

# Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer and Eastern Christian Exegesis\*

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**Resumen:** This paper will discuss the use of traditions from the Christian Orient for the understanding of the development of the motifs in Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer. The process of the development of the material in PRE is much discussed, with particular reference to other Jewish literature. However, a number of the motifs that represent a new development in PRE are also common ideas in sources from the Christian Orient. This paper will focus on four examples from PRE which reflect exegesis also found in traditions of the Christian Orient, and mark an initial endeavour to identify the material in PRE that may have been influenced by Christian thought.

**Abstract:** Este artículo estudia la utilización de las tradiciones procedentes del Oriente Cristiano para poder comprender el desarrollo de los motivos contenidos en el Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer. El proceso del desarrollo del material contenido en el PRE es analizado en detalle, con especial referencia al resto de la literatura judáica. Sin embargo, un número de motivos que representan un nuevo desarrollo en el PRE son, así mismo, ideas comunes en fuentes del Oriente Cristiano. Este artículo se ocupa de cuatro ejemplos del PRE, que reflejan una exégesis que se encuentra también en tradiciones del Oriente Cristiano y marcan una tentativa inicial para identificar aquel material del PRE que puede haber sido influenciado por el pensamiento cristiano.

**Palabras clave:** Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer. Oriente cristiano. Exégesis. Génesis.

**Keywords:** Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer. Christian Orient. Exegesis. Genesis.



Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer, also known as Baraita de-Rabbi Eliezer, Mishnah de-Rabbi Eliezer or Haggadah de-Rabbi Eliezer, is a narrative midrash.<sup>1</sup> It begins with two chapters outlining the biography of the attributed author of the

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<sup>1</sup> Hereafter, Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer will be referred to as PRE.

text, Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus also known as Eliezer ha-gadol, who lived at the end of the first century and beginning of the second. This introduction is followed by the retelling of the book of Genesis and the book of Exodus up to the punishment of Miriam for her criticism of Moses found in Numbers ch.12, expanding extensively upon the biblical story.

The text is generally dated to the eighth or ninth century, although it contains many earlier traditions. Pirqoi ben Baboi from the ninth century already quotes the text, whilst there are a number of references to Arab rule, which dates at least its final stage of redaction to after the mid-seventh century. G. Stemberger notes that Palestine is the most likely place of origin, as practically all the Rabbis mentioned are from there.<sup>2</sup>

PRE has enjoyed wide circulation which is evidenced by the large number of editions and manuscripts available. A complete list of these and translations of the text can be found in the introduction to the edition of PRE of D. Börner-Klein, and it is this edition which is referred to here.<sup>3</sup>

The process of the development of the material in PRE is much discussed, with particular reference to other Jewish literature. PRE naturally contains exegesis that is found in earlier rabbinic sources, which is sometimes adopted in its entirety, but also often extensively adapted. Interestingly, however, there are a number of interpretations that are found first of all in this text, which are then repeated in later texts such as the Zohar. The question then arises as to how this material was developed, and why it was developed in such a way in this particular text. It is how the exegesis in PRE has developed and potential influences on the selection of traditions in the composition of the text which is the subject of this paper.

The possibility that the early pseudepigraphical texts are a source for PRE is much commented upon, especially its relationship to the Books of Adam and Eve.<sup>4</sup> Targum Pseudo-Jonathan appears to share a number of points of

<sup>2</sup> See G. STEMBERGER, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*. Translated from the German by M. BOCKMUEHL (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996<sup>2</sup>), pp. 328-330; also the introductions in G. FRIEDLANDER, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer: The Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer the Great according to the text of the manuscript belonging to Abraham Epstein of Vienna* (New York, 1981<sup>4</sup>), M. PÉREZ FERNÁNDEZ, *Los Capítulos de Rabbi Eliezer*, (Valencia: Institución S. Jerónimo para la Investigación Bíblica, 1984), D. BÖRNER-KLEIN, *Pirke de-Rabbi Elieser: nach der Edition venedig 1544 unter beruecksichtigung der Edition Warschau 1852* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> D. BÖRNER-KLEIN, *Pirke de-Rabbi Elieser: nach der Edition venedig 1544 unter beruecksichtigung der Edition Warschau 1852* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2004). BÖRNER-KLEIN's work is based primarily upon the editions of Venice 1544 and Warsaw 1852, and is accompanied by a German translation. There are limited notes to the translation offering some parallel traditions in other texts.

<sup>4</sup> See especially FRIEDLANDER'S introduction where he lays emphasis on the dependency of PRE to earlier pseudepigraphical literature in FRIEDLANDER, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, pp. xxi-liii.

exegesis with PRE, but its dependency on PRE is disputed.<sup>5</sup> An alternative explanation for the development of the material in PRE has been suggested by J. Reubenstein, who argues that the narrative style of the text led to the possibility of expanding earlier rabbinic motifs.<sup>6</sup>

In this paper another way is posited, which should be seen as a supplement to previous theories rather than a replacement. The selection of traditions in PRE is of note for the large number of interpretations it contains that are also found in Christian exegesis. Indeed, Friedlander stated in his introduction that “very many interesting parallels to some of the teaching in our ‘Chapters’ are to be found in the writings of the Church Fathers. It would be advantageous to read the Patristic Literature in the light of Midrashic exegesis and interpretation and vice versa”.<sup>7</sup> This paper suggests that when the author(s) of PRE compiled the text, Christian exegesis influenced the work through the inclusion and development of ideas commonly known in Christian circles.

This influence is reflected in two main ways. First, through the inclusion of material that is new to rabbinic tradition and also found in Christian exegesis. This is especially relevant if the tradition is a popular idea in Christian literature, as the likelihood of awareness in Jewish circles is increased. Secondly, when there is material in PRE that represents the unique development of an earlier rabbinic tradition, the development of which suggests influence from Christian exegesis.

This paper will focus on four examples from PRE which reflect exegesis also found in sources of the Christian Orient, namely, Sammael’s role in the downfall of Adam and Eve, discussion over the descendants of Seth and Cain, Adam’s creation and burial at the Temple Mount and aspects of the construction of the ark. These examples are accompanied by citations from the Christian literature. Importantly, this is not meant to suggest direct influence or borrowing by the editor(s) of PRE from these particular texts. Rather, the Christian sources are representative of ideas current in the Christian Orient of which the editor(s) of PRE could have been aware.

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The contrary view is outlined by A. UROWITZ-FREUDENSTEIN, “Pseudepigraphical Support of Pseudepigraphical Sources: The case of Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer”, in J. C. REEVES, *Tracing the threads: studies in the vitality of Jewish pseudepigrapha* (Atlanta: Scholar’s Press, 1994), pp. 35ff.

<sup>5</sup> See in particular R. HAYWARD, “Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan”, *JJS* 42 (1991), pp. 215-246 against PÉREZ FERNÁNDEZ, *Los Capítulos de Rabbi Eliezer*, and A. SHINAN, “Dating Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Some More Comments”, *JJS* 41 (1990), pp. 57-61.

<sup>6</sup> J. RUBENSTEIN, “From Mythic Motifs to Sustained Myth: The Revision of Rabbinic Traditions in Medieval Midrashim”, *Harvard Theological Review* 89.2 (1996), pp. 131-159.

<sup>7</sup> FRIEDLANDER, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, p. liii.

### Sammael uses the serpent as an intermediary

PRE ch.13 and 14 describe the actions of the serpent in Paradise and the subsequent sin of Adam and Eve. Of particular interest in these passages is the role of Sammael in the downfall of humanity.

A wide number of traditions are attached to Sammael in later Jewish literature. He was originally one of the chief angels, and in PRE he is described as ‘the great prince in heaven’ but he fell from heaven and became the prince of demons. His name is often identified with that of the Satan or the angel of death.<sup>8</sup> His primary role is to be the prince of Rome, who brings accusations against Israel.<sup>9</sup>

PRE ch.13 opens by describing the contest between the ministering angels and Adam over the naming of the creatures of the world, which is a sign of wisdom.<sup>10</sup> Only Adam has the ability to name the creatures and so the angels are envious and desire to take steps against Adam. Sammael takes the lead in this action. He recognises that the serpent was skilled at doing evil, and so uses the serpent as his agent to bring about the downfall of humanity. In ch.14, God’s first punishment of the serpent is to cast Sammael and his company from heaven. Sammael is thus portrayed as an envious angel, who, because of his jealousy of Adam, used the serpent to tempt Eve, which led to him being cast from heaven.

והיה סמאל השר הגדול שבשמים וחיות [מארבע כנפים]  
 ושרפים משש כנפים וסמאל משתים עשרה כנפים לקח את הכת שלו וירד  
 וראה כל הבריות שברא הקב"ה ולא מצא [בהם] חכם להרע כנחש שנאמר  
 והנחש [היה] ערום מכל חית השדה והיה דמותו כמין גמל ועלה ורכב  
 עליו והתורה היתה צווחת ואומרת סמאל עכשו נברא העולם ועת למרוד  
 במקום כעת במרום תמריא רבון העולמים תשחק לסוס ולרכבו משל למה  
 הדבר דומה לאדם שיש בו רוח רעה וכל המעשים שהוא עושה מדעתו הוא  
 עושה וכל הדברים שהוא מדבר מדעתו הוא מדבר והלא אינו עושה אלא  
 מדעת רוח רעה שיש עליו כך הנחש כל מעשיו שעשה וכל דבריו שדבר לא  
 דבר ולא עשה אלא מדעתו של סמאל ועליו הכתוב אומר ברעתו ידחה רשע

<sup>8</sup> For example, see Deuteronomy Rabbah 11.10: ‘Sammael the wicked angel, the chief of all the accusing angels’ and ‘the angel of death’; also 3 Enoch 14.2 and 26.12 describe Sammael as ‘prince of the accusers’; Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Genesis 3:6 also describes Sammael as ‘the angel of death’.

<sup>9</sup> See G. STEMBERGER, “Samael und Uzza: Zur Rolle der Dämonen im späten Midrasch”, in A. LANGE et. al. (eds), *Die Dämonen* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), pp. 636-661 for analysis of Sammael traditions.

<sup>10</sup> This contest is well known in Rabbinic sources, for example, Genesis rabbah 17.4, Pesikta rabbati 14.9, Midrash on Psalms 8.2, Numbers rabbah 19.3.

«Sammael was the great prince, who was in heaven. The Living Creatures [had four wings] and the Seraphim had six wings, but Sammael had twelve wings. He took his company and descended and saw all the creatures which the Holy One, Blessed be He, had created, and he found [among them] none so clever to do evil as the serpent, as it is said, *'Now the serpent [was] more subtle than any beast of the field'* (Genesis 3:1). Its likeness was like a kind of camel, and he mounted and rode upon it. The Torah was crying out and saying: O Sammael! Now that the world is created, is it really the time to rebel against God? *'At that time she flapped away on high'* (Job 39:18). Lord of the World *'she will laugh at the horse and at its rider'* (Job 39:18). A parable, to what may the matter be compared? To a man in whom there was an evil spirit. All the deeds that he does, does he do through his own reasoning? All the words that he speaks, does he speak by his own reasoning? Does he not act only according to the reasoning of the evil spirit which is upon him? Thus it was with the serpent. All the deeds which it did, and all the words which it spoke, it did not speak and it did not do except by the intention of Sammael. Concerning him, the Scripture says, *'The wicked is cast down in his evil-doing'* (Proverbs 14:32).»

The role of Sammael in PRE builds upon traditions in pseudepigraphic and other early sources.<sup>11</sup> For example, Wisdom 2:24 ascribes the existence of death to the envious nature of the devil:

Φθόνῳ δὲ διαβόλου θάνατος εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον,  
πειράζουσιν δὲ αὐτὸν οἱ τῆς ἐκείνου μερίδος ὄντες.

«But through the devil's envy death entered the world, and those who belong to his party experience it.»

Furthermore, the Greek Life of Adam and Eve 16:1-5<sup>12</sup> describes the agency of the serpent for the Satan:

Καὶ ἐλάλησεν τῷ ὄφει ὁ διάβολος λέγων· ἀνάστα ἐλθὲ πρὸς με  
καὶ εἶπω σοι ῥῆμα ἐν ᾧ ὀφελήθης. τότε ἦλθεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ  
ὄφεις καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ διάβολος· ἀκούω ὅτι φρονιμώτερος εἶ  
ὑπὲρ πάντων τῶν θηρίων καὶ ὀμιλοῦσι σοι· ὅμως προσκυνεῖς

<sup>11</sup> See also 1 Enoch 69.6 where the angel Gadreel misleads Eve and brings death; 2 Enoch 29.4f ascribes the fall of Satanail to jealousy of God and 2 Enoch 31.2-8 describes how Satanail entered Paradise and corrupted Eve; the Latin Life of Adam and Eve 13.1 describes jealousy of Adam as the cause of the fall of the Satan; 3 Baruch 9.7 describes Sammael taking the serpent as a garment.

<sup>12</sup> Apocalypse Mosis 16, in: C.V. TISCHENDORF, *Apocalypses apocryphae* (Lipsia: Herm. Mendelssohn 1866).

τὸν ἐλαχιστότερον. διὰ τί ἐσθίεις ἐκ τῶν ζιζανίων τοῦ Ἀδάμ καὶ τῆς γυναικὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐχὶ ἐκ τοῦ καρποῦ τοῦ παραδείσου; ἀνάστα καὶ δεῦρο καὶ ποιήσωμεν αὐτὸν ἐκβληθῆναι διὰ τῆς γυναικὸς αὐτοῦ ἐκ τοῦ παραδείσου, ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐξεβλήθημεν διὰ αὐτοῦ. λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ ὄφις· φοβοῦμαι μήποτε ὀργισθῆ μοι κύριος. λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ διάβολος· μὴ φοβοῦ· μόνον γενοῦ μοι σκεῦος, κἀγὼ λαλήσω διὰ στόματός σου ῥῆμα ἐν ᾧ δυνήσῃ ἐξαπατήσαι αὐτόν.

«And the devil spoke to the serpent saying, “Rise up, come to me and I will tell you a word whereby you might have profit.” So, the serpent came to him. And the devil said to him: “I hear that you are wiser than all the beasts, and they converse with you but you prostrate yourself in front of one who is inferior to you. Why do you eat of Adam's and of his wife's weeds and not of the fruit of paradise? Rise up and come on and we will cause him to be cast out of paradise together with his wife, as we were cast out through him.” The serpent said to him, “I fear lest the Lord be wroth with me.” The devil says to him: “Do not be afraid, but only be my vessel and I will speak through your mouth words whereby you will be able to deceive him.”»

Although the idea that ‘the devil’ used the serpent is found in these early pseudepigraphic sources, the material in PRE is gathered together in a unique way. First, Sammael is explicitly named as the leader of the angels and presented as the architect in Eve's corruption. Secondly, Sammael is said to ride the serpent, perhaps a motif for his dominance over the creature, which provokes a rebuke from the Torah over his rebellion.<sup>13</sup> Finally, his reasons for using the serpent are elaborated upon and the fact that, with regard to the serpent, ‘all the deeds which it did, and all the words which it spoke, it did not speak and it did not do except by the intention of Sammael’ is emphasised.

Moreover, the agency of the serpent for Sammael is not a common idea in rabbinic literature, where the focus of exegesis is primarily the clever or wicked nature of the serpent and its superiority over other creatures<sup>14</sup>, its

<sup>13</sup> Job 39:18 is used to describe the Torah's response. כַּעֲשֵׂה בְּמַרְוֵם הַמָּרִיא ‘At that time she flapped away on high’ is understood to refer to the agitation of the Torah. רבון העולמים תשחק לבוס. רבון העולמים תשחק לבוס could translate either: Lord of the World ‘she will laugh at the horse and at its rider’ (following the original biblical quote) or Lord of the World ‘you will laugh at the horse and at its rider’ (understanding תשחק to be a 2ms rather than a 3fs). The first translation understands the Torah to be mocking Sammael's use of the serpent, whilst the second understands the Torah to declare that God will mock Sammael.

<sup>14</sup> For example, Genesis rabbah 20.5, Aboth de-Rabbi Nathan (A) 17b, Sanhedrin 59b.

prolific use of slander against God<sup>15</sup> and passion for Eve<sup>16</sup>. Indeed, the role of Sammael in the sin of Adam and Eve is found at the earliest in rabbinic literature in PRE.

G. Stemberger says of the tradition of Sammael in PRE ‘Diese Linie nimmt in der nachtalmudischen Tradition allein der Targum Pseudojonathan auf’.<sup>17</sup> However, despite the close similarities between PRE and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, the tradition in the Targum does not explicitly refer to the agency of the serpent. The text describes the actions of the serpent in Genesis 3:1-5, with Sammael appearing as the angel of death in Genesis 3:6.<sup>18</sup> Other later texts also contain a similar tradition to that in PRE, but again the intermediary role of the serpent is missing. For example, the Chronicle of Yerahmeel 22.2 describes how Sammael the angel of death falls from heaven after the contest with Adam over the naming of the creatures. He recognises the serpent’s ability, but the serpent acts alone. The Zohar 35b on Genesis 3:1 describes Sammael riding on the serpent and states that the ideal form of the serpent is the Satan. However the text states that the two of them talk with Eve and bring death into the world. All these factors point to the unusual nature of this tradition in PRE within Jewish thought.

Sammael as portrayed in PRE corresponds in many ways to Christian traditions about Satan.<sup>19</sup> The motif of Satan entering the serpent and using it as an intermediary for Eve’s seduction is very well known in the Syriac exegetical tradition and is mentioned in major works that deal with the creation of the world, such as Ephrem’s Hymns on Paradise, Narsai’s Homilies on Genesis, or Ishodad of Merv’s Commentary on Genesis.<sup>20</sup> Probably the closest parallel to the motifs described in PRE can be found in the Syriac *Cave of Treasures*. In the *Cave of Treasures* the fall of the angels takes place before the

<sup>15</sup> For example, Genesis rabbah 20.1, 20.2, Kallah rabbati 3.22, Deuteronomy rabbah 5.10, Midrash on Psalms 1.9, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Genesis 3:4.

<sup>16</sup> For example, Genesis rabbah 18.6, Shabbat 146a, Yevamoth 103b, Abodah Zarah 22b, Aboth de-Rabbi Nathan (A) 17a, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Genesis 4:1.

<sup>17</sup> STEMBERGER, ‘Samael und Uzza’, p. 641.

<sup>18</sup> As noted, the relationship between Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and PRE is much debated. See especially HAYWARD, ‘Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer’, pp. 222f.

<sup>19</sup> The name Samael (or Sammael) for the devil is also known in the Christian literature, cf. Apocryphal Acts of Andrew 24. It is also the name of the evil creator god in the Gnostic literature (NHC II.11.16; IV. 17.15; XIII.1; II.3.87.1; I.4.25; cf. IRENAEUS, Adv. haer. I.30.1; THEODORE BAR KONI, Lib. Schol. M. XI.78).

<sup>20</sup> See EPHREM, Hymn. Paradis. 15, 14. and Hymn. Epiph. 12, 2-3; NARSAI, Hom. Creat. I. 245-46; ISHODAD OF MERV, Comm. Gen 3.1; cf. SU-MIN, RI, *Commentaire de la Caverne des Trésors*, CSCO 581, Subs. 103, (Louvain, 2000), p. 163; A. TOEPEL, “Die Adam-und Seth-Legenden im syrischen *Buch der Schatzhöhle*”, (Tübingen, 2005, unpublished Ph.D. thesis), pp. 112ff. It is further developed in the *Kitab al-Magall* and in the *Book of the Bee*, which are both dependent on the *Cave of Treasures*. According to another quite common tradition in the Christian literature, the Satan or devil is identified with the serpent, cf. Apoc. 12:9; JUSTIN, Apol. 28.

actual Paradise Story. Satan's refusal to adore Adam because of his envy of him causes his fall in this text.<sup>21</sup> Accordingly, Satan is already a fallen angel when he seduces Eve.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, both PRE and the *Cave of Treasures* describe the jealousy of the 'devil' in connection with his use of the serpent to tempt Eve. The similarity between PRE ch.13 and the *Cave of Treasures* has also been noted by Su-Min Ri. He assumes with regard to this motif that PRE has been influenced by a tradition represented by that found in the *Cave of Treasures*: "Dans les littérature rabbiniques, le serpent qui, selon le récit biblique, séduit Ève, n'est jamais en relation avec Satan, mais il est avec Samaël dans le PRE, qui ont peut-être été influencés par une tradition apparentée à la *Caverne*".<sup>23</sup>

Thus, we have here an example of a tradition in PRE that was unique to rabbinic literature with its inclusion in PRE. Whilst, the use of the serpent by a Satanic figure is found in early pseudepigraphical sources, such as the Greek Life of Adam and Eve, the question remains, why did such a motif re-enter Jewish legend in PRE. Given the widespread popularity of the idea of the devil using the serpent as an intermediary in Christian sources, it seems likely that PRE may have incorporated such a tradition through knowledge of the Christian idea. This argument is also supported by G. Stemberger, who has stated 'Breit ist Samael erstmals in den um etwa 800 am ehesten in Palästina entstandenen Pirqe deRabbi Eliezer bezeugt, einem Text, der zahlreiche aus pseudepigraphen Schriften bekannte Traditionen aufgreift. Diese waren wohl kaum schon immer jüdisch verbreitet und nur zufällig in den klassischen rabbinischen Werken nicht belegt; viel näher liegt die Annahme, dass sie auf dem Umweg über christliche Tradenten und Schriften in das Judentum zurückgefunden haben'.<sup>24</sup>

### The descendants of Seth and Cain

Our second example is based on exegesis of Genesis 6:1-2, which describes the sons of God taking as wives the fair daughters of men.

Early Christian exegesis regarded Gen 6:1 to refer to angels of God.<sup>25</sup> This interpretation must have originated from a reading of an early version of the

<sup>21</sup> Cf. III.1-7. The same motif can be found also in NARSAI, *Hom.Creat.* I. 227-240, a work, which is considered to be a possible source for the *Cave of Treasures*, cf. A. TOEPEL, "Die Adam-und Seth-Legenden", p. 68f.

<sup>22</sup> This motif reflects 1En 69:6 where Eve is seduced by the fallen angel Gadreel; cf. also *The Gospel of James* 14.

<sup>23</sup> SU-MIN, RI, *Commentaire*, p. 162f.

<sup>24</sup> STEMBERGER, 'Samael und Uzza', p. 652.

<sup>25</sup> JUSTIN, *Apol.* 54; *Dial.* 5; IRENAEUS, *Adv.haer.* IV.36.4; IRENAEUS, *Dem.* 18; ATHENAGORAS, *Legation* 24.5-6; CLEMENT OF ALEX., *Strom.* V.10.2; PS.-CLEMENT, *Homilies* VIII.12-15; *Rec IV.26*; EUSEBIUS, *Praep.Ev.* 5.4.



Septuagint text, which referred to ‘angels of God’ and which is also attested in Philo, *De Gig* 4-5.<sup>26</sup> According to some exegetes, however, these were considered to be ‘fallen angels’, a reading that refers to the Enochic tradition on the fall of the angels and on the seduction of mankind by them (1En 7-8). M. Dexinger notes that „Die Väter haben in der Zeit vor dem 4. Jh die in der apokalyptischen Literatur beheimatete Engeldeutung bereitwillig übernommen“.<sup>27</sup>

From the 3<sup>rd</sup> century onwards, however, the majority of Christian exegetes would reject this identification and claim that the text refers to ‘sons of God’. Furthermore, they would argue that under this designation ‘sons of God’, the ‘sons of Seth’ or ‘Seth’s generation’ was meant, as it is said about Seth’s descendants: ‘Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time men began to call on the name of the LORD.’ (Gen 4:26).

There is a general agreement in scholarship that the identification of the ‘sons of God’ with the ‘Sethites’ is mentioned first in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century in Julius Africanus’ *Chronography*, which is preserved only fragmentarily in the *Chronography* of George Syncellus from the mid 8<sup>th</sup> century. According to Julius Africanus:

Πλήθους ἀνθρώπων γενομένου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ἄγγελοι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ θυγατράσιν ἀνθρώπων συνῆλθον. Μυθεύεται δὲ, ὡς οἶμαι, ἀπὸ τοῦ Σήθ, ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος, οἱ υἱοὶ Θεοῦ προσαγορεύονται, διὰ τοὺς ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ γενεαλογουμένους δικαίους τε καὶ πατριάρχας, ἄχρι τοῦ Σωτήρος· τοῦ δ’ ἀπὸ Κάιν ἀνθρώπους ἀποκαλεῖν σποράν, ὡς οὐδέτι θεῖον ἐσχηκότας διὰ ποιηρίαν γένους, καὶ διὰ τῆς φύσεως ἀνόμοιον, ἐπιμιχθέντων αὐτῶν, τὴν ἀγανάκτησιν ποιήσασθαι τὸν Θεόν. Εἰ δὲ ἐπ’ ἀγγέλων νοοῖτο ἔχειν τούτους, τοὺς περὶ μαγείας καὶ γοητείας, ἔτει δὲ ἀριθμῶν κινήσεως, τῶν μετεώρων ταῖς γυναιξὶ τὴν γνώσιν παραδεδωκέναι, ἀφ’ ὧν ἐποίησαν τοὺς παῖδας τοὺς γίγαντας, δι’ οὓς τῆς κακίας ἐπιγενομένης, ἔγνω πᾶν ἀφανίσαι ζώων γένος ὁ Θεὸς ἐν κατακλυσμῷ ἄπιστον.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> See M. HARL: “La leçon primitive du grec était ‘anges de Dieu’ (attestée notamment par Philon et les témoins antérieurs à Origène)”, *La Bible d’Alexandrie: La Genèse* (Paris: Cerf, 1994), p. 125.

<sup>27</sup> F. DEXINGER, *Sturz der Goettersöhne oder Engel vor der Sintflut?* (Vienna:Herder, 1966), p. 119.

<sup>28</sup> PG 10, c. 65. See A. KLIJN, *Seth in Jewish, Christian and Gnostic Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), p.61; J.B., GLENTHØJ, *Cain and Abel in Syriac and Greek Writers (4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries)*, CSCO 567 – Subs. 95 (Louvain: Peeters, 1997), p.227; SU-MIN, RI, *Commentaire*, p. 236.

«“When men multiplied on the earth, the angels of heaven came together with the daughters of men. I believe that, what the Spirit means, is that the descendants of Seth are called the sons of God because of the righteous men and the patriarchs who descended from him, even the Saviour Himself; but the descendants of Cain are called the generation of men, as they have nothing divine in them, because of the wickedness of their generation and the inequality of their nature, because they are a mixed people, and they have caused God’s indignation. But if it is assumed that these refer to angels, then these should be those who deal with magic and jugglery, who taught the women the knowledge about the motions of the stars, by whose power the giants were their children, by who wickedness came into being, so that God realised that the whole impious race of the living souls should perish in the deluge”.»

Julius Africanus must have based this idea on a version of a text that would have read ‘sons of God’. According to Klijn, this alternative understanding originated in a Syriac speaking environment, as the rendering ‘sons of God’ is also found in the Peshitta.<sup>29</sup> Julius Africanus, about whose biography very little is known, has allegedly indeed spent some time in Edessa.<sup>30</sup>

Church Fathers, such as John Chrysostom and others, argued that it should have been impossible for angelic incorporeal beings to have intercourse with corporeal, mortal human beings.<sup>31</sup>

Most probably, however, the implications of the ‘angels of God’ identified with the ‘sons of God’ would have been too delicate for Christological debates of that time. L.G. Wickham argues that the rejection of the view that the angels of God mixed with daughters of men ‘would not have come to dominate Christian exegesis, had it not been for 4<sup>th</sup> century debates about the deity of Christ’.<sup>32</sup> Significantly, this view was considered by some authors of the late 4<sup>th</sup> century to be heresy.<sup>33</sup> According to Julius Africanus, the generation of

<sup>29</sup> See KLIJN, *Seth*, p. 64. According to A. TOEPEL, “Die Adam-und Seth-Legenden”, however: “Es besteht daneben auch die Möglichkeit, dass Julius Africanus mit *Ant.* 1,67-73 vertraut war, wo von einer Sittenverderbnis der Sethiden in der siebten Generation berichtet wird, d.h. nach Gn Kap. 5 in der Generation von Noahs Vater Lamech, zu dessen Zeit sich der vermeintliche Engelsturz ereignete”, p. 164.

<sup>30</sup> See G. BROZIO, “Julius Africanus”, in S. DÖPP AND W. GEERLINGS, *Lexikon der antiken christlichen Literatur* (Freiburg i. Br. et al.: Herder, 1999), p. 363.

<sup>31</sup> JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Gen.Hom.* 22.7; BASIL OF SELEUCIA, *Orat VI: On Noah*, PG 85, c. 88; THEODORET OF CYRRHUS, *Quaest. XLVII*; ELISEE VARDAPET, *QuaestGen* 9.

<sup>32</sup> See L. W. WICKHAM, “The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men: Genesis VI.2 in Early Christian Exegesis”, *Oudtestamentische Studien* 19 (1974), p. 145.

<sup>33</sup> See PHILASTRIUS, *De Haer.* 108; cf. DEXINGER, *Sturz der Engelsoehne*, p. 106. Interestingly enough, in a homily on Noah’s Ark, which is preserved in Coptic under the name of Basil of Caesarea, the idea of the ‘angels’ is still mentioned as ‘angels who have become satans’ (ⲉⲎ

Seth was the one to be propagated after the flood and it is the generation from which the Saviour comes.<sup>34</sup> This view is based on the separation of humanity into the righteous generation of Seth and the wicked generation of Cain. The separation of the Sethites from the Cainites is treated quite extensively already by Josephus (Antiq. I.2) and it become a topos in the Patristic literature.<sup>35</sup>

Still, it is the intermarriage between the two generations that brings the subsequent corruption of the righteous generation, and finally causes the purifying flood to come upon the world, as it is emphasised particularly in the Patristic literature. Cain's descendants have to be corrupt and evil, since Cain is cursed by God (Gen 4:12) and the various inventions of his descendants lead to the corruption of mankind as well.<sup>36</sup> Cain is also according to some traditions, the son of the devil<sup>37</sup> as opposed to Seth, who is the only 'pure' son of Adam (cf. Gen 4:25; Gen 5:2).

The separation of the two generations is treated in the Christian literature not only from a moralistic point of view, but also geographically. The descendants of Seth should live opposite to Eden (where Adam fled after his expulsion from Paradise) but Cain's descendants live away from there, as Cain had to leave this place after he was cursed by God and built a city in Nod. Already, in Josephus, the children of Seth who are of a good disposition inhabit continually the same country, where they prosper (Ant I.3.67f.). According to Ephrem, the descendants of Seth lived at the foothill of the mountain of Eden, while Cain and his wicked descendants lived in the plain below or somewhere far from Paradise.<sup>38</sup> The 'fair' daughters of Cain then

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ΝΙΕΖΟΥΥ ΕΤΕΜΜΑΥ ΔΥΕΝΚΟΤ ΝΧΕ ΝΙΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΕΤΔΥΕΡ ΣΑΤΑΝΑΣ) implying thus they were 'fallen angels' according to the Enochic tradition, see "Homélie sur l'Arche de Noé, attribuée à Saint-Basile, évêque de Césarée", in H. DE VIS, *Homélie Coptes de la Vaticane*, Coptica. Consilio et Impensis Instituti Rask-Oersterdiani edita V (Hauniae: Glydendal, 1929), pp. 203-241.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. KLIJN, *Seth*, p. 62.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. ATHANASIOS OF ALEX., Quaest. LXV, PG 28, 740CD; CYRIL OF ALEX. Glaphyra, PG 69, c. 53C; ATHANASIOS SINAITA, *Viae Dux* IV. 38-42; XIII.8.71-74.

<sup>36</sup> In the Enochic and Gnostic traditions it is the 'fallen' angels that seduce the mankind – so the Church Fathers return to a more literal reading of the biblical text, while they reject any intervention of angelic powers in the human world.

<sup>37</sup> See 1John 3.8.12; CYRIL OF ALEX., Glaphyra, PG 69, c. 37-40 quotes John 8. 44 to maintain that Cain is the offspring of Satan (φημί δὴ τοῦ Κἄιν δίδωσι πατέρα, κάκείνου τὸν Σατανᾶν, τὸν τῆς ἀμαρτίας εὐρετήν), but in ebd. c. 33, he mentions Abel and Cain as the sons of Adam (Κἄιν καὶ Ἀβελ ἄμφω μὲν ἐγενέσθη ἐκ Ἀδάμ), see also EPHREM, Comm. Gen III.1, who mentions Cain and Abel as the sons of Adam. See A. GOLDBERG, "Kain: Sohn des Menschen oder Sohn der Schlange?", *Judaica* 25 (1969), pp. 203-221; V. APTOWITZER, *Cain und Abel in der Agada, in der Apokryphen, der hellenistischen und muhammedanischen Literatur* (Vienna/Leipzig: R. Löwit, 1922), p. 20.

<sup>38</sup> See EPHREM, Hymn Paradis. 1.10-11; Comm.Gen III.5; cf. *Cave of Treasures* VI.22ff.; cf. G.A. ANDERSON, "The Cosmic Mountain: Eden and Its Early Interpretation in Syriac

seduce the sons of Seth. According to some traditions, the seduction takes place with the help of music that the daughters of Cain attend to. Music is also an invention of the Cainites (cf. Gen 4:21).<sup>39</sup> The identification of the ‘daughters of Cain’ with the ‘daughters of men’ and their attractiveness becomes another topos in Christian literature.<sup>40</sup> The emphasis on the seductive nature of physical beauty, as well as of the music, points to a monastic milieu and it has led to various moralistic expositions by the Church Fathers,<sup>41</sup> and later Ecclesiastic writers like Euthychius of Alexandria (10<sup>th</sup> c.).<sup>42</sup>

Although A.J.Klijn, claims that the ideas about Seth in Christian literature were influenced by Jewish pseudepigrapha, such as 1Enoch, VitAd and the rabbinic literature<sup>43</sup>, the understanding of the mixing of the ‘sons of God’ with the ‘daughters of men’ as the mixing of the Sethites with the Cainites is a development that can be found up to Late Antiquity as such only in Christian literature.

In rabbinic literature, the formation of the generations of Seth and Cain are primarily discussed in exegesis of the genealogies of Genesis 4:17ff and 5:1ff, which list the descendants of Cain and Seth respectively. It is well known that the genealogies actually present a contradiction, as, in 4:18, Lamech the father of Noah is the descendant of Cain, whereas in 5:25 he is recorded as the descendant of Seth. The rabbis needed to explain this contradiction. Thus, the focus of rabbinic interpretation of Genesis 4:17ff is on the wicked nature of the descendants of Cain, whereas exegesis of Genesis 5:1ff teaches that the genealogy here signals the true descendants of Adam.<sup>44</sup> This reflects the

Christianity”, in G.A. ROBBINS, *Genesis 1-3 in the History of Exegesis* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988), pp. 186-222; cf. also GLENTHØJ, *Cain and Abel*, p. 279.

<sup>39</sup> According to SU-MIN, RI, *Commentaire*: “La chute des Séthites commence par la fabrication des instruments de musique qui sont, semble-t-il, catégoriquement condamnés, a qui suggère un contexte communautaire, soit qu’il s’agisse des synagogues après la destruction du Temple (70 ap. J.-C.) soit qu’il s’agisse des communautés chrétiennes des premiers siècles, où l’utilisation des instruments musicaux fut radicalement interdite”, p. 227.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. EPHREM, *Comm.Gen.* VI.2, THEODORET OF CYRRHUS, *Questions XLVII*, ANASTASIOS OF SINAI, *Viae Dux* IV.38-42.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. EPHREM, *Comm.Gen.* VI.2; JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Gen.Hom.* 22.9-11.

<sup>42</sup> See Juan Pedro MONFERRER-SALA, “Gn 6,1-4 a la luz de un fragmento exegético contenido en el *Kitāb al-ta’rīj al-ma’ymū’ā ‘alā al-tahqīq wa-l-tasdiq* de Eutiquio de Alejandría”, *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos*, 49 (2000), pp. 117-130.

<sup>43</sup> KLIJN, *Seth*, p. 77.

<sup>44</sup> For example, in exegesis of Genesis 4:17ff, Genesis rabbah 23.1 describes how the wicked (i.e. Cain and his descendants) think they will live forever, but will not live or rise for judgment. Genesis rabbah 23.2 outlines how Irad, Mehujael and Methushael will be wiped out and Lamech and his descendants are disowned, and Genesis rabbah 23.2-3 also describes the wicked deeds of the descendants of Cain. Alternatively, in exegesis of Genesis 5:1, Genesis rabbah 24.2-5 explains that Adam’s descendants are those written in the book of the generations of Adam. They are identified with those in the book of the living in Psalm 69:29,

widespread tradition that Seth became the ‘foundation of humanity’, based on Genesis 5:25ff where the genealogy indicates that Noah and his sons, and thus all humanity, are descended from Seth.<sup>45</sup>

The contradiction between the alternative genealogies of Seth and Cain are also discussed by Philo in *On the Posterity of Cain* 40-48. His solution is that people of wicked character deserve to be classed as a descendant of Cain, while righteous people should be classed as a descendant of Seth. For example, in discussion of the name ‘Lamech’, which he says means ‘humiliation’, he refers to two types of humiliation, one arising from weakness and one from perseverance. Philo draws a contrast between good and wicked in that those humiliated by perseverance are considered to be a descendant of Seth, whilst those humiliated by weakness are the descendants of Cain.

However, although the generations of Seth and Cain are discussed in interpretation of the genealogies, the contrast between the generations after this time, and particularly with reference to who constituted the generation of the flood, is not a common theme of exegesis in rabbinic literature, as outlined by Klijn.<sup>46</sup>

In exegesis of the genealogy in Genesis 5:1ff, Genesis rabbah 24.6 discusses to whom the genealogy in ch.4 could refer, given the true descendants of Adam are outlined in 5:1ff. The tradition refers to a separation between the descendants of Adam, and those who are not descended from Adam because they were destroyed by the flood. Those destroyed by the flood are Irad, Mehujael and Methushael, the descendants of Cain in Genesis 4:18. However, the generations of Seth and Cain as the component parts of the generation of the flood are not explicitly discussed, as the focus is on who are the true descendants of Adam. Genesis rabbah 26.7 also identifies the Nephilim of Genesis 6:4 with Irad, Mehujael and Methushael, but again with no reference to the descendants of Seth.<sup>47</sup>

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the twelve tribes will come from them and it is to them that the Torah will be given. Thus precedence is given to the descendants of Adam through Seth in Genesis 5:1ff rather than the alternative genealogy of Cain.

<sup>45</sup> The ancestry of Cain is further discredited by negating the paternity of Adam. This idea is based on the statement in Genesis 5:3 that Seth was in the likeness of Adam, the implication being that as Cain (and Abel) did not look like him, then he was not truly Adam’s son. In fact, Cain’s father is to be sought amongst the demons, as outlined in Genesis rabbah 24.6, and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Genesis 4:1-2 contains the tradition that Cain was the child of Eve and Sammael, implied in PRE ch.21. As such, Cain and his descendants would naturally inherit the wicked nature of their demonic ancestor. See also F. GARCIA MARTINEZ, “Samma’el in Pseudo-Jonathan and the Origin of Evil”, *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 30.2 (2004), pp 19-41.

<sup>46</sup> KLIJN, *Seth*, pp 1-12.

<sup>47</sup> See also the parallel tradition in Tanhuma Buber *Bereshit* 40.

PRE ch.22 is the first rabbinic source that unambiguously elaborates on the contrast between the descendants of Seth and Cain in the context of exegesis on Genesis 6:1-8 and who formed the generation of the flood. The text also describes in more detail than earlier sources the licentious nature of the generation of Cain.

רבי ישמעאל אומר משת עלו ונתיחסו כל הבריות וכל דורות הצדיקים ומקין עלו ונתיחסו כל דורות הרשעים והפושעים והמורדים שמרדו במקום ואמרו אין אנו צריכין לטיפת גשמים ולא לדעת את דרכיך שנאמר ויאמרו לאל סור ממנו רבי מאיר אומר גלוי בשר ערוה היו הולכין דורות של קין האנשים והנשים כבהמה ומטמאין בכל זנות איש באמו ובבתו ובאשת אחיו בגלוי וברחובות ביצר הרע ובמחשבות לבם שנאמר וירא יי' כי רבה רעת האדם רבי אומר ראו המלאכים שנפלו ממקום קדושתן מן השמים את בנות קין מהלכות גלויות בשר ערוה ומכחלות עיניהן כזונות ותעו אחריהן ולקחו מהן נשים שנאמר ויראו בני האלהים את בנות האדם

«Rabbi Ishmael says: From Seth arose and were descended all the people and all the generations of the righteous. From Cain arose and were descended all the generations of the wicked, and the sinners and the rebels, who rebelled against God, and they said: We do not need the drops of your rain, or to know your ways, as it is said, *'Yet they said to God, Depart from us'* (Job 21:14). Rabbi Meir says: The generations of Cain were walking about naked, the men and the women, like animals, and they defiled themselves with all kinds of immorality, a man with his mother or his daughter or the wife of his brother, in public and in the streets, through the evil inclination and through the thoughts of their heart, as it is said, *'And the Lord saw that the evil of man was great'* (Genesis 6:5). Rabbi says: The angels who fell from their holy place, from heaven, saw the daughters of Cain walking about naked, with their eyes painted like prostitutes, and they went astray after them, and took wives from amongst them, as it is said, *'And the sons of God saw the daughters of men'* (Genesis 6:2).»

The text contains a number of motifs found in earlier rabbinic tradition, but they are newly developed in the light of the contrast between the descendants of Seth and Cain.

First, PRE describes a clear separation between the righteous generation of Seth and the wicked generation of Cain, who rebelled against God. The use of Job 21 to describe the rebellion of the generation of the flood is very common in rabbinic literature. In this broader tradition, the crimes of the people are listed based on Job 21, including the fact that the people are so arrogant that they declare they do not need God to send rain because the earth already

produces its own moisture.<sup>48</sup> As a result, God decides to punish them through the means of their rebellion, i.e. through water.<sup>49</sup> However, PRE is the first text where the tradition is used to refer to the rebellion of the descendants of Cain in particular.

Secondly, the text emphasises that the two generations followed a different way of life especially with regard to moral practice. In particular, the seductive nature of the 'daughters of Cain' is highlighted, and they are said to walk about naked and defile themselves through sexual immorality. Sexual immorality as the primary sin of the generation of the flood is a widespread rabbinic tradition.<sup>50</sup> However, none of these sources from the broader tradition discuss this topic in relation to the 'daughters of Cain'.

Thirdly, the sexual immorality is what led to the temptation of the angels, based on Genesis 6:2 'And the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair' thus identifying the 'daughters of Cain' with the 'daughters of men'.<sup>51</sup>

All of these points can be found in the exegesis of Christian literature on the subject of the generation of the flood, as elaborated upon above. Characteristically, the *Cave of Treasures* describes the separation between the generation of Seth and the 'murdering' generation of Cain (VI.22-24). This can be compared to PRE, which describes the generation of Seth as righteous and the generation of Cain as wicked. Secondly, the seductive and lascivious nature of the daughters of Cain, who are identified with the 'daughters of men', is also emphasised in the *Cave of Treasures* (XII). Similarly, the identification of the 'daughters of men' in Genesis 6:2 with the daughters of Cain's generation can also be found in PRE, along with a description of the daughters of Cain walking about naked and practicing sexual immorality.

Despite the close parallels to Christian literature on the above motifs, PRE identifies the sons of God as the angels, which is in direct opposition to the Christian view held after the third century that such an identification was unacceptable. Interestingly, the association of angels and sons of God is also

<sup>48</sup> This is based on Genesis 2:6: 'And a mist went up from the land and watered all the surface of the ground'.

<sup>49</sup> See T. Sotah 3:6-9, Sifre Deuteronomy 43, Leviticus rabbah 4.1 Pesikta de-Rav Kahana 26.2 Ecclesiastes rabbah 2.2 S1, Pesikta rabbati 42.8, Tanhuma Yelammedenu *Beshallah* 12 and Numbers rabbah 9.24.

<sup>50</sup> For example, Leviticus rabbah 23.9, Genesis rabbah 26.5, Tanhuma Buber *Bereshit* 33, Tanhuma Yelammedenu *Bereshit* 12.

<sup>51</sup> Targum Pseudo-Jonathan parallels PRE in its description of the wickedness of the 'daughters of men' in Genesis 6:2, but does not refer to the daughters of Cain. Later sources that contain a similar tradition include: the Chronicle of Yerahmeel 24.10-12, which states that the daughters of men are the seed of Cain and the sons of God are the seed of Seth, and the introduction to Aggadat Bereshit in MS Oxford 2340, which identifies the sons of God with the sons of Cain.

criticised in Jewish literature. For example, Genesis rabbah 26.5 outlines how R. Simeon b. Yohai stated that the בני האלהים were the sons of judges (דיינים) and cursed those who called them the sons of God. Targum Neofiti also identifies the בני האלהים as the sons of judges. Targum Onkelos refers to the sons of the great ones (רברביא), as does Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, but this text also mentions the fallen angels Shemhazai and Azael in connection with them. It seems likely that, in this aspect of the tradition, PRE is following the widespread identification of the sons of God as angels found in early Jewish sources.<sup>52</sup>

In our second example, it is clear that PRE uses earlier rabbinic tradition, such as the use of Job 21 and the description of sexual immorality, to describe the generation of the flood. The text also appears to have been influenced by early pseudepigraphical texts that identify the sons of God with the angels. However, we have no direct parallel for the description of the generation of the flood in the terms of the contrast between the generations of Seth and Cain in rabbinic sources earlier than PRE. Indeed, Klijn has noted, ‘In PRE for the first time, we read that the Sethites were righteous and the Cainites were wicked, the two generations being compared with each other’.<sup>53</sup> However, Klijn goes on to say that ‘All this, however, seems to be a simple development of already known traditions’.<sup>54</sup> It is true that PRE builds on earlier Jewish tradition, as already noted. However, the motif as we have it in PRE is unparalleled in earlier sources, particularly with regard to the contrast between the generations of Seth and Cain in the context of Genesis 6:1-8, and the identification between the ‘daughters of men’ and the ‘daughters of Cain’. If we consider that this motif is found in different versions in various Greek and Syriac Christian sources from the fourth to the seventh century, while it is only found explicitly first of all in PRE, there is a strong possibility that we have here an influence of the Christian exegetical tradition on PRE.

### **The Cave of Machpelah and the Temple Mount**

The association between Adam and the Temple Mount begins in PRE ch.12, which describes how Adam was created on the site of the Temple before he was brought into Eden to study the Torah and commandments.<sup>55</sup> This is reiterated in ch.20, where Adam is thrown out of Eden and driven to Mount

<sup>52</sup> For example, Jubilees 5:1, 1 Enoch 6-16, 19 and 64, 2 Enoch 18 and Josephus *Antiquities* 1.3.1. See P. J. ALEXANDER, “The Targumim and Early Exegesis of “Sons of God” in Genesis 6”, *JJS* 23 (1972), pp. 60-71 for a full outline and discussion of this material.

<sup>53</sup> KLIJN, *Seth*, 12.

<sup>54</sup> KLIJN, *Seth*, 12.

<sup>55</sup> See also Sifre Deuteronomy 41, Midrash Tannaïm 22, Targum Pseudo-Jonathon Genesis 2:15 and similarly Genesis rabbah 16.5.



Moriah, which is identified as the site of the Temple, the place from which he was originally taken.<sup>56</sup> Mount Moriah is identified with the site of the Temple as early as 2 Chronicles 3:1 and repeated throughout Jewish tradition.<sup>57</sup> The creation of Adam on the site of the temple is also a fairly widespread tradition in rabbinic sources.<sup>58</sup> In PRE, the site of the Temple is also identified as the centre of the earth.<sup>59</sup>

The tradition in PRE ch.20 then takes an unexpected turn. Whilst on Mount Moriah, Adam reflects on the fact of his future death and decides to build a tomb for himself, which is identified as the Cave of Machpelah.

ישב אדם ודרש בלבו ואמר  
 כי ידעתי מות תשיבני ובית מועד לכל חי אמר אדם עד  
 שאני בעולם אבנה לי בית מלון לרבצי חוץ להר המוריה וחצב ובנה לו בית  
 מלון לרבצו אמר אדם מה הלוחות שהן עתידין להכתב באצבעו של הקב"ה  
 ועתידין מימי הירדן לברוח מפניהם וגופי שגבל בשתי ידיו ורוח נשמת  
 פיו נפח באפי [על אחת כמה וכמה] ולאחר מותי יקחו את עצמותי ויעשו להם  
 עבודה זרה אלא אעמיק אני את ארוני למטה מן המערה ולפנים מן המערה  
 לפיכך נקראת מערת המכפלה שהיא כפולה ושם הוא נתון אדם וחיה אברהם  
 ושרה יצחק ורבקה יעקב ולאח ולפיכך נקראת קרית ארבע שנקברו בה  
 ארבע זוגות ועליהם הכתוב אומר יבוא שלום ינוחו על משכבותם הלך נכחו

«Adam sat and searched in his heart, and said: 'For I know that you will bring me to death and to the house appointed for all living' (Job 30:23). Adam said: While I am still in the world, I will build for myself a lodging for my resting place (in death) outside Mount Moriah. So he hewed and built for himself a lodging for his resting place. Adam said: If regarding the tablets, which in the future will be written by the finger of the Holy One, Blessed be He, the waters of the Jordan will flee before them, [how much more so] will this be the case with my body which He kneaded with His two hands, and the spirit of the breath of His mouth He blew into my nostrils. After my death they will take my bones, and they will make for themselves an image for idolatry; but I

<sup>56</sup> This interpretation combines exegesis of Genesis 3:19 'In the sweat of your face you will eat bread, until you return to the ground, for from it you were taken. For dust you are and to dust you will return' and the tradition of the creation of Adam on the Temple site.

<sup>57</sup> For example, Josephus, *Antiquities* 1.13.2, Genesis Rabbah 56.10, Erubin 19a, Midrash on Psalms 92.6.

<sup>58</sup> For example, Y.Nazir 7.2 states that God took a spoonful of dirt from the place of the altar, and used it to create the first man. See also Genesis rabbah 14.8, Eliyahu Zuta 2.173 and Midrash on Psalms 92.6. Cf. Louis GINZBERG, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia, Penn: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1946), V, p. 126.

<sup>59</sup> PRE ch.11 describes the creation of Adam: במקום מהור היה בטבור הארץ היה "it was in a pure place, it was at the navel of the earth". Then PRE ch.12 identifies the מקום מהור "pure place" with המקדש "the place of the Temple".

will put my coffin deep down within the cave and forwards within the cave. Therefore it is called the Cave of Machpelah, because it is doubled (in number of chambers). Adam was put there, and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah. Therefore it is called ‘the city of four’, because four pairs were buried in it, and concerning them Scripture says, *‘He enters into peace; they rest upon their beds, each one that walks in his uprightness’* (Isaiah 57:2).»

In Genesis 23:1ff Abraham purchases the Cave of Machpelah, located near Mamre or Hebron, for a tomb and Genesis 49:29-32 records that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were buried there with their wives. A number of rabbinic traditions teach that Adam and Eve were also buried in the Cave of Machpelah. Genesis rabbah 58.4 teaches that the patriarchs and their wives were buried at Kiriath Arba, and 58.9 states that the name Machpelah signifies that God bent Adam double and buried him within it.<sup>60</sup> Erubin 53a teaches that Mamre was called Kiriath Arba ‘city of four’ because four couples were buried there, i.e. Adam and Eve and the patriarchs (Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah).<sup>61</sup> This tradition also refers to two views on the nature of the Cave, again based on exegesis of its name.<sup>62</sup> First, the cave consisted of two chambers, one within the other, and, secondly, the cave consisted of a lower and an upper chamber. Sotah 13a describes the contest between Esau and Jacob over the Cave of Machpelah. In this tradition, Mamre and Hebron are identified with Kiriath Arba, which is again so named because Adam and Eve and the patriarchs are buried there. Whilst in Baba Batra 58a, R. Bana’ah was marking out graves where there were dead bodies so unclean areas were identified. He goes to the cave of Abraham and also to the cave of Adam. This is identified as either the inner and outer cave of Machpelah, or the upper and lower cave, as referred to in Erubin 53a. The location of the cave is not mentioned in this tradition.

The pseudepigraphic sources also discuss the burial of Adam based on exegesis of Genesis 3:19. For example, the Greek Life of Adam and Eve 40.1-42.2 describes the creation and burial of Adam in the same place, but this is on the site in paradise where God had taken the dust to make Adam. Alternatively, Jubilees 3:32 states that when Adam and his wife were expelled from the Garden, they went to the land of ‘Elda, which is identified as the land of their creation. In 4:29, Adam is also said to be buried in the land of his

<sup>60</sup> This is based on exegesis of the name מַכְפֵּלָה, which means “doubling” or “coupling” from the root כָּפַל “double” or “double over”.

<sup>61</sup> In discussing the location of the cave, Genesis 23:19 situated Mamre and Hebron close to each other, and Kiriath Arba is identified with Hebron a number of times in the Bible at Genesis 23:2, 35:27, Joshua 14:15, 15:13, 15:54, 20:7, 21:11 and Judges 1:10.

<sup>62</sup> See note 60 above.

creation. Thus, in Jubilees, Adam was created and buried in the land of 'Elda, a place separate from paradise, from which he was taken at creation, returned after his expulsion and where he died.

Thus, PRE uses earlier tradition to describe the tomb of Adam at Machpelah, including exegesis of the name Machpelah, the double nature of the cave and the fact that four couples were buried there. However, the tradition of Adam and the cave in ch.20 contains some significant developments.<sup>63</sup>

First, Adam is said to have built the tomb himself. The Hebrew states:

והצב ובנה לו בית מלון לרבצו 'So he hewed and built for himself a lodging for his resting place'. It is ambiguous whether Adam has actually hollowed out the cave himself or merely a place within the cave for his body to rest, but either way this is a significant development of earlier tradition.

Secondly, Adam reflects on the special nature of his body, as it is created by God's own hands. As such, he is concerned that his bones will become an object of idolatry, and to avoid this, he will cause his coffin to be buried deep in the Cave of Machpelah. The idea that Adam's bones would become an object of idolatry is first found in PRE, but can be compared with Jacob's fear that incense would be burned before his coffin in Genesis rabbah 96.<sup>64</sup> The Cave of Machpelah is a double cave as indicated by the name, and so was particularly appropriate for hiding Adam's body, as it could be placed in the inner cave.

Finally, in PRE the Cave of Machpelah is located חוץ להר המוריה 'outside of Mount Moriah', that is, the site of the Temple. Thus, Adam was created and buried in the same area. This follows the same argumentation as the pseudepigraphic sources based on Genesis 3:19, but the location of the creation and burial site is not the Temple Mount in the pseudepigraphic texts. This motif in PRE is also in direct contrast to the other rabbinic sources, which retain the location of the Cave as identified in Genesis 23.

These three points demonstrate a considerable development of rabbinic tradition in PRE. Significantly, the location of the Cave of Machpelah at the Temple Mount, and as such the creation and burial of Adam in the same area, is also found in Christian sources.

According to certain Christian traditions, Adam was buried in Golgotha (that is, in Jerusalem) and interestingly enough they refer to 'Jewish traditions'

<sup>63</sup> See also PRE ch. 36. Here, Abraham enters the Cave of Machpelah to find Adam and Eve surrounded by candles and a sweet smell. In this tradition, the burial of Adam and Eve in the Cave of Machpelah is the reason why Abraham chooses this site for a burial place. Cf. Zohar 127a on Genesis 23:1.

<sup>64</sup> See also Tanhuma Buber *Wa-yehi* 12.5 and Tanhuma Yelammedenu *Wa-yehi* 12.3.

in support of that belief.<sup>65</sup> This idea also apparently reflects an exegetical approach to Gen 3:19 “In the sweat of your face you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; dust you are and to dust you will return”, so that the place where Adam was created would also be the place of his burial.<sup>66</sup> Adam’s tomb is further supposed to be in the middle of the earth, that is, the place of Christ’s crucifixion. If the Cross is situated in the middle of the Earth, this would imply that Jerusalem is located in the middle of the earth, but for the Christian authors the exact spot is not the Temple but Golgotha.

Accordingly, Adam was buried, where Christ has died. The redemptive role of Christ’s crucifixion regarding Adam’s and subsequently also mankind’s fall, would be thus emphasised. This idea, which was found first in Origen, was developed from the sixth century onwards to refer to the cult of Adam’s tomb in Jerusalem.<sup>67</sup>

Characteristically, in the Syriac *Cave of Treasures* (MsOr. V.10-11)<sup>68</sup> we read:

ܘܗܝܠܝܝܢ ܝܗܘܢ ܕܘܨܝܢ ܘܕܘܨܝܢ ܘܕܘܨܝܢ ܘܕܘܨܝܢ ܘܕܘܨܝܢ  
ܘܕܘܨܝܢ ܘܕܘܨܝܢ ܘܕܘܨܝܢ ܘܕܘܨܝܢ ܘܕܘܨܝܢ ܘܕܘܨܝܢ ܘܕܘܨܝܢ  
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«But command your sons, and order them to embalm your body after your death with myrrh, cassia, and ashes. And they shall put you in this

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Ps.-Athanasius, *De passione et cruce domini*, PG 28, c. 208: “Ὅθεν οὐδὲ ἀλλαχοῦ πάσχει, οὐδὲ εἰς ἄλλον τόπον, σταυροῦται ἢ εἰς τὸν Κρανίου τόπον, ὃν Ἑβραίων οἱ διδάσκαλοι φασὶ τοῦ Ἀδάμ εἶναι τάφον. Ἐκεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν μετὰ τὴν κατάραν τεθάφθαι διαβεβαιοῦνται. Ὅπερ εἰ οὕτως ἔχει, θαυμάζω τοῦ τόπου τὴν οικειότητα. Ἐδεῖ γὰρ τὸν Κύριον, ἀνανεῶσαι θέλοντα τὸν πρῶτον Ἀδὰμ, ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ τόπῳ παθεῖν, ἵνα ἐκείνου λύων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, ἀπὸ παντὸς αὐτὴν ἄρη τοῦ γένους· καὶ ἐπειδὴ ἤκουσεν ὁ Ἀδάμ· Γῆ εἶ, καὶ εἰς γῆν ἀπελεύση, διὰ τοῦτον πάλιν ἐκεῖ τέθειται, ἵνα τὸν Ἀδὰμ εὐρών ἐκεῖ, λύση μὲν τὴν κατάραν, ἀντὶ δὲ τοῦ· Γῆ εἶ, καὶ εἰς γῆν ἀπελεύση, (...) λοιπὸν εἴπη· Ἄναστα καὶ δεῦρο, ἀκολούθει μοι, ἵνα μηκέτι τεθῆς ἐπὶ γῆς, ἀλλ’ ἐν οὐρανοῖς ἀνέλθης.

<sup>66</sup> This exegetical approach is perhaps related to Jubilees 4:29: “And at the close of the nineteenth jubilee, in the seventh week in the sixth year [930 A.M.] thereof, Adam died, and all his sons buried him in the land of his creation, and he was the first to be buried in the earth”. The land of Adam’s creation would of course interpret ‘the earth, he was created from’ as the actual land. Jubilees will reflect so the later identification in the literature of Adam’s tomb and the place where he was created, that is in Jerusalem, cf. SU-MIN, RI, *Commentaire*, p. 179.

<sup>67</sup> ORIGEN, *Comm. in Mt 27:32*, PG 13, c. 1777; see J. JEREMIAS, *Golgotha, ΑΙΤΕΛΟΣ*, Archiv für neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte und Kulturkunde 1 (Leipzig: E. Pfeiffer, 1926), p. 34.

<sup>68</sup> See SU-MIN, RI, *La Caverne des Trésors. Les Deux Recensions Syriennes*, CSCO 486, Script. Syr. 207 (Louvain: Peeters, 1987), pp. 38-40.

cave, wherein I am making you to dwell this day, until the time when your expulsion shall take place from the regions of Paradise to that earth which is outside it. And whosoever shall be left in those days shall take your body with him, and shall deposit it on the spot, which I shall show him, in the centre of the earth; for in that place redemption will be affected for you and for all your children.»

Thus, Adam is buried on the ‘top of the mountain’ in the Cave, which is called the ‘Cave of Treasures’,<sup>69</sup> but after the flood his body is carried away to be buried in the centre of the earth, which is the place where the Cross of Christ stands, that is on Golgotha.<sup>70</sup> This is further identified in the *Cave of Treasures* with Mount Moriah (XXIX.3-8)<sup>71</sup>.

Furthermore, in the *Cave of Treasures*, Adam is created in the place where the Cross of Christ would stand. Implicitly, therefore, Adam is created in Jerusalem.<sup>72</sup> This would correspond to the rabbinic tradition, mentioned above, in which Adam was created in the place of the Temple that is in the middle of the Earth.<sup>73</sup> Characteristically, the *Cave of Treasures* is also the site where Adam’s descendants minister and offer bloodless sacrifices. According to Su-Min Ri, the Cave can be identified with the Temple, and it is also called in the text, the ‘House of Prayer’.<sup>74</sup>

The tradition in the *Cave of Treasures* is very close to the description of Adam’s burial found in PRE. In both texts there is reference to the burial of Adam at Mount Moriah, which was, as already noted, identified with the Temple Mount, the centre of the earth where it was believed that Adam was created. This idea is found first of all in rabbinic sources explicitly in PRE. This tradition is combined with the more common idea that Adam and Eve were buried in the ‘Cave’ of Machpelah.

<sup>69</sup> As it occurs in the Arabic *Kitāb al-Mağāll* Cf. J. P. MONFERRER-SALA, *Apócrifos árabes cristianos*. Introducción, traducción y notas J.P. Monferrer, «Pliegos de Oriente» (Madrid: Trotta, 2003), pp. 71 and 79.

<sup>70</sup> See B. BAGATTI, “Note sull’iconografia di ‘Adamo sotto il Calvario’ (Tavv. 1-12)”, *Liber Annuus XXVII* (1977), pp. 5-32. The *topos* of the flood is also found in the Muslim traditions, see J. P. MONFERRER-SALA, “Fragments from the Testament of Adam in Some Arabic Islamic Sources”, *Journal of Medieval and Islamic History* 4 (2004-5), pp. 16-17.

<sup>71</sup> See R. SCROGGS, *The last Adam. A study in Pauline anthropology* (Philadelphia, 1966), pp. 51-52.

<sup>72</sup> The tradition that Adam was explicitly created in Jerusalem can be found in only two Mss of the east Syrian group of the *Cave of Treasures*. Accordingly, it is considered to be a later inserted tradition in the text. cf. SU-MIN, RI, *Commentaire*, p. 148.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Jubilees 8:19, where is mentioned that Mount Zion is in the middle of the earth.

<sup>74</sup> See SU-MIN, RI, *Commentaire*, p. 179. In Christian tradition it is Jesus who first calls the Temple ‘the House of Prayer’ (Mt 21:13, Mk 11:17; Lk 19:46). In the Latin Life of Adam and Eve 30.2-3 when Adam is about to die, his sons are also gathered ‘in the house of prayer, where usually they worship the Lord God’.

Thus, PRE has combined the rabbinic motifs of the creation of Adam on the Temple site and his burial in the Cave of Machpelah, with exegesis of Genesis 3:19, also found in the pseudepigraphic tradition, of the creation and burial of Adam in the same place. As such, the motif of Adam's burial is developed to locate the Cave at Mount Moriah, thus moving the location of the Cave from Mamre and Hebron/Kiriath Arba to the site of the Temple. This idea was unique to rabbinic literature with its inclusion in PRE, and so the question as to what prompted the development of this tradition is raised. A number of Christian sources locate the tomb of Adam at Jerusalem, particularly Golgotha, the centre of the earth. Also, the *Cave of Treasures* was itself identified with the Temple and is described as the place of Adam's burial. Given the widespread popularity of these ideas in Christian circles, the possibility that PRE may have developed and included this tradition through the influence of the Christian motif should be considered.

### The construction of the ark

The final example in this paper is the description of the construction of the ark in PRE. This is based on Genesis 6:14-16, which describes the material from which the ark should be made, its dimensions and structure.

PRE ch.23 opens with God's instruction to Noah regarding the ark in Genesis 6:15 'and this is how you shall make it'. This is followed by a description of the number of rooms on each side of the ark, and the location of the water tanks and storerooms for the food. The text concludes that there were three hundred and sixty-six rooms for creatures on each level. PRE then describes who lived on the three storeys of the ark.

וזה אשר תעשה אותה תני רבי שמעיה באצבע  
 הראהו הקב"ה לנח ואמר לו כזה וכזה תעשה לתבה מאה וחמשים קנים  
 אורך ימינה של תיבה ומאה וחמשים אורך בצד שמאלה שלשים ושלשה קנים  
 בצד רחבה בדפנותיה לפנייה ושלשים ושלשה בדפנותיה לאחריה ועשרה  
 בתים בתווך הרי אלו לאוצרות של מאכל וחמש אפטניות בצד אורך ימינה  
 של תיבה וחמש אפטניות בצד אורך שמאלה של תיבה והמכניסים אמת  
 המים נפתחים ונסגרים וכן ביציע התחתונה וכן במעלה שניה וכן במעלה  
 שלישית מדור כל בהמה וחיה ביציע התחתנה מדור לכל העופות ביציע  
 השניה מדור שקצים ורמשים ובני אדם ביציע השלישית מבאן אתה למד  
 (ששלש מאות וששה ושלשים מיני בהמה) ושלש מאות וששה ושלשים מיני עופות  
 בארץ ושלש מאות וששה ושלשים מיני שקצים בארץ וכן ביציע התחתונה  
 וכן ביציע השניה וכן במעלה שלישית שנאמר תחתים שנים ושלשים תעשה

«*And this is how you shall make it* (Genesis 6:15). Rabbi Shemiah taught: The Holy One, blessed be he, showed it to Noah with a finger, and said to him: "Like this and like this you shall make the ark". One

hundred and fifty rooms were along the length on the right of the ark and one hundred and fifty were along the length of the left side. Thirty-three rooms were across its width on its front sides, and thirty-three were on its sides at the back. Ten rooms were in the middle and these were for the storerooms of food. Five protected cisterns were on the side of the right length of the ark and five protected cisterns were on the side of the left length of the ark, and the entrances of the water pipes were opening and closing. So it was in the lowest compartment, and so it was on the second level, and so it was on the third level. The dwelling of all the animals and beasts was in the lowest compartment. The dwelling of all the birds was in the second compartment. The dwelling of abominable things and reptiles and people was in the third compartment. From this you learn [that three hundred and sixty-six kinds of animals] and three hundred and sixty-six kinds of birds were on the earth, and three hundred and sixty-six kinds of abominable things were on the earth. So it was in the lowest compartment, and so it was in the second compartment and so it was on the third level, as it is said, *'With lower, second and third levels you shall make it'* (Genesis 6:16).»

The construction of the ark is widely discussed in rabbinic literature. The ark was either built of oak or cedar.<sup>75</sup> It consisted of a number of chambers or compartments.<sup>76</sup> The ark was lit either through a skylight, or from the light of precious stones.<sup>77</sup> The ark was shaped like a pyramid.<sup>78</sup> Also, the construction of the ark is understood to show how the Torah teaches practical knowledge.<sup>79</sup>

Certain aspects of earlier tradition are included in PRE, namely the discussion over the number of rooms in the ark and the means of lighting the ark. However, the key point of interest here is the description in PRE ch.23 of the different levels of the ark and who was said to inhabit each level. The different levels are first mentioned in Genesis 6:16, but without reference to their occupants. In PRE, the lowest level of the ark was the place for all the

<sup>75</sup> Interpretations are based on explanation of the word נִיפֵר in Genesis 6:14. See Sanhedrin 108b and Genesis rabbah 31.8.

<sup>76</sup> Genesis rabbah 31.11 states either 330 or 900 compartments. PRE ch.23 describes 366 rooms.

<sup>77</sup> An explanation of צִדְדֵי in Genesis 6:16. Sanhedrin 108b describes jewels that give light as though it was the middle of the day, PRE ch.23 describes a jewel suspended in the ark which acted as a lamp, and Genesis rabbah 31.11 refers to both a skylight and a precious stone. It also recounts the story that Noah had a precious stone that he hung up, and when it was dim it signified day and when it was bright it signified night.

<sup>78</sup> See Genesis rabbah 31.11, which, in an interpretation of Genesis 6:16, states that if it was finished upward to a cubit, it must have been tapered.

<sup>79</sup> Genesis rabbah 31.10 states that the instructions in Genesis 6:14-16 outline how to build a ship, and 31.11 teaches that, on the basis of the description of the ark, rooms of a size of 10 cubits square should have a door.

cattle and animals, the second level was for all the birds, and the third level was for the reptiles and abominable things along with Noah and his family.

A description of the different levels of the ark is also found in Sanhedrin 108b and Genesis rabbah 31.11.

Sanhedrin 108b<sup>80</sup> states:

תחתים שנים ושל ישים תעשה  
תנא תחתים לזבל אמצעים לבהמה על יונים לאדם

«*With lower, second, and third levels you shall make it*’ A Tanna taught: The bottom level was for the manure; the middle was for the animals; and the top was for people.»

Genesis rabbah 31.11<sup>81</sup> states:

תחתים שניים ושל ישים תעשה  
תחתים לזבלים ושניים לו ולבניו ולטהורים ושל ישים לממאים ויש  
שמחל יפים תחתים לממאים שניים לו ולבניו ולטהורים העיל יונים לזבלים

«*With lower, second and third levels you shall make it*’: The bottom level was for manure, the second was for himself and his children and the clean animals, and the third was for the unclean animals. There are some who exchange it: The bottom level was for the unclean animals, the second was for himself and his children and the clean animals, the top was for the manure.»

The main concern of the tradition in Genesis rabbah is to make a separation between clean and unclean animals. This is found in both of the interpretations it offers, along with a level for refuse. Also, in both interpretations, Noah and his family share the middle level of the ark with the clean animals. Sanhedrin 108b agrees with the first interpretation in Genesis rabbah regarding the refuse on the lowest level. Sanhedrin 108b also agrees with PRE in placing people on the highest level. However, the tradition in PRE is generally quite different to these texts. First, reptiles and abominable things, which are not mentioned in earlier tradition, are placed with people on the highest level. Secondly, birds, which are also not mentioned in earlier tradition, are placed on the second level. Finally, cattle and beasts are placed on the lowest level. PRE may be alluding to the separation of clean and unclean animals, as also found in

<sup>80</sup> From the edition of I. EPSTEIN et. al., *Talmud bavli* (London, 1960-).

<sup>81</sup> From the edition of J. THEODOR AND H. ALBECK, *Bereschit rabba: mit kritischem Apparat und Kommentar* (Berlin, 1912-1927; reprinted Jerusalem, 1965).



Genesis rabbah, but this is not clearly illustrated. There is a separation of abominable things, birds and animals, but no further distinction is made within each category of creature. More likely, the creatures mentioned here alludes to the description of those in the ark in Genesis 6:20, namely, birds, animals and creeping things.<sup>82</sup>

The scheme presented in PRE is particularly striking as it contains the same outline as in part of the patristic literature, namely in Ephrem, Hymns on Paradise 2.12, in the Syriac *Cave of Treasures* and interestingly enough in Hippolytus's Fragment on the Pentateuch.<sup>83</sup> In spite of the uncertain provenance of these latter fragments, the fragments that deal with the Flood Story contain details, such as reference to the ark carrying Adam's body, that depend heavily on the *Cave of Treasures*, and so it seems likely that they belong to the same pseudepigraphical tradition as the Cave.<sup>84</sup> Accordingly, this motif with this exact order of division must have been popular in certain traditions in Syria.

In the majority of the Christian literature, we can observe another order of levels, where this is explicitly mentioned. Origen, for example, mentions that the different storeys of the ark serve to separate the fierce animals from the

82

	PRE	San. 108b	Gen.R. 31.11	Gen.R. 31.11
Third level	People and reptiles	People	Unclean animals	Refuse
Second level	Birds	Animals	People and clean animals	People and clean animals
First level	Cattle and beasts	Refuse	Refuse	Unclean animals

<sup>83</sup> HIPPOLYTUS OF ROME, *Fragmenta Arabica XXVII in Pentateuchum*. PG 10, c.702ff: *Fragmenta dubia in Pentateuchum*, (pentateuchus arabicus ms. cum commentaries ss. Partum), see esp. c. 706. On Hippolytus's works, see EUSEBIUS, *Ecclesiastical History* VI.22; on the Arabic fragments, see P. DE LAGARDE, *Materialien zur Kritik und Geschichte des Pentateuchs*, II (Leipzig, 1867: B.G. Teubner). On this topic, see J. P. MONFERRER-SALA, "An Arabic-Muslim Quotation of a Biblical Text: Ibn Kaṭīr's *al-Bidāya wa-l-Nihāya* and the Construction of the Ark of the Covenant", in Rifaat EBIED & Herman TEULE (eds.), *Studies on the Christian Arabic Heritage in Honour of Father Prof. Dr. Samir Khalil Samir S.I. at the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, «Eastern Christian Studies» 5 (Leuven-Paris-Dudley (Ma): Peeters, 2004), pp. 263-278, for Noah's Ark, pp. 272-276.

<sup>84</sup> The exact authorship of these comments on the Pentateuch that circulated in Arabic catenae and glossae to the Pentateuch under the name of Hippolytus has not been yet thoroughly investigated. As GEORG GRAF, GCAL, notes: "In den Glossen zu Genesis, scheint echtes und unechtes Hippolytgut gemischt zu sein: eine endgültige Ausscheidung ist noch nicht unternommen worden. Auf syrische Vermittlung deutet die wiederholte Einfuehrung hin": "Hippolyt, der Ausleger des Targums", p. 307.

tame ones.<sup>85</sup> He offers an otherwise allegorical explanation of the different levels of the ark.

Also, Procopius mentions that the different storeys should separate the unlike animals from each other and he explains further that the lowest storey was reserved for the refuse, the snakes and the beasts, that is the dangerous animals, the middle storey was the place for the tame animals, while in the highest storey were the people and the food.<sup>86</sup> Theodore bar Koni thinks of three compartments, the lowest for the reptiles, the middle one for the wild animals and the highest compartment for the people, the tame animals and the birds.<sup>87</sup>

These authors try apparently to explain the inner construction of the ark in a logical way that would allow the successful preservation of all creatures so that, for example, the wild beasts would be separated from the animals that they would consider to be prey.

So, unlike the above mentioned traditions, Ephrem (Hymn.Parad. 2.12)<sup>88</sup> notes:

ܘܥܠ ܕܥܘܠܘܢ ܕܥܘܠܘܢ ܕܥܘܠܘܢ  
ܘܥܠ ܕܥܘܠܘܢ ܕܥܘܠܘܢ ܕܥܘܠܘܢ  
ܘܥܠ ܕܥܘܠܘܢ ܕܥܘܠܘܢ ܕܥܘܠܘܢ

2.12. Noah made the animals live in the lowest part of the Ark; in the middle part he lodged the birds, while Noah himself, like the Deity, resided on the upper deck.<sup>89</sup>

Thus, PRE has again used earlier rabbinic tradition in its description of the construction of the ark. In particular, the occupancy of the levels of the ark, an idea not found in the biblical text of Genesis 6:14-16, represents a tradition already discussed in Jewish literature, such as found in Genesis rabbah 31.11 and Sanhedrin 108b. However, although aspects of these traditions are found in PRE, the motif has been developed and now contains elements of the scheme also found particularly in the Christian Syriac tradition.

<sup>85</sup> Hom.Gen. II.

<sup>86</sup> PG 88, c. 276.

<sup>87</sup> Lib.Schol. M. II. 106; cf. ISHODAD OF MERV, CommGen 6.16.

<sup>88</sup> See E. BECK, *Des heiligen Ephrem des Syrers Hymnen de Paradiso und Contra Julianum*, CSCO 174 – Script. Syr. 78 (Louvain: Peeters, 1957), p. 8.

<sup>89</sup> Transl. S. BROCK, *Saint Ephrem: Hymns on Paradise* (Creastwood, N.Y: St Vladimir's Seminary Press 1990), p. 89.

### Conclusions

This paper suggests that part of the development of the traditions in PRE is due to the awareness of the editor(s) of Christian ideas and exegesis. The text contains a number of motifs found either first of all in PRE, or that reflect a significant development of earlier rabbinic exegesis. This development of the material could be due in part to the narrative style of PRE, which allowed a fuller expansion of legendary material. Indeed, Reubenstein sees the innovative character of PRE as ‘an internal Jewish development rather than the result of external influences or the “infusion” of myth from outside culture’.<sup>90</sup> In some cases, the material may also have been influenced by early sources such as Philo, Josephus or the Pseudepigrapha. However, it cannot be ignored that a number of the motifs which represent a new development in PRE are also common ideas in sources from the Christian Orient.

The likelihood of possible influence from Christian sources is increased in a number of ways. The examples discussed here contain traditions found in both PRE and Christian literature that cannot be understood to be a logical conclusion from exegesis of the biblical text. The proximity both geographically and linguistically between centres of Judaism and the Christian East also facilitates the possibility of an interchange of ideas between these two groups. Indeed, the examples discussed show a close association to the Syriac tradition. Furthermore, the motifs discussed from PRE are popular ideas in Christian sources, and so again the probability of awareness of these ideas in Jewish circles is increased.

The four examples investigated here provide strong evidence for the influence of Christian ideas on the traditions in PRE. This has implications for the study of PRE, and perhaps other late midrashim, as the importance of examining Christian exegesis for the understanding of the development of the texts should be recognised. The examples presented here mark an initial endeavour to identify the material in PRE that may have been influenced by Christian thought.

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<sup>90</sup> RUBENSTEIN, ‘From Mythic Motifs to Sustained Myth’, p. 158.