmael sinning in the three grave sins.

But the most surprising explanation, in my view, is the first exegetical motif, told by R. Akiba, explaining the word "playing" as idol-worshiping. One can conjecture a remote semantic connection if one thinks of the word "playing" as referring to singing and dancing, and connects this to the singing and dancing which probably took place in the event of worshiping of local gods. But what textual proof do we have that this is the meaning of the word in this case? Rabbi Akiba's exegetical move here is innovative. He points to the word "playing" in Exod 32:6 where the singing and dancing of the Israelites is in a close nexus to the worshiping of the golden calf. The exegesis is brilliant and serves well the issue at hand: Hagar, the Gentile woman, and her son Ishmael, the idol-worshiper, should be expelled, lest Isaac will learn from them their bad customs. Rabbi Akiba's interpretation is innovative, focused, and offers a real solution to the discrepancy in the narrative.

It seems, then, that the editor/author of this passage created the literary tension by piling three exegetical motifs of the school of R. Akiba, the first is probably an original exegesis by R. Akiba, the second, an almost banal one, which could have been created ad hoc for this passage, and a third which is originally an exegesis of a verse in Proverbs, explaining

[23] This custom was termed "back referencing" by Kugel (Kugel, *In Potiphar's House*, 261).

it as referring to the Isaac-Ishmael story. To these three arguments the editor/author added a fourth one, which criticizes the previous three interpretations, and serves as the literary and ideological climax of the passage.

The issue at hand in the Tosefta is the question of exegetical strategies; Hagar and Ishmael are considered only in as much as their case serves the discussion about exegesis. The focus on exegetical techniques becomes even clearer when we consider the context in which we find the passage just studied, which is a sequence of four interpretations of biblical verses,[24] over which R. Akiba and Rashbi differ in their exegetical strategy. This larger textual unit is, in turn, quoted within the discussion of the water of bitterness.[25]

Why was this discussion over exegetical strategies inserted into the text of the Tosefta? In order to answer this question it will be useful to check the parallel passage in the Mishnah.

3. *Mishnah Sotah* 5

In the parallel chapters in the Mishnah the sequence of the four exegetical issues over which R. Akiba and Rashbi differ is absent. However, we do find in the middle of the discussion about the water of bitterness a different digression; one which presents some of R. Akiba's interpretations to biblical verses.[26]

Here is a summary of this digression:[27]

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[24] The three other verses are Num 11:22; Ezek 33:24; Zech 8:19. Since the other three verses are not concerned with Hagar, I will not discuss them here.

[25] According to the biblical rule of the "water of bitterness" (Num 5:12–31), if a woman is suspected by her husband of being unfaithful, she is tested by ritualisticly drinking water of bitterness; if the water causes her bitter pain and some other symptoms, she is accused as being unfaithful. According to the rabbinic rule the woman is then forced to divorce without receiving the compensation to which she is entitled as a divorcée; if the water does not harm her, she is acquitted of the blame. About this rule and its application in rabbinic culture see M. Halbertal, *Interpretive Revolutions in the Making: Values as Interpretive Considerations in Midrashe Halakhah* (Jerusalem 1997), 94–113 (Hebrew); I. Rosen-Zvi, "The Tractate of Jealousy: A Forgotten Tannaitic Polemics about Marriage, Freedom of Movement and Sexual Control," *JSIJ* 5 (2006): 21–48. Online: http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/5–2006/Rosen-Zvi.pdf (Hebrew).

[26] I mostly follow the analysis of the chapter as was presented in I. Rosen-Zvi, "Who Will Uncover the Dust from Your Eyes: *Mishnah Sota* 5 and R. Akiva's Midrash," *Tarbiz* 75 (2006), 95–127 (Hebrew).

[27] *M. Sotah* 5.

1. Within the halakic discussion over what is an unfaithful wife, R. Akiba introduces a new personage besides the husband and the wife: the lover. The lover, says R. Akiba, should also be tested by the water of bitterness. Rabbi Akiba learns this by using a sophisticated exegetical strategy on verses from Numbers (5:11–31), learning from an appearance of the same word twice in one biblical passage. Rabbi Yehoshua and R. Yehuda the prince both make reference to opinions of earlier sages which agree with R. Akiba's conclusions. The agreement with established authorities imparts authority to R. Akiba's interpretation. This passage has an introductory nature, and it is a later addition to a list of Akibian interpretations.[28]
2. Next, R. Akiba states a halakic rule that a loaf of bread which was in an impure vessel is itself impure. This rule agrees with what was known already to R. Yochanan son of Zakai, a rabbi of great authority who lived one generation earlier, but it contradicts straightforward halakah found in a biblical verse (Lev 11:33). Rabbi Akiba again uses a sophisticated interpretive move to show that the rule is, in fact, based on a biblical verse. Rabbi Yehoshua is happy with R. Akiba's interpretation.
3. Rabbi Akiba explains a contradiction between two biblical texts regarding the distance that one is allowed to walk on a Shabbat. The halakic rule is a known one, and it is not dependant on any biblical verse; R. Akiba's innovation in this passage is connecting the rule with the biblical verse.[29]
4. Rabbi Akiba uses a sophisticated interpretation of an apparently surplus word in the biblical text to explain how the "song of the sea" (Exod 14:1) was performed: Moses was pronouncing one sentence, explains R. Akiba, and the Israelites repeated it. In opposition to R. Akiba's interpretation R. Nehemia claims that both leader and people were singing together at the same time. The implication of R. Nehemia's opinion is that a Holy Spirit descended on the Israelites as much as it did over Moses; otherwise how could they have known what to sing alongside Moses?[30]

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[28] Rosen-Zvi, "Who Will Uncover," 118–122.

[29] The state of affairs is somewhat more complicated; for a full description see Rosen-Zvi, "Who Will Uncover," 102–104.

[30] The fact that the Holy Spirit descended on the Israelites is not mentioned in the Mishnah, only implied. I emphasized it here because this topic will come up in the Tosefta, as a reaction to the Mishnah. See Rosen-Zvi, "Who Will Uncover," 105n51, 113n87.

5. Yehoshua son of Hyrcanus, who is presented as a pupil of R. Akiba,[31] interprets a verse from Job proving that Job worshiped God out of love, and not out of fear as was understood by R. Yochanan son of Zakkai. R. Yochanan learned it from a straightforward reading of a verse in the book of Job. Yehoshua's interpretation is sophisticated and follows the Akibian method of interpretation.

In his study of this mishnaic chapter, Rosen-Zvi concluded that the intention of the digression from the halakic topic was to show and to praise R. Akiba's method of interpreting the Scriptures. What is perhaps implied, but not specified in Rosen-Zvi's article, is that the important factor in R. Akiba's innovation is not his method of interpretation, but the fact that he insists on having a biblical support for the halakic rules.[32] The necessity to support the halakah with biblical quote is so great in R. Akiba's view, that one may even use "extreme" interpretive methods to reach this goal. Chapter 4 of the Mishnah is, then, a celebration of the Akibian method as a peak of interpretive virtuosity, which was not surpassed before or after R. Akiba, all with the purpose of combining halakah and Scripture into one cultural unity.[33]

The currently accepted scholarly view of the development of rabbinic culture is that by the end of the Second Temple period the Pharisaic law developed into an independent body of halakic rules, while the priestly culture was more closely linked with the biblical text. In the Tannaitic culture, which inherited the Pharisaic one, the urge to connect the halakah with Scripture rose, apparently in the proximity of R. Akiba, whether initiated by him or brought by him to a new level.[34]

Seeing the chapter of the Mishnah in light of this cultural trend, it is all the more interesting to see what the focus and the aim of the parallel chapter in the Tosefta are.

In the parallel passage in the Tosefta the compiler seems to react against the glorified image or R. Akiba portrayed in the Mishnah, by

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[31] Rosen-Zvi, "Who Will Uncover," 117.

[32] Rosen-Zvi, "Who Will Uncover," 101, 102 near n. 36, and in many other places where "tradition" vs. "midrash" is mentioned.

[33] The praising of R. Akiba's system is done mainly through the voice of R. Yehoshua, who is a senior of R. Akiba, which is probably also the voice of the editor of the Mishnah. See Rosen-Zvi, "Who Will Uncover," 123–126, and in his previous analysis of particular passages.

[34] Except for Rosen-Zvi's work about this, see also Werman, "Oral Torah," 105–107; A. Yadin, "4QMMT, Rabbi Ishmael, and the Origins of Legal Midrash," *DSD* 10 (2003): 131.

making every possible move to downplay the greatness of R. Akiba. In the parallel Tosefta passage, we find the following steps. The introductory passage, where R. Akiba is praised at great length, is omitted in the Tosefta. Also omitted is R. Yehoshua's praise of R. Akiba in the ruling about impurity. Rabbi Akiba's name is omitted from the ruling about the Shabbat-distance. With regard to "the song of the sea": in the Tosefta it is accepted that the Holy Spirit entered all of the Israelites (this is the opinion, which, in the Mishnah, was supported by R. Akiba's opponent). To this the Tosefta adds a wealth of opinions regarding the manner of singing, and, by so doing, the opinion of R. Akiba becomes but one of many possible ones, and not the preferred one as it was in the Mishnah. With regard to Job's faith, in the Tosefta we find the opinions of two other rabbis, not of R. Akiba, which prove that Job's faith was based on love, not on fear; R. Akiba's name is again omitted.

Here is a schematic representation of the sequence of the two corpora, The Mishnah and the Tosefta:

Mishnah Sotah 5	*Tosefta Sotah* 6
1. An introductory halakic passage about the unfaithful wife, with a ruling by R. Akiba who is using his interpretation of a verse to proof a halakah.	[the whole passage is missing or omitted]
2. Rabbi Akiba is ruling regarding impurity; R. Yehoshua is praising the ruling.	The same ruling of R. Akiba as in the Mishnah. Rabbi Yehoshua's praise is omitted.
3. Akiba's ruling about the Shabbat-limit; the mixture of halakah and Scripture is not accepted by R. Eliezer son of Yose, who is younger than R. Akiba, hence presenting R. Akiba's uniqueness in his exegetical abilities (because the sages of the next generation cannot produce a better one).[35]	The same ruling of R. Akiba as in the Mishnah, but said in the name of another sage (Yehuda son of Petiri); R. Eliezer's opinion is also presented as referring to Scripture, so R. Akiba's virtuosity looses its uniqueness.
4. Rabbi Akiba's sophisticated interpretation of the singing of "the song of the sea" is contrasted with R. Nehemia's method, which is a	[Appears as the last passage in the Tosefta] After stating that the Holy Spirit descended on the Israelites in

[35] Rosen-Zvi, "Who Will Uncover," 104.

simple understanding of the verse, but implies that the Holy Spirit impregnated all the Israelites in the event.	the desert (as was the opinion of R. Nehemia in the Mishnah, who opposed R. Akiba), the Tosefta brings a wealth of opinions about the manner of singing "the song of the sea," reducing R. Akiba's opinion to merely one of many.
5. Rabbi Akiba's interpretation of the Job story: he worshiped out of love, not fear.	[Appeared before "the song of the sea" issue in the Tosefta, in order to enable a longer discussion of the "song of the sea" later on?] The discussion here does not include R. Akiba's interpretation at all; it is attributed to another sage.
The chapter is finished; next is a new chapter about a new halakic issue regarding jealousy.	Here the text about the four issues about which R. Akiba and Rashbi differ is added. This text is criticizing fundamentally R. Akiba's interpretive method.

In the Tosefta, then, R. Akiba's opinion is omitted from as many passages as possible and, when not omitted, his is reduced to one among many other opinions or, at the very least, it is not praised.

In contrast to what is found in the Mishnah, the compiler of the Tosefta seems to take for granted the fact that a halakah has to be supported by an interpretation of a biblical verse, an issue which was represented in the Mishnah as R. Akiba's novelty. What is being criticized in the Tosefta is the particular, sophisticated, de-constructive method of interpretation, a method that was presented in the Mishnah as necessary in order to find a biblical support for halakah which is not rooted in the biblical text. Rabbi Akiba needed the sophisticated de-constructive method in order to bridge the gap between the halakah which he held as valid, and the Scripture, which he also took as authoritative. For Rashbi the connection between the halakah and Scripture is un-questionable, but the sophisticated method of interpretation does injustice, as he shows, to the authoritative biblical figure Abraham. Rashbi, therefore, rejects the Akibian method of interpretation.

This is true not only with regard to the story of the expulsion of Hagar, but with regard to the other three interpretive issues that appear in the Tosefta as well.[36]

[36] Of the other three biblical verses on which we find a debate between R. Akiba and

The passage about the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael is not halakic, but narrative. The motive behind the debate over it is not legal, but concerns cultural narrative—how can we, the rabbinic culture, accommodate the character of the father of the nation as it appears in the biblical text? It is therefore less institutionalized, but has more to do with portraying the cultural identity and its nature. But in other aspects it does tackle the same issue as the halakic debate, which is—what kind of exegetical strategies are accepted, and what is the rabbinic view of R. Akiba's exegetical activity and his readiness to resort to extreme exegetical technique in order to combine halakah and Scripture, or in this case, halakah and cultural narrative?

So far we have dealt with the exegetical motif about the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael, knowing that the real issue at hand was in the exegetical method itself. But once accepted as part of the authoritative literature, this exegetical motif, together with its literary context, was reused in other contexts. Such is the case with the exegetical motif of Ishmael the idol-worshiper which found its way to another discussion in the Tosefta, where the household of Abraham is the focus.

4. *Tosefta Sotah* 5: Is This a Text?

The image of Ishmael as an idol-worshiper, which was a motif exemplifying the interpretive method of R. Akiba, is found at another place in the Tosefta, just one chapter before the one discussed above. This occurs while the same general halakic topic is discussed: the drinking of the water of bitterness by an unfaithful woman (*t. Sotah* 5–6).

The Tosefta discusses the question after what kind of family arguments the woman has to drink the water of bitterness (*t. Sotah* 5:1–5), along with some other domestic issues (*t. Sotah* 5:6–11). Following this discussion, the text refers to one particular type of domestic quarrel about which the rabbis refrain from making any judgment. This is the case in which a woman asks heaven to mediate between herself and her husband. An

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Rashbi, which are not discussed here, two are narrative issues, and the last is halakic. It could be that we witness here the midrashic tendency of "increasing in importance": the three first issues, which are narrative, serve as introductions to the "real" issue, which is the halakic one, in this case, a calendric one. See also Lieberman's remark (Lieberman, *Tosefta*, 669), when talking about one of the manuscripts of this *parasha*: "And the meaning is that Rashbi did not debate with R. Akiba about *legal* issues, only in the case of the fast of the tenth [month], and the other things are *merely* narrative."

example of such a quarrel is the one between Abraham and Sarah, about the expulsion of Hagar. In the Bible Sarah asks for heavenly intervention when she says: "May the Lord judge between you and me" (Gen 16:5). The quarrel between Abraham and Sarah, as it is represented in this rabbinic passage, does not focus simply on the request for heavenly intervention, rather the accent is on the fact that each of the parties promotes his or her line of action by invoking the argument "if we do not do as I suggest, the name of heaven will be desecrated."

The deviant topic, and the self-coherence of the passage, suggest that we have here an independent textual unit that was incorporated into the Tosefta. This passage appears in all witnesses of the Tosefta, including a genizah fragment. For our purpose this passage is interesting because it uses the exegetical motif of Ishmael being an idol-worshiper.

Here is the passage, *t. Sotah* 5 (according to the Vienna manuscript):

1. If a woman says to her husband: "Heaven will [decide] between my [opinion] and yours," they [i.e., the couple] will ask for [a heavenly intervention] between them.
2. As we find regarding our mother Sarah, who said to our father Abraham: "May the Lord judge between you and me."
3. Indeed she said this to him: "Expel this made-servant and her son." This teaches that our mother Sarah saw Ishmael building *bemas*, and hunting grasshoppers and sacrificing and burning incense to an idol.
4. She said: "Lest my son Isaac will learn this, and will go and worship in this manner, and the name of heaven will be desecrated by this."
5. He [i.e., Abraham] said to her: "After one acquits a person, one convicts him?
   After we made her a queen and we made her a lady and we brought her into this greatness, we will send her away from our home?
   What will people say about us?
   Will not the name of heaven be desecrated?"
6. She said: "Since your say that this is a desecration of heaven and I say that this is a desecration of heaven, God will decide between my words and yours."
7. God decided between her words and his, as it says: "Everything that Sarah tells you, listen to her voice."
8. [37]Why is it written, "everything"?

[37] I am skipping the sentence "it is not written 'everything' (*she'eyn talmud lomar kol*),"

> This teaches that [God] decided in the second instance as he did in the first instance: as in the second instance it was a testimony regarding Hagar, so in the first instance it was a testimony regarding Hagar.[38]

Following the initial statement about the nature of the dispute and its heavenly solution (§ 1),[39] the discussion between Abraham and Sarah regarding Hagar is brought as an example of such a dispute (§ 2). We find then (§ 3) a gap-filling story telling how Sarah saw Ishmael worshiping idols. The description of Ishmael's action is similar to R. Akiba's formulation in ch. 6, which was discussed above. An additional narrative (§ 4) tells how Sarah wants to keep the bad influence away from Isaac, lest the name of heaven be desecrated by Isaac's worshiping foreign gods. Abraham, on his part, claims (§ 5) that since he and Sarah raised Hagar to the status of a lady and a mistress (i.e., a legitimate wife), sending her away would give a bad impression, apparently referring to people who will speak evil about Abraham's family and as a result also about the God of this family, and as a result, in this case also, the name of heaven will be desecrated. Since both parties invoke the argument of sacrilege, Sarah suggests (§ 6) letting God make the decision. And indeed, says the Tosefist (§ 7), God intervened, and commanded that Sarah's opinion should be followed. God's decision is made clear in Gen 21:12, where he tells Abraham: "Everything that Sarah tells you, hearken to her voice."

So far, the narrative of this Tosefta passage seems fluent and logical, the arguments seem complete, and there is no need for any further remarks. But at this point we find an additional sentence (§ 8): why does it say "*everything* that Sarah says"? Is Abraham supposed to obey Sarah in everything? The answer given is that "everything" here means that Sarah's opinion with regard to Hagar should be followed in the first instance as it was in the second.

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which I think is a comment made by a later scribe or a reader wondering about the nexus which the midrash creates between Gen 16:5 and Gen 21:12, a nexus that will be discussed later.

[38] The textual versions that read "about Hagar," instead of "a testimony about Hagar," are unnecessary corrections. See Lieberman, *Tosefta*, 665. Sarah's claims against Hagar are taken as a testimony made by a woman, which is usually not accepted as a valid testimony except in cases that concern her own body and some domestic issues. In this case the testimony was accepted by God.

[39] See also *m. Ned.* 11, 12, a similar demand on the part of the woman, which was explained differently in later sources. See references to such sources in Lieberman, *Tosefta*, 663–664.

At this stage the reader is reminded, if he or she did not realize it before, that in the biblical narrative there are two stories where Hagar found herself in the desert, the one in Gen 16, and the other in Gen 21. In the first instance, she ran away to the desert because, after treating Sarah with disrespect, Hagar was tortured by Sarah and eventually escaped to the desert. In the second instance, Hagar was expelled by Abraham following Sarah's request, after seeing Ishmael "playing." Having this knowledge the statement in the section § 8 of the Tosefta is clear: Just as God instructed Abraham to obey Sarah regarding the expulsion of Hagar in the second instance (Gen 21), so should Abraham have accepted the expulsion of Hagar to the desert in the first instance (Gen 16), which is what Abraham actually did.

In the previous paragraph I was trying to "make sense" of a passage in the Tosefta. But the truth is that the argument is not smooth and the narrative is not fluent. In Gen 16, where the first time Hagar went to the desert is recounted and where we find the verse, "Let God judge between me and you," Ishmael was not yet born, so it is hardly probable that Sarah would see him building an altar and sacrificing grasshoppers to idols. Furthermore, Isaac had also not yet been born, so Sarah could not have been worried about the effect of the unborn Ishmael's customs on the un-conceived Isaac.[40]

It is possible to conjecture that §§ 3 and 4 are a later addition to the argumentation, added by an unlearned scribe or editor. But, if we omit §§ 3 and 4 from our narrative, we will lose Sarah's argument for the whole textual unit, namely, the desecration of the name of heaven.

It is more plausible to conjecture that originally Sarah used a different argument to support the expulsion of Hagar, perhaps an argument that proves that, if Hagar stays in the house, a sacrilege will result. This would parallel nicely with Abraham's argument, that sending Hagar away (by letting Sarah torture her) would also result in sacrilege, making the dispute undecidable, and in need of heavenly intervention. Such an intervention is called for by Sarah with the words "May the Lord judge between me and you."

[40] Lieberman expends much effort to explain the existence of this passage here. Many early sources quote the Tosefta passage as is found here, and most don't react to the discrepancy described above (except one source, a genizah fragment, which declares that Sarah saw Ishmael sacrificing grasshoppers in a vision; see Lieberman, *Tosefta*, 664–665).

If this analysis/conjecture is true, we can assume that the original passage was a combination of two exegetical motifs. The first is an exegetical motif concerning the words of Sarah, "May the Lord judge between me and you," explaining these words as referring to a dispute that Abraham and Sarah had concerning Hagar. The two arguments brought up by the two parties (the one by Sarah, which is lost, and the one of Abraham) are the gap-filling stories, that is, describing a scene not told in the biblical text.

In the latter part of the passage we see a second exegetical motif, focused the verse Gen 21:12: "Everything which Sarah says, hearken to her voice." The word "everything" is explained as referring to the two times Hagar was sent/escaped to the desert.[41]

Once Sarah's proper argument was replaced by the argument that Ishmael was an idol-worshiper, the narrative became incoherent. But the fact that it was replaced shows that this exegetical motif about idol worshiping gained a status of authority, at least in the eyes of the scribe or the editor who chose to the replace the original argument with this one. The lexical similarly between the "idol-worshiping" motif here and in ch. 6 of the Tosefta, suggests that it was influenced by the phraseology found in ch. 6 of the Tosefta.[42]

This article studied some exegetical motifs in the Tosefta about the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael to the desert. We saw how these motifs are used by the early sages to illustrate arguments in a debate about exegesis and authority. Although the exegetical motifs are not the focus of attention of the Tosefta, their visibility and vitality in the culture of the sages is very obvious. It seems that the knowledge of exegetical motifs, and the creation of new ones, was a natural part of the culture of these sages.

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[41] In *Sifre on Numbers* the same question "should Abraham obey Sarah in *everything*?" is answered by saying that the dot above the word "between you" (MT: בינך) means that Abraham's obedience is only required in the case of Hagar. This seems to be a secondary use of this Tosefta passage, which is avoiding the discrepancies in the biblical text which the passage here suffers, as will be explained henceforth.

[42] It is possible that this exegetical motif existed separately, and was incorporated independently into both passages of the Tosefta which were studied above. I tend to think that this is the less likely possibility. The exegetical debate between R. Akiba and Rashbi might have been an independent textual unit, as can be argued from its existence, albeit in a different formulation, in *Sifre on Deuteronomy*, passage 357 on chapter 34 (L. Finkelstein, ed., *Siphre ad Deuteronomium* [New York 1969], 425).

The exegetical motif of Ishmael as an idol-worshiper received an authoritative status and became a fixed textual unit. This, in turn, was used by an unlearned copyist to replace an original argument of Sarah, which is now lost, rendering a whole Tosefta passage incoherent.

HAGAR IN *TARGUM PSEUDO-JONATHAN*

Florentino García Martínez

1. Introduction

This paper will present the figure of Hagar as described in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, a late Targum, but one which has preserved several of the traditions built around the figure of the maidservant of Sarah, the mother of Ishmael.[1] Some of these traditions may be much older, as they are partially attested to in the Qumran texts, in *Jubilees*, or in the New Testament.[2] I have grouped the information gathered in my reading of the *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* under three headings: the origins and status of Hagar, the description of Ishmael, and the dispute between Ishmael and Isaac.

2. The Origins and Status of Hagar

The information provided by the two biblical texts which deal with the origins and status of Hagar (Gen 16:1–16; 21:9–20) is scanty. They provide the name Hagar and state that she is an Egyptian maidservant or slave (שִׁפְחָה מִצְרִית). Hagar's Egyptian origins are thus established in the biblical text.[3] However, as always, the haggadah tries to be more precise by building upon the scarce data provided by the biblical

[1] I will use the edition of the *Tg. Ps.-J.* in Genesis, Volume 50.1 of *Biblia Polyglotta Matritensia. Series IV: Targum Palestinense in Pentateuchum. Additur Targum Pseudo-jonatan ejusque hispanica versio* (ed. A. Díez Macho; Madrid 1988).

[2] Although *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* is closely related to the *Pirqe Rabbi Eliezer* and most of the traditions are common to both compositions (including naming the preferred wife of Mohammed, Adisha [Ayisha], and his daughter, Fatima, as the wives of Ishmael; cf. *Tg. Ps.-J.*, Gen 21:21; *Pirqe R. El.* 30:3), I will refrain from using the *Pirqe Rabbi Eliezer* as an illustration of the developments of the *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*.

[3] See M. Görg, "Hagar, die Ägypterin," *BN* 33 (1980): 17–20 and in more detail, S.J. Teubal, *Hagar the Egyptian: The Lost Tradition of the Matriarchs* (San Francisco 1990).

text. In column 20 of the *Genesis Apocryphon* from Qumran Cave 1,[4] a text which develops the narrative of Genesis, we can read:

> Then, they [brought back to] me Sarai. The king gave her (ויהב לה מלכא) [silver and go]ld and much fine linen and purple and [...] in front of her and also Hagar (קודמיהא ואף להגר). He h[an]ded her to me, and appointed men to escort me and to ... out of Egypt. (1QapGen 20:30–32)[5]

Unfortunately, this text is neither complete nor very explicit. Nevertheless, it provides us with a new piece of information concerning the origins of Hagar as well as an explanation of the qualification "Egyptian" found in the biblical text. Hagar was given to Sarah when the latter was in Egypt with Abraham, and she was a gift from the Pharaoh himself (at this point the text simply calls him King [מלכא]. However, the preceding lines of the narrative[6] inform us that he was the Pharaoh Zoan [פרעו צען]). Thus, according to the *Genesis Apocryphon*, Hagar was given to Sarah, together with a number of other items, to compensate her for the two years she spent in captivity[7] at the Pharaoh's court after the courtiers praised her beauty. The Qumran text tells us how Abraham prayed for the Pharaoh and finally cured him and his household, when the true nature of Sarah and Abraham's relationship—they were husband and wife rather than brother and sister—was revealed. After receiving the gifts from the Pharaoh, the patriarchs left Egypt, taking Hagar with them. The Qumran text says explicitly that it is the Pharaoh who gives Hagar to Sarah, thus placing her origins clearly within the royal entourage of the Pharaoh, but the text is silent on the question of who Hagar's real father is. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* answers this question unambiguously and makes Hagar a daughter of the Pharaoh, although without specifying the name of the Pharaoh. Commenting on Gen 16:1 after a faithful translation of the biblical text, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* has a specific addition that is not found in any other Targumim. There we can read:

> Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children; but she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar, *a daughter of Pharaoh, whom he gave to her as maid when he took her and was smitten by a word from before the Lord.* (*Tg. Ps.-J.*, Gen 16:1)[8]

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[4] N. Avigad and Y. Yadin, *A Genesis Apocryphon: A Scroll from the Wilderness of Judaea* (Jerusalem 1956).

[5] F. García Martínez and E.J.C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition* (2 vols.; Leiden 2000), 1:43.

[6] 1QapGen 19:24; 20:4.

[7] 1QapGen 20:18.

[8] Translation by M.J. Maher, trans., introd., and comm., *Targum Pseudo Jonathan:*

The terminology employed leaves no doubt: Hagar is ברת פרעה ("a daughter of Pharaoh") and she was given to Sarah בזמן דנסבא ("at the time when he took her as wife") and was struck by a divine word (as in the translation of Maher above) or the Memra, which is also a possible translation. This episode in the life of Abraham is clearly the same as that which can be read in greater detail in the *Genesis Apocryphon*. The Pharaoh in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on Gen 16:1 remains anonymous, but at the end of the translation of Gen 16:5 we find that this Pharaoh is none other than the son of the infamous Nimrod: "so that we will not need the children of Hagar, the daughter of Pharaoh, the son of Nimrod who threw you into the furnace of fire." This mention of Nimrod as the grandfather of Hagar (ברת פרעה בר נימרוד) is very surprising and difficult to understand.[9] The only explanation I can find for making the Babylonian king the father of the Egyptian Pharaoh is the insistence on idolatry that we find in some of the elements *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* adds to the story of Hagar and Ishmael. For example, commenting on Gen 11:28, in a long addition to the Hebrew text which explains why Haran, the brother of Abraham, died before his father Terah, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* introduces Nimrod, depicting him as the personal enemy of Abraham, stating that he attempted to have Abraham burnt alive because he refused to worship idols:

> *It came to pass, when Nimrod cast Abram into the furnace of fire because he would not worship his idol, the fire had no power to burn him. Then Haran was undecided, and he said: "If Nimrod triumphs, I will be on his side; but if Abram triumphs, I will be on his side." And when all the people who were there saw that the fire has no power over Abram, they said to themselves: "Is not Haran the brother of Abram full of divination and sorcery? It is he who uttered charms over the fire so that it would not burn his brother." Immediately fire fell from the heavens on high and consumed him*; and Haran dies in the sight of Terah his father, *being burned* in the land of his birth *in the furnace of fire which* the Chaldeans *had made for Abram his brother*.
>
> (*Tg. Ps.-J.*, Gen 11:28)[10]

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan associates Hagar and Ishmael with idolatry, as we shall see below, which is perhaps the rationale for the strange

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Genesis (ArBib 1B; Edinburgh 1992), 62. As is usual in Targumic studies, italics in the translation indicate where the Targum differs from the Hebrew text.

[9] This is not attested to, as far as I know, in other Jewish sources.

[10] Maher, *Pseudo Jonathan*, 51.

genealogy that the Targum gives to Hagar, linking her to the Pharaoh of Egypt as a daughter, as well as the Babylonian King Nimrod as a granddaughter.[11]

This surprising information on the origins of Hagar is contained in a passionate outburst made by Sarah. In the Hebrew text (Gen 16:5), on discovering Hagar is pregnant, Sarah blames Abraham for her humiliation: "The wrong done to me is your fault!" She asserts that from the moment Hagar became pregnant "I am lowered in her esteem," and prays for the intervention of God, "The Lord decide between you and me!" God, as it were, is called upon to decide in the dispute between Abraham and Sarah. In *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* the emphasis is completely different with there being no real dispute between the spouses. Only one party is humiliated—Sarah—and peace and prosperity can only be attained when this humiliation is manifest before the Lord. Sarah adds the reasons why her grief is justified: it was she who followed Abraham into a foreign land, she who freed Hagar and gave her to Abraham and she whose honour was defiled. Moreover, she blames all this on a descendant of the hated Nimrod, who originally exiled Abraham and Sarah from their homeland. In *Tg. Ps.-J.*, Gen 16:5 we can read:

> Sarai said to Abram, "*All* my humiliation *(comes) from you, because I trusted that you would do me justice, (seeing) that I left my country and my father's house and went with you into a foreign land. And now, because I have not borne children, I set* my maid *free* and gave her *(to you) to lie* in your bosom. But when she saw that she was with child, *my honor was despised* in her sight. *Now let my humiliation be manifest before* the Lord, *and let him spread his peace between me and you, and let the earth be filled from us, so that we will not need the children of Hagar, the daughter of Pharaoh, the son of Nimrod, who threw you into the furnace of fire*." (*Tg. Ps.-J.*, Gen 16:5)[12]

It is interesting to see how the different Targumim present this accusation that Sarah makes. *Targum Onqelos* softens her accusation to "I have cause for a legal complaint against you." *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, as we have already seen, presents it as a given fact that Abraham has done wrong. In this respect, *Targum Neofiti I* gives an even more detailed account of the accusation, which is worth quoting in full because it provides a summary of Sarah's grief:

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[11] *Tg. Ps.-J.* seems to have had a special interest in Nimrod, for in the translation of Gen 25:27 he has Esau kill the hated King and his son Henoch: דהוא קטל ית נמרוד וית חנוך בריה.

[12] Maher, *Pseudo Jonathan*, 62.

> And Sarai said to Abram: "My judgment and my humiliation, my insult and the beginning of my affliction are given unto your hand. I forsook my country and the house of my birth and the house of my father, and I came with you with faith. I went in with you before the kings of the earth, before the Pharaoh king of Egypt and before Abimelech king of Gerar and I said: 'He is my brother,' so that they may not kill you. And when I saw that I did not bear, I took Hagar the Egyptian, my handmaid, and gave her to you as wife, and I said: 'She will bear children and I will rear (them). Perhaps I too will have children through her.' But when she saw that she had conceived my honour was of little value in her sight. And, now, let the Lord be revealed and let him judge between me and you, and let him spread his peace between me and you and let the earth be filled from us and we will not need the sons of Hagar the Egyptian, who belongs to the sons of the sons of the people who gave you to the furnace of fire of the Chaldeans."[13]

In Gen 16:1, Hagar has the same status as in the biblical text: she is a "handmaid," an Egyptian slave (*Tg. Neof.*: אמתה מצרייא; *Tg. Ps.-J.*: אמתא מציתיא, which is a straightforward translation of the Hebrew שפחה מצרית). However, in the translation of Gen 16:2 she has already been promised her freedom, and by v. 3 she is already a free woman:

> [2]Sarai said to Abram, "Behold, I pray, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Now, go in to my maid, *and I will set her free* (ואחררינה). Perhaps I may have children through her." And Abram listened to the word of Sarai. [3]Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid—after Abram had dwelt in the land of Canaan for ten years—*set her free* (ותררתה) and gave her to Abram her husband as wife (לאינתו).
>
> (*Tg. Ps.-J.*, Gen 16:2–3)[14]

The reason for making Hagar a free woman is certainly to prevent Abraham from becoming the father of a slave's child, something that could bring dishonour upon the patriarch.[15] The Targum repeats this affirmation in relation to Gen 16:5, "I set my maid free" (חררית מתי). It is true that *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* is not completely consistent on the matter. When translating Gen 21:14, where Abraham sends Hagar away after giving her bread and water and placing them on her shoulders with the

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[13] Translation by M. McNamara and M.J. Maher in A. Díez Macho, ed., *MS. Neophyti 1 I, Genesis* (TECC 7; Madrid 1969), 534. No italics are used in this translation.

[14] Maher, *Pseudo Jonathan*, 62.

[15] In the Islamic tradition this element is not important, because the status of both women either as wife or concubine is irrelevant, cf. F. Leemhuis, "Ibrāhīm's Sacrifice of His Son and the Early Post-Koranic Tradition," in *The Sacrifice of Isaac: The Aqedah (Genesis 22) and Its Interpretations* (ed. E. Noort and E. Tichgelaar; TBN 4; Leiden 2002), 128n3.

child, the Aramaic text adds: "tying (them) to her loins *to show that she was a maidservant*" (לאודועי דאמתא היא). Nevertheless, the assertion that Hagar was a free woman is repeated three times in our text. This is the best explanation *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* gives of Hagar's status. Hagar is clearly shown to be a wife of Abraham because when he sends her away he gives her a proper bill of divorce, a *get*, something a slave would not have received: "He (Abraham) sent her away *with a bill of divorce*" (ופטרה בגיטא), as stated in the *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* translation of Gen 21:14.

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan also makes Hagar a wife of Abraham in its translation of Gen 25:1, on the basis of identifying her as Keturah. The same point is made by a marginal gloss of *Targum Neofiti* and by MSS 110 and 440. All these witnesses agree on this essential point (that Keturah is another name for Hagar), but disagree on the verb used to express the reason for her being identified in this way. The first marginal gloss of *Targum Neofiti* (M1) and MSS 110 and 440 use the verb אסר ("to tie up"): ושמה קטורא היא הות הגר דהות אסירה לה מן שירריה ("and her name was Keturah, this was Hagar who was tied to him from the beginning"), but *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* and the second marginal gloss of *Targum Neofiti* (M2) use the verb קטר ("to bind") and read: ושמא דקטירא ליה קטורא היא הגר מן שרריה ("and her name was Keturah, this was Hagar who was bound to him from the beginning"), clearly linking the name Keturah with the verb קטר, suggesting that Hagar was indeed bound to Abraham from the beginning.

Another peculiar element of Hagar's status in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* is that she is presented as the recipient of divine revelations. Having fled from Sarah to the wilderness the Angel of the Lord finds her and entreats her to return to Sarah explaining the future of her child. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* translates the difficult Gen 16:13 as follows:[16]

> She *gave thanks before* the Lord *whose Memra* had spoken to her *and she spoke thus*, "You are *the Living and Enduring One, who sees but is not seen*," for she said, "*Behold, here indeed the Glory of the Shekinah of the Lord was revealed, vision after vision*." (*Tg. Ps.-J.*, Gen 16:13)[17]

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan understands "called the name of the Lord" as giving thanks or praying, interprets אל ראי (*ēl rŏ'i*) as a doubly divine title based on the interpretation of לחי ראי (*laḥai ro'i*) in the verse that

[16] On the difficulties of the Hebrew text, see T. Booij, "Hagar's Words in Genesis XVI 13b," *VT* 30 (1980): 1–7.

[17] Maher, *Pseudo Jonathan*, 63.

follows, and presents the whole episode as a continuous revelation (חזוא בתר חזוא). *Targum Neofiti I* is even more explicit in placing Hagar's words in the context of a revelation: אף כדון יתגלי עלי מן בתר דאתגלי על שרי רבונתי ("Behold also now he has been revealed to me after he has been revealed to my mistress Sarah").[18] Manuscripts 110 and 440 bring together the elements of *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* and *Targum Neofiti*:

> And Hagar gave thanks and prayed in the name of the Memra of the Lord who was revealed to her and to Sarai her mistress and said: "Blessed are you, the God who endures for all centuries and has seen my anguish." Behold she said "Also to me he has been revealed now, after he has been revealed to Sarai my mistress."[19] (MSS 110 and 440)

The *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* is most explicit on the second occasion in which Hagar is presented as the recipient of a revelation. In Gen 21:19, after the Lord has heard the voice of the suffering Ishmael and opens Hagar's eyes so that she can see the well of water, all the Targumim stay faithful to the Hebrew text, with only *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* adding that the well of water was revealed to Hagar:

> *The Lord* uncovered her eyes and a well of water *was revealed to her* (ואיתגלי לה) and she went and filled the water-skin with water, and gave the boy to drink. (*Tg. Ps.-J.*, Gen 21:19)[20]

3. The Description of Ishmael

We find a description of Ishmael in two places in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*. Before his birth, in the translation of Gen 16:11–12, the Angel of the Lord describes Ishmael to Hagar as follows:

> The Angel of the Lord said to her, "Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because your affliction *has been revealed before* the Lord. He shall be *like* a wild ass *among the children of men*; his hands will *take revenge on his enemies*, and the hands of his enemies will be stretched forth to harm him. He shall dwell alongside all his kinsmen *and he shall be mixed (with them)*."
> (*Tg. Ps.-J.*, Gen 16:11–12)[21]

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[18] Díez Macho, *MS. Neophyti 1 I, Genesis*, 89, 535.

[19] My translation of the text of MS 110: ואדיאת הגר וצליאת בשם מימרא דיי דאיתגלי עלה ועל שרי ריבונתהא ואמרת בריך את הוא אלהא קיים לעלמיא וחמית בצערי ארום אמרת הלחוד על איתגליאת היך בתר דאיתגליא על שרי ריבונתי (*Biblia Polyglotta*, 103).

[20] Maher, *Pseudo Jonathan*, 76.

[21] Maher, *Pseudo Jonathan*, 63.

In the Aramaic translation the account of the Angel of the Lord does not provide us with many details which were not already known from the biblical text. By using the verb גלה instead of the verb שמע to introduce the idea of revelation, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* has even lost the etymology of the name Ishmael that is present in the Hebrew text, which is preserved in the other Targumim such as *Targum Neofiti*: ותיקרי שמה ישמעאל ארום שמיע קדם ייי ית צעריך ("and you will call his name Ishmael, because your afflictions have been heard before the Lord"; cf. Gen 16:11). The "wild ass of a man" (פרא אדם) of the Hebrew text, is transformed into "like a wild ass among the children of men" (מדמי לערוד בבני נשא). *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* adds that Ishmael will take revenge on his enemies and, in particular, that he and his descendents "will be mixed" with them. The wording used (יתערבב from the root ערבב) seems to imply a play on ערב, the Arabs, thereby casting Ishmael as an ancestor of the Arabs,[22] but it can also be understood as simply indicating that Ishmael and his descendents will dwell among the nations and mix with them.

We find more details in the second description, after the birth of Ishmael, in the translation of Gen 21. While in the biblical text the only reason given for the expulsion is Sarah's wish to prevent Ishmael from obtaining part of the inheritance she wants to preserve for Isaac, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* adds other reasons in order to justify Abraham's decision to comply with Sarah's request and banish Hagar and Ishmael. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* states that God himself asserts that Sarah is a prophetess and that Ishmael shall not be recorded in Abraham's genealogy. Moreover, not only is the question of the inheritance brought to the fore but also the future military conflict between the two peoples. It is most characteristic that *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* has God accuse Ishmael of having abandoned the training Abraham gave him and more particularly of practising idolatry, an accusation which is repeated twice in three verses. The most telling change is that found in Gen 21:13, where God's positive promise to create a great people[23] from the son of the servant is transformed in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* into creating "a people of robbers" from him, to the extent of using the Greek loan word *lestēs* to make the matter clear (לעם ליסטיס):

[22] See F. Millar, "Hagar, Ishmael, Josephus and the Origins of Islam," *JJS* 44 (1993): 23–45.

[23] MT reads only "people" (לגוי) but most of the other witnesses (the Samaritan, Greek, Syriac, and Latin) read "great people" (לגוי גדול).

> Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she bore to Abraham, *sporting with an idol and bowing down to it*. And she said to Abraham, "Cast out this maidservant and her son; for *it is not possible that* the son of this maidservant should inherit with my son *and (then) make war with* Isaac." But the matter was distressing in Abraham's eyes on account of his son Ishmael, *who had practiced idolatry*. But the Lord said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed about the boy *who has abandoned the training you have given him*, or about your maidservant whom you *are banishing. Pay heed* to all that Sarah will say to you—*for she is a prophetess*—because through Isaac shall your children be named, *but this son of the maidservant shall not be recorded (in the genealogies) after you*. And I will make a nation *of robbers* of the son of the maidservant also, because he is your *son*."
>
> (*Tg. Ps.-J.*, Gen 21:10–13)[24]

The way the rest of the story is told illustrates that the accusation of idolatry is important to the editor of the *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*. In the story Abraham provides water for Hagar and Ishmael, certainly enough for them to reach Beer-sheba, and he is therefore not to blame if they stray from the path and become lost in the desert. Nor can he be blamed if they revert to idolatry and, as a result, Ishmael is punished with a burning fever that causes him to drink all the water. Even then, Hagar does not request the help of God but summons the "fear of her father" (וקרא לדחלתא דאיבה), the god of the Pharaoh who, of course, does not answer her. Only when Hagar rejects the "foreign idolatry" (פולחנא נוכראה) and withdraws from her son do things begin to change:

> She went off and strayed *from the way*, to the desert *which is near* Beer-sheba. *When they arrived at the entrance of the desert, they reverted to going astray after idolatry. Ishmael was stricken with a burning fever and he drank all the water until all* the water in the skin was finished. And *his flesh became parched and thin. So she carried him, and (when) she was exhausted she called to the god of her father, but he did not answer her. And immediately* she threw the child under one of the *trees*. She went and sat down *to one side, threw away the idol and withdrew from her son*, about *the distance of* a bowshot; for she said, "I am not *able* to look upon the death of the child." So she sat opposite *her son* and lifted up her voice and wept.
>
> (*Tg. Ps.-J.*, Gen 21:15–16)[25]

Once Hagar renounces idolatry the Lord is ready to hear the boy's cries. However, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* emphasizes that salvation will not come because of any merit on their part or because of their suffering but

[24] Maher, *Pseudo Jonathan*, 75.
[25] Maher, *Pseudo Jonathan*, 75–76.

that it is exclusively due to the merit of Abraham (בגין זכותיה דאברהם). It is not the deeds (the past or the future) of Ishmael that count, but it is exclusively the merit of Abraham that provides solace:

> The voice of the child *was* heard *before the Lord because of the merit of Abraham*. And the Angel *of the Lord* called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Fear not, for the voice of the child *has been* heard *before the Lord, and he has not judged him according to the evil deeds he is destined to do. Because of the merit of Abraham he has shown mercy to him in the place* where he is. Arise, take the boy and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him." *The Lord* uncovered her eyes and a well of water *was revealed to her*, and she went and filled the water-skin with water, and gave the boy to drink. *The Memra of the Lord was at the assistance of* the boy, and he grew up. He dwelt in the wilderness and became a *skilled* bowman. He dwelt in the desert of Paran *and took as wife Adisha. But he divorced her*, and his mother took *Fatima* as wife for him from the land of Egypt. (*Tg. Ps.-J.*, Gen 21:17–21)[26]

4. The Dispute between Isaac and Ishmael

The last point, which I would like to present very briefly, is a development we find in the Aramaic translation of Gen 22:1. Hagar only appears indirectly, as the mother of Ishmael, in the long addition *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* makes to the first verse of the story of the Aqedah. However, in a famous article, Le Déaut[27] asserts that Gal 4:29–30 may be understood against the background of the haggadah contained in this verse of the *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, in spite of the fact that there is no apparent similarity in the wording of the two texts.

The Hebrew text simply reads, "After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.'" The long addition in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* focuses on an explanation of why God should have "tested Abraham."

> After these events, *after Isaac and Ishmael had quarrelled, Ishmael said, "It is right that I should be my father's heir, since I am his first-born son." But Isaac said, "It is right that I should be my father's heir, because I am the son of Sarah his wife, while you are the son of Hagar my mother's maidservant." Ishmael answered and said, "I am more worthy than you, because I was circumcised at the age of thirteen. And if I had wishes to refuse, I would not have handed myself over to be circumcised. But you were circumcised at the*

[26] Maher, *Pseudo Jonathan*, 76.

[27] R. Le Déaut, "Traditions targumiques dans le Corpus Paulinien? (Hebr 11, 4 et 12, 24; Gal 4, 29–30; II Cor 3, 16)," *Bib* 42 (1961): 37–43.

> *age of eight days. If you had been aware perhaps you would not have handed yourself over to be circumcised."*[28] *Isaac answered and said, "Behold, today I am thirty-seven years old, and if the Holy One, blessed be He, were to ask all my members I would not refuse." These words were immediately heard before the Lord of the world, and at once the Memra of the Lord* tested Abraham and said to him "Abraham!" And he said *to him*, "Here I am."
>
> (*Tg. Ps.-J.*, Gen 22:1)[29]

The first claim by Ishmael is based on the right of the first-born, while Isaac's counter-claim is based on the fact that he is the son of Abraham's wife, whereas Ishmael is the son of the servant.[30] This claim is unparalleled in other Jewish texts, but seems to underline the argument in Galatians. The second argument relates more directly to the Aqedah and is the same as that brought forward by Josephus.[31] Ishmael defends his claim on the grounds that he freely accepted circumcision—he was thirteen years old (according to the biblical text, Gen 18:25) when Abraham circumcised him, and therefore he could have refused—while Isaac was a baby, circumcised at the age of eight days, and was therefore not free to refuse. Here Isaac replies that, as a fully-grown man,[32] he is now ready to offer not only his foreskin but all his limbs if it were asked of him. Isaac is thus ready for such a sacrifice and God decides to test Abraham "at once."

5. Conclusions

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan has preserved several traditions built around the figure of the maidservant of Sarah. With regard to Hagar's Egyptian origins, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* makes her a daughter of the Pharaoh and a granddaughter of the Babylonian King Nimrod. The rationale

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[28] Josephus (*A.J.* 1.214) preserves the same tradition: "Eight days later they promptly circumcised him; and from that time forward the Jewish practice has been to circumcise so many days after birth. The Arabs defer the ceremony to the thirteenth year, because Ishmael, the founder of the race, born of Abraham's concubine was circumcised at that age".

[29] Maher, *Pseudo Jonathan*, 77–78.

[30] See n. 15 above.

[31] See n. 28 above.

[32] The majority of the rabbinic sources give his age as thirty-seven (*Gen. Rab*. 55:5; *b. Sanh*. 89b), but one of the manuscripts of the *Seder "Olam Rabba"* (Parma, Bibliotheca Palatina 2787), which is considered to represent the original by C.J. Milikowski, *Seder Olam: A Rabbinic Chronography* (Ph.D. diss., University of Yale 1981), 53, gives Isaac's age as twenty-six. Josephus (*A.J.* 1.227) specifies that Isaac was twenty-five: "Isaac, therefore, who was now twenty-five years of age while constructing the altar, asked what sacrifice they were about to offer, having no victim."

for this strange genealogy is the fact that the Targum associates Hagar and Ishmael with idolatry. Moreover, according to the Targum Sarah hated Hagar because she was a descendant of the despised Nimrod who originally exiled Abraham and Sarah from their homeland. With regard to Hagar's status, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* makes her a free woman in order to prevent Abraham from becoming the father of a slave's child. With regard to the description of Ishmael, in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* God accuses Ishmael of having abandoned the training Abraham gave him and more particularly of practising idolatry. Moreover, the positive promises of God to make a great people from the son of the servant are transformed in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* into the promise to create from him a people of robbers.

MANY NATIONS AND ONE GOD: ABRAHAM IN HEBREW HYMNS

Wout van Bekkum

1. Abraham in Midrashic Traditions

One of the main features in the collection of midrashic traditions about Abraham is the fact that his life is depicted as full of trials and tests. It is through his success of withstanding trial (Hebrew: *nissayon*) that Abraham acquired his greatness and status as the first patriarch who would become "the companion (or friend) of God," an appellation that was to play a crucial role in rabbinic Judaism and later Islam.[1] Future generations had to comply with Abraham's example of passing the try-outs that were staged for him and implicitly for his offspring.

Midrash has it that there was a fixed number of ten tribulations in order to put Abraham to the test, but in the construction of the Abraham figure the tales of his birth and youth attest to his suitability to overcome them. When Abraham was born, he miraculously survived the slaying of the male newborns ordered by the king Nimrod son of Canaan, a parallel and prelude to the story of Moses. Because of the danger of slaughter, his mother left him in a cave without care, where he began to cry. Thereupon God sent the archangel Gabriel to give him milk to drink, and Gabriel made it to flow from the little finger of the baby's right hand, and Abraham sucked it until he was ten days old. Then he arose and walked about, and he left the cave, and went along the edge of the valley, as simple as that. When the sun sank, and the stars came forth, he said, "These are the gods." But dawn came, and the stars could be seen no longer, and then he said, "I will not pay worship to these, for they are no gods." Thereupon the sun came forth, and he spoke, "This is my god, him will I extol." But again the sun set, and he said, "He is no god," and

[1] 2 Chr 20:7: "Did you not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it for ever to the descendants of Abraham, your beloved friend?"; Sūrat al-Nisā 4:125: "God has chosen Abraham as a beloved friend (*khalīl*)."

beholding the moon, he called him his god to whom he would pay divine homage. Then the moon was obscured, and he cried: "He too, is no god." There must be one who sets them all in motion.[2]

This is how the adult baby Abraham as a tiny little Aristotelian met with the challenges of his life, proclaiming in Babylon and later in Haran the true living and immutable God, the only one who has none beside, incorporeal and ever-existing, the Creator of the world. He was to become the iconoclast who took a hatchet in his hand and broke all of his father Terah's idols. He was punished by Nimrod who cast him into a fiery furnace in a Danielic manner, but Abraham walked in the midst of the fire, and survived the flames.

However, despite all the divine help, Abraham was tempted by ten temptations or subjected to ten hardships by God himself. The first test to which he was subjected was the departure from his native land. The midrashic dialogue between God and Abraham in connection with this episode in Gen 12 is characteristic. Abraham spoke to God, and said, "Will not the people talk about me, and say, 'He is endeavouring to bring the nations under the wings of the Omnipresent, yet he leaves his old father Terah in Haran, and he goes away.'" But God replied, and said, "Dismiss all care concerning your father and your kinsmen from your thoughts. Though they speak words of kindness to you, yet are they all of one mind, to ruin you."[3]

2. Abraham in the Liturgical Compositions of Yose ben Yose

Such and other modes of biblical-expositional setting of the Abraham figure induced the early hymnists of the synagogue to be committed to add to his name and fame. The attitude of the cantor-poets, the *ḥazzanim* or *payṭanim*, towards Abraham was clearly inspired by the biblical episodes and the numerous explanations and sermons about Abraham as a prototype of the monotheist and the true believer, the patriarch and the physical or spiritual father. A number of observations are to be made with regard to Jewish awareness of Abraham's prominence.

Firstly, composers and their listeners in the synagogues or study-houses of Byzantine Palestine from the fourth century onwards to the

[2] One of the earliest sources is *Apoc. Ab.* 1:7. See also *Gen. Rab.* 38:13.
[3] *B. Arak.* 15a; *Tanh., Wayera* 22.

Arab conquest were familiar with the biblical stories of Abraham through the liturgical readings of the Torah pericopes with accompanying expositions.

Secondly, the mentioning of Abraham had become a *topos* in the first benediction of the statutory prayer called *Amidah*, a united text of eighteen or nineteen benedictions from late Second Temple or early Tannaitic times, to be recited individually or collectively three times a day. The benediction does not refer to Abraham directly, but blesses God as Abraham's shield (Hebrew: *magen Avraham*) on the basis of Gen 15:1: "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield, your reward will be very great."

Thirdly, the hymnists may have known about non-rabbinic interpretations and understandings of Abraham in Jewish folklore and from non-Jewish sources or traditions. This may have caused them to picture Abraham even as more zealous for the one God of Israel than otherwise would have happened.

Recent studies of Jewish hymnography indicate that a large number of composers were active in the Roman-Byzantine Empire of the fourth until the early seventh centuries. Their works have sunk into oblivion in the course of time, but some of them were known by name and may have gathered great fame in their own days and centuries thereafter. Were it not for the enormous Genizah collections of manuscripts and fragments of manuscripts discovered in Cairo, we would not have known about the importance and significance of Jewish hymnology for the religious and cultural life of Jewish communities in the Diaspora. To sense the wide range of Hebrew liturgical composing over time and place a global overview of "poetry production" is presented here:[4]

1. A pre-classical period of anonymous hymnists and the one composer known by name: Yose ben Yose (ca. fourth-sixth centuries).
2. A classical period of composers flourishing in Byzantine Palestine until and in the period of the Arab conquest. Their conspicuous names were Yehudah, Yannai, Shimʿon bar Megas, Elʿazar birabbi Qallir, Yohanan ha-Kohen, and Pinhas ha-Kohen (ca. sixth-eighth centuries).
3. A post-classical or late eastern period when the centre of Hebrew hymnography shifted from Palestine to Babylonia (Iraq) in the East (ca. ninth-eleventh centuries).

[4] Based on the revised edition of E. Fleischer, *Hebrew Liturgical Poetry in the Middle Ages* (Jerusalem 1975) by S. Elizur and T. Beeri (Jerusalem 2007).

4. A Spanish school (ca. tenth-thirteenth centuries).
5. An Italian-Ashkenazic (German)-Tsarfatic (French) school (ca. tenth-thirteenth century).

We will focus on the first two periods and turn to Yose ben Yose who was an orphan (Hebrew: *yatom*) and a priest (Hebrew: *kohen*), flourishing in fourth-century Byzantine Palestine. We do not know anything about his biography, but his oeuvre contains mainly poems for the Jewish New Year and the Day of Atonement. Particularly the latter, the so-called *avodot* are of great significance for our knowledge of the birth of *piyyut*, the Greek-Hebrew term for liturgical poetry of the synagogue. Did Yose ben Yose subscribe to the midrashic views about Abraham's childhood and zeal such as we have just now presented? Far more, I would presume, when we read in his *avodah* composition *Azkir gevurot eloah* ("Let Me Recount the Wonders of God") about Abraham as:

> A righteous man, who was an everlasting foundation.
> He reasoned, understanding the secret of creation,
> which is controlled by Him who governs and rules.
> When he saw the course of that which glides and shines [the sun],
> eager as a hero when it emerges and weak when it sets,
> the windows of the sky, in the east and the west,
> through which the moon leaps every day, the arrows of lightning,
> the rush of the stars dashing to and fro—and not one fails to appear—the
> unenlightened [Abram] became wise and inferred by his works,
> saying, "There is a Lord of these—Him I will follow."
> Before he began, God cleared the way for him.
> "Go forth from death, to the way of life."[5]
>
> (Yose ben Yose, *Azkir gevurot eloah*)

Thus we find a full versification of Abraham's understanding of true worship of God against the sun, moon, and stars, based upon a mixture of biblical allusions and rabbinic interpretations, culminating in the last verse: "Go forth from death, to the way of life" (Hebrew: *lek leka mimmawet, lederek hachayyim*). At first sight one would think that this sounds like a rabbinic *adagium*: "Keep away from idolatry, and accept the Torah," but Yose ben Yose seems to have the biblical context in mind: Gen 12:1 ("Go thee from your country and your kindred and your father's house") is preceded by Gen 11:32 ("Terah died in Haran") about which it has already been stated in *Gen. Rab.* 39:7: "The Holy One, blessed be

[5] M.D. Swartz and J. Yahalom, ed. and trans., *Avodah: An Anthology of Ancient Poems for Yom Kippur* (University Park, Pa., 2005), 242–243; A. Mirsky, *Yosse ben Yosse Poems* (2nd ed.; Jerusalem 1991), 141–142.

He, reassured Abraham: 'I exempt thee from the duty of honouring your parents, though I exempt no one else from this duty. Moreover, I will record Terah's death before your departure.' 'Terah died in Haran' is stated first, and then: 'Now the Lord said to Abram.' "

The treatment of Abraham is quite elaborated in Yose ben Yose's compositions, but comes to even more refinement in an anonymous ancient *avodah* entitled *Az be'eyn kol* ("When All Was Not"). Abraham is the one:

> Who was worried among the worthless shapes [idols],
> aggrieved among the graven images.
> He was appalled by artifacts [idols],
> discarded that which is carried.
> His soul thirsted for the bundle of life,
> and the light of his eyes was never extinguished.
> He wrapped himself in a turban of splendor and righteousness,
> and looked above and below for you rule them all.
> He spoke rightly; abiding at the gates;
> he was girdled with faith and relied on justice.
> He looked over the earth and said, if no one spreads it out,
> from whom does it tremble, and who keeps it steady?
> The luminaries of the sky—if they are not called by name,
> how is it that they do not change their courses of day and night?
> The shadows of night—if they are not spread out in time,
> who holds back the sun detaining it until dawn?
> He expounded the commandment: who made the moon?
> Is there a house that is laid out, built by itself?
> You soothed his heart, for you are Lord of all,
> and before you were revealed to him,
> you tried him (Gen 12:1) and he prevailed.
> You leapt toward him, like a lover his companion,
> and by the power of your light he took his steps.
> As it is written by your prophet:
> Who has roused a victor from the east, summoned him to his service?
> (Isa 41:2)[6] (Anonymous, *Az be'eyn kol*)

Thus we encounter once again Abraham's subversive attitude towards the gods of the sky, and God's reward for his loyalty and faith.[7]

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[6] Swartz and Yahalom, *Avodah*, 160–165.

[7] In Jewish hymnody God is repeatedly called "lover" (*'ohev*), and Abraham is called "companion" (*reya'*).

3. Yannai's Sabbath Compositions in Byzantine Palestine

Not exclusively the liturgy of festivals such as New Year and the Day of Atonement, but also the prayers of the weekly Sabbath were apt for poetic embellishments and extensions. The Sabbath morning was characterised by one prayer in particular, "the Sanctification of the Divine Name" (Hebrew: *Qedushah*; Greek: *Trisagion*; Latin: *Sanctus*). Compositions intended as introductions to the prayer of *Qedushah* were called *Qedushta'ot*, comprising a number of seven to nine separate poetic units with clear reference to the weekly readings of Torah and Prophets (*Haftarah*). These poems belonged to the sensations among the Genizah discoveries, when series of *Qedushta*-compositions were found for the Palestinian triennial cycle of Torah- and *Haftarah*-readings. The composer Yannai or Yannaios must have been a famous cantor-poet in a larger Jewish community during the early Byzantine period, probably mid-sixth century.[8] Hundreds of his poems are known by now, among which there is a fragmentary composition for Sabbath *Lek leka*, the Sabbath on which the pericope of Gen 12 is read. Yannai signs every third poem with an alphabetic acrostic *y-n-y-y*, thereby turning poem three into a quatrain. All his strophes have rhyme and conclude with biblical verse chains. Thus we find that Yannai has combined the first verse of Gen 12 ("Go thee from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you") for more or less obvious reasons with Ps 45:10 ("Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear; forget your people and your father's house"), 11 ("So shall the king desire your beauty. Since he is your Lord, bow to him"); Song 1:4 ("Draw me after you, let us make haste. The king has brought me into his chambers. We will exult and rejoice in you; we will extol your love more than wine; rightly do they love you"); Prov 3:6 ("In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths").[9] Why did the composer Yannai combine these verses? A direct analogy is found in the repetition of the expression "your father's house" which is the reason for a discourse of R. Isaac in a midrashic source: "This may be compared to a man who was travelling from place to place when

[8] See the recent studies of O. Münz-Manor, "All about Sarah: Questions of Gender in Yannai's Poems on Sarah's (and Abraham's) Barrenness," *Proof* 26 (2006): 344–374; T. Novick, "Praying with the Bible: Speech Situation in the *Qedushta'ot* of Yannai and Bar Megas," *MP* 4 (2008): 7–39.

[9] Z.M. Rabinovitz, *The Liturgical Poems of Rabbi Yannai according to the Triennial Cycle of the Pentateuch and the Holidays* (2 vols.; Jerusalem 1985–1987), 1:121–122. Cf. the contribution by Joanna Weinberg to this volume.

he saw a building in flames. Is it possible that the building lacks a person to look after it? He wondered. The owner of the building looked out and said, 'I am the owner of the building (Hebrew: *baʿal habirah*).' Similarly, because Abraham our father said, 'Is it conceivable that the world is without a guide?' the Holy One, blessed be he, looked out and said, 'I am the guide (Hebrew: *manhig*), the sovereign of the universe (Hebrew: *baʿal haʿolam*).' Hence Ps 45:12: 'So shall the king desire your beauty,' that is, to make you glorious in the world. Since 'he is your Lord, bow to him,' hence, the Lord said to Abraham, 'Go thee,' etc. (*Gen. Rab*. 39:1)."

Quite peculiarly, in some midrashic traditions Abraham is called "a daughter" (Hebrew: *bat*), as in *Tanhuma Lek Leka*: "Hear, O daughter, and consider: this refers to Abraham; forget your people and your father's house: this refers to idolatry." Elsewhere Abraham is called "sister" (Hebrew: *aḥoth*), as in *Gen. Rab*. 39:3: "A little sister (Song 8:8), this refers to Abraham, who united the entire world for us (by proclaiming the unity and oneness of God, the corollary if which is the unity and brotherhood of man)."[10] The composer Yannai was aware of such and similar connotations, because he versifies in the first two strophes of his poem for this pericope: "(God), you have acquired a beloved from amidst the hateful; you have let him gain converts, who are like newly created; you have seen a light in the dark; you have examined the ways of his heart. Like a sole sister you have made him heir; like a little sister you have let him unify; you have seen him as clean among the unclean; you have persuaded him to follow you, like girls who are persuaded to marry (and therefore leave their father's house)."

The implications of the concept of blessing are expressed in a second poem. In this poem, Abraham is presented as the father of the good name, an example of making the right choice on his own accord, the one man who chooses for the one God; therefore he is rewarded with a multitude of offspring: "Because you, Abraham, knew the greatness of your Maker, I will make you a great nation for ever; you have spoken …, therefore rush to the shadow of your shelter. I will rightly guide your footsteps; I will count your steps; I will bless your possessions with wealth; I will make you fly like an eagle. Your name was and always will be; …; be blessed and you will live on my blessing; by the strength of blessing you are blessed."

[10] See the contribution by Joanna Weinberg to this volume.

The second verse of the pericope, Gen 12:2, is therefore followed by a series of references to biblical verses like Prov 22:1 ("A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favour is better than silver or gold"); Eccl 7:1 ("A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death, than the day of birth"); Song 1:3 ("Your anointing oils are fragrant, your name is oil poured out; therefore the maidens love you"); Ps 37:22 ("For those blessed by the Lord shall possess the land, but those cursed by him shall be cut off"); Isa 51:2 ("Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for when he was but one I called him, and I blessed him and made him many").[11]

These and other Abraham typologies are accomplished in the third poem which is directed to the standard reading from the Prophets, Josh 24:3 ("Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the river and led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac," etc.). One of the catchwords in this poem is "beauty" (Hebrew: *yofi*): God was attracted to Abraham's beauty, and blessed him with "the beauty of his blessing" (Hebrew: *yofi birkato*). These expressions have been overlooked or played down, but in my opinion a linguistic or even semantic element of the Greek language may have entered here the liturgical-exegetical domain of the synagogue. I suspect here an equivalent with the use of Greek *eu-* as in *eulogia* or *eulogētos*. In one of Yannai's poetic extensions in the same composition for Gen 12:1 another originally Greek expression appears: *tirgalto bevirkat tikkusak* ("You have guided him with a series of blessings"). The word *tikkus* is a Hebrew nominal form of Greek *taxis*, analogous to the Hebrew term for liturgical poetry, *piyyut*, from Greek *poiētēs*. The Greek noun *taxis* was apparently long since accepted in rabbinic Hebrew idiom in nouns like *taḳsis*. The hymnists invented new nouns like *teḳes*, verbal forms like *taḳas* and *tikḳes* or participles like *takus* and *metukkas*. The semantic range of these words is hard to define, but most words indicate an element of preparedness, order, ceremony, adoration, worship. These same poems entirely focus on *berakah* ("blessing"), as perpetually valid and unalterable: the blessing of Abraham has no equal, has no deficit, is profitable to all nations, is an overflowing blessing, will be remembered forever, is perfect, nobody will ever be able to ignore it or deny it, etc.[12]

[11] Rabinovitz, *Liturgical Poems of Rabbi Yannai*, 123.
[12] Rabinovitz, *Liturgical Poems of Rabbi Yannai*, 129.

4. The Hymnist Yehudah in the Christian-Byzantine Realm

Like Yannai, the hymnist Yehudah, very close to the time of Yannai or possibly preceding him, constructs the term *yofi dibbur* ("beauty of speech") which is a literal rendering of *eulogia* in the sense of blessing. Yehudah, who was also a sixth-century composer in the Christian-Byzantine realm residing in a community outside Palestine, has a slightly different approach towards the Abraham traditions with particular emphasis on mutual recognition and appreciation:

> I appreciated your Father and I strengthened his arm,
> to put his seed like the stars of heaven,
> from beyond the river I took him to please him,
> and I led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his offspring many.
>
> He recognized Me at the age of three, so I recognized him,
> he appreciated Me, so I appreciated him,
> he glorified Me, so I glorified him,
> You are the Lord, the God who did choose Abram and bring him forth.
>
> He sought You and came near to profess Your unity,
> he did not mingle with those who bow for a strange [god],
> his fragrance was pleasing before You,
> a good name is to be chosen rather than great riches.[13]

The hymnist Yehudah refers to the socio-political situation of his own days in code language when he addresses Abraham's old age:

> Until when will it last that the insolent ones do not rise up before the grey-haired man?
> They have no shame and love abomination.
> How long, O Lord, will You look on?
> Even to your old age I am He, and to grey hairs I will carry you.
>
> You [God] are the Ancient of days.
> Multiply our days as of old.
> Like Abraham who was old and well advanced in years,
> and king David was old and well advanced in years.
>
> Restore the kingdom to the offspring of the one who crossed [the Jordan] with his staff [Jacob],
> and may one sit on the throne of God in his exalted house [Temple],

[13] W.J. van Bekkum, *Hebrew Poetry from Late Antiquity: Liturgical Poems of Yehudah: Critical Edition with Introduction and Commentary* (AGJU 43; Leiden 1998), 4.

his loyal faithful will stand up for us [...],
and although they covered him [David] with clothes, he could not get warm.

Bring speedily salvation, O awesome [God] in His sanctuary,
all who seek Him will sing praise in His holy name,
how long will the end and its excitement tarry?
The heart knows its own bitterness.

Listen and heed to our prayers,
and resettle us in our country,
let the palace stand where it used to be,
Your holiness will be set among us,
and He will lead us straight back to our cities,
a faithful messenger to those who send him, he refreshes the spirit of his master.[14]

This hymn is a strong petition for restoration of the ancient glory of Israel in a political-messianic sense. The insolent ones who have no shame are the Byzantines whose oppressive rule and anti-Jewish legislation have harassed the Jewish communities. Nowhere does the hymnist become too specific about the adversary outside, because Jewish converts could understand the underlying intentions and possibly denounce the community.

Since contemporary Christianity offered its own theological explanations of Abraham's significance for the Church, the question can be asked, if there was some kind of a Jewish response or even a manner of confiscation of the original ideas emerging from the cycle of biblical stories about Abraham. After all, Abraham is considered the father of many nations, so why would Jews have the exclusive right to claim Abraham for their own traditions? Yet, in some poems a tendency can be observed to judaize or rejudaize Abraham, not quite so much in official synagogue poetry but in Aramaic songs from the same period. A few years ago these songs were collected and edited by Sokoloff and Yahalom. The use of these Aramaic pieces may well be connected with the reading of the Targumim, the Aramaic portions of the Torah, in late antique synagogues. Apparently, these composers were not cantor-poets but *meturgemanin*, translators and commentators who offered expositions of the weekly pericope in rather popular Aramaic interspersed with Greek and Latin words and expressions.[15] Here are a few examples: lord or master with reference to

[14] Van Bekkum, *Hebrew Poetry from Late Antiquity*, 17–18.

[15] J. Yahalom and M. Sokoloff, *Jewish Palestinian Aramaic Poetry from Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem 1999), 42–45. See also the comprehensive review of M. Kister, "Jewish

God is *Kiris*, *Kurios*, even *Kiris celestis* or *Kiris de-ouranos* ("heavenly God"); a group of people or soldiers are *uḳlusin* (Greek: *ochlos* with the *Anklang* of *ekklēsia*); one soldier or a legion is *ligyon* (pl. *ligyonin*; Latin: *legio*; Greek: *legiōn*); inhabited land is *oikoumini* (Greek: *oikoumenē*); the Torah or Law is *nomos*, in an Aramaic phrase: *qera benomos* ("he reads the Law"); a reception room or granary is *triklin* (Greek: *triklinon*; Latin: *triclinium*); and many more. The majority of these songs are intended for festivals, commemorative days, or personal events like weddings and funerals. Abraham is presented in a few instances as the first patriarch who intercedes on behalf of the people of Israel before God.

In a hymn for the Ninth of Av, the commemoration of the destruction of the Temple, Abraham raises his voice like a bull, reminding God of his renowned hospitality, serving food and drinks to all passing travellers and strangers. Therefore the three men, the three angels, who came to announce the birth of his son Isaac, were offered milk and meat. Abraham who was eternalised as the one shielded by God (*magen Avraham*), has himself become a shield and protector of Israel for all times. On account of his virtues and those of the patriarchs Isaac and Jacob the people of Israel can rely on three formidable defenders who argue for the sake of God's promises to their posterity. Abraham's biblical plea for the safety of Lot and his family in the city of Sodom has transformed into an eternal and heavenly plea for the safe future of the Israelites. Jews may have set the effectiveness of the so-called *zekut avot* ("the merits of the patriarchs"), against the Christian interpretations of Abraham in an attempt to depict him more or less exclusively as the father of the Jews and Judaism.

5. The Hymnist Samuel ben Hoshaʿna in Muslim Palestine

Later hymnists who experienced the transition from the Byzantine empire to the Persian and ultimately Arab conquest or lived in Islamic surroundings continued to elaborate Abraham motifs and added surprising details. These composers were already used to a fundamental change in

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Aramaic Poems from Byzantine Palestine and Their Setting" (review of J. Yahalom and M. Sokoloff, *Jewish Palestinian Aramaic Poetry from Late Antiquity*), *Tarbiz* 76 (2007): 105–184 (Hebrew); also M. Rand, "Observations on the Relationship between JPA Poetry and the Hebrew *Piyyut* Tradition—The Case of the *Kinot*," in *Jewish and Christian Liturgy and Worship: New Insights into Its History and Interaction* (eds. A. Gerhards and C. Leonhard; JCPS 15; Leiden 2007), 127–144.

the reading traditions of Bible and Prophets: the Palestinian custom of the triennial cycle of reading the Torah pericopes was superseded by the Babylonian custom of the annual cycle. They had to build their poems on much larger text units, and they did so in the so-called *yotzrot*, poetic segments intended for the blessings in connection with the recitation of Deut 6:4, the Shema. One of them is Samuel ben Hosha'na, the most important hymnist in the later stage of poetic activity in Muslim Palestine.[16] Samuel was born in the latter third of the tenth century. He was active in the main religious court and academy, and acquired a high position in the assembly after the leader, the excellence or gaon, and the head of the court house or *Av beth din*, so he was number three in the hierarchy, in Hebrew he was called: *hashelishi bachavurah*, and therefore his name has become Samuel the Third. There are traces of Samuel the Third's legal and rabbinic correspondence on Sicily and in Ramle, and later in Jerusalem. From him we learn how tight connections were between the Jerusalem Jews and those of Fustat in Egypt, especially the Babylonian community of Fustat alongside the Jerusalem community in that city. The final years of his life are well documented in the Cairo Genizah, when he often frequented Fustat. Apparently, he died in 1012.[17]

Samuel the Third was already a *chaver* or associate scholar to the academy when he composed his liturgical works. He signs his poems with a name acrostic including the title, so that presumably most of his oeuvre came into being during the last decade of the tenth century. In his *yotzer* for Gen 12:1 Samuel introduces Abraham as a guide who led the peoples of the world before the Creator, and averted them from doing wrong. Abraham's travel from place to place caused him to be threatened by three dangers, lesser offspring, lesser richness, and the decline of the good name. Therefore three blessings were necessary to contend these three dangers: "I will make you a great nation," "I will bless you," "I will make your name great." By travelling and moving forward Abraham avoided bad company such as "the friends of Lot," that is to say, the inhabitants of Sodom. God proved to be stricter in defence of the honour of the righteous Abraham and other righteous men than his own honour: "I will personally disgrace your enemies, but they that despise me shall be disgraced through others." Abraham was quick in performing the divine commandments; both Abraham and Sarah are portrayed as

[16] N. Katsumata, *Hebrew Style in the Liturgical Poetry of Shmuel Hashlishi* (Leiden 2003). A critical edition of all *yotzrot* by Joseph Yahalom is forthcoming.

[17] M. Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634–1099* (Cambridge 1992), 370–381.

missionaries who brought people under the wings of the Omnipresent. Abraham was the persecutor of earthly kings whose shield is God and whose reward will wait for times to come. Four things were shown to him: *Gehinnom* ("hell"), repression by kingdoms, Torah, and Temple, with the promise: "As long as the Israelites will occupy themselves with the latter two, they will be saved from the former two." The Lord made a covenant with Abraham between the pieces, means in the words of the hymnist, the foreign kingdoms will eventually be torn into pieces, their name and memory be wiped out. Additional hymns dwell upon the motif of Abraham as the builder of altars, one in Shechem, one between Bethel and Ai, one in Hebron and one on the mountain of Mor, Moriah, the future site of the temple. In the sequence of versified motifs Samuel the Third comes close to an interpretation of his own time: "You, God, have put an end to dread [i.e., Rome], darkness [i.e., Byzantium], great [i.e., Sassanid Persia], a body with toes and feet is falling." This combination of allusions from Gen 15:12 ("A dread and great darkness fell upon him") and Dan 2:42 ("As the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle"). Is this a hidden condemnation of the rule of the Arabs or the power of the Fatimids? We cannot be sure, but these verses are more often employed within the context of Hebrew apocalyptic and mystical songs from one or two centuries earlier with reference to the four kingdoms including the authority of Umayyads and Abbasids. We also know that when Samuel wrote these words, Fatimid rule of Palestine and Syria became increasingly oppressive under the Jarrahids with the consent of one of the most controversial kalifs of early Islam, al-Hakim.[18]

The fragmentation of Islamic rule seems to be repeated in the lines of one of the closing poems within the composition for Gen 12:1: "Eight pieces [of calf, goat, ram, and bull] did the father of many cut into two [allusion to the political dissent and final destruction of Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs]; [Abraham] knew about their division and sequence in remembrance of his covenant for the saving of [one] piece [i.e., Israel]; look at the tribulations of that tribe [i.e., Israel], do not hide [your] face; You are a God who hides yourself, but nothing can be hidden from you; allow those who are doomed to die and be entreated by the melodies of their prayer!"

[18] W.J. van Bekkum, "Jewish Perceptions of the al-Hakim Era: The Letters of Samuel the Third" (forthcoming).

6. Conclusion

The depth and richness of these verses with regard to Abraham are repeated in numerous other verses of Hebrew hymnists from distinct periods and places, all focusing on a biblical patriarch and his lasting impact on beliefs and ideas within Jewish religious tradition. The examination of Abraham in Hebrew liturgical hymns adds to the complexity of attitudes in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam towards a key-figure who continuously has inspired generations throughout the ages both as a human being who passed the trials and tests of life and as a man who kept his promise to God and therefore divine promise was fulfilled in him.

NEW TESTAMENT AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

"NEITHER JEW NOR GREEK": ABRAHAM AS A UNIVERSAL ANCESTOR

Karin B. Neutel

1. Introduction

In his Letter to the Galatians, Paul redefines who belongs to Abraham. The sons of Abraham, the recipients of the blessing and the promise given to Abraham, the seed of Abraham—all these categories are newly demarcated by Paul to include the Gentile Galatians. The position of Gentiles in Christ is a necessary prerequisite for this redefinition: in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, because all are one. When Gentiles belong to Christ, they belong to Abraham, as his heirs. In Paul's characterisation, Abraham is not solely a Jewish ancestor, he is a universal ancestor.[1]

Yet how universal is an appeal to a figure from Jewish Scripture? If Abraham is father to both Jew and Greek, do not Jews retain their traditional genealogy, while Greeks are required to exchange their ancestry for one that is new and foreign? It has been argued recently that far from presenting a universal message, Paul in fact proclaims a message only to Gentiles, about how to become part of Abraham's descendants. In this view, Paul uses arguments and models from his Jewish heritage and opens them up to include Gentiles, but only on condition of their leaving their own cultural heritage behind. Rather than spreading an ethnicity-free gospel, it is suggested, Paul proclaims a distinctly Jewish message which asks no cultural change from Jews, who already belong to God, but a complete transformation from non-Jews. This paper questions this "Radical New Perspective on Paul," as it has been termed. I do this by examining the recent study on Paul's use of ethnicity and kinship by Johnson Hodge, who identifies herself with this perspective.[2] I will focus on Paul's

[1] I would like to thank George van Kooten, Birgit van der Lans, and Frank Brogan for their helpful comments and corrections in various stages of this paper. Also Marius Heemstra for our continuing exchange of ideas on many subjects, including those discussed here.

[2] "'Radical' new perspective" is the term used by Johnson Hodge for the interpre-

appeal to Abraham in Gal 3, where we find "the core of his teaching as apostle to the Gentiles."[3] Since the Radical New Perspective is a growing force in Pauline studies, it is appropriate to examine its interpretation of one of the core texts in Paul's Letters.[4] Should the Radical New Perspective be seen as the successor to the by now almost classic New Perspective on Paul? Or does Paul indeed construct Abraham as a universal figure, challenging both Jewish and Gentile self-conceptions in the process? I will start with a brief summary of Paul's appeal to Abraham in Gal 3.

2. Abraham as Ancestor: Faith, Christ, and the Law

It has long been recognised that in his Letter to the Galatians, Paul is involved in a discussion with opponents who felt that Gentiles needed to become circumcised and follow the law, in order to belong to God.[5] Paul is clearly concerned that these opponents have been successful. He fears that his audience has been persuaded to accept their view and will decide to start following the Jewish law. Throughout the Letter to the Galatians, Paul argues passionately that such a move is not necessary, and would even complicate their situation: "if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you" (Gal 5:2).[6]

While Paul may have been forced to refer to Abraham because his opponents brought him up in the course of their argument, as has often been suggested, he does so with conviction.[7] Paul replies with his version

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tation of Paul advanced by Gaston and Gager, which is developed, among others, by Stowers, Nanos, Eisenbaum, and herself (C. Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* [Oxford 2007], 9, 153). In his recent overview of Pauline scholarship, Zetterholm also uses the term "radical new perspective" (M. Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul: A Student's Guide to Recent Scholarship* [Minneapolis 2009], 161).

[3] Johnson Hodge defines Paul's gospel as the news that Gentiles can receive the blessing of Abraham in Christ (Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 86).

[4] Zetterholm devotes a chapter to the interpretation of the Radical New Perspective of Paul (Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul*, 127–164) and remarks that "the truth about Paul, I would assume, lurks somewhere within the radical new perspective" (239).

[5] See, e.g., G.W. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts* (JSNTSup 29; Sheffield 1989); J.L. Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33A; New York 1997), 13–34; J.D.G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (BNTC; Peabody 1993).

[6] The translation of New Testament texts is taken from the NRSV, with some changes.

[7] For a reconstruction of the argumentation on Abraham of Paul's opponents and their accusations of Paul, see the contribution to this volume by Birgit van der Lans.

of what it means to be Abraham's heir. He uses the claim that Abraham was a universal ancestor, that both Jews and Gentiles can be his offspring through faith and Christ, to support his case that the Galatians do not need the Jewish law.

Paul's argument about Abraham is based on three main points. The first is the association between Abraham and "those from faith." The second is the role of Christ as Abraham's seed, and the third is the distinction between Abraham and faith on the one hand, and the law on the other. We will briefly look at each of these points, before turning to the interpretation of the Radical New Perspective.

Faith. For Paul, the key to Gentile access to Abraham lies in faith. Because Abraham "believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (Gal 3:6), Paul maintains, "those from faith," including the Galatians, count as his sons (Gal 3:7). As a consequence of faith, the Galatians have received the spirit (Gal 3:2–5), and as a consequence of faith, Abraham was blessed and "those from faith" with him (Gal 3:8–9). Through faith, the nations have received the promise of the spirit, which was given to Abraham and to his seed (Gal 3:14, 16). Paul connects Abraham with the Galatians and those who are "from faith" in general, on the basis of their shared faith. This is the link which makes them count together as ancestor and descendant.

Christ. Paul identifies the seed of Abraham as Christ; the singular form of the noun "seed" in Greek (σπέρμα) indicates its reference to a single descendant (Gal 3:16). At the end of the chapter, Paul explains how Christ as the seed connects his audience to Abraham. By citing what is most likely a formula which was spoken at baptism, Paul can remind them of something that they are already familiar with: "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, nor male and female, because you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). From this baptismal inclusion into Christ, Paul can then draw his conclusion and give his bottom line: "if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise" (Gal 3:29). Both Jew and Gentile are "in Christ" and therefore both are Abraham's seed and heir.

For an overview of literature, see Esler, who imagines Paul to have thought, just before writing Gal 3: "You regard descent from Abraham as a desirable thing? … Then let me tell you what it means and how to get it!" (P.F. Esler, "Paul's Contestation of Israel's [Ethnic] Memory of Abraham in Galatians 3," *BTB* 36 [2006]: 23–34 at 25). Esler also discusses the various views on the specific case made by these opponents (24–25).

Law. Halfway through the chapter, Paul brings in a third point, which is probably intended to cut off a possible criticism (Gal 3:17–25). Because Paul has singled out faith as the crucial factor for Gentile inclusion into Abraham, and has opposed faith to the law (Gal 3:10–14), he has left himself open to questions about the status of the law. As the contribution to this volume by van der Lans shows, in contemporary thought, Abraham was associated with law observance in general, and circumcision in particular, precisely those issues which Paul argues against. Paul therefore takes pains to separate Abraham from the law of Moses. He does so by pointing out that God's dealings with Abraham preceded those with Moses, and were handled by God in person, while Moses functioned as a mediator and had to interact with angels (Gal 3:17, 19–20).[8] The law is therefore secondary to the promise to Abraham, and cannot change anything about it (Gal 3:17–20). Its function was only temporary, and has ended with the coming of Christ (Gal 3:19, 23–25).

In his polemical appeal to Abraham, Paul was thus concerned to show that his Gentile audience was included as his descendants, along with Jews, on the same terms. By portraying Abraham as a universal ancestor, Paul counters his opponents' claim that Gentiles can only be accepted as his descendants by accepting Jewish law. We will now see how Paul's case for Gentile inclusion into Abraham is read in the Radical New Perspective. In order to understand the particular interpretation of Paul in this perspective, it is necessary to make a preliminary point about the basic assumption which drives it.

3. The Radical New Perspective: Gentile Problems

The Radical New Perspective is built on the central notion that Paul was concerned only with the situation of non-Jews. As apostle to the Gentiles, he did not address Jews, or their position with respect to God or the law. Even though Paul may occasionally mention Jews, he always wrote to Gentiles, about Gentile problems.[9]

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[8] According to Dunn, the contrast with Moses is clearly negative, while the reference to angels "is much more positive than has often been assumed." There can be no doubt, though, that Paul mentions the angels to lower the status of Moses in relation to Abraham (J.D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* [Edinburgh 1998], 139–140).

[9] Johnson Hodge states that "there is perhaps no more pivotal issue for determining one's reading of Paul than audience. Whom did Paul address in his letters? For whom does he construct his arguments?" (Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 9).

The key Gentile problem for Paul is identified in the Radical New Perspective as Gentile alienation from the God of Israel. Gentiles are estranged from God because they did not accept the knowledge of God that was available to them, but collectively rejected God (Rom 1:18–32). This is a distinctively Gentile problem; only they need to be made right with the God of Israel through Christ. The situation of Jews is not an issue for Paul, because, according to the view of the Radical New Perspective, they are Abraham's descendants already, and already God's people. According to this two-covenant hypothesis, as it is called, Paul's gospel only involved the covenant of the Gentiles.[10]

The idea that Paul is concerned with Gentiles only, which characterizes the Radical New Perspective, determines its reading of Paul. According to Johnson Hodge, Paul does not implicitly or explicitly criticize Israel or the law. Therefore, "instead of viewing Paul as a critic of Judaism and the Law, we can see Paul as engaged in working out how *Gentiles* can be made right with the God of Israel in the context of the coming end-time."[11] It is important to note that Johnson Hodge seems to exclude the possibility that Paul's ideas about Gentiles and the God of Israel might imply a criticism of contemporary Jewish views of Gentiles and the law. She suggests that Paul can work out his solution to the problem of Gentiles without direct consequences for his attitude towards "Judaism." We will return to this point later, since it is important to my critique of the Radical New Perspective. First, we will examine in more detail the interpretation of the Radical New Perspective of Paul's portrayal of Abraham as an ancestor to Gentiles in Gal 3.

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[10] The two-covenant hypothesis was put forward by Gaston and Gager (L. Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* [Vancouver 1987]; J.G. Gager, *Reinventing Paul* [Oxford 2000]). For a critical evaluation of Gaston's idea that Paul is only concerned with Gentiles, see M.A. Seifrid, *Justification by Faith: The Origin and Development of a Central Pauline Theme* (NovTSup 68; Leiden 1992), 65–66. Setzer asks some pertinent questions of Radical New Perspective (C. Setzer, "Does Paul Need to Be Saved?" *BibInt* 13, no. 3 [2005]: 289–297). The two-covenant hypothesis was recently taken up by Eisenbaum (P. Eisenbaum, *Paul Was Not a Christian: The Original Message of a Misunderstood Apostle* [New York 2009]). She uses the term "two-ways salvation." For an evaluation of Eisenbaum's treatment of the concept, see Y.S. Kim, review of P. Eisenbaum, *Paul Was Not a Christian: The Original Message of a Misunderstood Apostle*, *RBLit* 3 (2010): n.p.

[11] Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 11 (emphasis C.J.H.). Johnson Hodge sees this as a general characteristic of the Radical New Perspective: "in this view, there is no implicit or explicit critique of Israel (except that many *Ioudaioi* do not realize Christ's role for Gentiles) or the Law (except when Gentiles try to keep it)" (Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 9).

4. The Radical New Perspective: Inclusion in Abraham

Just as the problem that motivates Paul is considered by the Radical New Perspective to be shaped along ethnic lines, so is its solution. According to Johnson Hodge, Paul's answer to the Gentile predicament is formulated in terms of ethnicity and kinship. Baptism into Christ repairs the Gentile alienation from God, by making Gentiles into brothers of Christ and descendants of Abraham.[12] This is the point which Paul argues in Gal 3, summing up succinctly in the closing verse: "if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise" (Gal 3:29).

Johnson Hodge demonstrates through careful analysis of numerous Jewish and Greek parallels, that Paul's use of the models of kinship and ethnicity is similar to that of his contemporaries. Myths about origin and ancestry are reconstructed and adapted to suit new situations and loyalties. The history of a family, a people, or a philosophical school can be rewritten to incorporate the new into the old, by claiming a shared heritage, or ethnic identity. Like his contemporaries, Paul adapts aspects of his ethnic identity, such as belonging to Abraham, to suit a new situation. Several passages in Gal 3 are replete with such kinship and ethnicity models, including those dealing with faith and Christ, which we identified as the first two points of Paul's argument. We will examine each of these points as they are understood by Johnson Hodge.

Faith. The logic of descent from Abraham in Gal 3:6–9 centres around Paul's use of the term "those from faith" (οἱ ἐκ πίστεως):

> Just as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, so, you see, those from faith are the descendants of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the Gentiles will be blessed in you." For this reason, those from faith are blessed with Abraham who believed. (Gal 3:6–9)

Johnson Hodge's understanding of the category "those from faith," is determined by the idea that Paul is only concerned with the situation of Gentiles, which characterizes the Radical New Perspective as we have seen. Jews are considered to be already possessing God's promises and blessing, and already belonging to Abraham.[13] Through Christ, Gen-

[12] In Johnson Hodge's terms: "if oppositional ethnic construction (Jews/non-Jews) defines the problem, aggregative ethnic construction (Gentiles-in-Christ linked to Israel) defines the solution" (Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 67).

[13] Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 99.

tiles can now be included in Abraham as well. The category "those from faith" thus necessarily cannot be taken as a challenge to another form of descent, such as "those from the flesh," as it often is, because there is another form of descent which remains relevant. This leads to a rather strained reading of the chapter, since the polemical tone and argument lose their impetus. This is intensified by Johnson Hodge's interpretation of faith, as indicating not that of the Galatians, but that of Abraham.

Given that Paul's argument deals with kinship, Johnson Hodge believes the term "those from faith" should be interpreted to mean "those whose line of descent springs from faithfulness." According to her, the "faithfulness" in question is not that of the Galatians. Rather, the faithfulness is that of Abraham, and refers to his response to God's promises as told in Genesis (Gen 12:3; 15:3–6; 18:18). In this view, it is not their own faith that makes Gentiles right with the God of Israel, but that of Abraham. Faith here is about ancestry, it refers to the kinship-making between God and Abraham. As such, it encompasses not only Abraham's response to God but also God's act, in founding a lineage based on Abraham's faithfulness. The Gentiles themselves play no active role in this; they are recipients of the promise, because of Abraham's faithfulness. Because Johnson Hodge does not define faith as a quality of the Galatians (even though Paul talks about faith in relation to them in the opening verses of the chapter [Gal 3:2–5]), they do not have any connection to Abraham. In this reading, while "those from faith" denotes a line of descent, it does not indicate who descends, but only how they descend. We are told that descent occurs "out of the faithfulness of Abraham," but we are thus none the wiser as to who these descendants are.[14]

Christ. In order to clarify who count as descendants, Johnson Hodge needs to bring in Christ as a referent of faithfulness, even though this has no direct basis in the text. Christ only appears explicitly in v. 13, but is now introduced into vv. 7–8, in order to be able to define "those from faith" beyond Abraham, as the ancestor. The references to faith are thus not only seen to indicate the faithfulness of Abraham, and of God, but that of Christ as well. Although Christ is not mentioned in Gal 3:6–9, Johnson Hodge believes that his faithfulness is implied in these verses (particularly in Gal 3:7–8). Christ's faithful obedience to God's plan, his death and resurrection, is what enables the Gentiles to belong

[14] Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 80–84.

to Abraham. Christ is the necessary link between him and the Gentiles; it is only because of Christ's faithfulness that kinship can be established. "Those from faith" are thus those who descend from the faithfulness not only of Abraham, but also of Christ.[15]

Essential for the role of Christ as a facilitator of kinship for Gentiles, so Johnson Hodge, is the experience of baptism. Paul ends his argument for Gentile inclusion into Abraham by referring to the new identity of the Gentiles "in Christ": "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, nor male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise" (Gal 3:28–29).

According to Johnson Hodge, although Paul seems to deny the ethnic identity of Jew and Greek, he in fact only adds a new facet to the ethnic identities already in place. They are now Gentiles-in-Christ. Important for Johnson Hodge's reading of this crucial text is the assumption that identity, including ethnic identity, is not fixed and static, but rather flexible and malleable. She maintains that it is common for people, both in Antiquity and today, to have several different ethnic identities at once, and rearrange these according to circumstance. In this passage then, Paul engages in "ethnic discourse," he "encourages the Gentiles in Galatia to rank their 'in-Christness' higher than their other available identities."[16] Being "in Christ" is thus seen as superimposed over other identities, without changing these identities.[17]

However, the idea that identities are flexible and malleable seems to have been misconstrued to some extent. The observation that people can combine different identities is turned into the idea that people can

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[15] Here Johnson Hodge addresses the thorny issue of the meaning of *pistis Christou* (πίστις Χριστοῦ), which she reads as a subjective genitive, the faithfulness of Christ, rather than as an objective genitive, faith in Christ (see Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 82–84, 90–91).

[16] Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 129. She argues that Paul himself has done the same, reprioritising his identity in Christ over his Jewish identity.

[17] Johnson Hodge suggests that 1 Cor 1:22–24 illustrate her view of a superimposed identity: "For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." However, we see here exactly that the different, ethnically determined, attitudes that characterise Jew and Greek when not called, are replaced by a uniform response to Christ. She concludes that "For Paul, being called or being in Christ cuts across ethnic identities, including both *Ioudaioi* and non-*Ioudaioi*" (Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 126).

adopt any identity without consequences to the individual identities they already possess. Johnson Hodge does not reflect on the fact that Jew and Gentile now in fact share a common identity. Boyarin has called this the "fundamental implausibility" at the heart of the two-covenant hypothesis, namely its assumption "that Gentiles could become part of Israel without observing the law, *and that this would not result in a fundamental redefinition of what being part of Israel meant!*"[18]

Through their new identity "in Christ," Gentiles now belong to Abraham; they are descendants of the founding ancestor of the Jews. Consequently, far from being ethnically neutral, Johnson Hodge maintains, being "in Christ" is grounded in Jewish identity. The Gentiles have secured a place within the larger network of Israel. Yet they only obtain this identity through radical adjustments to their previous identities: they need to give up their gods, accept Israel's Messiah, their scriptures, stories of origin, ethical standards, and even their ancestry.[19] At the same time, Johnson Hodge emphasizes, being "in Christ" does not require Jews to appropriate any Greek or Gentile traits, it is already a Jewish identity.[20]

Here as well, we see that Johnson Hodge does not reflect on the consequences of a shared identity for Jews and Gentiles. While "being in Christ" together with Gentiles does not constitute a Greek or Gentile identity, it does pose a challenge to Jewish identities which base themselves on the distinction between Jews and the ethnic and religious other. That Gentiles gain this position in Christ and Abraham not through becoming proselytes and following the law, but explicitly without the law, makes a redefining of Jewish identity even more necessary.

Law. Since the language of kinship and ethnicity is not as explicit in the verses which deal with the law, it is not treated extensively by Johnson Hodge. She does maintain that, even though Paul identifies the law in question as being the law of Moses, he is only concerned with the relation it has to Gentiles. When Paul writes that "therefore the law was our custodian until Christ came, so that we might be made right out of faith" (Gal 3:24–25), Johnson Hodge reads the "we" of this

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[18] D. Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Controv 1; Berkeley 1994), 272–273n9 (emphasis D.B.). For a criticism of the hypothesis, see also F. Thielman, *From Plight to Solution: A Jewish Framework for Understanding Paul's View of the Law in Galatians and Romans* (NovTSup 61; Leiden 1989), 123–133.

[19] Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 131.

[20] Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 152.

passage as including only Gentiles.[21] When Christ arrived, the Gentiles were freed from the law. The temporality of the law thus only relates to them.

Johnson Hodge concludes with the following characterization of her position:

> Like others in the "radical" new perspective, my reading of Paul insists on viewing him as a first-century Jew and thus opens the possibility that he had no critique of Judaism but remained fully faithful to the God of Israel and this God's plan for the salvation of all peoples.[22]

Again, here, Johnson Hodge suggests that if we see Paul as a first-century Jew, we cannot see him as a critic of Israel or "Judaism."[23] Apparently, if we accept that Paul remained faithful to God's plan for salvation, this excludes the possibility that he voiced any implicit or explicit criticism.[24] Having seen how Johnson Hodge reads Gal 3, I will now discuss some of the crucial aspects of the Radical New Perspective in general, which support her interpretation.

5. The Radical New Perspective: Radical Enough?

It will be good to start with common ground. The most valuable aspect of the Radical New Perspective on Paul, in my view, is that it understands Paul as a first-century Jew, and not in any way as a Christian. It rightly stresses the fundamentally Jewish nature of Paul's message. Paul refers to Jewish Scripture and mentions figures like Adam, Abraham, and Moses. His message centres on a Jewish Messiah, and prescribes Jewish ethical standards. The extent to which his Gentile audience would have to identify with a Jewish world view, in order to understand themselves as "the foreskin," for example, is probably not always fully appreciated in

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[21] Johnson Hodge compares the sons who achieve adoption in Gal 4 with the "we" who were kept imprisoned. Both are Gentiles only (Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 76).

[22] Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 153.

[23] Above, in section 3, I cited a similar statement from the introduction of Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*: "instead of viewing Paul as a critic of Judaism and the Law, we can see Paul as engaged in working out how *Gentiles* can be made right with the God of Israel in the context of the coming end-time" (Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 11).

[24] As Johnson Hodge notes of the Radical New Perspective: "in this view, there is no implicit or explicit critique of Israel (except that many *Ioudaioi* do not realize Christ's role for Gentiles) or the Law (except when Gentiles try to keep it)" (Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 9).

scholarship.[25] In this respect, the Radical New Perspective can be seen to offer a corrective to the New Perspective. Even though the New Perspective sprang from a criticism of the traditional, "works oriented," view of Judaism, it ultimately does not seem to escape opposing Paul to the Judaism of his time. As when Dunn writes that we see "a faith which sooner or later must break away from Judaism to exist in its own terms" (referring to Gal 2:16).[26]

An important question that might be asked, while on this common ground, is: why do we see Paul as a Jew? In my opinion, we do not recognise Paul as a Jew because he neatly colours within the lines of first-century Judaism, as the Radical New Perspective seems to assume. Rather, ultimately, Paul is a Jew because that is how he sees himself. Paul repeatedly identifies himself as a Jew and as part of the Jewish people.[27] His Jewishness does not depend on the extent to which he conforms to contemporary Jewish ideas, it is simply a given. According to Barclay, "to reinstate Paul in hindsight as a 'legitimate' Jew would be to impose a theological judgement over historical reality."[28] Paul is not defined by first-century Judaism, rather, he, along with others, defines first-century Judaism.

We can therefore understand Paul's voice as one among many, on issues such as Gentile inclusion, end-time expectation, or the nature of the law. It is puzzling to me that the Radical New Perspective should believe that the necessary inference from seeing Paul as a Jew, is that he cannot have raised any implicit or explicit criticism of Israel, the law, or Judaism.[29] Do its proponents believe the same to be true for Josephus, or Philo, for example? If Paul was a first-century Jew who addressed first-century problems, why deny him a place in contemporary debates? Why not accept that Paul takes a particular position within the spectrum of Jewish attitudes towards Gentiles and the law, a position, even, which may have created tension and disagreement with his contemporaries?[30]

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[25] Even though Paul denies that the distinction between "circumcision" and "foreskin" is relevant, he does expect his Gentile audience to understand that they are implied by the term.

[26] J.D.G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (London 1990), 196–198. See also the discussion of the New Perspective by Campbell (W.S. Campbell, *Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity* [London 2008], 26–29).

[27] E.g., Rom 9:3; 11:1; Gal 2:15.

[28] J.M.G. Barclay, "Paul among Diaspora Jews: Anomaly or Apostate?," *JSNT* 60 (1995): 89–120, 115–119.

[29] Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 9, 11, 153.

[30] In part, such debates will of course be academic constructions. We can compare

We can illustrate Paul's particular position with an example from Gal 3. In his statements about the law in this chapter, Paul does not say that the law plays a different role for Gentiles because Gentiles are not Jews. This is what the Radical New Perspective believes his position to be, based on the two-covenant hypothesis. Yet Paul does not explicitly say so, even though we know others did. The "council at Jerusalem," for example, is described as reaching the conclusion "that we should not trouble those Gentiles who are turning to God, but we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from whatever has been strangled and from blood" (Acts 15:19–20).[31] Unlike Jews, Gentiles who are turning to God do not need to take up the entire law. They are specifically required to live by the four commandments mentioned, which do not include circumcision.

Paul does not argue along such lines, but instead, in Gal 3, bases the role of the law on the fact that it was only temporary, and secondary to the promise to Abraham. As we saw above, Johnson Hodge contends that the temporality of the law only applies to Gentiles and not to Jews. Even if we grant that this is so, that does not make Paul's idea unproblematic or uncontroversial. Regardless of whether we are to assume that the law was temporary for Jews as well, Paul's argument in itself is extraordinary as a Jewish assertion about the law of Moses. Of course there were diverging opinions about the requirements for Gentiles associated with Judaism, and the fact that Paul did not require them to circumcise and follow the law might not have been unique.[32] However, his particular argumentation for this lack of requirement does set Paul apart from all extant views, and it may have been difficult for many to accept such a

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the positions of various authors, without necessarily assuming that they were in direct discussion. In the case of Paul, however, we have clear indication that he was involved with and responded to diverging views (e.g., Gal 2:11–21; 5:12).

[31] Again in Acts 15:28–29, the message to Gentiles is "that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell." Philo appears to refer to uncircumcised proselytes, though the passage is much disputed (*QE* 2.2). On the different position about how Gentiles can be associated with Judaism, see S.J.D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (HCS 31; SMTFIJS; Berkeley 1999).

[32] See previous note. Also T.L. Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE)* (Waco, Tex., 2007); M.D. Goodman, "Identity and Authority in Ancient Judaism," *Judaism* 39 (1990): 192–201. For contemporary ideas about the law, see Thielman, *From Plight to Solution*.

position.[33] Thus, while I wholeheartedly share the view of the Radical New Perspective that Paul was a Jew, I also believe that his ideas may have been intended and felt as criticism of contemporary Jewish thought and practice. Again, I will add, just as we can take the writings of Josephus and Philo to contain criticism, and to have provoked opposition.

This same issue of implied criticism can be raised for a more fundamental aspect of the Radical New Perspective, that of Gentile inclusion. The Radical New Perspective seems to assume that the inclusion of Gentiles as defined by Paul does not challenge any aspect of Jewish identity. As Johnson Hodge maintains, Jews remain Abraham's children; the Gentiles simply constitute an addition to the family. This is in itself a difficult proposition. How can the inclusion of those who are the ethnic and religious outsiders into Jewish ancestry not be seen as a change?

A further complication to the idea of the Radical New Perspective that Gentile inclusion does not affect Jews, is the way Paul talks about Jews and Gentiles once brought together. While we can identify various attitudes in Jewish sources towards those Greeks who were associated with Judaism in Antiquity, no extant source declares, like Paul, that circumcision is not relevant (1 Cor 7:19; Gal 5:6; 6:15) or that God does not differentiate between Jew and Greek (Rom 2:11; cf. 3:29–30; 10:12).[34] Paul repeatedly makes such emphatic statements, which undermine the idea of the Radical New Perspective that there are two distinct covenants.

The argument put forward by the Radical New Perspective in response to this, is that Paul makes these statements in letters addressed to Gentiles. Such statements do not say anything about his attitude towards Jews, because they only relate to Gentiles. Contrary to Johnson Hodge, I find the issue of Paul's audience not all that relevant.[35] This is not because I suppose we can extrapolate everything he says to Gentiles and apply it

[33] Setzer raises some pertinent questions regarding the Radical New Perspective. In response to the idea that all Paul's negative statements about the law should be seen as relevant for Gentiles only, and that they are misunderstood if they are read as Paul's opinion about the value of the law for Jews: "I confess to some puzzlement here. Do committed Jews talk about the Torah with one kind of vocabulary for insiders, namely as a life-giving gift of God, while condemning it to outsiders in the vilest terms?" (Setzer, "Does Paul Need to Be Saved?," 294).

[34] On the various ideas about the position of proselytes and others sympathetic to Judaism, see Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*. See also Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*; Goodman, "Identity and Authority."

[35] Johnson Hodge states that "there is perhaps no more pivotal issue for determining one's reading of Paul than audience. Whom did Paul address in his letters? For whom does he construct his arguments?" (Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 9).

to Jews. Rather, I believe that what Paul says to Gentiles is part of his conception of what it means to be Jewish. If Paul opposes Abraham and Moses in a letter to Gentiles, that means he can imagine seeing them as opposites, regardless of whether he would do so under all circumstances.

Johnson Hodge is right in maintaining that Paul is working out how Gentiles can be made right with God in the coming end-time.[36] But this is a very Jewish question, and Paul's particular answer to this question is directly pertinent to his ideas about Jewish identity and the law. While Johnson Hodge holds that it is crucial to know for whom Paul constructs his arguments, what really matters is that they are Paul's arguments, and therefore help us to understand his position.

As I put forward above, rather than talk about different covenants or lines of descent, as the Radical New Perspective maintains, Paul in fact repeatedly states that Jew and Greek are in the same position before God (e.g., Rom 3:29–30; 4:9–12; 10:12; Gal 5:6). Also in Gal 3, Paul argues that both Jew and Greek are descendants of Abraham, on the same terms. Abraham figures prominently as an ancestral figure in contemporary Jewish writings and for these authors, as for Paul, belonging to Abraham, however defined, was highly valued. In her article in this volume, van der Lans clearly indicates various aspects of Paul's interpretation of Abraham which differ markedly from those of his contemporaries: not the children of the flesh count as Abraham's children, but the children of the promise; Abraham does not exemplify Torah observance, rather, for belonging to Abraham's kin, circumcision and following the law are not necessary.

When compared with contemporary Jewish sources, Paul's interpretation of Abraham in Gal 3 thus requires a rereading of the Abraham stories, and a re-evaluation of the position of Moses. It is therefore not surprising that Paul's message would encounter resistance, which is precisely what we see in his letters. Paul appears to be involved in several conflicts, and does not hesitate to strike out at various opponents.[37] This controversial side to Paul is seriously neglected in the analysis of the Radical New Perspective.

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[36] Not because this is the entire problem, as the Radical New Perspective claims, but because this is Paul's half of the problem. The other half, how Jews can be made right with God, he has left to others, although it deeply concerns him (Rom 9:1–3).

[37] Most obviously in his Letter to the Galatians (e.g., Gal 1:9; 2:4, 14) where he insults those who think that Gentiles need to circumcise (Gal 5:12), as he does in Philippians (Phil 3:2). We can also see this in Paul's mini-autobiography, the first part of which is

6. Conclusion

What does it mean to say that Paul presents Abraham as a universal ancestor? In what sense can Paul's message be called universalist? It is not universalist in the sense that the differences between Jews and Gentiles in general have been wiped out. No, Jews are still the people who descended from Abraham, who received the covenant and the law, and out of whom the Messiah was born. Gentiles are still sinners who rejected God. Yet, both Jews and Gentiles stand in a problematic relation to God, both need to be put right with God. The core of Paul's universalism is that he believes that access to God is now universal in that God has called people both from the Jews and the Gentiles, to accept that through Christ's death and resurrection, a new era has begun. In this new era, God no longer distinguishes between Jew and Gentile, that is, as far as those Jews and Gentiles who are, in Paul's terms, "in Christ" are concerned. These people, Jews and Gentiles, now count as Abraham's sons and as God's sons.

For Paul, it is of fundamental importance that this turn of events, Gentile inclusion in God's people on the basis of the crucified and risen Christ, was part of God's plan all along. God did not change his mind; he always planned for the blessing to come to the nations, for the law to be only temporary, for part of Israel to be rejected, if only for a short time. There was, however, no previous tradition which proclaimed exactly this particular form of Gentile eschatological inclusion. Paul therefore brings together various passages from Scripture and interprets them to speak to the present. This is what we see in Gal 3. Here, Paul interprets the account of God's blessing and promise to Abraham and the nations, to answer the situation in Galatia. By saying that both Jew and Gentile are children of Abraham through Christ, Paul redefines his ancestral tradition to resolve the problems which plague his Galatian audience.

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adduced by Johnson Hodge as an example of his ethnic loyalty, in which he lists his Jewish credentials, but then declares these as "shit" (which Johnson Hodge does not include). Other examples can be found in First Corinthians, where Paul attacks the sexual standards in the community by saying that they are worse than those of the proverbially depraved Gentiles (1 Cor 5:1–2). His uncompromising charge of both Gentiles and Jews in Rom 1–3:20 is another example. In his important article "Paul among Diaspora Jews" Barclay notes the problem Paul ran in to with synagogue authorities, such as the lashings mentioned in 2 Cor 11:15, particularly because he continued to associate himself with Jews and the synagogue, in spite of his attempts to redefine tradition in a radical way (Barclay, "Paul among Diaspora Jews," 89–120, 115–119).

Paul engages in a sincere reinterpretation of his own tradition, in line with what he believes to be God's plan for the salvation of all people. Yet given Paul's distinctive point of view, his contemporaries might well have taken exception to his version of tradition. While Paul's Abraham is a universal Abraham, he was not everyone's Abraham.

BELONGING TO ABRAHAM'S KIN: GENEALOGICAL APPEALS TO ABRAHAM AS A POSSIBLE BACKGROUND FOR PAUL'S ABRAHAMIC ARGUMENT

Birgit van der Lans

1. Introduction

The limited reception of the blessing of the nations in Abraham (Gen 12:3; 18:18) in ancient Jewish texts, as demonstrated in this volume, suggests that Paul's use of the biblical notion in his letters to the Galatians and Romans was innovative in the context of Second Temple Judaism.[1] Yet, this does not mean that his use of the figure of Abraham in a genealogical appeal was completely unfamiliar to his audience, consisting in Galatia of ex-pagan Christians and in Rome of both ethnically Jewish and ex-pagan Christians. New Testament scholarship has long since acknowledged the likelihood that Paul was responding to arguments concerning the sonship of Abraham that had been introduced by other missionaries visiting Galatia, who disagreed with Paul's message.[2]

To elucidate the possible backgrounds of Paul's Abrahamic arguments, I will first discuss genealogical appeals claiming sonship to Abraham in other Jewish texts. Some of these appeals tapped into the wider appeal of Abraham as father of many nations (§ 2), while others made use of the more exclusive concept of Abraham as ancestor of the Jews. I will point at parallel texts in Josephus in which the issue of kinship with Abraham was

[1] I wish to express my gratitude to Prof. Martin D. Goodman, Prof. George H. van Kooten, Karin Neutel, and Prof. Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar for their valuable comments on a previous version of this paper.

[2] C.K. Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation: A Study of the Epistle to the Galatians* (London 1985), 22; J.D.G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Peabody 1993), 159; R.N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (Dallas 1990), xcvii; J.L. Martyn, *Galatians* (New York 1997), 302–306; J.S. Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews: Abraham in Early Christian Controversy* (Louisville, Ky., 1991), 31–34. These other missionaries are likely to have been either Jewish Christians or non-Jewish Christians who had been in touch with Jewish Christians. For methodological considerations regarding the reconstruction of the opponent's argument, see J.M.G. Barclay, "Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test-Case," *JSNT* 31 (1987): 73–93; G.W. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts* (Sheffield 1989), 167–174.

raised through criticism of Moses (§ 3). This type of genealogical appeal to Abraham offers a new perspective on the views against which Paul may have been arguing in his Letter to the Galatians. Finally, I will suggest that Paul's use of the notion of the blessing of the nations is part of a debate about the promises made to Abraham in Genesis and the identity of Abraham's seed (§ 4).

2. Abraham As Father of Many Nations

As the contributions to this volume show, Jewish authors could appeal to different aspects of the figure of Abraham, such as his qualities as an astrologer, a general, philosopher or sage. For this contribution, Abraham's role as forefather, both of the Jews and of other nations, is relevant.[3] References to the biblical promise of the multitude of Abraham's descendants (Gen 13:14–17; 15:5; 22:17) are attested regularly. However, the book of Genesis does not always specify the identity of Abraham's sons, the seed (σπέρμα) promised to Abraham. In later Jewish tradition, this seed is usually identified with the nation of the Jews and expresses their chosen status. Abraham's seed is distinguished from other nations: "for you chose the seed of Abraham before all other nations" (*Pss. Sol.* 9:9).[4]

At the same time, Jewish texts evidence awareness of the biblical tradition that Abraham was father not only of many descendants, but also of many nations (Gen 17:4–6). In the "Praise of the Fathers," Ben Sira praises Abraham as "the great father of a multitude of nations" (Sir 44:19; cf. *Jub.* 15:6–8).[5] Josephus draws on Abraham's wider outreach as father of many nations as well.[6] Firstly, he presents Abraham's eldest son Ishmael as ancestor of the Arabians, attributing qualities of this people in his own day to their descent from Abraham (*A.J.* 1.214, 221; 2.32). Secondly, Josephus describes how Abraham's descendants by Keturah colonized parts of Arabia and Africa, thus creating a connection between these nations and Abraham (*A.J.* 1.239). Alluding to Cleodemus Malchus

[3] See further L.H. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible* (Berkeley 1998), 129–152. Non-Jewish literature portrays Abraham as a wise and righteous man, a political ruler and an astrologer, see J.S. Siker, "Abraham in Graeco-Roman Paganism," *JSJ* 18 (1987): 188–208.

[4] See also Sir 44:21; 1QapGen 21:13; *2 Bar.* 8:23; Pseudo-Philo, *L.A.B.* 18:5.

[5] At the same time, *Jub.* stresses that God only chose Israel and no other nation, of which circumcision is the sign (15:32).

[6] Cf. Martin Goodman's discussion of Abraham in Josephus' works in this volume.

as evidence, he also forges a marital relationship between the daughter of one of these Abrahamites and the Greek hero Heracles (*A.J.* 1.241). In these texts, Abraham, as the progenitor of various peoples, has an appeal beyond the nation of the Jews. Another example of genealogical affinity between Abraham and non-Jewish nations is the tradition that both Jews and Spartans belong to the γένος of Abraham (1 Macc 12:21; *A.J.* 12.225–228; see Bremmer in this volume). Thus, genealogical appeals to Abraham could be made to construe a relationship with another *ethnos* and contribute to Abraham's own renown and to that of the Jews. Paul, too, appears to base his claim of Gentile descent from Abraham on Gen 17:4–6. When Paul states that Abraham is father of all who believe (Rom 4:11–18; see further § 4 below), he is drawing on the existing tradition of Abraham as father of many nations, which could also be employed by contemporary Jews.

3. Abraham As Father of the Jews

A second and prevailing type of genealogical appeal to Abraham draws on the tradition of Abraham as ancestor of the Jews. In a historiographical context, these appeals stress the long shared history and unity of the Jewish *ethnos*. This is especially clear in Josephus' history of the Jews. Within the table of nations, Abraham is the one from whom the Hebrews came forth (*A.J.* 1.122–153). When Josephus announces that he is going to discuss the Hebrews, he begins with the genealogy of Abraham, since he is the actual starting point of the Hebrew γένος (*A.J.* 1.148–149).[7]

The Jewish claim to descent from Abraham also serves to express national election and relationship with God (*Pss. Sol.* 9:9; 18:3; 3 Macc 6:3). In these texts, the seed of Abraham is identified as Israel, thus creating a more exclusive genealogy of Abraham (*Pss. Sol.* 9:9; 18:3; *T. Levi*

[7] For Abraham as πατήρ of the Jews, see also Josephus, *A.J.* 1.158; 11.169; 14.255. For Abraham as πρόγονος of the Jews, see Josephus, *A.J.* 2.269; 2.318; 3.87 (Adam, Noah, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph are also mentioned but only Abraham is singled out as πρόγονος); 5.97; 7.67; *B.J.* 4.531. Abraham is described as προπάτωρ in Josephus, *B.J.* 5.380 (cf. Rom 4:1). Non-Jewish writers also know Abraham as forefather of the Jews: Apollonius Molon, who significantly traces back Moses' genealogy to Abraham: *apud* Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.19.2–3; M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (3 vols.; Jerusalem 1974–1984), no. 46; Pompeius Trogus (Stern, *GLAJJ*, no. 137); see further Siker, "Abraham," 197–200. As Siker notes, it is noteworthy that contrary to Jewish understandings, pagan authors do not connect circumcision with Abraham, but with Moses.

8:15). One of the most elaborate genealogical appeals to Abraham can be found in Fourth Maccabees. The martyrs and their mother are repeatedly characterized as children of Abraham.[8] Abraham's obedience to God serves as an example for the entire nation, evidenced by his willingness to sacrifice his own son (7:19; 16:20, 25). The martyrs are qualified as sons of Abraham based on their obedience (9:21; 14:20; 17:6; 18:20, 23). More specifically, it is the martyr's obedience to the divine Law that constitutes the genealogical connection with Abraham. Other Israelites can also be qualified as descendants of Abraham when they obey the Law. This is most forcefully stated in an exhortation to the audience in 4 Macc 18:1: "O Israelite children, offspring of the seed of Abraham, obey this Law." Apparently, observance of the Law is a primary condition for being counted as seed of Abraham (τῶν Αβραμιαίων σπερμάτων).[9] As sons of Abraham, they must be ready to die for the sake of the Law (6:17–22). Although this Law of the Lord is not explicitly described as the Mosaic law, it is clear that it should be seen in the context of the divine revelation to Moses (5:16, 18, 25; 6:21; 9:15; 11:5, 27; 13:22).[10]

The connection made in Fourth Maccabees between Abraham and the Mosaic law is related to another important element of the Jewish reception of Abraham, his portrayal as the ideal Torah-observant Jew. Although the Sinaitic law had not yet been given, traditions in Second Temple Judaism presuppose that Abraham kept all the Mosaic prescrip-

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[8] For Abrahamic language in 4 Macc, see also T.K. Seim, "Abraham, Ancestor or Archetype? A Comparison of Abraham-Language in 4 Maccabees and Luke-Acts," in *Antiquity and Humanity: Essays on Ancient Religion and Philosophy* (ed. A. Yarbro Collins and M.M. Mitchell; Tübingen 2001), 27–42, esp. 30–36.

[9] A similar point is made by Seim: "But this language of physical descent is immediately qualified by requirements of virtue: obedience to the Law, faithfulness to the religion .... The offspring of Abraham have to prove themselves to be Abrahamites" (Seim, "Abraham, Ancestor or Archetype?," 34–35).

[10] D.A. da Silva, *4 Maccabees* (Sheffield 1998), 133–136; J.W. van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs As Saviours of the Jewish People: A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees* (Leiden 1997), 135. Willingness to die for the law is often phrased as a willingness to die for the "ancestral laws" (πάτριοι νόμοι), a frequent topic in both Jewish and non-Jewish texts; see also 2 Macc 7:2, 37; 8:21; 4 Macc 5:33; 9:1, 29; 16:16. While πάτριοι νόμοι cannot simply be seen as synonymous with the Torah, it is clear that both 2 and 4 Macc mean the laws of Moses when they refer to the πάτριοι νόμοι. E.g., 2 Macc 7:30 defines πάτριος νόμος as the law "that was given to the fathers through Moses." For parallels between the portrayal of the martyrs in 2 and 4 Macc and patriotic depictions of heroes who died a voluntary death in non-Jewish Greek and Roman texts, see van Henten, *Maccabean Martyrs*, 210–243.

tions (Sir 44:20; *Jub*. 6:19, 22; 12:27; *2 Bar*. 57:1–2; CD 3:2).[11] Since Abraham already observed the Mosaic law, it is obvious that his seed should do the same.

The importance of observance of the law for claims to genealogical kinship with Abraham is also found in Josephus' description of rebellions against Moses, as narrated in the book of Joshua. When the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half-Manasseh erected an altar across the Jordan River, they were accused by the Transjordanians of rebellion (νεωτερισμός) and of transgressing the ancestral customs established by Moses (τῆς παρατροπῆς τῶν πατρίων ἐθῶν; *A.J*. 5.101; cf. Josh 22:9–34).[12] Kinship (συγγένεια) plays an important role in this narrative: the Transjordanians considered actions against the Cisjordanians justified, in spite of their συγγένεια, but, because of their kinship, they dispatched a delegation first instead of taking violent action immediately (5.102, 105). It is important to note that συγγένεια is defined in terms of their observance of common laws. The altars are understood as an offence against the laws given by God (5.107). Subsequently, Phinehas admonished the Transjordanians to stay mindful of the ancestral laws and threatened with action on behalf of the laws (5.108). The idea that transgression of the laws entailed a departure from kinship is also suggested by the Cisjordanian defence, indicating that "they would never deviate from their kinship (συγγενείας) with them" (5.111). They were well aware of the Mosaic requirements for sacrifices and agreed that those who rebelled against them were to be killed (5.113). At this point, Josephus describes the genealogical relationship in terms of belonging to the γένος of Abraham:

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[11] In a different form, Philo also connects Abraham and Moses when he says that Abraham, and other sages, followed the natural law. The Mosaic law is a copy of their lives (*Abr*. 5; *Spec*. 1.149). For Abraham and other patriarchs as already observing the Torah, see G.A. Anderson, "The Status of the Torah before Sinai: The Retelling of the Bible in the *Damascus Covenant* and the Book of *Jubilees*," *DSD* 1 (1994): 1–29; B.C. Gregory, "Abraham as the Jewish Ideal: Exegetical Traditions in Sirah 44:19–21," *CBQ* 70 (2008): 69–73; Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians*, 129–133; J.L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998), 705–709; S. Sandmel, *Philo's Place in Judaism: A Study of Conceptions of Abraham in Jewish Literature* (Cincinnati 1956), 37; Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews*, 23.

[12] For this episode, see also C.T. Begg, "The Transjordanian Altar (Josh 22:10–34) according to Josephus (*Ant*. 5.100–114) and Pseudo-Philo (*LAB* 22.1–8)," *AUSS* 35 (1997): 5–19.

> For which [transgressions] all those belonging to the stock of Abraham (πάντες ὅσοι τοῦ Ἀβράμου γένους ὄντες) who adopt revolutionary ways, contrary to customary practice, would justly be wiped out.
>
> (Josephus, *A.J.* 5.113)[13]

In other words, belonging to the γένος of Abraham is characterized and conditioned by observance of the Mosaic law. Those who transgress the law should be punished by death. One might even say that transgression of the Mosaic law eradicates the συγγένεια. Phinehas suspected the Transjordanians of abandoning God and "going over to the evils of the Canaanites" (5.107). If they had indeed transgressed the laws, they would be destroyed and considered no different from the Canaanites (5.108). Thus, συγγένεια appears to be abolished when the laws are no longer observed. When the laws are abandoned, one is no longer reckoned part of the Jewish *ethnos*, nor part of Abraham's γένος.[14]

The idea that observance of the Mosaic law is required to be part of Abraham's people comes up in another rebellion against Moses narrated by Josephus. When the Israelites rebelled against Moses in the desert (Num 14:1–4), they claimed that they did not enjoy a special relationship with God for Moses' sake, but that God "looked after their nation in general because of their ancestors" (διὰ τοὺς προγόνους; *A.J.* 4.2). They could do without Moses, since they all belonged to Abraham's stock (ἁπάντων ἐκ τῆς Ἀβράμου γενεᾶς ὄντων; 4.4). The rebels thus attempted to bypass Moses by going directly back to Abraham. In Josephus' narrative, this is strongly condemned by God: those who belong to Abraham's γένος need to obey Moses' commands.[15] While these examples cannot simply be taken out of their narrative setting in Josephus, the introduction of Abraham surely is significant, given his absence in the biblical account.

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[13] Translation by C.T. Begg, *Antiquities 5–7* (vol. 4 of *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*; ed. S. Mason; Leiden 2005).

[14] See also P. Spilsbury, *The Image of the Jew in Flavius Josephus' Paraphrase of the Bible* (Tübingen 1998), 217: while Abraham and Moses form the two constitutive figures of Jewishness, physical kinship with Abraham is "not a sufficient basis for true Judaism. Kinship with Abraham implies certain well-defined religious customs and duties. These are summed up in the laws of Moses. Only by adhering to these might the children of Abraham claim true Jewish identity and secure God's ongoing favour."

[15] The same thought is expressed in the account immediately preceding the construction of the Cisjordanian altar. Addressing those who have settled across the Jordan, Joshua stressed their kinship (5.97: συγγενείας) and admonished them not to think of them as others (ἑτέρους) instead of as Hebrews, "because we are all of Abraham" (Ἀβράμου γὰρ ἅπαντές ἐσμεν). They should not diverge from the worship of God and of Moses' constitution (5.98).

4. Paul, Abraham, and Moses

The interconnectedness between Abraham and Moses is exactly what Paul undermines.[16] Throughout his letters to the Galatians and the Romans, he redefines sonship of Abraham in two ways. Firstly, Paul argues that physical kinship (κατὰ σάρκα) is irrelevant. Those who are heirs of the promise to Abraham are his seed (Rom 9:7–8; Gal 3:19, 29; 4:21–31). Just as other Jewish understandings posited that only the genealogical line Abraham-Isaac-Jacob qualified as true descent, Paul also makes the line Abraham-Isaac definitive: "through Isaac your seed shall be called" (Rom 9:7). However, Paul redefines the characteristics of Isaac's descent from Abraham: not the children of the flesh, the ethnic-genealogical line, "but the children of the promise are counted as seed" (Rom 9:8; Gal 4:28).

The second way in which Paul redefines sonship of Abraham is by claiming that observance of the Law and circumcision are not a necessary condition for belonging to Abraham's kin (Rom 4:13–25; Gal 3:10–29). As discussed above, other streams of Jewish thought made a connection between Abraham and Moses. Moses could even be placed in direct continuation with the genealogical line of Abraham-Isaac-Jacob (*A.J.* 2.229).[17] At the same time, Abraham was seen as the ideal Torah observer. In the previous section I pointed to genealogical appeals to Abraham in Josephus in which the close connection between Abraham and the Law is especially clear. Moreover, in these rebellion narratives the appeal to Abraham was actually made in response to transgressions of the Mosaic law: Jews who did not obey the Law and defected from Moses were thought to abandon their συγγένεια with Abraham (5.113). Precisely at this point, Paul drives a wedge between Abraham and Law observance, stating that those who share Abraham's faith are his descendants, not just those who observe the Law (οὗτοι υἱοί εἰσιν Ἀβραάμ; Gal 3:7). It is conceivable that his Galatian opponents uttered an accusation against Paul and the community which he had founded similar to the allegation made against the Transjordanians in Josephus, which was that they did

[16] The importance of Paul's bypassing of Moses and direct appeal to Abraham has been widely recognized: H.D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia 1979), 139–140; B.W. Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God: The Transformation of Identity in Galatians* (Edinburgh 1998), 32–33, 130; Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews*, 34; D.F. Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians: A Text-Centred Rhetorical Analysis of a Pauline Letter* (Tübingen 2005), 110.

[17] See also Apollonius Molon, tracing back Moses' genealogy to Abraham: *apud* Eusebius, *Praep. ev*. 9.19.2–3; Stern, *GLAJJ*, no. 46.

not observe Mosaic law and were thus not considered sons of Abraham. Although both Josephus and Fourth Maccabees date after Paul, the existence of these texts makes it likely that Paul's contrast between Abraham and Moses in constructing a genealogical appeal would not be completely unfamiliar to a Jewish audience.

To support this point, Paul draws on several biblical traditions concerning Abraham. Firstly, "Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him for righteousness" (Gal 3:6; cf. Gen 15:6). In other Jewish interpretations of Gen 15:6, possibly introduced by Paul's opponents, Abraham's faith was connected with the faith Abraham showed when God tested him by demanding the sacrifice of his son (Gen 22; 1 Macc 2:52; Sir 44:19–21; *Jub.* 1:15–18). Righteousness in terms of staying within the covenant was constituted by observance of the Law.[18] According to Paul, this righteousness is not based on Law observance but on faith (Gal 3:7, 10–14). To make his point that this faith is open not only to Jews but also to non-Jews, Paul introduces his second scriptural argument and draws on the biblical notion of the blessing of the nations in Abraham, conflating Gen 12:3 and 18:18.[19]

> And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations from faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, "in you shall all the nations be blessed." Consequently, those from faith are blessed with Abraham who believed. (Gal 3:8–9)

After Christ, Abraham's blessing became available beyond the restriction to the Jewish *ethnos*, guarded by the Law (Gal 3:14). The notion of the blessing of the nations in Abraham (Gen 12:3; 18:18) supports Paul's universalistic understanding of Gen 15:6 against his opponents' ethnically restricted understanding, separating the Jewish *ethnos* from other nations by the Law.[20] In this way, Gen 12:3 / 18:18 offers scriptural support for his claim that sonship of Abraham is not dependant on observance of the Mosaic law.

As this contribution enquires after the background of Paul's Abrahamic arguments, it is interesting to wonder whether Paul came up with the biblical motif of the blessing of the nations himself. Since, as noted above and throughout this volume, the blessing of the nations in Abra-

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[18] Dunn, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 161–162.

[19] πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (Gen 18:18) is inserted in place of πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ (Gen 12:3).

[20] See the contribution of Karin Neutel for a convincing argument, against the 'Radical Perspective', that Paul's statements on the role of the law applied to both Jews and Gentiles.

ham (Gen 12:3 / 18:18) is hardly referred to in other Jewish texts, this is a good possibility.[21] God's promise of blessing for the nations is repeated several times throughout Genesis in two forms. In Gen 12:3 and 18:18, the nations or families are blessed in Abraham (Gen 12:3 LXX: ἐν σοὶ "in you"; Gen 18:18 LXX: ἐν αὐτῷ "in him"). In the other references, however, the nations are blessed *in Abraham's seed* (Gen 22:18; 26:4 LXX (to Isaac): ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου; Gen 28:14 LXX (to Jacob): "in you and in your seed"). Whereas Gen 12:3 and 18:18 potentially have a direct universal impact, the second version of the blessing connects the fate of the nations with Abraham's seed, commonly identified as the nation of the Jews.[22]

This descendant-mediated version is referred to more frequently in later traditions than Gen 12:3 / 18:18, but it is hard to establish if that is really significant. The different uses to which these texts are put are noteworthy, however. The author of *Jubilees* does include Gen 12:3 in his record of divine promises (*Jub*. 12:23), but when he refers to the other versions (Gen 22:18 in *Jub*. 18:16; Gen 26:4 in *Jub*. 24:11) he expands the biblical account and emphasizes that the blessing of the nations is dependant on obedience to the Lord's commandments by Abraham's Israelite children (20:2–10).[23] Philo also shows a different treatment of Gen 12:3 on the one hand and Gen 28:14 on the other. He quotes Gen 12:3 at the start of his essay on the beginning of Gen 12, *De migratione Abrahami*. In his explanation, he refers to the positive effect of the righteous man in the community in which he lives (*Migr*. 118, 122). Philo offers the same interpretation of Gen 28:14, but adds that the presence of the Jewish nation has a similar beneficial impact on the world (*Somn*. 1.3, 177–178; cf. *Her*. 8 referring to Gen 26:4). Ben Sira, to give a third example, refers to the blessing of Gen 22:18: "the nations would be blessed in his seed" (ἐνευλογηθῆναι ἔθνη ἐν σπέρματι αὐτοῦ), and, by changing the biblical order of the promises, also founds the blessing on Abraham's prior obedience to the Law and the covenant (Sir 44:21).

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[21] The exceptions (*Jub*. 12:23; Philo, *Migr*. 1, 118, 122) will be considered below. It is unlikely that Gen 12:3 / 18:18 was put forward by Paul's opponents, as a number of scholars assume: Longenecker, *Triumph of Abraham's God*, 131; Martyn, *Galatians*, 296–297.

[22] Dunn is one of the few to note the relevance of Paul's reference to Gen 12:3 / 18:18 instead of Gen 22:18; 26:4; 28:14 (Dunn, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 164).

[23] J.R. Wisdom, *Blessing for the Nations and the Curse of the Law* (WUNT 2.133; Tübingen 2001), 68–73. Wisdom does not note the distinction between Gen 12:3; 18:18 on the one hand and Gen 22:18; 26:4; 28:14 on the other.

Finally, it is remarkable that Luke also refers to the descendant-mediated version of the blessing (Gen 22:18), in Acts 3:25. In the literary context of Acts 3, Peter stresses in front of a Jewish audience that Jesus had been announced by the Jewish prophets and sent by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to speak to the Jews first (3:13–26). The reference to the blessing of the nations does not emphasize the nations, but serves to demonstrate the importance of the seed. To sum up, when the blessing of the nations is referred to, "it is interpreted to point to the importance of Israel as the mediator of blessing through her occupation of the whole world and the positive influence obtained by Gentile communities through the presence of the righteous in her midst."[24]

It is still very possible that Paul introduced Gen 12:3 / 18:18 on his own initiative. Another option to be considered is that he responded to a common Jewish use of the other version of the blessing in Abraham's seed (Gen 22:18; 26:4; 28:14). Precisely because this form of the blessing of the nations was drawn upon in Jewish discussions of descent from Abraham, Paul elaborates on the identity of the recipient of the biblical promises, Abraham's seed:

> Now, the promises were to Abraham and to his seed (τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ). It does not say, "And to his seeds" (καὶ τοῖς σπέρμασιν), as of many, but as to one: "And to your seed," who is Christ. (Gal 3:16)

Paul needs to reinterpret the common collective sense of σπέρμα, because it was taken to refer to Abraham's Jewish descendants alone, in the blessing of the nations through Abraham's descendants as well. "The promises" in Gal 3:16 are usually taken to refer to the different promises of the land in Genesis (Gen 13:15, 17; 15:18; 17:8; 22:7; 28:4).[25] I would suggest that these promises refer more specifically to the descendant-mediated version of the blessing of nations (Gen 22:18; 26:4; 28:14), continuing the argumentation from Gal 3:8–9. It is conceivable that Paul's opponents in Galatia had used this version of the blessing to argue that the blessing of the Gentile Galatians was mediated by the Jewish *ethnos*, which they would have to join by observing the entire Law. This would

[24] Wisdom, *Blessing for the Nations*, 130.

[25] E.g., Dunn, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 183. The argument seems to be that the phrase καὶ τῷ σπέρματί σου almost always occurs in connection with the promise of the land (Gen 12:7; 13:15; 15:18; 17:8; 24:7; 26:3–4). But in Gen 22:18; 28:4, it refers to the blessing of the nations, which would continue the previous train of thought, while the promise of the land is not explicitly addressed by Paul. The possibility that Paul is referring to Gen 28:4 is recognized by Wisdom, *Blessing for the Nations*, 148.

mean that the fact that Paul *uses* the tradition of the blessing of the nations is not completely innovative, although his *understanding* of it could well be.

So far, Paul has not explicitly drawn upon the tradition of Abraham as father of many nations, discussed in the second section of this paper. Paul's third scriptural argument for universalizing the significance of Abraham is Gen 17:5, drawing on the universal potential of Abraham as father of many nations. Paul does not use this argument in Galatians, but only in his letter to the Romans (4:16–18).[26] In this letter, Paul uses Gen 15:6 to argue that Abraham is father of all who share the patriarch's faith, which he showed before his circumcision (Rom 4:3–12). Secondly, in Rom 4:16–18, Paul makes use of "father of many nations" traditions (Gen 17:5 in 4:17; multitude of seed Gen 15:5 in 4:18), interpreted as a reference to many nations and not to Jews exclusively. By using the "father of many nations" tradition explicitly, Paul can uphold the usual collective sense of σπέρμα to state his central point that Abraham is father of all who believe (Rom 4:11, 16).[27]

5. Conclusion

In his commentary on Galatians, Dunn indicated that it is unknown why sonship of Abraham and a share in his promises and inheritance were at stake for Paul's opponents in Galatia.[28] The other genealogical appeals to Abraham discussed here may provide some indications. By challenging the necessity of the Mosaic law, Paul rebelled against understandings of Abrahamic descent that made it dependent on observance of the Law.[29] Against this background, it is possible that Paul's opponents

[26] This nuanced difference in argumentation could be related to the different contexts of both letters. In Rom, Paul argues that Abraham is father of all who believe, both circumcised and uncircumcised (4:11–12, 16). No party is explicitly excluded from sonship to Abraham. In Gal 4:21–31, Paul excludes those who stress the importance of physical kinship and Law observance, including the Christ-believing ones, from true sonship of Abraham. It is not until Rom 9:7 that Paul applies a more exclusive definition of sonship: "Not all children are seed of Abraham" (οὐδ' ὅτι εἰσὶν σπέρμα Ἀβραὰμ πάντες τέκνα). Yet, this only applies to the non-believing Jews. This difference probably results from Paul's attempts to unify the Roman community. Furthermore, in Rome the Gentile Christians, who seem to have formed the majority anyway, were not pressured or forced so strongly regarding circumcision as in Galatia.

[27] Cf. Longenecker, *Triumph of Abraham's God*, 133.

[28] Dunn, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 16.

[29] For a similar view on Paul as a Jew engaged in debates with Jewish contemporaries, see Karin Neutel in this volume.

accused him of undermining the foundation of belonging to the γένος of Abraham. Parallels for this accusation can be found in the Josephan texts discussed in § 3. Following this analysis, both Paul and the Transjordanians were accused of creating a distinction between Abraham and Moses, thereby endangering descent from Abraham, which was considered to be partly based on Law observance. Paul's distinction between Abraham and Moses centred around Law observance may not have sounded completely unfamiliar to his contemporaries, given the parallels in the form of accusations in Josephus' *Antiquitates judaicae*. The use to which this distinction is put, however, appears to be unprecedented. While the Transjordanians, in Josephus' narrative, confirm their Abrahamic descent by stating their loyalty to the Law, Paul confirms the accusation of separating Abraham from Moses and denies that Law observance is necessary for belonging to Abraham's kin.

Another way in which Paul's Abrahamic arguments could be placed in the context of existing debates is by looking at his scriptural arguments. In his letter to the Romans, Paul draws on the familiar tradition of Abraham as father of many nations. Josephus and the author of Second Maccabees also use this tradition to widen Abraham's appeal beyond that of the Jews. Additionally, I have suggested the possibility that Paul's use of the blessing of the nations was inspired by other Jewish uses of this tradition, according to which the blessing was mediated by Abraham's seed. By bringing the direct blessing in Abraham of Gen 12:3 / 18:18 to the forefront, Paul expands Abraham's existing universal potential.

BROADENING THE NEW PERSPECTIVE ON PAUL: PAUL AND THE ETHNOGRAPHICAL DEBATE OF HIS TIME—THE CRITICISM OF JEWISH AND PAGAN ANCESTRAL CUSTOMS (1 THESS 2:13–16)*

George H. van Kooten

1. Introduction

Within the New Perspective on Paul, the universal nature of his view on emerging "Christianity" and his criticism of the ethnocentric identity-markers of Judaism such as circumcision and food regulations, have been much emphasized.[1] In Paul's historiography this universality was already characteristic of pre-Mosaic Judaism and was exemplified in the figure of Abraham, who received God's promise that in him all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Paul draws this picture of Abraham in his Letters to the Galatians (Gal 3:8 = Gen 12:3; 18:18) and the Romans (Rom 4:17–18 = Gen 17:5) and in doing so construes Christianity as essentially identical to "the religion of Abraham."[2] In this way Paul, in his discussion with Judaizing Christians in Galatia, and with a self-consciously Jewish section of the Christian community in Rome, tried to answer the question of what difference the coming of Jesus Christ makes to a traditional understanding of the covenant, which used to identify itself by markers such as circumcision, food laws, and the Sabbath. According to Dunn:

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* This essay is dedicated with gratitude to James D.G. Dunn on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, albeit appearing after the event.

[1] I wish to thank the participants in the TBN conference in September 2008 in Groningen, notably Martin Goodman and Birgit van der Lans, and those involved in the 2008 British New Testament Conference in Durham, in particular John Barclay for his constructive and interesting response to my paper. Translations from the Bible are normally taken from the NRSV, with small alterations where necessary, and those from classical authors are normally derived from the Loeb Classical Library or from M. Stern, ed., introd., trans., and comm., *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (3 vols.; Jerusalem 1976–1984) = Stern, *GLAJJ*, again with occasional changes.

[2] On the construction of Islam as "the religion of Abraham," see the fascinating contribution to this volume by Gerald Hawting.

> In brief, Paul's new answer is that the advent of Christ had introduced the time of fulfilment, including the fulfilment of his purpose regarding the covenant. From the beginning, God's eschatological purpose in making the covenant had been the blessing of the nations: the gospel was already proclaimed when God promised Abraham, "In you shall all the nations be blessed" (Gal 3:8; Gen 12:3; 18:18). So, now that the time of fulfilment had come, the covenant should no longer be conceived in nationalistic or racial terms. No longer is it an exclusively Jewish *qua* Jewish privilege. The covenant is not thereby abandoned. Rather it is broadened out as God had originally intended—with the grace of God which it expressed separated from its national restriction and freely bestowed without respect to race or work, as it had been bestowed in the beginning. This is roughly the argument of Gal 3–4, as also developed later in Rom 3–4.[3]

Nevertheless, this portrayal of Abraham is but one expression of Paul's underlying universalizing thought. Already in his oldest preserved correspondence, his First Letter to the Thessalonians, we find an inverted expression of it in Paul's criticism of the Jews who "oppose everyone by hindering us from speaking to the nations so that they may be saved" (1 Thess 2:15–16). Paul's universalism here takes the form of a criticism of Jewish ethnocentricity which resists a Jewish-Christian reaching out towards the nations.

In this paper we will not rehearse the extensive treatment which the explicit passages on Abraham's universalistic religion have found in the New Perspective on Paul, but concentrate rather on the passage from 1 Thess 2 which may help us to appreciate the full scope of Paul's universalism, which—as we will learn—took shape not only in response to Jewish ethnocentrism, but also in reply to the Greco-Roman protection of pagan ethnic, ancestral customs. The passage from 1 Thess 2:15–16 has recently found exemplary treatment by Barclay in his paper on "Hostility to Jews As Cultural Construct" (2007).[4] Barclay rightly draws attention to the fact that in his criticism of Jewish ethnocentricity Paul takes up an anti-Jewish argument from the contemporary pagan discourse on Judaism. Barclay takes care to demonstrate that this discourse is part of a larger ethnographical debate in Antiquity and should not be under-

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[3] J.D.G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul: Collected Essays* (WUNT 185; Tübingen 2005); quoted according to the revised edition, J.D.G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul* (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich., 2007), 114; cf. further p. 251.

[4] J.M.G. Barclay, "Hostility to Jews As Cultural Construct: Egyptian, Hellenistic, and Early Christian Paradigms," in *Josephus und das Neue Testament: Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen: II. Internationales Symposium zum Corpus Judaeo-Hellenisticum, 25.–28. Mai 2006, Greifswald* (ed. C. Böttrich and J. Herzer; WUNT 209; Tübingen 2007), 365–385.

stood, as scholars such as Schäfer tend to do, as a virulent anti-Semitic discourse which is distinctively different from other ethnographical discussions. Yet, as I will argue, ultimately Barclay also seems to sketch a too limited setting to Paul's criticism of Jewish ethnocentrism. As I will contend, the passage from 1 Thess 2 not only contains Paul's criticism of the pagan discrimination against and harassment of pagan converts to Christianity in Thessalonica, but at the same time compares the persecution of these Christians by their fellow countrymen to that of Christian Jews by Jews in Judea. Paul construes a point of comparison between the Christian experience of Jewish and pagan attitudes towards them. In that sense, Paul is not simply anti-Jewish, but against every ethnic intransigence, regardless of whether it is Jewish or Greek. This will make us aware that, contrary to what one would perhaps assume, there is no antithesis operative in Antiquity between Jewish ethnocentrism versus Greek universalism; rather both sides are basically ethnocentric, focused on the continuation of their ancestral customs.

In the following, I will first examine the text from First Thessalonians (section 2). Secondly, I will explore the pagan views on Jewish ethnocentric misanthropy and the fuller ethnographical discourse in which it is subsumed (section 3). Finally, I will explore the double-sidedness of Paul's critique, which not only applies to Judaism but also to paganism, and points to a larger issue in Antiquity, that of the perceived sacrosanct nature of any ancient or traditional customs of the respective nations, races and tribes (section 4). This view was clearly voiced by Celsus in his critique of Christianity as a revolutionary and universal movement, and it seems that against this background we might be able to understand why Paul is able to compare Jewish and pagan attitudes towards Christianity.

2. Analysis of 1 Thess 2:13–16

In the passage from First Thessalonians Paul says that the pagan converts to Christianity in Thessalonica "became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you suffered the same things from your own compatriots as they did from the Jews" (1 Thess 2:14: ὑμεῖς γὰρ μιμηταὶ ἐγενήθητε, ἀδελφοί, τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν οὐσῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ὅτι τὰ αὐτὰ ἐπάθετε καὶ ὑμεῖς ὑπὸ τῶν ἰδίων συμφυλετῶν καθὼς καὶ αὐτοὶ ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων). I will first continue with Paul's subsequent detailed description of the Jews, but it is essential for a correct interpretation of the entire passage that the

comparison which Paul draws between the ex-pagan, Christian Thessalonians and the Christian Jews elsewhere (2:14) is noted. As regards the Jews, Steck, in his classic study *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten* (1967), has already pointed out that Paul describes the Jews in the vocabulary of an internal Jewish struggle.[5] The Jews, according to Paul:

> … killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out; they displease God and oppose everyone by hindering us from speaking to the nations so that they may be saved. Thus they have constantly been filling up the measure of their sins; but God's wrath has overtaken them at last.
>
> … τῶν Ἰουδαίων, τῶν καὶ τὸν κύριον ἀποκτεινάντων Ἰησοῦν καὶ τοὺς προφήτας, καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐκδιωξάντων, καὶ θεῷ μὴ ἀρεσκόντων, καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἐναντίων, κωλυόντων ἡμᾶς τοῖς ἔθνεσιν λαλῆσαι ἵνα σωθῶσιν, εἰς τὸ ἀναπληρῶσαι αὐτῶν τὰς ἁμαρτίας πάντοτε. ἔφθασεν δὲ ἐπ᾽ αὐτοὺς ἡ ὀργὴ εἰς τέλος. (1 Thess 2:15–16)

In his monograph, Steck clearly outlined the traditions internal to the Jews in which fellow Jews are accused by others of killing the prophets. It is against this background that he also offers a separate treatment of 1 Thess 2:15–16.[6] In this passage the tradition of violence against prophets, internal to the Jews, is now christianized, with Jesus also included in the fate suffered by previous Jewish prophets. To this point, Paul's accusation of the Jews is not anti-Jewish but rather internal to the Jewish tradition. Barclay, however, has rightly pointed out that this internal Jewish tradition is here transformed because it is joined with elements of the pagan, anti-Jewish discourse, according to which Jews, as Paul puts it, "oppose everyone," they "killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out; they displease God *and oppose everyone*" (2:15). This misanthropic attitude expresses itself in the Jews hindering Paul "from speaking to the nations." Barclay is absolutely right that "both Hellenistic and Judean traditions are here adopted and adapted in the service of a new logic for hostility to Judeans":[7] "they displease God *and oppose everyone by hindering us from speaking to the nations* so that they may be saved" (2:15–16). I fully agree with Barclay that indeed the passage from Paul borrows heavily from Hellenistic anti-

[5] O.H. Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten: Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum und Urchristentum* (WMANT 23; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1967).

[6] Steck, *Geschick der Propheten*, 274–279.

[7] Barclay, "Hostility to Jews," 381.

Judaism and that attempts at distancing Paul's anti-Judaism here from Hellenistic anti-Judaism are flawed.[8] Yet one might ask why such an anti-Judaism is developed by Paul. Why did he draw on anti-Jewish Hellenistic traditions? In Barclay's view it is not

> … accidental that the Hellenistic charge of Judean antisocial behaviour should continue to be employed: By placing Jewish / Judean opposition to the Christian mission within the wider framework of their hostility to humanity, Christians can feel that their complaint is not simply partisan, but common to all "decent-living" residents of the empire.[9]

This purpose, however, does not fit the context of Paul's passage particularly well, as he has just spoken of the crude behaviour of these "'decent-living' residents of the empire" towards the pagan converts at Thessalonica. The Thessalonian Christians suffered equally from their own compatriots as did the Christian Jews in Judea from the Jews. As a matter of fact, in this passage Paul develops a point of comparison between the Jews and the pagan συμφυλέται of the Thessalonians, their pagan fellow countrymen. It would be difficult to understand how Paul could lessen the pain of their experience of being persecuted by pagans by adopting Hellenistic anti-Jewish views; the letter is addressed to the ex-pagan Christians at Thessalonica, not to Christian Jews in Judea. Something more must be at issue here, and we will now take a closer look at these Hellenistic anti-Jewish traditions, see how they are embedded in the general ethnographical literature of the period, and examine how this general ethnographical discourse is of relevance both to Christian Jews in their relationship to fellow Jews and for ex-pagan Christians vis-à-vis their fellow countrymen. First, we will focus on Hellenistic charges against the Jews on account of their supposed misanthropy (section 3), and subsequently, we will see how Paul, although he draws on these anti-Jewish Hellenistic traditions, detects a common anti-Christian denominator in paganism and Judaism, as both turn against the Christians in their midst; it seems likely that this common attitude is a response to Christianity's reserved attitude towards ethnic, ancestral religions, which was strongly shaped by its universalism (section 4).

[8] Barclay, "Hostility to Jews," 380n44.
[9] Barclay, "Hostility to Jews," 381.

3. The Pagan Greek Charge of Jewish Misanthropy

3.1. *Hecataeus of Abdera*

It seems that the writings of Hecataeus of Abdera (ca. 360–290 BCE) contain the first preserved mention of Jews by a Greek author. Hecataeus' comments on the Jews are embedded in an ethnographical account of the Egyptians. The relevant passage for the present purposes reads:

> The sacrifices that he [i.e., Moses] established differ from those of other nations, as does their way of living, for as a result of their own expulsion from Egypt he introduced an unsocial and intolerant mode of life.
>
> τὰς δὲ θυσίας ἐξηλλαγμένας συνεστήσατο τῶν παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἔθνεσι καὶ τὰς κατὰ τὸν βίον ἀγωγάς· διὰ γὰρ τὴν ἰδίαν ξενηλασίαν ἀπάνθρωπόν τινα καὶ μισόξενον βίον εἰσηγήσατο.
>
> (Stern, *GLAJJ*, no. 11: Hecataeus of Abdera, *Aegyptiaca apud* Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* 40.3.4)

The remark about Jewish sacrifices differing from other nations, as Stern noted, fits the genre of ethnographical literature in which the way sacrifices were offered is a fixed component. For that reason, Stern is right in pointing out that "[w]e should not see an expression of anti-Semitic feeling in Hecataeus' description of the peculiarities of the Jewish system of religion, but rather the traces of ethnographical literature."[10] Hecataeus' wording that the Jewish sacrifices and way of life "differ from those of other nations" (ἐξηλλαγμένας … τῶν παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἔθνεσι) closely resembles Paul's remark that the Jews are opposed to all people (1 Thess 2:15: πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἐναντίων).

The ethnographical genre can also be clearly detected in the remark that the Jews' "unsocial and intolerant mode of life" is the result of the fact that they themselves suffered ξενηλασία ("expulsion of foreigners") at the hand of the Egyptians. The notion of "expulsion of foreigners" is important in ethnographical literature. In a sense, the Jews are being excused for their unsocial and intolerant mode of life because they are but the victims of a misanthropic, unsocial kind of expulsion: "as a result of their own expulsion from Egypt he introduced an unsocial and intolerant mode of life" (διὰ γὰρ τὴν ἰδίαν ξενηλασίαν ἀπάνθρωπόν τινα καὶ μισόξενον βίον εἰσηγήσατο).

[10] Stern, *GLAJJ*, 1:30.

The act of expelling foreigners was regarded as characteristic of the barbarians, as a passage from Eratosthenes, preserved in Strabo's geography, makes clear: "According to Eratosthenes, the expulsion of foreigners is a custom common to all barbarians" (Eratosthenes *apud* Strabo, *Geogr*. 17.1.19: φησὶ δ' Ἐρατοσθένης κοινὸν μὲν εἶναι τοῖς βαρβάροις πᾶσιν ἔθος τὴν ξενηλασίαν). As an example of barbaric peoples who performed such expulsions, Eratosthenes mentions the Egyptians, the Carthaginians, and the Persians.

However, it was not only the barbarians who were charged with the expulsion of foreigners, as it also appears to be an issue within Greek ethnographical rivalries, in which the misanthropic attitude of the Spartans is described. In his *Leges*, Plato is critical of the expulsion of foreigners, which is considered to take place not only among the Egyptians but also among the Spartans. According to Plato, the ideal constitution does not allow the expulsion of foreigners, as the following passage makes clear:

> Such are the laws in conformity with which they must receive all strangers, of either sex, from another country, and send out their own citizens; thus doing honour to Zeus, Patron of strangers, instead of expelling strangers by means of meats and ceremonies (μὴ βρώμασι καὶ θύμασι τὰς ξενηλασίας ποιουμένους) as is now done by the nurslings of the Nile, or else by savage proclamations. (Plato, *Leg*. 953e)

In Plato's view it is the Egyptians who forbid the foreigners to be present at ceremonial feasts and expel them. The ideal constitution, however, develops a policy of admitting strangers:

> Now for the citizens to refuse altogether either to admit others or to go abroad themselves is by no means a possible policy, and, moreover, it would appear to the rest of the world to be both churlish and cross-grained, since they would get the reputation of adopting harsh language, such as that of the so-called "Aliens Expulsion Acts."
>
> ἔτι δὲ ἄγριον καὶ ἀπηνὲς φαίνοιτ' ἂν τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνθρώποις, ὀνόμασίν τε χαλεποῖς ταῖσιν λεγομέναις ξενηλασίαις χρωμένους καὶ τρόποις αὐθάδεσι καὶ χαλεποῖς, ὡς δοκοῖεν ἄν. (Plato, *Leg*. 950a–b)

Plato here refers to the law of the Spartan lawgiver Lycurgus, one of whose laws forbid strangers to reside in Sparta. Plato more often criticizes this sort of expulsion of foreigners. In a mocking answer to Protagoras in the dialogue of the same name, Plato has Socrates suggest that the Spartans "make pretence of ignorance, in order to prevent the discovery that it is by wisdom that they have ascendancy over the rest of the Greeks" (342b). The Spartans' aloofness goes so far that:

> … they pass alien acts against the Spartanizing set [i.e., people who have come to acquire the Spartan way of life, in order to spread it in other cities] and any other strangers within their gates (ξενηλασίας ποιούμενοι τῶν τε λακωνιζόντων τούτων καὶ ἐάν τις ἄλλος ξένος ὢν ἐπιδημήσῃ) …; while on their part they do not permit any of their young men to travel abroad to the other cities—in this rule they resemble the Cretans—lest they unlearn what they are taught at home. (Plato, *Prot*. 342c–d)[11]

Thus, it is not only the Spartans but also the Cretans who are charged with such a critical attitude towards other people. Some philosophers, however, such as Philostratus, come to the aid of the Spartans. In his biography of Apollonius, Philostratus has him address the policy of exclusion against all foreigners, and defend the Spartans in this:

> Let us not assail … the law-giver Lycurgus; but we must understand him, and then we shall see that his prohibition to strangers to settle in Sparta and live there was not inspired on his part by mere boorish exclusiveness, but by a desire to keep the institutions of Sparta in their original purity by preventing outsiders from mingling in her life.
>
> (Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll*. 6.20)

At least, according to Philostratus, the exclusion of others could be motivated by the honourable intention to keep one's institutions pure.

It is noteworthy that Jews themselves were very much aware of this ethnographical debate, and drew a comparison between themselves and the Spartans in this respect. In reply to the anti-Jewish criticism of Apollonius Molon, whose views we will encounter in the following section, Josephus describes what he regards as analogies between the laws of Plato and those of the Jews, while paying special attention to precautions which may prevent foreigners from mixing with the citizens under these constitutions:

> In two points in particular, Plato followed the example of our legislator [i.e., Moses]. He prescribed as the primary duty of the citizens a study of their laws, which they must all learn word for word by heart. Again, he took precautions to prevent foreigners from mixing with them at random (καὶ μὴν καὶ περὶ τοῦ μὴ δεῖν ὡς ἔτυχεν ἐπιμίγνυσθαί τινας ἔξωθεν), and to keep the state pure and confined to law-abiding citizens. Of these facts Apollonius Molon took no account when he condemned us for refusing admission to persons with other preconceived ideas about God, and for

[11] On the expulsion of foreigners in Sparta, see T.J. Figueira, "*Xenēlasia* and Social Control in Classical Sparta," *CQ* 53 (2003): 44–74.

> declining to associate with those who have chosen to adopt a different mode of life. Yet even this habit is not peculiar to us; it is common to all, and shared not only by Greeks, but by Greeks of the highest reputation. The Spartans made a practice of expelling foreigners and would not allow their own citizens to travel abroad, in both cases apprehensive of their laws being corrupted (Λακεδαιμόνιοι δὲ καὶ ξενηλασίας ποιούμενοι διετέλουν καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν ἀποδημεῖν πολίταις οὐκ ἐπέτρεπον διαφθορὰν ἐξ ἀμφοῖν ὑφορώμενοι γενήσεσθαι περὶ τοὺς νόμους). They [i.e., the Spartans] might perhaps be justly reproached for discourtesy, because they accorded to no one the rights either of citizenship or of residence among them. We, on the contrary, while we have no desire to emulate the customs of others, yet gladly welcome any who wish to share our own. That, I think, may be taken as a proof both of humanity and magnanimity.
>
> (Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.257–261)

In their critical attitude towards others, Josephus explains, Jews are very similar to the Greeks, yet at the same time more moderate than the Spartans. Whereas Spartans allow nobody to reside among them, Jews welcome those who wish to adopt Jewish customs.

What the above passages make clear is that the issue of expulsion of foreigners is an important topic in the ethnographical debate which occurs in the Greco-Roman period. Expulsion could be seen as an act of misanthropy, but also as a way of maintaining the purity of one's institutions and avoiding contamination by outsiders. Consequently, when the Jewish "unsocial and intolerant mode of life" is seen by Hecataeus to be the result of their expulsion—as foreigners—by the Egyptians, there is nothing specifically anti-Jewish about his remark. It is rather part of an ethnographical debate, conducted between Greeks and barbarians, and between various representatives of the Greeks themselves. The passage from Josephus shows that Jews were cognizant of this debate and participated in it.

The same holds true for Philo. In a description of the festival of Pascha, Philo presents the Jews' exodus from Egypt as a case of the expulsion of foreigners (ξενηλασία), and explicitly links it with the inhumanity (ἀπανθρωπία) of the Egyptians:

> The festival is a reminder and an offering of thanks for that great migration from Egypt which was made by more than two million of men and women in obedience to the oracles vouchsafed to them. Now at that time *they had left a land brimful of inhumanity which made a practice of expelling strangers* (ἀπολελοιπότες χώραν γέμουσαν ἀπανθρωπίας καὶ ξενηλασίας), and what was worst of all, assigned divine honours to irrational creatures, not merely domesticated animals, but even wild beasts.
>
> (Philo, *Spec.* 2.146)

In a sense, this passage in Philo is an exact inversion of the passage from Hecataeus. Whereas Hecataeus believes that as a result of the Jews' expulsion from Egypt, Moses introduced an inhumane and intolerant mode of life (διὰ γὰρ τὴν ἰδίαν ξενηλασίαν ἀπάνθρωπόν τινα καὶ μισόξενον βίον εἰσηγήσατο), in Philo's view the expulsion of the Jews reveals the inhumanity of the Egyptians.

3.2. *Posidonius, Apollonius Molon, and Apion*

A similar ethnographical discourse can be traced in the following, cruder debate between Greeks and Jews which becomes visible in Posidonius, Apollonius Molon, and Apion. Although they go so far as to accuse the Jews of the annual murder of a Greek in the Jerusalem temple, this extreme example of anti-Jewish propaganda is also part of the broader rhetoric surrounding the Hellenism/barbarism divide. On the authority of Apion we have it that both Posidonius and Apollonius Molon told the story that every year a Greek foreigner was kidnapped and ritually executed in the Jerusalem temple, a horrible practice which was allegedly discovered when Antiochus IV Epiphanes entered the Jewish temple in 168 / 167 BCE:

> They would kidnap a Greek foreigner, fatten him up for a year, and then convey him to a wood, where they slew him, sacrificed his body with their customary ritual, partook of his flesh, and, while immolating the Greek, swore an oath of hostility to the Greeks (*ut inimicitias contra Graecos haberent*). The remains of their victim were thrown into a pit.
>
> (Stern, *GLAJJ*, no. 44: Posidonius *apud* Josephus, *C. Ap*. 2.79, 89, 91–96 = Stern, *GLAJJ*, no. 48 [Apollonius Molon] = Stern, *GLAJJ*, no. 171 [Apion])

This story seems to relate to the topic of the barbarian practice of sacrificing strangers. Philostratus, in his *Vita Apollonii*, for example, describes it as a barbarian practice committed by the Scythians (6.20). As the following passage from Apollonius Molon's writings shows, he regards the Jews as an example of the barbarians, although they constitute for him "the dullest of the barbarians" (ἀφυεστάτους τῶν βαρβάρων). This passage from Apollonius Molon, preserved and embedded in Josephus' *Contra Apionem*, reads:

> Apollonius, unlike Apion, has not grouped his accusations together, but scattered them here and there all over his work, reviling us in one place as atheists and misanthropes (καὶ δὴ εἴπας ποτὲ μὲν ὡς ἀθέους καὶ μισανθρώπους λοιδορεῖ), in another reproaching us as cowards, whereas elsewhere, on the contrary, he accuses us of temerity and reckless madness. He adds that we are the most witless of all barbarians, and are consequently

> the only people who have contributed no useful invention to civilization (λέγει δὲ καὶ ἀφυεστάτους εἶναι τῶν βαρβάρων καὶ διὰ τοῦτο μηδὲν εἰς τὸν βίον εὕρημα συμβεβλῆσθαι μόνους).
>
> (Stern, *GLAJJ*, no. 49: Apollonius Molon *apud* Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.148)

This passage shows that, serious as Apollonius Molon's accusations of the Jews as misanthropes may be, they function within a larger ideological distinction between the Greeks and the barbarians. Even if Jews are the dullest of the barbarians and have, for that reason, contributed nothing to civilization, their position only constitutes an extreme on a sliding scale of barbarian nations. In that sense the anti-Jewish discourse is not isolated but part of a more general ethnographical discourse about the barbarians, as opposed to Greeks.

3.3. *Diodorus Siculus*

As we saw in our discussion of the charge of Jewish misanthropy in Posidonius, Apollonius Molon, and Apion in the previous section, the setting of their story of the annual human sacrifice of a Greek in the Jerusalem temple was the events under Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Whereas the well-known Jewish accounts in Daniel, First and Second Maccabees, and Josephus accuse Antiochus of sacrilege with respect to the Jerusalem temple, the pagan accounts in Posidonius, Apollonius Molon, and Apion accuse the Jews of hostility towards the Greeks and gross impiety in the way in which they run the sacrificial cult in the temple at Jerusalem. A similar point of view is taken by Diodorus Siculus. According to his account, Antiochus finds a marble statue of Moses in the Jerusalem temple:

> … the founder of Jerusalem and organizer of the nation, the man, moreover, who had ordained for the Jews their misanthropic and lawless customs (τὰ μισάνθρωπα καὶ παράνομα ἔθη). And since Epiphanes was shocked by such hatred directed against all mankind, he had set himself to break down their traditional practices (αὐτὸς δὲ στυγήσας τὴν μισανθρωπίαν πάντων ἐθνῶν ἐφιλοτιμήθη καταλῦσαι τὰ νόμιμα). Accordingly, he sacrificed before the image of the founder and the open-air altar of the god a great sow, and poured its blood over them. Then, having prepared its flesh, he ordered that their holy books, containing the xenophobic laws (τὰς ἱερὰς αὐτῶν βίβλους καὶ περιεχούσας τὰ μισόξενα νόμιμα), should be sprinkled with the broth of the meat.
>
> (Stern, *GLAJJ*, no. 63: Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* 34–35.1.3–4)

What is particularly relevant in this passage, is that the charge of Jewish misanthropy is now levelled, not against the exceptional annual practice of kidnapping a Greek but, more generally, against the Jews' misanthropic

and lawless customs (τὰ μισάνθρωπα καὶ παράνομα ἔθη) and traditional practices (τὰ νόμιμα). Diodorus here employs terminology which is characteristic of the contemporary Greek ethnographical debate about traditional practices and customs, the rationale of which we will explore in section 4 below, in a passage in which Celsus reflects on the respectability of traditional customs. It is because these customs are misanthropic that, according to Diodorus, Antiochus IV is determined to dissolve them. This, however, was by no means the only attitude Greco-Roman authors could take with regard to Jewish customs, even if they were critical about them. I will now discuss a passage from Tacitus, in which his esteem and criticism of Jewish customs are nicely balanced, and phrased in the terminology of the general ethnographical discourse of the day. The passage from Tacitus also shows something of what was at stake in this debate; the attraction of some pagans to Judaism.

3.4. *Tacitus*

As we have seen in Diodorus Siculus, the charge of Jewish misanthropy concerns Jewish customs and traditional practices. According to Tacitus, however, there were some Jewish customs which were respectable, but only those which could be taken to refer to the god Saturn—the celebration of the seventh day and the seventh year in honour of Saturn, one of the seven planets—or those which had been derived from the Idaeans, the tribe which take their name from Mount Ida in Phrygia or, according to some, Crete:

> Others say that this [i.e., the celebration of the seventh day and year] is done in honour of Saturn, whether it be that the primitive elements of their religion were given by the Idaeans, who, according to tradition, were expelled with Saturn and became the founders of the Jewish race, or is due to the fact that, of the seven planets that rule the fortunes of mankind, Saturn moves in the highest orbit and has the greatest potency; and that many of the heavenly bodies traverse their paths and courses in multiples of seven. Whatever their origin, *these* rites are maintained by their antiquity. (Stern, *GLAJJ*, no. 281: Tacitus, *Hist*. 5.4.4–5.5.1)

According to Tacitus, insofar as Jewish rites are ancient they are respectable. These rites, however, can be distinguished from other Jewish customs which Tacitus, as Diodorus Siculus before him, regards as base and abominable, and as reflecting the Jews' misanthropic hate for humankind:

> The *other* customs of the Jews are base and abominable, and owe their persistence to their depravity. For the worst rascals among other peoples,

> renouncing their ancestral religions (*spretis religionibus patriis*), always kept sending tribute and contributing to Jerusalem, thereby increasing the wealth of the Jews. Again, the Jews are extremely loyal toward one another, and always ready to show compassion, but toward every other people they feel only hate and enmity (*sed adversus omnes alios hostile odium*). They sit apart at meals (*Separati epulis*) and they sleep apart .... They adopted circumcision to distinguish themselves from other peoples by this difference (*ut diversitate noscantur*). Those who are converted to their ways follow the same practice, and the earliest lesson they receive is to despise the gods, to disown their country, and to regard their parents, children, and brothers as of little account (*Transgressi in morem eorum idem usurpant, nec quidquam prius imbuuntur quam contemnere deos, exuere patriam, parentes liberos fratres vilia habere*).
>
> (Stern, *GLAJJ*, no. 281: Tacitus, *Hist*. 5.5.1–2)

Although he grants that there are respectable Jewish customs, Tacitus emphasizes that there are also quite different Jewish customs which are characterized by misanthropy. Whereas the good customs are held in common with or derived from other ethnic groups (i.e., the Idaeans), the bad customs differ from other nations, and constitute the Jews' *diversitas*. As Tacitus remarks in a subsequent passage, "the founders of the city [of Jerusalem] had foreseen that there would be many wars because the ways of their people differed so from those of the neighbours" (Stern, *GLAJJ*, no. 281: Tacitus, *Hist*. 5.12.2: *Providerant conditores ex diversitate morum crebra bella*). This emphasis on the distinctive diversity of particular ethnic customs (*diversitas morum*), is an issue in ethnographical literature and, consequently, not specifically anti-Jewish as such. Indeed, as Stern pointed out, the same view is encountered in the Greek Middle Comedy poet Anaxandrides who, addressing the Egyptians, states:

> I couldn't bring myself to be an ally of yours, for neither our manners nor our customs agree, but stand a long distance apart from each other. You worship the cow, but I sacrifice it to the gods. You hold the eel to be a mighty divinity, we hold it by far the mightiest of dainties. You eat no pork, but I like it very much.
>
> (Anaxandrides *apud* Athenaeus, *Deipn*. 7.55, 299F)[12]

This kind of diversity of customs and manners is also stressed in Tacitus' account of the Jewish customs. What seems to be at stake in Tacitus' negative evaluation of Jewish customs comes to the fore in his attack on pagan converts to Judaism. They not only follow the same practice as the Jews, but their conversion forces them "to despise the gods, to disown

[12] Stern, *GLAJJ*, 2:57.

their country, and to regard their parents, children, and brothers as of little account" (*contemnere deos, exuere patriam, parentes liberos fratres vilia habere*). What troubles Tacitus more than the Jewish customs as such, is that pagan converts start "renouncing their ancestral religions" and despising their own customs. In section 4 we will see that this is exactly the view of the pagan philosopher Celsus on the danger of the conversion of proselytes to Judaism. Jewish customs are respectable because of their antiquity, so there is no problem with Jews following their own customs. The real problem is that of the proselytes: "If indeed in accordance with these principles the Jews maintained their own law, we should not find fault with them but rather with those who have abandoned their own traditions and professed those of the Jews" (Celsus *apud* Origen, *Cels.* 5.41).

It is this feature of the ethnographical debate which seems particularly relevant to our understanding of 1 Thess 2:13–16. According to Paul, the pagan converts to Christianity in Thessalonica suffer repression by their own pagan fellow countrymen. It seems that the pagan Thessalonians criticize compatriots who convert to Christianity in the same way in which Tacitus finds fault with pagan converts to Judaism. This is very plausible because the Christians did not yet call themselves "Christians" and would still have been viewed as a Jewish movement. This renders the passage from Tacitus very relevant, because it makes us aware that the conversion of pagans to Judaism was considered highly problematic since it entailed the rejection of the ethnic, ancestral customs which one previously adhered to. In section 4 below, we will see that this is precisely the kind of criticism which Celsus puts forward against Christianity. It also reveals the logic underlying Paul's point of comparison between the pagan and Jewish censure of Christianity:

> For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you suffered the same things from your own compatriots as they did from the Jews, who … oppose everyone by hindering us from speaking to the nations so that they may be saved.
>
> (1 Thess 2:14–16)

Both the Jewish and the pagan converts to Christianity are attacked by their compatriots for transgressing ethnic boundaries and despising their own ancestral customs. Christianity's position in this ethnographical discourse is ambiguous. On the one hand, from a pagan perspective, pagan converts to Judaism and Christianity are condemned in the same way. This common treatment seems also to be reflected in the fact that Tacitus not only censures the Jews for their hate and enmity

toward every other people (*adversus omnes alios hostile odium*; see above Stern, *GLAJJ*, no. 281: Tacitus, *Hist*. 5.5.1), but also levels the same charge against the Christians: after the fire of Rome in 64 CE, Christians are convicted of "hatred of the human race" (Stern, *GLAJJ*, no. 281: Tacitus, *Ann*. 15.44.4: *odium humani generis convicti sunt*). On the other hand, *Jewish* Christians also attracted the criticism of their Jewish compatriots for no longer respecting the Jewish ethnic identity-markers. In short, both paganism and Judaism criticized former co-religionists who converted to Christianity for renouncing their ancestral, ethnic traditions. In contrast to Christianity, which was distinctively universalistic (in the sense of "open to all"), Judaism and paganism revealed themselves to be religions strongly rooted in ethnic practices and conventions.

3.5. *Juvenal*

The pagan criticism of proselytes to Judaism, combined with the charge of Jewish misanthropy, is also found in the early second-century CE Roman satirist Juvenal. In his *Satirae*, Juvenal pictures the gradual Judaization of particular pagan families. This process starts with reverence for the Sabbath, abstinence from pork, and culminates in circumcision and disrespect for "the laws of Rome":

> Some who have had a father who reverses the Sabbath, worship nothing but the clouds, and the divinity of the heavens, and see no difference between eating swine's flesh, from which their father abstained, and that of man; and in time they take to circumcision. Having been wont to disobey the laws of Rome, they learn and practise and revere the Jewish law, and all that Moses handed down in his secret tome, *forbidding to point out the way to any not worshipping the same rites*.
>
> (Stern, *GLAJJ*, no. 301: Juvenal, *Sat*. 14.96–103)

The defiance of the laws of Rome accompanies reverence for the Jewish law, which leads to a total segregation of these converts from their original social setting, as the Jewish law is kept secret from those who do not worship according to the Jewish rites. The issue here, as it also appeared to be in Tacitus, is the increasingly critical attitude of proselytes towards their own ancestral customs. From a pagan perspective this disobedience towards the laws of Rome and their disowning of the country to which they belonged would be very undesirable and accompanied by social segregation, as well as hate and enmity towards every other people.

3.6. *Philostratus*

Again, according to Philostratus, the problem with Judaism is that Jews lead an unsociable life because they do not mingle with others:

> The Jews have long been in revolt not only against the Romans but against humanity (ἐκεῖνοι μὲν γὰρ πάλαι ἀφεστᾶσιν οὐ μόνον Ῥωμαίων, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντων ἀνθρώπων); and a race that has made its own a life apart and irreconcilable (οἱ γὰρ βίον ἄμικτον εὑρόντες), that cannot share with the rest of mankind in the pleasures of the table nor join in their libations or prayers or sacrifices, are separated from ourselves by a greater gulf than divides us from Susa or Bactra or the more distant Indies.
>
> (Stern, *GLAJJ*, no. 403: Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 5.33)

As we have seen in other instances above, the terminology employed is not specifically anti-Jewish but at home in a more general ethnographical debate. According to Strabo, for instance, in the region of Dioscurias, near the Caspian Sea, there live seventy tribes who "all speak different languages because of the fact that, by reason of their obstinacy and ferocity, they live in scattered groups and without intercourse with one another (διὰ τὸ σποράδην καὶ ἀμίκτως οἰκεῖν)" (Strabo, *Geogr.* 11.2.16). It is this ethnographical notion of not mingling with others, which Josephus is also willing to employ in a positive sense. According to Josephus, the unmixed, pure state of the Jews enables them to observe their laws carefully:

> Well, ours is not a maritime country; neither commerce nor the intercourse which it promotes with the outside world (ταῖς πρὸς ἄλλους διὰ τούτων ἐπιμιξίαις) has any attraction for us. Our cities are built inland, remote from the sea; and we devote ourselves to the cultivation of the productive country with which we are blessed. Above all we pride ourselves on the education of our children, and regard as the most essential task in life the observance of our laws and of the pious practices, based thereupon, which we have inherited. If to these reasons one adds the peculiarity of our mode of life, there was clearly nothing in ancient times to bring us into contact with the Greeks (προσούσης τοίνυν τοῖς εἰρημένοις καὶ τῆς περὶ τὸν βίον ἡμῶν ἰδιότητος οὐδὲν ἐν τοῖς παλαιοῖς χρόνοις ποιοῦν ἡμῖν πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας ἐπιμιξίαν). (Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.60)

Twice in this passage Josephus denies that the Jews promote mixing with others (ἐπιμιξία): they do not mingle with the outside world, nor do they mingle with the Greeks. It is this state of purity and unsociableness (ἀμιξία) which enables them to observe their ancestral laws and pious practices. This view fits nicely with the comparison which Josephus, as we have seen above, draws between, on the one hand, the Jewish practice of "refusing admission to persons with other preconceived ideas about

God, and for declining to associate with those who have chosen to adopt a different mode of life," and, on the other hand, the Spartan practice of the expulsion of foreigners (ξενηλασία):

> … this habit is not peculiar to us; it is common to all, and shared not only by Greeks, but by Greeks of the highest reputation. The Spartans made a practice of expelling foreigners and would not allow their own citizens to travel abroad, in both cases apprehensive of their laws being corrupted (Λακεδαιμόνιοι δὲ καὶ ξενηλασίας ποιούμενοι διετέλουν καὶ τοῖς αὐτῶν ἀποδημεῖν πολίταις οὐκ ἐπέτρεπον διαφθορὰν ἐξ ἀμφοῖν ὑφορώμενοι γενήσεσθαι περὶ τοὺς νόμους). (Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.259)

It is clear from our findings, that both the issue of the expulsion of foreigners (ξενηλασία) and that of purity and unsociableness (ἀμιξία) are part of a general ethnographical debate.

3.7. *Synesius*

Finally, we find in the Christian neoplatonist Synesius (ca. 370–413 CE) a charge which we have also already found in Posidonius, Apollonius Molon, and Apion, the charge that Jews kill Greeks (see section 3.2 above). The latter three accused the Jews of engaging in an annual human sacrifice in the Jerusalem temple. Synesius, in his turn, depicts the Jews, as "a graceless race and fully convinced of the piety of sending to Hades as many Greeks as possible" (Stern, *GLAJJ*, no. 569: Synesius, *Epistulae* 4: … γένος ἔκσπονδον καὶ εὐσεβεῖν ἀναπεπεισμένον ἢν ὅτι πλείστους ἄνδρας Ἕλληνας ἀποθανεῖν αἴτιοι γένωνται). As in the case of Posidonius, Apollonius Molon, and Apion, this charge serves to delineate a sharp divide between barbarians and Greeks and, for that reason, is probably not specifically anti-Jewish. Although he was a Christian, it is probable that his perspective was shaped by Hypatia, the influential pagan teacher of neoplatonist philosophy at Alexandria.

The observation that the charges which Greeks such as Posidonius, Apollonius Molon, Apion, and Synesius bring forward against the Jews are, in themselves, not specifically anti-Jewish but part of a larger ethnographical debate holds true for most, or even all instances of polemics against alleged Jewish misanthropy which we have studied above. As I have already indicated, it is important to emphasize this and challenge attempts by scholars such as Schäfer to interpret these polemics as an ancient manifestation of anti-Semitism. In this I agree fully with Barclay, who is very much aware of the ethnographical debate of the time.

However, unlike Barclay I do not believe that this anti-Jewish debate is simply employed by Paul in 1 Thess 2:13–16. As we have already seen, according to Barclay:

> By placing Jewish / Judean opposition to the Christian mission within the wider framework of their hostility to humanity, Christians can feel that their complaint is not simply partisan, but common to all "decent-living" residents of the empire.[13]

Certainly, Paul's depiction of the Jews as "opposing everyone" is derived from this anti-Jewish debate. However, Paul's discourse seems to be different. In the same passage, he draws a comparison between, on the one hand, the malign and inamicable Jewish persecution of Jewish Christians because of their reaching out to the nations and, on the other, the pagan harassment of pagan Thessalonians who converted to the universalizing movement of Christianity. The passages adduced above, particularly those of Tacitus and Juvenal which warn against the danger of pagan conversion to Judaism, show that this was seen as involving the spurning of one's ancestral customs and gods, and the same would apply to a conversion to Christianity.

In that sense, it is not only Judaism which proves ethnocentric in Paul's view but Greek paganism as well. This observation seems to entail an important expansion of the New Perspective on Paul. According to this perspective, Paul's universalism stood in stark contrast to ethnocentric, ancestral Judaism. Yet the emphasis on the ethnic, ancestral roots of religion seems to be equally characteristic of Greek paganism. As we learn from First Thessalonians, the ex-pagan Thessalonians are harassed by their fellow countrymen (συμφυλέται), who belong to the same race or tribe (φυλή). Just as the Jews are opposed to the nations (ἔθνη), and maintain their own ethnic identity, the Greeks, too, warn against transgressing the boundaries of one's ancestral customs. For that reason, the Christians are mistrusted by both Jews and pagans for the very same ethnic reasons. As such, as we have seen, pagans could appreciate the ancestral customs of the Jews insofar as they were ancient and hence authoritative. The main problem for pagans, however, consisted of the proselytes who increasingly despised their former customs. Christians, in this view, were even worse because they not only attracted pagans who came to neglect their ancestral customs, but also broke with the ancient customs of the Jews. As the example of Paul illustrates, Christians were no

[13] Barclay, "Hostility to Jews," 381.

longer zealous about paternal Jewish customs (Gal 1:14). This complex of thought is fully developed in the criticism of Christianity by the second-century CE pagan philosopher Celsus, to whom we now turn.

4. Celsus' Criticism of Proselytism and Christianity, and His Esteem for Judaism

The various features which I distinguished in my gradual exploration of the ethnographical discourse above are all present in Celsus. First we will comment on Celsus' esteem for Judaism because of its antiquity. Secondly, we will show the rationale for his criticism of pagan converts to Judaism. Thirdly, we will explore his reasons for criticizing Christianity and, finally, I will argue how the rudimentary features of this ethnographical debate are already present in 1 Thess 2:13–16 (section 5).

4.1. *Celsus' Positive Views on the Jews*

In Tacitus, we have already met the view that at least some Jewish customs are to be appreciated because of their antiquity. This viewpoint is strongly endorsed by Celsus. He grants that the Jewish religion may be peculiar, but that it is ancient and, for that reason, respectable:

> Now the Jews became an individual nation, and made laws according to the custom of their country; and they maintain these laws among themselves at the present day, and observe a worship which may be very peculiar but is at least traditional (Ἰουδαῖοι μὲν οὖν ἔθνος ἴδιον γενόμενοι καὶ κατὰ τὸ ἐπιχώριον νόμους θέμενοι καὶ τούτους ἐν σφίσιν ἔτι νῦν περιστέλλοντες καὶ θρησκείαν ὁποίαν δή, πάτριον δ' οὖν). In this respect they behave like the rest of mankind, because each nation follows its traditional customs, whatever kind may happen to be established (ἕκαστοι τὰ πάτρια, ὁποῖά ποτ' ἂν τύχῃ καθεστηκότα, περιέπουσι).
>
> (Celsus *apud* Origen, *Cels.* 5.25)

Celsus mentions several reasons why it is that each nation follows its traditional customs, the most important one being that there is a relationship between ethnic customs and the divine "overseers" of each particular locality in which these customs are developed:

> This situation seems to have come to pass not only because it came into the head of different people to think differently and because it is necessary to preserve the established social conventions (καὶ δεῖ φυλάττειν τὰ ἐς κοινὸν κεκυρωμένα), but also because it is probable that from the beginning the different parts of the earth were allotted to different overseers, and are governed in this way by having been divided between certain authorities.

> In fact, the practices done by each nation are right when they are done in the way that pleases the overseers; and it is impious to abandon the customs which have existed in each locality from the beginning (παραλύειν δὲ οὐχ ὅσιον εἶναι τὰ ἐξ ἀρχῆς κατὰ τόπους νενομισμένα).
>
> (Celsus *apud* Origen, *Cels.* 5.25)

Given the link between local customs and the divine regional overseers it is regarded as impious to abandon these customs. Origen, in his reply to Celsus, further illustrates the notion of divine regional overseers by stating that the division of the regions of the earth is touched upon by Greek history "when it introduces the idea that some of the supposed gods contended with one another over Attica, and makes some of the supposed gods confess in the poets that some places are closely related to them" (5.29). Origen has in mind the legendary contest between Athena and Poseidon for Attica.[14] Origen himself compares this idea to Moses' view on the division of the nations in the Song of Moses in Deut 32:

> We say that Moses … gives an account of the division of the peoples of the earth in the song in Deuteronomy where he speaks as follows: "When the Most High divided the nations, as he scattered the sons of Adam, he set the boundaries of the nations according to the number of the angels of God; and the Lord's portion was Jacob his people, Israel the lot of his inheritance" [Deut 32:8–9]. (Origen, *Cels.* 5.29)[15]

Although neither the idea of regional divisions of the earth under corresponding angelic or demonic overseers nor the influence of these divine beings on the local customs plays any role in the sources discussed thus far, Celsus' emphasis on the sacrosanct nature of local, ethnic customs is in line with what we have seen to this point. Origen's answer to Celsus also alerts us to the tension between Christianity as a universalizing movement and the observance of these locally and ethnically embedded pagan customs. Origen regards Celsus' defence of ethnic, local customs as implying that piety is seen as "a matter of arbitrary arrangement and opinion" (5.27). In this way, according to Origen, "piety and holiness and righteousness are reckoned to be relative, so that one and the same thing is pious and impious under differing conditions and laws" (5.28). In the

[14] See, e.g., Pausanias, *Descr.* 1.24.5; 1.26.5; 1.27.2; Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3.14.1.

[15] Cf. the same idea in Ps 82:8, with the comments of M.E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100* (WBC 20; Waco, Tex., 1990), 340.

terminology of Smith, this confrontation is about Christianity as a universalizing movement over against locative forms of religion which even the philosopher Celsus upholds.[16] Celsus' statement that "it is impious to abandon the customs which have existed in each locality from the beginning" (5.25) is deliberately inverted by Origen:

> We would not agree with Celsus' opinion when he maintains that because of the overseers that have been allotted to the parts of the earth the practices done by each nation are right. Moreover, we do not want to do their practices in the way that pleases them. For we see that it is pious to break customs which have existed in each locality from the beginning.
> (Origen, *Cels.* 5.33)

Whereas Origen criticizes the notion of ethnically defined, local customs, for Celsus the principle that "each nation follows its traditional customs, whatever kind may happen to be established" (5.25) is the basis for his positive appreciation of the ancient customs of the Jews. It is only logical then, that Celsus censures pagan converts to Judaism for abandoning their own ancestral customs.

4.2. *Celsus' Criticism of Pagan Converts to Judaism*

The problem for Celsus does not consist in the Jewish customs per se, peculiar as they may be, but in their adoption by pagans, who, by converting to Judaism, must necessarily abandon their own customs: "If indeed in accordance with these principles the Jews maintained their own law, we should not find fault with them but rather with those who have abandoned their own traditions and professed those of the Jews" (Celsus *apud* Origen, *Cels.* 5.41). Celsus expresses the same pagan criticism of proselytism as we have already encountered in authors such as Tacitus and Juvenal. This, we may assume, is precisely the kind of criticism which the Thessalonian converts to Christianity received from their pagan compatriots, and probably all the more so as Christianity was an active missionary movement which would attract more converts than Judaism. The material which we have studied in Tacitus, Juvenal, and Celsus reveals why Paul could compare the ex-pagan Thessalonians with the Christian Jews; both encountered the same resistance from their fellow countrymen, who defended their respective ancestral customs

[16] J.Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (SJLA 23; Leiden 1978), ch. 4.

in the face of converts who denied their binding nature. Pagans such as Tacitus and Celsus were willing to appreciate the Jewish customs as ancient, authoritative traditions for the Jews but, for that very reason, were critical of proselytes who left their authoritative customs behind. Christians, however, in Celsus' view, are by definition converts, either from Judaism or from paganism and have no right to transgress the boundaries of their ethnic customs, regardless of whether they were Jewish or Greek. As we will see, Celsus illustrated his point by means of Herodotus.

4.3. *Celsus' Criticism of the Christians*

Christians, as Celsus explains, lack the right to break with their ethnic customs in the same way as the people of the Egyptian cities of Marea and Apis, which bordered Libya, were not allowed by the god Ammon, the chief divinity of the Egyptian pantheon, to abandon Egyptian customs and follow Libyan customs:

> One might also call Herodotus as witness of this, when he speaks as follows: "Now the people of the cities Marea and Apis who live in the part of Egypt bordering on Libya, thinking that they were Libyans and not Egyptians, objected to the worship of the temples, not wanting to abstain from eating cows; so they sent to Ammon .... But the god did not allow them to do this ..." [Herodotus, *Hist*. 2.18]. This is the story of Herodotus. Ammon is not any less competent to give an account of the things of God than the angels of the Jews. Thus there is nothing wrong if each nation observes its own laws of worship .... And Pindar seems to me to have been right when he said that custom is king of all [Pindar, frg. 152 Bowra].
>
> (Celsus *apud* Origen, *Cels*. 5.34)

Origen reads this passage as an implicit criticism of the Christians. Each nation should observe its own laws of worship and Christians, like the people of the cities Marea and Apis, have no right to cease worshipping the traditional gods:

> From these facts the argument seems to Celsus to lead to the conclusion that all men ought to live according to their traditional customs and should not be criticized for this; but that since the Christians have forsaken their traditional laws and are not one individual nation like the Jews they are to be criticized for agreeing to the teaching of Jesus.
>
> (Celsus *apud* Origen, *Cels*. 5.35)

Precisely because Christianity lacks an ethnic basis, in Celsus' view, Christians have no right to forsake their previous religious-ethnic allegiance. Origen acknowledges that Christianity is not an ethnic move-

ment and, for that reason, defines it in a different terminology: he stipulates that Christianity is a philosophy and, in this way, underlines the fact that Christianity is not confined to a local, ethnic space. Philosophers, Origen explains, cannot be expected to keep traditional local customs:

> Let him [i.e., Celcus] tell us, then, whether philosophers who teach men not to be superstitious would be right in abandoning the traditional customs, so that they even eat of things forbidden in their own countries, or would they act contrary to moral principle in so doing? … If Celsus or those who approve of his views were to try to defend the view which he has set forth by saying that one who has read philosophy would also observe the traditional customs, that implies that philosophers, for example, among the Egyptians, would become quite ridiculous if they took care not to eat onion in order to observe the traditional customs …. If one of their sort became a philosopher and were to keep the traditional customs, he would be a ridiculous philosopher because he would be acting unphilosophically. (Origen, *Cels*. 5.35)

As earlier in *Cels*. 5.27–28, Origen criticizes a non-philosophical, superstitious and arbitrary, relative, localized definition of piety. Origen's criticism of traditional customs is subsequently supported and further illuminated by the Stoic distinction between the law of nature and the written laws:

> Now there are two kinds of law for our consideration. The one is the ultimate law of nature, which is probably derived from God, and the other the written code of cities. Where the written law does not contradict the law of God it is good that the citizens should not be troubled by the introduction of strange laws. But where the law of nature, that is of God, enjoins precepts contradictory to the written laws, consider whether reason does not compel a man to dismiss the written code … even if in doing this he must endure dangers and countless troubles and deaths and shame. (Origen, *Cels*. 5.37; cf. 5.40)[17]

On this basis Origen shows that Celsus is very unreasonable in saying "that each nation worships its native and traditional deities" (*Cels*. 5.38). Christians do not observe the laws which Celsus wants them to follow in sacrificing to daemons:

> What sort of laws does Celsus want us to follow in sacrificing to daemons? If he means those in force in the cities, let him prove that they are in

[17] For the Stoic distinction between the national customs or written laws of nations on the one hand, and the laws of nature on the other, see, e.g., Cicero, *Leg*. 1.15.42–16.45.

> harmony with the divine laws. But if he cannot do this (for the laws of most cities do not agree even with one another), obviously we must say that they are not strictly speaking laws at all. (Origen, *Cels*. 8.26)

Indeed, for Origen, converts to Christianity should give up their ancestral customs:

> … it is not plausible … that the people who heard them [i.e., the apostles of Jesus] should have been changed from keeping ancestral customs of long standing, unless some considerable force and miraculous events had moved them to change to doctrines so strange and foreign to those in which they had been brought up. (Origen, *Cels*. 8.47)

Interestingly, Celsus is said to recognize the universalistic claim which is inherent in the Christian criticism of ancestral customs:

> After this he utters a sort of wish: "Would that it were possible to unite under one law the inhabitants of Asia, Europe, and Libya, both Greeks and barbarians even at the furthest limits." As if he thought this impossible he continues that "he who thinks this knows nothing."
>
> (Celsus *apud* Origen, *Cels*. 7.72)

5. Final Observations and Conclusions

It is this explicit discussion of the importance of local ancestral customs in Celsus, and their subsequent criticism in Origen, which show us what seems to be characteristic for the Christian movement. Not only with regard to Judaism, but also in relation to Greek paganism, Christianity appears to be critical of the observance of ancestral customs. The New Perspective on Paul has rightly emphasized that Paul's criticism of Judaism revolved around its ethnocentric character. However, all the attention devoted to this feature of ancient Judaism by the New Perspective, correct as it may be, has given the impression that it is an exclusive hallmark of Judaism, and not of its purportedly open-minded, tolerant Greco-Roman *Umwelt*, the influence of which Judaism had to resist. As a matter of fact, the strong devotion to ethnic customs is equally characteristic of Greco-Roman paganism.

It seems that this is relevant to a proper understanding of 1 Thess 2:13–16. It is absolutely true that Paul in 1 Thess 2:13–16 continues the internal Jewish debate about the Jews who killed the prophets, as Steck has convincingly shown. It is equally true that Paul, in his depiction of the Jews as those who "oppose everyone by hindering us from speaking to the nations," draws upon the pagan charge of Jewish misanthropy, as

Barclay has argued. Indeed, as Barclay concludes, "both Hellenistic and Judean traditions are here adopted and adapted in the service of a new logic for hostility to Judeans."[18]

However, this is not the full picture. Barclay seems to ignore the fact that Paul refers to the actions of the Jews as analogous to the threats which the pagan inhabitants of Thessalonica posed to compatriots who converted to Christianity. If we take the entire ethnographical debate of this period into account, together with its emphasis on the importance of ancestral customs, it becomes clear that Christianity, because of its universalizing tendency, provoked a reaction from both Judaism and Greek paganism. Jews were critical of Christians, and even persecuted them, as is evident from Paul's own pre-Christian career (1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13, 23; Phil 3:6), his own persecution by Jews after he had become a believer in Christ (2 Cor 11:24), and from the experience of the Christian Jews in Judea to whom Paul refers in First Thessalonians as analogous to the experience of the ex-pagan Christians in Thessalonica. The Jews persecuted Christians, either because they were religiously motivated[19] or, as Goodman suggested, because they anticipated the pagans' response to the conversion of non-Jews to Christianity, which at that stage was still a conversion to a form of Judaism. As Goodman explains:

> The problem for Paul's fellow Jews lay in the hostile reaction to the conversion of gentiles to Christianity to be expected from unconverted *gentiles*, in particular the civic and Roman authorities, and the possibility that, because Paul portrayed himself as a Jew, they as Jews might be blamed for his behaviour .... The determination of Diaspora Jews to preserve the privileges which protected them ... is testimony to their concern that their delicate position might be undermined. The actions of Paul threatened precisely such undermining .... The punishment meted out to Paul had a precise purpose. As Paul wrote, "the Jews persecute us ... forbidding us to speak to the gentiles that they might be saved" (1 Thess 2:15–16). Punishment was intended to prevent Paul from going round Diaspora cities incurring odium for local Jews from gentiles by urging those gentiles to cease their ancestral worship.[20]

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[18] Barclay, "Hostility to Jews," 381.

[19] For Jews persecuting renegade fellow-Jews who had abandoned their ancestral beliefs, see 3 Macc 7:10–15; cf. 1:3 and 3:31–33.

[20] M. Goodman, "The Persecution of Paul by Diaspora Jews," in *The Beginnings of Christianity: A Collection of Articles* (ed. J. Pastor and M. Mor; Jerusalem 2005), 379–387; repr. in *Judaism in the Roman World: Collected Essays* (ed. M. Goodman; AJEC 66; Leiden 2007), 145–152, at 150, 151, 152 resp.

The Christians' critical attitude was undesirable to the Jews and equally offensive to the pagan world, as negligence of the ancestral customs and the gods would not be tolerated. For that reason it was possible for Paul to draw a comparison between the experience of the ex-pagan Thessalonians and the Jewish Christians; both were oppressed by their compatriots, who could not condone their break with ancestral customs. If read against this background, 1 Thess 2:13–16 is not only testimony to an internal Jewish debate (as far as the killing of the prophets is concerned) and to an anti-Jewish debate (figuring the misanthropy of the Jews), but finally also to an anti-ethnocentric discourse in the broadest sense of the word, regardless of whether this ethnocentrism is Jewish or Greek.

Paul's universalistic conviction is not only expressed in his emphasis on the universal nature of Abraham's religion in his correspondence to the Galatians (Gal 3:8 = Gen 12:3; 18:18) and the Romans (Rom 4:16–17 = Gen 17:5), but already apparent in his oldest preserved Letter, that to the Thessalonians. This should come as no surprise as his belief in the universalistic nature of what was to be called Christianity derives from what he experienced as the moment of his calling in the 30s CE (Gal 1:15–16) and became further articulated in his conflict with Christian Judaizers who visited the Christian community in Antioch at the end of the 40s CE (Gal 2:11–14). When he founds the Christian community at Thessalonica in the early 50s CE and learns of their oppression by their pagan compatriots, Paul draws a comparison between their experience and that of Jewish Christians in Judea, who suffer under Jews who hinder them from speaking to the nations (1 Thess 2:14–16). Indeed Paul only hints and implies that Jewish and Thessalonian Christians all suffer for the very same reason, but if this passage is read in the context of the ethnographical debate of Paul's time it seems likely that the main explanation for Jewish and pagan animosity towards Christians is their criticism and abandonment of ancestral, ethnic customs as a result of their universalistic conviction. It is only a further expression of Paul's universalism when, later in the 50s CE, in his discussions with Judaizing Galatian Christians (Gal 3–4) and with the self-consciously Jewish element in the Christian community in Rome (Rom 4), he reflects on the way in which this universalism is already prefigured in the history and religion of Abraham, in whom the nations were to be blessed.

HAGAR AND PAUL'S COVENANT THOUGHT

Albert L.A. Hogeterp

1. Introduction

The "allegory of Hagar and Sarah" in Paul's Letter to the Galatians (Gal 4:21–31) offers a pronounced polemic against the way in which the rival missionaries in Galatia understood the covenant of the law. The allegory is about these two biblical women who are taken to stand for two covenants, one covenant associated with slavery and one associated with freedom. In the course of Paul's exposition, Mount Sinai, traditionally the place where the law was revealed to Moses, becomes entangled with a covenant which "bears children for slavery" (Gal 4:24).[1] This essay focuses on Paul's idea that Hagar personifies a covenant in slavery, and goes into the question what significance this dimension of Paul's allegory has for the apostle's argument and covenant thought.

The question of what part the allegory plays in Paul's argument in Galatians has been the subject of some debate. Galatians 4:21–31 has been treated as a "supplementary" part in Paul's argumentation by some commentators,[2] while it is considered to be an essential, final piece in Paul's argumentation by others.[3] A study by Barrett yet acutely emphasises that Gal 4:21–31 is Paul's response to scriptural arguments of his missionary opponents who insist on a Jewish way of life for Gentile converts.[4] If this analysis is correct, the allegory should be read in light of Paul's dispute

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[1] Unless otherwise indicated, biblical quotations are from the Revised Standard Version.

[2] R.N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Dallas 1990), 199: "the dominant approach to this passage has been to see it as a 'supplementary argument' that occurred to the apostle 'apparently as an afterthought' to reinforce what he had argued earlier"; J.D.G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (BNTC; Peabody 1993), 243 considers Gal 4:21–31 to be "an illustration or additional documentation of the point already made."

[3] H.D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia 1984), 238–252 categorises Paul's allegory of Sarah and Hagar (Gal 4:21–31) as Paul's sixth (and final) argument in his elaboration of proofs for his proposition in Gal 2:15–21.

[4] C.K. Barrett, "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians," in Idem, *Essays on Paul* (London 1982), 154–170.

with his opponents, albeit in the heat of polemic against one another. This dispute does not stand for a transitory affair, but it reflects more deep-seated theological concerns which preoccupied the apostle vis-à-vis the gospel and its proclamation within the missionary Jesus-movement. Yet it depends on the specific socio-rhetorical context which can be established for Gal 4:21–31 how one evaluates the theological reflection which underlies Paul's allegory in response to those "who desire to be under law" (Gal 4:21).

My investigation about the place of the allegory in Paul's argument and covenant thought will take into account more recent studies on rhetorical-critical analysis,[5] new data and renewed discussion about Second Temple Jewish covenant thought[6] and discussion about the question whether or not we can speak of covenant theology in Paul's letters.[7] These subjects, rhetorical-critical analysis of Paul's allegory in Galatians, the historical context of covenant thought, and the question of covenant thought or theology in Paul's letters in general, will subsequently receive attention in the order of my discussion.

2. Rhetorical Setting of Paul's Allegory for a Covenant of Slavery

Before I go into the allegorical statement about Hagar in Gal 4:24 and its possible connections with Paul's argument in Galatians, I will begin with some reflections about the rhetorical significance of the opening question in Gal 4:21 for Gal 4:21–31. Galatians 4:21 begins this part in Paul's letter with the question, "Tell me, you who desire to be under law, do you not hear the law?" The question is polemical, since it introduces a firm rebuttal of the idea that the law would bring the Galatians closer to the promises of the gospel. In what follows, as Barrett has pointed out,

[5] See, e.g., R.D. Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul* (CBET 18; Kampen 1996); P.H. Kern, *Rhetoric and Galatians: Assessing an Approach to Paul's Epistle* (SNTSMS 101; Cambridge 1998); C.J. Classen, *Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament* (WUNT 128; Tübingen 2000), and section 2 below.

[6] See, e.g., S.E. Porter and J.C.R. de Roo, eds., *The Concept of Covenant in the Second Temple Period* (JSJSup 71; Leiden 2003), and section 3 below.

[7] S.E. Porter, "The Concept of Covenant in Paul," in *The Concept of Covenant in the Second Temple Period* (ed. S.E. Porter and J.C.R. de Roo; JSJSup 71; Leiden 2003), 269–285; J.D.G. Dunn, "Did Paul Have a Covenant Theology? Reflections on Romans 9.4 and 11.27," in *The Concept of Covenant in the Second Temple Period* (ed. S.E. Porter and J.C.R. de Roo; JSJSup 71; Leiden 2003), 287–307.

Paul reacts to scriptural arguments of his opponents from Genesis that only law-observant followers of the gospel can consider themselves to be true descendants of Abraham, as offspring through Isaac and not through Ishmael who was driven out with his mother Hagar.[8] The question in Gal 4:21 pushes those who would contend with Paul that law-observance is not duly emphasised in the Pauline gospel mission back to the issue of basic understanding of the law. Hearing the law was at the basis of religious instruction for the Jewish people, as we learn from, for instance, Josephus and Paul himself.[9]

While the question in Gal 4:21 refers opponents back to their own terms, Paul's line of thought in the Letter to the Galatians also presupposes a clear tension between the hearing and observing of the law emphasised by his opponents and revelation as the basis of the gospel on which the apostle insists (Gal 1:12, 16; 2:2; 3:23). Paul here implies that those "who desire to be under law" have received a false hearing, that is, a false understanding of the law. Paul's presentation of the gospel, on the contrary, leaves no possibility of human misunderstanding at the source of its proclamation. In Gal 1:12, the apostle writes: "For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ."

The rhetorical force of Gal 4:21 consists in the fact that those induced to follow Paul's opponents in their scriptural arguments about the law are urged to reconsider whether they accurately hear the law without misunderstanding it. Paul's use of allegory, which he applies to the biblical story about Hagar and Sarah (Gal 4:22–23) from v. 24 onwards, may be understood in rhetorical-critical perspective. Classen notes about allegory that it was a well-known figure of speech since the Hellenistic period designed to introduce a deeper sense, a proper intent to a subject matter.[10] Philo applies allegorical interpretation to biblical exegesis in order to explore a deeper, hidden sense in the biblical text, if the literal

[8] Barrett, "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar," 162: "The Judaizing argument is clear. The true descendants of Abraham are the Jews, who inhabit Jerusalem. Here are the true people of God; and it will follow that Jerusalem is the authoritative centre of the renewed people of God, now called the church."

[9] Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.175 mentions the hearing of the law (ἡ ἀκρόασις τοῦ νόμου) every Sabbath not just by the learned but by the many (cf. 168–174). Rom 2:13: "For it is not the *hearers of the law* who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified"; cf. 2 Cor 3:14–15.

[10] In this connection, Classen, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 31–32 mentions the use of allegory in the rhetorical works of various Greco-Roman as well as Hellenistic-Jewish authors: Philodemus, Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Pseudo-Longinus, Pseudo-Demetrius,

reading does not make good sense or, for some reason, is problematic.[11] When the apostle Paul alludes to the biblical story about Abraham's two sons (Gal 4:22–23) and states that "this is an allegory," his purpose is also to present a deeper sense to the biblical text, whose interpretation by the opponents conflicted with Paul's gospel message. It is the role of Hagar in Paul's allegory to which I will now turn.

3. The Role of Hagar and Her Offspring in Paul's Allegory

The role of Hagar in this allegory will first need to be re-examined,[12] before we can answer the question what role Hagar may play in Paul's covenant thought. My re-examination will take into account not only the scriptural arguments of Paul's opponents,[13] but also the post-biblical Jewish context of exegesis in which these opponents were versed and to which Paul may have reacted. It should be noted from the outset that Paul's allegory does not necessarily contrast to literal interpretation of Scripture by Paul's opponents in every respect, even if this could have been the opponents' claim underlying Paul's polemical response. In his discussion about Gal 4:21–31, Hays has argued that an ancient Jewish reading, as that in the book of *Jubilees*, which identifies Hagar with Gentile offspring and Sarah with Jewish offspring comprises allegorical elements as well.[14]

Quintilian, Tiberius, Trypho, Philo, Heraclitus, Josephus, Plutarch, Sextus, and Athenaeus. Cf. R.D. Anderson, *Glossary of Greek Rhetorical Terms Connected to Methods of Argumentation, Figures and Tropes from Anaximenes to Quintilian* (CBET 24; Leuven 2000), 14–16 on ἀλληγορία.

[11] See, e.g., Philo, *Det*. 1, 15, 47–48.

[12] The role of Hagar in this allegory cannot be minimised or explained away as a "later insertion" by the argument that some textual witnesses do not have "Hagar" at all, an argument noted by Betz, *Galatians*, 245, since this omission of "Hagar" in certain manuscripts is only true for Gal 4:25, not for Gal 4:24.

[13] With regard to post-biblical Jewish literature, Barrett, "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar," 154–170, mainly turns to rabbinic literature and an occasional example from Josephus as evidence of ancient Jewish exegesis of the Hagar-Sarah story. Betz (Betz, *Galatians*, 238–252), Martyn (J.L. Martyn, *Galatians* [AB 33A; New York 1997], 431–466), and Esler (P.F. Esler, *Galatians* [NTR; London 1998], 209–215), generally turn to biblical texts in their discussion of Gal 4:21–31. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 200–206 mainly goes into rabbinic literature and Philo's treatises, while further adducing some contextual parallels from the literature of Qumran; Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 242–259 discusses biblical texts and contexts of post-biblical Jewish thought.

[14] R.B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven 1989), 111–121 at 111 and 113 on allegorical interpretation in *Jub*. 16:17–18 in terms of legitimation.

First, the scriptural background merits due attention. The scriptural argument of Paul's opponents gives the following line of interpretation, as Barrett has formulated it: "the Jews, who live by the law of Moses, are the heirs of Abraham and it is to Jews that the promise applies."[15] This understanding of the story about Hagar and Sarah in Gen 16 and 21:1–21 is probably based on a biblically informed perception of continuity between God's covenant with Abraham, which occurs in Gen 17, and the Mosaic covenant at Sinai (e.g., Exod 6:3–8). Yet in this and preceding passages, the basic notion which Paul attributes to Abraham's offspring through Isaac is that of promise (Gal 4:23, 28; cf. Gal 3:14, 16–18, 29). It is probably of interest to the understanding of Pauline thought that Genesis comprises two narratives of God's covenant with Abraham, one in Gen 15 and one in Gen 17, of which only the latter constitutes the "covenant of circumcision."[16] It is from this first narrative that Paul has cited a verse in Gal 3:6 that Abraham's faith was reckoned to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6). The fundamental notion of promise which Paul takes as his point of departure when reading the story of Abraham and his two sons is one which precedes the law (Gal 3:15–18) and also takes precedence over it in Paul's gospel message to Gentile converts (Gal 3:6–9, 14). This Pauline notion conflicts sharply with the opponents' reading of the story of Hagar and Sarah, who would rather insist on the notion of covenant "in the flesh" (Gen 17:13) in Gen 17, which focuses on Abraham, Sarah and Isaac (Gen 17:21). Paul's reaction to those who desire to be under law also implies that their hearing of the opponents' message drew a straight line from the Abrahamic covenant of Gen 17 to the Mosaic covenant at Mount Sinai. The exclusive claim of covenant on the part of Paul's missionary opponents was so much at odds with Paul's idea about the promise to Abraham that in the apostle's view it did not do justice to a proper "hearing of the law," as we have seen with the introductory rhetorical question in Gal 4:21.

The role of Hagar in the biblical story is one of an Egyptian maid (Gen 16:1) giving birth to offspring for Abraham, whose descent is yet counted as a nation dwelling in the wilderness outside of the land of Israel (Gen

[15] Barrett, "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar," 162.

[16] Cf. A.F. Campbell and M.A. O'Brien, *Sources of the Pentateuch: Texts, Introductions, Annotations* (Minneapolis 1993), whose source-critical analysis categorises Gen 17 as belonging to the Priestly Document (pp. 29–30) and Gen 15:1–21 as belonging to the Yahwist narrative (pp. 100–101).

16:12; cf. Gen 21:20–21; 25:16–18). Hagar's offspring is not included in the covenant established with Isaac (Gen 17:19–21) and is cast out together with Hagar herself in order not to be heir with Isaac (Gen 21:10). Paul's allegory clearly takes up the notion that Hagar's offspring has no part in the inheritance of the other son of Abraham, namely Isaac, for he cites Gen 21:10 in Gal 4:30. Certain identifications which occur in Paul's allegory could be related to biblical backgrounds. The biblical identity of Hagar and her son is that of slave service in the household of Abraham (Gen 16:3; 17:23; 21:10–13), while in other biblical books the descendants of Hagar are said to have their habitation in regions east of the land of Israel in a situation of conflict with and subjection to Israel (1 Chr 5:10, 19–20; Ps 83:6). The location of Arabia, which Paul mentions in Gal 4:25, could perhaps be derived from this biblical information which attributes these dwelling places to the descendants of Hagar. The geographical conceptualisation of Arabia in Paul's time probably included the Sinai peninsula,[17] and it is "Mount Sinai in Arabia" with which Paul allegorically identifies Hagar in the first place (Gal 4:24–25).

Paul's identification of Hagar with Mount Sinai and the present Jerusalem[18] makes part of Paul's rebuttal of his opponents. The identification of Hagar and Mount Sinai, the first allegorical identification after Paul has conceptualised Hagar and Sarah as standing for "two covenants," is the most striking one and it has received different explanations. Betz mentioned an etymology of the name Hagar standing for the Arabic term *ḥadjar* for rock in the Mount Sinai area.[19] Barrett and others who follow the thesis that Paul responds to scriptural arguments of his opponents do not rely on etymological arguments of explanation, but look for the role of Hagar in Paul's allegory on the biblical story in terms of rebuttal.[20] The law-observant gospel mission of the opponents stressed continuity

[17] "Ἀραβία," BDAG, 127–128.

[18] Note that the interrelation between Mount Sinai and Jerusalem may go back to biblical tradition; cf., e.g., Ps 68:17.

[19] Betz, *Galatians*, 245 adds: "That the Arabic ḥ does not correspond to Hebrew ה, not to mention the Greek, would not bother a man who is absorbed with 'allegory' and who would be guided even by the most superficial similarities."

[20] Barrett, "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar," 164: "Other interpretations of the name were current; we need not linger over the etymological arguments with which Paul might have supported his. The identification itself is the ground for the statement of 4.24b"; cf. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 250–252 who also surveys etymological renderings of the name "Hagar," but regards the reference "in Arabia" as an "afterthought by Paul."

from the covenant of God with Abraham to that through Moses at Mount Sinai and it is at this point that Paul countered them. Martyn has further observed that Paul's Greek terms in the antitheses of the allegory, namely the phrase συστοιχεῖ δὲ which literally means "belongs to the same column (as)," constitute a Greek figure of speech which categorically excludes certain possibilities of thought through columns of polar opposites.[21] In this rhetorical way, Paul makes clear what in his opponents' claims is inconceivable to him. The graphical identification of Hagar not only with Mount Sinai in Arabia, but also with the present Jerusalem (Gal 4:25) makes Paul's point explicit that his opponents' claim of authority for their gospel mission as deriving from observance of the Mosaic law and from Jerusalem as religious centre cannot be authoritative, let alone a corrective of Paul's gospel. Yet, the graphical picture in terms of antitheses leaves the question on what basis Paul turned the tables, when identifying Hagar not with Gentile descent from Abraham but with the law-observant gospel mission of the opponents, and how this would have constituted a rhetorically significant rebuttal of his opponents' claims.

This brings my exploration of the subject to the second aspect, interrelated with Paul's polemical response to scriptural arguments, and that is post-biblical exegetical presuppositions on the part of Paul's opponents. Some presuppositions may derive from the biblical text and biblical tradition itself. Nevertheless, it may be of interest to know what associations with Hagar and her son Ishmael occur in post-biblical Jewish discourse about the biblical story of Hagar and Sarah prior to or contemporary with Paul's time. A survey of contemporary Jewish exegetical thought about Hagar and Sarah could clarify at which point Paul departs from ancient Jewish readings of Scripture and from his opponents' law-observant reading of Scripture. The point of departure for Paul is a gospel mission to Gentile converts without insisting on observance of the whole law (cf. Gal 5:2–3). It is at this point that Paul confronts the exegetical presuppositions of his missionary opponents and those who, at their instigation, would be inclined to "desire to be under law" (Gal 4:21).

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[21] Martyn, *Galatians*, 438–439 at 438: "Paul explicitly refers to one of two columns of polar opposites, similar to those Aristotle attributes to the Pythagoreans"; cf. "συστοιχέω," BDAG, 979: "in grammarians and in the Pythagorean tables of categories … (the members of the same categories in the tables συστοιχοῦσι, while members of opposite categories ἀντιστοιχοῦσι)."

The commentary of Longenecker argues that "Philo's Hagar-Sarah allegory bears several striking surface similarities to Paul's in Gal 4:21–31," among which is the antithesis between slave and free. In Longenecker's words, this demonstrates "nothing more than that Paul and Philo both read Scripture."[22] However, the comparison between Philo and Paul may yield relevant comparative evidence about exegetical presuppositions. If in Philonic thought Hagar and her son Ishmael stand for "a preliminary and preparatory stage that is superseded by something greater,"[23] the generic exegetical presupposition is that perfection in learning comes through knowledge of the law as mediation of words of God. This idea recurs in Philo's treatise *De fuga et inventione*, which characterises Hagar's flight in terms of shame and imperfection as compared to a higher level of knowledge about words of God (*Fug.* 5–6, 207). The generic Jewish exegetical presupposition of the law as teacher or instructor also occurs in Paul's Letters to the Galatians and Romans. Galatians 3:24–25 refer to the law as a παιδαγωγός, a guardian or guide, before the coming of Christ and faith in Christ. Romans 2:18 mentions Jewish instruction in the law, after which several aspects of the law as source of teaching are elaborated (Rom 2:19–20).[24] For Paul the level of knowledge beyond the "preliminary and preparatory stage" is revelation about the promises of Scripture through Jesus Christ. In view of this conviction, Paul subordinates the understanding of and obedience to the law to promise and faith and applies this to the biblical story about Sarah and Hagar. The polemical identification of the yoke of the law with Hagar as a covenant, that of Mount Sinai "bearing children for slavery" (Gal 4:24) calls for further attention to Paul's understanding of slavery in Galatians, to which I will turn in a moment.

At this point it is important to note that Paul's belief that the promise to Abraham constitutes a promise to Israel and other nations alike is prophetically inspired. Paul's reading of the biblical story of Hagar and Sarah may also be filtered through this prophetically inspired perspective. Paul in fact quotes from the book of Isaiah in the course of this

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[22] Longenecker, *Galatians*, 204–205, citations on p. 205; Philo's treatises which refer to the Hagar-Sarah story are all mentioned, but *Congr.* 9–10, 12, 14; *Cher.* 9; *Leg.* 3.244; *QG* 3.19 are extensively reproduced in Longenecker's discussion as "a representative sample."

[23] Longenecker, *Galatians*, 205. See esp. the contribution to the present volume by Bos.

[24] This passage refers to the imagined Jewish interlocutor as teacher of the law in terms of ὁδηγός ("guide" or "leader"; Rom 2:19), that is, "leader of the way," since the Greek word ὁδός is etymologically related to ὁδηγός, and in terms of παιδευτής ("instructor") and διδάσκαλος ("teacher") (Rom 2:20).

allegory (Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27). Other passages in Isaiah could play in the background to Paul's thought about gospel mission to the Gentiles. Isaiah 51:1–8 includes the promises to Abraham (Isa 51:2) in a vision of salvation for the people as well as justice "for a light to the peoples" (Isa 51:4). Isaiah 56:1–8 further presents a universal message of salvation. Paul's missionary opponents probably referred the Galatians to the covenant of the law as an exclusivist covenant, in view of Paul's polemical observation in Gal 4:17 that "they want to shut you out, that you may make much of them." This tendency cuts against the grain of Paul's prophetically inspired reading of Scripture, including the biblical story about the offspring of Abraham. It is in reaction to this exclusivism that Paul frames the allegory which polemically identifies with Hagar the missionary opponents' claims of a law-observant gospel as the only way to salvation. The allegorical identification of Hagar with Mount Sinai thereby counters the opponents' exegetical presuppositions about the law.

A few words may still be said about the sonship of Hagar in Paul's allegory. When Paul associates those "who desire to be under law" with children of Hagar, the biblical story not only about Hagar and Sarah, but about Ishmael and Isaac comes to the fore. It is to the sons of Abraham that Paul first turns in Gal 4:22–23 after his rhetorical question of v. 21, before he makes the allegory about Hagar and Sarah explicit. Philo's treatises include important analogous evidence of a contrast between the figures of Ishmael and Israel. Philo's exegetical presuppositions about them could be indirectly relevant for our idea of the line of thought of Pauline opponents. Paul counters those, influenced by the opponents, "who desire to be under law" with the question whether they do not hear the law and subsequently equates Mount Sinai with sonship of Hagar. Philo's treatise *De fuga et inventione* (*Fug.* 208) draws a contrast between the perception of Ishmael in terms of hearing God, liable to deception, and the perception of Israel in terms of seeing God, while Philo further identifies Israel as "the son free-born and first-born."[25] It is difficult to know whether and to what extent Philo's etymologies of the biblical names Ishmael and Israel were current in Hellenistic-Jewish thought, but it seems unlikely that Philo invented them. Philo may have relied on

[25] *Fug.* 208: "Ishmael by name, since thou shalt have been chastened by hearkening to words of God; for 'Ishmael' means 'hearkening to God.' Hearing takes the second place, yielding the first to sight, and sight is the portion of Israel, the son free-born and first-born; for 'seeing God' is the translation of 'Israel.' It is possible to hear the false and take it for true, because hearing is deceptive, but sight, by which we discern what really is, is devoid of falseness" (trans. Colson and Whitaker, LCL).

bilingual lists with explanations, including etymological explanation of biblical names, and expanded on them in his allegorical exposition.[26] The general fact that Ishmael is relegated to a secondary place as compared to Israel corresponds to covenant thought about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in biblical and post-biblical tradition. The Philonic association of Ishmael with hearing liable to deception and distortion could perhaps play in the background of Paul's polemic against his missionary opponents. Without naming Ishmael, Paul does presuppose that those who do not hear the law properly according to his exegesis align themselves with the sonship of Hagar.

4. The Covenant of Slavery and Paul's Argument in Galatians

The full weight of Paul's polemic in the allegory consists in the fact that Hagar is taken to stand for a covenant "from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery" (Gal 4:24) and being "in slavery with her children" (Gal 4:25), to be "cast out in order not to inherit with the son of the free woman" (Gal 4:30). The allegory by itself does not make clear why Paul associates being under law with being in slavery, and we have to turn to the larger context of Paul's argument in Galatians in order to evaluate the notion of slavery. It should be noted from the outset that the biblical narrative is not as outspoken as Paul's schematic presentation of two covenants, including a covenant with Hagar. Genesis 17:18–21 rather makes the point that God's covenant with Abraham will be continued with Isaac. Paul's reference to the sonship of Hagar in terms of a covenant mainly serves to drive home the idea that the missionary opponents' covenant claim should not be considered authoritative by the Galatian audience.

Freedom and slavery are not figures which Paul limits to the antitheses in his allegory. It is already in the course of his narration of events in Jerusalem (Gal 1:18–2:10), where Paul visited James, Peter, and John to reach an apostolic agreement about gospel mission among Jews and Gentiles, that he starts to write about his own revelation of the gospel in

[26] See J.-G. Kahn, "Did Philo Know Hebrew?," *Tarbiz* 34 (1965): 337–345; J.-G. Kahn, "Philo Hebraicus?," *JS* 36 (1996): 41*–58* at 52* and n. 14, who refers to Egyptian papyri "listing names whose Hebrew meaning is explained in Greek" published in A. Deissmann, ed., *Die Septuaginta-Papyri und andere altchristliche Texte* (VHPS 1; Heidelberg 1905), 86–93.

terms of freedom and that which could endanger or enslave this freedom. For we read the following in Gal 2:4–5 about this contrast between freedom and slavery:

> But because of false brethren secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage[27]—to them we did not yield submission even for a moment, that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. (Gal 2:4–5)

The context of the narration makes it clear that bondage is related to the imposition of the whole law, including circumcision, on the gospel mission to the Gentiles. In Gal 2:3 Paul notes that "even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled[28] to be circumcised, though he was a Greek." The freedom in Christ is also what Paul wants to convey to his Galatian audience, since immediately after the allegory Paul writes in Gal 5:1 that "for freedom Christ has set us free," thereby including the Galatian audience on his side.

Yet there are still other passages in Galatians, preceding the allegory, which build up to the polemical picture of the opponents' law-observant gospel mission in terms of a covenant "in slavery." The division between promises to Abraham and a covenant "from Mount Sinai in slavery," which Paul presupposes in his allegory, is preceded by exegetical thoughts about the promises to Abraham and the law. Galatians 3:15–18 draws on a human example of a man's will and then argues that the promises to Abraham are not made void by "the law which came four hundred and thirty years afterward" (Gal 3:17). Paul here juxtaposes inheritance by promise to inheritance by the law (Gal 3:18), while representing God's promises to Abraham as a "testament" or indeed "covenant", depending on one's translation of the Greek term διαθήκη in this passage. I would argue for its meaning as covenant, since it is only the introductory human example which makes mention of a man's will, but this analogy need not amount to an equation of meaning in Gal 3:15 and 17 respectively. If

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[27] The Greek verb which Paul uses here is καταδουλοῦν. This verb also occurs in 2 Cor 11:20, where Paul observes that the Corinthians bear it if a man makes slaves of them, in the context of his polemic against rival missionaries (2 Cor 11:12–15) who boast of Jewish descent (2 Cor 11:21–22).

[28] The Greek verb ἀναγκάζειν, which Paul uses in this verse, denotes compulsion or strong insistence. This verb recurs in the apostle's confrontation of Peter with the question "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel (ἀναγκάζεις) the Gentiles to live like Jews?" (Gal 2:14) and in his polemic against "those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel (ἀναγκάζουσιν) you to be circumcised" (Gal 6:12).

God's promises to Abraham are then conceived of as a covenant preceding the law, what we have here are already the contours of two covenants, a covenant with Abraham by promise and a covenant of the law. As we have seen with the biblical citation in Gal 3:6, Paul derives the idea of promise from Gen 15 rather than from Gen 17. The promise which precedes the law also takes precedence over it in Paul's line of exegesis.

Two other passages further build up to the contrast between a covenant "in slavery" and a covenant of freedom in Paul's allegory: Gal 4:1–7 and Gal 4:8–11.[29] Galatians 4:1–7 characterises being under the law in terms of being under guardians and trustees (Gal 4:2) as children, no better than slaves (Gal 4:1, 3). Paul distinguishes this situation of a minor, analogous to that of a slave, from adoption as sons and thereby heirs through God's Son (Gal 4:4–7).[30] The interrogation *ad hominem* in Gal 4:8–11 introduces slavery in a figurative way as "bondage to beings that by nature are no gods," that is, pagan idolatry (Gal 4:8). In the heat of his polemic against the law-observant gospel mission of his opponents, Paul further associates this figurative notion of slavery with liturgical calendar observance in Jewish religion (Gal 4:9–11).

The last point may indeed be attributable to the heat of polemic rather than fully expressed argument, since Paul does not specifically go into more accurately descriptive terms of the Jewish calendar than "days and months and special times and years" (Gal 4:10). It would also be surprising if Paul's terms had been more specific, since in his other letters, for instance in First Corinthians, he mentions a timeframe ultimately derived from a Jewish background. At the end of his First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul uses terms of a timeframe, like σάββατον in 1 Cor 16:2 and πεντηκοστή in 1 Cor 16:8, in a non-polemical way.

What we can infer from these passages preceding the allegory of Hagar and Sarah is the idea that the allegory itself is not an afterthought in Paul's argumentation,[31] but that Paul builds up to formative elements in this allegory in the course of the rhetorical structure of his argument. Paul's

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[29] Betz, *Galatians*, 202–219 identifies Gal 4:1–7 and 4:8–11 respectively as "proofs" and "an *interrogatio*" about Christian tradition; cf. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 209–230.

[30] Adoption of sons (Gal 4:5: υἱοθεσία) is one of the gifts of God which Paul associates with the Israelites in Rom 9:4, so that there is also an intra-Jewish dimension to this theological idea.

[31] *Contra* Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 243 according to whom Gal 4:21–31 serves to "give those already convinced a way of handling and thus countering a key scriptural argument of the other missionaries." The rhetorical question in Gal 4:21 seems to contradict this idea that it addresses "those already convinced."

idea of two antithetical types of covenant, one with Abraham as promise to all nations and the other of slavery associated with the law-observant mission of the opponents, already occurs in passages from the narration of events up to subsequent theological argumentation (Gal 2:4–5; 3:15–18; 4:1–11).

5. Paul's Allegory and Contemporary Jewish Contexts of Covenant Thought

Before I turn to the implications of Paul's argumentation and allegorization for our understanding of his covenant thought, I will present a few thoughts about contemporary Jewish contexts of covenant thought. This may put into historical perspective Paul's theological distinction between two types of covenant which also reflects his polemical response to his missionary opponents.

Recent scholarship has seen a substantial increase of discussion about the concept of covenant in Second Temple Judaism.[32] The historically recognised diversity of forms of Judaism in the Second Temple period also entails a diversification of notions of covenant, probably even in comparison between different types of Qumran documents.[33] It has become a matter of discussion whether the term "covenantal nomism," coined by Sanders, still does justice to the diverse landscape of Second Temple Judaism as we now know it.[34] A recent article by Freedman and Miano differentiates between the Abrahamic covenant, the Davidic covenant, the Sinai covenant, and the "new covenant," represented in biblical as well as post-biblical Jewish tradition.

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[32] E.g., B. Nitzan, "The Concept of the Covenant in Qumran Literature," in *Historical Perspectives: From the Hasmoneans to Bar Kokhba in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. D. Goodblatt, A. Pinnick, and D.R. Schwartz; STDJ 37; Leiden 2001), 85–104; Porter and de Roo, *The Concept of Covenant*; L.H. Schiffman, "The Concept of Covenant in the Qumran Scrolls and Rabbinic Literature," in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel* (ed. H. Najman and J.H. Newman; JSJSup 83; Leiden 2004), 257–278. See also E.J. Christiansen, *The Covenant in Judaism and Paul: A Study of Ritual Boundaries as Identity Markers* (AGJU 27; Leiden 1995).

[33] See F. García Martínez, "Emerging Christianity and Second Temple Judaism: A 'Qumranic' Perspective," *RCT* 29 (2004): 255–267, who distinguishes different concepts of covenant in the *Community Rule* and in the *Damascus Document* respectively.

[34] See D.A. Carson, P.T. O'Brien, and M.A. Seifrid, eds., *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/Grand Rapids, Mich., 2001).

The differentiation of types of covenant is therefore not a theological invention by Paul, but its presentation in terms of antithesis has its place in heated debates within the early Jesus-movement about the place of the law in the gospel mission to the Gentiles. Paul's references to Jerusalem and the circumcision party in Gal 2:1–14 probably serve to discredit the agenda of the opponents who derived their source of authority from "the present Jerusalem."

The pressure of conformity to the law is what Paul describes in relation to Jerusalem in Gal 2:4–5 and in relation to the influence of the circumcision party, circles around James, which came to Antioch, as we read in Gal 2:11–14.[35] Apart from Paul's letters, the Acts of the Apostles also indicate that conformity to the law was an important concern to the Jerusalem church (Acts 21:15–26). In historical perspective, observance of the law of Moses was probably among the basic presuppositions to theological covenant thought in Second Temple Judaism in all its diversity. The early missionary Jesus-movement was heavily influenced by this religious tradition, which in turn explains the polemic from the point of view of Paul who did not uphold observance of the whole law as the central part of his gospel mission to the Gentiles.

6. Paul's Covenant Thought in Gal 4:21–31 and Other Pauline Letters

The allegory of Hagar standing for a covenant from Mount Sinai "bearing children for slavery" is an integral part of Paul's argument in Galatians, as we have seen. It was necessary to analyse the place of the allegory in Paul's argument before we could turn to its place in Paul's covenant thought in general. The question how the allegory about Hagar relates to Paul's covenant thought and Paul's theology at large will finally concern my examination.

It should first be noted that the theological dispute and discussion underlying the allegory are dependent on the contingent framework of the Letter to the Galatians, its rhetorical situation, whereas a picture of Paul's theology at large depends on what one deduces from "going

[35] See P.F. Esler, "Making and Breaking an Agreement Mediterranean Style: A New Reading of Galatians 2.1–14," *BibInt* 3 (1995): 285–314, who has made a strong argument for the idea that the Jerusalemite opponents in Gal 2:1–10 are also those who operate in Antioch in Gal 2:11–14.

behind" Paul's letters.[36] If we compare the notion of two covenants, one of promise and one "in slavery," in the allegory in Gal 4:21–31 to covenantal ideas in Paul's other letters, we can trace another context in which Paul makes use of an antithesis between two covenants. That is, in 2 Cor 3:4–18, Paul contrasts the covenant mediated through Moses as the "old covenant" to the new covenant in Christ. In this passage, Paul also emphasises freedom in connection with ministry of the gospel of Christ (2 Cor 3:17). Yet in this passage the old covenant is not dismissed as no longer relevant or only leading to slavery, but as a covenant whose splendour can only be properly understood in terms of the surpassing splendour of the new covenant. At places in his Letter to the Romans where Paul comes to speak about covenant the idea of differentiation rather than antithesis seems to be at the surface in Rom 9:4, whereas Rom 11:27 appears to envisage a convergence of covenant thought in light of Paul's theological perspective on the salvation of all Israel (Rom 11:25–32). Yet the theological argument about the promise to Abraham, as opposed to the idea of exclusive inheritance through the law, also occurs in Rom 4.

Returning to the argument in Galatians, the allegory about Hagar and Sarah makes up part of the fabric of theological discussion in this letter, in polemical response to other ideas about gospel mission by which the Galatian audience has been influenced and in discussion with exegetical presuppositions about the law. In terms of theology, the allegory serves to establish the dividing line between Paul's position and that of his missionary opponents, without thereby determining every element of Paul's theological thought about the law in his letters.

[36] Cf. J.D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (London 1998), 1–26.

PHILOSOPHICAL CRITICISM OF GENEALOGICAL CLAIMS AND STOIC DEPOLITICIZATION OF POLITICS: GRECO-ROMAN STRATEGIES IN PAUL'S ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION OF HAGAR AND SARAH (GAL 4:21–31)

George H. van Kooten

1. Introduction

The figure of Hagar is not referred to by name in the New Testament writings, with the notable exception of Paul's Letter to the Galatians (4:24–25). In this letter Paul wishes to define the nascent Christian movement within Judaism as a universalistic kind of Judaism. In doing so he develops a Christian historiography which revolves around the figures of Abraham, Moses, and Christ. In Paul's view, Judaism, of which Christianity is part, is in essence an Abrahamic religion, going back to the hybrid figure of Abraham on the threshold between the Chaldean and the Jewish world, whereas Moses is only a secondary figure. This Abrahamic redefinition of (Christian) Judaism takes place in chapter three of Paul's letter (Gal 3:6–29), after he has positioned his Christian Judaism in opposition to the other forms of Judaism (both Christian and non-Christian) of his day in chapters one and two. Surprisingly, after his reflection on the Abraham narrative in chapter three, he returns to this narrative again near the end of chapter four, now focusing on Abraham's children, Ishmael and Isaac, with their respective mothers Hagar and Sarah. While other contributions to this volume deal with the climax of the first Abraham passage in the programmatic statement that "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring" (Gal 3:28–29), or with the way in which the second Abraham passage expresses Paul's covenantal thought,[1] the present paper focuses on the reasons for the

[1] See resp. the contributions to this volume by Karin Neutel and Albert Hogeterp. On Gal 3–4, cf. also F. Vouga, "La construction de l'histoire en Galates 3–4," *ZNW* 75 (1984): 259–269.

second passage and, especially, on its explicit inclusion of the figure of Hagar (section 2), and two other remarkable features: its criticism of the relevance of ethnic descent (section 3), and its identification of Hagar and Sarah with the opposite poles of dual citizenship—earthly citizenship as opposed to the citizenship of heaven (section 4). Both motifs, that of claims of ethnic descent and of dual citizenship, will be commented upon with particular attention to the Greco-Roman world. The Galatians, too, were part of this world, after they had passed through Greece in the third century BCE, crossed over to Asia, and "occupied the country on the farther side of the river Sangarius, capturing Ancyra, a city of the Phrygians."[2]

2. The Polemic Nature of Paul's Reworking of the Hagar Narrative

The reason why Paul, after his elaboration of the Abraham narrative in chapter three, adds a second passage on Abraham at the end of chapter four seems to lie in his wish to strike at the heart of those Jews who regard Judaism as an ethnic religion which depends on the genetic lineage between Jews and Abraham. The first Abraham passage in chapter three is devoted to the burning question: "Who is a son of Abraham," a question answered in Gal 3:7 ("it is those who have faith who are Abraham's sons") and in 3:29 ("So if you belong to Christ, you are the *sperma* of Abraham").[3] This first Abraham passage is construed in order to define what "real Judaism" is: it is not founded on Moses, whose law is secondary as it only arrived on the scene 430 years after Abraham (3:17), but on Abraham, whose distinctive quality is his trust in God: *ho pistos Abraam* (3:9).

To criticize his opponents even more effectively, Paul adds a second Abraham passage at the end of chapter four, in which he confronts his opponents with the statement that Abraham had *two* sons, i.e., not just Isaac, whom Jews consider to be the "legitimate" child, but Ishmael, too: "Tell me, you who desire to be subject to the law, will you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had *two* sons …" (Gal 4:21–22;

[2] Pausanias, *Descr.* 1.3.5–1.4.6.

[3] Translations from the Bible are normally taken from the NRSV, with small alterations where necessary, and those from classical authors are normally derived from the Loeb Classical Library, again with occasional changes.

italics mine). The second Abraham passage starts suddenly at a point at which Paul could have drawn the letter to a close but instead starts again. This passage is even more polemic as its blunt statement "that Abraham had two sons" will have been perceived as a provocative remark by those Jews and Christian Jews who regarded themselves as "sons of Abraham" in virtue of their genetic descent from *the* son of Abraham, i.e., Isaac. Both in Jewish and Christian sources we find the notion that Isaac was Abraham's only-begotten, sole son. Although the LXX just depicts Isaac as Abraham's "beloved son" (Gen 22:2), both Josephus and the author of Hebrews go further, depicting him as *monogenēs*. According to the author of Hebrews,

> By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac. He who had received the promises was ready to offer up *his only son*, of whom he had been told, "It is through Isaac that descendants shall be named after you." He considered the fact that God is able even to raise someone from the dead—and figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.
>
> (Heb 11:17–19)

This characterization of Isaac as Abraham's only, single son (Heb 11:17), is shared by Josephus, according to whom "Isaac was passionately beloved of his father Abraham, being his only son (*monogenēs*) and born to him 'on the threshold of old age' through the bounty of God" (*A.J.* 1.222). It is interesting to see how Josephus acknowledges the fact that Ishmael and his descendents are related to Abraham, but in his depiction of these relations carefully avoids the terminology of sonship:

> When the child reached manhood, his mother found him a wife of that Egyptian race whence she herself had originally sprung; and by her twelve sons in all were born to Ishmael, Nabaioth(es), Kedar, Abdeêl, Massam, Masma, Idum(as), Masmes, Chodam, Thaiman, Jetur, Naphais, Kadmas. These occupied the whole country extending from the Euphrates to the Red Sea and called it Nabatene. And it is these who conferred their names on the Arabian nation and its tribes in honour both of their own excellence and of the fame of Abraham (εἰσὶ δὲ οὗτοι, οἳ τὸ τῶν Ἀράβων ἔθνος καὶ τὰς φυλὰς ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν καλοῦσι διά τε τὴν ἀρετὴν αὐτῶν καὶ τὸ Ἁβράμου ἀξίωμα). (Josephus, *A.J.* 1.220–221)

According to Josephus, the descents of Ishmael make up τὸ τῶν Ἀράβων ἔθνος ("the nation of the Arabs") and it is this very name, "Arabs," as Josephus seems to suggest, which reflects (a) their ἀρετή ("excellence"), and (b) τὸ Ἁβράμου ἀξίωμα ("the fame of Abraham"). As Thackeray explains in his notes, and is confirmed by Hilhorst in his contribution to this volume, Josephus seems to imply a "connexion of the name Arab with

the first two letters of ἀρ–ετή and of Ἀβ–ραάμος."[4] Although Josephus assumes a close link between Abraham on the one hand, and Ishmael and his Ar-ab-ian descendants on the other, he does not call Ishmael Abraham's son, the only-begotten son being Isaac. If being a son of Abraham could only be perceived of, both by non-Christian Jews such as Josephus and by Christian Jews such as the author of Hebrews, as in the line of Abraham—Isaac—Jews, then Paul's short statement "For it is written that Abraham had *two* sons" (Gal 4:22) really is extremely polemical in itself. This statement also shows why Paul, in his second passage on the Abraham narrative, starts to talk about Hagar. He is not interested in Hagar as such, but only insofar as she is the mother of Abraham's *other* son. Contrary to other Jews such as Josephus and the author of Hebrews, Paul is of the opinion that Abraham had two sons, and he emphasizes this because this fact undermines a straightforward claim to being sons of Abraham. The question which Paul construes is not whether one is a son of Abraham, but what kind of son, through the genealogical line of Isaac, or through that of Ishmael:

> Tell me, you who desire to be subject to the law, will you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and the other by a free woman. One, the child of the slave, was born according to the flesh; the other, the child of the free woman, was born through the promise. (Gal 4:21–23)

I will refrain from commenting in detail upon this passage and its continuation, but instead will follow two lines of thought in Paul's argumentation. The entire second Abraham passage seems to unfold from the opening statement that Abraham has two sons. As already explained, this statement allows Paul to call any straightforward claim to Abrahamic sonship into question. As we shall see in the next section, Paul continues by criticizing such ethnic claims, and even inverts them. Subsequently, as we shall see in the last section, within this line of thought Paul opens a second line, in which he identifies the figures of Hagar and Sarah with two different kinds of citizenship, one of an ethnic, earthly nature, the other of a heavenly nature.

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[4] Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities, Books 1–20* (trans. H.S.J. Thackeray et al.; LCL; Cambridge, Mass., 1930–1965), 5:109n*m*. Cf. the conclusion to Anthony Hilhorst's contribution to this volume, pp. 433–434.

3. A First Line of Thought: Criticism and Inversion of Ethnic and Genealogical Claims

3.1. *Paul's Argumentation*

The existence of two sons of Abraham implies that there are two different ethnic lineages, one through Isaac, via his mother Sarah, the other through Ishmael, via his mother Hagar. In this way Paul questions the validity of the argumentation of his Jewish opponents, who seem to claim that only ethnic Jews are sons of Abraham. According to Paul, there are two different genealogies possible. Paul's criticism, however, goes even further. He also inverts the common understanding of these ethnic genealogies by interpreting them in an inverted way by means of a non-literal, allegorical interpretation. Remarkably, Paul views those Jews who stick to their ethnocentric claims of being the sole descendants of Abraham and resist Paul's universalizing understanding of Judaism as descendants of Abraham, not through Sarah, Isaac's mother, but through Hagar, Ishmael's mother. Not the figure of Sarah, but that of Hagar is identified with "Mount Sinai," which is located in Arabia, and "the present Jerusalem":

> Now this is an allegory: these women are two covenants. One woman, in fact, is Hagar, from Mount Sinai .... Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem .... But the other woman corresponds to the Jerusalem above; she is free, and she is our mother.
>
> (Gal 4:24–26)

In this passage the ethnic Jews are identified with "Mount Sinai" because they follow the Mosaic law from the Sinai because, as Paul explains in the first Abraham passage in chapter three, they derive their identity from Moses rather than from Abraham, not complying with Paul's universalistic understanding of Judaism. In the current passage they are now described as descendants of Hagar. Paul seems to buttress his inverted identification of these "Mosaic-Sinaitic" Jews with the descendants of Hagar by pointing at their common regional background in Arabia. Both the link between Mount Sinai and Arabia and that between Arabia and Hagar are established in ancient Jewish literature. As we have already seen, Josephus describes the Arabian ethnicity of Ishmael's descendants:

> twelve sons in all were born to Ishmael, Nabaioth(es), Kedar, Abdeêl, Massam, Masma, Idum(as), Masmes, Chodam, Thaiman, Jetur, Naphais, Kadmas. These occupied the whole country extending from the Euphrates to the Red Sea and called it Nabatene. And it is these who conferred their names on the Arabian nation (*to tōn Arabōn ethnos*) and its tribes.
>
> (Josephus, *A.J.* 1.220–221)

In this way Hagar and her descendants through Ishmael are linked with Arabia. At the same time Mount Sinai is regarded as being situated in the region of Arabia. In his description of Apion's view on Jewish history, Josephus writes that Apion "tells us … that Moses went up into the mountain called Sinai, which lies between Egypt and Arabia" (Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.25).

This link between Arabia with, on the one hand, Hagar, and, on the other hand, Sinai, seems to support Paul's implication that non-true, law-observing Jews are descendants of Hagar and that their views reflect Arabian-Sinaitic-Mosaic backgrounds rather than the true Jewishness which starts with Abraham. As he has already pointed out in the first Abraham passage, the Mosaic law came 430 years after Abraham (Gal 3:17). Now in the second Abraham passage, the Mosaic law is not only chronologically but also geographically restricted by Paul's emphasis on its origins in the region of Arabia, hence the close identification of the Sinaitic-Mosaic Jews with Hagar, whose descendants occupy the same territory. Other Jews, however, such as Paul and other Jewish participants in his missionary movement, and ex-pagan Greeks such as the Galatians (if Paul can persuade them!), are descendants of Sarah: "she is our mother" (Gal 4:26). This is emphasized in subsequent lines, in which Paul tries to convince them of their true lineage: "Now you, my friends, are children of the promise, like Isaac …. So then, friends, we are children, not of the slave but of the free woman" (Gal 4:28–31). Paul not only criticizes the validity of ethnic reasoning, but also inverts the claims involved; the "true" descendants of Abraham through Sarah and her son Isaac are not ethnocentric Jews, who emphasize their specific, pure, genetic roots, but those who show the character traits of Isaac and his mother.

Artificial as this argumentation might seem, it is not without analogies in Greco-Roman sources. In writings by philosophers such as Plato, Plutarch, and Dio Chrysostom we find similar criticism of genealogical claims, and sometimes also a similar way of inverting these claims.[5]

[5] For a comparable contextual approach, cf. S. Di Mattei, "Paul's Allegory of the Two Covenants (Gal 4.21–31) in Light of First Century Hellenistic Rhetoric and Jewish Hermeneutics," *NTS* 52 (2006): 102–122.

3.2. *Greco-Roman Criticisms of the Validity of Genealogical Descent*

Analogies for Paul's criticism of ethnic and genealogical claims often relate to Heracles. Many Greek individuals and states claimed to derive from him, and many cities claimed to have been founded by this Greek hero.

a. *Plato*

In Plato's *Theaetetus*, Socrates is said to find fault with those who trace their lineage to an important figure. According to Socrates, such genealogical claims are very unphilosophical because people tend to ignore those within their lineage who are, for a variety of reasons, less interesting:

> And when people sing the praises of lineage and say someone is of noble birth, because he can show seven wealthy ancestors, he [i.e., the philosopher] thinks that such praises betray an altogether dull and narrow vision on the part of those who utter them; because of lack of education they cannot keep their eyes fixed upon the whole and are unable to calculate that every man has had countless thousands of ancestors and progenitors, among whom have been in any instance rich and poor, kings and slaves, barbarians and Greeks. (Plato, *Theaet*. 175a)

As a matter of fact, Socrates, in his rebuttal of these claims, comes close to Paul's censure of social and ethnic differentiations (see Gal 3:28), although, differently from Paul, Socrates, in this passage, does not explicitly condemn them as such. Socrates' observation that ethnically pure genealogies are hard to find is also reminiscent of the intention of the author of the Gospel of Matthew, who is keen to mention foreign, non-Jewish women in the genealogy of Jesus; although ultimately descended from Abraham (Matt 1:2), Jesus' lineage runs via disreputable or foreign women such as Tamar and Ruth (Matt 1:3, 5).[6]

Subsequently, as an example of petty and absurd genealogical claims, Socrates mentions those who emphasize their descent from Heracles:

> And when people pride themselves on a list of twenty-five ancestors and trace their pedigree back to Heracles, the son of Amphitryon, the pettiness of their ideas seems absurd to him [i.e., the philosopher]; he laughs at them because they cannot free their silly minds of vanity by calculating that

[6] Cf. U. Luz, *The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew* (trans. J. Bradford Robinson; NTTheol; Cambridge 1995), 26.

> Amphitryon's twenty-fifth ancestor was such as fortune happened to make him, and the fiftieth for that matter. In all these cases the philosopher is derided by the common herd, partly because he seems to be contemptuous, partly because he is ignorant of common things and is always in perplexity.
> (Plato, *Theaet*. 175a–b)

The tension mentioned between the philosophers, who criticize such claims, and "the common herd," which values them, underlines how sensitive people are when their ethnic and genealogical claims are contested. In Plato's *Lysis* a similar example is given of a certain Athenian named Hippothales who, in a poem, stresses his kinship with Heracles in an effort to impress his audience. One of Socrates' interlocutors is extremely critical of Hippothales' claims and characterizes them as "old wives' tales," while Socrates, in his turn, deems Hippothales ridiculous (*Lysis* 205c).

b. *Plutarch*

Among the Greek states which claimed to derive from Heracles the Spartans figure prominently, together with the Macedonian royal family, which also claims lineal descent from Heracles. In several of his writings the middle-platonist philosopher Plutarch (ca. 50–120 CE) comments on the Spartan claims, and shows that one is only regarded to be a true descendant of Heracles if one emulates Heracles' exemplary character. In his *Apophthegmata Laconica* he quotes Lycurgus, the reputed founder of Classical Sparta's laws and so-called *eunomia* ("good order"). According to Plutarch,

> He [i.e., Lycurgus, the lawgiver] made it clear how much instruction contributes for better or worse, saying: "So also in our case, fellow-citizens, noble birth (*eugeneia*), so admired of the multitude, and our being descended from Heracles (*to aph' Hērakleous einai*) does not bestow any advantage, unless we *do* the sort of things for which he was manifestly the most glorious and most noble of all mankind, and unless we practice and learn what is good our whole life long."
> (Plutarch, *Apoph. Lac*. 226A; italics mine)

The message which Lycurgus wishes to convey clearly is that the claim to Heraclid origins is useless unless matched by deeds which resemble those of Heracles. Another illustration of this conviction is found in Plutarch's description of a book on government written by the Spartan general Lysander (d. 385 BCE), in which he even seems to argue that the Spartan kingship should not be hereditary and restricted to the so-called Heraclidae, who were considered to be descendants of Heracles

and comprised both the Agiads (the senior royal house at Sparta) and the Eurypontids (the junior of the two Spartan royal houses), but open to election:

> the citizens should take away the kingship from the Eurypontids and the Agiads and put it up for election, and make their choice from the best men, so that this high honour should belong not to those who were descended from Heracles (*hoi aph' Hērakleous*), but to men like Heracles (*hoi hoios Hēraklēs*), who should be selected for their excellence; for it was because of such excellence that Heracles was exalted to divine honours.
>
> (Plutarch, *Apoph. Lac.* 229F)

This view closely resembles Paul's criticism of Jewish genealogical claims. Just as true Jews are not necessarily ethnically and genealogically related to Abraham through Sarah and Isaac but resemble the attitudes and character traits of these exemplary figures, so true Heraclidae are not those who are descended physically from Heracles but are "men like Heracles" who show similar excellence.

That moral excellence is determinative if someone can count as "a true Heraclid" is also shown in the case of Archidamus, one of the Spartan kings who claimed Heraclid origins. Because he tries to incite an opponent to betray a certain stronghold in exchange for large rewards, he is censured for not being a "true Heraclid" for the following reason; his opponent

> called Archidamus no true Heraclid, since Heracles had gone about killing malefactors, while Archidamus was making malefactors of honest men, in the same way we must say to one that claims the name of gentleman, if he forces matters and presses an impudent request, that his conduct is unseemly and unworthy of his birth and character.
>
> (Plutarch, *Vit. pud.* 535A–B)[7]

The differentiation which we encounter in these various passages between "true Heraclidae," "men like Heracles," and physical descendants of Heracles who are not worthy of the name and therefore "not true Heraclidae" is comparable to Paul's strategy. By inverting the genealogical claims, Paul characterizes universalistic Jews and pagan Greek-Galatian converts to this universalistic, Abrahamic Judaism as "children of the promise, like Isaac" (Gal 4:28), as "children, not of the slave but of the

[7] Cf. also Plutarch, *Reg. imp. apophth.* 192A: "his reply was that Archidamus was not descended from Heracles, for Heracles, as he went about, punished the bad men, but Archidamus made the good men bad."

free woman" (4:31), as opposed to those who are merely *physei Ioudaioi*, those who are "physically speaking Jews" (2:15). In his Letter to the Romans Paul would return to this differentiation between, on the one hand, calling oneself a Jew and being a Jew outwardly and, on the other, being a Jew inwardly (Rom 2:17, 28–29). Or as he states in the same letter, in terminology closely resembling the issues of his Letter to the Galatians:

> For not all Israelites truly belong to Israel, and not all of Abraham's children are his true descendants; but "It is through Isaac that descendants shall be named after you." This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as descendants. (Rom 9:6–8)

Against the background of ethnic and genealogical claims about the true descendants of the important hero figure of Heracles in Greek writings such as those we have analysed above, interesting similarities spring to mind.

c. *Dio Chrysostom*

A final example of this genealogical debate about Heraclid origins may be derived from the writings of Plutarch's contemporary, the Greek orator and popular philosopher Dio Chrysostom (ca. 40–110 CE). Not only the Spartan kings claimed lineal descent from Heracles, the Macedonian royal family did too. In his fourth oration, *De regno iv* (*Kingship 4*), Dio represents Alexander the Great as conversing with Diogenes the Cynic, who tells him that the real king is a son of Zeus, a sonship which—according to Cynic philosophy—shows itself in one's character, and not by military power and world dominion. Dio censures Alexander for his hereditary understanding of kingship, whereas the animal world of the bees shows that kings are made so by nature and have no need of outward badges, and do not inherit this kingship:

> "It is the badge of the bees," he [i.e., Diogenes] replied, "that the king wears. Have you not heard that there is a king among the bees, made so by nature, who does not hold office by virtue of what you people who trace your descent from Heracles call inheritance?"
>
> (Dio Chrysostom, *4 Regn*. 62 [*Or. 4*])

Already at this stage Diogenes seems to include Alexander's genealogical claim to Heraclid origins in his criticism. This comes more clearly to the fore when the conversation between both men becomes even more heated when Diogenes utters the following criticism and forces Alexander to respond:

> "Therefore, O perverse man, do not attempt to be king before you have attained to wisdom. And in the meantime," he [i.e., Diogenes] added, "it is better not to give orders to others but to live in solitude, clothed in a sheepskin." "You," he [i.e., Alexander] objected, "do you bid me, Alexander, of the stock of Heracles, to don a sheepskin—me, the leader of the Greeks and king of the Macedonians?" (Dio Chrysostom, *4 Regn.* 70 [*Or. 4*])

In a similar way to that we encountered in Plutarch, Dio's Diogenes, too, implies that being a true Heraclid means that one emulates the exemplary character and deeds of Heracles rather than claiming to be his physical descendant: "if you will drop your conceit and your present occupations, you will be a king, not in word maybe, but in reality; and you will prevail over all women as well as all men, as did Heracles, whom you claim as an ancestor of yours." (Dio Chrysostom, *4 Regn.* 72 [*Or. 4*])

It is remarkable that Paul's criticism and inversion of Jewish claims of Abrahamic origins is in many respects similar to the Greek philosophical critique of the numerous genealogical claims which Greek individuals or states lay to Heraclid origins. It may well be that Paul was acquainted with such claims and subsequent philosophical criticism. After all, Tarsus itself was reputedly founded by Heracles, and in his thirty-third oration, *Tarsica prior* (*First Tarsic Discourse*), in which he publicly addresses the inhabitants of Tarsus, Dio Chrysostom employs the same kind of critique as in his censure of claims to Heraclid origins by individuals and states. In strong language he inveighs against their moral decay and threatens them with an unexpected, anonymous visit by Heracles to the city he founded:

> neither its name nor its antiquity nor its renown are spared by you. What would you think, if, just as you might reasonably expect (and as men report) that founding heroes or deities would often visit the cities they have founded, invisible to everybody else (both at sacrificial rites and at certain other public festivals)—if, I ask you, your own founder, Heracles, should visit you (attracted, let us say, by a funeral pyre such as you construct with special magnificence in his honour), do you think he would be extremely pleased to hear such a sound? (Dio Chrysostom, *1 Tars.* 47 [*Or. 33*])[8]

It seems likely, then, that Paul must have been aware of the frequent and manifold claims to Heraclid origins made by cities, individuals and states, and also of the philosophical critique of such claims. The criticism which philosophers such as Plato, Plutarch, and Dio Chrysostom issued against those who traced their genealogy to Heracles was frequent and is likely to have attracted Paul's attention. They not only criticize such genealogical

[8] For Tarsus as a Heraclid foundation, see also Dio Chrysostom, *1 Tars.* 1 [*Or. 33*].

claims but sometimes also invert them, in the sense that true Heraclids are those who emulate Heracles' exemplary behaviour, even if they are not genetically related. The same strategy is visible in Paul's Letter to the Galatians, in the second passage on Abraham. It may well be that Paul, as I have already suggested, was familiar with the philosophical critique of Heraclid origins. But it may also be that such ethnic-genealogical debates engendered the same kind of criticism. In any case, Paul's strategy is not without contemporary analogies. Yet the degree to which Paul extends his criticism of the genealogy of Abrahamic origins to include a full-scale review of the ethnic identity of the Jews seems unprecedented.

4. A Second Line of Thought: The Earthly versus the Heavenly Jerusalem—Paul's Appropriation of the Platonic-Stoic Doctrine of Dual Citizenship

Paul not only identifies the Mosaic-Sinaitic Jews with Hagar, but within this line of thought he opens a second line by identifying Hagar in turn with "the present Jerusalem," whereas Sarah is associated with "the Jerusalem above":

> One woman, in fact, is Hagar, from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery. Now *Hagar* is Mount Sinai in Arabia and *corresponds to the present Jerusalem*, for she is in slavery with her children. *But the other woman corresponds to the Jerusalem above*; she is free, and she is our mother.
>
> (Gal 4:24–26)

I shall return to the description of "the present Jerusalem" in terms of slavery (Gal 4:25) later. I would now like to draw attention to the antithesis in this passage between "the present Jerusalem" and "the Jerusalem above." It is the latter which, from Paul's perspective, is described as "our mother." This is remarkable because both Jews and non-Jews would normally regard the present, earthly Jerusalem as the *mētropolis* of the Jews. Both Strabo and Josephus call Jerusalem *mētropolis* in the sense of capital city (Strabo, *Geogr*. 16.2.28; Josephus, *A.J*. 11.160; *B.J*. 2.517, 626; 4.234), whereas Philo calls Jerusalem *mētropolis* in the sense of the mother-city of the Jewish colonies in the Diaspora:

> As for the holy city, I must say what befits me to say. While she, as I have said is my native city (*patris*) she is also the mother-city (*mētropolis*) not of one country Judea but of most of the others in virtue of the colonies sent out at divers times to the neighbouring lands Egypt, Phoenicia, the part of Syria called the Hollow and the rest as well and the lands lying far apart .... And not only are the mainlands full of Jewish colonies but also the most

> highly esteemed of the islands Euboea, Cyprus, Crete. I say nothing of the countries beyond the Euphrates .... So that if my own home-city (*patris*) is granted a share of your goodwill [i.e., the goodwill of Gaius Caligula] the benefit extends not to one city but to myriads of the others situated in every region of the inhabited world whether in Europe or in Asia or in Libya, whether in the mainlands or on the islands, whether it be seaboard or inland. (Philo, *Legat*. 281–283)

Apart from the small difference in meaning, Philo's use of the term *mētropolis* largely agrees with the way Strabo and Josephus apply it, as in all these occurrences the term has a literal meaning and points to the earthly Jerusalem, whether it be as capital city of the Jewish-Judean country or as mother-city of the Jewish colonies. Paul, however, regards the *heavenly* city of Jerusalem as his mother. Paul spiritualizes the *mētropolis* terminology and charges it with the philosophical meaning we encounter in authors like Plato and the Stoics.

a. *Plato, the Stoics, and Seneca*

Paul's antithesis between an earthly and a heavenly city is strongly reminiscent of Plato's reference to the ideal city, which is searched for in vain on earth, and contrasted with the city of one's birth. When in the *Respublica* Socrates is asked whether the "sage," the wise man, would take part in politics, he answers as follows:

> "Yes, by the dog," said I, "in his own city he certainly will, yet perhaps not in *the city of his birth*, except in some providential conjuncture." "I understand," he [i.e., Glaucon] said; "you mean the city whose establishment we have described, *the city whose home is in the ideal*; for I think that it can be found nowhere on earth." "Well," said I, "perhaps there is a pattern of it laid up in heaven for him who wishes to contemplate it and so beholding to constitute himself its citizen. But it makes no difference whether it exists now or ever will come into being. The politics of this city only will be his and of none other." (Plato, *Resp*. 9.592a–b)

The same antithesis between an earthly city, of which one becomes a citizen by birth, and the ideal city in heaven, of which one can become a citizen, is also found in Paul's Letter to the Galatians. The passage from Plato has become very influential in history. As Shorey rightly remarks, "This is one of the most famous passages in Plato, and a source of the idea of the City of God among both Stoics and Christians."[9] It is notably the Stoics who develop a full-scale theory of the cosmic city, as Schofield has demonstrated in his ground-breaking monograph entitled *The Stoic Idea*

[9] Plato, *The Republic* (trans. P. Shorey; LCL; Cambridge, Mass., 1935), 6:414–415n*b*.

of the City (1991).[10] The doctrine was developed by Stoic philosophers such as Zeno and Chrysippus; they emphasized that there is not only the responsibility of one's city of birth, but that one should also develop a moral affinity with, and orientation (*oikeiōsis*) towards all human beings. In this way they shaped the Stoic doctrine of dual citizenship, a notion which was adopted by Roman Stoics such as Seneca. As Morford phrases it, in his study *The Roman Philosophers*:

> The idea of *oikeiōsis* towards all humankind, first articulated by Zeno, was extended by Chrysippus, in his work *On Nature*, to the "community of all rational beings who are citizens of the universe", including gods and humankind. Thus the possibility of dual citizenship was created: one was a citizen of Rome or Athens, but also of the community of all human and divine beings. For Seneca this was the solution to the dilemma of political participation.[11]

In Seneca's *De otio* we encounter the same differentiation as in Plato between the city "to which we have been assigned by the accident of birth," and the other city "which embraces alike gods and men," and belongs to all, and not "to some particular race of men":

> Let us grasp the idea that there are two commonwealths (*Duas res publicas animo complectamur* . . .)—the one, a vast and truly common state, which embraces alike gods and men, in which we look neither to this corner of earth nor to that, but measure the bounds of our citizenship by the path of the sun; the other, the one to which we have been assigned by the accident of birth. This will be the commonwealth of the Athenians or of the Carthaginians, or of any other city that belongs, not to all, but to some particular race of men. Some yield service to both commonwealths at the same time—to the greater and to the lesser—some only to the lesser, some only to the greater. (Seneca, *De otio* 4.1)

Human beings can thus be citizens of both cities at the same time, but do not necessarily render their service to both cities or commonwealths.

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[10] The most important studies are M. Schofield, *The Stoic Idea of the City* (Cambridge 1991; repr. with a new foreword by M.C. Nussbaum and a new epilogue by M. Schofield, Chicago 1999); M. Schofield, "Social and Political Thought," in *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (ed. K. Algra et al.; Cambridge 1999), 739–770; M. Schofield, "Epicurean and Stoic Political Thought," in *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* (ed. C. Rowe and M. Schofield; CHPT 3; Cambridge 2000), 435–456; D. Obbink, "The Stoic Sage in the Cosmic City," in *Topics in Stoic Philosophy* (ed. K. Ierodiakonou; Oxford 1999), 7, 178–195; E. Brown, "The Emergence of Natural Law and the Cosmopolis," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Greek Political Thought* (ed. S. Salkever; New York 2009), 331–363 at 356–360 ("The Cosmos As a Polis").

[11] M. Morford, *The Roman Philosophers: From the Time of Cato the Censor to the Death of Marcus Aurelius* (London 2002), 180–182.

According to Seneca, philosophers such as Zeno and Chrysippus only served the interests of the cosmic city, and in doing so gave expression to their universalism:

> Our school at any rate is ready to say that both Zeno and Chrysippus accomplished greater things than if they had led armies, held public office, and framed laws. The laws they framed were not for one state only, but for the whole human race. Why, therefore, should such leisure at this not be fitting for the good man, who by means of it may govern the ages to come, and speak, not to the ears of the few, but to the ears of all men of all nations (… *nec apud paucos contionetur, sed apud omnis omnium gentium homines*), both those who now are and those who shall be?
>
> (Seneca, *De otio* 6.4)

This passage, in its wish to speak "to the ears of all men of all nations," almost has a Pauline ring to it.

Although strictly speaking Seneca develops a doctrine of dual citizenship, his predilection for the cosmic city also becomes visible in the fact that he criticizes the earthly city and states that the wise man has a problematic relationship to the cities of the earth:

> … he is nowhere to find a state. Besides, no state will ever be available to the fastidious searcher. I ask you to what state should the wise man attach himself? To that of the Athenians, in which Socrates was sentenced to death, from which Aristotle fled to avoid being sentenced? In which all the virtues are crushed by envy? Surely you will say that no wise man will wish to attach himself to this state. Shall the wise man, then, attach himself to the state of the Carthaginians …? From this state also will he flee. If I should attempt to enumerate them one by one, I should not find a single one which could tolerate the wise man or which the wise man could tolerate. (Seneca, *De otio* 8.1–3)[12]

On the basis of such passages, it becomes clear that the Stoic doctrine of dual citizenship entails, at least potentially but often also actually, a strong criticism of the earthly city. This is also the case in the passage from Paul under consideration. According to him, "the present Jerusalem … is in slavery with her children," whereas "the Jerusalem above … is free" (Gal 4:25–26). It seems that Paul's description of the earthly Jerusalem as being "in slavery with her children" also hints at the political situation of Jerusalem in the 50s CE. Although the theme of slavery is introduced with the figure of Hagar, who is Abraham's young female slave (Gal 4:22–24, 30–31), and a important theme of the Letter to

[12] Cf. also Epictetus on Diogenes the Cynic: "for him alone the whole world, and no special place, was his fatherland" (Epictetus, *Diatr*. 3.24.64–66).

the Galatians insofar as both non-Christian Jews and pagan Galatians are considered to be *enslaved* to the elements of the cosmos (4:3),[13] it seems that Paul's emphatic characterization of the earthly and heavenly Jerusalem as enslaved and free (4:25–26) reflects the political situation of his time. I will now draw on a comparable text by Dio Chrysostom who also discusses the Stoic doctrine of two cities within the context of the endangered situation of a particular city. This text consists of Dio's thirty-sixth oration and also shows other points of comparison with Paul.

b. *Dio Chrysostom*

In his thirty-sixth oration, *Borysthenitica* (*Borysthenic Discourse*), Dio Chrysostom tells an audience in his home town that he recently visited the city of Borysthenes, a city in Pontus, on the edges of the Greco-Roman cultural and political sphere. As Dio lets us know, Borysthenes is an ancient Greek foundation (*Borysth.* 18 [*Or. 36*]) but has for some time experienced a steady decline:

> The city of Borysthenes, as to its size, does not correspond to its ancient fame, because of its ever-repeated seizure and its wars. For since the city has lain in the midst of barbarians now for so long a time—barbarians, too, who are virtually the most warlike of all—it is always in a state of war and has often been captured .... For that reason the fortune of the Greeks in that region reached a very low ebb indeed. (*Borysth.* 4–5 [*Or. 36*])

It is this situation of a Greek city in decline, enclosed in largely barbarian territory, that forms the appropriate narrative context for Dio's exposition of the Stoic doctrine of dual citizenship. Within this endangered city, Dio is to expound his views on the existence of two different sorts of cities.

When Dio approaches the city of Borysthenes (*Borysth.* 1 [*Or. 36*]), he is overtaken by a certain Callistratus, who is on his way to the city (*Borysth.* 7 [*Or. 36*]). He is about eighteen years of age, in high repute with his fellow townsmen, interested in oratory and philosophy, and—like practically all the people of Borysthenes—fond of Homer (*Borysth.* 8–9 [*Or. 36*]): "... although in general they no longer speak Greek distinctly, because they live in the midst of barbarians, still almost all at least know the *Iliad* by heart" (*Borysth.* 9 [*Or. 36*]).

Dio tries to broaden Callistratus's horizon, and starts a discussion about the sixth-century BCE poet Phocylides of Miletus (*Borysth.* 10–15

[13] For the enslavement to the elements of the cosmos, see G.H. van Kooten, *Cosmic Christology in Paul and the Pauline School: Colossians and Ephesians in the Context of Graeco-Roman Cosmology* (WUNT 2.171; Tübingen 2003), 59–79.

[*Or. 36*]), unknown to Callistratus and the Borystheneans, and one of whose maxims Dio chooses "since in my opinion he speaks very nobly regarding the city" (*Borysth.* 15 [*Or. 36*]). The maxim from Phocylides reads as follows:

> This too the saying of Phocylides: The law-abiding town, though small and set on a lofty rock, outranks mad Nineveh. (*Borysth.* 13 [*Or. 36*])

This maxim proves to be susceptible of a Stoic interpretation in terms of two cities, as Dio's paraphrase already shows: "… a small city on a rugged headland is better and more fortunate, if orderly, than a great city in a smooth and level plain, that is to say, if that city is conducted in disorderly and lawless fashion by men of folly" (*Borysth.* 13 [*Or. 36*]).

In this way Dio differentiates between orderly and disorderly cities. Dio's suggestion to discuss Phocylides is accepted by Callistratus, while they are being joined by people from within the walls of Borysthenes (*Borysth.* 7, 15 [*Or. 36*]). In fact, Callistratus welcomes the topic of the city as being particularly relevant to him and his fellow citizens, as just the day before the Scythians had made a partially successful raid on the city (*Borysth.* 15 [*Or. 36*]). Despite their circumstances the Borystheneans wish to learn from Dio about the city: "they were such ardent listeners, so truly Greek in character that almost all the inhabitants were present, under arms, eager to hear me" (*Borysth.* 16 [*Or. 36*]). At Dio's suggestion, they enter the heavily guarded city and move to the precincts of the temple of Zeus (*Borysth.* 16–17 [*Or. 36*]).

As soon as quiet is secured, Dio pays them a compliment, saying that in his opinion "they did well, seeing that they dwelt in a city that was ancient and Greek, in wishing to hear about a city" (*Borysth.* 18 [*Or. 36*]). Linking up with the maxim of Phocylides which he quoted outside the gates, Dio gives a preliminary definition of "city":

> … the term "city" is said to mean a group of *anthrōpoi* dwelling in the same place and governed by law. It is immediately evident, therefore, that that term belongs to none of those communities which are called cities but are without wisdom and without law. Consequently not even in referring to Nineveh could the poet use the term "city," since Nineveh is given over to folly. For just as that person is not even an *anthrōpos* who does not also possess the attribute of reason, so that community is not even a city which lacks obedience to law. And it could never be obedient to law if it is foolish and disorderly. (*Borysth.* 20 [*Or. 36*])

There are, then, clearly two sorts of cities, and only the orderly sort of city can claim to be really a city in the proper sense of the definition. In what follows, and in the same vain as Plato and Seneca before him, Dio even

questions whether there are good cities on earth. The two kinds of cities are explicitly defined as "a city of mortal men" and "a city of the blessed gods in heaven," respectively:

> no one knows of a good city made wholly of good elements as having existed in the past, that is, a city of mortal men, nor is it worth while to conceive of such a city as possibly arising in the future, unless it be a city of the blessed gods in heaven .... For that, indeed, is the only constitution or city that may be called genuinely happy—the partnership of god with god; even if you include with the gods also everything that has the faculty of reason .... However, if we take communities of a different kind, though everywhere and in every instance, we may almost say, they are absolutely faulty and worthless as compared with the supreme righteousness of the divine and blessed law and its proper administration.
>
> (*Borysth.* 22–23 [*Or. 36*])

Once Dio gives this definition of the two cities, one of the Borystheneans, a certain Hieroson, "the eldest in the company and held in high esteem" (*Borysth.* 24 [*Or. 36*]), interrupts him, and "makes himself know as one of those inhabitants of Borysthenes who do not only love Homer, but Plato, too." He observes that in his remarks Dio has "touched upon the divine form of government (*hē theia dioikēsis*)" (*Borysth.* 26 [*Or. 36*]) and, under reference to the current threat which the Borystheneans are experiencing from the Scythians, asks him if he could focus on the heavenly city instead of on the earthly, mortal city:

> This, then, is our situation; and if you wish to do us all a favour, postpone your discussion of the mortal city (*hē thnētē polis*)—possibly our neighbours may after all grant us leisure tomorrow, and not compel us to exert ourselves against them as is generally our wont—and tell us instead about that divine city or government, whichever you prefer to call it, stating where it is and what it is like. (*Borysth.* 27 [*Or. 36*])

Dio, of course, is pleased to comply with this request, and continues with his exposition of the Stoic doctrine of the heavenly city. He explains that the Stoics apply the term "city" in a metaphorical way to the cosmos. They can do so because the orderly constitution of the cosmos resembles the orderly arrangement of a city's administration (*Borysth.* 29–30 [*Or. 36*]). According to Dio, some also apply the term "home of Zeus" to the cosmos, but he himself believes that the term "city" is more appropriate (*Borysth.* 36–37 [*Or. 36*]).[14] In his further elaboration on the divine,

[14] For the designation of the cosmic city as "house of Zeus/God," cf. also Pseudo-Paul's Eph 2:19, where pagan Christians, who were outside the *politeuma* of Israel, are now considered to be *oikeioi tou theou*. For an interpretation of Ephesians in the light of the

heavenly city, Dio makes the following two important points. First, the nature of the cosmic, heavenly city appears to be restrictive; not all living beings form part of it, but only those who "have a share in reason and intellect." Secondly, although selective in this sense, membership of the cosmic city is open to people from all social and ethnic backgrounds. This is explicitly contrasted with the practice of an earthly city like that of Sparta, where the Helots, the servile population, are excluded from Spartan citizenship:

> This, then, is the theory of the philosophers, a theory which sets up a noble and benevolent fellowship of gods and men which gives a share in law and citizenship, not to all living beings whatsoever, but only to such as have a share in reason and intellect, introducing a far better and more righteous code than that of Sparta, in accordance with which the Helots have no prospect of ever becoming Spartans, and consequently are constantly plotting against Sparta. (*Borysth.* 38 [*Or. 36*])

By contrast, citizenship of the divine, heavenly city is open to all, regardless of social and ethnic background.

5. Concluding Observations: Depoliticization of Politics and Criticism of Ethnocentrism

There appear to be many points of comparison between the Stoic doctrine of two citizens and Paul's argumentation in Gal 4.

(a) First, the antithesis between "the present Jerusalem," which "is in slavery with her children," and "the Jerusalem above," which "is free" (Gal 4:25–26), resembles the Stoic antithesis between the earthly, "mortal" city and the divine, heavenly city. Often, biblical scholars refer to the Jewish pseudepigrapha as the proper background for Paul's antithesis and state that these writings rework the notion from the book of Exodus that God, during his instruction of Moses, showed him "the pattern of the tabernacle and of all its furniture":

> And have them make me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them. In accordance with all that I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle and of all its furniture, so you shall make it .... And see that you make them according to the pattern for them, which is being shown you on the mountain. (Exod 25:8–9, 40)

Stoic notion of the cosmic city, see van Kooten, *Cosmic Christology*, 175–179; cf. Brown, "Natural Law," 359–360: "The early Christians ... cultivated a worldwide city of god as the cosmopolis of the wise," with reference to Eph 2:20 in n. 66.

According to Dunn, for instance, the echo of this passage in the Jewish pseudepigrapha also sounds in Paul's Letter to the Galatians:

> Here Paul clearly has in mind the strand of Jewish apocalyptic thought which presumed that there was a heavenly Jerusalem, that is, an ideal form of Jerusalem in the purpose of God, waiting, as it were, in heaven to be revealed at the end time, when God's purpose would be completely fulfilled. This was obviously based on Exod. 25:9, 40 (cf. Wisd. Sol. 9:8), where Moses was told to construct the tabernacle in accordance with the pattern shown him on the mountain.[15]

And indeed, Jewish apocalyptic thought does reflect this passage from Exodus. In *Second Baruch*, for instance, the author develops an antithesis between the city which "will be delivered up for a time" (the historical, earthly Jerusalem), and the city which God has carved on the palms of his hands (4:1–2).

There are, however, important differences, I would argue, between the Jewish apocalyptic notion of the new Jerusalem and Paul's stoicizing notion of the heavenly city of Jerusalem. The former is clearly to be seen in an eschatological perspective. According to *Second Baruch* the city engraved on the palms of God's hands "is not this building that is in your midst now; it is that which will be revealed, with me" (4:3). It was prepared from the moment that God decided to create paradise, and was shown to Adam, Abraham, and to Moses on Mount Sinai; "now it is preserved with me—as also paradise" (4:6), to be revealed in the future. This is also the case in *Fourth Ezra*. In a passage which predicts the temporary messianic kingdom and the end of the world, the eschatological manifestation of the new Jerusalem is described as follows: "the city which now is not seen shall appear" (7:26). The city of the new Jerusalem is built at the end of times (8:50–52). In one of Ezra's visions the female figure of the historical Jerusalem disappears and is replaced with a new city on earth: "And I looked, and behold, the woman was no longer visible to me, but there was an established city, and a place of huge foundations showed itself" (*4 Ezra* 10:27). The interpretation of the angel Uriel for Ezra shows that the new Jerusalem, "the city of the Most High" reveals itself on earth at the end of time, on a field which has never been built upon:

> For now the Most High, seeing that you are sincerely grieved and profoundly distressed for her, has shown you the brightness of her glory, and the loveliness of her beauty. Therefore I told you to remain in the field

[15] J.D.G. Dunn, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (BNTC; London 1993), 253.

> where no house had been built, for I knew that the Most High would reveal these things to you. Therefore I told you to go into the field where there was no foundation of any building, for no work of man's building could endure in a place where the city of the Most High was to be revealed.
>
> (*4 Ezra* 10:50–54)

Whereas the new Jerusalem in these Jewish apocalyptic writings is primarily something which is to be eschatologically revealed on earth (cf. also *4 Ezra* 13:36), Paul, like the Stoics, speaks about a present differentiation between an earthly and a heavenly city. Moreover, the notion of a heavenly city is not isolated in Paul but must also underlie his view in the Letter to the Philippians that Christians are citizens of heaven: their *politeuma* is in heaven (Phil 3:20) and consequently they should behave as its citizens (1:27). This clearly runs parallel with the Platonic-Stoic view that there are two commonwealths or two cities, which imply a dual citizenship for those who are also members of the heavenly city.[16] This similarity between the Christian and Platonic Stoic notions of the heavenly city is explicitly acknowledged by the pagan convert to Christianity Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150–216 CE), who writes the following:

> But I shall pray the Spirit of Christ to wing me to my Jerusalem. For the Stoics say that heaven is properly a city, but places here on earth are not cities; for they are called so, but are not. For a city is an important thing, and the people a decorous body, and a multitude of men regulated by law as the church by the word—a city on earth impregnable—free from tyranny; a product of the divine will on earth as in heaven. Images of this city the poets create with their pen. For the Hyperboreans, and the Arimaspian cities, and the Elysian plains, are commonwealths of just men. And we know Plato's city placed as a pattern in heaven.
>
> (Clement, *Strom*. 4.26 [*ANF* 2:441])

Paul's views on the earthly and heavenly Jerusalem, then, seem to incorporate the Stoic notion of two cities.

(b) Secondly, the antithesis between the earthly and the heavenly city gains sharp relief both in Paul's letter and in Stoic thought when the vulnerability and weakness of the earthly city within this pair of opposites is being emphasized. As we have seen, in Dio Chrysostom's thirty-sixth oration, *Borysthenitica* (*Borysthenic Discourse*), the city of Borysthenes, although a Greek foundation, is surrounded by barbarian territory and just the day before has been raided by the Scythians. It is within the

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[16] Paul's acquaintance with this view is easily recognized by classicists. See, e.g., Shorey, who refers to, among other passages, Gal 4:26 and Eph 2:19. See Plato, *The Republic* (Shorey, LCL), 6:414–415n*b*.

heavily guarded gates of this city, in the local temple of Zeus, that Dio speaks about the divine, heavenly city. It is hard to imagine a starker contrast than that between the ideal city of the Stoics and earthly politics. Indeed, as Schofield notes:

> … at the heart of the conception of the mutual society of the gods that Dio has sketched is the idea of a form of common life in which there is no internal strife nor the possibility of defeat by external forces …. This idea is diametrically opposed to the Borystheneans' current situation in every dimension Dio has got us to think of. No wonder they are so attracted to it. As often, the dispossessed prefer the prospect of heaven to political thought.[17]

Perhaps the term "prospect of heaven" in this context does not do full justice to the Stoic notion of the cosmic city as no eschatological reference to the end of times is implied. Rather, this notion is about the "awareness of a heavenly reality," in the sense that apart from an earthly, political situation, there is at the same time an alternative cosmic society, inhabited by the gods and the Stoic sages, which transcends geopolitical commonwealths and cities. But Schofield is right about the way in which Dio maximalizes the contrast between the earthly and heavenly cities by stressing the vulnerability of Borysthenes, which is the ideal background for an exposition of the Stoic doctrine of dual citizenship. The same strategy can be recognized in Paul's description of the present Jerusalem and the Jerusalem above; the former "is in slavery with her children," the latter "is free, and she is our mother" (Gal 4:25–26). Like Borysthenes, Jerusalem is threatened, and even subdued by foreign forces—those of Rome. And in Jerusalem the presence of the Roman forces can be rather intimidating. Although Paul writes his Letter to the Galatians on the threshold between the Claudian and the Neronian eras, the recent history of Caligula and Jerusalem in the early 40s CE will still have been at the back of every Jew's mind. In Paul's description of the present Jerusalem as being in slavery, as opposed to the freedom of the heavenly Jerusalem, we get a rare insight into Paul's view on political issues. In a way very similar to Dio, Paul seems to transcend the confines of earthly politics and to emphasize the freedom which characterizes the heavenly *politeuma*.

(c) Thirdly, there is an interesting tension between the way in which both Dio and Paul transcend the ethnic and political interests of a particular, specific city on earth but, at the same time, still value the importance

[17] Schofield, *Stoic Idea*, 63.

of political vocabulary by speaking of the divine heavenly city and its citizenship. Indeed, as Schofield noted, this political vocabulary is radically transformed. According to him, Stoicism did not advocate

> . . . a world state: a political system in which the unity of all mankind would find expression .... As developed by Chrysippus, the ideal city of Zeno's *Republic* is indeed in a sense a universal community, whose citizens . . . are *kosmopolitai*. However, it is universal not that it includes all mankind, but because it is made up of gods and sages wherever they may be: not a wider community, but a wholly different sort of "community." When Chrysippus uses words like "city" and "law," he intends a radical transformation of their meaning, robbing them of anything ordinarily recognizable as political content. In short, political vocabulary is depoliticized.[18]

This also holds true for Paul. The citizenship which he advocates is a citizenship in heaven. By emphasizing the freedom of the Jerusalem above, despite the politically difficult situation of the present Jerusalem, Paul is able to direct his attention, and that of his readers and communities, to an altogether different reality. This heavenly reality, although described in political vocabulary, is fundamentally depoliticized.

(d) Finally, the depoliticized, universal stature of the heavenly city goes very well together with, and even seems to imply a profound criticism of, ethnicity. We have seen that Seneca emphasizes that the heavenly city is a universal, non-ethnic community, whereas this is not true of the earthly city, "the one to which we have been assigned by the accident of birth. This will be the commonwealth of the Athenians or of the Carthaginians, or of any other city that belongs, not to all, but to some particular race of men" (Seneca, *De otio* 4.1). Although Seneca expounds the idea that there are two commonwealths, and that it is possible to "yield service to both commonwealths at the same time" (4.1), he is very critical of the earthly political sphere. Sages such as Zeno and Chrysippus, who did not hold public office but led an "inactive," "contemplative" life of "leisure," may "govern the ages to come, and speak, not to the ears of the few, but to the ears of all men of all nations (. . . *nec apud paucos contionetur, sed apud omnis omnium gentium homines*), both those who now are and those who shall be" (6.4). The wise man, according to a disillusioned Seneca, will nowhere find a state to which he can attach himself. Neither the Athenian nor the Carthaginian state is an option, and from both he will flee. "If I should attempt to enumerate them one by one, I should not find a single

[18] Schofield, "Social and Political Thought," 768.

one which could tolerate the wise man or which the wise man could tolerate" (8.1–3). The only city to which the sage can attach himself is the heavenly city.

In a similar way Dio Chrysostom lauds the non-ethnic, universal nature of the heavenly city. Whereas the servile population of Sparta, the Helots, are excluded from the city's citizenship, the citizenship of the heavenly city is open to all, regardless of their social and ethnic status, with the only restriction being that they use their reason and intellect in the right way (*Borysth.* 38 [*Or. 36*]).

The same universal, ethnicity-free passion colours Paul's Letter to the Galatians. Already at the climax of the first passage on Abraham in Gal 3, Paul concluded:

> . . . in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise. (Gal 3:26–29)

And, as we have seen, the second passage on Abraham, in Gal 4, also shows the same tendency. The genealogical claims to be a son of Abraham are now countered, in a provocative way, by the statement "that Abraham had *two* sons" (Gal 4:21–22). The question for Paul is not whether one is a son of Abraham, since both Jews and non-Jews can be physical descendants of Abraham, either through Hagar and her son Ishmael, or through Sarah and her son Isaac. If there are two possible genealogical lineages, the actual question is who the *true* son of Abraham is. Paul proposes to solve this question by way of allegorical reasoning. As he had already explained in his first passage on Abraham, according to Paul the true descendants of Abraham emulate Abraham's character, by trusting God as he did:

> Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" [cf. Gen 15:6], so, you see, those who believe are the descendants of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations shall be blessed in you" [cf. Gen 12:3; 18:18]. (Gal 3:6–8)

In his second passage on Abraham, in Gal 4, in which he involves both of Abraham's sons, Paul is now even able to invert the ethnic-genealogical claims in a very poignant manner. Ethnocentric Jews such as Paul's opponents cannot claim genealogical descent from Abraham via Sarah but belong, metaphorically speaking, to the lineage of Hagar.

True "Jews," such as Paul himself and the pagan converts from Galatia whom he wishes to convince with his letter, are those who are descended, again metaphorically speaking, from Sarah. For that reason they do not have to submit themselves to a narrow ethnocentric definition of Judaism. In this way, Paul not only criticizes the dominant, ethnocentric understanding of Judaism but also offers a variety of genealogical claims, which he subsequently inverts and interprets in an allegorical way. As a consequence, it is Hagar through whom ethnocentric Jews are descended from Abraham; they cannot claim to be *the* sons of Abraham as Abraham had two sons. "True Jews" are those who emulate Abraham's true religion, trusting God in his promise to bless the nations through Abraham.

As we have seen, this line of reasoning was also developed by Greco-Roman authors who criticized particular genealogical claims. In Plato's *Theaetetus* Socrates criticizes genealogical claims for their one-sided focus on one particular ancestor, whereas "every man has had countless thousands of ancestors and progenitors, among whom have been in any instance rich and poor, kings and slaves, barbarians and Greeks" (175a). Consequently, the philosopher derides those who claim to be descendants of the hero-god Heracles; their ideas are petty and absurd to him (175a–b). Such claims with regard to Heracles were frequent, issued by individuals, cities and states alike and, as we have seen, continued to draw philosophical criticism. According to Plutarch, the claim of "being descended from Heracles does not bestow any advantage, unless we *do* the sort of things for which he was manifestly the most glorious and most noble of all mankind, and unless we practice and learn what is good our whole life long" (*Apoph. Lac.* 226A). True Heraclids are not those who are descended from Heracles (*hoi aph' Hērakleous*), but men like Heracles (*hoi hoios Hēraklēs*), who show the same excellence as he did (*Apoph. Lac.* 229F).[19] This is the same technique of inverting genealogical claims as we encounter in Paul.

This profound criticism of ethnicity is now crowned by Paul's inclusion of the Stoic doctrine of the earthly and the heavenly city. It is the latter notion, that of the heavenly, supra-ethnic, depoliticized, cosmic city, which disposes of any remaining ethnic inclinations. The earthly Jerusalem, symbolized through the figure of Hagar, is subject to the present political circumstances; she is "in slavery with her children," whereas the true metropolis, the heavenly city, which Paul advocates, is free.

[19] Cf. Plutarch, *Vit. pud.* 535A–B; Dio Chrysostom, *4 Regn.* 72 (*Or. 4*).

CHILDREN OF THE SLAVE WOMAN: THE GNOSTIC CHRISTIAN REINTERPRETATION OF PAUL'S ALLEGORY OF HAGAR AND SARAH

Bas van Os

1. Introduction

The subject of this paper is the reinterpretation of the story of Hagar and Ishmael in gnostic Christianity. At first sight, Hagar and Ishmael seem to be absent in this tradition. Their names are never mentioned in the Nag Hammadi writings or the remnants of gnostic Christian literature preserved in the writings of the early church fathers. But Hagar and Ishmael are present in gnostic Christian reinterpretations of Gal 4. In these reinterpretations, it is not their names that are significant but their status as a slave woman and as a son born of the flesh, as can be seen in the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* (*Exc.* 57), compiled by Clement of Alexandria:

> But Israel is an allegory, the spiritual man who will see God, the lawful son of the faithful Abraham, he who was born of the free woman, not he who was born of the flesh, the son of the Egyptian slave woman.
>
> (Clement of Alexandria, *Exc.* 57)

I will first discuss the allegory of Hagar and Sarah in Gal 4:21–5:1, and the way that Paul connects the barren Sarah with the New Jerusalem of Isa 54:1. Next, I will discuss how early Christian writers re-interpreted this prophecy in the light of the numerical dominance of the Gentiles in the early Christian movement, and then in the light of the growth of the church in relation to the misfortunes of the Jewish people. I will then show how gnostic Christians, and in particular the author of the *Gospel of Philip*, offered an allegorical reading of Isa 54:1 from the perspective of Paul's Letter to the Galatians. I will conclude with Irenaeus' reaction to their interpretation of mainstream Christians as children of the slave woman.

2. The Allegory of Hagar and Sarah

In his Letter to the Galatians, Paul opposes a group of people who argue that the followers of Jesus in Galatia need to observe the law.[1] He describes this conflict as follows:[2]

> 4:21Tell me, you who desire to be subject to the law, will you not listen to the law? 22For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and the other by a free woman: 23One, the child of the slave, was born according to the flesh. The other, the child of the free woman, was born through the promise. 24Now this is an allegory, these women are two covenants: One woman, in fact, is Hagar, from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery. 25Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. 26But the other woman corresponds to the Jerusalem above; she is free, and she is our mother. 27For it is written,
>
> > "Rejoice, barren one, you who bear no children, burst into song and shout, you who are not in labour; for many are the children of the deserted one, more that than the children of the one who has a husband." (Isa 54:1)
>
> 28Now you, my friends, are children of the promise, like Isaac. 29But just as at that time the child who was born according to the flesh persecuted the child who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. 30But what does the Scripture say?
>
> > "Drive out the slave and her child; for the child of the slave will not share the inheritance with the child of the free woman." (Gen 21:10–12)
>
> 31So then, friends, we are children, not of the slave but of the free woman. 5:1For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. (Gal 4:21–5:1)

Paul is afraid that his "little children" will become children of his opponents.[3] That they would turn from Sarah to Hagar and from the heavenly Jerusalem to the earthly Jerusalem, where his opponents probably came from. From this perspective, Paul's choice of Isa 54:1 is understandable. This passage describes Jerusalem in the same words as Sarah is described

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[1] The nature of Paul's opponents is a matter of scholarly debate. The most economic hypothesis, in my opinion, is to assume they were judaizing followers of Christ, related to the "false brothers" in Gal 2:4 and the men of James in Gal 2:12—if not the same.

[2] Translations of Bible texts are taken from the NRSV, sometimes with minor modifications.

[3] See Gal 4:19. Cf. also B. Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Edinburgh 1998), 325–339; B. Roberts Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul* (Louisville, Ky., 2007), 29–39.

in Gen 11:30: "Now Sarai was barren; she had no child." A little earlier, in Isa 51:1–3, Sarah is upheld as a hopeful example for Jerusalem: she is now barren, but the New Jerusalem will have many children. Using Isa 54:1, Paul can connect his opponents from the present Jerusalem with Hagar, in order to demonstrate the difference between believers who are slaves under the law, and those who are children of promise.

3. Reinterpretation of Isa 54:1 by the Early Church Fathers

The allegory of Hagar and Sarah and the prophecy from Isa 54:1 were used over and over again in the context of later conflicts.[4] Such reinterpretations can be typological, as prophetic texts that are later fulfilled, or allegorical, in the sense that the images refer to a different reality.[5] Quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures in the (later) New Testament, like Isa 54:1 in Gal 4, became part of *testimonia* collections that were interpreted typologically as referring to the life of Jesus and the emergence of the church.[6]

In *Apologia i* (*1 Apol.* 53), Justin gives a series of such prophecies that were fulfilled in his days. One of these is Isa 54:1:[7]

> For with what reason should we believe of a crucified man that he is the first-born of the unbegotten God, and himself will pass judgment on the whole human race, if not because we found testimonies concerning him published before he came and was born of man, if not because we saw things that happened accordingly? … And the prophecy in which it was predicted that there should be more believers from the Gentiles than from the Jews and Samaritans, we will produce; it ran as follows:
>
> > "Rejoice, barren one, you who bear no children, burst into song and shout, you who are not in labour; for many are the children of the deserted one, more than the children of the one who has a husband."
> >
> > (Isa 54:1)

[4] Cf. the contribution to this volume by Leemans.

[5] Origen pointed specifically to Gal 4 to justify the practice of allegorical interpretation (*Cels.* 4.44). In opposition, John Chrysostom comments: "Contrary to usage [Paul] calls a type an allegory" (*Hom. Gal.* 4.24).

[6] See M.C. Albl, *"And Scripture Cannot Be Broken": The Form & Function of the Early Christian* testimonia *Collections* (Leiden 1999), 65–69.

[7] Unless otherwise indicated, passages from the early church fathers are quoted after the *ANF*.

> For all the Gentiles were "desolate" of the true God, serving the works of their own hands. (Justin, *1 Apol.* 53)

Justin applies the text to the difference in numbers between the Jewish Christians of his days and those in Gentile churches. In another source from the mid-second century, *2 Clement*, the same prophecy is explained as follows:

> When he said, "Rejoice, barren one who bears no children," he referred to us, for our church was barren before children were given to her. … And when he said, "For the deserted one has many more children than the one who has a husband," [he means] that our people seemed to be outcast from God, but now, through believing, have become more numerous than those who are reckoned to possess God. (*2 Clement* 2)

Who are they, that were reckoned to possess God, but are now less numerous than the Christians? If we accept the early dating of the letter, when early Christianity was still a very small movement, then the author cannot have been not thinking of all the Jews in the Roman Empire, but rather of those Jews that believed Christ. There were still far more Jews than Christians. Jewish Christians, on the other hand, were now outnumbered by Christians from the Gentiles.

It is relevant to take the numerical development of early Christianity into account here. If we apply the numbers collected and calculated by Stark the presence of Christians in Greco-Roman cities grew from about 1 percent in 150 CE, to more than 5 percent in 200 CE and almost 30 percent in 250 CE[8] In the same period, the number of Jews decreased following the three Jewish wars of 70, 115, and 135 CE. It seems that the second Jewish War, in 115–117 CE destroyed the formerly very significant Jewish presence in Alexandria.

From this perspective we can understand a shift in interpretation towards the third century. Clement of Alexandria and Cyprian of Carthage contrast the decrease of the number of Jews with the increase of the number of Christians. In his *Protrepticus*, written towards the end of the second century, Clement combines Isa 54 with the prophecy about John the Baptist, "a voice in the desert":

[8] See R. Stark, *Cities of God: The Real Story of How Christianity Became an Urban Movement and Conquered Rome* (San Francisco 2006). I have taken the larger part of the total number of Christians in these years (p. 67), and divided these by the total urban population of the empire, of about 3 million people (p. 60).

> John is the forerunner, and that voice is the precursor of the *Logos*; an inviting voice, preparing for salvation; a voice urging men to the inheritance of the heavens, and through which the "barren" and the "deserted" is childless no more. … For many were the children of the mother of the noble race, but the Hebrew woman, once blessed with many children, was made childless because of unbelief. The barren woman receives the husband, and the desert the husbandman; both become mothers through the *Logos*, the one of fruits, the other of believers. (Clement of Alexandria, *Protr*. 1)

Although Clement too uses the prophecy from Isa 54, he does not forget the link with Abraham's offspring that we find in Gal 4:

> And if to Abraham it was counted as righteous because he believed, and if we are the seed of Abraham, then we too must believe through hearing. For we are Israelites, not convinced by signs but by hearing. Therefore, it is said:
>
> > "Rejoice, barren one, you who bear no children burst into song and shout, you who are not in labour; for many are the children of the deserted one, more than the children of the one who has a husband." (Isa 54:1)
>
> … This is spoken to those who are called from among the nations, that were once "barren," formerly destitute of this husband, the *Logos*,—formerly "deserted" of the bridegroom.
>
> (Clement of Alexandria, *Strom*. 2.6)

In *Treatise XII*, Cyprian provides a series of *testimonia* with explanations. In the twentieth *testimonium*, he quotes Isa 54:1, to show "that the church that before had been barren would have more children from among the Gentiles than what the synagogue had before, …." In his comments he seems to take into account Gal 4, where Isaac is portrayed as the child born of the promise:

> Thus also to Abraham, when his former son was born of a slave woman, Sarah remained barren for a long time. But late in old age, she gave birth to her son Isaac, of a promise, who was the type of Christ. Thus Jacob too received two wives. The elder was Leah, with weak eyes she is a type of the synagogue. The younger was the beautiful Rachel, a type of the church, who also remained barren for a long time, and then brought forth Joseph, who was a type of Christ as well.
>
> (Cyprian, *Treatise XII*, testimonium 20)

4. Gnostic Christian Reinterpretation of Isa 54:1 and Gal 4

As gnostic Christians were less numerous than Jews and mainstream Christians,[9] they favoured a different interpretation of Isa 54:1. A good example can be found in the second-century Naassene sermon preserved by Hippolytus:

> And the Phrygians style him, he says, "very fruitful" also. Because, says he: "more numerous are the children of the deserted one, than those of her who has a husband," in as much as they become immortal by being born again, and abide forever in great numbers, even though the ones that are produced may be few. But carnal ones, he says, are all corruptible, even though very many are produced. For this reason, he says, "Rachel wept for her children and would not be comforted." She had sorrow over them, says he, for she knew "that they are not." (Hippolytus, *Haer*. 5.8.36–38)

Whereas Cyprian would later see both Sarah and Rachel as the mother of the church, the Naassene preacher points out that carnal Rachel cried for her children and would not be comforted, "for she knew," he says, "that they are not." Only spiritual offspring counts. Lancelotti has compared the exegesis of Clement and the Naassene sermon on this passage.[10] She believes that both may go back to the same "anthologies of scriptural references," and that both were influenced by Paul's discussion in Gal 4. Another gnostic Christian source from the second century, excerpted by Clement of Alexandria,[11] explicitly builds on the letters of Paul:

> Therefore many are material [people], but not many are psychic, and few are spiritual. Now the spiritual is saved by nature, but the psychic has free will, and has the capacity for both faith and incorruptibility, as well as for unbelief and corruption according to its own choice; but the material perishes by nature. When, therefore, the psychic "are engrafted on the olive tree" into faith and incorruptibility and share "the fatness of the olive tree," and when "the Gentiles come in," then "thus shall all Israel" (Rom 11:17–26).

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[9] Typically, early gnostic Christians distinguish the gnostic from the larger group. One apostle who sees, versus the many who do not see. Or, in the quote preserved in Clement of Alexandria, *Exc*. 56b below: "many are material, but not many are psychic, and few are spiritual."

[10] M.G. Lancellotti, *The Naassenes: A Gnostic Identity among Judaism, Christianity, Classical and Ancient Near Eastern Traditions* (FARG 35; Münster 2000), 308–312.

[11] The present passage is assumed not to be excerpted from Theodotus, but from another Valentinian source.

> But Israel is an allegory, the spiritual man who will see God, the lawful son of the faithful Abraham, he who was born of the free woman, not he who was born of the flesh, the son of the Egyptian slave woman
>
> (Gal 4:21–31).

> Therefore from the three species a [natural] formation of the spiritual element happens to one, and a change of the psychic from slavery to freedom happens to the other. (Clement of Alexandria, *Exc.* 56b, 57)

Here we see that the gnostic Christian is Isaac, the son of the free woman who is saved by nature. Ishmael, the son of the Egyptian slave woman, is as the psychic who can gain his freedom through faith.

5. The Reinterpretation of the Allegory of Hagar and Sarah in the *Gospel of Philip*

As Pagels has pointed out, there are a number of possible links between Paul's Letter to the Galatians and the *Gospel of Philip*.[12] In the present paper, however, I will focus mainly on the reinterpretation of the allegory of Hagar and Sarah and the associated metaphors: the status of sons and slaves, and the status of the two mothers in relation to Isaiah's prophecy about the old and the new Jerusalem.[13]

5.1. *Sons and Slaves*

As can be seen in the passages below, two paragraphs of the *Gospel of Philip* (*Gos. Phil.* 2, 37) have a similar understanding of the metaphor of sons and slaves as Gal 4:1–2:

> My point is this: heirs, as long as they are minors, are no better than slaves, though they are the owners of all the property; but they remain under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. (Gal 4:1–2)

> 2. The slave only asks to be free and does not ask for the domain of his lord. But the son,—not only that he is son, but the inheritance of the father he claims.

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[12] Galatians has been frequently quoted or alluded to in gnostic Christian literature. See E. Pagels, *The Gnostic Paul: Gnostic Exegesis of the Pauline Letters* (Philadelphia 1975), 101–114.

[13] Possible links that are not discussed in this paper include: (a) the ethnic and social categories in *Gos. Phil.* 49, which may be connected to the pairs in Gal 3:28; (b) the expressions "to crucify the cosmos" in *Gos. Phil.* 53 and "to crucify the flesh" in Gal 5:24; (c) the biting and devouring of the "animals" that are not gnostic Christians in *Gos. Phil.* 58, which may be connected to the warning in Gal 5:15; and (d) the concept of being "clothed" in baptism in *Gos. Phil.* 101 and Gal 3:27.

> 37. That which is of the father will be the possessions of the son. But regarding the son: as long as he is small he is not entrusted with his possessions. When he has become a man, his father will give him all his possessions. (*Gos. Phil.* 2, 37)[14]

The point of both passages is that, as long as the son is minor, there is not always a visible difference between a house-slave, who could rise to positions of responsibility in the estate of a "lord," and a son—I note that both the servant and the son could be addressed as *pais*.

For Paul the inheritance that was promised to Abraham can be likened to a will (Gal 3:15). After his death, Abraham's inheritance was not given to Israel, as they were all still minors and slaves (4:1). But when Christ came the promise was inherited (3:16). Those who are "in Christ," become heirs to the same promise (3:26, 29). Paul compares his opponents and their followers to Hagar and Ishmael, who have to be driven out so that they do not inherit with Sarah's son Isaac (4:30).

I suggest that Paul's use of "Christ" is paralleled in *Gos. Phil.* 3, where the dead ones are those who still live under the law, whereas they come alive if they inherit from Christ, the Living One:

> Those who inherit from the dead ones, they too are dead, and they are heirs from the dead. Those who inherit from the Living One, they are alive; and they inherit from the Living One and from the dead ones. Those who are dead do heirs of no-one. For how shall one who is dead inherit? If the dead one inherits from the Living One, he shall not die; to the contrary: the dead one will rather come alive. (*Gos. Phil.* 3)

Paul argues that he and his audience were slaves to the *stoicheia tou kosmou* (a concept reflected in *Gos. Phil.* 11, 13), and not yet adopted by their father. But this changed because of Christ's redemption, turning slaves into children. Something similar is implied by *Gos. Phil.* 6: they were fatherless Hebrews (as is stated in *Gos. Phil.* 17, the *Gospel of Philip* uses the word "Hebrew" for mainstream Christians). This notion goes back to the idea in Gal 4 that those who are under the law are children from Hagar. Slave women could not legally marry, nor refuse intercourse with their master.[15] Their children were legally fatherless, as ancient law did not recognize slaves as having fathers.[16] In other words, they are orphans. When, therefore, the *Gospel of Philip* calls a Hebrew an orphan, this is the same as saying that a mainstream Christian is a slave. At

[14] Translations of passages from the *Gospel of Philip* are by the present author.
[15] J. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (New York 2002), 21–29.
[16] Glancy, *Slavery*, 4.

the same time, when a Hebrew is transformed into a true Christian, he is not merely set free but he receives father and mother. Apart from receiving God for a father, he receives Sarah for a mother instead of Hagar. Finally, both texts acknowledge that people are transformed when Christ redeems them:

> So with us; while we were minors, we were enslaved to the *stoicheia tou kosmou*. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. (Gal 4:3–5)

> 13. The rulers [of the *kosmos*] … wished to take the free one and make him their slave forever.
>
> 6. In the days that we were Hebrews, we were orphans, having our mother. But when we became Christians we received father and mother.
>
> 9. Christ came, for some indeed to buy them, but for others to save them, others to ransom them. (*Gos. Phil.* 13, 6, 9)

Paul sees Ishmael as the son born according to the flesh, and Isaac as the son born according to the promise of God. The implication is that the believer who is redeemed by Christ, is born again as a son of the promise. Something similar can be observed in *Gos. Phil.* 30:

> One, the child of the slave, was born according to the flesh; the other, the child of the free woman, was born through the promise. (Gal 4:23)

> Those who are born in the *cosmos* are all born in the physical (world). And in [the place] where they were born the others [eat]. (But) Man [receives] food from the promise from above. If he [were born] from the mouth [of God]—where the *logos* comes from—, he would eat from the mouth and he would become perfect. (*Gos. Phil.* 30)

Both Paul and the *Gospel of Philip* warn against the possibility of again assuming the yoke of slavery:

> For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. (Gal 5:1)

> He, who is a slave against his will, will be able to become free. He, who has been made free by the grace of his lord and sells himself into slavery, will no longer be able to become free. (*Gos. Phil.* 114)

The *Gospel of Philip* also has an admonition not to harvest in this cosmos in § 7. The parallel of this text can be found in Gal 6:9:

> Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. So let us

> not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. (Gal 6:7–9)

> Those who sow in the winter, harvest in the summer. The winter is the *kosmos*; the summer is the other *aiōn*. Let us sow in the *kosmos*, so that we shall harvest in the summer. Therefore it is necessary for us not to pray in the winter. Out of the winter the summer (comes forth). (*Gos. Phil.* 7)

5.2. *Mothers*

We already saw a change of mothers in *Gos. Phil.* 6, where the slave mother is replaced by a free father and mother:

> In the days that we were Hebrews, we were orphans, having our mother. But when we became Christians we received father and mother. (*Gos. Phil.* 6)

The identity of the free-born mother of the disciples is referred to in *Gos. Phil.* 34–37. She is the Holy Spirit (34) who is also called Sophia (35). She is also the mother of the angels:

> Sophia, who is called "the barren," is "the mother of the angels" and "the partner of the saviour."[17] (*Gos. Phil.* 55)

For these gnostic Christians the children of Sophia are "born" as children of the Father when spiritual humans are united with their counterpart angels (see *Gos. Phil.* 26). When people are "offering" (which is probably connected with baptism), they are "salted"[18] with Sophia (see *Gos. Phil.* 35).[19] Before Christ came, however, Sophia was barren like Sarah in Gal 4.

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[17] This line was incorrectly punctuated in early translations, assigning the second title to Mary Magdalene. Both titles, however, are given to Sophia in, e.g., *Eugnostos* and the *Sophia of Jesus Christ*, where Sophia is called the sister and consort of Man, and the Mother of All (e.g., NHC III,*3*–*4*.81.23; 82.5, 21; 88.7; 101.16; 104.11, 18; 106.17, 22; 112.‹7›, 19; 113.14; NHC V,*1*.8.31; 9.5); the combination of mother and partner of the Saviour is found in NHC III,*4*.114.15 and in Hippolytus, *Haer.* 6.343.

[18] In a preparatory rite for baptism in the West, catechumens were signed with the cross and received salt as a symbol of purification and preservation unto the day of their baptism. Its full description by John the Deacon, *Ad Senarium* 3, is late, but—with the expression "salt of wisdom" (Sophia)—very to the point: "Now that he is a catechumen he will receive blessed salt, with which he is signed, because just as all flesh is seasoned and preserved by salt, so too the mind, sodden and soft as it is from the waves of the world, is seasoned by the salt of wisdom [i.e., Sophia] and of the preaching of the word [i.e., *Logos*] of God."

[19] Cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.6.1. Here, the "salt" and the "light of the world" from Matt 5:13–14 refer to the spiritual substance that has been sent forth from Sophia to unite with the psychic in baptism, in order to be instructed together.

This can also be seen in *Gos. Phil.* 36:[20]

> And Sophia is "barren," "[without] children." Therefore she is called ["de-ser]ted," inasmuch as ‹she is› salt. Where they will [become] like such [children],[21] the Holy Spirit [will give birth to them], and "many are her children." (*Gos. Phil.* 36)

The same titles that were used for Sarah and the new Jerusalem in Gal 4:27 and Isa 54:4, are used here for Sophia: she is barren and deserted. The *Gospel of Philip* sees gnostic Christians as the many children of Sarah,[22] and Sarah as Sophia. It is interesting to note that there was a Jewish precedent for this. Philo identified her as Virtue and Wisdom (Sophia):[23]

> Most paradoxically, Moses calls her "barren" on the one hand, and on the other hand blessed with numerous offspring. (Philo, *Congr.* 3)

Philo identifies Hagar in a positive sense as the study of the arts and sciences (grammar, geometry, astronomy, rhetorica and dialectica, music etc.). These "secular" studies, he sees as preliminary and auxiliary to the acquisition of divine wisdom.[24]

Paul on the other hand, creates an opposition between divine and cosmic wisdom, which we also see in the *Gospel of Philip*:

> My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God. Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. (1 Cor 2:4–7)

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[20] For this tentative reconstruction of this damaged passage, I refer to my dissertation: L.K. van Os, *Baptism in the Bridal Chamber: The* Gospel of Philip *as a Valentinian Baptismal Instruction* (Ph.D. diss., University of Groningen 2007).

[21] Cf. Matt 18:3: "… unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

[22] Gal 4:27 gives a comparative, which is not reflected here in *Gos. Phil.* 36. We do find that comparative, however, in *Gos. Phil.* 28: "The Man from heaven has many more children than the Man from the earth. If the children of Adam are numerous, even though they die, how much more the children of the perfect Man. These do not die, but are being born every time." See also the discussion of the Naassene sermon above.

[23] Cf. A.P. Bos, *Geboeid door Plato: Het christelijk geloof bekneld door het glinsterend pantser van de Griekse filosofie* (Kampen 1996), 20–36. See also the parallel between *Gos. Phil.* 17, where the *Gospel of Philip* uses the title "the virgin that no power defiled" for the Holy Spirit (typified by Mary), and Philo, *Fug.* 51, where this is said of Sophia.

[24] See also the contribution to the present volume by Abraham P. Bos.

> 38. O wanderers! Those who are born of the spirit, wander off again because of it. Therefore: by one and the same wind [= spirit], the fire is kindled and extinguished.[25]
>
> 39. Echamoth and Echmoth are two different (things). Echamoth is simply Sophia [Wisdom]. But Echmoth is the Sophia [Wisdom] {of death, which is the one} who knows death, who is called "little Sophia [Wisdom]." …
>
> 42. First adultery came, afterwards murder. And he [i.e., Cain] was begotten in adultery, for he was the son of the snake. For that reason he became a murderer, like his father, and he killed his brother. (*Gos. Phil.* 38, 39, 42)

The *Gospel of Philip* does not call Hagar by name, but we can see how she is present in the allegorical interpretation of the author. Whereas Sophia took the place of Sarah, the Wisdom of death took the place of Hagar. This lower Sophia is a negative spirit from the days of creation. She is the breath (= spirit) of the devil. Because the serpent breathed his spirit into Eve, Cain was born.[26] It seems that *Gos. Phil.* 42 is based on Jesus' polemic against the Pharisees in John 8:30–59, where Jesus calls them "sons of the devil," who was "a murderer from the beginning." As in the *Gospel of Philip* and in Galatians, the debate in John 8 is about the true sons of Abraham (8:33), and about the question who are sons and who are slaves (8:35–36). In Heracleon's comment on John 8:44 we see how this can be applied to the psychics:

> These things were spoken not to the natural earthbound sons of the Devil but to the *psychikoi* who by choice become sons of the Devil; from being such [psychics] by nature, some can also by choice become sons of God. (Heracleon, *apud* Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 20.24.213)

In other words, the psychic, or mainstream Christians can choose to become sons of the Devil who turn against their brethren, like Cain and Ishmael did. Both are expelled in the biblical narrative. In Paul's words in Gal 4:29:

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[25] Here, the *Gospel of Philip* reworks John 3:8 to indicate that the wind can lead both to life and to death. In *Gos. Phil.* 109 the two winds are the Holy Spirit and the spirit of the cosmos. The question in *Gos. Phil.* 109 is which spirit is received when a Christian is baptized. The *Gospel of Philip* warns that mainstream Christians may in fact receive the Sophia of death when they are baptized.

[26] In *Val. Exp.* 38.21–27, Adam brings forth this race from Cain because a negative power breathed into him. Contrary to J.D. Turner in C.W. Hedrick, ed., *The Coptic Gnostic Library: Nag Hammadi codices XI, XII, XIII* (NHS 28; Leiden 1990), I suggest restoring ⲁ[ⲡⲇⲓⲁⲃⲟⲗⲟ]ⲥ instead of ⲁ[ⲡⲇⲏⲙⲓⲟⲩⲣⲅⲟ]ⲥ. This gives a better reading in the context: "Adam sowed him [i.e., the devil] [into his offspring]. Therefore he acquired sons who angered one another. And Cain killed Abel his brother, for the *devil* had breathed into *him* [i.e., Adam]" (line 22).

> At that time the son born of the flesh persecuted the one born of the spirit. It is the same now. But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son" (Gen 21:10). (Gal 4:29)

Gnostic Christians, like the author of the *Gospel of Philip*, used Gal 4 to distinguish between two types of Christians within early Christianity: gnostic and mainstream Christians. As in the allegorical interpretation of Philo, Sarah becomes the type of the divine Sophia, and Isaac of the spiritual man. By implication, Ishmael came to stand for mainstream Christians that were still "enslaved" by the laws of the Creator of the cosmos. His mother Hagar, the slave woman, came to stand for worldly wisdom that ends in death.

6. Reaction from Irenaeus

Irenaeus favours a typological interpretation of the Hebrew bible. In his *Epideixis tou apostolikou kērygmatos* (*Epid*. 94), Irenaeus gives his own interpretation of Isa 54:1:[27]

> Through the new calling, then, a change of heart occurs in the Gentiles, through the *Logos* of God, when he was incarnate and tented among men, as his disciple John also says: "And the *Logos* became flesh and dwelt among us." For this reason the church bears as fruit so great a number of the saved; for it is no longer an intercessor, Moses, nor an angel, Elijah, but the Lord himself who saves us, bestowing a greater number of children on the church than on the synagogue, as Isaiah announced, saying: "Rejoice, barren one, who did not bear children,"—and barren is the Church, which in former times, did not present any children at all to God—"break forth and cry out, you who were not in labour; for many are the children of the deserted one, more than her who has a husband" (Isa 54:1)—and the former synagogue has a husband: the law. (Irenaeus, *Epid*. 94)

He argues both against a completely "historical" interpretation by Jewish exegetes (*Haer*. 5.33.3), as if these words do not refer to Christ and the church, as well as against a wholly "allegorical" interpretation by gnostic Christians (5.35.1), as if they do not refer to flesh-and-blood human beings. The exposition of Galatians seems to have been prominent in Irenaeus' debate with gnostic Christians. Irenaeus argues, against the Valentinians, that Abraham's true children in Gal 3 represent the church.[28] In

[27] Translation: J. Behr, *On the Apostolic Preaching* (Crestwood, N.Y., 1997).

[28] In *Haer*. 5.35.2: "For this seed [of Abraham] is the church, which receives the

that same section, he also argues against the Valentinian understanding of the heavenly Jerusalem in Gal 4:26–27 as an "erratic Aeon," namely Sophia.[29] In *Haer*. 1.10.4, Irenaeus claims that the "church" throughout the world can better explain doctrine than gnostic Christians do. For that reason, he wants the "church" to speak out,

> . . . and not be silent as to how it is that God has made the Gentiles, whose salvation was despaired of, fellow-heirs and of the same body and partakers with the saints, . . . and proclaim in what sense he says: "that is a people who was not a people; and she is beloved who was not beloved," and in what sense he says that: "more are the children of the deserted, than of her who has a husband." (Irenaeus, *Haer*. 1.10.4)

Irenaeus clearly does not want his gnostic Christian opponents to designate his community as children of the slave woman.

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adoption to God through the Lord, as John the Baptist said, for 'God is able to raise up children to Abraham from stones.' This is also what the apostle says in the Epistle to the Galatians: 'But you, brethren, like Isaac are children of the promise.' And again, in the same epistle, he plainly declares that they who have believed in Christ do receive Christ, the promise to Abraham, when he says: 'The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Now he does not speak of seeds, as if of many. He speaks of one, 'and to your seed,' which is Christ' (Gal 3:16). And again, confirming his former words, he says: 'Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know, therefore, that they who are of faith are the children of Abraham. But the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, declared to Abraham beforehand 'in you all nations shall be blessed.' So then those of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham' (Gal 3:6–9). Thus, then, they who are of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham, and these are children of Abraham."

[29] Cf. Irenaeus, *Haer*. 1.5.3.

"COME OUT OF YOUR COUNTRY AND YOUR KINSFOLK": ABRAHAM'S COMMAND AND ASCENT OF THE SOUL IN THE *EXEGESIS ON THE SOUL* (NHC II,6)

Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta

1. Introduction

Ever since Homer immortalized it in the *Odyssey*, Odysseus' journey back home has become *the* symbol for the return to one's fatherland. Probably due to the undeniable allegorical dimension of the Homeric poem, already recognized by Aristotle in the *Poetica*,[1] but certainly also due to the fact that, as the motto has it, *habent sua fata libelli*, Odysseus' myth has been interpreted throughout history in many different ways.

Plotinus in the third century CE already focused on Odysseus' rejection of the sensual attractions of Circe and Calypso.[2] For him Odysseus' journey back home was a departure from the world of the senses, from the externalities that keep us attached to the flux of the tangible world, in order to take the flight to the Fatherland, to the place where we come from, where the Father is.

Plotinus did not exhaust all possible interpretations, however, and in the Middle Ages Dante focused not on what he rejected and regained, but on what Odysseus lost with his arrival. In fact, Odysseus' thirst for knowledge made him abandon his beloved house and family, to die at sea far away from home.[3] Tennyson's poem "Ulysses," in its turn, focuses instead on Odysseus' will and capacity to deal with the obstacles in

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[1] Aristotle, *Poet*. 1459b, which describes the *Odyssey* as ἠθική.

[2] See Plotinus, *Enn*. 1.6.8: "'Let us flee then to the beloved Fatherland': this is the soundest counsel. But what is this flight? How are we to gain the open sea? For Odysseus is surely a parable to us when he commands the flight from the sorceries of Circe or Calypso—not content to linger for all the pleasure offered to his eyes and all the delight of sense filling his days."

[3] Dante Alighieri, *Divina commedia*, Inferno 26.90–105: "Quando / mi diparti' da Circe, che sottrasse / me più d'un anno là presso a Gaeta, / prima che sì Enea la nominasse, / né dolcezza di figlio, né la pieta / del vecchio padre, né il debito amore, / lo qual dovea Penelopè far lieta, / vincer poter dentro da me l'ardore / ch'i'ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto, / e degli vizii umani e del valore; / ma misi me per l'alto mare aperto / sol con un legno e con quella compagna / picciola dalla qual non fui diserto. / L'un lito e l'altro

his path. The final verse of the poem ("To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield"), properly summarizes this late romantic interpretation of the motif.[4] Differently again, Cavafy's "Ithaka," in the twentieth century, focuses not on Odysseus or on Ithaka but on the trip itself.[5]

Something similar has happened with the first verse of the section of Genesis we are dealing with in this volume. God's command to Abraham in Gen 12:1 to leave his country, his people, and his father's house has been allegorically interpreted in a variety of contexts. Philo, Origen, and Didymus the Blind are just some examples, and it goes without saying that in each case the interpretations imply different conceptual frameworks. As in the case of Odysseus' myth, different authors have made use of the symbolic value of God's commandment in order to apply a personal allegorical interpretation of the passage.

This is also the case with the text I intend to analyze, the *Exegesis on the Soul* (*Exeg. Soul*), a Nag Hammadi text that, as a matter of fact, combines the motif of Odysseus' journey home with the commandment given to Abraham.[6] A closer examination of the text's conceptual background will help us to discover the allegorical interpretation the author is applying to the text and, at the same time, to reveal its differences when compared to other apparently parallel uses of the biblical passage. Within this purpose my exposition is organized into three sections. The first part includes an initial approach to the *Exegesis on the Soul* that provides a conceptual framework for our study. The second compares it with some other extant allegorical interpretations, mainly those by Philo, and the third attempts to draw some conclusions regarding the cosmological and anthropological views of our text.

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vidi infin la Spagna, / fin nel Morrocco, e l'isola de' Sardi, / e l'altre che quel mare intorno bagna."

[4] First published in A. Tennyson, *Poems* (2 vols.; London 1842), 1:vii, 233; 2:vii, 231.

[5] C. Cavafy, *Ποιήματα* (*1897–1933*) (Athens 1989), 27.

[6] *Exeg. Soul* (NHC II,6) was edited and translated by B. Layton and W.C. Robinson, "The Expository Treatise on the Soul," in *On the Origin of the World, Expository Treatise on the Soul, Book of Thomas the Contender* (vol. 2 of *Nag Hammadi Codices II,2–7, together with XIII,2*, Brit. Lib. Or.4926(1), and P.OXY. 1, 654, 655: With Contributions by Many Scholars*; ed. B. Layton; NHS 21; Leiden 1989), 135–169. See also H. Bethge, "Die Exegese über die Seele … eingeleitet und übersetzt vom Berliner Arbeitskreis für koptisch-gnostische Schriften," *TLZ* 101 (1976): 93–104; J.M. Sevrin, *L'exégèse de l'âme (NH II,6)* (BCNHT 9; Québec 1983); M. Scopello, introd., trans., and comm., *L'exégèse de l'âme: Nag Hammadi Codex II,6* (NHS 25; Leiden 1985). See now C. Kulawik, *Die Erzählung über die Seele (Nag-Hammadi-Codex II,6)* (TUGAL 155; Berlin 2006).

2. The *Exegesis on the Soul*

The *Exegesis on the Soul* is the sixth tractate of Nag Hammadi Codex II.[7] It was probably composed in Greek around 200 CE and in it the anonymous author provides an exhortation to otherworldliness that combines narrative and paraenesis, and which receives support from frequent quotations, mostly from the Old Testament but also from Homer.[8] The text presupposes the gnostic worldview and as its name suggests it focuses exclusively on the soul's nature and fate, which includes an account of her fall into materiality (κάθοδος) as well as of the possible recovery of her pristine condition (ἀνάβασις).[9]

Descent and Ascent of the Soul

As far as the causes that determined the soul's exile on earth are concerned, the treatise is not wholly consistent. The opening, for example, presents the soul as a victim and states that when she "*fell* down into a body and came to this life then she *fell* into the hands of many robbers."[10] In spite of this and other passages that seem to exonerate the soul of responsibility for her present condition,[11] there are other sections that instead seem to make her liable for her fate,[12] such as the assertion that

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[7] Numerous interesting commentaries and articles: see, e.g., W.C. Robinson, "The Exegesis on the Soul," *NovT* 12 (1970): 102–117; G.W. MacRae, "A Nag Hammadi Treatise on the Soul," in *Ex orbe religionum: Studia Geo Widengren XXIV mense apr. MCMLXXII quo die lustra tredecim feliciter explevit oblata ab collegis, discipulis, amicis, collegae magistro amico congratulantibus* (ed. J. Bergman et al.; SHR 21, 22; Leiden 1972), 471–479; J.-E. Ménard, "L'évangile selon Philippe et l'Exégese de l'âme," in *Les textes de Nag Hammadi: Colloque du Centre d'histoire des religions, Strasbourg, 23–25 octobre 1974* (ed. J.-E. Ménard; NHS 7; Leiden 1975), 56–81.

[8] On the use of quotations in *Exeg. Soul*, see P. Nagel, "Die Septuaginta-Zitate der koptisch-gnostischen '*Exegese über die Seele*' (Nag Hammadi Codex II)," *APF* 22/23 (1974): 249–269; R. McL. Wilson, "Old Testament Exegesis in the Gnostic *Exegesis on the Soul*," in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of Pahor Labib* (ed. M. Krause; NHS 6; Leiden 1975), 217–224; M. Scopello, "Les '*testimonia*' dans le traité de '*L'exégèse de l'âme*' (Nag Hammadi, II,6)," *RHR* 191 (1977): 159–171; M. Scopello, "Les citations d'Homère dans le traité de *L'exégèse de l'âme*," in *Gnosis and Gnosticism: Papers Read at the Seventh International Conference on Patristic Studies (Oxford, September 8th–13th 1975)* (ed. M. Krause; NHS 8; Leiden 1977), 3–12.

[9] J. Helderman, "Anachorese zum Heil," in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of Pahor Labib* (ed. M. Krause; NHS 6; Leiden 1975), 40–55.

[10] *Exeg. Soul* 127.25–26.

[11] *Exeg. Soul* 127.22–128.1; 132.20.

[12] *Exeg. Soul* 128.35–129.5; 137.5.

"many are the afflictions that have come upon her because she *abandoned* her house."[13]

The issue is not irrelevant, since the understanding of the ultimate explanation of the soul's fall from its divine origin might provide us with a better insight both into the genesis and the affiliation of the text. The lack of clarity regarding the process involved in the soul's degradation is not exclusive to the *Exegesis on the Soul*, however. The *descensus animae* was the problem *par excellence* in Late Antiquity, a period in which the dualistic approach to reality was ubiquitous. Festugière's catalogue, which relies on Iamblichus' *De anima* (3rd–4th cent.), lists the numerous solutions presented for the problem and is witness to the seriousness of the issue the authors were dealing with.[14] If the soul was originally divine, how can we explain the fact that it now lives degraded in the realm of change, subject to defilement at "the hands of many robbers"—to use the expression in the *Exegesis on the Soul*?[15]

In spite of the lack of clarity concerning the causes that produced the fall, of the two groups, optimistic and pessimistic, included in Festugière's approach, the *Exegesis on the Soul* clearly belongs to the latter, since it offers a very negative view both of the world and of the physical body. The text is explicit in its description of the soul's suffering and exile in her earthly sojourn and in encouraging people to leave behind an existence depicted as defilement and/or prostitution.

With regard to the upward journey (ⲧⲁⲛⲁⲃⲁⲥⲓⲥ ⲑⲟⲇⲟⲥ ⲛⲃⲱⲕ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ ϣⲁ ⲡⲉⲓⲱⲧ)[16] of the soul, the text is more explicit. It consists, first, in the soul's rejection of all that is not hers, namely the sorceries of the external world; then comes repentance for her former deeds, and finally the reunion with her real husband. Only then does the soul regain its original condition. We will come back to this issue later on.

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[13] *Exeg. Soul* 129.4–5.

[14] A.J. Festugière, *Les doctrines de l'âme* (vol. 3 of Idem, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*; Paris 1953), 63–118. See also J. Dillon, "The Descent of the Soul in Middle Platonic and Gnostic Theory," in *The School of Valentinus* (vol. 1 of *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, March 28–31, 1978*; ed. B. Layton; SHR 41; Leiden 1980), 357–364.

[15] *Exeg. Soul* 127.25–26.

[16] *Exeg. Soul* 134.14–15.

The Soul's Degraded Condition

After the introductory section that states the feminine name and nature of the soul, the *Exegesis on the Soul* asserts that she even has a womb.[17] Awkward though it might be—I have not been able to find a single parallel for such a conception, not even in the extensively documented article by Barb[18]—, this reference is essential for the conceptual and literary framework of the text. In a last analysis, the focus of the treatise is both the soul's capacity to conceive and the fact that this capacity can result in either good or bad offspring depending on her partners.[19] Admittedly, the idea is of Platonic provenance and probably found its inspiration in Diotima's speech in Plato's *Symposium* (below).[20] As for the text's assertion, later on, that the soul's womb is "around the outside like the male genitalia, which are external,"[21] the text recalls Aristophanes' speech in the same Platonic dialogue that describes Zeus splitting original human androgynies into two halves as a punishment of human pride.[22]

In explaining the soul's present condition, the *Exegesis on the Soul* relates that although virgin and androgynous in origin,[23] the soul lost her virginity as a result of the incarnation in a body, because then "some made use of her [by force], while others did so by seducing her with a gift."[24] Scholars tend to interpret this as a reference to sexuality as "the soul's plight."[25] In my view, however, in spite of the sexual imagery, we

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[17] *Exeg. Soul* 127.19–22.

[18] A.A. Barb, "*Diva matrix*: A Faked *intaglio* in the Possession of P.P. Rubens and the Iconology of the Symbol," *JWCI* 16 (1953): 193–214.

[19] Good offspring: *Exeg. Soul* 134.2–3; bad offspring: *Exeg. Soul* 128.23–26.

[20] In spite of A.D. Nock and A.J. Festugière, *Corpus Hermeticum I, Traités I–XII* (2nd ed.; Budé; Paris 1960) 101n9, who consider the idea of the soul's good or bad offspring a combination of Oriental and Platonic elements, we agree with Layton that the motif is clearly Platonic and that it can be explained on the exclusive basis of Plato. A close reading of Diotoma's speech in the *Symp*. (201d–212b) shows that the idea might indeed proceed from this dialogue.

[21] *Exeg. Soul* 131.25–26.

[22] Plato, *Symp*. 189c–193e. See now Kulawik, *Die Erzählung*, 285–288, who denounces previous scholarship's neglect of the parallel and provides an interesting commentary on both texts, *Exeg. Soul* and Plato's *Symp*., that claims the influence of the latter on the former (in my view unnecessarily) through Philo; Kulawik, *Die Erzählung*, 285n45.

[23] A similar conception in *Auth. Teach*. 25.6–9 (NHC VI,3), which describes the soul's contact with the world and the subsequent appearance of desires as a "contamination" of man's virginity: "For if a thought of lust enters into a virgin man, he has already become contaminated."

[24] *Exeg. Soul* 127.29–31.

[25] See, e.g., Scopello, *L'exégèse*, 58–59; Layton and Robinson, "The Expository Treatise," 137–138.

are still moving exclusively in the sphere of the soul and the simile of prostitution should be seen as a metaphorical description of the soul's interaction with the sensible world. In this interaction there are both irrational and rational elements involved. As to the irrational ones, those who made use of her by force are the senses, sensorial perception. The simile is effective: due to the soul's union with the body, the continuous influx of information conveyed by the senses imposes a delusionary view and conception of the external world. As to the rational ones, those that "seduce her with a gift (δῶρον)" represent the attraction of externals and imply the soul's assent to what comes from without. This seems a clear reference to the passions of the soul.[26] On the one hand, the motif of the soul's seduction by means of a gift—and, particularly, the term used for the latter (δῶρον)—appears recurrently in contexts dealing with the soul's involvement with the delusion of externals.[27] On the other, according to the Platonic bipartition of the soul standard in this period,[28] only through rationality can the irrational part of the soul call a halt to constantly changing affections that seduce her with their ephemeral satisfaction.[29]

The continuation of the *Exegesis on the Soul* plastically describes this never-ending search for the fleeting fulfilment of the passions. The soul is depicted as having sexual intercourse with ever-changing adulterers, who abandon her as soon as they use her, without giving her what she

[26] Thus also in the *Auth. Teach.* (NHC VI,3). See above n. 23.

[27] The combination of force and seduction recurrently appears in texts dealing with the deception of the soul in the realm of nature. In this context, "violence" (βία) and deceiving "present" (δῶρον) are also frequently used to describe the effect of externalities on man. So, e.g., the *Acts of Andrew* describes the devil's seduction of humanity by means of the term δῶρα ("presents") (*Acts Andr.* 18 [V^{r} 252; 256]) and implicitly associates βίος ("life") and βία ("violence") (*Acts Andr.* 17 [V^{r} 231–233]). The same combination in *Trim. Prot.* (NHC XIII,1) 144.12–13; *Gos. Phil.* (NHC II,3) 65.16–18 and, as Scopello, *L'exégèse*, 122, points out Longus, *Daphn.* 15.1.

[28] See L. Roig Lanzillotta, "One Human Being, Three Early Christian Anthropologies: An Assessment of *Acta Andreae*'s Tenor on the Basis of Its Anthropological Views," *VC* 61 (2007): 414–444.

[29] A similar combination of irrational and rational elements determines the prostitution of the soul in *Auth. Teach.* (NHC VI,3) 24.6–10 as well. The soul's sojourn in the body is equated to a state of illness (27.25–27) and the world's influence on the soul as "blows at her [i.e., the soul's] eyes wishing to make her blind" and for which the only medicine is the λόγος or "reason" (28.10–22; see also 22.26–34). See the fisherman simile (29.3–32.1) for the combination of violence and persuasion influencing the soul: firstly, the adversary puts in front of us a variety of foods (τροφή) with appealing forms and smells, concealing within them a hook in order to seize and subdue us by force (βίᾳ) (31.8–15); then, passions arise in the soul as a logical consequence (31.17–24).

expected to receive from them, "but even when she turns her face from those adulterers, she runs to others and they compel her to live with them and to render service to them upon their bed, as if they were her masters … and after all they abandon her and go."[30]

In spite of their different modes of action, by force or by seduction, however, the influence they exert on the soul is the equivalent, "her offspring by the adulterers are dumb, blind, and sickly. They are feeble-minded."[31] With this assertion the text completes its first objective: due to a wrong inclination the soul mixes with bad partners, as a result of which she produces bad offspring. By her contact with the world, through the influence of the body, the soul not only creates her own delusional captivity (αἰχμαλωσία), but also perpetuates it by means of enhancing the obliviousness of her origin.

That we are moving exclusively in the realm of the soul's alienation appears to be evident in the biblical quotations introduced to exemplify the prostitution of the soul. After quoting Jeremiah (3:1–4) and Hosea (2:4–9), the *Exegesis on the Soul* introduces a quote from Ezekiel (16:23–26). The allegorical interpretation of the latter provides support for our interpretation of the sexual simile as a metaphorical description of the soul's dealings with externalities. As a matter of fact, the *Exegesis on the Soul* explains Ezek 16:26 ("You prostituted yourself to the sons of Egypt, those who are your neighbours, men great of flesh") as follows:

> But what does "the sons of Egypt, men great of flesh" mean if not the domain of the flesh and the perceptible realm and the affairs of the earth, by which the soul has become defiled here, receiving bread from them, as well as wine, oil, clothing and the other external nonsense surrounding the body—the things she thinks she needs. (*Exeg. Soul* 130.20–23)[32]

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[30] *Exeg. Soul* 128.7–17; see also 131.13–16.

[31] *Exeg. Soul* 128.23–26.

[32] According to Hippolytus (*Haer.* 5.16.5), the *Peratae* applied a very similar allegorical interpretation, which closely related Egypt to the body and the Naassenes saw in Egypt the image for the "lower *mixis*," for the lower realm of generation, namely the realm of the body and the flesh (Hippolytus, *Haer.* 5.7.39–40). See M. Tardieu, *Trois mythes gnostiques: Adam, Éros et Les animaux d'Égypte dans un écrit de Nag Hammadi (II,5)* (Paris 1974), 270–271. For Philo's similar interpretation, see *Migr.* 14 ("taking out all the population of the soul right away from Egypt, the body, and away from its inhabitants; deeming it a most sore and heavy burden that an understanding endowed with vision should be under the pressure of the pleasures of the flesh …"); *Mos.* 1.18–29, on which S.J.K. Pearce, "King Moses: Notes on Philo's Portrait of Moses As an Ideal Leader in the *Life of Moses*," *MUSJ* 57 (2004): 37–74 at 50–55. See further *Leg.* 3.13–14; *Conf.* 92. See also Clement of Alexandria, who saw Egypt as "a symbol for the world and of error, the passions and vices" (*Strom.* 2.47.1; 1.30.4) and Origen (*In Ex.* 8.2). Numerous references in Tardieu, *Trois*

But the definitive confirmation for our interpretation of the soul's violation and prostitution as a reference to the influence of both sensorial perception and emotions comes from the text itself, namely from the following group of quotations proceeding now from the New Testament.[33] In fact, the *Exegesis on the Soul* affirms that when the apostles command "to guard yourselves against it,"[34] they are "speaking not just of the prostitution of the body but especially of that of the soul."[35] This emphasis is due to the fact that in the text's view it is not the body that is held responsible for the bad conduct of the soul, but the soul for the bad conduct of the body. In a way that recalls the old pre-Socratic view of Democritus, the *Exegesis on the Soul* asserts that "the greatest [struggle] has to do with the prostitution of the soul. From it arises the prostitution of the body as well."[36]

The Soul's Recovery of Her Primal State

Thanks to the mercy of the Father, however, not everything is lost. Indeed, the last part of the narrative section explains how, due to suffering and disgrace, and the subsequent repentance, the soul gains the grace of the Father: "But when the Father who is above visits her and looks down upon her and sees her sighing … and repenting of the prostitution in which she engaged, and when she begins to call upon his name … then he will count her worthy of his mercy upon her ...."[37]

Given the physical experience of the soul's interaction with the body, described in such dark hues as defilement, sexual violation and/or prostitution, one expects some kind of physical purification before the process of spiritual recovery can begin. In point of fact, this is precisely what happens. To begin with, the Father makes the womb turn from the external domain to the internal one, thus cutting off, in a manner of speaking,

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mythes gnostiques, 270n350. In general, see S.J.K. Pearce, *The Land of the Body: Studies in Philo's Representation of Egypt* (WUNT 208; Tübingen 2007), 120–122, 127.

[33] Acts 15:20; 1 Cor 5:9–10; Eph 6:12.

[34] In a reference to the following places: Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25; 1 Thess 4:3; 1 Cor 6:18; 2 Cor 7:1.

[35] *Exeg. Soul* 130.32–33.

[36] *Exeg. Soul* 130.35–131.2; cf. Democritus B 159 (ed. DK): "If the body brought a suit against it [i.e., the soul] for all the sufferings and ills it had endured throughout its whole life, and one had oneself to judge the case, one would gladly condemn the soul for having ruined certain features of the body through carelessness and made it soft through drink and brought it to rack and ruin through love of pleasure, just as if a tool or a utensil were in a bad state one would blame the person who used it carelessly."

[37] *Exeg. Soul* 128.26–129.4.

the way to eventual new influences from the exterior. Once that has been done, he cleanses the soul of all pollution:[38]

> So when the womb of the soul, by the will of the Father, turns itself inward, it is baptized and is immediately cleansed of external pollution, which was pressed upon it, just as [garments, when] dirty, are put into the [water and] turned about until their dirt is removed and they become clean.
>
> (*Exeg. Soul* 131.27–34)

We might see here, with Layton, the motif of the soul as a dirty garment, but this interpretation creates more problems than solutions.[39] Thus far the *Exegesis on the Soul* has stuck to a clear dualistic view of the world and of man, opposing divine and earthly realms and body and soul, respectively. And in such a Platonic, dualistic context the motif of the garment is strictly applied to the body and not to the soul.[40] It is true that in Hermetic and gnostic contexts, the Platonic motif was adapted and applied to the soul, but this exclusively occurs in trichotomous schemes that distinguish body, soul, and intellect and/or *pneuma*.[41] According to this well-documented view, after physical death the soul leaves the body behind in order to ascend to the celestial region. It is in that region that the intellect "puts off" its psychic garment in order to continue its ascent to its Fatherland.[42] I will come back to the issue below.

After her repentance and rejection of externals, the restitution of the soul's pristine condition consists of regaining her former state of androgyny, namely in the reunion with her other half, since it is only then that the soul is capable of producing good offspring. A first step towards her goal was recovering her former nature (132.1), which has been so plastically and physically described by the Father turning her womb inward, and turning back to herself again.

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[38] See F. Wisse, "On Exegeting the '*Exegesis on the Soul*,'" in *Les textes de Nag Hammadi: Colloque du Centre d'histoire des religions, Strasbourg, 23–25 octobre 1974* (ed. J.-E. Ménard; NHS 7; Leiden 1975), 68–81 at 73–74.

[39] B. Layton, "The Soul as a Dirty Garment," *Mus* 91 (1978): 155–169.

[40] See Plato, *Gorg.* 523 ff.; see also Empedocles B 126 (ed. DK).

[41] Clement of Alexandria, *Exc.* 64 (see also 61.8; 63.1) describes souls as ἐνδύματα. See Nock and Festugière, *Corpus Hermeticum I, Traités I–XII*, 131n57. According to E.R. Dodds, trans., introd., and comm., *Proclus: The Elements of Theology* (2nd ed.; Oxford 1963), 307, the metaphor has a Orphic-Pythagorean origin, for which he quotes the passages of Empedocles and Plato referred to in the previous note that conceive of the body as a garment (ἀμφίεσμα), which souls take off after death. In his view, the Valentinian interpretation of Gen 3:21 and the "coat of skin" (χιτὼν δερμάτινος) as a reference to the fleshly body has the same background (cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.5.5). See also *Corp. herm.* 7.18 and Nock and Festugière, *Corpus Hermeticum I, Traités I–XII*, 82–83n9.

[42] *Corp. herm.* 10.16; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.7.1 and 1.21.5 (Marcosians).

Then comes the reunion with her other half. This reunion is presented as a marriage, the soul being the bride and the other half the bridegroom.[43] The soul no longer remembers what he looks like "since the time she fell from her Father's house," "But then the bridegroom, according to the Father's will, came down to her into the bridal chamber, which was prepared. And he decorated the bridal chamber."[44] The soul begins then to gradually recognize her other half "and [once] they unite [with one another], they become a single life."[45]

The Exegesis on the Soul *and Abraham's Command*

It is at this point that the *Exegesis on the Soul* introduces God's command to Abraham to leave his country, his kinsmen, and the house of his father since, as the treatise states, the soul's heavenly bridegroom "requires her to turn her face from her people and her adulterers." After quoting Ps 44:11–12, which already advances the notions of the soul's "people" and "father," creating in this way the proper conceptual framework, the *Exegesis on the Soul* quotes Gen 12:1 in order to encourage people to depart from the delusion and flux of the tangible world and to return to the Father. Both quotations in the context of the soul's exile in the lower realm and as admonitions to leave its present condition are, however, somewhat confusing. Up to this point "the soul's father" was the real Father, namely God, and the "house of her Father," the divine realm. This is clear in 132.20–21, when, describing the soul's obliviousness to her origin, the text says that the soul "no longer remembers the time she fell from her Father's house (ⲡⲏⲉⲓ ⲙⲡⲉⲥⲉⲓⲱⲧ)."

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[43] On the symbolism of marriage, see Ménard, "L'évangile selon Philippe," 56–64.

[44] *Exeg. Soul* 132.23–26.

[45] *Exeg. Soul* 132.34–35. It is true that both context and vocabulary seem to place us in a clearly gnostic framework (see Scopello, *L'exégèse*, 141). For parallels for the opposition "fleshly wedding" and "spiritual wedding," see *Gos. Phil.* (NHC II,3) 64.35–65.1; 76.6–9; 82.4–10; references to the "bridal chamber" (70.13–20); see also *Gos. Thom.* (NHC II,2) 75. However, Sevrin, *L'exégèse*, 101–102, rightly points out that in *Exeg. Soul* the "bridal chamber" does not refer, as usual in gnostic texts, to the Pleroma, since in *Exeg. Soul* the bridegroom descends to meet the bride. See also J.M. Sevrin, "Les noces spirituelles dans *L'évangile selon Philippe*," *Mus* 87 (1974): 143–193 at 188–191. The passage should therefore perhaps rather be placed in its wider Hellenistic context (Kulawik, *Die Erzählung*, 186). See also M. Meyer, "Making Mary Male: The Categories 'Male' and 'Female' in the *Gospel of Thomas*," *NTS* 31 (1985): 554–570 at 563–564 and G. Luttikhuizen, *De veelvormigheid van het vroegste Christendom* (Delft 2002), 175n320, who refer, e.g., to Philo's conception of spiritual marriage and its goal of superseding femaleness in order to reach the higher status of male rationality (*QE* 1.7–8; *Fug.* 51).

Now, in turn, Ps 44:11 encourages the soul to "forget your people and your father's house." Given the visible contradiction, the author is forced to adjust his citation by adding a gloss to the text before he can introduce the following quotation, similar in content, from Gen 12:1. To begin with, he associates "her people" with the "multitude of her adulterers." Then the *Exegesis on the Soul* states that the "father" mentioned in Ps 44:11–12 is not the "real" father—namely the celestial Father to whom the soul actually belongs and should return to—, but the "earthly father":

> For he requires her to turn her face from her people and the multitude of her adulterers, in whose midst she once was, to devote herself only to her king, her real lord, and to forget the house of the earthly father, with whom things went badly for her, but to remember her Father, who is in heaven. (*Exeg. Soul* 133.20–28)

This reference creates some conceptual problems, since the author introduces a duality of fathers not mentioned so far. Interpreters tend to consider this as a reference to the demiurge or creator god[46] who, they argue, is implicit in the text's gnostic conceptual background. In my view, however, this is hardly necessary. On the one hand, this is the only reference in the *Exegesis on the Soul* to an earthly father whatsoever; on the other, it can be explained perfectly on the basis of the confusing textual context created by the introduction of both quotations.[47] We will come back to the issue below.

In any case, and as a confirmation of the previous gloss, the *Exegesis on the Soul* then introduces God's commandment to Abraham, in Gen 12:1: "Come out from your country and your kinsfolk and from your father's house."[48] In this case no gloss sheds new light on the interpretation the author is giving to the biblical text. There is no reason to suppose that it is different from the one provided for the former text, however. But in the dualistic context of the *Exegesis on the Soul* the reference to Gen 12:1, as it mentions three elements and not two, remains somewhat artificial. Note, moreover, that there is no effort made to add additional information

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[46] See Scopello, *L'exégèse*, 144; and, with hesitation, Sevrin, *L'exégèse*, 106, who points out that even if not openly presented as the demiurge, the description as "earthly father" in the present dualistic gnostic context implicitly calls for associations with it. See, however, Kulawik, *Die Erzählung*, 204, who rightly observes that this single mention is not sufficient to assume an implicit reference to the demiurge.

[47] Also noticed by Sevrin, *L'exégèse*, 106, who denounces the confusing context created by the introduction of an earthly father which is now opposed to the celestial Father.

[48] *Exeg. Soul* 133.29–31.

regarding the third element, namely the "country" referred to in the quote. We will see in the next section that this is not the case with Philo's use.

At any rate, bride and bridegroom reunite "and when she had intercourse with him, she got from him the seed that is the life-giving spirit, so that by him she bears good children."[49] This is the counterpoint to the beginning of the text. Whereas her interaction with bad partners made her a slave of circumstances, either by force or by seduction, a captive in the prison of external delusion, the reunion with her other half gives her the life-giving *pneuma* that assures her of good offspring. Freed from the pressure of externals, she is no longer subdued by force or seduction. She now moves of her own accord and is restored to her original abode. As the text expressively affirms, "This is the ransom from captivity. This is the upward journey to heaven."[50]

3. So-called Parallel Uses of Gen 12:1

Several exegetes and commentators refer to Philo's allegorical interpretation of Gen 12:1 in order to shed some light on the use of the motif by the *Exegesis on the Soul*.[51] A closer scrutiny, however, immediately shows that the similarities only concern general issues, namely the allegorical interpretation of the "migration," since their respective underlying anthropological conceptions are rather different.

The Background of Philo's Reference to Gen 12:1–3

Whereas the *Exegesis on the Soul* is straightforward in its dualistic conception of man, Philo's point of departure is somewhat more complex. In general, Philo endorses the Platonic anthropological model, namely a dualistic scheme that opposes the soul to the body, the interior to the exterior dimensions of man.[52] However, in line with the views developed by Plato in the *Respublica* and the *Timaeus*,[53] as usual in Hellenism, Philo

[49] *Exeg. Soul* 133.34–134.2.
[50] *Exeg. Soul* 134.13–15.
[51] See, e.g., Scopello, *L'exégèse*, 144–145; Kulawik, *Die Erzählung*, 205.
[52] Philo, *Leg.* 3.62; *Cher.* 128; *Det.* 19; *Agr.* 46, 152; cf. *Abr.* 96 etc.
[53] Against the view expressed in the *Phaedo* (783b–c) that the soul is not "composite"—and therefore not liable to destruction—, the *Respublica* affirms that the soul has three parts—the spirited, the irrational, and the rational ones. As Dörrie (H. Dörrie, *Porphyrios' "Symmikta zetemata": Ihre Stellung in System und Geschichte des Neuplatonismus nebst*

also tends to differentiate rational and irrational parts within the soul, opening in this way the path to a trichotomous view of man.

In fact, Philo opens *De migratione Abrahami* with a quotation of Gen 12:1–3 and devotes the following chapters to providing a sound explanation of the three elements involved in God's commandment to Abraham. His allegorical interpretation bears witness to his trichotomous tendency, since it clearly differentiates three parts in man (body, soul, and *logos*): "'Land' or 'country' is a symbol of the body, 'kindred' of sense-perception, 'father's house' of speech (*logos*)."[54] At first sight, it might be argued that the tripartite conception here is forced by the three elements mentioned in Gen 12:1, namely land, kinsfolk, and father's house. The *logos*, however, is nevertheless clearly seen as a differentiated part of the soul—witness his assertion, some lines below, that discursivity (*dianoia*) is the rational part of the soul as opposed to the irrational one that rules over sensation.[55]

The tendency towards trichotomy in Philo's anthropological scheme is even clearer in some later chapters, namely in *Migr.* 9, 10, 12–13. The commandment is explicitly rendered there as "Escape … from the prison-house, thy body" (9); "Depart … out of sense-perception" (10); and "again, quit speech also" (12), which becomes clearer in the next chapter since the ambiguous term *logos* is substituted now by *nous*: "… when mind (*nous*) begins to know itself and to hold converse with the things of mind, it will thrust away from it that part of the soul which inclines to the province of sense-perception."[56]

In *De migratione Abrahami* we just observed both the internal bipartition of the soul and the reference to its rational part with the term "mind" (νοῦς), the function of which is described as a control of the irrational part. *De Abrahamo* now includes a reference to the capacity of "mind" to

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einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten [Zet 20; München 1959], 167–168) has pointed out, however, Middle Platonists reduced the former two into a single part in order to bring it into line with the bipartition irrational-rational in the *Timaeus*. See on the bipartite structure of the soul in Middle-Platonism J. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism, 80 BC to AD 220* (London 1977), 101–102 (Antiochus of Ascalon), 174–175 (Philo), 194 (Plutarch), 256–257 (Atticus), 263 (Severus), 290–294 (Alcinous).

[54] Philo, *Migr.* 2.5–7.

[55] Philo, *Migr.* 3.4–5: αἴσθησις δὲ συγγενὲς καὶ ἀδελφόν ἐστι διανοίας, ἄλογον λογικῆς, ἐπειδὴ μιᾶς ἄμφω μέρη ψυχῆς ταῦτα ….

[56] Philo, *Migr.* 13.4–5: ἐπειδὰν γοῦν ὁ νοῦς ἄρξηται γνωρίζειν ἑαυτὸν καὶ τοῖς νοητοῖς ἐνομιλεῖν θεωρήμασιν, ἅπαν τὸ κλινόμενον τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς τὸ αἰσθητὸν εἶδος ἀπώσεται. See also Philo, *Her.* 69–74, where he expounds his view of the ecstatic experience, conceived as the action by means of which the mind quits itself.

detach itself both from irrationality and the body. The section in question from *De Abrahamo* also refers to the section of Gen 12. After devoting a long section to an exposition of both the literal and allegorical interpretations of Gen 12:1, Philo concludes that according to the allegorical explanation the passage shows "how the mind did not remain for ever deceived nor stand rooted in the realm of sense, nor suppose that the visible world was the Almighty and Primal God, but using its reason sped upwards and turned its gaze upon the intelligible order which is superior to the visible."[57]

It is true that, strictly speaking, it cannot be said that Philo is departing from the Platonic bipartite scheme, but we must admit that he is at least flirting with Aristotle, namely with that group of Middle Platonists who incorporated the Aristotelian noetics into the inherited Platonic dualism, since the νοῦς appears to become more and more independent. *Quis rerum divinarum heres sit* 277 ff. seems to provide some support for this assertion. In that passage Philo attempts to provide a sound explanation of the term "fathers" in the context of Gen 15:15, which commands rather the opposite to Gen 12:1, namely "Depart to thy fathers." Philo is in this context interested in clearing up what Moses meant by "fathers" in Gen 15:15 and, consequently, Gen 12:1 is no longer dealt with allegorically but literally. It is interesting, however, that in allegorically explaining Gen 15:15, he offers three different explanations of the term "fathers," which in my view have Peripatetic, Platonic, and Stoic backgrounds, respectively.

To begin with he refers to the view of those who interpret "fathers" as the sun, the moon, and other stars, since in this conception "it is owing to these bodies that the nature of all the things in the world has its existence" (*Her*. 280, 283). This section has been interpreted as a reference to astral determinism and put in connection with *Abr*. 69, in which Philo attacks this view.[58] However, not only the contents but also the framework of the mention seems to point rather to an Aristotelian or Peripatetic provenance. On the one hand, Philo reports that according to this view the totality of the visible world owes its existence (γένεσις is the term used by Philo) to the stars or astral spheres, as Aristotle

[57] Philo, *Abr*. 62–88 at 88.

[58] See Philo, *Quis rerum divinarum heres sit* (introd., trans., and comm. M. Harl; OPA 15; Paris 1966), 307, who refers to *QE* 2.114 and *Migr*. 97. See more similar passages in A.J. Festugière, *Le Dieu cosmique* (vol. 2 of Idem, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*; Paris 1949), 569–572. See also *Abr*. 69, on which A.P. Bos, "De wijsgerige theologie van Philo van Alexandrië als wegbereidster van gnostische theologieën," *KT* 51 (2000): 52–63 at 57–58.

asserts in *De generatione et corruptione*.[59] On the other, in referring to allegorical interpretations of the term "fathers" one expects references to different interpretive schools or lines; the Aristotelian interpretation is in this context nothing but expected, since the continuation of the text adds two other philosophical hermeneutic approaches, to wit the Platonic and Stoic views.

Secondly, Philo refers to the Platonic interpretation of "fathers" as the archetypal forms out of which earthly things are modelled. The third view deals with the Stoic conception in which man is a combination of the four elements and, as such, he will return to them after death. The Stoic provenance of the notion can not only be seen in the emphasis on the four elements, but also in the fact that Philo introduces the simile of grammar: as nouns and verbs "consist of the elements of grammar, and again are resolvable into these ultimate principles," so each individual returns his constituent elements to the four ground elements (*Her*. 282).[60]

Philo closes this survey of interpretive approaches with another reference to Aristotle, this time as a support for the view that the soul is made out of the same element as the stars. Indeed, in a passage including some echoes from Aristotle's *De caelo* (1.1–2), Philo affirms that there is "a fifth substance, moving in circle, differing by its superior quality from the four. Out of this they thought the stars and the whole of heaven had been made and deduced as natural consequence that the human soul also was a fragment thereof."[61] As a matter of fact, Philo's knowledge and use of Aristotle is so frequent that in an article by a Dutch scholar he is even called "a Platonist in the image and the likeness of Aristotle."[62]

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[59] Aristotle, *Gen. corr*. 2.10–11. See his conclusion at 338a4–338b7. Cf. *Phys*. 8.7–9.

[60] On the Stoics on grammar, see M. Pohlenz, *Die Begründung der abendländischen Sprachlehre durch die Stoa* (NGWGPHK NAW 3.6; Göttingen 1939); R.H. Robins, *Ancient and Mediaeval Grammatical Theory in Europe, with Particular Reference to Modern Linguistic Doctrine* (London 1951); R.H. Robins, *A Short History of Linguistics* (3rd ed.; London 1990), 11–47; M. Frede, "The Origins of Traditional Grammar," in *Historical and Philosophical Dimensions of Logic, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science* (ed. R.E. Butts and J. Hintikka; Dordrecht 1977), 51–79; repr. in *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford 1987), 338–359; M. Frede, "Principles of Stoic Grammar," in *The Stoics* (ed. J.M. Rist; MTS 1; Campus 212; Berkeley 1978), 27–75.

[61] Philo, *Her*. 283; on which see P. Moraux, "Une nouvelle trace de l'Aristote perdu," *EC* 16 (1948): 89–91. See A.P. Bos, *The Soul and Its Instrumental Body: A Reinterpretation of Aristotle's Philosophy of Living Nature* (BSIH 112; Leiden 2003), 280–281.

[62] A.P. Bos, "Philo of Alexandria: A Platonist in the Image and the Likeness of Aristotle," in *The Studia Philonica Annual: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism, Volume 10, 1998* (ed. D.T. Runia; BJS 319; Atlanta 1998), 66–86.

Origen and Didymus the Blind

Closer comparison material for the use of Gen 12:1 by the *Exegesis on the Soul* is provided by Origen and Didymus the Blind. On the one hand, far from the allegorical sophistication of Philo, they present, as does our treatise, a rather simple interpretation of Genesis that opposes earthly and celestial fathers. On the other hand, both authors combine, like the *Exegesis on the Soul*, the passage of Genesis with that of Psalms.[63]

Let us begin with Origen. He refers to both passages in *Selecta in Exodum* in a context that clearly opposes the earthly to the real father.[64] After stating that those who sin have the devil as father, and that those who do not are sons of God, he quotes Gen 12:1, in a context that leaves no doubt about its elucidation. Origen affirms that the text has two interpretations, literal and spiritual (ἔχει γὰρ ὁ λόγος τὸ σωματικόν, ἔχει καὶ το πνευματικόν), and appeals to its allegorical, deeper meaning. In his view, allegorically interpreted Gen 12:1 appeals to man to leave behind his earthly father, namely the devil. Even though he has been clear enough in the preceding section, before introducing the second quote Origen feels the need to explain the relationship between man and his earthly father. Due to sin man has become a son of the devil or his companions; but God does not abandon sinners. When he visits man and before giving him his goodness he asks him to leave their earthly realm. It is in this context that Ps 44:11 is quoted.

As far as Didymus the Blind is concerned, he refers to both passages on two occasions, *Commentarii in Zachariam* 7.8–10 and 11.17, the second of which simply echoes the Philonic interpretation in *De migratione Abrahami* we have seen above.[65] In *Comm. Zach*. 7.8–10, on the other hand, Didymus follows the interpretation of Origen, who associates the earthly father with the devil. After defending widows and orphans from general opprobrium by means of several biblical quotations, Didymus resorts to the spiritual sense (κατὰ θεωρίαν). In his view, a widow has in a certain way rejected her "bad husband, who is no other than the devil"; with regard to an orphan, the father who procreated him in sin does not exist anymore. The reference to Gen 12:1 and the quotation of Ps 44:11

[63] See Scopello, "Les '*testimonia*,'" 159–171, for the view that these similarities might indicate the existence of a *florilegium* including these references. See also Scopello, *L'exégèse*, 22–24.

[64] Origen, *Sel. Exod*. 126–127.

[65] See above p. 413 and nn. 54–56.

in the present context clearly show that in Didymus' view they symbolize the rejection of the earthly realm and father.

Origen and Didymus consequently not only provide exactly the same interpretation of the Genesis passage as the *Exegesis on the Soul*; they also combine Gen 12:1 with the same quotation from Psalms. Even more interesting, however, is the fact that all three texts artificially introduce a gloss in order for the quotes to fit in their respective contexts. In our view, Scopello's hypothesis concerning the existence of a *florilegium*[66] should be taken seriously, even if it is difficult to prove.[67]

4. Conclusions

On the basis of the preliminary approach to the *Exegesis on the Soul* and the comparative analysis of its use of Gen 12:1, we already have enough elements to draw some conclusions regarding the treatise's cosmological and anthropological views.

It is well known that the anthropological schemes in antiquity normally correlate with the cosmological ones. On the basis of a conception according to which macrocosm and microcosm are expressions of the same natural order, the human being tends to be considered in the light of the cosmological framework.[68] The *Exegesis on the Soul* is no exception to this rule. As far as cosmology is concerned, the treatise is clear as to the strict dualistic scheme that governs its conception of the cosmos. The world is divided into two realms, namely the earthly and divine spheres, which are not only ontologically diverse, but also qualitatively differentiated. On the one hand, the divine realm is the region of the Father; it is the sphere of unity and soundness. On the other, the lower world is described in very dark hues that define the earthly existence as an act of violation and/or prostitution and is explicitly depicted as "the place of deception" (ⲡⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲛⲧⲉⲡⲗⲁⲛⲏ).[69]

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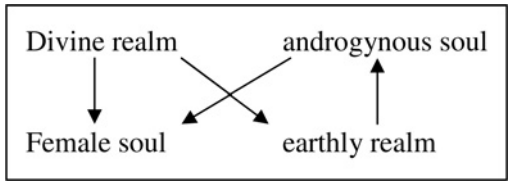
[66] Scopello, "Les '*testimonia*,'" 165–167; Scopello, *L'exégèse*, 144.

[67] See Layton and Robinson, "The Expository Treatise," 138–139.

[68] For Plato the dualistic view of the world that opposes ideas to matter determines his dualistic conception of man consisting of soul and body. The same is true for Aristotle: his tripartite vision of the cosmos, which distinguishes the realm of the unmoved mover, astral sphere, and sublunary world, results in a tripartite conception of man that differentiates *nous* or intellect from soul and body. See in general Roig Lanzillotta, "One Human Being."

[69] *Exeg. Soul* 136.27.

The *Exegesis on the Soul* reveals no trace of an intermediary realm, the astral region in which the planets or spheres are located and that in trichotomous schemes was conceived of as the demiurgical sphere. Consistent with its bipartite vision of the cosmos, the ascent of the soul, and her resulting restoration to her original abode, is automatic once the soul overcomes her earthly obstacles. There is no reference to other intermediary impediments the soul has to deal with, such as the password owed to the archons that populate the planetary region usual in other gnostic schemes. The fall and recovery of the soul follows a typical binary pattern expressed in the following chiastic structure:



This scheme is resolved by the descent of the soul's celestial half, which reactivates the soul's remembrance of her origin, thus allowing her restoration of her primal state.

As far as the anthropological views are concerned, they correlate with the cosmological ones exactly. There is a clear bipartite conception of man that distinguishes soul and body. These two parts are also ontologically and qualitatively different. In spite of the text's ambiguity concerning the ultimate causes of her fall and, consequently, the soul's responsibility for her degradation, the *Exegesis on the Soul* is more than clear about its consequences. The loss of the original androgynous nature seems to reflect the loss of her intellective faculty (its male part), as a result of which the soul is trapped in the bonds of nature. Due to her irrational condition, she is now the victim both of sensorial perception with its delusional view of the world and of passions that claim fulfilment of their ephemeral satisfaction. The soul presents a clear bipartite structure that opposes rational and irrational parts and, given the loss of its intellective ruling principle, during her earthly sojourn she is under the rule of irrationality.

As in the cosmological views of the treatise, there is no trace of a third element in its anthropology. True, the appearance of the *pneuma* as the vivifying spirit that comes into the soul might seem to echo the Aristotelian conception of the extrinsic intellect that comes in man from

without in *De generatione animalium*.[70] However, the only passage that mentions it does not seem to consider *pneuma* as a differentiated part of the soul, but rather as the divine element by means of which God actualizes the soul's dormant rationality. In this sense, the basic dualistic scheme is not challenged. Additional support for this interpretation comes from the *Exegesis on the Soul*'s use of Gen 12:1, since it glosses "the father's house" as "the earthly father." In a trichotomous scheme one would instead expect its closer association with the demiurgical sphere, the region where the soul has its origin and in which it remains while the intellect continues its ascent to the transcendent realm. At this juncture, it is difficult to agree with Layton's interesting hypothesis regarding the conception of the soul as a dirty garment. Given the lack of a third element for the soul to clothe, namely the intellect, it seems preferable to see it as a simple simile that describes the soul cleansing itself of pollution.

What is the additional information we can draw from our treatise's use of Gen 12:1? At first sight, the comparison with Philo, on the one hand, and with Origen and Didymus, on the other, shows in any case that the Platonism of the text did not affect the allegorical interpretation of the passage and that the *Exegesis on the Soul* sticks to the regular Christian dissociation between the celestial and the earthly father, God and the devil, respectively. Another possible interpretation is, of course, that whereas Philo interprets the *passus* according to a tripartite view of man current in Middle Platonic contexts under the influence of Aristotle and the Peripatos, the *Exegesis on the Soul* remains faithful to the traditional Platonic scheme usual in those Middle Platonists who saw Aristotelian influence as a betrayal of Plato's heritage.[71]

If Scopello is right in assuming a *florilegium* as the origin of the quotations, however, this might provide an easier explanation for their odd integration into the overall conceptual framework of the text. We have already referred to the conceptual problems created by the reference to the "earthly father."[72] In addition, the closing quote of the *Odyssey* is clear concerning the text's Platonic background, since it opposes the immaterial soul and the tangible world of the senses. The *Exegesis on the Soul*'s explanation of the "father's house" not as the external world or as the

[70] *Exeg. Soul* 134.1–2; Aristotle, *Gen. an.* 736b27–29.

[71] On which see P. Merlan, "The Later Academy and Platonism," in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (ed. A.H. Armstrong; Cambridge 1970), 53–83.

[72] See above, pp. 410–412.

body but as the devil might very well proceed from a *florilegium* that was thematically organized. This seems to be confirmed by similar efforts, in the *Exegesis on the Soul* and in Origen, to clear up the association they both make between soul or man and earthly father or devil, respectively.

ISHMAELITES, HAGARENES, SARACENS

Anthony Hilhorst

1. Introduction

Names of peoples are less stable than one might think at first glance. In classical times, the Greeks called themselves *Hellēnes*; but to Homer, *Hellēnes* were just the inhabitants of one particular region of Greece—the assembled Greeks who besieged Troy were *Achaioi* or *Argeioi* or *Danaoi*. Many centuries later the Greeks of Byzantium proudly called themselves *Rhōmaioi*, the traditional name *Hellēnes* having come to mean "Gentiles." Reasons for changes to names are manifold. Among them is the wish not to offend a people's sensibilities—thus we have learned to say Inuit instead of Eskimo and Muslim instead of Muhammadan—or, conversely, to counter claims harboured by a people—not Palestinians but just Arabs. The initiative for renaming may be taken by the people themselves or by others. Whereas many varieties of name change immediately spring to mind, it is more difficult to find parallels for the one which will occupy us here, where successively no fewer than three, or maybe even four, members of one and the same family were called on to provide names for the people in question. This is the case with the designations we find in patristic and subsequent medieval literature for the Arabs.

The naming we have in mind is summarized concisely by Eucherius (ca. 380–ca. 450 CE) in the second book of his *Instructiones*, in the section on the peoples (CSEL 31.150–151):

> Ismahelitae uocati ab Ismahelo filio Abrahae, idem et Saraceni a Sarra, idem et Agareni ab Agar.
>
> The Ishmaelites are called after Ishmael, Abraham's son, the same are also called Saracens, after Sarah, and Hagarenes, after Hagar.[1]
>
> (Eucherius, *Instructiones* 2)

[1] For "Hagar(enes)" I will use the forms beginning with "H," in accordance with Hebrew, although in Greek the names usually have a smooth breathing, cf. F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and F. Rehkopf, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch* (17th ed.; Göttingen 1990), § 39.3a, and in Latin too the "H" is omitted.

In this paper we propose to trace first the origins and early history of this tradition, and subsequently offer some remarks on its survival after the rise of Islam. The starting point for our discussion is of course the information to be found in the book of Genesis, where it is said that Abraham got a son Ishmael by Sarah's maid Hagar at the age of eighty-six (Gen 16:15–16) and a son Isaac by Sarah at the age of one hundred (21:3, 5), and that not only Isaac's but also Ishmael's offspring will be very numerous (16:10; 17:20; 21:18). For reasons that will soon become obvious, it seems best first to deal with the names "Ishmaelites" and "Hagarenes" and then with the name "Saracens." Although some of our sources mention that the people bearing these names were the Arabs, we will not go into the complicated question of who exactly were the Arabs. Suffice it to say that roughly speaking in antiquity that name denoted a race of nomads living in the Syrian Desert and in the Middle Ages became synonymous with Saracens, denoting all those who spoke Arabic and adhered to Islam.[2] A further restriction of our subject is that after an exploration of the biblical and pre-Mishnaic Jewish evidence we will confine ourselves to Christian literature.

2. Ishmaelites and Hagarenes

Both Ishmaelites and Hagarenes are mentioned in the Old Testament.[3] The Ishmaelites (Yišmə'ē'lîm; Ἰσμαηλῖται; *Ismahelitae*) occur in the plural in Gen 37:25, 27, 28; 39:1; Judg 8:24; Ps 83/82:7, and in the singular in 1 Chr 2:17; 27:30. The Hagarenes or Hagarites (Hagrîm, Hagrî'îm, Hagri'îm; Ἀγαρηνοί, Ἀγαρῖται, Ἀγαραῖοι; *Agareni, Agarei*) occur in the plural in 1 Chr 5:10,[4] 19, 20; Ps 83/82:7 and in the singular in 1 Chr 27:31.[5] For the unsuspecting reader, there is no evidence of their being linked to Ishmael and Hagar. The Ishmaelites in Genesis are the mer-

[2] For the pre-Islamic period see J. Retsö, *The Arabs in Antiquity: Their History from the Assyrians to the Umayyads* (London 2003).

[3] Cf. the contribution on Hagar to this volume by Ed Noort.

[4] The LXX reads παροίκους here.

[5] As a rendering of the name Hagrîm in Greek, one might have expected a form Ἀγρῖται, for Hebrew names of peoples ending in *-î* are commonly graecised by -ίτης in biblical Greek, cf. Blass, Debrunner, and Rehkopf, *Grammatik*, § 111.2. Indeed in 1 Chr 27:31 LXX, "Jaziz the Hagrite" is rendered as Ἰαζὶζ ὁ Ἀγαρίτης, but otherwise there are only the two forms: Ἀγαρηνοί and Ἀγαραῖοι. In the Latin of the Vg., we have only the forms *Agareni* and *Agarei*; the Ἀγαρίτης in 1 Chr 27:31 has been normalized to *Agareus*. In later texts Ἀγαρηνοί in Greek and *Agareni* in Latin are the usual forms.

chants to whom Joseph was sold by his brothers. If they really were descended from Ishmael, Abraham would have been their great-grandfather just as he was the great-grandfather of Joseph and his brothers and we might have expected some awareness by both parties of their mutual relationship.[6] The same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to Judg 8:24. Nor are the Hagarenes mentioned as descendants of Hagar. In 1 Chr 5:19–20, war is waged against "the Hagarites, Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab." The latter three are no doubt nations indicated by the names of their ancestors. Nodab is mentioned only here in the Bible, but Jetur and Naphish are among the twelve sons of Ishmael mentioned in Gen 25:12–18. If Hagarites was the name given to *the* descendants of Hagar, it would be pointless to mention Jetur and Naphish, because they would be Hagarites too. We could even claim that Jetur and Naphish are among the offspring of Hagar, while the Hagarites are not. Of particular interest to our inquiry is Ps 83 / 82:7, where "the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, Moab and the Hagarites" are mentioned in an enumeration of the enemies of God and Israel. Not only are the Ishmaelites and Hagarites enemies of Abraham's offspring, they are also presented as separate peoples: Ishmaelites ≠ Hagarites!

Nevertheless, there seems to have been an awareness of a genealogical connection between Hagar and her son Ishmael on the one hand and the Hagarenes and Ishmaelites on the other. Generally speaking, the Hebrew ending -î in the terms "Yišmə'ē'lîm" and "Hagrîm" could be taken as a patronymic. Moreover, the idea of the numerous progeny of Ishmael is clearly present in Genesis. In Gen 16:12, the angel of the Lord predicts to Hagar the character of her future son: "He shall be a wild ass of a man, his hand against every man and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen." This description has in view less the son himself than the intractable desert nomads who were his descendants.[7] In Gen 21:13 God promises Abraham that he

[6] As was the case in 4QTJoseph ar (4Q539), a fragment of which has been preserved in a mid-first BCE copy in Qumran, where Joseph is speaking of בני דדי [יש]מע[אל] ("the sons of my uncle [Ish]ma[el]").

[7] As such it would be interpreted by Ephraem the Syrian and Jerome, and, largely through the latter's authority, live on in patristic and medieval authors, cf. M.B. Ogle, "Petrus Comestor, Methodius, and the Saracens," *Spec* 21 (1946): 318–324; J. Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs: Women of the Old Testament among Biblical Commentators from Philo through the Reformation* (New York 2001), 45n125, 49, 51n149, 55n165, 62–63; but cf. already *1 En*. 89:11: "and the wild asses multiplied."

will make a nation of Ishmael. And in Gen 25:13–16 (and 1 Chr 1:29–31) the descendants of Ishmael are enumerated. Admittedly, the "sons of Ishmael" mentioned there are his twelve blood sons, not his descendants in the wider sense, but they are styled as "twelve princes according to their tribes," and the people ruled by them as a whole dwell "from Havilah to Shur" (Gen 25:18), i.e., the territory of northwest Arabia including the Sinai Peninsula.

Passing beyond the books of the Hebrew Bible, we may record first of all the statement by the Jewish author Artapanus (third or second century BCE) transmitted in Eusebius' (ca. 260–ca. 340 CE) *Praep. ev.* 9.23.1 (GCS 43 / 1.516), who notes down about Jacob's son Joseph:

> προϊδόμενον δὲ τὴν ἐπισύστασιν δεηθῆναι τῶν ἀστυγειτόνων Ἀράβων εἰς τὴν Αἴγυπτον αὐτὸν διακομίσαι· τοὺς δὲ τὸ ἐντυγχανόμενον ποιῆσαι· εἶναι γὰρ τοὺς τῶν Ἀράβων βασιλεῖς ἀπογόνους Ἰσραήλ, υἱοὺς τοῦ Ἀβραάμ, Ἰσαὰκ δὲ ἀδελφούς.
>
> He obtained prior knowledge of the [i.e., his brothers'] conspiracy and requested the neighboring Arabs to convey him to Egypt. They complied with the request, for the kings of the Arabs were descendants of Israel, sons of Abraham, and brothers of Isaac.
>
> (Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.23.1 [trans. Collins, *OTP*])

This partly conflicts with the account in Genesis and partly expands it. Joseph's prescience and his initiative for the transport to Egypt may be, in the words of Collins, "a deliberate revision of the biblical story," but the Arabs are most probably the Ishmaelites of Gen 37:25. Furthermore, if we are allowed to emend "Israel" to "Ishmael," "sons" to "son" and "brothers" to "brother," these Arabs alias Ishmaelites appear here unambiguously as the offspring of Ishmael. Otherwise we would have to suppose that, again to quote Collins, "Artapanus thinks Israel was the father of Abraham or merely uses Israel as a generic name for Abraham and his descendants."[8] Knowledge about the family relationships also spread outside the Jewish world. The famous pagan scholar Apollonius Molon (first century BCE), in a passage again transmitted in Eusebius' *Praep. ev.* 9.19.2 (GCS 43 / 1.505), declares:

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[8] J.J. Collins, "Artapanus," in 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*; ed. J.H. Charlesworth; London 1985), 889–903 at 897. Cf. also C.R. Holladay, *Historians* (vol. 1 of *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors*; ed. C.R. Holladay; PseudS 10; TT 20; Chico, Calif., 1983), 228nn15–16.

> λαβόντα δὲ δύο γυναῖκας, τὴν μὲν ἐντοπίαν, συγγενῆ, τὴν δὲ Αἰγυπτίαν, θεράπαιναν, ἐκ μὲν τῆς Αἰγυπτίας γεννῆσαι δώδεκα υἱούς, οὓς δὴ εἰς Ἀραβίαν ἀπαλλαγέντας, διελέσθαι τὴν χώραν καὶ πρώτους βασιλεῦσαι τῶν ἐγχωρίων· ὅθεν ἕως καθ' ἡμᾶς δώδεκα εἶναι βασιλεῖς Ἀράβων ὁμωνύμους ἐκείνοις.
>
> He [i.e., Abraham] took two wives, one a local one and a relative of his, and the other an Egyptian handmaid. The Egyptian woman bore him twelve sons, who emigrated to Arabia and divided the country between themselves; they were the first to be kings over the inhabitants of that country. Consequently, till our times there are twelve kings among the Arabs who are namesakes of the sons of Abraam.
>
> (Eusebius, *Praep. ev*. 9.19.2 [trans. Stern, *GLAJJ*])

Although the author is at variance with Scripture in attributing twelve sons to Hagar (in Gen 25:13–15 they are her grandsons), he testifies to the conviction that the Arabs were Hagar's offspring. We cannot know whether he knew that the people were descended from Hagar via her son Ishmael, but we may be sure that Jewish authors did. So, if the *War Scroll* from Qumran (1QM II, 13) and Jdt 2:23 LXX (= 2:13 Vg.) speak of "sons of Ishmael" and Bar 3:22–23 refers to the "sons of Hagar," they must have in mind the same pedigree. Also Josephus, in his *Antiquitates judaicae* written in about 90 CE, at *A.J.* 1.214 clearly highlights the genealogical link. He records that, whereas the Jews circumcise eight days after birth, "the Arabs defer the ceremony to the thirteenth year, because Ishmael, the founder of their race, born of Abraham's concubine, was circumcised at that age" (trans. Thackeray, LCL).[9]

So, Judaism in the Hellenistic and early imperial periods was familiar with the idea of a nation stemming from Hagar and Ishmael. This nation could be denoted as "sons [i.e., descendants] of Ishmael/Hagar," but the terms "Ishmaelites" and "Hagarenes" were rarely used in this connection. Indeed, no Jewish text, to my knowledge, up to and including Josephus has any passages mentioning Hagarenes as descendants of Ishmael/Hagar, and there is only one that speaks of Ishmaelites in this sense: the book of *Jubilees*. In that anonymous work, dated by most specialists to the second century BCE,[10] in ch. 20:11 Abraham sends away Ishmael with his sons and Keturah (Abraham's third wife) with her sons and their

[9] Cf. I. Ephʿal, "'Ishmael' and 'Arab(s)': A Transformation of Ethnological Terms," *JNES* 35 (1976): 225–235 at 231–233; F. Millar, H.M. Cotton, and G. Maclean Rogers, *The Greek World, the Jews, and the East* (vol. 3 of *Rome, the Greek World, and the East*; ed. F. Millar, H.M. Cotton, and G. Maclean Rogers; SHGR; Chapel Hill, N.C., 2006), 360–362.

[10] See A.-M. Denis, *Introduction à la littérature religieuse judéo-hellénistique* (Turnhout 2000), 398–401.

sons. "They dwelt," the text continues, "from Paran to the entrance to Babylon in all of the land which faces the east opposite the desert. And these mixed with each other, and they are called Arabs or Ishmaelites" (*Jub*. 20:12–13 [trans. Wintermute]).[11]

In early Christianity, which drew on the biblical and cognate literature it inherited from Judaism, we may take the knowledge of the offspring of Ishmael/Hagar for granted. Saint Paul, in a famous passage in Galatians (4:21–31), gave an allegorical interpretation of the events described in Genesis.[12] As Southern puts it: "Isaac, the son of the free-woman, prefigured Christ, and his descendants the Church. Similarly Ishmael and his descendants represented the Jews."[13] The literal interpretation we are concerned with here, however, in which the descendants of Ishmael are the Ishmaelites, is not discussed in Christian texts that have come down to us from the first three centuries. The first author to mention both the link between the people and Hagar and Ishmael and the use of the names Ishmaelites and Hagarenes for the same people is Eusebius. In his *Chronicon* (GCS 47.24a), written about 300 CE, he states:

> Abraham ex ancilla Agar generat Ismael, a quo Ismaelitarum genus, qui postea Agareni et ad postremum Saraceni dicti.
>
> Through his female slave Hagar, Abraham fathers Ishmael, from whom come the race of Ishmaelites, later called Hagarenes, and finally Saracens. (Eusebius, *Chron*. [trans. Pearse])

Although we have this testimony only in a Latin translation by Jerome (ca. 345–420 CE; the translation was made ca. 380), we may be reasonably confident that he rendered the Greek faithfully; at least, in the preface to his translation he announces that, whereas in the later parts of the work he has added quite a few new facts, the first part, to which our passage belongs, is a *pura Graeca translatio*. After Eusebius, this knowledge remains commonplace.[14] Some authors specify that the descent from Ish-

[11] In the Latin version the final words run *et adhesit nomen ipsorum Arabiis et Ismaelite usque in diem hanc* ("and their name clave to the Arabs, and [they are] Ishmaelites, to this day") (trans. Charles).

[12] See the contributions on Hagar to this volume by Hogeterp and van Kooten.

[13] R.W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (2nd ed.; Cambridge, Mass., 1978), 17.

[14] For a list of passages see n. 19 below.

mael went via his son Kedar (figuring in Gen 25:13; 1 Chr 1:29).[15] The mention of "the sons of Kedar" in Isa 21:17 may have suggested this idea.

Returning to Eusebius' *Chronicon*, we learn that the people were at first called Ishmaelites, then Hagarenes, and finally Saracens. This statement returns in later sources.[16] It may well be true. The term "Saracens" was no doubt the latest one, as we will see presently. As for Ishmaelites and Hagarenes, the earliest passage known to us that mentions Ishmaelites as descendants of Ishmael, *Jub*. 20:13, has no coeval counterpart for Hagarenes as descendants of Hagar and so seems to point once more to the correctness of Eusebius' statement. The absence of Hagarenes may, however, also be accidental, and the statement by Eusebius may be no more than an attempt to create the elegance of a succession where the available evidence offered is just an artless concurrence of unconnected traditions. It may also be the case that the sequence was introduced by Jerome; in any case it is repeated by Latin authors only.

3. Saracens

Whereas the name Saracen is absent both from the Old and the New Testaments, in classical texts it may have existed as early as the first century CE. The indications are dubious, though: there is a possible misspelling of the name in the form *Araceni* mentioned by Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* 6.157. And Pedianus Dioscurides, *De materia medica* 1.67, has a reading δένδρου Σαρακηνικοῦ ("Saracen tree"), although its latest editor, Wellmann (1907), prefers the reading δένδρου Ἀραβικοῦ ("Arabic tree").[17] The earliest certain occurrence of the Saracens is in the *Geographia* of Ptolemy (mid-second century CE), where they are listed in 6.7.21 as one of the tribes of the Arabs. Afterwards they are mentioned regularly by Greek and Latin authors; thus a vivid description of them is provided by Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 14.4. In Christian texts they turn up from the third century onward; Hippolytus, *Chron*. 200 (GCS 46.32), written in about 234 CE, and Dionysius of Alexandria

[15] Arnobius Junior, *Comm. Ps*. ad Ps. 119 (CCSL 25.204); Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 9.2.57.

[16] Tiro Prosper of Aquitaine, *Epit*. (MGH AA 9.386); Isidore of Seville, *Chron. Mai*. 34 (MGH AA 11.432); Fredegarius, *Chron*. 2.2 (MGH Merov. 2.44); Marianus Scotus, *Chron*. 1.16 (ed. B.G. Struve, 1726, 479); Lucas Tudensis, *Chron*. 1.24 (CCCM 74.27).

[17] I. Shahîd, "Saracens," *EI*^{2}, 9:27–28, adduces both passages as "the earliest certain attestations" to its existence in the first century CE.

(ca. 195–ca. 264), in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.42.4, seem to be the earliest occurrences. They are often equated there with the Arabs generally,[18] and as the Arabs were equated with the Ishmaelites/Hagarenes, nothing stood in the way of recording that the names Ishmaelites, Hagarenes, and Saracens were used indiscriminately for them. The first Christian text in which the three names are mentioned side by side is the already quoted passage in Eusebius' *Chronicon*. The juxtaposition is repeated in many texts by the church fathers and their medieval successors.[19]

What was the origin of the term "Saracens"? Classical sources—Ptolemy in the second century CE and Stephanus of Byzantium, depending on earlier authors, in the sixth—derived the name Σαρακηνοί from the region Saraka on the Sinai peninsula. This seems to remain the most plausible etymology.[20] Another pagan etymology is offered by Isidore of Seville (ca. 560–636 CE) in his *Etymologiae* 9.2.57: *Saraceni dicti . . . , sicut gentiles aiunt, quod ex origine Syrorum sint, quasi Syriginae* ("They are called Saracens . . . , as the Gentiles say, because they are descended from the Syrians, *Saraceni* being equivalent to *Syrigenae*"), but this theory,

[18] In classical writers there is no consistent view of who the Arabs were: the name was given either to the nation as a whole or to any of the tribes belonging to it, cf. Millar, Cotton, and Maclean Rogers, *Greek World*, 354–357; for the use in Josephus cf. Millar, Cotton, and Maclean Rogers, *Greek World*, 366–368.

[19] After Eusebius the three names are mentioned together in Greek texts in Joseppus, *Libellus Memorialis* 147 (PG 106.164); Epiphanius, *Panarion* 4.1.7 (GCS NF 10.180); Procopius of Gaza, *Comm. Octat.* ad Gen. 25.12 (PG 87.407–408); Sophronius, *Nativ.* (ed. H. Usener, 1886, 508); John of Damascus, *De haeresibus* 100 (PTS 22.60); *Chronicon Paschale* (PG 92.180); George Syncellus, *Ecloga chronographica* (ed. A.A. Mosshammer, 1984, 113); George Hamartolos, *Chronicon* 1.15.1 (ed. C. de Boor and P. Wirth, 1978, 107); Pseudo-Polydeuces (ed. I. Hardt, 1792, 86); George Cedrenus (ed. I. Bekker, 1838, 50–51); Nicetas Choniates, *Thes.* 20.1 (PG 140.105), and in Latin texts in the passages mentioned in n. 16 as well as in Jerome, *Comm. Ezech.* 8 ad Ezek 25:1–7 (CCSL 75.335) and *Comm. Isa.* 5 ad Isa 21:17 (CCSL 73.208); Eucherius, *Instructiones* 2 (CSEL 31.150–151); Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 9.2.6, 57 and *Chron. Mai.* 34 (MGH AA 11.432); Hrabanus Maurus, *De uniu.* 16.2 (PL 111.438) and *Exp. Ier.* 16.49 ad Jer 49:28–33 (PL 111.438); *Prophetic Chronicle* 3 (ed. Y. Bonnaz, 1987, 3); Marianus Scotus 1.16 (ed. B.G. Struve, 1726, 479); Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea* 177.76 (ed. G.P. Maggioni, 2007, 1414). At times only two names are given: Hagarenes and Saracens in Jerome, *Epist.* 129.4 (CSEL 56/1.170); Fredegarius, *Chron.* 4.66 (MGH Merov. 2.153); Alcuin, *Epist.* 7 (MGH Epist. 4.32); Agobardus, *Iud. superst.* 21 (CCCM 52.215–216); *Gesta Dagoberti* 24 (MGH Merov. 2.409); Alexander Neckam, *De naturis rerum* 2.158 (RS 34.262); Nicholas of Lyre ad Gen. 16:10 and ad Is. 21:13, Ishmaelites and Saracens in Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.33.3 (GCS NF 10.397–380); Jerome, *Vit. Malch.* 4 (PL 23.57); Sozomenus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.38.10–11 (GCS 50.299); *Fredegarii Scholastici Continuationes* 20 (MGH Merov. 2.177); Angelomus, *Comm. Gen.* ad Gen 21:21 (PL 115.193); Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopulus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.47 (PG 146.733).

[20] Shahîd, "Saracens," 27–28. Cf. also I. Toral-Niehoff, "Saraka [2]," *NP* 11 (2001): 52.

which is found neither in earlier nor in later sources, may well be his own invention.

Christians soon associated the name with Sarah, Abraham's wife.[21] This caused them a problem, since Genesis taught them that the people they had come to call the Saracens were not the offspring of the free woman, Sarah, but of the handmaid, Hagar. Two solutions were devised to overcome the difficulty. The first, and best-known one, is found for the first time in Joseppus, *Libellus Memorialis* 147 (PG 106.164):[22]

> Πρῶτον τὸ ἐκ τῆς Ἄγαρ καὶ τοῦ Ἰσμαὴλ Ἀγαρηνοὶ καὶ Ἰσμαηλῖται εἰσίν, οἱ ψευδοσαρακηνοὶ κικλησκόμενοι, ἑαυτοῖς ἐπιφήμιζοντες τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς Σάρρας, οὐκ ὄντες ἐξ αὐτῆς, ἐπωνυμίαν.
>
> The first is the offspring of Hagar and Ishmael: the Hagarenes and Ishmaelites, who falsely are called Saracens, usurping for themselves the name of Sarah, although they are not descended from her.
>
> (Joseppus, *Libellus Memorialis* 147)

This explanation came to be very popular.[23] It starts from the self-esteem of the Arabs: because they are unwilling to be named after Abraham's concubine, Hagar, they have adopted for themselves the name Saracens, after Abraham's lawful wife, the free woman Sarah. Of course, this conflicted with the biblical version, and so, the Christians felt, these

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[21] See, e.g., Eucherius, *Instructiones* 2 (CSEL 31.150–151); George Hamartolos, *Chronicon* 1.15.1 (ed. C. de Boor and P. Wirth, 1978, 107).

[22] *Pace* Millar, Cotton, and Maclean Rogers, *Greek World*, 375–376, who think that the interpretation of the term *Sarakēnoi* as relating to Sarah "seems to have been unique to" Sozomenus, who wrote his *Historia ecclesiastica* between 443 and 450, and P. Thorau, "Sarazenen," *LM* 7:1376–1377, who even makes Isidore its inventor. Joseppus is to be dated to the fourth century, probably even well before 375 CE (S.C. Mimouni, "L'*Hypomnesticon* de Joseph de Tibériade: Une œuvre du IVème siècle?," *StPatr* 32 [1997]: 346–357 at 356).

[23] The supposed self-naming is mentioned more or less as a neutral fact in Sozomenus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.38.10–11 (GCS 50.299); Procopius of Gaza, *Comm. Octat*. ad Gen 25:12 (PG 87.407–408); George Syncellus, *Ecloga chronographica* (ed. A.A. Mosshammer 1984, 113); Marianus Scotus, *Chron*. 1.16 (ed. B.G. Struve, 1726, 479); George Cedrenus (PG 121.77–78); Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopulus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.47 (PG 146.733), and disapprovingly in Joseppus, *Libellus Memorialis* 147 (PG 106.164); Jerome, *Comm. Ezech*. 8 (CCSL 75.335); Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum* 9.2.6, 57; Hrabanus Maurus, *De uniu*. 16.2 (PL 111.438); *Prophetic Chronicle* 3 (ed. Y. Bonnaz, 1987, 3); Jacques de Vitry, *Hist. Hieros. abbr*. 1.5; Nicholas of Lyre ad Gen 16:10 and Isa 21:13. In Jerome, *Comm. Isa*. 5 ad Isa 21:17 (CCSL 75.335); *Fredegarii Scholastici Continuationes* 20 (MGH Merov. 2.177); Agobardus, *Iud. Superst*. 21 (CCCM 52.215–216); Hrabanus Maurus *Exp. Ier*. ad Jer 49:28–33 (PL 111.1135); Alexander Neckam, *De naturis rerum* 2.158 (RS 34.262) the name Saracens is branded as a false name without explicitly referring to Sarah.

unbelievers once more betrayed their wicked character. There is no lack of passages where the name Saracens is called a *peruersum nomen*, a *corruptum nomen* or *uocabulum*. This disdain was not always shown, however. In the statement by Eucherius we quoted initially, the derivations from Ishmael, Sarah and Hagar are presented side by side without further comment, and in the first half of the ninth century CE Ermoldus Nigellus, in his epic *In honorem Hludowici* 1.145 (MGH Poet. 2.9), can even write *Gens est tetra nimis Sarae de nomine dicta* ("There is a most hideous race, called after the name of Sarah") as if the derivation from Sarah is the obvious one.[24] It is open to doubt, to put it mildly, whether the Christians were right in claiming that the Arabs chose the name for themselves,[25] and the better informed may have known this. Whatever the case, among the Greeks a second explanation was developed which, far-fetched as it was, had the merit of not attributing the invention of the name to its bearer. John of Damascus (ca. 655–ca. 750 CE) is our earliest authority for it. His comment, in *De haeresibus* 100 (PTS 22.60), is:

> Κατάγεται δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἰσμαὴλ τοῦ ἐκ τῆς Ἄγαρ τεχθέντος τῷ Ἀβραάμ· διόπερ Ἀγαρηνοὶ καὶ Ἰσμαηλῖται προσαγορεύονται. Σαρακηνοὺς δὲ αὐτοὺς καλοῦσιν ὡς ἐκ τῆς Σάρρας κενοὺς διὰ τὸ εἰρῆσθαι ὑπὸ τῆς Ἄγαρ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ· Σάρρα κενήν με ἀπέλυσεν.
>
> They are descended from Ishmael, the one who was born to Abraham by Hagar. Therefore they are called Hagarenes and Ishmaelites. And they are called Saracens as being empty through Sarah, because of what was said by Hagar to the angel: 'Sarah sent me empty away.'
>
> (John of Damascus, *De haeresibus* 100)

Strictly speaking, Genesis does not record the words given here as Hagar's answer to the angel; what is related there is Sarah's ill-treatment of Hagar and the latter's fleeing from her (Gen 16:6), and Hagar's encounter with the angel of the Lord, to whose question "Where have you come from and where are you going?" she answers: "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai." Practically, however, fleeing because of mistreatment amounts to being sent empty away. A slightly different version of this explanation is offered by George Syncellus (*fl.* ca. 800 CE) in his *Ecloga chronographica*:[26]

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[24] I owe this passage to the inexhaustible storehouse of information which is A. Borst, *Ausbau* (vol. 2 of Idem, *Der Turmbau von Babel: Geschichte der Meinungen über Ursprung und Vielfalt der Sprachen und Völker*; 2 vols.; Stuttgart 1958–1959), 2.1:512.

[25] The term "Saracens" "was one that the Arabs did not use in referring to themselves" (Shahîd, "Saracens," 27). J.B. Cotelier, *Ecclesiæ Græcæ monumenta* (3 vols.; Paris 1677–1686), 1:791, refers to a letter by Saladin to Emperor Frederick using the term "Saracens".

[26] A.A. Mosshammer, ed., *Georgii Syncelli Ecloga chronographica* (Leipzig 1984), 113.

> ἕτεροι δὲ τοὺς Ἰσμαηλίτας Σαρακηνοὺς καλεῖσθαι φασιν, ὅτι Σάρρα τὴν Ἄγαρ κενὴν ἐξαπέστειλε κληρονομίας.
>
> But others say that the Ishmaelites are called Saracens because Sarah sent out Hagar deprived of an inheritance.
>
> (George Syncellus, *Ecloga chronographica* [trans. Adler and Tuffin])

This reading is based on Gen 21:10, where Sarah says to Abraham: "Cast out this slave-woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac" (Greek: Ἔκβαλε τὴν παιδίσκην ταύτην καὶ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς; οὐ γὰρ κληρονομήσει ὁ υἱὸς τῆς παιδίσκης ταύτης μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ μου Ἰσαάκ). Abraham does what he is asked (Gen 21:14) and so, through the agency of *Sarah*, Hagar is sent away "without an inheritance" (κενὴ κληρονομίας). So, the sending away may have either Gen 16 or 21 in view, but either way it was perpetuated in the name of her offspring: Σαρα–κηνοί.[27] Both variants were echoed by later authors.[28]

In the West, the explanation starting from the usurped name Saracens did not satisfy everybody. While Alexander Neckam (1157–1217 CE) in his *De naturis rerum* 2.158 (RS 34.262) for the umpteenth time repeated that *Saraceni se mentiuntur cum Agareni sunt* ("they falsely pose as Saracens, whereas they are Hagarenes"), a glossator commented:

> Possunt tamen se dicere Saracenos, cum sint filii Agar eo quod, ut dicit Augustinus, uterus Agar accommodatus est, sed Sarae accessit auctoritas.
>
> They can, however, call themselves Saracens, since they are sons of Hagar on the understanding that, as Augustine says, Hagar's womb was applied, but Sarah's will was added. (Alexander Neckam, *De naturis rerum* 2.158)

The anonymous author is alluding to Augustine's *De civitate Dei* 15.3, where Sarah is described as *utens iure suo in utero alieno* ("exercising her own right in another's womb").

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[27] As is well known, in post-classical Greek the ēta was normally pronounced as [i:], so -κηνός in Σαρακηνός was rather different from κενός ("empty"). Nevertheless, the awareness of the original affinity of epsilon and ēta was probably not lost, due to such forms as ἐλθεῖν vis-à-vis ἦλθον or ποιμένος vis-à-vis ποιμήν. Cf. further F.T. Gignac, *Phonology* (vol. 1 of Idem, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*; TDSA 55; Milan 1976), 242–249, Mark 15:34–35 ἐλωῖ ἐλωῖ / Ἠλίαν, and the variant names of Elchasai mentioned in G.P. Luttikhuizen, *The Revelation of Elchasai* (TSAJ 8; Tübingen 1985), 179–181, e.g. Ἠλχασαΐ and Ἐλχασαῖος.

[28] George Cedrenus (PG 121.77–78) following George Syncellus, and Nicetas Choniates, *Thes*. 20.1 (PG 140.105) following John of Damascus.

4. Islam

The Arabs were Semitic nomads. They worshipped Allah as the creator of the world together with a number of other deities, but in the early seventh century CE the Meccan merchant Muhammad succeeded in winning them to the exclusive worship of Allah and unconditional submission to His will. How did the Christians assess this revolution among the Arabs, whom they knew as Hagarenes, Ishmaelites, and Saracens, and what consequences, if any, did it have for the name-giving? Here is not the place to deal with these questions in depth, but some observations relating to our subject are in order.

Christians, especially those of the Byzantine Empire, were rather well informed about the Arabs, who inhabited neighbouring regions and with whom there were many contacts, commercial and other. In Christian eyes, the Arabs, who were formerly idolaters, were now the adherents of a heresy. Heresiologists devoted the final section of their manuals to them, and they were fought with data from Scripture. Thus, their descent from Ishmael was scornfully represented to them. Indeed, if Muslims argued that Ishmael was favoured with God's promise, referring to Gen 17:20 ("He shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation"), Christian opponents would retort that with such a promise God had also blessed the birds of the air and the fish of the sea; and that the multitude of twelve peoples was of no avail if God's goodwill was not there; besides, Abraham had had to implore God in order to obtain this promise for Ishmael.[29]

But, of course, the religious issue was but part of the story. Arabs were not just heretics, they were warriors. At high speed, they overran much of the Near East, North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula, nor did they give the impression of being contented with the results of these conquests. So, they were a real threat to the Christian world, and we can understand Alcuin in 790 CE complaining:

> Sed heu pro dolor, quod idem maledicti Saraceni, qui et Aggareni, tota dominantur Affrica, et Asia maiore maxima ex parte.
>
> But alas, how dreadful! Those same cursed Saracens, who are also called Hagarenes, dominate all Africa and the most part of Greater Asia.
>
> (Alcuin, *Epist.* 7 [MGH Epist. 4.32])

[29] Thus the ninth-century Byzantine Nicetas Byzantinus in his *Confut. Dogm. Mahom.* 25.92 (PG 105.789). Cf. Gen 1:22; 17:18.

This alarm gave a new actuality to the age-old commonplaces concerning the "sons of Hagar," and it was very inviting to call these adversaries by names that recalled their descent from the handmaid and to deny them the name of Saracens derived from the name of the mistress. Thus the old terms "Hagarenes" and "Ismaelites" continued to be used. Nevertheless, their meaning stealthily underwent a twofold shift. First, the new rulers crossed the boundaries of their original country and were to be found from Iran to Spain. They and the masses under their sway were referred to as Hagarenes/Ishmaelites/Saracens, no matter in which part of the empire they lived. Furthermore, as they were now adherents of Islam, the names we are studying became synonymous with Muslims. In the ninth century, Nicetas Byzantinus can use terms derived from the term "Hagarenes" in this new meaning: ἀγαρίζειν ("to be or become a Muslim"), ἀγαρισία and ἀγαρισμός ("Islam").[30] We might continue the semantic history by pointing out, for instance, how the term "Saracens" came to refer to Turks, or Hungarians, or Gypsies, but we will leave it at this for the moment.

One last observation: at the beginning of this paper we alluded to the possibility that not three, but maybe even four members of Abraham's kin contributed to the onomastics of the people being dealt with here. The three members, we have seen, were Hagar, Ishmael, and Sarah. The fourth member is not a *heros eponymos* called "Arab" (who is non-existent in Arabic history)[31] but might be no less a person than Abraham himself. For that we have to return to Josephus, who in his *A.J.* 1.221 has the following to say about the twelve sons of Ishmael:

> εἰσὶ δὲ οὗτοι, οἳ τὸ τῶν Ἀράβων ἔθνος καὶ τὰς φυλὰς ἀφ' αὑτῶν καλοῦσι διά τε τὴν ἀρετὴν αὐτῶν καὶ τὸ Ἀβράμου ἀξίωμα.
>
> It is these who conferred their names on the Arabian nation and its tribes in honour both of their own prowess and of the fame of Abraham.
>
> (Josephus, *A.J.* 1.221 [Thackeray, LCL]).

This statement was commented upon by Thackeray with the following remark: "One cannot resist the suspicion of a preposterous connexion of the name Arab with the first two letters of ἀρ–ετή and of Ἄβ–ραμος!"[32] Although I am unable at present to offer more than was done by the text's latest commentator, Feldman, who is content merely to quote Thackeray's

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[30] Nicetas Byzantinus, *Confut. Dogm. Mahom.* 25.42 (PG 105.728) (ἀγαρίζειν), 25.31 (PG 105:712) (ἀγαρησία), 25.48 (PG 105:736) (ἀγαρισμός).

[31] See Retsö, *The Arabs*, 30, 100.

[32] H.S.J. Thackeray, trans., *Josephus* (10 vols.; LCL; Cambridge, Mass., 1930), 4:109n*m*.

view,[33] at least I think it quite possible that further study will reveal the correctness of Thackeray's intuition. For the moment, however, we will have to be satisfied with three name-givers from Abraham's family, which still is well above the average.[34]

[33] L.H. Feldman, *Judean Antiquities Books 1–4* (vol. 3 of *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*; ed. S. Mason; Leiden 2000), 83, introducing the quotation as follows: "The association of ἀρετή with Abraham is so close in this passage that Thackeray (*ad loc.*) remarks:" In the same vein É. Nodet, *Flavius Josèphe, Les Antiquités Juives, Livres I à III* (3rd ed.; Paris 2003), 59n2. Retsö, *The Arabs*, 339, on the other hand, is sure of his ground: "It is interesting that the etymology of Arab (ar-ab) suggested in Josephus as a combination of 'virtue', *ar*-ētē and '*Ab*-raham' presupposes a Greek midrash," although for an underpinning he has solely Thackeray's note *m* to offer.

[34] It is a pleasure to thank Wim J. Aerts, Jan N. Bremmer, Carolien A.A.M. Hilhorst-Böink, and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar for their help during the preparation of this paper.

AFTER PHILO AND PAUL: HAGAR IN THE WRITINGS OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Johan Leemans

1. Introduction

My assignment for the collaborative effort of this volume is to offer a contribution about Hagar in the writings of the church fathers as exemplified in one particular author or text. An exhaustive survey of Hagar in *all* of early Christian literature would be a fascinating subject for a doctoral dissertation—a project which, to the best of my knowledge, still must be carried out—but it is impossible to present such an overview in the space allotted to me here.[1] Discussing how the Hagar pericopes are discussed by just one author or one writing, however, runs the risk of ending up with a completely lopsided picture. Therefore I chose a *via media*. I will present three thematic strands that I encountered in reading early Christian texts about Hagar. First I will present some texts that pursue the line of interpretation advanced by Philo. Then I will demonstrate how the Hagar/Sarah-typology as developed by Paul and styled by him as an allegorical interpretation (ἀλληγορούμενα), played a crucial role in the discussions about the lawfulness of such an allegorical approach to the text of the Scriptures. In the final subsection I will demonstrate how the duality between Hagar and Sara, *inter alia* in Gal 4, gave rise to a host of very diverse interpretations according to which Hagar and Sarah are presented as two options in the field of religion. In these instances, Hagar is virtually always credited with the role of embodying the less desirable option.[2] All in all the material presented here will show how the church

[1] For a brief survey about Hagar in the writings of the church fathers, see K. Hoheisel, "Hagar," *RAC* 13:305–313, esp. 311–313. See also E.A. Clark, "Interpretive Fate amid the Church Fathers," in *Hagar, Sarah, and Their Children: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives* (ed. P. Trible and L.M. Russell; Louisville, Ky., 2006), 127–149.

[2] "But the Church Fathers did not view Hagar in any of these sympathetic ways [i.e., ways informed by postcolonial, feminist or critical race theory]. Indeed, their deployments of the narratives in Genesis about Abraham, Sarah and Hagar may appear callous to contemporary readers" (Clark, "Interpretive Fate," 127).

fathers labour in the shadow of Philo and Paul respectively and how they bring in their own insights into the basic framework developed by their predecessors of the first century CE.

2. After Philo

In his *De congressu eruditionis gratia* Philo gives a quasi-word-for-word-commentary on Gen 16:1–6. In his interpretation Abraham in his desire for knowledge married Sarah—virtue—but first also had to join Hagar, who stands for the propaedeutic instruction of the "profane sciences" (the *enkyklios paideia*).[3] These function as a necessary introduction to reach perfect, spiritual virtue. In recent decades the influence of Philo on the early Christian authors is being increasingly recognised.[4] This influence is very clear in the area of the reflection on the relationship between the profane sciences and Christian faith. The reflection developed by Philo on the *enkyklios paideia* and the striving towards virtue and wisdom was indeed a perfect mould to adapt to the theme of *paideia* and Christian *philosophia*. The influence of Philo, however unsystematic or implicit it may be, can be detected in authors and writings as diverse as Origen's *Epistula ad Gregorium Thaumaturgum*, Basil of Caesarea's *De jejunio (homilia 1, 2, 3)* or Gregory of Nyssa's *De vita Mosis*.[5]

Some authors thought further along the lines sketched by Philo and thereby also adopted and adapted his interpretation of Hagar and Sarah. Clement of Alexandria is the first author whose writings show with regard to the Hagar-Sarah-typology an explicit influence of Philo.[6] In his *Strom.* 1.28–32 he reflects on the topic of secular learning and Christian faith. Clement introduces the trias *enkyklios paideia*—philosophy (virtue)—wisdom (faith). These three are hierarchically interrelated: Wisdom is the queen of philosophy, as philosophy is the queen of *paideia*. Philosophy, understood as the pursuit of an ethical lifestyle, of virtue, in itself is valuable but only assumes its fullest potential when it is enriched by *paideia* and is made subservient to travelling the road to spiritual per-

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[3] See also the contributions on Philo to this volume by Bos and Makiello.

[4] See D.T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (Assen 1993).

[5] Philo, *De congressu eruditionis gratia* (introd., trans., and comm. M. Alexandre; OPA 16; Paris 1967), 83–97. See for the *De vita Moysis* A.C. Geljon, *Moses As Example: The Philonic Background of Gregory of Nyssa's* De vita Moysis (Ph.D. diss., University of Leiden 2000).

[6] A. van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and His Use of Philo in the* Stromateis: *An Early Christian Reshaping of a Jewish Model* (Leiden 1988).

fection which is only to be found in Christ. When brought together in effective harmony the three can help to become a *gnostikos*, somebody whose life is in touch with the honour and knowledge of God.[7] The exegesis of the Hagar and Sarah pericope of Gen 16:1–6, which is presented in support of his argument, further elucidates the relationship between the three elements. In Clement's exegesis Hagar represents *paideia*, Sarah philosophy/virtue, and Abraham wisdom. At first Abraham was married to Sarah but she did not get pregnant and therefore assigned her maid Hagar, the Egyptian, to Abraham, in order to be able to beget children:

> Wisdom, therefore, who dwells with the man of faith [i.e., Abraham] … was still barren and without child in that generation, not having brought forth to Abraham aught allied to virtue. And she, as was proper, thought that he, being now in the time of progress, should have intercourse with secular culture first (by Egyptian the world is designated figuratively); and afterwards should approach to her according to divine providence, and beget Isaac.[8] (Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.30.4)

Yet one should not jump to the conclusion that Clement judges the roles of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar as equally valuable. On the contrary, a little bit further in the same section of book I of the *Stromata* he continues his exegesis of Gen 16:1–6 with the passage in which Abraham allows the jealous Sarah to send Hagar away:

> Wherefore also, when Sarah was jealous at Hagar being preferred to her, Abraham, as choosing only what was profitable in secular philosophy, said, "Behold, your maid is in your hands: deal with her as it pleases thee; manifestly meaning, 'I embrace secular culture as youthful, and a handmaid; but your knowledge I honour and reverence as true wife.'"[9] (Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.32.1)

The conclusion is clear: *paideia* is very good as a preparatory stage but once the "real thing" of wisdom, of Christian faith has been reached, the Christian, who then is a *gnostikos*, no longer needs it since he has gained access to a higher, more spiritual form of knowing. Philosophy, virtue, is the real, true partner of wisdom, faith. The union of Abraham and Sarah (faith and virtue) was initially sterile and it is the undeniable merit of Hagar (*paideia*) to have ended this sterility but this does not mean that

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[7] L. Rizzerio, *Clemente di Alessandria e la fysiologia veramente gnostica: Saggio sulle origini e le implicazioni di un'epistemologia e di un'ontologia cristiane* (Leuven 1996).

[8] English translation taken from *Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus and Clement of Alexandria* (*ANF* 2:306), modified.

[9] English translation taken from *Fathers of the Second Century* (*ANF* 2:306–307), modified.

her role is indispensable. On the contrary, once they were enriched with *paideia*, Abraham and Sarah got Isaac. The role of Hagar is an important one but one may dispense with it after reaching maturity.

The writings of Origen also contain one or two passages in which the Hagar-Sarah-typology is present along the lines developed by Philo. He seems to be inspired rather by Philo than by Paul,[10] e.g., in a catena-fragment of his *Commentarii in Genesim*.[11] From Origen I jump immediately to Didymus the Blind, in whose writings the Hagar-Sarah-typology is quite prominently present. Didymus is one of the most eminent theologians of the Alexandrian tradition of the fourth century, whose writings were only very partially extant until a chance papyrus find in 1941 unearthed a substantial amount of hitherto unknown scriptural commentaries. These texts show "how completely and unreservedly Philo had been absorbed into the Alexandrian Christian tradition."[12] For the Hagar-Sarah-typology especially the long discussion of Gen 16:1–6 in Didymus' *In Genesim* is relevant.[13] A detailed analysis of how he adopts the heritage of Philo and Clement is, to the best of my knowledge, still a *desideratum*. For our purpose here the following points are noteworthy.

Having quoted the biblical texts of Gen 16:1–2, Didymus starts his exegesis with the following words: "Following the law of allegory the Apostle has seen in these two women the two Covenants but because the literary interpretation of the text also occurred, it is well worth looking into this too."[14] Didymus belongs to the Alexandrian tradition and his preferred method of exegesis is the allegorical one or, as he calls it more often, the anagogical one, the one that leads upward.[15] Yet, it is also customary for him, as is the case in his commentary on Gen 16:1–2, to offer first a literal reading before developing an anagogical

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[10] Runia, *Early Christian Literature*, 171 with reference to A. Henrichs, "Philosophy, the Handmaiden of Theology," *GRBS* 9 (1968): 437–450.

[11] *PG* 12:116A. In his *Hom. Gen.* 11 a similar reading is offered of the relationship between Abraham and Keturah (cf. Philo, *De congr.* 86–90).

[12] Runia, *Early Christian Literature*, 197–204, here 204.

[13] Didymus the Blind, *Sur la Genèse: Texte inédit d'après un papyrus de Toura* (ed., trans., and comm. P. Nautin and L. Doutreleau; SC 244; Paris 1978), 200–217.

[14] Didymus the Blind, *Sur la Genèse*, 200, 32–34.

[15] About Didymus' exegetical works and technique, see W.A. Bienert, *Allegoria und Anagoge bei Didymos dem Blinden von Alexandria* (Berlin 1972); J. Tigcheler, *Didyme l'Aveugle et l'exégèse allégorique: Étude sémantique de quelques termes exégétiques importants de son Commentaire sur Zacharie* (Nijmegen 1977). Full bibliography in C. Kannengiesser et al., *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis* (2 vols.; BAChr 1; Leiden 2004), 725–729. See most recently also the introduction to Didymus the Blind, *Commentary on Zechariah* (trans. R.C. Hill; FC 111; Washington, D.C., 2005), 9–28.

interpretation.[16] According to his literal reading, the teaching offered by the first two verses of Gen 16 is that the saints did not marry because of pleasure but because of procreation and that Abram's behaviour was perfectly in line with this maxim: he himself did only sleep with Hagar after Sarah had suggested this to him in view of achieving the higher goal of bringing forth offspring. The literal reading of the story thus brings to light Sarah's σωφροσύνη and ἀφθονία as well as Abram's ἀπάθεια.

In the passage quoted above, Didymus' attitude to Paul's interpretation of Hagar and Sarah also invites some comment. The Alexandrian explicitly mentions the Pauline interpretation but at the same time neatly glosses over it to proceed with the literal interpretation. The same happens at the end of this section on the literal interpretation of Gen 16:1–2, where he is making the transition to the anagogical interpretation. He writes: "As for the anagogical teaching, one can explain it by remembering that Paul transposed the two women figuratively into the two covenants." But then he adds: "Philo also used figurative language but gave it another application." This "other application" then is explained at length in what follows and serves as his main source of inspiration. It is clear that Didymus is much more in tune with Philo's allegorical explanation of Gen 16:1–2 than with the Pauline one. In itself this is not surprising. Firstly, Philo is quoted and mentioned by name on at least six other occasions by Didymus and the influence of the Jewish Alexandrian can also be detected beyond these quotations. Most noteworthy for our purpose is that in his *Commentarii in Ecclesiasten* Didymus is giving the same allegorical exegesis of Gen 16:1–2 as he does in his *In Genesim*.[17] Secondly, in both the passages from the *Commentarii in Ecclesiasten* and the *In Genesim* he is favouring the Philonic interpretation over the Pauline. Thirdly, besides the passages mentioned, in all of which Philo is preferred above Paul, Gal 4:24 in Didymus' writings occurs only in a catena-fragment. The conclusion must be, then, that Didymus resolutely opts for the Philonic exegesis of Gen 16:1–6. The reason behind this preference probably is that the Philonic exegesis invited an easy link to read the Scriptures as a guide for the road to virtue, an enterprise dear to Didymus' heart as a spiritual teacher.[18]

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[16] This literal analysis is offered in Didymus the Blind, *Sur la Genèse*, 200–203.

[17] Didymus the Blind, *Comm. Eccl.*, 275–276 in the edition of Didymus the Blind, *Kommentar zu Eccl. Kap. 9,8–10,20* (vol. 5 of *Kommentar zum Ecclesiastes*; ed. M. Gronewald; PTA 24; Bonn 1979), 10–19. Cf. Runia, *Early Christian Literature*, 199.

[18] See most recently R.A. Layton, *Didymus the Blind and His Circle in Late-Antique Alexandria: Virtue and Narrative in Biblical Scholarship* (Urbana, Ill., 2004).

What, then, is Didymus' allegorical exegesis of Gen 16:1–2? Just as Clement had done two centuries earlier, Hagar symbolises here too the *progymnasmata*, the preliminary exercises, in short: *paideia*. Sarah stands for the perfect virtue (*aretē*). Note that Didymus seems to prefer virtue whereas Clement used the term "wisdom" for Sarah. The main line of the allegorical interpretation of Gen 16:1–2 thus is that, just as Sarah sent Abram to Hagar and she got a child from him before he returned to his lawful wife, in the same way one must first engage oneself in the preparatory disciplines (*progymnasmata*) before one can aspire to rise to virtue. Interestingly, Didymus makes concrete these "introductory disciplines" by enumerating Jewish religious practices, something which is due to a connection with Heb 10:1, where the word *skia* ("shadow") refers to the Jewish law, a connection absent in Clement.

Another development by Didymus in comparison to Clement is that, in contrast to his predecessor, he pays much attention to Gen 16:4–5 and particularly to the tensions between the three characters in the story. First there is Hagar who becomes pregnant and displays *atimia*, lack of respect, towards Sarah her mistress. In his allegorical explanation Didymus here introduces an insight already found in Clement: there is nothing wrong with the use of the *progymnasmata* to come to faith, but only as a transitory phase. When one is past that phase it is undesirable to return to it. And most certainly it is unthinkable that one, who remains in this phase of the *progymnasmata* should look with contempt to those striving towards virtue. Such a person would indeed produce offspring worthy of a slave. Moreover, when somebody initially strives for virtue but then deliberately remains in the introductory sciences, he commits an injustice by showing *atimia* towards virtue itself in the sense that he takes her as the initial impetus but then abandons the ultimate goal.[19]

In the commentary on Gen 16:6 it seems that "all is well that ends well." In Genesis we read that Abram gives Sarah the permission to do with Hagar as she likes; that Sarah treats Hagar badly and that she flees. In Didymus' allegorical explanation this means that virtue and *progymnasmata* have found their rightful place: just as Hagar will be disciplined by Sarah the person who strives for virtue will be disciplined by virtue as long as he is still entirely or partially in the phase of the *progymnasmata*.

[19] Didymus the Blind, *Sur la Genèse*, 212–217.

Sarah treating Hagar badly so that she flees is the ultimate step when swift progress and perfection are within reach: then the Hagar of the *progymnasmata* is no longer necessary.[20]

To conclude: Clement and Didymus read and interpret Philo's basic ideas in much the same way. It is a tribute to the distinct influence that Philo of Alexandria exercised on the church fathers' interpretation of the characters of Hagar, Sarah, and Abraham as they appear in Gen 16:1–6. Yet, in the overall picture the Pauline interpretation of Gal 4:20–24 was at least as powerful, as the following two subsections demonstrate.

3. After Paul: Galatians 4:24 and Allegorical Exegesis—Pro and Contra

In Gal 4:24 Paul interprets Hagar and Sarah as the old and the new covenant and styles this interpretation as an allegorical one (ἀλληγορούμενα).[21] This is one of the texts from Scripture that played a crucial role in the *Methodenstreit* in the early church about which interpretation of Scripture was the best. Very roughly speaking it can be said that in this discussion the literal one as practised by the representatives of the Antiochene school opposed the allegorical one of the Alexandrian school. The latter used Gal 4:24 as an argument in defence of their position whereas, to the representatives of the literal sense, it was a major stumbling block.[22]

Galatians 4:24 emerges as a defence of allegory in the writings of Tertullian and Origen. Tertullian argues in his *Adversus Marcionem* that the latter's rejection of the Old Testament and excision of too "Judaic" passages from the New Testament is pointless because Paul, Marcion's "hero," by his use of allegory in Gal 4 advocated this kind of appropriation of the Old Testament.[23] A similar reasoning is offered by Origen in *Contra Celsum*. To his pagan interlocutor's criticism that Christians use allegory only to explain away the crudeness of many stories from the Old Testament, Origen replies that the pagan stories are at least as crude and that the allegorical mode of interpretation of the Old Testament is

[20] Didymus the Blind, *Sur la Genèse*, 216–217.

[21] See also the contributions on Hagar to this volume by Hogeterp and van Kooten.

[22] Excellent overview in R. Heine, "Gregory of Nyssa's Apology for Allegory," *VC* 38 (1984): 360–370.

[23] Tertullian, *Marc.* 3.5 in the edition of Tertullian, *Livre III* (vol. 3 of *Contre Marcion*; ed. and trans. R. Braun; SC 399; Paris 1994), 70–77.

divinely sanctioned because it is present in the Scriptures itself.[24] In other passages Origen also takes up the defence of allegory, most notably in *De principiis* 4.2.1–9 and his *Ninth Homily on Joshua*.[25] In both key-passages Gal 4:24 is brought forward as an argument together with a host of other Pauline texts, mostly from First and Second Corinthians, to build a strong argumentation in defence of allegory.

The Pauline foundation Origen had developed in defence of allegory was adopted quasi *in toto* by Gregory of Nyssa in his prologue to his *In Canticum canticorum (homiliae 15)*. In this text Gregory reflects on how to achieve his purpose of revealing the hidden meaning of the Song of Songs so that it can be cleaned from the misleading interpretations that come forth from a literal interpretation. Therefore the prologue turns into a defence of the allegorical method of reading Scripture as the only access to its true meaning. Gregory also underlines that it is less important what terminology exactly (allegory, tropology, etc.) is used to indicate this searching for Scripture's deeper meaning. Here Pauline quotations are brought to the fore to demonstrate that in several instances where the Apostle applies the allegorical method he gives a different name to what he is doing. Here Gal 4:24 is mentioned as the second in a row of Pauline texts, proving that the Apostle, while giving it different names, was consistently applying the allegorical method in his interpretation of the Old Testament.[26]

Later in his *In Canticum canticorum (homiliae 15)*, when commenting on Song 4:2 Gregory implicitly also takes up the defence of the allegorical reading. He argues that this text about the teeth of the bride that are compared to sheep, is completely dark and impossible to understand when a literal reading is applied, while an allegorical reading is perfectly capable of opening up the meaning of this verse. In his exegesis the teeth of the bride stand for the activity of a good exegete, preacher or bishop: his "teeth" make the raw meat of Scripture accessible for a wider audience. Scriptural example *par excellence* is Paul in Gal 4:20–24. First he states in 4:22 that "Abraham had two sons, one by a slave-woman and the other

[24] Origen, *Cels*. 4.48–54 in the edition of Origen, *Livres III–IV* (vol. 2 of *Contre Celse*; ed. and trans. M. Borret; SC 136; Paris 1968), 307–323.

[25] Origen, *Princ*. 4.1–7 in the edition of Origen, *Vier Bücher von den Prinzipien* (ed. and trans. H. Görgemanns and H. Karpp; TzF 24; Darmstadt 1976), 700–731; *Ninth Homily on Joshua* in the edition of Origen, *Homélies sur Josué* (ed. and trans. A. Jaubert; SC 71; Paris 1960), 242–269.

[26] Rom 7:14; Gal 4:20, 24; 1 Cor 9:9–10, 10:11, 13:12; 2 Cor 3:16; Matt 10:14; 2 Cor 3:6.

by a free woman." This is a dark saying in itself, but is then illuminated by applying it to the old and the new covenant, Judaism and Christianity.[27]

Gregory's apology for allegory bears testimony to the discussions that in his period were taking place between "the Alexandrian allegorists" and "the Antiochene literalists." In his prologue to his *In Canticum canticorum (homiliae 15)* Gregory *expressis verbis* rejects the literal meaning of the Scriptures as adopted by "some clerics" who "do not grant that anything in it has been said symbolically and with an underlying meaning for our benefit." At the end of his argumentation he says his remarks should be considered as "a kind of apology to those who lay it down that one ought not to seek more from the divine words than the obvious meaning of the language."[28]

In this debate about the allegorical reading of the Scriptures Gregory was engaged in a confrontation with the neo-Arian Eunomius on the one hand and the representatives of the Antiochene school of exegesis on the other: Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and John Chrysostom. Herein Gal 4:24 obviously plays a crucial role.

We can follow Gregory's exchange with Eunomius in his *Contra Eunomium*, in which he gives long quotations from the writings of his opponent. In the Trinitarian debates of the fourth century Eunomius defended a radical subordinationist position, thereby often capitalising on a literal reading of the Scriptures. Proverbs 8:22 ("The Lord created me before his ways") is a crucial text which was taken by many to imply that Father and Son could not possibly be co-eternal whereupon authors such as Athanasius of Alexandria and later Gregory of Nyssa countered that one must not interpret the text too literally and apply it not to the divine Son of God but only to his humanity, to the period that he was in the flesh. In the passage of *Contra Eunomium* that interests us here, Gregory rejects Eunomius' literal exegesis of Prov 8:22 and introduces Gal 4:20–24 as the authoritative argument that true exegesis is allegorical.[29]

Galatians 4:24 is also brought to the fore in Gregory's confrontation with the representatives of the Antiochene school, with some of whom he was personally acquainted. In his comments on Gal 4:24 Theodore of Mopsuestia states:

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[27] Gregory of Nyssa, *In Canticum canticorum homilia 7* in the edition of Gregory of Nyssa, *Homilien zum Hohenlied* (trans. F. Dünzl; FChr 16; Freiburg 1994), 432–433.

[28] Translation taken from Heine, "Apology for Allegory," 365.

[29] Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* 3.1.21–54 in the edition of Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium libri III* (ed. W. Jaeger; GNO 2; Leiden 1960), 10–23.

> There are some people who make it their business to pervert the meaning of the divine Scriptures .... They invent foolish tales of their own and give to their nonsense the name of 'allegory'. By using the apostle's word, they imagine they have found a way to undermine the meaning of everything in Scripture—they keep on using the apostles expression 'allegorical'. They do not realise what a difference there is between their use of the term and the apostle's use of it here.
>
> (Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on Galatians*)

A little bit further Theodore questions the basis of allegorical reasoning: if this method amounts to discovering the spiritual truth, some hidden meaning of the text, some theological notions, then must they not explain how they arrive at these notions in the first place? In other words, what is the source of the knowledge they seek behind the text of the Scriptures which they refuse to take on its face value?[30]

John Chrysostom points out that what Paul does in Gal 4:24 is actually a typology, not an allegory and that this does not mean that he rejects the literal reading.[31] Diodore of Tarsus also underlines that Paul, by bringing in the spiritual sense, which he called allegory, did not nullify the literal sense at all. Hence Gal 4:24 should not be used as an argument against the validity of the literal sense of Scripture.[32]

To conclude this section: throughout Christian Antiquity and especially in the latter decades of the fourth century, Paul's exegesis of the pericope on Hagar and Sarah from Genesis in Gal 4:20–24 with its use of the term ἀλληγορούμενα in 4:24 was a key-text in the search for a valid Christian interpretation of the Bible.

4. Exploiting the Hagar-Sarah-Duality of Gal 4:20–24

In the stories of Genesis the characters of Hagar and Sarah are prominently presented as characters whose interests conflict. In Gal 4:20–24 Paul deliberately presents them as two, opposite characters: slave-woman versus free woman, children born according to the flesh versus according

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[30] Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on Galatians* in the edition of H.B. Swete, ed., *Theodori episcopi Mopsuestenii in epistulas B. Pauli commentarii: The Latin Version with the Greek Fragments* (Cambridge 1880–1882), 73–75. English translation from M. Wiles and M. Santer, *Documents in Early Christian Thought* (Cambridge 1975), 151–152.

[31] John Chrysostom, *Hom. Gal.* in the edition of F. Field, ed., *S.P.N. Joannis Chrysostomi in divi Pauli epistolam ad Galatas commentaria* (Oxford 1852), 73–74 (= *PG* 61:662).

[32] Diodore of Tarsus, *Commentarii in Psalmos*, Prologue in the edition of Diodore of Tarsus, *Commentarii in Psalmos I–L* (vol. 1 of *Diodori Tarsensis Commentarii in Psalmos*; ed. J.-M. Olivier; CCSG 6; Brepols 1980), 7.

to the promise etc. .... Hagar represents the old covenant, Sarah the new. The antithetical structure of the pericope of Gal 4 lends itself very well for substituting the types of Hagar and Sarah with a variety of oppositional types: Christianity versus non-Christian religions, old covenant versus new covenant, the "orthodox" versus the "heretics," and many more variations on the theme "the good versus the bad."[33] As a basic scheme this is no exception: other biblical pairs such as brothers or sisters are interpreted in the same way. Notable examples are Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau or Rachel and Leah.[34] The following examples, chosen at random, bear testimony to the ingenuity and diversity with which this oppositional framework can be found back in the church fathers' writings.

There is a large number of patristic texts which follow the Pauline interpretation quite closely. Hence, they identify Sarah and Hagar (as well as their sons Isaac and Ishmael) as the representatives of the old and the new covenant, respectively. In many instances this opposition is used to underline Christianity's superiority vis-à-vis Judaism; sometimes it is turned into explicit anti-Jewish polemic.[35] Thus, Cyprian points out that the formerly barren Christian church (Sarah) has produced from the Gentiles many more children ("Isaac") than Judaism (Hagar) had been able to bear so many centuries before.[36] An example which follows Paul's interpretation of Gal 4:22–24 quite closely comes from *De Abrahamo* by Ambrose of Milan. In this treatise Ambrose presents Abraham as an example of virtue. This means he has to explain away Abraham's unfaithfulness towards Sarah. One of the arguments he brings forward is that one must favour the allegorical reading of the Genesis narrative, such as the one delivered by Paul, over the literal one. The Apostle there shows how Abraham had a son from Hagar, a slave-woman, and one from Sarah, a free woman. In this way he begot two peoples: the Jewish people that obeyed the law and the Christian people that received the freedom of divine grace.[37]

An interesting use of Gal 4:24 we find in Hilary of Poitiers' *Commentary on the Psalms*, where he discusses the word "law" as it occurs in

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[33] Cf. also the contribution to this volume by van Os.

[34] See V. Hahn, *Das wahre Gesetz: Eine Untersuchung der Auffassung des Ambrosius von Mailand vom Verhältnis der beiden Testamente* (Münster 1969), 134–196.

[35] Clark, "Interpretive Fate," 128–129.

[36] Cyprian, *Test*. 1.20 in the edition of Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum & Ad Fortunatum* (vol. 1 of *Sancti Cypriani episcopi opera*; ed. R. Weber; CCSL 3; Turnhout 1972), 19–21.

[37] Ambrose, *Abr*. 1.4.28 in the edition of Ambrose, *Exaemeron ... de bono mortis* (vol. 1 of *Sancti Ambrosii opera*; ed. C. Schenkel; CSEL 32; Vienna 1897), 522.20–523.16.

Ps 118:1 (*beati immaculati in via, qui ambulant in* lege *domini*). In this section he attempts to make a distinction between Old Testament terms such as *lex*, *praeceptum*, *iudicium*, *iustificatio*, and *testimonium*. What does "the law" mean here? Hilary makes a connection with Heb 10:1: the law is the shadow of things to come (*umbra futurorum*). This only makes sense when interpreted allegorically and hence Hilary refers to Gal 4:21–24 to justify the allegorical reading he is about to offer. In his quotation of Galatians he duly underlines that, according to Paul, one of Abraham's children was born according to the flesh, the other according to the promise. As Paul himself says, they allegorically represent both Testaments (*duo testamenta*). Since the law is spiritual (*lex spiritalis est*), a definition Hilary inherited from Origen, the conclusion must be that wherever the term *umbra* is mentioned in the spiritual teachings (*doctrinae spirituales*), it refers to the law. Thus, Gal 4:24 is used here in defence of allegory but, at the same time, functions in a wider argument that endeavours to find a criterion for how to distinguish "the law" from other kinds of divine commandments.[38]

The lion's share of Gregory of Nyssa's *In diem luminum (vulgo in baptismum Christi oratio)* is a theological reflection on Christian baptism. One major section consists of a seemingly endless list of Old Testament prefigurations of Christian baptism. Virtually every text from the Old Testament in which water occurs is mentioned here, including Hagar being saved from death by an angel who showed her a well of living water. Gregory interprets this allegorically: the well of living water stands for the ritual of baptism for "it is by the means of living water that salvation comes to him that was perishing—water that was not before, but was given … by an angel's means." The life-threatening situation Hagar and her son Ishmael found themselves in is seen by Gregory as a symbolic reference to the, in his opinion, imperfection of the old covenant for, as he comments, "it was not possible that the synagogue … should have all that was needed to support life."[39]

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[38] Hilary of Poitiers, *Commentary on the Psalms* 118.1, 5 in the edition of Hilary of Poitiers, *Commentaire sur le Psaume 118* (2 vols.; introd., trans., and comm. M. Milhau; SC 344; Paris 1988), 1:104–108. Compare also Hilary's use of Gal 4:24 later in the same writing (*Tractatus super Psalmos* 138.40 in the edition of Hilary of Poitiers, *Tractatus super Psalmos* [vol. 1 of *S. Hilarii Episcopi Pictaviensis opera*; ed. A. Zingerle, CSEL 22; Vienna 1891], 773).

[39] Gregory of Nyssa, *In diem luminum* (in the edition of Gregory of Nyssa, *Sermones, Pars 1*; vol. 9 of *Gregorii Nysseni opera*; ed. E. Gebhardt et al.; Leiden 1967), 221–242, esp. 230.19–231.10.

Besides the Judaism/Christianity dichotomy many other explanations of the opposition between Hagar and Sarah are possible. A creative one we find in Origen's *Homiliae in Genesim* 7. There he underlines that knowledge, free will and a conscious choice for virtue—and not fear for divine punishment—should lead humanity to God. He then opposes the two groups: those who adhere to God out of love on the basis of free choice and those who do so out of fear and because of threats. The first group are children of the free woman Sarah, the second group are children from the slave Hagar.[40]

Augustine is also an interesting source for the application of such dichotomic schemes.[41] The title of his sermon "Quomodo ad Agar et Ismael pertineant haeretici et schismatici" says it all: according to the bishop of Hippo Hagar and Ishmael figuratively represent heretics and schismatics. In his *Expositio in epistulam ad Galatas* and book 16 of *De civitate Dei*, the bishop of Hippo breaks open the opposition in order to construct an interesting triad: the children of Abraham's lawful wife, Sarah, are the true Christians, the children of his first concubine, Hagar, are "the carnal people under the old covenant," the children of his second concubine, Keturah, are "the carnal individuals who think that they belong to the new covenant."[42] Here Hagar, Sarah, and Keturah represent orthodox Christians, Jews and heretics or schismatics, respectively. Augustine is the heir of this oppositional way of patristic interpretation of Hagar, Sarah (and eventually Keturah), a paradigm which continued into the Middle Ages. There it will continue to flourish, together with the negative interpretation of the character of Hagar it entails.

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[40] Origen, *Homiliae in Genesim* 7 in the edition of Origen, *Homélies sur la Genèse* (ed. and trans. L. Doutreleau and H. de Lubac; SC 7bis; Paris 1976), 194–212.

[41] A full discussion of the reception of Sarah and Hagar by Augustine is offered in E.A. Clark, "Interpretive Fate," 136–143.

[42] Augustine, *Expositio in epistulam ad Galatas* in the edition of E. Plumer, ed., *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians* (Oxford 2003), 192–195; *De civitate Dei* in the edition of Augustine, *Book XVI–XVIII, 35* (vol. 5 of *Augustine: The City of God against the Pagans*; text and trans. E. Matthews Sanford and W. McAllen Green; LCL; Cambridge, Mass., 1965), 158–161.

THE CALL OF GOD AND THE RESPONSE OF ABRAHAM: PERSPECTIVES FROM A FIFTH-CENTURY CHRISTIAN DEBATE

Augustine Casiday

1. Introduction

In the midst of controversies in fifth-century Gaul pertaining to the question of divine initiative and human responsiveness in matters of salvation, the account in Gen 12 wherein God promises to make a great nation of Abraham (and the reception of that account in Gal 3 and Rom 8:9) plays an important part. Leaving his father's home at God's behest, Abraham was an exemplary figure for two Latin authors who contributed to those debates and who will therefore be our chief topics: John Cassian (ca. 360–ca. 435), a monastic founder and reformer, and Tiro Prosper of Aquitaine (ca. 390–ca. 455), a chronicler and controversialist. These two were by no means the only contributors to the debates, but there are good reasons to select those two authors in particular. First, each of them left behind a substantial corpus of writings. In that regard, they are unlike many other occasional contributors to the controversies, some of whom are in fact anonymous and about whom we can therefore say relatively little of interest. Second, Prosper and Cassian interacted—or at least Prosper manifestly interacted with the writings of Cassian (whether Cassian knew of Prosper is a matter for conjecture). Prosper dedicated one of his most pungent writings—*Contra collatorem* ("Against the Conferencer"), a transparent reference to Cassian's magnum opus, the *Conferences*—to an unrelenting attack on Cassian's teachings. In the course of that particular writing, Prosper made it very clear that he regarded Cassian as typical of the perspective against which he argues in the writing that will chiefly occupy our attention. So we will begin with Cassian's comments on the promise to Abraham and Abraham's reaction, and then turn to Prosper's.

A third reason for choosing these two authors in particular is that Cassian and Prosper are key figures in the early history of reactions to the theology of Augustine of Hippo (354–430). Modern scholarship on

the two has been conducted with more or less constant reference to the Augustinian legacy. Indeed, if the controversy in which Prosper engaged Cassian is generally known by any name at all, that name is a tribute to Augustine's final debates with the Pelagians: for it is called the "Semi-Pelagian controversy." Other descriptors have been proposed in recent years—notable among them being the "Augustinian controversy," the "semi-Augustinian controversy" and (my own preference) the "Predestination controversy." Though there are good reasons for thinking that one or other of those descriptors is more accurate than the "Semi-Pelagian controversy," it is nevertheless the case that all the conventional designations revert to a thematization in terms derived entirely from Augustine's debate with Pelagius, Julian of Eclanum and others—and therefore implicitly suggest that the later debates are substantially a continuation of the earlier controversy. For our purposes, the most salient aspects of those arguments are divine election, human responsiveness and, lingering in the background, the nature of theological authority; we shall come to these topics in considering Cassian's and especially Prosper's works, but before we do it will be good to clear the ground by noting some of the ways in which modern scholarly research into this controversial literature has distanced itself from trends in the earlier scholarship.

So, after a review of the scholarly literature and recent contributions (in the form of on-going research), we will come to Cassian's *Conferences* and then to Prosper's *The Call of All Nations* attending to the use that each makes of our biblical themes. Then we will attempt a comparison of the two authors and, finally, conclude with a few observations about the relevance of these findings to the study of the history of Christian literature.

2. Writing the History of an Early Christian Debate

The foundations for the recent study of Prosper and Cassian were laid by a series of several publications that appeared from 1929 to 1962, after which there was to all intents and purposes a hiatus of about thirty-five years. The enduring contribution of these publications was that they identified the importance of Prosper's writings for subsequent theology. (As we shall see, the modern study of Prosper has been foundational to the modern study of Cassian.) Merely to register the titles of the major publications is to indicate clearly what their authors thought Prosper's contribution was. In chronological order, the most significant are

Cappuyn's "Le premier représentant de l'Augustinisme médiéval, Prosper d'Aquitaine,"[1] Pelland's *S. Prosperi Aquitani doctrina de praedestinatione et voluntate Dei salvifica: De ejus in augustinismum influxu*,[2] Plinval's "Prosper d'Aquitaine interprète de saint Augustin,"[3] and Lorenz's "Die Augustinismus Prospers von Aquitanien."[4] These publications neatly illustrate the convergence of several themes: Prosper's significance is as the first major interpreter of Augustinianism, a theological system concerned chiefly with the questions of the predestination of humans and the will of God to save humans.

No doubt Prosper would be enormously gratified by the influence that his writings came to exercise, for (as he made clear in a plucky letter that he sent to Augustine himself) he regarded himself as Augustine's great defender against unnamed backbiters who were dissatisfied by Augustine's doctrine of grace. Indeed, Prosper informed Augustine that he was not only reiterating Augustine's own teachings in the hopes of winning over the doubters, he was even going so far as to imitate Augustine's teachings whilst confecting his own arguments.[5] From the number and the tone of Prosper's subsequent writings, it is clear that his arguments did not meet with universal acceptance and in fact seem to have roused even greater opposition from some quarters.

It is an interesting fact that Prosper's analysis of that opposition has become an integral part of the modern historical reconstruction of early responses in Gaul to Augustine's theological writings *On Admonition and Grace* and his *On the Predestination of Saints and the Gift of Perseverance*. The use of Prosper's witness goes beyond incorporating his claims into an account along with numerous others. Instead, many interpretations of those events are uncritically reliant upon nakedly polemical assertions from Prosper's works, which are then used as the basis for interpreting

[1] M. Cappuyn, "Le premier représentant de l'Augustinisme médiévale, Prosper d'Aquitaine," *RTAM* 1 (1929): 309–337.

[2] L. Pelland, *S. Prosperi Aquitani doctrina de praedestinatione et voluntate Dei salvifica: De ejus in augustinismum influxu* (SCMIC 2; Montreal 1936).

[3] G. de Plinval, "Prosper d'Aquitaine interprète de saint Augustin," *RechAug* 1 (1958): 339–355.

[4] R. Lorenz, "Die Augustinismus Prospers von Aquitanien," *ZKG* 73 (1962): 217–252.

[5] Prosper, *Ad Augustinum* 3 (PL 51:70): "Et cum contra eos scripta beatitudinis tuae validissimis et innumeris testimoniis divinarum Scriptuarum instructa proferimus, ac, secundum formam disputationum tuarum, aliquid etiam ipsi quo concludantur astriumus …."

other contemporary writings.[6] The effects for the study of Cassian and his writings have been particularly harmful. Now is not the time to enter into the questions that are prompted by this over-reliance upon Prosper's claims. Rather, it suffices to observe that several scholars in seminal publications have identified Prosper's advocacy of Augustine's works as being nothing other than the clear statement of Augustinian orthodoxy in confrontation with detractors of those works. It should also be noted that the scholars in question were quick to refer their readers to earlier histories of dogma and patrologies, such as those written by Harnack, Bardenhewer, Tixeront, Cayré, Altaner, and de Labriolle, amongst others.[7]

Making allowances for the confessional commitments of any particular author, what all those worthy volumes have in common is a sustained emphasis on Christian doctrine (understood in a fairly conventional way as teachings about Christ, the Trinity, the Church, etc.). Prosper's writings—which identify doctrinal concerns and relentlessly pursues discrepancies—made happy reading for earlier generations whose sites were trained on the development of theological systems. By contrast, other early Christian literature that concerned itself with less lofty themes was correspondingly less relevant. Regardless of how morally improving Cassian's accounts of the desert fathers might be, what mattered was that Prosper in his role as an eminent Augustinian had isolated the theological implications of Cassian's writings and found them to be seriously wanting.

Over the last three decades or more, the high level interest in doctrinal theology that was typical of those earlier publications has waned amongst subsequent scholars of early Christianity, who have instead turned their attention to overlooked genres and other byways in the surviving literature.[8] As a result of this expanded purview, it has been possible for recent studies on early Christian controversies to come to fresh conclusions about the causes and the outcomes of those debates. Old assumptions can be challenged and new questions can be asked as the evidence is studied. For example, in the matter that we are considering, interesting results have come from suspending the assumption that Prosper was slav-

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[6] E.g., see A. Casiday, "Rehabilitating John Cassian: An Evaluation of Prosper of Aquitaine's Polemic against the 'Semipelagians,'" *SJT* 58 (2005): 270–284.

[7] Thus, Cappuyns, "Premier représentant," 309n1; cf. P. de Letter, trans. and notes, *St. Prosper of Aquitaine: The Call of All Nations* (ACW 14; London 1952), 162n33, 163n45.

[8] See E.A. Clark, "The State and Future of Historical Theology: Patristic Studies," in Idem, *Ascetic Piety and Women's Faith: Essays on Late Ancient Christianity* (SWR 20; Lewiston, N.Y., 1986), 3–19.

ishly devoted to expounding Augustinian theology. In the monograph based on his doctoral research, Hwang has convincingly demonstrated that Augustine was progressively eclipsed in Prosper's thinking as Prosper's own ideas about the locus of theological authority changed, with the eventual result that Prosper's later writings demonstrate little commitment to the rightness of Augustinian theology but a huge interest in the institutions of the church of Rome as the bulwark of Christianity.[9] (This claim is substantiated by a revealing line from Prosper's *The Call of All Nations*: "Grace has now submitted to the sceptre of the Cross of Christ many peoples whom Rome could not subject with her arms; though Rome by her primacy of the apostolic priesthood has become greater as a citadel of religion than as the seat of power.")[10] Hwang's finding are more subtle than the claims of earlier scholars who, supposing loyalty to Augustine's legacy was Prosper's paramount concern, have found it difficult to explain the gradual tempering of Prosper's rhetoric and the maturation of his theological writings as they shifted from "strict" Augustinianism.

As for Cassian, the relaxation of *Dogmengeschichte*'s mighty grip on research into the patristic era has made it possible for Cassian's anecdotes to be taken seriously, instead of peremptorily dismissing them as being either theologically inadequate or else historically naive (or maybe both). Attention to Cassian's intended readership, to the genres in which he wrote, to his own background and to other comparable factors has enabled—even encouraged—scholars increasingly to interpret Cassian with much greater nuance. This emergent trend should be contrasted to the older practice of isolating elements from Cassian's writings and construing them according to categories of systematic theology, which are obscure with respect to their origin, quite probably irrelevant, and almost certainly anachronistic. There is considerable irony in the fact that the first interpreter of Cassian to attempt to extract his meaning from his writings and exposit it systematically (albeit with disastrous results) was Prosper himself.

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[9] A.Y. Hwang, *Intrepid Lover of Perfect Grace: A Study of the Life and Thought of Prosper of Aquitaine* (Washington, D.C., 2009), based on his Ph.D. dissertation for Fordham University (2006).

[10] Prosper, *Call of All Nations* 2.16 (de Letter, ACW 14:120; PL 51:704): "... multosque jam populos sceptre crucis Christi illa [i.e., gratia] subdiderti, quos armis suis ista non domuit. Quae tamen per apostolici sacerdotii principatum amplior facta est arce religionis quam solio potestatis."

Despite the ancient pedigree that such maladroit interpretation therefore has, there are heartening examples of recent attempts to understand Cassian that have produced much better results. Mention can be made of the researches of Stewart, of Drivers, and of Goodrich.[11] Their books indicate that the presupposition of normative Augustinianism is loosening its hold on the study of Cassian and scholars are now demonstrating a refreshing willingness to read Cassian's writings without presuming that Prosper's criteria for interpreting Cassian in any way compel out attention. What emerges is an account of Cassian that identifies in his anecdotes a vehicle for moral, philosophical and theological training that is different from, but no less important than, the stridently didactic tones of Prosper's writings.

With these preliminary considerations in mind, let us now turn to Cassian's *Conferences* and then to Prosper's *Call of All Nations*. By looking to what each of them makes of God's call to Abraham and Abraham's response to God, we will have a more refined sense of the debates from this period.

3. Cassian's *Conference* 3 and Prosper's *Call of All Nations*

Despite the influence that Prosper's polemical writing against Cassian has had on subsequent interpreters of Cassian (or rather, precisely because Prosper's intermediating role has been so significant), we begin with Cassian's *Conferences*. Published in three instalments from between 426 to 429,[12] Cassian looks back over some thirty years to relate conversations that he and his companion Germanus had with elders from the Egyptian desert when they were young monks. Probably originally from Scythia (modern-day Romania), by the time of their two extended pilgrimages to Egypt they were based in Bethlehem. Cassian has come in for a

[11] C. Stewart, *Cassian the Monk* (OSHT; New York 1998); S.D. Driver, *John Cassian and the Reading of Egyptian Monastic Culture* (SMHC 8; London 2002); R.J. Goodrich, *Contextualizing Cassian: Aristocrats, Asceticism, and Reformation in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Oxford 2007).

[12] The first part of the *Conferences* consists in books 1 to 10 and its preface mentions the death of Castor, whom we otherwise know to have died in 426. The second part (books 11–17) is dedicated to Honoratus and Eucherius whom Cassian, a priest, addresses as *fraters*—but Honoratus became bishop of Arles in 426. The third part (books 18–24) mentions Honoratus as still living, though he died in early 429. See further Jean Cassian, *Les Conférences, I–VII* (ed. and trans. E. Pichery; SC 42; Paris 1955), 28–30.

reasonable amount of criticism in recent years, because some of the details of his recollections do not bear up under scrutiny.[13] But it is a mistake to criticise him as if he were offering a *history* of the monks of Egypt.[14] Certainly, Cassian does enjoin his dedicatees to offer prayers that his recollection may be complete and that his characterisations vivid, but in the selfsame passage he indicates that the reason he wants to achieve this level of verisimilitude is precisely so that he can stir his readers to emulate the people and the conversations that he describes.[15] So it is hardly surprising that Cassian retells stories rooted in the past that are topical and relevant for Gallic bishops of monastic disposition in the 420's.

The conference that is our particular concern is the third, attributed by Cassian to an elderly priest in the monastic community of Scete named Paphnutius, who because of his love of solitude is called "the Buffalo."[16] When the two young monks come to his cell one evening for edifying conversation, after initial pleasantries have been exchanged Paphnutius settles in to elaborating on his theme that there are three vocations, or calls to reorient oneself toward God, and also three renunciations. The first type of vocation comes directly from God, the second by the mediation of other people and the third from compulsion (by which Paphnutius means circumstantial necessities that compel the sufferers to call out to God, as did the Children of Israel when in distress they cried to the Lord—Ps 116[117]:19). Speaking as an experienced monk to junior monks, Paphnutius unsurprisingly puts Anthony the Great forward as an example of one whose calling came directly from God. In a well known episode from the *Vita Antonii*, written by Athanasius of Alexandria, it is by taking to heart the gospel message (which he overheard in church) to go, sell all, and give to the poor that Anthony was set on the course that would ultimately make of him "the father of the monks."[17] But perhaps because that vocation could seem to some to have been mediated by a human agent rather than an immediate calling from God, Paphnutius also proposes Abraham, too:

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[13] See especially K.S. Frank, "John Cassian on John Cassian," *StPatr* 30 (1996): 418–433.

[14] As did J.-C. Guy, "Jean Cassien, historien du monachisme égyptien?," *StPatr* 8 (1966): 366–372.

[15] Cassian, *Conference* 1.praef. (SC 42:74–76).

[16] Cassian, *Conference* 3.1 (SC 42:140).

[17] See Athanasius of Alexandria, *Vit. Ant.*, 2.3; 15.3; 54.6 (G.J.M. Bartelink, ed. and trans., Athanase d'Alexandrie. *Vie d'Antoine* [SC 400; Paris 2004]), 132, 176, 280.

> a calling is from God whenever some inspiration has taken possession of our heart, and even while we are asleep stirs in us at desire for eternal life and salvation, and bids us follow God and cleave to His commandments with life-giving contrition: as we read in Holy Scripture that Abraham was called by the voice of the Lord from his native country, and all his dear relations, and his father's house; when the Lord said "Get thee out from thy country and from thy kinsfolk and from thy father's house."
>
> (Gen 12:1) (Cassian, *Conference* 3.4 [*NPNF*^{2} 11:320; SC 42:141–142])

The twinning of Abraham with Anthony is a device that enables Paphnutius to shift from hagiographical to biblical exempla, which he offers across the remainder of his conference.

Abraham therefore becomes Paphnutius' chosen model for the three renunciations, which he explains in these terms:

> The first is that by which as far as the body is concerned we make light of all the wealth and goods of this world; the second, that by which we reject the fashions and vices and former affections of soul and flesh; the third, that by which we detach our soul from all present and visible things, and contemplate only things to come, and set our heart on what is invisible. And we read that the Lord charged Abraham to do all these three at once, when He said to him "Get thee out from thy country, and thy kinsfolk, and thy father's house." (Gen 12:1) First He said "from thy country," i.e., from the goods of this world, and earthly riches: secondly, "from thy kinsfolk," i.e., from this former life and habits and sins, which cling to us from our very birth and are joined to us as it were by ties of affinity and kinship: thirdly, "from thy father's house," i.e., from all the recollection of this world, which the sight of the eyes can afford.
>
> (Cassian, *Conference* 3.6 [*NPNF*^{2} 11:321; SC 42:145])

It is of course not unprecedented for Abraham to be advanced as the type of a spiritual hero who had made three renunciations: Philo, too, attributed to Abraham three "goings out" in response to the call of God. Philo's exegetical techniques were emulated by Egyptian Christians (to such an extent that what is sometimes rather narrowly construed as "Origenist exegesis" owes a greater formal debt to Philo than to Origen)[18]—and that is to say nothing about how Philo's *De vita contemplativa* was nothing short of a template for literary accounts of Christian monasticism in Egypt. But in this instance, there has been a shift from the Philonic prototype: for Paphnutius, Abraham's renunciations are

[18] Cf. the comments on Alexandrian exegesis in Egyptian monastic literature by M. Sheridan, "The Spiritual and Intellectual World of Early Egyptian Monasticism," *Copt* 1 (2002): 1–51.

precisely the abandonment of those ties that bind the would-be monk to the secular world.

Paphnutius further explains that these three renunciations are not optional for those who would be perfect. Rather, all three are obligatory. Paphnutius takes pains to explain the transformation in attitudes toward possessions that enables people to abandon "visible riches," which (being external) are always subject to being owned by somebody else. Then he goes on to state that the second renunciation is more difficult, for it amounts to a moral transformation by which one moves from vicious behaviour to virtuous behaviour. This second renunciation in turn prepares the way for the third renunciation, whereby one directs one's aspirations toward the future promised by God. Again, Paphnutius invokes Abraham, who is to be imitated so that "we may be found worthy to hear that highest utterance, which was spoken to Abraham: 'and come into a land which I will show thee' (Gen 12.1)."[19]

At this point, Paphnutius makes an interesting comment (which, it must be said, is somewhat historically improbable and almost certainly is evidence of Cassian's aptitude for *aggiornamento*). He notes that throughout the call of Abraham, God is ever present. From start to finish, it is God who calls, who enables and to reveals the goal,

> which clearly proves that the beginning of our salvation results from the call of the Lord, Who says "Get thee out from thy country," and that the completion of perfection and purity is His gift in the same way, as He says "And come into the land which I will show thee," i.e., not one you yourself can know or discover by your own efforts, but one which I will show not only to one who is ignorant of it, but even to one who is not looking for it. And from this we clearly gather that as we hasten to the way of salvation through being stirred up by the inspiration of the Lord, so too it is under the guidance of His direction and illumination that we attain to the perfection of the highest bliss.
>
> (Cassian, *Conference* 3.10 [SC 45:154–155])

Paphnutius takes Abraham's actions as a paradigm for the interaction of divine grace and human freedom. God disposes various opportunities, which are then given to humans as an invitation to act. The case of Abraham illustrates this pattern:

> For just as the offer came from God Who called him "get thee out of thy country," so the obedience was on the part of Abraham who went forth; and as the fact that the saying "Come into the land" was carried into action,

[19] Cassian, *Conference* 3.10 (*NPNF*[2] 11:325; SC 45:154).

> was the work of him who obeyed, so the addition of the words "which I will show thee" came from the grace of God Who commanded or promised it. (Cassian, *Conference* 3.12 [*NPNF*^{2} 11:325–326; SC 45:155–156])

I have introduced these comments as being historically improbable. The reason is less to do with the unlikelihood that it would ever have occurred to an Egyptian monk to insist on the sustaining involvement of God in the process of salvation; rather, they are improbable because they are highly relevant to topics that were being discussed in Gaul during the time that Cassian was writing. Some have supposed that this co-incidence invalidates the historicity of the *Conferences*, but such a conclusion is hasty. Before endorsing it, what is needed is some argument that would convincingly show that Cassian was fabricating his message, instead of merely gilding it. It is worth mentioning this aspect of *Conference* 3 because the themes just mentioned are actually expressed again in *Conference* 13—which was the writing that provoked a furious response from Prosper. Following him, scholars have for generations carefully turned over every stone of that conference, in hopes of finding a trace of Augustine's doctrines, but the results of those painstaking efforts have (in all fairness) been unimpressive. The themes seem less like the sly attack on Augustine that Prosper claimed they were, and more like an old hobbyhorse of Cassian's—especially since they recur at regular intervals in his *Conferences*.[20]

Be that as it may, we have come to the end of Abraham's role in the *Conferences*, so it is time to turn to Prosper. Prosper's case against Cassian in his *Contra Collatorem* was an early effort in Prosper's aggressive campaign for Augustinian orthodoxy, but it was not his last. In fact, the opening lines of his *Call of All Nations* invoke the spectre of controversy: "A great and difficult problem has long been debated among the defenders of free will and the advocates of the grace of God."[21] Prosper manifestly puts himself in the latter group. His understanding of grace is utterly thoroughgoing: creation is an act of grace; so, too, is the re-creation of fallen creatures. Grace takes from the fallen creature away nothing "but the blemish which [the creature] did not have by nature."[22] Prosper is so committed to this robust doctrine of grace that he is (by

[20] De Vogüé has identified the themes in *Conference* 3, 13, 23; see A. de Vogüé, "Pour comprendre Cassien: Un survol des *Conférences*," *ColC* 39 (1979): 250–272 at 268, 270.

[21] Prosper, *Call of All Nations* 1.1 (de Letter, ACW 14:26; PL 51:648–649).

[22] Prosper, *Call of All Nations* 1.7 (de Letter, ACW 14:34; PL 51:654).

his own acknowledgment) in danger of taking up an untenable position, such that he cannot give a reasoned account for moral responsibility and human accountability.

His attempts at methodological statements are rather feeble:

> This is a condition which we must keep—that we do not permit what is inaccessible to our knowledge to render obscure what we know clearly, and that we do not, whilst wantonly insisting on knowing what we cannot know, lose sight of what we are all able to know; since it ought to be enough for us to live on with the knowledge that we have gained.
> (Prosper, *Call of All Nations* 1.9 [de Letter, ACW 14:40–41; PL 51:657])[23]

To paraphrase, Prosper intends to err on the side of reiterating what he regards as established truth, even if at the considerable price of offering an integrated theological vision. To that end, Prosper retrenches his theological positions by amply providing judiciously chosen excerpts from Scripture. It would not be quite right to describe Prosper's writing as a catena of biblical extracts and allusions, but it can be said in fairness that the weight of his argument is borne more by scriptural authority than by clear analysis.

It is in this context that Prosper introduces Abraham. Abraham's first appearance is understated and in that way typical of what follows. Prosper writes,

> They who come to God through God and with the desire of being save, are saved without fail, for they conceive the very desire of salvation through God's inspiration, and thanks to an illumination from Him who calls, they come to the knowledge of the truth. They are indeed the sons of promise, the reward of faith, the spiritual progeny of Abraham, "a chosen nation, a kingly priesthood" (1 Pet 2:9), foreknown and foreordained (*praesciti et praeordinati*) for eternal life according to the testimony of the Holy Spirit.
> (Prosper, *De vocatione omnium gentium* 1.9 [de Letter, ACW 14:42; PL 51:658])

There are several points of interest in that quotation. First, it is to be noted that the point of departure for Prosper is not terribly far from Cassian's. They both acknowledge the on-going involvement of God A second

[23] Cf. Prosper, *Call of All Nations* 2.2 (de Letter, ACW 14:90; PL 51:687): "We must not profane with our human dialectics the texts quoted from the divine Scriptures to explain what grace is; that would be to drag so many clear and concordant statements into the uncertainty of a misleading interpretation. In the same way, argumentation to the contrary must defile what we find in the same body of Scripture about the salvation of all men. Rather, the more difficult is its understanding the more praiseworthy will the faith be that believes."

noteworthy feature is the interweaving of references to Scripture; it is here that we first encounter Abraham, whose offspring (in Prosper's terms) are "sons of promise, the reward of faith" and who can also be described in terms borrowed from the New Testament. Lastly, the "spiritual progeny of Abraham" can also be described using technically precise theological terms: they are *praesciti et praeordinati*—"foreknown and foreordained" unto life everlasting.

The scriptural allusions give pride of place to Abraham. It is in reference to Abraham that we understand what it means to be children of promise. Abraham is the model of faith that is rewarded. By specifically designating Abraham's progeny as being *spiritual*, Prosper alludes to Gal 3:3–9, with its rapid transition from contrasting the Spirit and the Law to the faith of Abraham which makes those who share it "children of Abraham." Likewise, the reference to a nation of priests carries forward naturally from the reference to Abraham becoming the "father of many nations" (Gen 17:5). Even when Prosper turns his attention to describing those who are not saved, he does so with reference to Abraham once more: "But it is certain that in God's foreknowledge they were *not sons of Abraham* and were not reckoned among the number of them of whom it is said, 'In thy seed all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed' (Gen 28:14)."[24] But that reference is exceptional. In general, Prosper is disposed to refer to Abraham in positive contexts.

Indeed, when Prosper glosses the central conceit of his work (namely, that God *calls* humans back from their sins), he reverts to a similar catalogue of scriptural terms in which Abraham (or, perhaps more accurately, Paul's Abraham) is pivotal:

> For these reasons do all the sons of light, sons of the promise, sons of Abraham, sons of God, a chosen people, a kingly priesthood, true Israelites, foreknown and foreordained for the kingdom of God who has *called* (*vocavit*) them not only from among the Jews but also from among the Gentiles, accept the word of Him who came down from heaven.
>
> (Prosper, *De vocatione omnium gentium* 1.20 [de Letter, ACW 14:67; PL 51:673; emphasis A.C.])[25]

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[24] Prosper, *Call of All Nations* 1.9 (de Letter, ACW 14:44; PL 51:659; emphasis A.C.).

[25] For an indication of Prosper's reliance on other New Testament receptions of Abraham, see Prosper, *Call of All Nations* 2.9 (de Letter, ACW 14:103; PL 51:694): "To Abraham a numerous posterity is born among all nations under the heavens. The promised heritage falls no longer to the sons of the flesh, but to the sons of the promise [cf. Rom 9:8]." And also Prosper, *Call of All Nations* 2.14 (de Letter, ACW 14:112–113; PL 51:699): "This diffusion of grace which was to be revealed in the fullness of the appointed time, appears with still clearer signs in God's promise to Abraham, when he

The added content in this repetition of his formulaic invocation of Abraham is Prosper's reference to the incarnation and the extension of the call to the Gentiles. Elsewhere in the book, Prosper fleshes out this thin connection by clearly identifying Christ to be that seed "of which it had been said, 'In thy seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.' "[26]

Abraham's position in Prosper's theological treatise is reinforced because the divine call to which Abraham responded is the quintessential example of what Prosper calls "special grace." Special grace is contrasted to the general grace of God, which is evident in the very handiwork of creation. As Prosper explains the relationship of these two modes of God's activity, "Over and above these gifts which proclaim their Maker throughout the ages, God has scattered a special bounty of grace (*specialis gratiae largitas*)."[27] This special bounty builds upon the preparation of the human will that God's grace has already brought about.[28]

Although Prosper leaves Abraham behind from roughly this point in his analysis, it seems fair to complete this account of his argument. Prosper asserts that God's assistance does not relieve the saints of the burden of experiencing the struggles that attend the process of salvation: "In all their exertions and endeavours," he says, "the struggle between willingness and unwillingness continues unabated."[29] Moreover, despite the fact that they are only able to reach the end of their course though God's sustaining power—despite, that is, the fact that God gives them the wherewithal to be victorious, God nevertheless accredits the victory to the humans.[30] Or, as Prosper summarises his position, "God, then,

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foretold him that his twofold posterity, that is, the children of the flesh and the children of the promise, would grow as numerous as the sand and the stars [cf. Gen 22:17, Rom 9:8]."

[26] Prosper, *Call of All Nations* 2.14 (de Letter, ACW 14:113; PL 51:700); the reference is to Gen 22:18 or 26:4 (cf. 28:14), also quoted at Acts 3:25.

[27] Prosper, *Call of All Nations* 2.25 (de Letter, ACW 14:133; PL 51:711); cf. Prosper, *Call of All Nations* 2.4 (de Letter, ACW 14:96–97; PL 51:690): "Now, what else is this testimony, always at the Lord's command and never silent about His goodness and power, except the unspeakable beauty of the whole world and the rich and orderly dispensation of His countless mercies? These offered to the hearts of men tables, as it were, of the Eternal Law where they could read in the pages of the created things and the volumes of the unfolding ages the universal and common doctrine God was teaching them."

[28] Prosper, *Call of All Nations* 2.26 (de Letter, ACW 14:135; PL 51:711–712).

[29] Prosper, *Call of All Nations* 2.28 (de Letter, ACW 14:139; PL 51:714).

[30] Prosper, *Call of All Nations* 2.28 (de Letter, ACW 14:140; PL 51:714): "And though it is He who gives them the victory, He attributes to them the merit of it. Though it is only with God's help that they stood firm in temptation, yet because they were of their nature exposed to falling, He reckons it to their credit that they remained steadfast."

grants to His elect whom He chose without any merit of their own, the means to gain merit."[31] This summary is neat, but does not put to rest the questions acknowledged by Prosper near the beginning of his treatise: how are God's initiative and the moral evaluation of human responses meant to be reconciled? This is not a problem that Prosper intended to resolve; as he made clear, he intended instead to reinforce the message of Scriptures and, in term of that message, he returned to a theme sounded earlier in *The Call of All Nations*: "Every day the foreknown and promised fullness of the Gentiles enters the fold, and in the seed of Abraham every nation, every tribe, every language receives His blessings."[32]

4. Conclusions

Having come to the end of this survey, let us venture a few comparisons between the ways that Cassian and Prosper appeal to the biblical accounts of Abraham.

In Cassian's writing, *Conference* 3, Paphnutius twins Abraham (the father of many nations) to Anthony (the father of the monks). Since the literature of early Christian monasticism is pervasively eschatological in its orientation, the parallel might be taken to suggest that Abraham is to be understood as the father of many *spiritual* nations. Such a suggestion, however, should not be accepted too quickly. For it relies on bringing to Cassian's writing the assumption of New Testament models that are not found in it. Throughout *Conference* 3, Abraham is held up as an example of how to behave rightly. Whilst the language of going out to an unknown land is not avoided and the eschatological overtones are not muted, Paphnutius' teachings are grounded in things more mundanely monastic and physical than the visions of heavenly glory. Abraham's response is portrayed as a radical renunciation of his attachment to everything except God. In Cassian's argument, the stories about Abraham illustrate the correct disposition toward concrete, physical things; ethereal considerations of spiritual progeny do not play a prominent role in Cassian's account of Paphnutius and his teachings.

As for Prosper, he makes use above all of Abraham as interpreted in Galatians and Romans. This is a notable feature of Prosper's invocation of Abraham, because *The Call of All Nations* is filled with extensive

[31] Prosper, *Call of All Nations* 2.35 (de Letter, ACW 14:150; PL 51:720).
[32] Prosper, *Call of All Nations* 2.29 (de Letter, ACW 14:141; PL 51:715).

quotations from the Old Testament. But Prosper's argument requires that Abraham should be a cipher for universalism, which is something that Prosper takes from Paul's re-reading of Abraham. Moreover, because the character of Prosper's treatise is philosophical, his interest in Abraham is rather abstract. It matters less what Abraham did than the fact that Abraham did it after he had been called to action by God. Indeed, Prosper's burden is to convince his readers that Abraham was only able to persist because God constantly assisted him. And because this element of Prosper's argument is not especially well supported by choice passages from Scripture, he proposes Abraham as his paradigm less and less. This does not make Abraham dispensable: he is the chief example of God calling someone so as to forge a new relationship with that person. That example overarches the whole of Prosper's treatise, giving Abraham a presiding role over the whole.

Earlier in this paper, I pointed out that Prosper makes a spirited attack on Cassian and that the two are ranged on opposite sides of a debate, which is typically understood in terms of the normativity of Augustine's theology. It is not my intention in these closing lines to make assertions about that debate or its outcomes. Instead, I wish merely to recall a point raised earlier. The study of the history of ancient Christianity has in recent times been too greatly preoccupied with the doctrines and institutions of Christianity, which can—and in fact still has and does—stifle the historical reconstruction of early Christian systems of thought and the philological study of early Christian literature. Prosper's theological agenda is compatible with the doctrinally-driven approach to ancient Christianity. But as it is increasingly accepted that ancient Christian theology need not always issue forth in creeds and doctrines, we can now look to ancient authors like Cassian and evaluate them more satisfactorily. What emerges is an account of early Christian literature in its diversity. The theme of the call of Abraham in our two authors provides a neat example, since by attending to that theme we can isolate major theological concerns from their writings and find that they were basically working on entirely independent projects, despite the occasional overlap in content and themes.

HAGAR IN THE SO-CALLED *DANIEL-DIEGESIS* AND IN OTHER BYZANTINE WRITINGS

W.J. Aerts

The *Daniel-diegesis* is a very particular apocalypse.[1] This diegesis is transmitted in three manuscripts: two complete texts in M (Montpellier, 15th cent.) and in B (Bodleian Library in Oxford, 15th cent.) and a kind of abstract V (from Venice, Marciana VII, 22). The Montpellier text was edited with commentary and translation into German by Berger in 1976.[2] I made, of course, lavish use of this edition, running up, however, against a number of mistakes and misinterpretations, in my opinion. Zervos[3] used for his introduction and translation into English MS B, once edited by Istrin. In his notes he mentions a great number of corrections of Istrin's text and sometimes readings of the MS M. In a number of cases I disagree with Zervos' translation, too. Manuscript V can be neglected in this context.

Before going into some textual and interpretational problems, I should like to make some general observations. The edition of Berger is characterized by a very extensive but overloaded commentary, in which very many apocalyptica, relevant or not, have been gathered. Point of departure for Zervos must have been his belief that the *Daniel-diegesis* is built on the pattern of the Apocalypse of John. If I confine myself to the use of Hagar in this treatise, there is not much specific to be said about her. The most interesting point is perhaps the clear connection of her presence in the *Daniel-diegesis* with her being mentioned in the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*,[4] a point missed by Zervos. Because it is the aim to

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[1] Within the framework of the conference on the biblical person of Hagar which took place in Groningen (2006) I was invited to speak about the presence of Hagar.

[2] K. Berger, *Die griechische* Daniel-diegese: *Eine altkirchliche Apokalypse: Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar* (StPB 27; Leiden 1976).

[3] G.T. Zervos, "*Apocalypse of Daniel* (Ninth Century AD): A New Translation and Introduction," in *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (vol. 1 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*; ed. J.H. Charlesworth; Garden City, N.Y., 1983), 755–770.

[4] For the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* (*Apoc. Ps.-Meth.*) see G.J. Reinink, ed. and trans., *Die Syrische* Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius (2 vols.; CSCO 540–541; CSCO Scriptores syri 220–221; Leuven 1993); W.J. Aerts and G.A.A. Kortekaas, eds., *Die* Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius: *Die ältesten griechischen und lateinischen Übersetzungen* (2 vols.; CSCO 569–570; CSCO Subsidia 97–98; Leuven 1998).

gain some more insight in the person of Hagar in the Byzantine context, I shall not only present my findings in respect to the *Daniel-diegesis*, but also say something about other Byzantine writings in connection with Hagar.

But first the *Daniel-diegesis*. Just as in the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, of which only the first and longest version seems to be relevant for the comparison with the *Daniel-diegesis*, there are two clearly distinguished parts in the Daniel-treatise: a historical part comprising nine chapters in the Berger edition, and a prophetic part, occupying the chs. 10 up to 14 inclusive, exactly the same division as in the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*.[5] In Zervos the historical part is given in seven chapters, the apocalyptic part in another seven. But contrary to the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, whose conception, however particular it may be, shows a clear consistency, the *Daniel-diegesis* gives the impression of being a random composition of low quality. While the historical part of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* is clearly inspired by the prediction of Daniel, based on the succession of the four world empires (Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome), with the argument that the apparently successful development of the Arabic empire can only be temporary: the Roman (= Byzantine) emperor will wake up and destroy the Arabs in the time preceding the appearance of the antichrist and the end of the world, the *Daniel-diegesis* refers in its historical part only to the Arabic campaigns against the Byzantine empire. The analysis of Berger, who tries to find a hidden reference to the world empires, reduced to three (Babylon, Byzantium, Rome), is to be rejected, in my opinion. The historical program of the Daniel-treatise is made clear in 1:2: "Then, [i.e., when the signs of world's end appear, see Mark 13:7–23] the bramble bush, which keeps the sons of Hagar in check, will wither up." Berger has become victim of a strange misunderstanding: instead of "bramble bush" (Greek: ἡ βάτος … ξηραίνεται) he translates "Dann wird auch austrocknen die Tiefe …" ("Then the depth will dry up"; Zervos correctly translates "bush," incorrectly referring to the drying up of the Euphrates in John's Apocalypse), apparently confusing ἡ βάτος with τὸ βάθος. The correctness of the reading of ἡ βάτος is undeniable. The interesting thing is that the passage refers to a passage in the version *epsilon* (ε) of the *Alexander Romance*.[6] In

[5] Berger followed the subdivision of Istrin, who also made the subdivision of *Apoc. Ps.-Meth*.

[6] Version ε = *Vita Alexandri regis Macedonum* in the edition of J. Trumpf, ed., *Anonymi byzantini vita Alexandri regis Macedonum* (Teubner; Stuttgart 1974), 145, 15–

that passage Alexander the Great builds his gate against Gog and Magog, and especially the ε version (followed by the γ version) adds that Alexander had bramble bushes planted over a distance of 3,000 miles, watered from the mountains. These bushes functioned as a barrier. Their withering up is a sign of the outbreak of Gog and Magog, and in this case of the Arabs. It should be mentioned that the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* in his description of the fifth millennium tells that a king Sampsisanó attacks the three kingdoms of India, followed by an invasion into the παρεμβολή ("camp"/"enclosure") of "the children of Ishmael, the son of Hagar the Egyptian, the slave of Sarah, wife of Abraham," who in their turn leave their παρεμβολή and invade the realms of the world and the promised land.[7]

The next paragraph (1:3) is more explicit about the sons of Hagar: "and then the peoples (ἔθνη) and the three sons of Hagar will march out of the great Babylon."[8] The following paragraph also mentions their names: Οὐάλης, Ἀξιάφαρ, and Μορφόσαρ, names that can be connected, indeed, with Arab leaders.[9]

Chapter 2 of the *Daniel-diegesis* begins with mentioning Ishmael, who will take the shortest way to make for this (?) part of the world (κατέλθη τὸ μέρος τῆς γῆς, leg. ⟨ἐπὶ τοῦτο⟩ τὸ μέρος τῆς γῆς?).[10] He will occupy

16. Version γ = U. von Lauenstein, H. Engelmann, and V. Parthe, *Der griechische* Alexanderroman: *Rezension γ* (3 vols.; BKP 4, 12, 33; Meisenheim am Glan 1962–1969).

[7] *Apoc. Ps.-Meth.* 5:2.

[8] Zervos incorrectly translates "will go forth into great Babylonia," reading ἐξελεύσονται εἰς τὴν μεγάλην Βαβυλωνίαν. According to Berger, the mention of Babylon refers to the construction of the four world empires, Babylon being the first. In my opinion Babylon is nothing more than a reference to the corrupt (and damned) city, in the same way as the Babylon, mentioned in 9:1, this time in connection to Byzantium. One may ask, whether the three sons of Hagar are perhaps inspired by the strange genealogy in *Apoc. Ps.-Meth.* 9:5, where it is told that Byzantia, married to Byzas, gives birth to three sons, who will be the kings of Rome, Byzantium, and Alexandria in the future.

[9] Instead of Οὐάλης one should perhaps prefer Οὐαλήδ, Οὐαλήθ or Οὐαλίδ etc., cf. Theoph. 376.10; 382.3; 383.23. Probably Walid I is meant, for whom see A. Palmer, S.P. Brock, and R.G. Hoyland, introd., trans., and annot., *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles* (TTH 15; Liverpool 1993), 208–211. Axiaphar is to be identified with Abu ʿl-Aʿwar (see Palmer, Brock, and Hoyland, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 176, 179, 180, 186), Morphósar with Omar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAziz, successor of Suleiman (Theoph. 396.24). He forces Christians to become Muslims (μαγαρίζειν), see Theoph. 299.21 and Palmer, Brock, and Hoyland, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 50, 64, 80.

[10] Berger translates incorrectly "Und Ismael wird schnellen Laufes aus (*sic*!) dem Land herauskommen" ("Ishmael will very quickly come out of the country").

Chalcedon (it should be remarked that the occupation of Chalcedon plays a much more prominent role in the war that the emperor Heraclius has to wage with the Persians, one generation earlier in Byzantine history). The passage has, however, another parallel in the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*. In 13:9 we read: "Woe to you, Byzas, Ishmael will attack you. All horse ⟨power⟩ ⟨of⟩ Ishmael will cross over and the first of them will set up his tent opposite to you, Byzas." The striking point is that 13:9 is part of an interpolation, which occurs only in the MSS D, B, and G of the first version of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*. The passage is lacking in the Latin translation. This gives at least an indication of the *terminus post quem* of the *Daniel-diegesis*. The Latin translation of the first *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* version is to be dated between about 710 and 730. If we take also into account that the ε version of the *Alexander Romance* can scarcely be earlier than the ninth century, we have to assume that the Daniel-treatise was written at the earliest in the (later?) ninth century. Zervos gives a very exact date between 801 and 802, between the coronation of Charles the Great as a Roman emperor and the death of the Byzantine empress Irene. I will return to this (improbable) date later.

In the continuation mention is made of invasions of the three sons of Hagar, suggesting invasions along the southern and the northern accesses to Asia Minor. A third invasion combining Trebizond and the island of Kos (if Berger's suggestion is correct) is far from logical. According to Berger Kos is indicated by the mythological name "Meropes," a name which is also connected with some fabulous people. Zervos translates "land of the Meropes," without any comment.[11] The kind of invasions finds its parallels again in the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* (13:6; before the interpolation),[12] in Theophanes at several instances, etc. I think one should not attach much value to this sort of catalogue, the less so because a number of names are unrecognizable.[13]

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[11] Perhaps one has to understand "Meropes" as Merops and his sons in Homer, *Il.* 2.831; 11.329 from Perkote, a place at the Hellespont in Mysia.

[12] See also the Syrian *Apoc. Ps.-Meth.* 13:6 (German translation: Reinink, *Syrische* Apokalypse, 60). For the three expeditions, compare again *Apoc. Ps.-Meth.* 13:7, the first paragraph of the interpolation: … μερισθήσονται δὲ εἰς ἀρχὰς τρεῖς καὶ τὸ μὲν ἓν μέρος χειμάσει εἰς Ἔφεσον, τὸ δὲ ἕτερον εἰς Πέργαμον, καὶ τὸ τρίτον εἰς τὰ Μαλάγινα. Note also the conformity in the use of the numerals: πρῶτος, ἕτερος, τρίτος.

[13] In MS B the city Mesiaspolis is mentioned (in an unsyntactical construction) where MS M reads Ἀμασίας πόλεως.

In 13:7 it is said that boys older than two or three years will be killed. It seems that we have to do with the counterpart of the murder of the innocents.[14] (Both Berger and Zervos translate "younger than two or three years," by giving an incorrect interpretation of the adverb ἄνωθεν. Just as ἔξωθεν in Byzantine Greek means "outside," ἄνωθεν means "above.")

In the *Daniel-diegesis* 3:3 we meet with the cliché of the countless enemies, in 3:4 with the scornful question of boasting Ishmael "where is the god of the Romans?" Compare the *Apoc. Ps.-Meth.*13:6.[15]

Chapter 4 mentions again the three sons of Hagar, who, after a first frustrated attempt to cross over to Byzantium, decide to construct a floating bridge (γέφυραν διὰ καράβων), which causes much fear among the Romans (= Byzantines). Striking is the use of the word Ἑπτάλοφος ("Sevenhilly") to indicate Constantinople. The term is not used in the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, but is found in later apocalyptic and non-apocalyptic contexts as, e.g., in the *Vita Andreae Sali*, in Tzetzes, and several times in the so-called *Oracles of Leo (VI) the Wise*. In Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 9.657 we read: Περὶ χρησμῶν: Βοῦς βοήσει τε καὶ ταῦρος δὲ θρηνήσει: καὶ Οὐαί σοι, ὦ ἑπτάλοφε, ὅτι οὐ χιλιάσεις ("On oracles: the cow will shout and the bull will mourn: Woe to you, Sevenhilly, you will not last the thousand years").[16] In this oracle it is suggested that the cow (representing Constantinople) will deter the Italians ("bull" being ἰταλός = *vitulus* in Latin!). Very close to the *Daniel-diegesis* (see the following paragraph) and the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* (again!) is the Oracle XIII, where an apparently dead king will wake up from his drunkenness and take the scepter in his hand. An invisible herald will summon the population to go to the west of the Sevenhilly and welcome a wise, friendly man, after whose coming the Sevenhilly will have its power again.

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[14] Καὶ κατακόψει ἄρρενες παῖδας ἀπὸ διέτους καὶ τριέτους ἄνωθεν. Berger translates, incorrectly, in my opinion, boys younger than two or three years old ("… von zwei und drei Jahren an abwaerts"). The same mistake in Zervos translation.

[15] The same suggestion in *Apoc. Ps.-Meth.* 13:6 where the Ishmaelites say: οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἀνάρρυσιν οἱ χριστιανοὶ ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν ἡμῶν.

[16] This passage recalls *Apoc. Ps.-Meth.* 13:9: … συντρίψει τὴν πύλην Ξυλοκέρκου καὶ εἰσελεύσεται ἕως τοῦ Βοός: τότε Βοῦς βοήσει σφόδρα καὶ Ξηρόλαφος (v.l.: Ξηρόλοφος) κραυγάσει, συγκοπτόμενοι ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰσμαηλιτῶν.

Chapter 5 of the *Daniel-diegesis* brings the U-turn. The first two paragraphs in MS M read as follows:

> 1. But still, beloved ones, listen to the highly compassionate philanthropy of the most merciful God.
>
> 2. But as soon as he hears the roaring of the son [*sic*!] of Hagar and (of) the godless Ishmael, as if they were furious lions, against the Romans, the Lord will incline his compassion to the Romans and to their taking revenge (ἐκδίκησιν) and he will bring their enemies to justice.

(In MS B there is an alternative text, saying that God tolerates the attacks of the enemies because of the iniquities of the Romans, but as he hears the Romans complain that there is no king, neither in heaven nor on earth, he inclines his compassion to the Romans etc.)

Thunder and earthquakes will start and "the Lord will let burst forth his wrath upon the sons of Hagar and upon the implacable race of Ishmael" and he will transfer the insipidity of the Romans into the hearts of the Ishmaelites. He will waken the Roman emperor, who was thought to be dead and good for nothing, but rather was kept safe in the inland of Persia and Syria. His name begins with letter K (or Y). This emperor enters the city on Friday evening and starts (together with his young sons [μειράκια]) the war on Saturday morning against Ishmael and the sons of Hagar. Even abbots and priests will bear weapons, and a violent war is waged against the sons of Hagar, resulting in the complete destruction of Ishmael and the sons of Hagar.

This chapter contains a number of problems. In paragraph 2 the Greek text says: ὡς γὰρ βρυχόμενον[17] τὸν υἱὸν τῆς Ἄγαρ καὶ τοῦ ἀθέου Ἰσμαὴλ ὥσπερ ἄγριοι λέοντες[18] κατὰ τῶν Ῥωμαίων κλινεῖ κύριος τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ κτλ. It is very unlikely that this is the original text. In the first place a verb in the subordinate clause is lacking, e.g., ἀκούει ("when he [i.e., God] hears …"). The singular "the son (of Hagar)" is strange in combination with "the roaring lions." Even more strange is the fact that there is written "the son of Hagar and the godless Ishmael." One may suppose that instead of βρυχόμενον τὸν υἱὸν one has to read βρυχομένων τῶν υἱῶν (the genitive dependent on ἀκούει): "When he hears the sons of Hagar and also the godless Ishmael roaring like roaring

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[17] More correct would be βρυχώμενον (⟨ βρυχάομαι), though βρύχομαι is also found. But an emendation βρυχομένων (βρυχωμένων) τῶν υἱῶν [sc. ἀκούει] is more than probable.

[18] In the Greek text unjustly λέωντες. Perhaps one should emend ⟩ καὶ τὸν ἄθεον Ἰσμαὴλ.

lions." On the other hand one has to state that the combination "son" or "sons" of Hagar AND Ishmael is also found in MS R of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* (10:6).[19] But MS R is the only manuscript in which the interpolation of ch. 13:6 etc. does not occur! Given the obscurity of this text, it seems plausible to suppose that the alternative text was invented to eliminate the difficulty of the corrupt reading.

The passage with the information that the insipidity of the Romans will be transferred to the Ishmaelites is a nearly literal quotation from *Apoc. Ps.-Meth.* 13:10.[20] The same holds good for the waking up of the Byzantine emperor, who seemed to be dead and good for nothing, see *Apoc. Ps.-Meth.* 13:11 (after the interpolation).[21]

As to the origin of this emperor from the inland of Persia and Syria [*sic*!], it can be interpreted as referring to Leo III, who inflicted a crushing defeat on the Arabs before Constantinople. He came, according to Theophanes, from Isauria,[22] but actually from Germaniceia in northern Syria. Strange is the remark about the first letter of his name, a K or, if the κ of the text (shorthand writing for "twentieth") is to be understood as the twentieth letter, a Y. The K can, indeed, be a reference to Leo, who was also called Konon.[23] In case of Y one may think of a title like ὕπατος (minister) or ὑποστράτηγος (subordinate commander). According to Zervos, the passage refers to Leo's successor, Constantine V.

The κ, by the way, seems to be a commonly occurring element in predicting formulas, see Leo, *Oracle* 8:3–4: Ἧμος κρατήσει πρὸς μακρὸν κάππα χρονόν, / Σφαγαὶ γὰρ ἐν σοὶ καὶ προχύσεις αἱμάτων ("When *kappa* shall reign a long time, there will be, indeed, slaughter and bloodshed in thee"). In the related *Oracle* 10, the *kappa* has been interpreted as a numeral: Οὐαί σοι, πόλις ἑπτάλοφε, ὅταν τὸ εἰκοστὸν / στοιχεῖον εὐφημίζεται εἰς τὰ τείχη σου, / Τότε ἤγγικεν ἡ πτῶσις καὶ ἡ ἀπώλεια / Τῶν

[19] *Apoc. Ps.-Meth.* 10:6: Εἶτα ἀναλωθείσης τῆς βασιλείας τῶν Περσῶν ἐπαναστήσονται ἀντ' αὐτῆς κατὰ τῶν Ῥωμαίων οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ Ἰσμαὴλ υἱοῦ τῆς Ἄγαρ …. This text is my reconstruction, based on the parallels in Syr. and Lat. and on the MSS G and B. Ms R reads indeed οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσμαὴλ ἐκ τῆς Ἄγαρ.

[20] *Apoc. Ps.-Meth.* 13:10: Τότε φωνὴ ἔλθῃ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λέγουσα: "ἀρκεῖ μοι ἡ ἐκδίκησις αὕτη," καὶ ἀρεῖ κύριος ὁ θεὸς τότε τὴν δειλίαν τῶν Ῥωμαίων καὶ βάλῃ εἰς τὰς καρδίας τῶν Ἰσμαηλιτῶν ….

[21] *Apoc. Ps.-Meth.* 13:11: … καὶ ἐξελεύσεται ἐπ' αὐτοὺς βασιλεὺς Ἑλλήνων, ἤτοι Ῥωμαίων, μετὰ μεγάλου θυμοῦ καὶ ἐξυπνισθήσεται καθάπερ ἄνθρωπος ἀπὸ ὕπνου πιὼν οἶνον πολύν, ὃν ἐλογίζοντο οἱ ἄνθρωποι ὡσεὶ νεκρὸν ὄντα καὶ εἰς οὐδὲν χρησιμεύοντα.

[22] A region in the Taurus Mountains. See Theoph. 391.4–5.

[23] Theoph. 407.21.

δυναστῶν σου, καὶ τῶν ἀδικίᾳ κρινόντων ("Woe to you, city of seven hills, when the twentieth letter is saluted on your walls, then the fall and ruination of your mighty men and unjust judges have come nearby").

The remark that even priests and abbots bore weapons seems to be taken from the situation in the earlier generation, when the patriarch Sergius not only put the church treasures at the disposal of the emperor Heraclius, but also organized, together with the clergy, the defense of Constantinople. Paragraph 16, mentioning the pursuit of thousands by the emperor, ten thousands by his sons, is a nearly literal quotation of Deut 32:30.[24]

In ch. 6 of the *Daniel-diegesis* the final defeat and the massacre of the Arabs is told, followed by a description of the reign of the ideal emperor and the realized utopian period. The sons of Hagar are not mentioned further, it is only said that not more than three tents of the people of Ishmael are left, that prisoners will be the slaves of the donkey drivers during thirty years, and that the Byzantines will not find any trace of the Ishmaelites, anywhere. The annihilation and slavery of the Ishmaelites are paralleled in *Apoc. Ps.-Meth.* 13:11–13.

Thus far the role of Hagar in the *Daniel-diegesis*. My conclusion is that her role is not very much more than the usual indication in Byzantium of the Arabs and/or Muslims by the term Agarenes.[25]

There is one detail which should be mentioned. In ch. 8 there are two parallel texts. In the first one (MS M), a very tall stranger (ἀνὴρ ἀλλόφυλος καὶ μακρογενὴς) from "the sides of the south" (ἐκ τῶν πλευρῶν τοῦ νότου) will be ruler in Byzantium; in the second (MS B) this ruler will be an abominable woman from abroad (γυνὴ … μιαρὰ καὶ ἀλλόφυλος) who will be settled on "the sides of the back" of the Sevenhill city (καὶ συγκαθήσεται ἐπὶ τῶν πλευρῶν τοῦ νώτου [ω!!] τῆς Ἑπταλόφου). Berger and Zervos think that this woman must be the Empress Irene (797–802), who had, indeed, a bad reputation because she blinded her own son, but who on the other hand was praised because of her orthodoxy in restoring the veneration of the icons.[26] My feeling is that

[24] See Berger, *Die griechische* Daniel-diegese, 66, 67. The quotation is more fully reproduced in 6:9.

[25] Thus also *Vita Andreae Sali* 210: … καὶ ταπεινώσει τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἄγαρ … (subj. the king, called by God, see *Vita Andreae Sali* 209).

[26] Moreover, the Empress Irene came from Athens. Perhaps there is a confusion with Irene the Khasaress, the first wife of Constantine V, notorious for his iconoclastic politics.

this supposition is unnecessary: women ruling as a sign of the imminent downfall of a regime on the eve of the apocalyptic events is a common cliché, beginning with the description of the woman in the Apocalypse of John (Rev 17:3–6), representing the accursed Babylon (see also, e.g., *Vita Andreae Sali* 219, 220).[27] This parallel text is probably a later invention, and could even have been invented after the reign of Basil II (976–1025) and Constantine VIII, when the throne was occupied by women, and also the influence of Venice (Rome!!) increased.

To end my paper, a single remark about the term Agarenes. This term is already used for indicating the Arabs in the Septuaginta, 1 Chr 5:19, where the sons of Reuben and Gad wage war against the Arabs (named Ἀγαρηνοί or Ἀγαραῖοι). Also in Ps 82:7: τὰ σκηνώματα τῶν Ἰδουμαίων καὶ οἱ Ἰσμαηλῖται, Μωαβ καὶ οἱ Ἀγαρηνοί …; Nicetas Byzantinus 728B uses the verb ἀγαρίζω ("to become a Muslim").[28] Elsewhere the verb μαγαρίζω is used, e.g., Theoph. 399.21, 22, 29; 452.26.[29] Nicetas Byzantinus is, by the way, the first Byzantine author who often directly refers to Sura's of the Qur'an. But it is only in ch. 25 (788Bff.) of his *Refutationes* that Hagar herself is mentioned, as being Abraham's wife and mother of his son (Ishmael), his son, however, of the flesh, but no longer his wife after the birth of Sarah's son Isaac, the son of the promise.

In later times Ἀγαρηνοί is commonly used to indicate the Turks, see Gyula Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica* 2:55,[30] who mentions also a number of variations: Ἀγαρηναῖοι, οἱ τῆς Ἄγαρ, οἱ ἐξ Ἄγαρ, τῆς Ἄγαρ οἱ ἀπόγονοι, even οἱ τῆς Ἄγαρ κύνες ("the dogs of Hagar"). In the most extensive discussion of the later emperor Manuel II Paleologue with a Muslim scholar (*Dialoge mit einem "Perser"*)[31] Hagar is not even mentioned.

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[27] *Vita Andreae Sali* 219–220: Τότε … ἀναστήσεται γύναιον αἰσχρὸν Μόνδιον ἐκ τοῦ Πόντου, καὶ βασιλεύσει ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ, καὶ αὐτὴ βακχεύτρια, τοῦ διαβόλου θυγάτηρ, … 220. Καὶ γὰρ ἡ βασιλὶς ἐκείνη ἀκάθαρτος, θεὰν ἑαυτὴν πράτουσα, καὶ ἑῷ μαχομένη καὶ προαιρουμένη μετ' αὐτοῦ παλαίσασθαι.

[28] *LBG* s.v. "ἀγαρίζω,"; *LBG* s.v. "Ἀγαριναῖοι,".

[29] The etymology is not very clear. Soph., *Lex.* gives μολύνω "contaminate" (Nomocanon Cotelerium 48), or "a travesty of ἀγαρίζω" See also μαγαρισμός. The word is probably of Semitic origin. See also *LBG* s.v. "ὁ μαγαρίτω," and s.v. ὁ μαγαρίτης, where Trapp gives the derivation from Arab. *muhagir* "arabischer Siedler moslemischen Glaubens in den neueroberten Gebieten 〉 *zum Islam Übergetretener, Abtrünniger, Renegat*."

[30] G. Moravcsik, *Sprachreste der Türkvölker in den byzantinischen Quellen* (vol. 2 of *Byzantinoturcica*; by G. Moravcsik; BBA 11; 3rd ed.; East-Berlin 1983).

[31] In the edition of E. Trapp, ed. and introd., *Dialoge mit einem "Perser"* (WBS 2; Vienna 1966).

Another strange confusion is to be found in the *Historia Syntomos* (70,67)[32] ascribed to Michael Psellus, but certainly not of his hand, who mentions that Justinian II broke the peace treaty with the τῆς Σάρας ἀπόγονοι, a circumlocution for the Σαρακηνοί, where οἱ τῆς Ἄγαρ ἀπόγονοι would be correct. Σαρακηνός is a very common term for indicating the Arabs, from the stem SH-R-Q ("east-man").

To conclude: there is no indication whatsoever that the Byzantines were interested in the person of Hagar herself. The *Daniel-diegesis* brings, indeed, the suggestion that her role there is somewhat different from what is found in general in Byzantine literature, but also in this case the mention of the three sons of Hagar seems to be nothing more than the idea of "three times the sons of Hagar," i.e., three armies of Agarenes.

As to the *Daniel-diegesis* itself, I think that it should be seen as a conglomeration of different apocalyptica between the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* and material like the *Vaticinium Severi et Leonis Imperatorum* of Leo, in which there are also traces of the *Sibylline Oracles* and so on. The historical part is, indeed, focused on the struggle with the Arabs, with suggestions, however, of a growing threat to be expected from the west, indications too vague to attach a concrete date to them.

[32] W.J. Aerts, ed., trans., and comm., *Michaelis Pselli Historia syntomos: Editio princeps* (CFHB SB 30; Berlin 1990).

ISLAM

THE RELIGION OF ABRAHAM AND ISLAM

Gerald Hawting

1. Introduction

In this paper I am concerned with the identification of Islam as the religion of Abraham, a perspective from which Islam is seen, not as a new or variant form of the Middle Eastern monotheist religious tradition, but as the direct (and the only true) continuation of Abraham's religion.[1]

Since the detailed accounts in Muslim traditional literature of how Islam is the continuation of the religion of Abraham also tell us, and to some extent are dependent on the idea, that the Arabs were descended from him in a physical sense, through his son Ishmael, it is not possible to ignore that aspect of the question too. The designation of the Arabs as Ishmaelites or Hagarenes (after Ishmael's mother, Hagar) is relatively common in pre-Islamic and later Christian and Jewish texts, and the descent of the Arabs from Abraham through Ishmael and his mother is frequently asserted in Islamic literature (the earliest extant texts of which are not earlier that the late 8th century). The idea that the Arabs are the physical descendants of Abraham through Ishmael is indeed taken by many, non-Muslims as well as Muslims, as a genealogical and historical fact.[2]

Unlike Paul's metaphorical and symbolic arguments that the followers of Jesus (rather than those Jews still in thrall to the law) were the true

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[1] Abraham's religion, indeed, is generally viewed in Islam as the same as that of all of the prophets in the line that end with Muhammad and began with Adam: it is the true *Urmonotheismus*. Nevertheless, for Muslims, as for traditional Jews and Christians, Abraham plays a special role as the effective father of monotheist religion. From the Islamic perspective, although the prophets sent to the Jews and the Christians had taught the true religion, their followers had corrupted their teachings, and thus Judaism and Christianity were illegitimate claimants to the inheritance of Abraham.

[2] For discussion of the genealogical theory and suggestions about how the identification of Arabs and Ishmaelites came to be established see, I. Ephʿal, "'Ishmael' and 'Arab(s)': A Transformation of Ethnological Terms," *JNES* 35 (1976): 225–235; F. Millar, "Hagar, Ishmael, Josephus and the Origins of Islam," *JJS* 44 (1993): 23–45. Terms like Ishmaelite and Hagarene were, of course, intended pejoratively, whereas for the Muslims descent from Ishmael is a matter for pride.

heirs of Abraham,[3] the Muslims' claim to be the spiritual descendants of Abraham relies on narratives, presented as (and presumably understood by most as) history. Those narratives are not fully attested in the Qurʾān but appear in the literature of Muslim tradition. They tell how Abraham had introduced the true religion into Arabia, and they recount its decline and corruption there before God sent Muhammad to restore it. It is in those narratives that the theme of Islam's identity with the religion of Abraham is combined with an explanation of how the Arabs, the first recipients of Islam, were descended from him through Ishmael.

Naturally, I am not concerned with the validity of those claims, but with their origins, the sources on which they draw, and their effects. After consideration of how the idea of the religion of Abraham appears in, on the one hand, the Qurʾān and, on the other, the extra-quranic texts of Muslim tradition (commentaries on the Qurʾān, lives of Muhammad, and other genres), this paper discusses the issue of the historical circumstances that may have led to the appearance of the various ingredients involved in the identification of Islam with the religion of Abraham.

It is necessary, first, to say something briefly about the approach to the Qurʾān adopted here, since it is one that is rather different from that dominant until about the 1970s (and still held by many today). Here the Qurʾān is not seen as a text closed and fixed in a *ne varietur* form around 650 CE (as the tradition holds). When the text as we know it was composed and stabilised, and when it acquired the authoritative status within Islam that it has held ever since, can probably not be known for certain. Here it is understood as the end result of a relatively gradual process, even though the final redaction may have been a hurried one. The important point is that the process continued for decades at least after the first Arab conquests in the Middle East.

In this understanding, the Qurʾān is an important part of the development of Islam but not the source from which all else came. Sometimes there are inconsistencies between the Qurʾān and classical Islamic ideas and practices, and sometimes the traditional scholars seem to struggle to reconcile them.[4] The Arabs did not, in this view, have the Qurʾān as

[3] See esp. Rom 4:9–25; 9:7–9; Gal 3:6–14; 4:21–31.

[4] E.g., the Qurʾān nowhere specifies five as the number of prayers that should be performed each day. If one only had the Qurʾān to go by, one might conclude that two or three prayers were required each day. There is also a difference between what the Qurʾān tells us about those opponents it labels as "associators" (*mushrikūn*) and what the tradition tells us about them (see G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam: From Polemic to History* [CSIC; Cambridge 1999]).

we know it with them at the time of their conquests in Syria, Iraq, and Egypt (630s–650s), and the text cannot be assumed to throw light on conditions in Mecca and Medina in the first three decades of the seventh century. At least some of the materials that it contains may come from communities further north, although it is difficult, given our present state of knowledge, to be certain about the geographical area, or even the nature of the religious community or communities they originated in.

This paper is not the place to enter into detailed discussion of this approach to the Qurʾān, but it is one shared, in broad terms, by a number of contemporary scholars, albeit with differences in particulars.[5]

2. Abraham and His Religion in the Qurʾān

In the Qurʾān, the expression commonly rendered as "the religion of Abraham" is *millat Ibrāhīm*, and there are several passages where it is mentioned as something to be followed. Outside the Qurʾān *milla* is often glossed as *dīn* ("religion"), and we find the expression *dīn Ibrāhīm* as an equivalent of *millat Ibrāhīm*, although the former expression is not found in the Qurʾān.

In that text the word *milla* is sometimes used with reference to the religion of its main opponents (the *mushrikūn*, who are presented in extra-quranic tradition as polytheists and idolaters), and once to that of the Jews and Christians, but most frequently, on eight occasions, it is associated with the name of Abraham in a genitive construction (*millat Ibrāhīm*). That suggests an already established formula.

Academic scholars have proposed that *milla* has been adapted into Arabic from Hebrew or Aramaic, according to Jeffery the most likely immediate source being the Syriac *melltā*, which is sometimes used for

[5] This approach owes much to the seminal work of Wansbrough (esp. J. Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* [LOS 31; London 1977]), although it does not follow it in every detail and prefers to use it as a broad framework for understanding the Qurʾān. For an introduction to Wansbrough's ideas and theories, see A. Rippin, "The Methodologies of John Wansbrough," in *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies* (ed. R.C. Martin; Tucson, Ariz., 1985), 151–163. See also Rippin's foreword to J. Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (introd., trans., and expanded notes by A. Rippin; Amherst, N.Y., 2004); H. Berg, ed., *Islamic Origins Reconsidered: John Wansbrough and the Study of Early Islam*, special issue of *MTSR* 9.1 (1997).

the Greek *logos*.[6] If the derivation from Hebrew and Aramaic is right, then *milla* of Abraham may have at first denoted something more specific than simply his "religion."[7]

How far the Qurʾān differentiates *milla* from the other word that is commonly translated as "religion" (*dīn*)[8] is hard to say. In some places in the Qurʾān, the two words occur very close together in a way that might suggest they have different senses. For example, at Sura 4:125 we are asked if there is anyone better in *dīn* than someone who submits himself (*aslama wajhahu*) to God and follows the *milla* of Abraham. *Dīn*, of course, also has connotations of law and, like *milla*, is used in the Qurʾān both of the true religion and of that of others. It could be that there is not really a significant difference between them but that *millat Ibrāhīm* was a well established expression and passages like that just cited are the result of a redaction process. Whatever the explanation, the Qurʾān, does not use *dīn Ibrāhīm* for "the religion of Abraham."

What does this quranic *milla* of Abraham consist of?[9] The precise content of it is not elaborated upon in the Muslim holy text. In the passages where the phrase *millat Ibrāhīm* occurs it remains somewhat abstract although it is notable that another word applied to Abraham appears in those same passages: *ḥanīf*.

That word is usually in the indefinite accusative, and it is not always possible to decide whether it functions as an adjective or as an adverb. The sense and derivation of the word have been much discussed both in traditional Islamic and academic scholarship. It has especially been a problem for academic scholars, who have recognised that in the Qurʾān and most Islamic usage the word appears to have a sense opposite to that in other Semitic languages (such as Syriac *ḥanpā* and Hebrew *ḥānēf*). While in the latter it frequently conveys the sense "heathen" or "pagan," in Islam it is often understood in connection with concepts of pure monotheism (as contrasted with the idolatry—or rather corrupt monotheism—of the *mushrikun*).[10]

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[6] See F. Buhl and C.E. Bosworth, *"Milla," EI²*, 7:61.

[7] The most obvious possibilities would be to see it as referring either to God's promise to/covenant with Abraham, or to the commands he imposed on him.

[8] See L. Gardet, "*Dīn*," *EI²*, 2:293–296, and references there to further literature.

[9] See P. Crone and M. Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge 1977), 12–13, for the plausible suggestion that the idea of the religion of Abraham centred on the institutions of circumcision and sacrifice. Their evidence is drawn from outside the Qurʾān and outside Islam.

[10] For discussion of the linguistic issue and of the sense of the word *ḥanīf*, see W. Montgomery Watt, *"Ḥanīf," EI²*, 3:165–166, and U. Rubin, *"Ḥanīf," EQ*, 2:402–404; N.A. Faris

Sura 2:135 refutes the suggestion of opponents that one should be a Christian (*naṣrānī*) or a Jew[11] in order to obtain divine guidance; rather, that is to be obtained by following the *milla* of Abraham, *ḥanīfan*, and he was not one of the *mushrikīn* (those who associate others with God as worthy of worship). Similarly, Sura 3:95 commands us to follow the *milla* of Abraham, *ḥanīfan*, and he was not one of the *mushrikīn*. Sura 16:120 refers to Abraham as a "nation" (*umma*),[12] obedient to God, *ḥanīfan*, and not one of the *mushrikīn*. Two verses later (Sura 16:123), the command is repeated to follow the *milla* of Abraham, *ḥanīfan*, and he was not one of the *mushrikīn*.

The other notable feature of the quranic references to the *milla* of Abraham and its use of the word *ḥanīf* is the occurrence in some cases of words associated with the root *s-l-m*, from which is derived the name of Islam. The most striking example is Sura 3:67 where we are told that Abraham was not a Jew or a Christian but *ḥanīfan musliman* and he was not one of the *mushrikīn*.[13] At Sura 4:125, again the idea of following the *milla* of Abraham is associated with that of submitting oneself (*islām al-wajh*) to God: "Who is better in religion (*dīn*) than he who submits himself (*aslama wajhahu*) to God, is of good conduct, and follows the *milla* of Abraham?" Finally, at Sura 22:78, we are told that God "has not imposed upon you any restriction (*ḥaraj*) in the religion (*al-dīn*), the religion (*milla*) of your father Abraham.[14] He has called you "those who submit" (*al-muslimīn*) heretofore and in this [book?] …".[15]

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and H.W. Glidden, "The Development of the Meaning of the Koranic *Ḥanīf*," *JPOS* 19 (1939): 1–13; Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 13–14. F. de Blois, "*Naṣrānī* and *Ḥanīf*: Studies on the Religious Vocabulary of Christianity and Islam," *BSOAS* 65 (2002):1–30 (16–25 on *ḥanīf*), suggests a derivation from Syriac *ḥanpā* in the sense of non-Jew, Gentile, or not subject to the Jewish law.

[11] I use the conventional terms Christian and Jew, avoiding the issue of what type of Christians or Jews we should envisage. For the argument that *naṣrānī* refers to Jewish Christians (Judaeo-Christians) see de Blois, "*Naṣrānī* and *Ḥanīf*," 1–16.

[12] For Abraham as a nation, cf. Gen 12:2. Muslim commentators derive the word from the same root as *imām*, and interpret it here in the sense of model or precedent to be followed.

[13] It is not clear whether we should understand "a *ḥanīf* and a *muslim*" or whether the two terms are to be read as adverbs in apposition with a sense such as "but he lived purely and submissively."

[14] For the expression "father Abraham," cf. Luke 16:24, John 8:35 ff., Rom 4:11.

[15] The commentators cited in the *Tafsīr* of al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) on this verse, and al-Ṭabarī himself, are unanimous in understanding *ḥaraj* to mean "restriction" although they have different interpretations of the type of restriction referred to. *Al-dīn* (the religion) is understood by all to refer to the religion of Islam. Why the word *milla* is in

In several other passages the idea of submission (*islām*) is associated with Abraham, evidently referring to his submissive acceptance of God's command to offer his son in sacrifice, but the word and idea are also associated with other prophets and with the followers of the quranic prophet. The association of the idea of submission (*islām*) with following the *milla* of Abraham would provide an obvious link when the followers of Muhammad came to designate their own religion as Islam.[16]

In terms of its content, however, the *milla* of Abraham seems to be quite abstract in the passages just mentioned. The way in which *ḥanīf* is frequently attached to the name of Abraham and the statement that he was not one of the *mushrikīn* implies that being *ḥanīfan* is the opposite of practising *shirk* (the sin of the *mushrikūn*), and it is stated that Abraham was not a Jew or a Christian. Beyond that, though, one can only attempt to supply what is involved in following the *milla* of Abraham from the many other references to him in the Qurʾān, the majority of them allusions to narratives that are known also from the Bible and midrash.[17]

One theme that frequently recurs and that distinguishes the quranic Abraham from the biblical one is his hostility to idols, manifested above all in various references to his smashing those of his father and father's people, the action that necessitated his migration. That theme is known from pre-Islamic Jewish midrash, and it resonates with the quranic repetition of the idea that Abraham was a *ḥanīf* who was not one of the *mushrikīn*.

Another notable feature of the quranic, contrasted with the biblical, Abraham, is his status as founder of the "house" (*al-bayt*). The Qurʾān itself does not explicitly relate this to the idea of the *milla* of Abraham, but in the extra-quranic Muslim tradition it is a very significant ingredient of the history of the religion of Abraham.

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the accusative, and its grammatical relationship to the preceding phrase, is passed over rather hastily and, it seems, unconvincingly.

[16] For discussion of the expression *islām*, see, e.g., D. Künstlinger, "'Islam,' 'Muslim,' 'Aslam' im Kurān," *RocO* 11 (1935): 128–137; H. Ringgren, *Islām, 'aslama and Muslim* (HSoed 2; Uppsala 1949); D.Z.H. Baneth, "What Did Muḥammad Mean when He Called His Religion Islām?," *IOSt* 1 (1971): 183–190; J. Smith, *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term "islām" As Seen in a Sequence of Qurʾān Commentaries* (HDR 1; Missoula 1975).

[17] One problem here is the significance, if any, of multiple references in the Qurʾān. E.g., four separate passages in the Qurʾān allude to the visit to Abraham of the three angels and his slaughtering a calf for them (Gen 18). Is that a sign that the theme has a special importance for the quranic and Islamic understanding of Abraham, or is it perhaps just a result of the way in which the text was put together? It is possible that the occurrence in the text at different places of numerous parallel or only slightly variant passages is an indication of imperfect editing rather than of their importance.

There are a number of passages that allude to it. Sura 2:127–128, which associates Ishmael with his father in "raising the foundations of the house (*wa-idh yarfaʿu Ibrāhīmu al-qawāʿida mina l-bayti wa-Ismāʿīlu*)," has them call on God afterward to make them submissive (*muslimīn*) to him and to make their descendants a submissive nation (*umma muslima*). Two verses previously (Sura 2:125), God refers to his having made the "house" as a place to which people may resort in safety (*mathābatan lil-nāsi wa-amnan*), and he tells them to adopt a place for prayer (*muṣallā*) of the place where Abraham stood (*min maqām Ibrāhīm*); He then refers to his commission to Abraham and Ishmael that they should "purify my house" for those who perform certain specified religious rituals (associated with circumambulation of an altar or sanctuary and with prayer: *an ṭahhirā baytī lil-ṭāʾifīna wal-ʿākifīna wal-rukkaʿi l-sujūdi*).

This last phrase appears in a slightly variant form also at Sura 22:26 where God refers to his having shown (*bawwaʾnā li-*) Abraham the place of the *bayt* and telling him (without reference to Ishmael this time) not to associate anything else with him, and to "purify my house for those who circumambulate, stand, bow and prostrate (in prayer)."[18] In succeeding verses (Sura 22:29, 33) the "house" is referred to as the "ancient house" (*al-bayt al-ʿatīq*) and is associated with circumambulation and animal sacrifice.

Sura 3:96–97, immediately following another command to follow the *milla* of Abraham, who was a *ḥanīf* and not one of the associators, tells us that

> the first "house" established for mankind was indeed that at Bakka .... In it there are clear signs, the place where Abraham stood (*maqām Ibrāhīm*). Whoever enters it is secure. Men have a duty to God [to fulfil] the *ḥajj* at the "house," whoever can make his way there. (Sura 3:96–97)

All of these passages are interpreted by Muslim tradition as references to the role that Abraham played in building the Kaʿba at Mecca and establishing the rituals of the Muslim Hajj. The house (*bayt*) is understood to mean the Kaʿba; Bakka is explained as an alternative name for Mecca/Makka (or for a part of it); "the place where Abraham stood" is generally understood to refer to a stone that stands near to the Kaʿba and upon which he stood (for reasons explained variously in different

[18] Apart from the command being in the singular rather than the dual, the only difference is that at Sura 2:125 the text has *al-ʿākifīn*, at Sura 22:26 *al-qāʾimīn*.

accounts); and the *ḥajj* is, of course, identified with the annual festival that takes place in and around Mecca in the last month, of the Muslim year.

Leaving the issue of those identifications aside for now, we may nevertheless note the lack of precision in the Qurʾān in these passages (as often elsewhere too). If we only had the Qurʾān, and not the evidence of Islamic practice, we would probably have little idea of what is being alluded to. Abraham is closely associated with a "house," of which he, and in one reference Ishmael too, seems to be the builder. There are indications that this house is associated with circumambulation and rituals of prayer, but its identity and nature are not clear. The references to it are allusive and largely anonymous. In order to understand them it has been customary to turn to the extra-quranic Muslim tradition (the commentaries on the Qurʾān, lives of the Prophet, and other such works), and to read the Scripture in the light of the tradition. There is a danger, though, that by reading Qurʾān in the light of tradition, and by citing the Qurʾān to support the tradition, we are confined in an interpretative circle.

In the Qurʾān, then, the idea of the religion of Abraham is prominent, and there are links between it and the concept of submission (*islām*). The function of the idea of the religion of Abraham in the Qurʾān is essentially polemical, directed against others who see or would like to see themselves as his spiritual descendants:

> O People of the Book, why do you argue about Abraham …? Why do you argue about that of which you have no knowledge? … Abraham was not a Jew or a Christian, but *ḥanīfan musliman*, and he was not one of the *mushrikīn* …. Those of the people who have the nearest claim upon Abraham (*awlā l-nāsi bi-Ibrāhīma*) are those who follow him—this prophet, and those who believe …. (Sura 3:65–68)

To some extent, one might read this passage as an attempt to build a bridge with the people of Scripture. It follows a verse that contains an appeal to them to "come to something that is equally shared between us and you—that we do not worship any but God, that we do not associate anything with him, and that some of us do not set up others as 'lords' …" (Sura 3:64). In that context to ask what is the point of arguing about Abraham and to point out that he was not a Christian or a Jew because (as is stated in Sura 3:65) "the Torah and the Gospel were only revealed after him," might be read as an eirenic statement.

However, the quranic prophet and those who follow him clearly claim to have the most right to be regarded as Abraham's successors and the succeeding verses (Sura 3:69–80) are much more polemical against

the people of Scripture: some of them are accused of trying to lead the believers astray, they are all accused of rejecting God's signs, of hiding the truth, of pretending to believe for a short time and then rejecting the truth, of being exclusivist in their religion, etc. The overall impression, therefore, is that the purpose of the appeal to Abraham as neither Christian nor Jew and certainly not *mushrik*, and stressing the fact that he lived before the revelation of Torah or Gospel, is similar to Paul's depiction of the followers of Jesus as the only true descendants of Abraham.

Particular details of the quranic treatment of Abraham call to mind elements in Paul's use of him. The quranic reference to Abraham as living before the revelation of Torah and Gospel is reminiscent of Paul's statement that he lived 430 years before the law (Gal 3:17). Paul's argument that the promises made to Abraham's progeny do not apply to the Jews generally, but specifically to Christ (Gal 3:16), seems to foreshadow God's exclusion of the evil-doers (*al-ẓālimūn*) from his covenant (*'ahd*) when Abraham asked that his descendants be included in it (Sura 2:124). Finally, although there is no evident semantic connection, it is tempting to associate the various references to Abraham as *ḥanīf* with Gen 15:6: "[Abram] put his faith in the Lord and he counted it to him as righteousness (*ṣedāqā*)." Paul cites the verse when talking of Abraham both in Romans (4:3) and Galatians (3:6), and, of course, it is also prominent in rabbinic discussions of Abraham.

Nevertheless, a direct connection between the letters of Paul and the Qurʾān in their treatment of Abraham seems unlikely. Where there are details in common it is probably because they draw on a common repertoire of ideas and themes that can be used for their, *mutatis mutandis*, similar purposes. There is probably a linguistic and conceptual precursor of the quranic concept of the *milla* of Abraham that is closer than that of Paul's letters, but the precise source for it is still obscure.

3. Abraham and His Religion in Muslim Tradition outside the Qurʾān

Outside the Qurʾān, the rather elusive quranic references to the religion of Abraham appear with much detail that could not be inferred simply from the Qurʾān itself. We find a quite detailed and full narrative about the coming of the religion of Abraham to Arabia and its fate there, often related to the biblical narratives and their development in texts other

than the Bible, but with many unfamiliar details and new emphases. One such unfamiliarity is indeed the Arabian setting itself; another is the emphasis on the role of Ishmael and the marginalisation of Isaac, although in the Qurʾān itself the latter is mentioned more frequently than his elder brother. We may summarise the Muslim tradition about Islam's identification with the religion of Abraham and the descent of the Arabs from Abraham under five main heads.

a. *Abraham and Ishmael As the Ancestors of the Arabs*

Muslim tradition elaborates on the fate of Hagar and Ishmael after their expulsion by Abraham, as narrated in Gen 21:19–21. In Muslim versions of the story, Ishmael and his mother Hagar, after being driven out by Abraham, came to the place where Mecca was eventually to be established. It was there that an angel appeared and a spring (often identified with Zamzam, the well next to the Kaʿba) gushed forth to save Ishmael from death by thirst. Hagar and Ishmael then settled in Mecca, and Ishmael was married to women of local tribes.[19] It was from these marriages that his descendants, the Arabs, stemmed.[20]

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[19] For this and the following sections, a variety of Muslim texts are summarised and specific references will not be given. The materials summarised are to be found in various genres of Muslim literature, particularly the traditional lives of Muhammad (*sīra*) and commentaries on the Qurʾān (*tafsīr*), but also in chronicles (*taʾrīkh*) that begin with the creation, local histories of Mecca, and many other types of works. Representative of them are: Ibn al-Kalbī, Hishām b. Muḥammad (d. 821), *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* (text, introduction, comments, and German translation in R. Klinke-Rosenberger, *Das Götzenbuch*: Kitāb al-Aṣnām *des Ibn al-Kalbī* [SOA 8; Leipzig 1941]; English translation, introduction, and notes by N.A. Faris, *The Book of Idols: Being a Translation from the Arabic of the* Kitāb al-Aṣnām *by Hišām Muḥammad Ibn al-Kalbī* [POS 14; Princeton 1952]); Ibn Hishām (d. 828 or 833), *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* (English translation, introduction, and notes by A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad* [Oxford 1955]); Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), *Taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk* (English translation by various translators in E. Yar-Shater et al., eds., *The History of al-Ṭabarī*: Taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk [40 vols.; Albany 1985–2007]; Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān*; Al-Azraqī, Abu l-Walīd Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh (d. probably third quarter of the 9th C.), *Akhbār Makka* (edition and partial German translation and summary in F. Wüstenfeld, ed., *El-Azrakís Geschichte und Beschreibung der Stadt Mekka* [vol. 1 of *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka*; ed. F. Wüstenfeld; 4 vols.; Leipzig 1857–1861]).

[20] The Muslim narrators, aware that Ishmael could only be the ancestor of the Arabs if there were already women there to bear his children, refer to the theory that the Arab people were divided into two major groups: the earlier inhabitants of Arabia, whose ancestor was not a descendant of Ishmael, and those who stemmed from Ishmael's marriages with women from among these earlier inhabitants. It is to the descendants of Ishmael that Muhammad and most of the important early Muslims belonged. In spite of this theory, sometimes all of the Arabs are viewed as stemming from Ishmael (by

b. *Abraham's Dispatch to Mecca to Build the Kaʿba*

According to the Muslim narratives, the Kaʿba had originally been established at Mecca by God to compensate Adam for his expulsion from paradise. The structure had been damaged by the great flood of Noah's time, and God sent Abraham to Mecca to restore it on its ancient foundations. This Abraham did together with Ishmael, who was already settled in Mecca when his father Abraham came there. In effect they stand as the real founders of the Kaʿba, the pre-Abraham history appearing in comparison rather nebulous.

These are the events understood to be alluded to in the quranic passages relating to Abraham and the *bayt*, mentioned already.

c. *The Corruption of Abraham's Monotheism in Arabia*

After Abraham and Ishmael had rebuilt the Kaʿba, according to the extraquranic narratives, the worship of the one God was established in Arabia. Abraham called on all the peoples of the world, those born and those still to be born, to come to God's house, the Kaʿba, and worship him there.

Over time, however, the Arab descendants of Ishmael fell away from the pure monotheism of their forefathers and became idolaters. According to one version, it was a certain ʿAmr ibn Luḥayy "who was the first to set up idols around the Kaʿba and change the *ḥanīfiyya*, the religion (*dīn*) of Abraham."

It is important, however, that according to the tradition, Abraham's religion never completely died out in Arabia. Certain elements of it still survived in the time of Muhammad, even though it was almost eclipsed by the gross idolatry in which the Arabs were enmeshed until Muhammad rescued them from it.

The most notable survival of Abraham's religion was the idea that there was one God, called Allāh, who was superior to the multitude of idols and divinities that had come to be worshipped by the pagan Arabs, and that the Kaʿba was the shrine of this one God, in spite of its pollution by idols and the paraphernalia of idolatry. According to Muslim tradition, most of the Arabs recognised the Kaʿba as Allāh's sanctuary and gave it a position of superiority over the multitude of other tribal and local sanctuaries in Arabia.

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identifying the ancestor of the other line also as a descendant of Ishmael), and there was sometimes pressure from those who had been counted as non-Ishmaelites to be included in the Ishmaelite group. See G. Rentz, "'*Arab (Djazīrat al-)*," *EI*^{2}, 1:533–556.

This account of the corruption of Abrahamic religion in Arabia is not related to any quranic verses but seems to reflect wider monotheist ideas about how idolatry and polytheism entered the world. It is important for Islam's claim to be the revival of the religion of Abraham. Occasionally it seems to be envisaged that Muhammad learned from those who still preserved elements of the Abrahamic tradition in his lifetime. For example, there are different versions of a report about a meeting between Muhammad and one of them who reproved him for being willing to eat meat offered to idols.[21] Generally, however, Muhammad's religion is portrayed as the consequence of revelation.

d. *Ishmael as the Intended Victim of the Sacrifice*

In another aspect, the Muslim version of the story of Abraham clearly represents a significant development of the biblical account. That is, in the widespread view that it was Ishmael rather than Isaac who was the intended victim when Abraham set out to fulfil God's command that he offer his son for sacrifice.

This is not the unanimous view of the Muslim scholars who relate the story—there are several reports that share the biblical identification of the intended victim as Isaac—but the majority and most widely accepted view is that it was Ishmael whom Abraham was ordered by God to sacrifice, and that the aborted sacrifice of Ishmael occurred in or near Mecca. The Qurʾān leaves the intended victim anonymous. From the various references there it seems simpler to conclude that it was assumed to be Isaac, but those Muslim commentators who preferred the view that Ishmael was intended were able to interpret the quranic text to support their case with some plausibility.[22]

e. *The Ḥanīfs*

Finally, Muslim tradition outside the Qurʾān also develops the concept of *ḥanīf*, an idea that, as we have seen, in the Qurʾān is often attached to Abraham. The traditional narratives know of several individuals, living at the time of Muhammad in Arabia, to whom they apply the same term.

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[21] M.J. Kister, "A Bag of Meat: A Study of an Early Ḥadīth," *BSOAS* 33 (1970): 267–275.

[22] Sura 37:99–111; N. Calder, "From Midrash to Scripture: The Sacrifice of Abraham in Early Islamic Tradition," *Mus* 101 (1988): 375–402; R. Firestone, "Abraham's Son As the Intended Sacrifice (*al-dhabīḥ*; Qurʾān 37:99–113): Issues in Qurʾānic Exegesis," *JSS* 89 (1989): 95–131.

Among them was ʿAmr b. Zayd who, according to some reports, reproved Muhammad for being willing to eat the meat offered to idols.

Generally, these *ḥanīf*s are portrayed as people who were monotheists, having rejected the idolatrous polytheism of their fellow Arabs, but who were unwilling to embrace either of the two monotheistic religions available in the environment—Judaism or Christianity (although, somewhat paradoxically, some of them are reported to have eventually become Christians). Often they are presented as people who maintained surviving elements of the religion of Abraham amidst the idolatry that had encompassed the Arabs generally, and thus we find again the equation of the religion of Abraham with the status of a *ḥanīf* (*dīn Ibrāhīm: al-ḥanīfiyya*).[23]

4. Scholarship and Interpretation

In Muslim tradition, therefore, that the Arabs were descended from Abraham through Ishmael, and that Abraham had introduced the true religion into Arabia at the time when he built the Kaʿba with his son, are both historical facts.

Furthermore, we are told that these historical facts were to some extent known by the Arabs themselves before Islam. Not only the *ḥanīf*s (in this understanding, individuals who had maintained or revived elements of the Abrahamic religion, especially reverence for the Kaʿba), but also those Arabs who had fallen away from the pure monotheism that Abraham had brought to them, were aware of the debt they owed to the patriarch and his son. In the tradition we find, for example, the idolatrous pagans of Mecca referring to the well of Zamzam as "the well of our father Ishmael," and the Prophet Muhammad's grandfather, a pagan, standing before an idol in the Kaʿba but addressing God (Allāh) in prayer. Both themes—that the Arabs were Ishmaelites and that Abraham had establish monotheism in Arabia—are intertwined.

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[23] For varying modern discussions and interpretations of the *ḥanīf*s (including the view that they are a purely literary construct), see J. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums* (2nd ed.; Berlin 1927), 234 (for identification of them as "Suchern"); Montgomery Watt, "*Ḥanīf*," *EI*[2], 3:165–166; J. Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History* (LOS 34; London 1978), esp. 4, 6; U. Rubin, "*Ḥanīfiyya* and Kaʿba," *JSAI* 13 (1990): 85–112; A. Rippin, "*RḤMNN* and the *Ḥanīf*s," in *Islamic Studies Presented to Charles J. Adams* (ed. W.B. Hallaq and D.P. Little; Leiden 1991), 153–168. For discussions of the linguistic issue, see n. 9 above.

One might say that from that perspective Muhammad's task was to remind the Arabs of something of which many of them were already aware, albeit perhaps without much understanding. By calling them to the religion of Abraham, of which he was the contemporary representative, he was reminding them both of their descent from the patriarch and of their corruption of his religion. He was not introducing anything completely new.

With a few exceptions, academic scholarship has been less ready to accept those ideas as simple statements of fact, and has sought to explain when, how and why the Arabs came to believe in their physical descent from Abraham and in the religion of Abraham as the prototype of Islam. In fact, scholarship has addressed a group of related questions but tended to keep them distinct.

a. *When and How Did the Arabs Come to See Themselves as Ishmaelites?*

It has been demonstrated that the identification of the Arabs as Ishmaelites, descendants of Abraham through Ishmael and his mother Hagar, seems to have become established in the Middle East around the beginning of the Common Era.[24] But when and how did that become known to the Arabs themselves? Presumably, it would have been associated with the spread of Christianity and Judaism among them in the pre-Islamic period, and we do indeed have statements in some sources from Late Antiquity relevant to the process.

The most often cited is a passage in the *Historia ecclesiastica* of the Bishop of Gaza, Sozomen (d. ca. 450),[25] who says, without any indication of time, that after the Arabs (referred to as Ishmaelites and Saracens) had forgotten their origins as descendants of Abraham through Ishmael, they were afterwards able to re-establish the details of their genealogy through their contacts with the Jews. Furthermore, the rediscovery of their descent from Abraham led them to adopt Hebraic laws and customs (slightly earlier Sozomen had noted that the Ishmaelites, like the Jews, practise circumcision and avoid pork).

The passage has been referred to quite frequently by scholars since the 1980s: some have used it in a relatively restrained way while others derive

[24] See n. 2 above.

[25] *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.38 in the edition of J. Bidez and G.C. Hansen, eds., *Kirchengeschichte* (GCS 50; Berlin 1960).

from it implications for the history of the religion of Abraham in inner Arabia, the idea of Abraham as the founder of the Kaʿba, and the rise of Islam.[26]

It is possible, of course, that reports like that of Sozomen simply reflect their authors' knowledge that the Arabs observed practices and taboos that non-Arab observers regarded as characteristic of the Jews, and that they were attempting to account for them in a fairly obvious manner. Crone and Cook seem to have envisaged something like that on the part of the Arabs themselves when they proposed that the value of the idea of the religion of Abraham for the Arabs at the time of the conquests was that it allowed them to claim an Abrahamic legitimacy for what were in fact the ancestral Arab practices of animal sacrifice and circumcision.[27]

It is not unlikely, however, that before Islam some Arabs had learned of their Ishmaelite descent from Jews and Christians with whom they were in contact in Syria and Mesopotamia. How far such knowledge would have spread in inner Arabia (the region in which Islam is traditionally viewed as having begun), is another question. Why would Arabs who, so far as we know, were still content with their ancestral culture have adopted a genealogy derived from the Bible? One could understand why those who were in contact with Jews or Christians in Palestine and Mesopotamia, and perhaps subject to a degree of acculturation, might accept that they were descended from Abraham through Ishmael as part of a movement to conversion. But it is less easy to see why that would have happened on a mass scale in inner Arabia before the rise of Islam.

b. *Was There a Pre-Islamic Tradition of Monotheism in Arabia and, If So, How Is It to Be Accounted For?*

There is, of course, no doubt that Judaism and Christianity had a strong presence before Islam in northern and southern Arabia, and no reason to doubt that it would have penetrated to some extent from both directions into the interior. What we are concerned with here, though, is the existence, proposed by several major academic scholars, of a distinct Arab form of monotheism, neither Judaism nor Christianity, among the Arabs of inner Arabia.

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[26] M. Cook, *Muhammad* (PM; Oxford 1983), 81, 92; P. Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* (Princeton 1987), 190n104; I. Shahīd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century* (Washington, D.C., 1989), 167–169; Rubin, "*Ḥanīfiyya* and Kaʿba"; Millar, "Hagar," 42 (with a full translation).

[27] Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 13.

The evidence that has often been interpreted in support of that proposition is of two sorts. Most significant are the reports in Muslim tradition about such things as the *ḥanīf*s as a group of monotheists who were neither Christians nor Jews; about the belief among the nominally pagan Arabs that Allāh was superior to the many local and tribal gods about whom we hear; and about their identification of the Kaʿba, the sanctuary associated with Allāh, as a place to be venerated above the many local shrines and places of worship. Together with that, there is evidence, again taken from Muslim traditional texts, interpreted to show that the pre-Islamic Arabs around the time of Muhammad really cared little about their ancestral pagan religion. There are stories that are taken to mean that they were surprisingly ready to abandon their gods when their powers proved ineffective, and in the poetry transmitted in Islamic texts, but understood as having originated in pre-Islamic Arabia, there are very few references to paganism but many to Allāh.

Taking that evidence at face value, academic scholars have followed two main lines of argument. The first, initiated by Wellhausen, suggests that, in the century or so before the time of Muhammad, the Arabs were experiencing a transition from polytheism to monotheism in their religious concepts. Wellhausen himself stressed what he saw as the normal process of religious evolution—a natural movement from lower to higher forms of religion—whereas some subsequent scholars put the emphasis more on external influences penetrating inner Arabia from outside, and operating through mechanisms such as trade contacts and missionary activity. An important detail in this argument, whether it assumes evolution, external influences, or a mixture of both, is that, although Christianity and Judaism did make some headway among the Arabs, each of the two existing forms of monotheism is supposed to have been regarded as foreign by some of the Arabs, and they are held to have been looking for a form of monotheism that was more essentially Arab.[28]

The second line of argument proposes an original tradition of monotheism in Arabia that had survived over the centuries in spite of the tendency for it to be overlaid with non-monotheist ideas and practices, whether as a result of foreign influences or of normal human backsliding and misapprehension. Brockelmann seems to have been the first to propose this Arabian version of the *Urmonotheismus* theory that had attracted considerable support among scholars of comparative religion.[29]

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[28] Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, 215–224, 230–234.

[29] C. Brockelmann, "Allah und die Götzen: Der Ursprung des islamischen Monotheis-

Whatever theory underlies it, the idea that even before Muhammad there was a tradition of monotheism in Arabia distinct from its Jewish and Christian forms has been prominent in academic discussions of the rise of Islam. Most of its proponents do not seem to have made any link with the notion of the religion of Abraham, probably because the majority has been non-Muslims for whom there is no reality in the idea that Abraham introduced the Arabs to monotheism. Occasionally, however, the link has been made.[30]

This is not the place to enter into a detailed criticism of these arguments for the existence of a distinctly Arab pre-Islamic form of monotheism.[31] Put briefly, they rely on the evidence of the Muslim traditional texts that reflect the belief that Abraham had introduced the pure monotheistic religion into Arabia, and many of the details and reports could be explained other than by accepting them as historical fact. Furthermore, the theories that lie behind them seem outmoded and very questionable. It is impossible to prove a negative. There may have been an independent form of monotheism among the Arabs before Islam but there is no compelling evidence for it.

c. *When and How Did the Idea Originate That Abraham Was the Builder of the Kaʿba and the Father of Arab Monotheism?*

The theory proposed by Snouck Hurgronje[32] is well known and for long was accepted as a sort of orthodoxy among academic students of Islam. Put briefly, he argued that it was Muhammad who developed the concept of Abraham as the founder of the Kaʿba. He did so in order to dissociate his religion from that of the Jews, whose hostility he faced after his move to Medina in 622. Whereas previously he had regarded his religion as identical with Judaism, and shared with the Jews the practice of facing Jerusalem in prayer, as well as other things, he now adopted the ancient Arab sanctuary as the focal point (*qibla*) of his religion and put forward the claim that Abraham was its founder.

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mus," *AR* 21 (1922): 99–121. The theory has been adopted by several more recent scholars, and is to be understood as a response to Wellhausen's interpretation.

[30] See K. Athamina, "Abraham in Islamic Perspective: Reflections on the Development of Monotheism in Pre-Islamic Arabia," *Islam* 81 (2004): 184–205.

[31] For a discussion of these theories and the evidence on which they are based, see Hawting, *Idolatry*, 20–44.

[32] C. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Meccan Pilgrimage: Its Emergence and Early Development* (trans. L.I. Conrad and P. Sijpesteijn; Princeton 2004). See too A.J. Wensinck, *Muhammad and the Jews of Medina* (trans. W. Behn; IM 3; Freiburg im Breisgau 1975).

Snouck Hurgronje, it seems, was reacting against the arguments of Dozy that Abraham was already known as the founder of the Kaʿba among the Arabs of Mecca long before Islam, the concept ultimately deriving from a misunderstanding associated with Israelite immigration to Mecca many centuries before Muhammad.[33] Snouck Hurgronje's counter-arguments were based largely on the chronology of the quranic verses in which the identity of Abraham as a *ḥanīf* and a *muslim* is asserted and his role in the founding of the *bayt* mentioned. Those verses, he thought, had all originated in Medina (i.e., after 622 when Muhammad, according to tradition, had to deal with a large Jewish population) while in the parts of the Qurʾān traditionally held to reflect the teaching of Muhammad while he was still in Mecca there is little or no evidence that he understood Abraham in that way.

Eventually, Snouck Hurgronje's theory came under criticism from Beck and others, who argued that some of the quranic material that the eminent Dutch scholar had classified as Medinan should rather be counted as Meccan: in other words, that Abraham already had an important role in Muhammad's thinking—as associated with Mecca—while he still lived in Mecca and before he came into contact with the Jews of Medina. The Prophet's ideas about Abraham, therefore, must have been formed before the alleged break with Judaism, and the polemics of the Medinan period merely sharpened them up.[34]

Both Snouck Hurgronje and Beck held similar views about the Qurʾān as a guide to Muhammad's thought, based on traditional Muslim accounts of its revelation and composition. They merely differed regarding whether certain verses originated in Mecca or in Medina. I have already indicated that some recent scholarship calls those premises into question, and even those still willing to support the Meccan/Medinan division of verses would recognise that there is a certain arbitrariness in allocating them to one category or another, and that the traditional scholars themselves sometimes disagreed about it.

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[33] R.P.A. Dozy, *Die Israeliten zu Mekka von Davids Zeit bis in's fünfte Jahrhundert unsrer Zeitrechnung: Ein Beitrag zur alttestamentlichen Kritik und Erforschung des Ursprungs des Islams* (Leipzig 1864). Dozy's suggestion was that an expression used of the Kaʿba, "the house (sanctuary) of Abraham," arose from deformation of "the house (sanctuary) of the Hebrews"; he regarded the Kaʿba as having originated as a foundation of Israelites who had migrated to Mecca from Palestine.

[34] E. Beck, "Die Gestalt des Abraham am Wendepunkt der Entwicklung Muhammads," *Mus* 65 (1952): 73–94. See too R. Paret, *"Ibrāhīm,"* *EI*^{2}, 3:980–981.

Nevertheless, both Snouck Hurgronje and Beck demonstrate that the quranic references to Abraham do not reflect a uniform understanding of him but suggest a development in which his association with the "house" becomes more prominent. They also provide a context for such a development: the elaboration of a religious identity distinct from other forms of monotheism. That context may not have been precisely the one envisaged by them—Mecca and, especially Medina in the time of Muhammad—but Snouck Hurgronje was surely right in understanding that Abraham is used in order to distinguish an emerging religious group from its rivals who also claimed a special link with the patriarch.

The identification of Abraham as the builder of the house in association with Ishmael at Sura 2:127, is followed by Abraham's prayer asking God to make "us" (presumably him and Ishmael) *muslimīn*, and to make of our progeny an *umma muslima* (a submissive people/community/nation). He goes on to call on God to send a messenger (prophet) to that *umma* and he excoriates those who turn from the *milla* of Abraham. Subsequent verses underline the central importance of submission (*islām*) to the Lord of the Worlds.

The primary importance of Snouck Hurgronje's thesis, therefore, was to show why the figure of Abraham would be important for a new religious group emerging in competition and polemic with other monotheists who proclaimed allegiance to the tradition of Abraham. The idea that there was a tradition of Abrahamic monotheism in Arabia before Islam lacks an explanation of that sort: it simply asserts the historical reality of the fact.

d. *The Sources of the Idea That Abraham Built the Kaʿba.*

For Snouck Hurgronje, the idea that Abraham had built the Kaʿba seems to have come from Muhammad's own mind. Others, however, have discussed the possible literary or oral sources of the material about Abraham in the Qurʾān and in Muslim tradition. Can they be explained as a midrash type development of elements in the Bible and in Jewish and Christian tradition?

It is obvious that many of the details and stories in the Qurʾān and Muslim tradition can be understood in that way. For example, the reference, often found in Muslim tradition about the settlement of Hagar and Ishmael in Mecca, to shrubs and bushes (in spite of the lack of water), must be related to the reference in the biblical narrative to Hagar placing

her son under a bush.[35] From this point of view, how could we explain the idea that Abraham was the builder of the *bayt* (sanctuary)?

Various scholars have suggested passages in Jewish and Christian texts about Abraham as a possible source of this idea, but none of those suggestions has been especially convincing and won wide support.[36] A number have related the quranic passages to a verse in the book of *Jubilees* in which Abraham refers to a house that he has built, and which will be called the house of Abraham, although that seems to be a metaphorical usage of the word house in the sense of family.[37] Others have made a link with the reports in Genesis of Abraham building altars at places where he had experienced a theophany—near Bethel and at the oak of Mamre.[38]

A recent article by Witztum seems to provide a more substantial link. Witztum notes that already in 1933 Finkel had suggested the account of the aborted sacrifice of Isaac in Gen 22, with its references to the building of the altar (and in midrash Isaac is a willing participant in that), as the ultimate source of the quranic passage (Sura 2:127–128) in which Abraham and Ishmael are said to have "raised the foundations of the *bayt*." Witztum substantiates the link, especially by citing a homily in Syriac of Jacob of Serugh (d. 521) on the biblical account of the sacrifice of Isaac, a homily that has some close thematic and linguistic parallels to the quranic passage. The most notable of them is the use of the Syriac *baytā* (house) with reference to the altar.[39]

How far the midrashic developments reflected in Jacob of Serugh's homily had been consciously adapted in the Qurʾān to make them refer to the Kaʿba at Mecca is hard to say. Sura 5:97 ("God has made the Kaʿba, the sacred house, an institution for the people") could indicate that the adaptation had already been made, but one might hesitate before

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[35] Gen 21:15.

[36] R. Firestone, "Abraham," *EQ*, 1:5–11 states that the series of references in the Qurʾān to Abraham and the building of the Kaʿba (*sic*) "finds no parallel in either the Bible or the later Jewish traditions."

[37] *Jub*. 22:24 (translated by O.S. Wintermute in 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*; ed. J.H. Charlesworth; Garden City, N.Y., 1985], 99). For this suggestion see Rubin, "*Ḥanīfiyya* and Kaʿba," 108 and the references given there.

[38] Gen 12:6–8; 13:18; cf. Firestone, "Abraham," *EQ*, 1:5–11.

[39] J. Witztum, "The Foundations of the House (Q 2:127)," *BSOAS* 72 (2009): 25–40; J. Finkel, "Jewish, Christian and Samaritan Influences on Arabia," in *The Macdonald Presentation Volume: A Tribute to Duncan Black Macdonald, Consisting of Articles by Former Students, Presented to Him on His Seventieth Birthday, April 9, 1933* (Princeton 1933), 158–160.

identifying every reference to the Kaʿba with that at Mecca. The Kaʿba of the Qurʾān is associated with the sacrifice of animals (possibly linking it with the concept of an altar), whereas the Kaʿba as we know it at Mecca is not a place of animal sacrifice.[40]

The view that the idea of Abraham building the Kaʿba was the outcome of a midrashic process of the sort suggested above does not provide any social or other context, apart from that of each of the texts concerned. If one were to maintain that the idea had developed in Mecca, then it would be desirable to show that some of the texts involved—say, the book of *Jubilees* or the *Homilies* of Jacob of Serugh—were, or could have been, known there. Usually that conclusion is derived simply from a presupposition of the Meccan setting and the persuasiveness of the textual relationships. If one were to go merely by what is known about the circulation of text like the *Homilies* and *Jubilees*, however, one might argue that the idea is likely to have developed away from Mecca itself.

5. Conclusions

The conclusions reached so far may be summarised as follows.

The idea that Abraham founded the Kaʿba and introduced monotheism into Arabia is only partly and ambiguously attested in the Qurʾān, although the allusions there to Abraham's role in building the *bayt* suggest an ongoing development of ideas, similar to a midrash in style. In contrast, the narratives outside the Qurʾān are full and detailed.

To say that the tradition is an elaboration of the Qurʾān does not necessarily envisage an already fixed and authoritative quranic text, and it may be that the text itself reflects some of the developments in the tradition.[41] But it does seem that the abstract, and fundamentally polemical,

[40] There are only two references to the Kaʿba by name in the Qurʾān. At Sura 5:95 there is reference to an (animal) offering that is to reach the Kaʿba as a compensation for a breach of ritual purity; two verses later, at 5:97, is the cited verse about God having made the Kaʿba, the sacred house. Other verses referring to animal offerings use expressions other than *al-kaʿba*: Sura 2:196, in the context of regulations about the *ḥajj* and the *ʿumra*, prohibits leaving the state of ritual purity before the offering (*al-hady*) has reached its place of sacrifice (*maḥillahu*); Sura 48:25, referring to unbelievers who have "barred you from *al-masjid al-ḥarām*," says that the offering has been prevented from reaching its place of sacrifice; Sura 22:33 refers to the benefits God has given us in animals until it is time to offer them at a stated time, when "their place of sacrifice (*maḥilluhā*) is to the ancient house (*al-bayt al-ʿaṭīq*)." In the Hajj of Islam, animal offerings are made at Minā, at some distance from the Kaʿba.

[41] E.g., the rather strange grammar of the allusion to Ishmael's participation in the

idea of the religion of Abraham, and the obscure allusions to the *bayt*, in the Qurʾān are fleshed out and made solid in the tradition.

Although the idea that they were descended from Abraham through Ishmael may have been known to some Arabs before Islam, there is no reason to think that it had spread widely in inner Arabia.

There is no real evidence of a tradition of Arabian monotheism independent of Judaism and Christianity before Islam, and no evidence either that the pre-Islamic Arabs regarded Abraham as the builder of the Kaʿba at Mecca.

That latter idea would make best sense as Islam sought to establish its independence against other forms of monotheism and to assert its identity as the only legitimate representative of Abraham's religion.

It seems likely, therefore, that the idea of Abraham as the builder of the Kaʿba originated in connection with the claim that he was the forefather of the religion that had the Kaʿba as its central shrine, Islam, and that the idea that the Arabs were descendants of the patriarch through his son Ishmael became widely accepted among the Arabs in the same connection. The whole complex of ideas is likely to be part and parcel of the emergence of Islam as an independent form of monotheism and its assertion of its identity and supremacy over its rivals. Would that have been before or after the Arab conquests?

Apart from Muslim tradition itself, the argument that the Arabs came out of Arabia already with a strong concept of Abraham as the father of their religion and their race is based mainly on certain early non-Muslim texts attributing those ideas to the Arabs who had recently established their political domination. Some of these non-Muslim texts are considerably earlier than the Muslim literary evidence available to us.

For example, the *History of Heraclius* attributed to the Armenian bishop Sebeos, and perhaps written in the 650s, refers to Muhammad (Mahmet) as having united the Arabs around the worship of the God of Abraham, their father.[42] The Syriac *Khuzestani Chronicle*, usually accepted as dating from the 660s, refers to the dome (*qūbtā*) of Abraham, where the Arabs worshipped, but about which the compiler of the chron-

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building of the house at Sura 2:125 could indicate an interpolation (cf. Beck, "Gestalt des Abraham," 79, but note the counter-arguments of Witztum, "Foundations of the House," 26). It is notable that the similar wording at Sura 22:26 has no reference to Ishmael, and uses a singular verb where Sura 2:125 has a dual form.

[42] R.W. Thomson, trans. and notes, J. Howard-Johnston, historical comm., and T. Greenwood, ass., *The Armenian History Attributed to Sebeos* (TTH 31; Liverpool 1999), 95–96, 238–240.

icle did not have precise knowledge. He knows, however, that Abraham built it in the desert for the worship of God and the offering of sacrifices. "Indeed it was no new thing for the Arabs to worship there, but goes back to antiquity, to their early days, in that they show honour to the father of the head of their people."[43]

The most usual questions asked about such texts concern the nature of their sources (observation, personal contacts, written sources?), and how far they are confirmed by, or themselves confirm, Muslim texts. Most scholars would probably interpret these and other texts as ultimately reflecting, perhaps at a distance or obscurely, Arab beliefs and practices. They would be seen as very early evidence that the Arabs, when they came out of Arabia to conquer the Middle East, brought with them a belief in descent from Abraham, adherence to a religion they associated with him, and worship at a sanctuary they held that he had initiated.

If those conclusions are valid, and the non-Muslim texts are taken at face value, they would either seem to work against my previous conclusions of the broad trends in modern research regarding Abraham, the Arabs and Islam, or they would point to the activity of Muhammad as being crucial in establishing the main details of the idea of Abraham as the father of Islam and the builder of the sanctuary.

Sebeos talks of Muhammad as being instrumental in establishing the worship of the God of Abraham among the Arabs whereas the *Khuzestani Chronicle* asserts that the Arab worship at the Dome of Abraham and their honouring of "the father of the head of their people" goes back to antiquity. Presumably what the chronicler means is that there was a long tradition of sacrifice there; but the designation of the place as the Dome of Abraham and the statement about the purpose of the worship there could be of more recent origin—an interpretation provided by his sources (perhaps ultimately the Arabs themselves), or perhaps even his own gloss.

We may accept that already in the early decades following the conquests, the new conquerors identified Abraham as their spiritual and physical ancestor, and that they associated their main place of worship with him. It is possible that those ideas were established before the Arabs began their conquests (in which case, Muhammad may well have had an

[43] I. Guidi, ed. and trans., *Chronicon anonymum* (CSCO, Scriptores Syri 1–2; Paris 1903), cited here from the translation of the passage in R.G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (SLAEI 13; Princeton 1997), 187.

instrumental role), but one could also surmise that they are ideas that began to develop in the wake of the conquests as a result of interaction between the Arabs and the peoples they now ruled over.

It does not seem impossible that the Arabs derived the ideas of their Abrahamic ancestry from the peoples they ruled over, who had been calling them Ishmaelites and Hagarenes for centuries, and who may now have tried to explain the Arab religion as a consequence of their descent from the figure they regarded as the father of the Arabs, Ishmael. Two centuries or so earlier, Sozomen had explained the Arabs' custom of circumcision and their avoidance of pork in the same way. It may be too much to suggest that the idea of Abraham as the builder of the Kaʿba also derives from the conquered peoples, but, if Witztum's arguments are convincing, the closest parallel to the crucial quranic passage is a Syriac Christian homily.

In his *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, Hoyland remarks *à propos* of the information about the religion of Abraham followed by the Arabs according to texts like that of Sebeos and the *Khuzestani Chronicle*, that they are "patently coloured by Biblical conceptions" and that there was a stereotype for the way in which Christian writers presented Islam as the religion of Abraham: they wished to show it as "primitive, not having benefited from any of Jesus' modernisations."[44]

It seems possible, therefore, that the elaborate Muslim narratives which historicise the idea of Islam as the continuation of the religion of Abraham, and the associated explanation of how the Arabs came to be descended from him through Ishmael, are the product of the interaction between the Arabs and the subject peoples in the period after the Arab conquests. One can easily envisage how, in the circumstances following the conquests, when a relatively small Arab elite ruled over a much larger non-Arab population, and when Islam developed in competition and polemic with other religions, issues of religious and ethnic identity would become urgent. And all the ingredients of the developed Muslim narratives could have been supplied by adaptation and development of ideas and stories current among the peoples who came under the domination of the Arabs. Among those peoples were, naturally, Arabs who had adopted various forms of Christianity and Judaism.

The evidence that the Arabs who came out of Arabia with the conquering armies of the 630s and 640s already had a self-identification as Ish-

[44] Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 536–537.

maelites and followed a religion that they identified as Abraham's is not compelling. In addition to a rather literal willingness to accept the statements of the early non-Arab and non-Muslim witnesses like Sebeos and the *Khuzestani Chronicle*, that view depends very much on a traditional understanding of the origins of the Qurʾān in connection with the career of Muhammad in Mecca and Medina. Even if one takes that traditional view, the quranic notion of the religion of Abraham and its allusions to the building of the "house" by him and Ishmael is underdeveloped, allusive and elusive in comparison to the detailed Islamic narratives. It is for those reasons that this paper has suggested that the Islamic idea of the religion of Abraham should be understood as a product of the religious and social conditions brought about by the Arab conquests in the Middle East.

HĀJAR IN THE *QUR'ĀN* AND ITS EARLY COMMENTARIES

Fred Leemhuis

Although by far not as well known as her son Ismāʿīl, Hājar or Ājar as she also sometimes is called is certainly not unfamiliar to most Muslims. After all, wasn't it her desperate search for water for her thirsty son which made her run seven times the approximately 350 meters from the top of the little hillock al-Ṣafā to that of al-Marwa to look for water or for people who might bring it? Isn't it exactly that which is commemorated during the *ḥajj* with the *saʿy*, the ritual run, from al-Ṣafā to al-Marwa? And wasn't it the famous Zamzam well which sprung up to save her and her son?

One only has to look up the lemma "Abraham" in the *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*[1] to find out what part Hagar plays in the narrative cycle of Ibrāhīm which is largely in accordance with Jewish tradition as Paret already remarked in the lemma "Ismāʿīl" in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.[2] The modifications are that Ibrāhīm, of course, does not just send away Hājar and Ismāʿīl, but accompanies them until they arrive in the valley where Ibrāhīm and Ismāʿīl later will build the Kaʿba. There Ibrāhīm leaves them to God's care and goes back to Syria/Palestine.

So far so good. There are, however a few problems with the Hājar parts of this narrative. The first is that Hājar does not occur in the *Qurʾān*, not even unnamed as, e.g., the mother of Ismāʿīl, in a similar way as Sāra is mentioned as Ibrāhīm's wife in Sūrat Hūd (11):71 and by implication as Ishāq's mother. It is true that probably the offspring in Ibrāhīm's words in Sūrat Ibrāhīm (14):37 refers to Ismāʿīl where Ibrāhīm says: "O Our Lord, I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation by thy Sacred House, that they may establish regular prayer …." And maybe by implication these words then also refer to his mother who had brought him there.

And, if one starts to think about it, it is also quite strange that the single reference in the *Qurʾān* to the circumambulation of al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa as part of the *ḥajj* rites in Sūrat al-Baqara (2):158 does not refer to Hājar or Ismāʿīl at all. The verse goes as follows: "Surely, al-Ṣafā

[1] R. Firestone, "Abraham," *EQ*, 1:5–11.
[2] R. Paret, "Ismāʿīl," *EI²*, 4:184–185.

and al-Marwa are among the rites of God. Whoever, then, makes a pilgrimage to the House, or pays a visit to it, will not be committing sin if he circumambulates both." It is striking, that the verse uses the verb *ṭawwafa* ("to circumambulate") and not *saʿā* ("to run"). It is the same root which is used in connection with the rite of circumambulating the Kaʿba and it gives at least the suggestion that the rite may have been different from what is the standard rite: walking briskly from al-Ṣafā to al-Marwa seven times.

Indeed, in three early commentaries on the *Qurʾān* of Warqā's (160/776) version of Mujāhid,[3] Sufyān al-Thawrī[4] (d. 161/777) and Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767),[5] this verse is commented upon as being sent down, because early Muslims considered the rite to be pagan and thus felt uneasy about their circumambulation as part of the pilgrimage rites. Muqātil is the most specific in that he mentions that for the Ḥums, the tribal association of Quraysh, Kināna, Khuzāʿa and ʿĀmir b. Ṣaʿṣaʿa which observed very strict rites and taboos in connection with the pre-Islamic pilgrimage, they did not form part of the pilgrimage rites and that these two hills had idols on them in pagan times, Nāʾila on al-Ṣafā and Isāf or Yasāf on al-Marwa.

Actually, Mujāhid explains the verse as intending that who does *not* circumambulate them does not do wrong, in fact making their circumambulation facultative. Sufyān simply mentions that Ibn ʿAbbās read the verse as follows: "Whoever, then, makes a pilgrimage to the House, or pays a visit to it, will not be committing sin if he *does not* circumambulate both." And indeed from al-Farrāʾ[6] (d. 207/822) we learn that it was a well-known reading, which he discusses seriously. Also al-Ṭabarī[7] (d. 310/923) mentions this reading as a variant reading of Ibn Masʿūd's. From the *Encyclopaedia of Koranic Readings* that was published in 2002

[3] ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad al-Sūratī, ed., *Tafsīr Mujāhid* (2 vols.; Islamabad 1976; repr. Beyrouth n.d.), 1:94–95; Muḥammad ʿAbd-al-Salām Abū al-Nīl, ed., *Tafsīr al-imām Mujāhid ibn Jabr* (Cairo 1989), 217–218.

[4] Imtiyāz ʿAlī ʿArshi/-, ed., *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-Karīm lil-imām Abī ʿAbdallāh Sufyān ibn Saʿīd ibn Masrūq al-Thawrī al-Kūfī* (Rampur 1965), 13; reprint Beirut (without some of the indices) 1983, 53.

[5] ʿAbdallāh Maḥmūd Shaḥāta, ed., *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān* (5 vols.; Cairo 1979–1989), 1:152.

[6] Abū Zakariyāʾ Yaḥyā b. Ziyād al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿāni al-qurʾān* (2nd ed.; 3 vols.; Cairo 1980), 1:95.

[7] Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al- Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī al-Musammā Jāmiʿ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾān* (12 vols.; Beirut 1412/1992), 2:46–56.

we learn that a whole host of early *Qur'ān* readers read the verse that way.[8] The striking thing is that in none of the above-mentioned early commentaries there is a mention or allusion that the verse has any connection with Hājar's frantic search for water for her son. The only one which comes near is Muqātil who states that it should be part of the *ḥajj* rites, because Ibrāhīm had already done so. Even al-Ṭabarī, who in his history mentions the connection of al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa with Hājar,[9] nevertheless, in his quranic commentary on the al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa verse, quotes more than thirty exegetical traditions, but none of them with any reference to Hājar and/or Ismāʿīl, neither does he himself refer to them. In the quranic commentary he only, just like Muqātil, states that the rite should be part of the *ḥajj* rites, because Ibrāhīm had instituted it.

Muqātil in his commentary actually mentions Hājar, but not in connection with the story of her looking for water, but in connection with Ibrāhīm's words in Sūrat Ibrāhīm (14):39: "Praise be to God who has given me, in spite of old age, Ismāʿil and Isḥāq." There he states simply that Ismāʿīl was Ibrāhīm's son by Hājar, Ibrāhīm's slave girl, and that he was then sixty years old and seventy when Ishāq was born. Muqātil then adds: "And all prophets descend from Isḥaq except our prophet—God bless him and grant him salvation—because he is of Ismāʿīl's offspring."[10]

In the available early commentaries from before the time of al-Ṭabarī the only other one which mentions Hājar at all is by ʿAbd al-Razzāq[11] (d. 211/827) and as far as I know also only once. From al-Ṭabarī onward the mother of Ismāʿīl is clearly present in the narrative cycle of Ibrāhīm and Ismāʿīl.

As far as I know ʿAbd al-Razzāq is also the earliest available source which mentions how Ibrāhīm became the father of Ismāʿīl. In the commentary on Sūrat al-Ḥajj (22):26 he includes an atypically long narrative on the authority of Maʿmar and the final authority of Abū Hurayra. This is the story of how Ibrāhīm and Sāra passed by the giants and that Ibrāhīm let Sāra pass for his sister and that the giant, when he had sent for her, tried to molest her, but all three times when he tried to lay his hands on her he could not do anything with her because of Sāra's prayers. The giant then sent her away saying to the one who had brought her: "You

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[8] ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Khaṭīb, *Muʿjam al-qirā'āt* (11 vols.; Damascus 2002), 1:219–220.

[9] Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk* (10 vols.; Cairo 1960–1969), 1:252.

[10] ʿAbdallāh Maḥmūd Shaḥāta, *Tafsīr Muqātil*, 2:409.

[11] Muṣṭafā Muslim Muḥammad, ed., *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān lil-imām ʿAbd -al-Razzāq ibn Hishām al-Ṣanʿānī* (3 vols.; Riyadh 1989), 2:35–36.

have brought me a she-devil, not a human being." And then he gave her Hājar to serve her. Sāra then came back to Ibrāhīm who was praying and she said: "God averted the hand of the depraved infidel and he gave Hājar as a servant." Then afterwards Hājar became Ibrahīm's maid and she bore him Ismāʿīl. Abū Hurayra said: "That is your mother, o sons of the water of heaven (*yā banī mā'i l-samā'*, a pun on Ismāʿīl) with which the Arabs are meant. She was the slave girl of the mother of Ishaq."

Also in this tafsīr there is no mention of Hājar in connection with al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa. There are, however, a few aspects of this narration that are rather remarkable. In the first place it is clear that Sāra is still young, at least young enough to be desired by the giant, and nothing is said about her barrenness. Hājar becomes her maidservant, but there is no reason given why Hājar later becomes Ibrāhīm's maid. Neither is there any mention of an Egyptian connection of Hājar. It is clear that the whole story centres on an important question: What exactly was the genealogical connection between Ibrāhīm and Ismāʿīl? For Ibrāhīm's wife is mentioned in the *Qur'ān*, but it is clear that she was the mother of Ishāq and not of Ismāʿīl.

The theme of the giant, or a king, or a tyrant giving Hājar or Ājar to Sāra is also found in four versions in the *Canonical Collection of Prophetic Traditions* of al-Bukhārī[12] (194/810–256/870) and in one version in Muslim's (202/817 or 206/821–261/875) *Collection*,[13] all on the final authority of Abū Hurayra.

Actually, as far as I know, the earliest version of the episode of Hājar and Ismāʿil having nothing left to drink and of Hājar's desperate search for water which made her run seven times from the top of al-Ṣafā to al-Marwa is also in al-Bukhārī. In a tradition that goes back to Saʿīd b. Jubair on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās, the whole story of Hājar's flight and its final outcome of her settling with her son Ismāʿīl near the new well Zamzam is told in two slightly different versions.[14] Apart from the fact that one version mentions that the mother of Ismāʿīl was the first to use her waistband in order to erase her tracks when she fled from Sāra, these two traditions tell the story of Ibrāhīm, Hājar and Ismāʿīl as it has become widely known in Islam, especially through pious ḥadīth collections such as the *Riyād al-ṣāliḥīn* by al-Nawawī, who died in the seventh/thirteenth century.

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[12] *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: anbiyā'* 8, *hiba* 28, *hiba* 36, *nikāḥ* 12.
[13] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: fadā'il* 154.
[14] *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: anbiyā'* 9.

Of course, in these versions Ibrāhīm does not simply send away Hājar and her son, but he brought her and Ismāʿīl to a place at the Kaʿba near Zamzam and left them to God's care. At that time there was no water to be found and nobody lived there. Hājar ran from al-Ṣafā to al-Marwa and then finally we get the harmonization of the *Qur'ān* with the story, because this tradition mentions that the Prophet said that the running of the people between them is because of that (*fa dhalika saʿy al-nās baynahuma*). An angel dug the well of Zamzam and then Hājar started to make something of a basin around it.

This last element is also found in a tradition that also goes back to Saʿīd b. Jubair on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās of which two versions are found in Al-Bukhārī and one in Ibn Ḥanbal's collection of traditions.[15] Like the longer one on the authority of Saʿīd b. Jubair ʿ*an* Ibn ʿAbbās these versions all state that Hājar did something to the Zamzam well that made her the owner of the well and that this right of hers and her descendants was recognised by the Jurhum tribe who came to live with her and her son in Mecca. Thus it became the foundation for the claim of the descendants of al-ʿAbbās, the oldest uncle of the Prophet, that his descendants had the right to giving the water of Zamzam to the pilgrims.

There is not much that we can conclude with certainty from all this, but one thing is rather clear. In the earliest period of Islam we do not have much reference to Hājar at all. As far as the written sources are concerned, it would appear that only sometime in the first half of the second century of Islam is Hājar mentioned at all and that not before the end of the second century of Islam, i.e., the beginning of the ninth century CE, was the story of her and her son's flight to Mecca written down. Of course, the oral tradition of which they are the deposit may and will have been older, but even so it is striking that apparently the early preoccupation with al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa had nothing to do with Hājar and that early preoccupations with Hājar seem to be concerned with claims of the descendants of al-ʿAbbās on the right of the water of Zamzam.

The earliest written source which mentions Hājar as the mother of the Arabs is the above mentioned *Tafsīr* of ʿAbd al-Razzāq which dates from the end of the second Islamic century, i.e., the beginning of the ninth century CE.

[15] *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: anbiyā'* 8, *sharb* 10; *Musnad Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*: 5, 121.

In view of all this I consider it highly unlikely that Hājar played any serious part in the early doctrinal history of Islam. Of course it is possible that she was suppressed by Islamic tradition of a later stage, but this is unlikely in view of the fact that it appears that the later we get, the more material becomes available about Hājar as the mother of Ismāʿīl and her connection with the origin of the ritual run from al-Ṣafā to al-Marwa. Instead of being written out of, she was more and more written into Islamic tradition.

In all probability the text of the *Qurʾān* as we now know it, i.e., the ʿUthmanic redaction, was already fixed around the end of the seventh century and probably earlier.[16] And so Hājar's absence from the *Qurʾān* is indeed remarkable, not because she was suppressed by Islamic tradition, but because she only came on stage at a later date. As the authenticity of the early tafsīr is also sufficiently established by now, it is no surprise that it corroborates Hājar's relative insignificance in the early period of Islam.

[16] Cf. F. Leemhuis, "Readings of the Qurʾān," *EQ*, 4:353–363; F. Leemhuis, "From Palm Leaves to the Internet," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Qurʾān* (ed. J.D. McAuliffe; CCR; Cambridge 2006), 145–161.

EPILOGUE

Martin Goodman

The recent systematic study by Donaldson of almost all the texts generally cited as evidence for Jewish attitudes to Gentiles from ca. 300 BCE to ca. 150 CE will undoubtedly prove a boon to scholars. Donaldson conscientiously analyses each text, placing it in its literary context according to author, audience, and genre, and doing his best to see each extract as the product of a particular time and place. Each text is allotted to (at least) one of four categories: since all the passages cited show Jews describing relations with Gentiles in an essentially positive fashion, the issue in each case is whether they envisage what Donaldson calls "sympathization" (Gentiles engaged in Jewish activities and in association with Jews), conversion, ethical monotheism (through the alignment of Greek philosophy to the Torah as paths to a universal God), or eschatological participation (in texts which describe Gentiles as in some way beneficiaries of the redemption of Israel at the end of days).[1] His volume marks a major advance, and will doubtless be much used, but much also remains to be done (apart, of course, from the important task, acknowledged by Donaldson, of widening the scope of the texts discussed to include those in the early rabbinic corpus, not least the different formulations of the Noachide laws).[2]

One task will be to distinguish more clearly between the attitude of Jews to Gentiles, the attitude of Gentiles to Jews, and the attitude of Jews to the attitudes adopted (or alleged to be adopted) by Gentiles—since so much of the evidence is preserved in Jewish texts, it is not always easy to discern on which of these levels a text is best to be read. It is one thing to discover that some Gentiles sympathised with Jews or adopted Jewish practices or were described as proselytes on their tombstones,[3] but it is

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[1] T.L. Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE)* (Waco, Tex., 2007).

[2] Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 13; on the Noachide laws, see D. Novak, *The Image of the Non-Jew in Judaism: An Historical and Constructive Study of the Noahide Laws* (TST 14; New York 1984).

[3] On inscriptions from Jerusalem in the first century CE using the Greek term *proselytos*, see T.L. Donaldson, "Jerusalem Ossuary Inscriptions and the State of Jewish

quite another to discover the attitude of Jews to such "sympathization" and conversion, as emerges from the important recent work by Hayes and Schwartz on the existence in Second Temple Judaism of a minority stream of Jews for whom the notion of a non-Jew mutating into a Jew remained ontologically impossible, regardless of the behaviour and self-perception of the individual concerned.[4]

There is a need also to balance the eirenic attitudes examined by Donaldson against the far more hostile stance to be found in a number of the texts analysed in this volume, not least *Jubilees* and the Dead Sea Scrolls, and against the political narrative of intercommunal violence which provides the backdrop of so much of the literature which survives.

In this latter regard, it needs to be frankly acknowledged both how important specific local conditions may have been in conditioning Jewish attitudes to Gentiles (and their potential volatility, given the availability, to all Jews, of a wide range of attitudes inherited from the varied biblical base recently analysed with great clarity by Kaminsky in his study of the concept of election),[5] and the circularity inherent in dating many texts, like *Jubilees*, to a specific period on the grounds of their attitudes to Gentiles and then using those texts as evidence for attitudes in that time and place.[6] On the validity of placing texts in a specific time and place according to the attitudes they evince, two passages by Cassius Dio may in any case encourage caution. It is hard to imagine two periods of Judean history when Gentiles were treated with more hostility than in the revolts of 66–70 and 132–135 CE, and indeed Josephus provides chilling reports of massacres of Gentiles by Jerusalemite Jews at the start of the war in 66 as well as pogroms of Jews which may have occurred, at least in part, in retaliation.[7] Even before the war was fully underway the

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Proselytes," in *Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity: Essays in Honour of Peter Richardson* (ed. S.G. Wilson and M. Desjardins; SCJ 9; Waterloo 2000), 372–388.

[4] C. Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud* (Oxford 2002); D.R. Schwartz, "Doing like Jews or Becoming a Jew?: Josephus on Women Converts to Judaism," in *Jewish Identity in the Greco-Roman World* (ed. J. Frey, D.R. Schwartz, and S. Gripentrog; AJEC 71; Leiden 2007), 93–109.

[5] J.S. Kaminsky, *Yet I Loved Jacob: Reclaiming the Biblical Concept of Election* (Nashville 2007).

[6] For the date of the composition of *Jubilees*, see, e.g., D. Mendels, *The Land of Israel As a Political Concept in Hasmonean Literature: Recourse to History in Second Century BC Claims to the Holy Land* (TSAJ 15; Tübingen 1987).

[7] Josephus, *B.J.* 2.458–460 (Gentiles killed by Jews); 2.457, 461–465 (Jews killed by Gentiles).

rebels had killed every one of the soldiers in the Roman garrison.[8] And yet the Roman historian Cassius Dio, who wrote his account of the war in the early third century CE, reported that in the course of the siege in 70 "some of the Romans, becoming disheartened … and suspecting that the city was impregnable, as was commonly reported" went over to the side of the Jews, and that the Jews, "even though they were short of food, treated those recruits kindly, in order to be able to show that there were deserters to their side also,"[9] and the same Cassius Dio wrote that on the outbreak of the Bar Kokhba revolt in 132 "many outside nations" joined the Jews "through eagerness for gain" (although the attitude of the Jews to these non-Jewish allies is not recorded).[10] In light of such behaviour it is evidently unsafe to assume that at times of political turmoil between Jews and Gentiles there will necessarily be traces of such hostility in the surviving literature.

But what is more fundamentally missing from the sourcebook, and is bound to be passed over in any collection of *testimonia*, is a sense of what is *not* said in the ancient sources and of the potential significance of such silence, and it is in this respect that the present volume should make its greatest impact by examining how a range of Jewish and Christian literature treated one biblical text. When Paul in Galatians reassured his Gentile Christian brethren that

> those who believe are the descendants of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you." For this reason, those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed. (Gal 3:7–9)

and compared these descendants of Abraham to those who rely on the works of the law and are therefore "under a curse,"[11] this did not invoke a contrast between Abraham and Moses which would have resonated with Paul's fellow Jews, let close the Gentile "foolish Galatians"[12] to whom the letter was addressed. The studies in this volume have shown how little was known about Abraham in the wider Gentile world in the centuries before Paul preached, and how in Paul's own time Abraham was treated by Philo not as opposed to the Torah but, like the other patriarchs, as

[8] Josephus, *B.J.* 2.453.
[9] Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* 66.5.4.
[10] Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* 69.13.2.
[11] Gal 3:10.
[12] Gal 3:1.

an embodiment of it.[13] The volume has also shown how both Jews and Christians were to interpret the figure of Abraham in all sorts of other ways in the centuries after Paul. It should not perhaps totally surprise that the powerful contrast between Abraham as archetype of the faith of the Gentiles should have originated with Paul, who designated himself according to Acts as "apostle to the Gentiles."[14] The search for the Jewish background to the teachings of Paul the Jew is entirely warranted,[15] but just occasionally it emerges from this search that Paul's message was original. It is not unreasonable to suggest that it was precisely this originality that led to the enduring influence of his work.

[13] S. Sandmel, *Philo's Place in Judaism: A Study of Conceptions of Abraham in Jewish Literature* (Cincinnati 1956).

[14] Acts 18:6.

[15] See E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London 1977), and many studies in its wake.

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