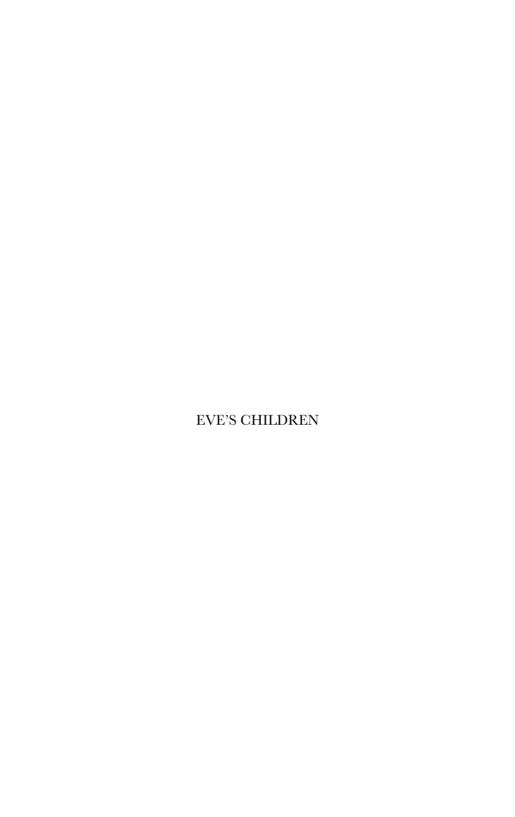# Eve's Children

The Biblical Stories Retold and Interpreted in Jewish and Christian Traditions

edited by
Gerard P. Luttikhuizen

BRILL

EVE'S CHILDREN

THEMES IN
BIBLICAL NARRATIVE

JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS

VOLUME V

EVE'S CHILDREN

The Biblical Stories Retold and
Interpreted in Jewish and
Christian Traditions

EDITED BY

GERARD P. LUTTIKHUIZEN

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Cover design: TopicA (Antoinette Hanekuyk)

An image of Lilith from an amulet: a nineteenth-century Persian amulet intended to protect newborns against Lilith in her aspect of baby stealer (or killer, depending on the tradition)

CONTENTS

PART THREE

SETH

PREFACE

The fifth annual symposium of the Department of Biblical Studies, University of Groningen, held in June 2001, was devoted to the reception of the biblical stories of Cain, Abel and Seth in various Jewish and Christian traditions. In accordance with the previous conferences, the emphasis was on early rewritings and interpretations, both within mainstream Judaism and Christianity and within marginal or sectarian groups. The proceedings are contained in this book, the fifth volume in the series *Themes in Biblical Narrative*.

The opening essay draws attention to the first mention of Eve's childbearing in the sentence which God pronounced on the woman after her transgression, and to interpretations of this sentence in biblical and early Jewish texts (Jacques van Ruiten). The studies by Florentino García Martínez, Lieve M. Teugels, and Marcel Poorthuis discuss further questions related to the coming into being of the second generation. They explain how the crime committed by Cain could lead commentators to believe that Eve's first child might not have been Adam's son but an offspring of the serpent, a wicked angel, or the Devil himself. Ancient interpreters were also puzzled by the fact that the Bible does not mention females of the same age as Cain and Abel. The articles show how the missing daughters were added in the Targumim, in rabbinic sources and in later speculations.

Several contributions deal with the tragic relationship between the first two brothers, Cain and Abel. The subject is introduced by Jan N. Bremmer who discusses fraternal relations, more particularly tensions between brothers and the theme of fratricide in Israel, Greece and Rome. Ed Noort analyses the Genesis account of Cain's killing of his brother in the light of the judicial texts of the Hebrew Bible. Hindy Najman argues that Philo's typological interpretation of the Cain and Abel narrative should be understood as an exercise in moral psychology and pedagogy. The somewhat enigmatic references to the voice of Abel in the New Testament Letter to the Hebrews are discussed by Ton Hilhorst, who concludes that the author presents Abel as the earliest example of true faith and as a prophet of future justice and salvation. Rick Benjamins offers a critical examination of two different interpretations of the Cain and Abel story in the works

of St Augustine. In one of his polemical treatises, the Church Father alleges that this story prefigures God's preference for the faith of the New Testament to the earthly observances of the Old Testament, while in his *De Civitate Dei* he treats Cain and Abel as representatives of two types of human being. This part of the proceedings concludes with two studies of modern readings of the Genesis story. The first focuses on Lord Byron's wrestling with the figures of Cain and Abel in his scriptural plays (Bernard Beatty), the second analyses aspects of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden.* Barend van Heusden shows how the story of two brothers in this voluminous book elaborates elements of the Cain and Abel narrative and how the biblical narrative is the focus of intense discussions between the main characters of the book.

A few contributions deal with the figure of Seth, the "other seed instead of Abel" (Gen 4:25). Eibert Tigchelaar proposes an emended reading of Sirach 49:16 and suggests that in what is probably the oldest non-biblical mention of his name, Seth is regarded as a semi-angelic figure in the line of the author's understanding of Psalm 8. Jürgen Tubach undertakes a literary-critical and theological study of the marked ideas about Seth and the contacts between Seth's descendants and the Cainites in the exegetical works of the early Syrian authors Aphrahat and Ephrem and in their possible source, the Cave of Treasures. Gerard P. Luttikhuizen, finally, investigates how in two Gnostic writings, Seth and other children of Eve are related to later generations and what these texts tell us about the soteriological ideas of the Gnostics.

The volume concludes with a bibliography of recent studies composed by Annemieke ter Brugge with the help of several contributors, most notably Marcel Poorthuis and Jacques van Ruiten. Thanks are due also for her assistance in adapting the typescripts for publication and in preparing the list of abbreviations and the index of references to ancient texts. It is a pleasant duty to express my gratitude to the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Groningen, for the help provided to organize the conference, and to Freek van der Steen and Brill Academic Publishers for their patience and support.

Gerard P. Luttikhuizen

ABBREVIATIONS

AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AJS	American Journal of Sociology
APEF	Annual of the Palestine Exploration Fund
APOT	Apocrypha and pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English
ATD	Altes Testament Deutsch
BeO	Bibbia e Oriente
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BG	Berlin Codex
BiRe	Bible Review
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar: Altes Testament
BN	Biblische Notizen
BT	Babylonian Talmud
BZ	Biblische Zeitschrift
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
COT	Commentaar op het Oude Testament
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
DSD	Dead Sea Discoveries
EI	Eretz Israel
EstB	Estudios Biblicos
EThL	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses
ETR	Études théologiques et religieuses
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
GenR	Genesis Rabbah
GLAE	Greek Life of Adam and Eve
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JAOC	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JBQ	The Jewish Bible Quarterly
JECS	Journal of Early Christian Studies
JETS	Journal of Evangelical Theological Studies
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies

JQS   Jewish Quarterly Review
JSJ   Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic
           and Roman Period
JSJS   Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSOT   Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSP   Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha
JSPSS   Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha, Supplement Series
JSS   Journal of Semitic Studies
JT   Jerusalem Talmud
JTS   Journal of Theological Studies
LAB   Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum
LIMC   Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae
LXX   Septuagint
MoBi   Monde de la Bible
NRT   La nouvelle revue théologique
NTS   New Testament Studies
OBO   Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OLP   Orientalia lovaniensia periodica
OTP   Old Testament Pseudepigrapha
PRE   Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer
PSV   Parola Spirito e Vita
PT   Palestinian Talmud
QD   Quaestiones Disputatae
RAT   Revue Africaine de Théologie
RExp   Review and Expositor
RHPhR   Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses
RHR   Revue de l'Histoire des Religions
RSR   Recherches de science religieuse
RSV   Revised Standard Version
SBL   Society of Biblical Literature
SBLMS   Society of Biblical Literature, Monograph Series
SC   Sources Chrétiennes
Sef   Sefarad
STDJ   Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
StPhA   Studia Philonica Annual
SVTP   Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha
Syr   Syria
TBN   Themes in Biblical Narrative
Tg.   Targum

ThWAT	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament
TThZ T	rierer theologische Zeitschrift
TRE	Theologische Realenzyklopädie
TynB	Tyndale Bulletin
UF	Ugarit-Forschungen
USQR	Union Seminary Quarterly Review
VigChr	Vigiliae Christianae
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WThJ	Westminster Theological Journal
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZPE	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik
ZThK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

This page intentionally left blank

CONTRIBUTORS

B. Beatty   beatty@liverpool.ac.uk
R. Benjamins   hs.benjamins@wxs.nl
J.N. Bremmer   j.n.bremmer@theol.rug.nl
F. Garcia Martínez   f.garcia.martinez@theol.rug.nl
B. van Heusden   b.p.van.heusden@let.rug.nl
A. Hilhorst   a.hilhorst@theol.rug.nl
G.P. Luttikhuizen   g.p.luttikhuizen@theol.rug.nl
H. Najman   najman.1@nd.edu
E. Noort   e.noort@theol.rug.nl
M.J.H.M. Poorthuis   mpoorthuis@ktu.nl
J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten   j.t.a.g.m.van.ruiten@theol.rug.nl
L. Teugels   liteugels@jtsa.edu
E.J.C. Tigchelaar   e.j.c.tigchelaar@theol.rug.nl
J. Tubach   jt@onlinehome.de

PART ONE

EVE'S SONS AND DAUGHTERS

This page intentionally left blank

EVE'S PAIN IN CHILDBEARING?
INTERPRETATIONS OF GEN 3:16A
IN BIBLICAL AND EARLY JEWISH TEXTS

Jacques van Ruiten

In this first chapter we concentrate on the begetting of Eve's children. First, we consider the biblical text of Gen 3:16a, which speaks about Eve and childbearing. What does this verse mean, and how is it related to Gen 4:1–5:32, where the births of Cain, Abel and Seth are reported? We then continue with some aspects of the reception history of Gen 3:16a in the Hebrew Bible (Isa 65:23; 1 Chron 4:9–10) and in early Jewish literature (Septuagint of Gen 3:24, *Jubilees* 3:24; Josephus, *Antiquitates* 1:49; *Life of Adam and Eve* 25:1–3; *2 Baruch* 56:5–6; 73:7; *4 Ezra* 7:12; 10:12).

1. *Genesis 3:16a*

Eve's childbearing activity is mentioned several times in Genesis 4. However, already in chapter 3 some important comments are made about the begetting of children and the motherhood of Eve. While the first couple is still in Paradise, it is said (Gen 3:20): ויקרא האדם שם אשתו חוה כי הוא הותה אם כל חי ("the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the *mother* of all living"). Eve's name is associated with a predicted motherhood in relation to all living creatures. All creatures are thus Eve's children! Her maternal role is being prepared in Gen 3:16a, which speaks about the begetting of children in a somewhat negative context of punishment that follows the transgression. We quote Gen 3:16 along with the translation found in the Revised Standard Version:

MT Gen 3:16		Gen 3:16 (RSV)
אל האשה אמר	16α	To the woman he said,
הרבה ארבה עצבונך והרנך	16αβ	"I will greatly multiply *your pain in childbearing*;
בעצב תלדי בנים	aγ	*in pain you shall bring forth children,*
(ואל אישך תשוקתך	(bα	yet your desire shall be for your husband,
והוא ימשל) בך	bβ	and he shall rule over you".)

The text anticipates the future life of the first woman just created.[1] It refers to the begetting of children. It should be observed, however, that the translations of this text are all somewhat misleading—not only the RSV quoted here but also other translations.[2] We will focus on the first part of the sentence pronounced on Eve and omit the second.

The sentence begins (Gen 3:16αβ) with an infinitive absolute of the verb רבה, followed by a finite form of the same verb (1 sg. imperf. *hiph'il*). This construction can be translated as "I will greatly multiply".[3] The object of this multiplying is the עצבון and the הרון of the woman. The meaning of both words and their relation to each other are the subject of debate.[4] Most exegetes consider עצבונך והרונך a hendiadys, a single expression for which two words are used.[5] It means something like "(. . .) your pain in your childbearing", or "(. . .) your pain of your childbearing".

Some remarks can be made about this interpretation of Gen 3:16a. First, the word הרון is a *hapax legomenon*. It occurs only here and, according to some, it can be connected with the term הריון, which means "conception" in the two places where this term is used in the Hebrew Bible (Hosea 9:11; Ruth 4:13).[6] Both הרון and הריון can be related to the verb הרה, which means "to conceive" as well as "to be pregnant". Therefore, הרון in Gen 3:16a seems to concern more the *beginning* of pregnancy than its end.[7] If this is true, something painful *in childbearing* seems to miss the point of הרון. The noun עצבון occurs in three places in the Hebrew Bible; outside Gen 3:16a, only

---

[1] Unlike the serpent (Gen 3:14–15) and the soil (Gen 3:17), the woman is not cursed. However, in Gen 3:15 a sentence is passed on her. Cf. G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* (WBC 1; Waco, Texas 1987), 81; cf. C. Westermann, *Genesis 1–11* (BKAT 1/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1999⁴), 356. Differently W.H. Schmidt, *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift. Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte von Genesis 1 1–2 4a und 2 4b–3 24* (WMANT, 17; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1967²), 214–218. See also: S.G.W. Andrews, *Ancient Interpretation of Divine Judgement in Eden* (Genesis 3:14–19), (Ph.D. Dissertation; Cambridge 1994), 30.

[2] For a short discussion of some of the translations, see C. Meyers, *Discovering Eve. Ancient Israelite Women in Context*, Oxford 1988, 95–97.

[3] See *GesK*, 113c; cf. Gen 16:10; 22:17.

[4] Cf. Andrews, *Interpretation*, 30.

[5] E.g. J. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (ICC; Edinburgh 1910); O. Procksch, *Die Genesis übersetzt und erklärt* (Leipzig 1924²); Westermann, *Genesis*, 356.

[6] Cf. Andrews, *Interpretation*, 30.

[7] Meyers, *Discovering*, 102–103.

in Gen 3:17 and 5:29. The verb עצב, however, and the derived nominatives, like עצב, occur more often.[8] This word means something like "pain", but is often used in a context where it means "toil", i.e. hard unpleasant work, physically exhausting.[9] Outside Gen 3:16a, the term עצב is never related to pregnancy or childbearing, except in 1 Chron 4:9–10, but this text seems to be an echo of Gen 3:16. In the context of Genesis, outside Gen 3:16, עצבון is related to hard and unpleasant work (Gen 3:17; 5:29). Moreover, when the notion of pain is mentioned with regard to pregnancy or childbirth the word עצב is never used, but always other words, e.g. חיל (cf. Jes 21:3; Jer 6:24; Ps 48:6). This could indicate that in the case of Gen 3:16a the sentence to the woman concerns two matters—on the one hand, hard work and on the other, pregnancies. The following translation seems to be more appropriate: "I will greatly increase your toil and your pregnancies".[10]

The sentence continues with בעצב תלדי בנים (Gen 3:16aγ (RSV): "In pain, you shall bear children") and parallels the first half of the sentence. Most probably עצבונך parallels בעצב, whereas והרנך parallels תלדי בנים. One might argue that Gen 3:16a speaks in the first line (v. 16aβ) about hard and unpleasant work, possibly with painful aspects, and about pregnancy. The second line (v. 16aγ) also speaks about this hard and unplesant work, and possibly about childbirth. The verb ילד seems to concern the process of childbirth itself and not so much the preceding stages such as conception and pregnancy. Meyers goes a step further. According to her, one should distinguish between an intransitive use of the verb ילד ("you shall bring forth"), and a transitive use ("you shall bring forth *children*"). Only the intransitive use refers to childbirth, whereas the transitive use refers not so much to childbirth but to the status of parenthood. "The personal, physical process is not specified, but the social condition of contributing to family growth is prescribed".[11] One could refer to the genealogies of Gen 5, Gen 10; and 1 Chron 1, where the male form of the verb ילד is used, which might not literally refer to childbirth.

---

[8] The verb עצב occurs 15 times, the nomen עצב 9 times, the nomen עצבה 5 times, and מעצבה 1 time.

[9] According to Meyers, *Discovering*, 103–105, the verb עצב mostly refers to psychological or emotional discomfort rather than to physical pain.

[10] Meyers, *Discovering*, 105.

[11] So Meyers, *Discovering*, 106.

In all these places the verb ילד is used transitively. In Gen 3:16 ילד
is used in the same way, and therefore the stress is more on the
social notion of parenthood than on physical childbirth. Hence Meyer's
translation here, "Along with travail shall you beget children", and
this means "the work is unremitting and is not mitigated by the pro-
creative demands placed on female existence". Parenthood, especially
motherhood, is linked with hard unpleasant and tiring work.[12] Clearly
Gen 3:16a does not speak about the moment of intercourse. Moreover,
the realisation of the prospect of begetting children, of becoming a
mother, is not found in chapter 3 of Genesis. Only outside the
Garden of Eden will Eve bring forth children.

2. *Genesis 4:1–5:32*

In the beginning of Genesis 4, when Adam and Eve have just left
Paradise, the first thing mentioned about them is that they had inter-
course and that Eve became pregnant and bore a child: והאדם ידע את
חוה אשתו ותהר ותלד את קין (Gen 4:1a: "Now Adam knew Eve his
wife, and she conceived and bore Cain"). The text continues with Eve
giving an etymology of the name Cain with a short phrase: ותאמר
קניתי איש את יהוה (Gen 4:1b: "saying, I have gotten a man with the
help of YHWH"). This somewhat curious sentence has given rise to
much speculation and interpretation in the versions, and also in early
Jewish and rabbinic literature. Nearly every word in this biblical
naming speech is a problem. The verb קנה has more than one mean-
ing ("to acquire"; "to create"). The use of the word איש ("man") for
a new-born baby is odd. And the final part את יהוה is perplexing,
since it seems to imply that God is the partner of Eve.[13]

  After Cain's birth, the biblical text continues with the birth report
of Abel ותסף ללדת את אחיו את הבל (Gen 4:2a: "And again, she bore
his brother Abel"). The Hebrew of this phrase is structured rather

---

[12] Meyers, *Discovering*, 108. Although Meyers' interpretation of the first part of v.
16 is quite attractive, I am not completely convinced by her interpretation of ילד
and the differences she makes between the transitive and the intransitive use of it.
Although it might sometimes be possible that ילד points to fatherhood or mother-
hood, and not to the physical proces of childbirth, nevertheless in all places it refers
to the very *beginning* of childbirth, the moment of being born.
[13] See further the contributions of L. Teugels and F. García Martínez in the pre-
sent volume.

peculiarly and has given rise to various interpretations. These mostly concern the phrase ותסף ללדת. But what is striking is the lack of renewed intercourse and pregnancy. The problem is stressed at the end of chapter four, where we find for the first time the expression ידע עוד ("He *again* knew"). This seems to suggest that, after the first act of intercourse, this is the second (Gen 4:25: "And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for (she said), "God has appointed for me another child instead of Abel, for Cain slew him"). Although there is some deviation in the structure of Gen 4:25 with regard to Gen 4:1, the name-giving and the etymology of the name Seth seem to come again from the mother, Eve. Seth seems to emerge from Eve's second pregnancy. In this case, one could consider Cain and Abel as twin brothers.[14]

However, there is yet another problem in the chapter. In v. 17 we read: "Cain knew *his wife*, and she conceived and bore Enoch". Unless we presuppose that Cain had intercourse with his mother, the implication of this utterance in v. 17 is that, beside Cain and Abel, there were still more children, including at least one daughter. This has given rise to some speculation in early Jewish literature about how many daughters Eve bore. Who could Cain possibly have married? We omit the question of various sources which might have been drawn together here, but merely point to a problem in the final text which has given rise to various early interpretations.[15]

Jubilees, for example, is the earliest text to speak about a sister of Cain and Abel called 'Awan (cf. *Jub* 4:1). She it is who marries Cain. Later on, after the birth of Seth, Azura is mentioned, who marries Seth (*Jub* 4:8, 11). In later literature, even more sisters, including twins, are created. Josephus writes: "Adam and Eve had two sons . . . they also had daughters" (*Ant.* I.2.1). Pseudo-Philo says: "In the beginning of the world Adam became the father of three sons and one daughter: Cain, Noaba, Abel, and Seth" (*LAB* 1:1).[16] *Gen r.* 22:3: "R. Joshua b. Qorhah: Only two entered the bed, and seven left it: Cain and his twin sister, Abel and his two twin sisters". This

---

[14] Most modern commentators put this option aside, e.g., Skinner, *Genesis*, p. 103; Westermann, *Genesis*, p. 398; Wenham, *Genesis*, p. 102.

[15] Cf. Bowker, *Targums*, 137.

[16] See also the discussion of targumic and rabbinic texts by F. García Martínez and L. Teugels respectively below, pp. 27–45 and 47–56.

interpretation is related to the three occasions on which the parti-
cle את occurs in Gen 4:1c, 2a: "and she gave birth את Cain, . . . and
she continued to give birth את his brother, את Abel". The article
placed once before Cain implies one twin sister, twice before Abel
implies two twin sisters. The beginning of Gen 4:2a ("she continued
to bear") also plays a role in this interpretation, since *Gen r* 22:3
continues: "She continues to bear implies an additional birth, but
not an additional pregnancy".[17] Elsewhere in rabbinic literature, it
is said that "Four left the bed".[18] In *PRE* 21 it is stated: "Rabbi
Miasha said: Cain was born, and his wife, his twin sister, with him".
Tg Ps-J Gen 4:1–2: "Adam knew his wife Eve who had conceived
from Sammael, the angel of the Lord. Then, from Adam her hus-
band she bore his twin sister and Abel".

Also Genesis chapter 5 speaks about the begetting of the children.
In Gen 5:1–5 the family story of Adam and Eve is seen from a
somewhat different pespective. The text speaks about the generations
of *Adam*: זה ספר תולדת אדם (Gen 5:1: "This is the book of the gen-
erations of Adam"). The focus is no longer on Eve, who becomes
pregnant and gives birth, but on Adam, who becomes "the father
of". In Hebrew, a different form of the same verb is used (ויולד
instead of ותלד). Moreover, the birth reports of Cain and Abel are
omitted: Adam immediately becomes the father of Seth. Subsequently,
Adam becomes the father of still more sons and daughters, who are
not mentioned by name (ויולד בנים ובנות), though it is clear that they
are all born after Seth.

To conclude, one can say that the prospect of motherhood is
being realised only outside the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:16, 20). In
chapters 4 and 5, it is indeed narrated that Eve brought forth
children. Some of the terminology of Gen 3:16a is repeated in Genesis
4–5 (הרה: Gen 4:1, 17; ותלד בן: Gen 4:25; cf. ותלד את: Gen 4:1, 2,
17). It is striking that the word בעצב or עצבונך is never used in con-
nection with the actual begetting of Eve's children. Nevertheless, the
adventures of Cain and Abel, described in Gen 4:3–16, show that
their growing up was not unproblematic. Abel was murdered by
Cain, whereas Cain was cursed from the ground. When one reads
the narrative of Gen 4:1–16 as a continuation of Gen 3, one might
understand Gen 4:3–16 as an interpretation of בעצב of Gen 3:16a.

---

[17] Cf. *JT Yebam.* 11,11d; *BT Sanh* 38b; *ARN* 1.
[18] Cf. *BT Sanh* 58b.

3. *The Interpretation of Genesis 3:16a in the Hebrew Bible*

3.1 *Isaiah 65:23*

In the Hebrew Bible, there are two possible allusions to Genesis 3:16, i.e. Isa 65:23 and 1 Chron 4:9–10. The first text, Isa 65:23, runs as follows:

לא יִיגְעוּ לָרִיק	23a	They shall not labour in vain,
וְלֹא יֵלְדוּ לַבֶּהָלָה	b	or bear children for calamity;
כִּי זֶרַע בְּרוּכֵי יהוה הֵמָּה	c	for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of YHWH,
וְצֶאֱצָאֵיהֶם אִתָּם	d	and their children with them.

This verse is part of the well-structured passage of Isa 65:17–25,[19] which can be seen as typical for Trito-Isaiah, insofar as it is linked with Deutero–Isaiah and at the same time uses themes that occur only in Isaiah 56–66.[20] These verses interpret Deutero-Isaiah in a new historical context and refer in the first place to Isa 43:18–19.[21] The chapter's closure (Isa 65:25) contains, in addition, an interpretation of Proto-Isaiah, especially Isa 11:6–9.[22] Moreover, Isa 65:20–23 belongs to a genre of Covenant Theology, namely "the curse of ineffectiviy", which means that if Israel denies the covenant many forms of human labour will be in vain because someone else, namely the enemy, will appropriate the fruits of this labour.[23]

---

[19] For a discussion of the structure of this passage, see: W.A.M. Beuken, *Jesaja. Deel IIIB*, Nijkerk 1989, 57–62; J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, *Een begin zonder einde. De doorwerking van Jesaja 65:17 in de intertestamentaire literatuur en het Nieuwe Testament*, Sliedrecht 1990, 41–50; idem, "The Role of Syntax in the Versification of Is 65:13–25", in: E. Talstra—A.L.H.M. van Wieringen (eds.), *Comparative Description and Literary Interpretation of Isaianic Texts* (Application, 9; Amsterdam 1992), 118–147; J.L. Koole, *Jesaja III* (COT; Kampen 1995), 412–414.

[20] Beuken, *Jesaja IIIB*, 81.

[21] Beuken, *Jesaja IIIB*, 81–82; Van Ruiten, *Begin*, 51–60.

[22] J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, "The Intertextual Relationship between Isaiah 65,25 and Isaiah 11,6–9", in: F. García Martínez et al. (eds.), *The Scriptures and the Scrolls* (SVT, 49; Leiden 1992), 31–42; O.H. Steck, "'. . . *ein kleiner Knabe kann sie leiten*'". Beobachtungen zum Tierenfrieden in Jesaja 11, 6–8 und 65,25", in: H.J. Hausmann – H.-J. Zobel (eds.), *Alttestamentlicher Glaube und Biblische Theologie* (Stuttgart 1992), 104–113.

[23] See especially Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 for this genre; O.H. Steck, 355, 357; cf. W. Gross, "Israels Hoffnung auf die Erneuerung des Staates", in: J. Schreiner (ed.), *Unterwegs zur Kirche. Alttestamentliche Kozeptionen* (QD, 110; Freiburg 1987), 87–122 (esp. 106–112); Y. Goldman, *Prophétie et royauté au retour de l'exil* (OBO, 118), Fribourg 1992, 9–64; 218–237.

Although this typical Trito-Isaianic passage refers in the first place to Deutero- and to Proto-Isaiah, and although deuteronomistic language is also involved, it might also refer to the first chapters of Genesis.[24] The author shows an interest in removing the deficiencies of the first creation from the future situation of salvation, and in the case of chapter 65 he shows an interest in removing the curses of Genesis 3.

Several elements in Isa 65:17–25 allude to the first chapters of the book of Genesis.[25] We refer, in the first place, to v. 17 which speaks about the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. In the second place, v. 25 alludes, among other animals, to a serpent, and although this verse refers, in my opinion, in the first place to Isaiah 11:6–9, it is also true that a part of the curse of Genesis 3:14 is reflected here ("Upon your belly you shall go, *and dust you shall eat all the days of your life*").[26] The curse has been changed into a blessing for the people of God. In the third place, Gen 3:17–20 speaks about toil, hard unpleasant work on the cursed אדמה, the cursed ground on which thorns and thistles grow; work that is physically very tiring and after which death follows. In contrast, Isa 65 speaks about a long life-span on a new earth, where the work of houses and vineyards is succesful (Isa 65:20–22). In the fourth place, v. 25e speaks about a holy mountain. This of course refers, in Isa 65, first of all to Jerusalem; but in early Jewish literature the holy mountain also has strong connotations of the Garden of Eden. In this future holy mountain (Jerusalem), in this new creation, the evil events (רעע) that occurred in the first creation, in the first Garden of Eden, will occur no longer. The new Jerusalem will therefore become the new Garden of Eden. Finally, the versions (esp. Tg and LXX) even strengthen the reference to the story of Paradise. We point here only to the addition in v. 22c ("the tree *of life*"), and v. 23b, in which LXX reads "They shall not bear children for the curse", and the Targum "they bring up children for death".

If it is true that the author of Isaiah 65 is rereading and rewriting the account of the first creation—and the account of the story of

---

[24] See O.H. Steck, "Der neue Himmel und die neue Erde. Beobachtungen zur Rezeption von Gen 1–3 in Jes 65,16b–25", in: J. van Ruiten – M. Vervenne (eds.), *Studies in the Book of Isaiah*, (BETL, 132; Leuven 1997), 350–365.

[25] Cf. Steck, "Himmel", 357–363.

[26] Cf. note 25.

Paradise and the aforementioned arguments point in this direction—
then it is not impossible that Isa 65:23b refers to Gen 3:16a, although
the verbal parallels between both texts are restricted to the verb ילד,
which occurs also in many other places in the Hebrew Bible.

Gen 3:16	*Isa 65:23b*
בעצב תלדי בנים	ולא ילדו לבהלה

Whereas the verb ילד is used in both texts, one could also point to
לבהלה ("for calamity") in Isa 65:23b that might interpret בעצב ("in
pain", but which could also be read as "[along] with travail") of
Gen 3:16. If this is true, then it is clear that, according to Trito-
Isaiah, בעצב does not say anything about the birth process itself, but
about the fact that children are born destined for "calamity" and
untimely death. The construction בעצב is not interpreted as painful
childbirth but as childbirth with a prospect of many troubles. In the
eschaton, however, the woman is blessed with perfect children, with-
out trouble in their lives. There is restoration of the order of Eden,
with the reversal of several aspects of the curse.

3.2   *1 Chronicles 4:9–10*

Passage 1 Chron 4:9–10 is different from the rest of the chapter. It
is not only a genealogy, but also presents an etymology.[27] Moreover,
it is well marked off from the context by its envelope structure, in
which the introduction (4:9a: "Jabez was more honorable than his
brothers") balances the conclusion (4:10b: "And God granted what
he asked"). In between there is direct speech from the mother (4:9b:
"And his mother called his name Jabez, saying: Because I bore him
in pain") and of Jabez (4:10a: "Jabez called on the God of Israel,
saying: Oh that thou wouldst bless me and enlarge my border, and
that thy hand might be with me, and thou wouldst keep me from
harm so that I might not hurt me!"). Both speeches have many ele-
ments in common. We refer to the verbs קרא and אמר, the name
יעבץ, and the nomen עצב. The fate evoked by the birth of Jabez is
curbed by his prayer. Apparently, prayer is superior and more effective
than the magic of the name.[28] Outside Gen 3:16 the word עצב is

---

[27] S. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles. A Commentary* (London 1993), pp. 108–109; R. Braun, *1 Chronicles* (WBC 14; Waco, TX, 1986), 58.

[28] Japhet, *Chronicles*, 110.

only used in connection with the verb ילד in 1 Chron 4:9 (כי ילדתי בעצב). It is the only place in the Hebrew Bible where the pain of the birth is described with the word עצב. At the same time this word is used to describe a grievous and toilsome life. Although the text speaks about a painful childbirth, this description is used as a prediction of a very troubled life. Because of the prayer of Jabez, however, this prediction does not come about.

4. *The Interpretation of Genesis 3:16a in Early Jewish Literature*

We focus now on the question of how the first part of Gen 3:16 is interpreted in early Jewish literature. First, we briefly examine the version of the Septuagint of Genesis 3:16, then we look at the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament. References to Gen 3:16, can, of course, be found in examples of the rewritten Bible, i.e. in the *Book of Jubilees* (3:23–24) and in the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve* (25:1–3).[29] Beside this, one can find brief references to Gen 3:16 in *2 Baruch* (56:5–6; 73:7) and in *4 Ezra* (7:12; 10:12).

4.1 *The Septuagint of Genesis 3:16a*

LXX Gen 3:16a

16aα	καὶ τῇ γυναικὶ εἶπεν	16aα	And to the woman he said,
16aβ	Πληθύνων πληθυνῶ τὰς λύπας σου καὶ τὸν στεναγμόν σου,	16aβ	"I will greatly multiply your sufferings and your *sighing*;
16aγ	ἐν λύπαις τέξῃ τέκνα	16aγ	in the sufferings you shall bring forth children,

In the Hebrew text, the effect of the sentence to the woman is characterised by an increase of the עצבון והרן. The construction with the infinitive absolute (הרבה ארבה) is translated in the Greek of the Septuagint with a participle from the same verb.[30] The word עצבון is simply translated by the plural of λύπη, "sorrow, grief affliction", and the LXX of Genesis does not differentiate between עצבון and עצב. Both are translated by αἱ λύπαι.[31] This word has a more gen-

---

[29] I leave out here the reference to Gen 3:16a in Josephus, *Ant.* 1:49.

[30] For other examples, see H.St.J. Thackery, *A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint, I*, Cambridge 1909, 47–50.

[31] Cf. also Gen 3:17; 5:29.

eral meaning and does not contain a specific reference to childbirth or pregnancy.[32] The same applies to the second word στεναγμός, which means something like "sighing, groan", but which is quite general in meaning and not related specifically to childbirth.[33] The first utterance in Gen 3:16 seems to be of a general character. The life of sadness outside Eden is in contrast with the paradisiacal life inside. The use of στεναγμός for הרון) is quite odd. It is possible that the author had a word in his *Vorlage* that was different from the Massoretic text. It is, however, also possible that the LXX gives a free rendering of a Hebrew text that read הרון, because the translator did not associate הרון with הרה ("to conceive, be pregnant"). It is also possible that he considered the pregnancy in the curse as being in conflict with the divine blessing of procreation and therefore deliberately chose another word. According to some, the word στεναγμός describes the sighing of women during delivery.[34] Because the LXX has two parallel words at this point it is quite probable that the translator did not read a hendiadys here.

4.2 *Jubilees 3:24*

The rewriting of Gen 3:16 the *Jubilees* 3:24 is quite literal. The end of verse 23 shows God's displeasure with Eve ("At the woman, too, he was angry") and gives an explicit reason for it ("because she had listened to the voice of the serpent"). Verse 24 is mainly a verbatim quotation of Gen 3:16, with some small modifications. First, the Hebrew עצבונך והרנך in Gen 3:16b is rendered in *Jub* 3:24a as *chezenki wethe'erki* ("your sadness and your pain"). *Jubilees* has a similar reading to the Septuagint here. It has "pain" instead of "childbearing". We should entertain the possibility that in *Jub* 3:24a the author has not chosen a word that differs from the Hebrew text of Genesis but that he has a different word in his *Vorlage*. The same applies to LXX Gen 3:16b. It is, therefore, possible that *Jubilees* also gives a free rendering of a Hebrew text in Genesis that reads הרון, because they

---

[32] See LS, 1065–1066. Cf. M. Alexandre, *Le Commencement du Livre Genèse I–V. La versio grecque de la Septante et sa réception* (Christianisme Antique, 3), Paris 1988, 317.
[33] See LS, 1638.
[34] Cf. J.W. Wevers, An Apologia for Septuagint Studies, *BIOSCS* 18 (1985) 16–38 (esp. 33–34); M. Rösel, *Übersetzung als Vollendung der Auslegung. Studien zur Genesis-Septuaginta* (BZAW, 223), Berlin 1994, 95.

did not associate הרון with הרה ("to conceive, be pregnant"). Although
we are not sure whether we should read the two words in Jubilees
as one expression, we could at least say that the Jubilees author does
not combine here עצב (*ch^ezen*) with the notion of being pregnant.
Moreover, the words עצבון (Gen 3:16b: "pain, hurt, sadness") and
עצב (Gen 3:16c: "pain, toil, sadness") are rendered in *Jubilees* by one
and the same word (*ch^ezen*). The same applies to LXX Gen 3:16bc.
Finally, in *Jub* 3:24b an imperative ("bear") is used instead of the
imperfect ("you shall bear"). Against all other versions this is in line
with EthGen 3:16.[35] One should consider here the possibility that it
a later harmonisation.

Although the prediction about bearing children in Jub 3:24 is not
omitted, it is not impossible that the author, with the rendering of
הרון as *ch^ezen* ("pain"), tries to avoid the association of conception or
pregnancy with the Garden of Eden. This seems to be confirmed
by the fact that the naming of Eve, and its explanation (Gen 3:20),
are omitted from their proper place in the narrative of *Jubilees*. There,
Adam does not give the name to Eve immediately after the curse.
It is *delayed* until they have left Eden, namely in v. 33. In the expla-
nation of the name, it is said that the name "Eve" has something
to do with motherhood and childbearing. At the same time, the
curse of Gen 3:16 loses much of its weight with this delay of the
naming. Moreover, an *explanation* of the name is not given. This
omission in the case of Eve might be deliberate, although the author
also leaves out many other naming speeches. The connection between
the name choice and the negative sides of Eden is broken. We would
suggest that the author of *Jubilees* tries to avoid any suggestion that
the childbearing activity of Adam and Eve has anything to do with the
curse in the Garden of Eden.[36]

The birth of Cain and Abel is described in Jub 4:1, the rewrit-
ing of Gen 4:1b–2c. The author adds a chronological framework
and mentions the birth of a daughter. The births of Cain and Abel
are not dated in the Book of Genesis. By being seen within a chrono-
logical framework, they take their appropriate place in sacred his-
tory. Moreover, the link with the other birth reports (*Jub* 4:7–33) is
strengthened. *Jub* 4:1 also mentions the birth of a daughter to Adam

---

[35] Cf. J.C. VanderKam, The Book of Jubilees (CSCO, 88; Leuven 1989), 19.
[36] B. Halpern-Amaru, "The First Woman, Wives, and Mothers in *Jubilees*", *JBL*
113 (1994) 609–624 (esp. 613).

and Eve: "'Awan, his (i.e. Adam's) daughter". The birth of daughters in order to provide appropriate wives for the sons is an important issue for the author of *Jubilees*. Problems with regard to childbirth are not mentioned. The author does not refer back to a predicted curse about a painful birth.

4.3 *The Greek Life of Adam and Eve 25:1–3*

Many legends are woven around Adam and Eve. Within these disparate traditions, the *Lives of Adam and Eve* form a clear entity. These *Lives* are retellings of the story of Genesis 3, which describes Adam and Eve's transgression against God's commandment and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. The *Lives* try to investigate the consequences of these events for humanity.[37] One can distinguish five versions: the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*,[38] also called the *Apocalypse of Moses*,[39] which can be considered the oldest; the Armenian version;[40] the Georgian version;[41] the Latin version;[42] and the Slavonic version.[43] Although these versions are clearly related, they differ in many

---

[37] M. de Jonge – J. Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve and Related Literature* (Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha), Sheffield 1997, 11.

[38] There does not exist a critical edition of *GLAE*. See, however, the diplomatic editions of the manuscripts by M. Nagel, *La vie d'Adam et d'Eve (Apocalypse de Moïse, I–III,* Lille 1974. His preparation for a critical edition was used in A.-M. Denis, *Concordance grecque des pseudépigraphes d'Ancien Testament*, Louvain-la-Neuve 1987, 815–818; and Anderson – Stone (eds.), *Synopsis*. An eclectic edition of several manuscripts of the text one can find in D.A. Bertrand, *La vie grecque d'Adam et Eve* (Recherches intertestamentaires, 1; Paris 1987).

[39] This name was given by C. Tischendorf when he published the work in 1866, because of the preface ("The narrative and life of Adam and Eve the first-made, *revealed by God to Moses his servant* when he received the tablets of the law etc."), which occurs in many manuscripts.

[40] The Armenian *Book of Adam* closely follows the Greek version. Distinct from this is the *Penitence of Adam*; cf. M.E. Stone, *The Penitence of Adam* (CSCO, 429–430; Leuven 1981).

[41] The *Georgian Book of Adam* is closely related to the Armenian *Penitence of Adam*. It was published by C. K'urc'idze in 1964 and translated by J.-P. Mahé; cf. "Le livre d'Adam géorgien", in: R. van den Broek – M.J. Vermaseren (eds.), *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions* (FS G. Quispel; Leiden 1981), 227–260.

[42] There are two editions of the Latin *Life of Adam and Eve*: W. Meyer, "Vita Adae et Evae", *Abhandlungen der philosophischen Klasse der königlichen Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, XIV.3 (München 1878), 185–250; J.H. Mozley, The "Vita Adae", *JTS* (1929) pp.121–147. M.B. Halford, "The Apocryphal Vita Adae et Evae. Some Comments on the Manuscript Tradition", *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 82 (1981) 417–427, mentions many manuscripts, which were not used by Meyer or Mozley.

[43] V. Jagic, "Slavische Beiträge zu den biblischen Apocryphen, I, Die altkirchenslavischen Texte des Adambuches", *Denkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften*.

respects.[44] We restrict ourself here to the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve
(GLAE)*, because the most obvious allusion to Gen 3:16a can be
found here. We refer to *GLAE* 25.[45]

Whereas Genesis 3 tells the story in a chronological order, the
version of this story in *GLAE* is told in the form of two flashbacks,
one by Adam (7–8) and one by Eve (15–30), both delivered at Adam's
deathbed. Moreover, *GLAE* eleborates the events around the death
and funeral of Adam (31–41) and those of Eve (42–43). One can
define the literary form of *GLAE* as farewell discourse.[46] One should
realise, however, that the story contains two farewell speeches and
that the most important of these (15–30) is not utterred by the dying
person himself but by his wife. The flashbacks on the transgressions
of Adam and Eve explain why human beings have to die. The events
around the death of Adam are directed at the life of men after death
and at their resurrection.

The allusion to Gen 3:16a occurs in *GLAE* 25, in which the judge-
ment of Eve is described. The reference is part of Eve's farewell
speech, in which she looks back at life in the Garden of Eden (15–30).
At the beginning (15:1), and at the end (30:1), she addresses her
children. She describes the situation in Paradise (15:2–3), and how
Satan seduced the serpent (16), the serpent Eve (17–19), and Eve her
husband Adam (21). God returns to Paradise and summons Adam
(22–23). Thereupon, Adam, Eve, and the serpent are condemned
for their actions (24–26). When the angels eject Adam and Eve from
Paradise, Adam makes three requests. First, he askes, in vain, to stay
a little while in Paradise in order to beg God for mercy (27). Then
he askes, again in vain, to be allowed to eat from the tree of life
(28). Finally, a request to take fragrances from Paradise, so that after
he has left he will be able to bring an offering to God, is granted.

Phil.Hist. Classe 42.1 (Vienna 1893) 1–104. New material is listed by E. Turdeanu,
"La Vie d'Adam et d'Eve en slave et en roumain", in: E. Turdeanu, *Apocryphes
slaves et roumains de l'Ancien Testament* (SVTP, 5; Leiden 1981), 75–144; 437–438.

[44] The Greek and Latin text, as well as translations of the Armenian, Georgian
and Slavonic versions are published in a synoptic overview by Anderson and Stone.
Cf. G.A. Anderson – M.E. Stone (eds.), *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve* (SBL,
Early Judaism and Its Literature, 5; Atlanta 1995). For the relationship between
the various versions and text forms, see De Jonge – Tromp, *Life*, 28–44.

[45] This chapter in *GLAE* has a close parallel in both the Armenian and Georgian
version (44[25]). Besides, there a somewhat hidden allusion, which is connected with
the birth of Cain, in the Armenian, Georgian, and Latin *Life of Adam and Eve* (19).

[46] Cf. De Jonge – Tromp, *Life*, 45–47.

Adam receives four kinds of fragrant spices and herbs (crocus, nard, reed, cinnamon) plus "seeds for his food" (29).

Eve's account of the Fall (*GLAE* 15–30) parallels Gen 3:1–24, which concerns the ejection from the Garden. In the following table, we give a general comparative overview of Gen 3:1–24 and *GLAE* 15–30:

Ejection from the Garden (*Genesis 3:1–24*)		*Farewell Speech of Eve* (*Greek Life of Adam and Eve* 15–30)	
		1. 15–16	Introduction
1. 3:1–7	*Temptation and transgression* a. serpent (3:1a) b. woman (3:1b–6) c. man (3:7)	2. 17–21	*Temptation and transgression* a. serpent (16) b. woman (17–20) c. man (21)
2. 3:8–13	*Hiding from God and Accusation*	3. 22–23	*Hiding from God and Accusation*
3. 3:14–29	*Judgement* a. 3:14–15 _serpent_ b. 3:16 _woman_ c. 3:17–19 _man_	4. 24–26	*Judgement* a. 24 _man_ b. 25 _woman_ c. 26 _serpent_
4. 3:20–24	*Expulsion*	5. 27–29	*Expulsion*
		6. 30	Conclusion

It may be clear that *GLAE* 15–30 follows the story of Genesis 3 at many points. However, there are also considerable deviations.[47] These are sometimes due to interpretations of the biblical story, i.e. the close relationship between the Satan and the serpent, the interpretation of the nakedness of Adam and Eve, and how it was possible that Eve was seduced. These interpretations occur also in other texts in early Jewish literature. Further deviations seem to have more to do with the need for embellishments, i.e. the description of Paradise, which is surrounded by a wall with doors, the description of God returning to Paradise to judge Adam sitting on a chariot of cherubim, whereas the archangel sounds the trumpet. For a proper understanding of *GLAE* and the way it uses the Genesis story, it is useful

---

[47] Cf. De Jonge – Tromp, ibid.

to describe the intertextual relationship of Genesis and *GLAE*. In this respect, it makes no difference if the additions and variations in *GLAE*, when compared with the biblical text, should be attributed to the authors of *GLAE* or to a preceding tradition which they adopted. We restrict myself, in the framework of this paper, to the relationship between Gen 3:16a and *GLAE* 25.

Gen 3:16		Greek Life of Adam and Eve 25:1–3	
16aα	To the woman he said,	1a	Turning to me, the Lord said to me,
		b	"Since you have listened to the serpent
		c	and ignored my commandment,
16aβ	"I will greatly multiply your pain and your childbearing;	d	you shall be in pains and intolerable sufferings;
aγ	in pain *you shall bring forth children*,	2a	*you shall bring forth children* in many ways
		b	and in one hour you shall come to bear and lose your life from your great anguish and sorrows.
		3a	And you shall confess, and say,
		b	"Lord, Lord, save me
		c	and I will never again turn to the sin of the flesh"
		4a	And by this, according to your word, I will judge you,
		b	because of the enmity which the enemy has placed in you.
(bα	yet your desire shall be for your husband,	(c	And yet you shall turn again to your husband,
bβ	and he shall rule over you".)	d	and he shall rule over you")

There can be no doubt that *GLAE* 25:1–3 refers to Gen 3:16. The general context points already in that direction: *GLAE* 15–30 is a retelling of Genesis 3. After the transgression follows the judgment. The order is chiastic, when compared to the biblical texts: first the judgement on the man, then on the woman, and finally on the serpent. Also, within *GLAE* 25:1–3 itself, the reference to Gen 3:16 is clear. In the introduction in *GLAE* 25:1, it is made clear that the woman Eve is the one who is speaking. After this, *GLAE* speaks about the birth of children in a comparable way to Gen 3:16. And

the concept of pain is central to it. Finally, the text speaks of return-
ing the woman to her husband, which is nearly identical in both
texts (LXX Gen 3:16b; *GLAE* 25:4cd). At the same time, it is clear
that the verbal similarity between Gen 3:16a and *GLAE* 25:1–2 is
very small. In fact only the words "you shall bring forth children"
(*GLAE* 25: τέξει τέκνα; LXX: τέξῃ τέκνα) occur in both texts. The
Hebrew phrase הרבה ארבה עצבונך והרנך (LXX: Πληθύνων πληθυνῶ
τὰς λύπας σου καὶ τὸν στεναγμόν σου) does not occur in the same
way in *GLAE* 25. Instead, *GLAE* 25:1 speaks about ἔσει ἐν καμάτοις
καὶ ἐνπόνοις ἀφορήτοις ("you shall be in pains and intolerable
sufferings"). In view of what follows, these words seem to be related
with the birth of children. Instead of בעצב (LXX: ἐν λύπαις), one
can find an extensive description in *GLAE* 25:2: ἐν πολλοῖς τρόποις
καὶ ἐν μιᾷ ὥρᾳ ἔλθεις τοῦ τεκεῖν καὶ ἀπολέσις τὴν ζωήν σου ἐκ τῆς
ἀνάγκης σου τῆς μεγάλης καὶ τῶν ὀδυνῶν (". . . in many ways, and in
one hour you shall come to bear and lose your life from your great
anguish and sorrows"). The utterance is not completely clear. It
seems as if the birth of children takes place in many different ways.
At the moment of childbirth, there is also the fear of losing a life.
The connection of childbirth and the loss of a life does not occur
in Genesis. The experience of childbirth seems to cause Eve's repen-
tence, since she says: "I will never again turn to the sin of flesh".[48]

4.4   *2 Baruch 56:5–6; 73:7*

One can find some brief references to Gen 3:16 in *2 Baruch* and *4
Ezra*. Both are apocalyptic texts and date from the late first or early
second century C.E. The authors do not so much comment on scrip-
ture as use it as a reference point for their own discourse. They
want to convince their readers of the immanence of eschatological
salvation and for this they take from scripture whatever they can
use.[49] Therefore, the answer to the questions as to how they read
Gen 3:16, and if they saw a tension between Gen 3:16 and Gen 4,
is not straightforward.

---

[48] It is not explained in the texts what is meant by "the sin of flesh".
[49] Andrews, *Interpretation*, 163–164.

In *2 Baruch*, in two places, one can find small allusions to Gen 3:16. First, in *2 Baruch* 56:5–6 the author refers to Genesis 2–3. This is established by the fact that the text speaks about "the transgression of Adam" (56:5b) and gives a sort of catalogue of the consequences. The text reads as follows:

> *2 Baruch 56:5–7 (Tr. A.F.J. Klijn, OTP I, p. 641)*
>
> 5a　And as you first saw the black waters on the top of the cloud which first came down upon the earth;
> b　this is the transgression which Adam, the first man, committed.
> 6a　For when he transgressed,
> b　untimely death came into being,
> c　mourning was mentioned,
> d　affliction was prepared,
> e　illness (*k'b'* = עצב) was created,
> f　labour accomplished,
> g　pride began to come into existence,
> h　the realm of death began to ask to be renewed with blood,
> i　the conception of children came about,
> j　the passion of the parents was produced,
> k　the loftiness of men was humiliated,
> l　and goodness vanished.
> 7a　What could have been blacker and darker than these things?

The text does not quote Genesis 3 literally, but freely alludes to it. Nevertheless, one could establish some connections with Genesis 3. First, *illness* (56:6e) is a common word for "grief" and "pain". However, it is possibly used to refer to the pain which is mentioned in connection with childbirth in Gen 3:16, since the Peshitta of Gen 3:16, 17 uses this word (*k'b'*) as a translation of עצב, whereas in *2 Baruch* 73:7 it is used to describe "the pain" of childbirth which will be eliminated in the new aeon.[50] Second, *labor* (56:6f) could refer to Gen 3:23, but it might also refer to Gen 3:17. In that case, the sequence of childbirth and labour of Gen 3:16–17 occurs here. Third, the sequence of the conception of children followed by the passion of the parents (56:6i–j) seems also to refer to Gen 3:16. As a consequence of the transgression they are longing for each other and produce children. There are, however, some problems with the inter-

---

[50] See J.R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism. From Sirach to 2 Baruch* (JSPSS, 1; Sheffield 1988), 140.

pretation of the word '*nsb'* (56:6i). According to some, it refers to "the conception" of children.[51] For Levison, however, it denotes "taking away" and refers to death.[52] Bogaert reads it as "the carrying of the children".[53] In that case, it could refer to an inescapable aspect of human existence,[54] but, more specifically, it might also refer to Abel's murder. In that case, the preceding phrase, "the realm of death began to ask to be renewed with blood" (56:6h), could also refer to Gen 4:11, which speaks about the ground that has openend its mouth to receive Abel's blood. If the reference to the murder of Abel is correct, then one could refer also to 56:6b which speaks about "untimely death". This could, of course, allude to Gen 3:22, where it is stated that man cannot live for ever. However, it could also refer to the murder of Abel, who thus died an untimely death.[55] In conclusion, one might say that in this passage of *2 Baruch* Adam is described as blameworthy. Pain and illness, and possibly the conception of children, came into the world not because of Eve but because of his transgression. Eve is not mentioned, nor is she blamed.[56] The word עצב seems to be interpreted as a more general term. It is not only related to childbirth and conception, but runs parallel to mourning, affliction, untimely death and labour. Moreover, the author of these verses take Genesis 3 and 4 together. The story of the brothers fills in what is predicted by the curses of Paradise.

The second place in *2 Baruch* in which a possible reference can be found to Gen 3:16 is chapter 73:7. We give the translation of this text in the context of *2 Baruch* 73:1–74:4:

---

[51] R.H. Charles, *The Apocalypse of Baruch Translated from the Syriac*, London 1896, p. 513; W. Harnisch, *Verhängnis und Verheissung der Geschichte. Untersuchungen zum zeit- und Geschichtsverständnis im 4. Buch Esra und in der syr. Baruchapokalypse*, Göttingen 1969, 112; A.F.J. Klijn, "2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch", in: J.H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, I*, London 1983, 641.

[52] Levison, *Portraits*, 140.

[53] P. Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch. Introduction, traduction du syriaque et commentaire, I–II* (SC 144–145; Paris 1969), II, 108.

[54] Bogaert, *Apocalypse, II*, 108 ("The Sheol carries away the children").

[55] Levison, *Portraits*, 139.

[56] There is one passage, however, in *2 Baruch* where Eve is mentioned as the one to be blamed: "O Adam, what did you do to all who were born after you? And what will be said of the first Eve who obeyed the serpent, so that this whole multitude is going to corruption?" (48:42). Cf. Levison, *Portraits*, 135–136.

2 Baruch 73:1–74:4 (Tr. A.F.J. Klijn, *OTP, I*, pp. 645–646)

73:1a   And it will happen that after he has brought down
          everything which is in the world,
   b   and has sat down in eternal peace on the throne of the
          kingdom,
   c   then joy will be revealed
   d   and rest will appear.
   2a   And then health will descend in dew,
   b   and illness will vanish,
   c   and fear and tribulation and lamentation will pass away
          from among men,
   d   and joy will encompass the earth.
   3a   And nobody will again die untimely,
   b   nor will any adversity take place suddenly.
   4a   Judgment, condemnations, contentions, revenges, blood,
          passions, zeal, hate, and all such things will go into
          condemnation since they will be uprooted.
   5a   For these are the things that have filled the earth with evils,
   b   and because of them the life of men came in yet greater
          confusion.
   6a   And the wild beasts will come from the wood
   b   and serve men,
   c   and the asps and dragons will come out of their holes to
          subject themselves to a child.
   7a   And women will no longer have pain (*k'b'* = עצב) when
          they bear,
   b   nor will they be tormented when they yield the fruits of
          their womb.
74:1a   And it will happen in those days that the reapers will
          not become tired,
   b   and the farmers will not wear themselves out,
   c   because the products of themselves will shoot out speedily,
   d   during the time they work on them in full tranquillity.
   2a   For that time is the end of that which is corruptible and
          the beginning of that which is incorruptible.
   3a   Therefore, it is far away from the evil things and near
          to those which do not die.
   4a   Those are the last bright waters which have come after
          the last dark waters.

In 73:6, the author of *2 Baruch* refers to Isaiah 11:6–9, whereas he
refers in the continuation of the text (74:1) to an important theme
of Isaiah 65. It contains a reference to those "who toil without weari-
ness" (cf. Isa 65:21–23).[57] Above, We have already pointed above to

---

[57] Andrews, *Interpretation*, 166.

the supposition that Isaiah 65 is also referring to Genesis 3, a notion stressed by the ancient versions of Isaiah. It is not impossible that the author of *2 Baruch* is referring to Genesis 3, via Isaiah 65. We point especially to Isa 65:23: "They shall not labour in vain/or bear children for terror" (Isa 65:23). Also Isaiah 11:6–9 plays a part in Isaiah 65. While speaking about the nature of the redeemed order, the author of *2 Baruch* combines Isaiah 11, 65 and Genesis 3.[58] The description of future glory is a merging of the reversal of the curses of Gen 3:16–19,[59] for which the author borrows from Isaiah 11 and 65. As far as we can see, the pain is related directly to childbirth (73:7a), although in addition to the pain of childbearing it also refers to a difficult life after the birth (73:2–5). So בעצב is related directly to the pain of childbirth, but also to the sorrow afterwards. In the future era, the judgement in Eden will be reversed.

4.5   *4 Ezra 7:12; 10:12*

In *4 Ezra*, there are two possible allusions to Gen 3:16 (*4 Ezra* 7:12; 10:12). The text of 7:12 is part of a larger unit (7:1–25) in which the angel Uriel answers questions from Ezra, posed in 6:59 ("If the world has indeed been created for us, why do we not possess our world as an inheritance? How long will this be so?").[60] *4 Ezra* 7:10–14 shows the implications of what has been brought forward by the angel in two parables (7:3–9). The first describes a broad and vast sea. Its entrance, however, is narrow. The second shows a city. Its entrance also is narrow, and dangerous. In 7:10–14, the author explains the meaning of the parables. Originally, the world was broad and vast. This was the world created for Israel's sake. When Adam transgressed, this creation was judged.[61] The consequence is that there is not only a wide, broad, and safe world but also a narrow, painful and toilsome one. It is only possible to enter the broad and safe world when one has negotiated the narrow and dangerous path.[62] The spatial picture of two worlds (spacious and safe over against small and dangerous) becomes a temporal picture, in that this world

---

[58] Andrews, *Interpretation*, 166.
[59] Cf. Levison, *Portraits*, 143; Andrews, *Interpretation*, 166.
[60] For a study of the form and structure of 4 Ezra 7:1–25, see M.E. Stone, *Fourth Ezra. A Commentary of the Book of Fourth Ezra* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis 1990), 191–192.
[61] Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 193.
[62] Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 191.

is the narrow and dangerous one and the world to come its safe
and spacious counterpart. One must first pass through the danger-
ous world before one can enter the spacious one. In sum, Adam's
transgression necessitated the postponement of rewards until the age
to come.

The list of difficulties which describes this world differs from Gen
3:14–19, which outlines the consequences of the transgression of
Adam and his wife. However, the words "sorrowful" and "toilsome"
recall the curses of Genesis.[63] In 7:12, the word *dolentes* ("sorrowful"),
possibly refers to בעצב in Gen 3:16 (where the Vulgate reads *in
dolore*).[64] In Genesis 3, it is part of the woman's curse, while the
author of *IV Ezra* applies it to Adam. The second word *laboriosi*
("toilsome") possibly refers to בעצבון in Gen 3:17, where the Vulgate
reads *in laboribus*. The other words which Uriel uses are common-
place descriptions of the troubles of human life and seem not so
much to reflect Genesis 3.

In chapter 10 a small reference to Gen 3:16a can also be found.
We point first to v. 12 ("For I have lost the fruit of my womb,
which I brought forth in pain, and bore in sorrow"), and v. 14b
("As you brought forth in sorrow"). But we refer also to v. 10 ("And
from the beginning all have been born of her") and to v. 7 ("Zion,
the mother of us all"). It is, of course, true that Zion or Jerusalem
as a mother is a figure that has clear biblical roots and appears else-
where in both early Jewish literature and the New Testament.[65]
However, the addition "(the mother) *of us all*" is something said espe-
cially of Eve (cf. Gen 3:20). In this passage, Ezra is adressing a
mourning woman who has lost her son. He says to her, "Why do
you mourn? For, firstly, we are all mourning because of Zion
(v. 6–8) and, secondly, the earth should mourn over so many that
come forth upon it" (v. 9–11). The woman answers that the earth
is not touched in the way she is, since she lost the fruit of her womb.
And then the reference to the curse of Gen 3:16a is made (". . . I
brought forth in pain, and bore in sorrow"). But Ezra continues with
the idea that the earth also gives birth, that the earth can be con-

---

[63] Levison, *Portraits*, 121.
[64] Levison, Portraits, 121; Andrews, *Interpretation*, 169.
[65] See, for example, Isa 50:1; Jer 50:12; Hos 2:4; 4:5; *2 Baruch* 3:1; 10:16; Gal
4:26. Cf. Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 321.

sidered a womb. Although it is difficult to draw any conclusions about the use of Gen 3:16, it seems as if, according to *4 Ezra*, the pain and the sorrow are related explicitly to childbirth. It is not so much Eve who suffers this pain but women in general, Zion and the earth more specifically.

5. *Conclusion*

We started out with two questions. What is the meaning of Gen 3:16a, and how is this part of the sentence to the woman interpreted elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible and in early Jewish literature?

We have tried to show that the sentence to the woman (Gen 3:16a) concerns two matters. On the one hand, it is about hard, unpleasant work, possibly with painful aspects and on the other it is about childbearing. The terms for pain and toil are used in relation to childbirth; but beside this they are also used to point to aspects of the life of the woman beyond the moment of childbirth. Only outside the Garden of Eden (Gen 4:1–5:32) is the prospect of begetting children realised. However, the terms used for pain and toil are not used in relation to the actual begetting of children. One could perhaps suggest that the adventures of Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1–16) point to a painful and toilsome life after their birth.

The interpretations of Gen 3:16a in the Hebrew Bible and in early Jewish Literature are diverse. According to Trito-Isaiah, the toil and pain are not to be interpreted as a painful childbirth but as a childbirth with a prospect of many troubles (Isa 65:23). In the eschaton, however, there is a restoration of the order of Eden, with the reversal of several aspects of the curse. The woman is blessed with perfect trouble-free children. The text of 1 Chron 4:9–10 speaks about a painful childbirth, but this is used as a prediction of a life with many troubles. Because of prayer, the prediction does not come to fruition. In LXX Gen 3:16a and in *Jub* 3:24 the toilsome and painful aspects seem not to be related specifically to childbirth. It seems as if the life of sadness is made to contrast with the paradisiacal life inside Eden. Childbirth is related to life outside Eden. Because of his conception of Eden as a temple, the author of *Jubilees* seems to show that sexual intercourse and childbearing do not take place inside the garden but only when Adam and Eve have left it. The painful aspects seem not to refer to childbirth as such but to

the general conditions of life, in which childbirth also takes place. In *GLAE* 25:1–3 it is perfectly clear that pain is related directly and explicitly to childbirth. According to *2 Baruch* 56:5–7 pain and illness seem not to be related to childbirth and conception but are parallel to mourning, affliction and untimely death. According to this text, the narrative of Gen 4:1–16 fills in what is predicted by the sentence to the woman. In *2 Baruch* 73:7 the pain is related directly to childbirth, although it not only refers to the pain of childbearing but also to a difficult life after birth. In the future dispensation, this judgement of Eden will be reversed. In *4 Ezra* 10:12, finally, it seems as if the pain and sorrow are related explicitly to childbirth.

EVE'S CHILDREN IN THE TARGUMIM

Florentino García Martínez

Only a few of the many traditions about Eve's children that can be gleaned from even a cursory reading of the Palestinian Targumim on Genesis can be presented here. The denial of Adam being the father of Cain by the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan is perhaps the best known of all these traditions.[1] Since our topic is not "Adam's children" but Eve's, it seems fitting to start this essay by re-examining this well-known topic. At any rate, this is a very old tradition, traces of which can arguably be found underlying the well-known Qumran poem on the "one who is pregnant of the serpent,"[2] and behind the 1 John 3:12 reference to Cain "who *was from the evil one* and murdered

---

[1] In the numerous studies on the different traditions of the children of Eve, the matter of Cain's true paternity has received particular attention. See, for example A. Goldberg, "Kain: Sohn des Menschen oder Sohn der Schlange?" *Judaica* 25 (1969) pp. 203–21 (reprint in M. Schlüter and P. Schäfer [eds.] *Arnon Goldberg. Mystiek und Theologie des rabbinisches Judentums. Gesammelte Studies I* [Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum 61; Tübingen 1997] pp. 275–288. On the Biblical narrative of Cain and Abel, see C. Westerman, "Kain und Abel, die biblische Erzähling," in his *Erträge der Forschung am Alten Testament. Gesammelte Studien III* (München 1984) pp. 39–53; on other traditions about Cain and Abel, see J. Kughel, "Cain and Abel in Fact and Fable," in R. Brooks and John J. Collins (eds.), *Hebrew Bible or Old Testament?* (Notre Dame IN, 1989) pp. 167–190; on the Muslim Cain and Abel traditions, see L. Grattepanche, "Cain and Abel dans les légendes islamiques," *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 24 (1993) pp. 133–142.

[2] 1QHᵃ XI 6–18 (Sukkenik III:6–18). This poem, which opposes the woman giving birth to "a wonderful counsellor with his strength" to the woman giving birth to "all deeds of terror" has been extensively studied and variously interpreted. See, among others, A. Dupont-Sommer, "La mère du Messie et la mère de l'aspic dans un hymne de Qumran (DST iii, 6–18)." *RHR* 147 (1955), pp. 174–88; L.H. Silberman, "Language and Structure in the *Hodayot* (1QH 3)," *JBL* 75 (1956), pp. 96–106; M. Delcor, "Un psaume messianique de Qumran," in *Mélanges bibliques rédigés en l'honneur d'André Robert* (Paris, 1957) pp. 334–40; O. Betz, "Das Volk seiner Kraft. Zur Auslegung der Qumran-Hodajah III,1–18," *NTS* 5 (1958–59), pp. 65–75; P.S. Brown, "Deliverance from the Crucible: Some Further Reflections on 1QH III,1–18," *NTS* 14 (1967–68), pp. 247–59; E.M. Laperrousaz, "La mère du Messie et la mère de l'aspic dans les "hymnes" de Qumrân: Quelques remarques ser la structure de "1QH" III,1–18," in *Mélanges d'histoire des religions offerts à H.-C. Puech* (Paris, 1974), pp. 173–85. For a full bibliography of this poem, see E.M. Schuller – L. DiTomasso, "A Bibliography of the Hodayoth, 1948–1996," *DSD* 4 (1997), pp. 70–72.

his brother,"[3] which assures us of the tradition's antiquity. Since this tradition concerning the origins of Cain was apparently obtained by an exegesis of the Biblical text that is shared by different Gnostic groups,[4] it can serve as a link to other interpretations of the same Biblical narrative.

In this paper, I shall first examine the Aramaic translation of Genesis 4:1 in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, which informs us who Cain's father was. Then I shall comment briefly on Pseudo-Jonathan's translation of Genesis 4:2 and on the other children of Eve. The third part of the paper will be a reading of a targumic *tosefta* in which Eve's daughters play a leading role.

1. *Cain's Father*

The Hebrew text of Genesis 4:1, which narrates Cain's birth, is almost straightforward. It contains, nevertheless, the inevitable elements of incongruity and ambiguity which always stimulate the ingenuity of the interpreters and give rise to all sort of interpretations. The Hebrew text of Gen. 4:1 is usually translated: "And Adam (or "the man," because of the presence of the article האדם) knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain; and she said: קניתי איש את יהוה."

Eve's exclamation, which I have left untranslated, supplies us with a reasonably elaborate etymology of the name.[5] But the expression used is somehow incongruous because it designates the newborn babe

---

[3] New Testament scholars are divided as to the concrete meaning of the expression in this case. All of them recognise that ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ is the equivalent of the expression τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου ("children of the devil") of 1 John 3:10, who are the antithesis of the τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ ("children of God") of the same verse; but while some (for example, G. Strecker, *The Johannine Letters*, Hermeneia, Minneapolis, 1996, 105) interpret the expression in an ethical sense, in light of Origen (*Homily on Ezekiel* 9:1 "Omnis enim qui facit peccatum, ex diabolo natus est"), others (for example R.E. Brown, *The Epistles of John*. Anchor Bible, Garden City, 1982, 442–43) read the text in light of the Jewish Cainitic traditions. See T.C. de Kruif, "Nicht wie Kain (der) vom Büsen war . . . (1 Joh 3,13)," *Bijdragen* 41 (1980) pp. 47–63. On the related text from John 8:44, see N.A. Dahl, "Die Erstegenborene Satans und der Vater des Teufels (Polyk. 7:1 und Joh 8:44," in W. Eltestser (ed.), *Apophoreta: Festschrift Ernst Hänchen* (Berlin, 1964) pp. 70–84 and G. Reim, "John. 8:44— Gotteskinder-Teufelskinder," *NTS* 30 (1984) pp. 619–24.

[4] See Gerard P. Luttikhuizen's contribution in this volume, pp. 203–17.

[5] On the different explanations of the meaning of the name, see Karl Budde, "Die Erklärung des Names Kajin in Gen 4.1", *ZAW* 31 (1911) pp. 147–157.

neither with the usual designation of בן "son", nor with any other Hebrew word for a male child, but instead has her call the infant איש, "man." This incongruity, that in other Jewish and Christian interpretations would lead to further speculation on Cain's radiant countenance at the moment of his birth,[6] does not seem to have bothered the targumists particularly, since only the Targum Neofiti felt the need to change it to the more usual בר [written ביר in the margin], which is the Aramaic translation of the Hebrew בן, instead of translating it, as Onqelos does, with נברא.

What most bothered the Aramaic translators was the ambiguity produced by the use of the particle את. In Hebrew, את is very often simply the marker of the verb's object, as found in the same verse: האדם ידע את הוה, "And Adam knew Eve." Which means that if את is so interpreted, Eve's exclamation could be translated "I have acquired a man, YHWH," instead of the usual translation "I have acquired a man from the Lord." That this danger of misunderstanding the Hebrew sentence is not imaginary is proved by the Gnostics' interpretations, such as the one found in the *Apocryphon of John*, which makes Eve the mother of both Eloim and Yave, the two sons begotten on her by the supreme archon Yaldabaoth.[7]

---

[6] Such as the *Vita Adam et Eva* 21:3 "And she bore a son and he was lustrous. And at once, the infant rose, ran, and brought in his hands a reed and gave it to his mother. And his name was called Cain." (M.D. Johnson, "Life of Adam and Eve" in J.H. Charlesworth [ed.] *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Vol 2. [Garden City, 1985] p. 264); see J. Tromp, "Cain and Abel in the Greek and Armenian/ Georgian recensions of the 'Life of Adam and Eve,'" in G. Anderson, M. Stone and J. Tromp (eds.), *Literature on Adam and Eve. Collected Essays* (SVTP 15; Leiden 2000) pp. 277–296. A similar assertion is found in the *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* 21: "And she saw his likeness that it was not of the earthly beings, but of the heavenly beings, and she prophesied and said: 'I have gotten a man with the Lord.'" (G. Firedlander, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* [The Judaic Studies Library, 6: New York, 1981⁴] p. 151. James Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible* (Cambridge MA, 1998) p. 157, interprets the text of the *Pirke* giving to "man" the meaning of "angel": "It is this spectacle that causes her to opine, I guess I have acquired a "man" (that is, an angelic being) from some *angel of* the Lord."

[7] *The Apocryphon of John, Nag Hammadi Codex II*, 24:16–25: "And the chief archon seduced her and he begot in her two sons; the first and the second (are) Eloim and Yave . . . And these he called with the names Cain and Abel with a view to deceive," according to Frederik Wise's translation in J.M. Robinson (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Library* (Leiden, 1997) p. 112. On the complex Gnostic ideas on the origins of Cain and Abel, see Gedaliahu A.G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology* (NHS 24; Leiden, 1984) pp. 38–53, and G. Luttikhuizen's contribution in this volume, pp. 203–17.

The targumim, of course, tried to dispel this ambiguity by various means. Onqelos and Neofiti use קדם מן, "from before," to make clear that the Lord cannot be understood in apposition to "a man." In a similar manner, the LXX achieves the same result with the translation of את by διὰ: διὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, and the Vulgata with the use of *per: per Dominum*. Targum Neofiti, in addition to using מן קדם and translating איש not as נברא, like Onqelos, but directly as בר "a son," changes the verb into the passive form יתיהב לי, "there has been given to me," thus obtaining a smooth and safe translation that avoids all risks: "Behold, there has been given to me a son from before the Lord."

But the only surviving manuscript of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, (British Library Aramaic Additional MS 27031) provides us with a completely different translation of the passage, in which Eve's exclamation is missing. Its Aramaic text reads:[8]

ואדם ידע ית הוה איתתיה דהיא מתעברא מין סמאל מלאכא דה᾿

which can be rendered: "And Adam knew his wife Eve, who had conceived from Samael, the angel of YHWH."[9] The omission of Eve's exclamation from this translation could be a way of solving the problems discussed, of course, but it is most probably a simple scribal error. The *editio princeps* of 1591 by Asher Forins, which was based on a different manuscript, belonging to the Foa family of Reggio and now lost, had a different, and more complete text, with an additional phrase in the first part of the sentence, and with its own rendering of the exclamation. According to Roger Le Déaut,[10] who studied the relationship of the manuscript reproduced in the *editio princeps* with the London manuscript, both have so many common errors that, though representing two separate branches, they must have ultimately derived from the same archetype. We can therefore confidently use the *editio princeps* for our purpose, since the omission of Eve's exclamation in the London manuscript is best explained by homoioteleuton between the twice occurring מלאכא.

---

[8] According to the text edited in the *Polyglotta Matritensis*, IV:Targum Palestinense in Pentateuchum. L. 1 Genesis (Madrid, 1988) p. 29.

[9] For the role of Samael see M. Poorthuis' contribution in this volume, pp. 57–74.

[10] R. Le Déaut – J. Robert, *Targum du Pentateuch. Traduction des deux recensions palestiniennes complètes*. Vol. 1: Genèse (SC 245; Paris, 1978) pp. 33–34.

The complete Aramaic text reads:

ואדם ידע ואדם ית הוה ית איתתיה דהוא חמידת למלאכא והיא מתעברא מין
סמאל ואעדיאת ויילדת ית קין ואמרת קניתי לנברא ית מלאכא דה'

> And Adam knew his wife Eve, who had desired the angel, and she
> conceived from Samael, the angel of the Lord, and bore Cain; and
> she said: "I have acquired as man the angel of the Lord."

The two main points of this interpretation are clearly asserted in
both texts: Cain is not the son of Adam; he is the offspring of
Samael. But if we look at the Aramaic version carefully, several other
interesting interpretative elements come to the fore.

(1) Already at the beginning, through the addition of "who had
desired the angel," the meturgeman makes explicit that he has inter-
preted the verb ידע not as it was in the Hebrew text (that Adam
knew Eve, that is "Adam had intercourse with Eve"). In spite of
having kept the indication of the direct object ית, he has read it as
the assertion that Adam knew something about Eve, namely Eve's
sexual desire for the angel. The alternative translation of the London
manuscript text proposed by Michael Maher in the recent English
translation of Pseudo-Jonathan is thus perfectly correct, is spite of
the fact that in the London manuscript the addition was lost: "And
Adam knew that his wife Eve had conceived from Samael, the angel
of the Lord."[11] The same interpretation of the verb ידע is explicitly
stated in the *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* 21 when commenting on the begin-
ning of this verse: "Adam came to her, and she conceived Abel, as
it is said, 'And Adam knew Eve his wife.' What is the meaning of
'knew'? (He knew) that she had conceived."[12] This idea may also be
present in the targum Neofiti, because the translator changes the
characteristic ידע for חכם, a verb which does not have the sexual
connotations of ידע. Pseudo-Jonathan's addition prepares the reader
for the explicit assertion of Cain's paternity which follows. It goes
without saying that this interpretation of ידע in the phrase "And
Adam knew Eve his wife" is not the most usual explanation of this
verse in rabbinic tradition. *Genesis Rabbah* (21:9), for example, reads:
"When Adam saw that his descendants were fated to be consigned

---

[11] M. Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis* (The Aramaic Bible; Edinburgh,
1992) p. 31.
[12] Friedlander, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, p. 151.

to Gehenna, he refrained from procreation. But when he saw that after twenty-six generations Israel would accept the Torah, he applied himself to producing descendants; hence, 'And Adam knew Eve his wife.'"[13]

(2) The phrase of the *editio princeps* דהוא חמידת למלאכא "who had desired the angel" may be a faint echo of the complex tradition of the sexual character of the first sin we find in later rabbinic aggadah (the serpent aroused the desire of Eve "When the serpent came unto Eve he infused filthy lust into her", says *b. Abod. Zar.* 22b; see also *b. Yebam.* 103b, *b. Shabb.* 146a). But it can also allude to the inter-pretation of Genesis 4:1 in *Genesis Rabbah* just mentioned, to the lack of sexual relations between Adam and Eve for 130 years, and to Eve's resultant sexual frustration. We find the idea twice in the same *Genesis Rabbah* (in 20:11 and 24:6):[14]

> For R. Simon said: Throughout the entire one hundred and thirty years during which Adam held aloof from Eve the male demons were made ardent by her and she bore, while the female demons were inflamed by Adam and they bore, as it is written, "If he commit iniq-uity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the afflictions of the children of man-Adam" (2 Sam. 7:14), which means, the chil-dren of the first man.[15]

Be that as it may, Eve's phrase expressing her desire for the angel prepares the reader for the main point, the blunt assertion that fol-lows in the targum: that Samael fathered Cain. This child of Eve's is not Adam's son. This assertion is completely explicit, and needs no comment.

Can we trace how the meturgeman arrived at it? Is it eisegesis or exegesis? Is the translator importing a foreign story into the text in order to be able to explain Cain's later fate and his differences with his brother Abel, or is he attempting an exegesis of the Hebrew text, interpreting not only what the biblical text says, but also what the biblical text leaves unsaid? I feel that in this instance both may be true, and for both explanations we can find clues in the targum text itself.

---

[13] H. Freedman, *The Midrash Rabbah. Genesis* (Soncino; London, 1977), p. 179.
[14] Ibid., pp. 170 and 203.
[15] See further M. Poorthuis' contribution in this volume, pp. 57–74, esp. p. 58.

(3) As we will see below, when dealing with the motives for the dispute between Cain and Abel, the ancient interpreters' main problem was to explain Cain's evil conduct and his murderous deed, having been created good by God. The Biblical text has at least two different explanations of the presence of evil on earth: Eve and Adam's fall in the Garden of Genesis 3, and the story of the fallen angels who lust after the daughters of men of Genesis 6, further elaborated in the Enoch tradition. Curiously enough, the only other mention of Samael in the whole Targum Pseudo-Jonathan seems to indicate that the Targum tried to combine both explanations of the origin of evil. The first mention of Samael is clearly linked with the story of the fall in the Garden. In Pseudo-Jonathan's translation of Gen. 3:6, Samael, identified as the Angel of death, appears in the middle of Eve's dialogue with the serpent: וחמת איתתא תי סמאל מלאך מותא ודחילת, "And the woman saw Samael the angel of death and she was afraid . . ." In the translation of Gen. 4:1 the same Samael has intercourse with Eve, and, even more telling, the result of this union, Cain, is not only of mixed origin but of mixed nature, human and heavenly. This reveals itself most clearly if we accept the Maher translation of the Aramaic text of the *editio princeps* ("I have acquired a man, the angel of the Lord.")[16] But even in my own translation, the assertion of Cain's mixed nature resulting from the union of the heavenly partner and the human mother is clear.[17] Eve's son is "a man," but he is also "an angel of the Lord," as will be the mixed offspring of the fallen angels, the Giants of Genesis 6.

(4) But it is, in my view, equally clear that the meturgeman may also have arrived at his conclusion by way of exegesis. Not by exegesis of something said in the biblical text, but by exegesis of what is not said in it, of an *omission* in the text. This is a rather common exegetical procedure in rabbinic exegesis.[18] For example, some rabbinic

---

[16] M. Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, p. 31.

[17] In my translation, the meaning of Eve's exclamation is different to the one proposed by Mahler, since I give due value to the preposition *le-* clearly present in the text of the *editio princeps*, which means that the "angel of the Lord" is the direct object of the verb, preceded as such by ית: קניתי לגברא ית מלאכא דה ית, means either that Eve had acquired the angel as man (as sexual partner, which would repeat the assertion of the first part of the verse), or that she had acquired the angel as a son. In both cases, the assertion of the mixed nature of Cain, though indirect, is equally clear: he is of angelic origin.

[18] Cf. the observations made by L. Teugels below, pp. 47–56.

interpreters concluded that Cain and Abel were twin brothers from the fact that the expression "And Adam knew Eve" is not repeated after the birth of Cain in Gen 4:2,[19] while other exegetes concluded from the same omission that both Cain and Abel were born at the moment of the creation of their parents, on the sixth day of the creation.[20] The author of Pseudo-Jonathan is also prone to attributing meaning to things not said in the Biblical text, although it is not always clear which omission is the starting point of his exegesis. Fortunately, in this case the meturgeman makes the point explicit, not in the exegesis of our text, but a little later on, when translating Gen 5:3, the verse which narrates the birth of Seth. There he states that Cain did not resemble Adam and therefore was not his son, thus demonstrating that the absence from the birth of Cain of the expression used for the birth of Seth was an important factor in concluding that he was the son of an angel and not of Adam.[21] In the Hebrew text of Genesis 5:3 we read that Adam "begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth." Since this phrase is absent from Genesis 4:1, the meturgeman concluded that Cain, unlike Seth, was not born in Adam's likeness, and was thus not his offspring. Pseudo-Jonathan's Aramaic translation of Genesis 5:3 adds the following to the biblical text (here in italics):

> *When Adam had lived a hundred and thirty years he begot* Seth (the biblical text says *a son*) *who resembled his image and likeness.* For before that, Eve

---

[19] The biblical text simply says that "she bore again his brother Abel," without expressly saying that Adam knew Eve and that she conceived. *Gen. Rab.* 22:3 *"And again (wa-tosef) she bore his brother Abel."* (Gen 4:2) This supports what R. Joshua b. Karhah said: "They ascended the bed two and descended seven, for *and she again bore* implies an additional birth, but not an additional pregnancy." Freedman, *Midrash Rabbah. Genesis*, 181.

[20] This is asserted in *Gen. Rab.* 22:2 as explanation of the biblical phrase "And she conceived and bore Cain" of Gen 4:1: 'R. Eleazar b. Azariah said: "Three wonders were performed on that day: on that very day they were created, on that very day they cohabited, and on that very day they produced offspring." In *Gen. Rab.* 24:7 the same explanation is offered as exegesis of the phrase "In the day God created man" of Gen 5:1. Freedman, *Midrash Rabbah. Genesis*, pp. 180 and 204. *Pirke de R. Eliezer* 11, is even more precise, since it determines even the precise hour of sixth day where everything happened: "The day had twelve hours; in the first . . . in the ninth (hour) they went up to (their) couch as two and descended as four." Friedlander, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, pp. 77–78.

[21] A similar development can be found in several Gnostic writings, see Stroumsa, *Another Seed*, pp. 49–53.

had borne Cain, who was not from him and who did not resemble him. Abel was killed by Cain, and Cain was banished, and his descendants are not recorded in the book of the genealogy of Adam. But afterwards he begot one who resembled him *and he called his name Seth.*

That both eisegesis and exegesis are present in the background of our targumic text can be illustrated with a quote from the *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* 21, a text related in several ways to our Targum,[22] where both elements appear together:

> Just as with this garden (the text is talking of Eden) whatever is sown therein, it produces and brings forth, so (with) this woman, what seed she receives, she conceives and bears through sexual intercourse. Riding on the serpent came to her, and she conceived Cain,[23] as it is said: Adam knew Eve his wife. What is the meaning of "knew"? (He knew) that she had conceived. And she saw his likeness that it was not of the earthly beings, but of the heavenly beings, and she prophesied and said: "I have gotten a man with the Lord."[24]

The father of Cain in this text remains anonymous. The "he" is the devil, of course, riding on the serpent. Giving the devil a name, Samael, is most probably a late development, since it is only attested to in this Targum,[25] as may also be making a half-caste of Cain. Not completely angel, but certainly not human, a real "bastard" in all senses of the word.

---

[22] On the relationship of the *Pirke* and Pseudo-Jonathan, see Miguel Pérez Fernández, *Los capítulos de Rabbí Eliezer* (Biblioteca Midrásica 1; Valencia, 1984) pp. 31–36, and Robert Hayward, "Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan," *JJS* 42 (1991) pp. 215–288.

[23] In its first edition, Friedlander's translation adds "afterwards Adam came to her, and she conceived Abel" with the Jalkut and the Zohar.

[24] Friedlander, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, pp. 150–151.

[25] The identification of the father of Cain with Samael appears, but only implicitly, in two Nag Hammaadi tractates, since Samael is one of the three names given to the archon who fathered both Cain and Abel. In the already quoted *Apocryphon of John* we find: "Now the archon who is weak has three names. The first name is Yaltabaoth, the second is Saklas, and the third is Samael." (11:18) Similarly, in the *Trimorphic Protennoia* it is said of "the great Demon who rules over the lowest part of the underworld" that "he is called 'Saklas,' that is, 'Samael,' 'Yaltabaoth.'" (39:20–25).

2. *Eve's Daughters*[26]

The Aramaic translation of the first part of Genesis 4:2 in the Targum
Pseudo-Jonathan contains two interesting additions to the Hebrew
text (in italics in the translation):

> ואוסיפת למיליד מן בעלה אדם ית תיומתיה וית הבל, "And again *from Adam
> her husband* she bore *his twin sister and* Abel."

Since Adam had no part in the conception and birth of Cain in
Pseudo-Jonathan, the meturgeman needs to introduce him anew as
an actor, in order to present him in the first addition as the real
father of Abel. This addition is thus a direct consequence of his
attributing the paternity of Cain to Samael. The second addition is
the introduction of Abel's twin sister. According to Pseudo-Jonathan,
Eve gave birth not only to the two sons mentioned in the Biblical
text, but also to a daughter.

Apparently, our Targum is simply alluding to a well-know tradi-
tion here. Since the Bible is completely silent on the birth of any
daughter of Adam and Eve at this early juncture (only later, in Gen.
5:4, will she give birth to the anonymous "sons and daughters"), the
question of how their earlier sons could have married during the
130 years which had elapsed between their birth and the birth of
Seth was unavoidable. *Jubilees* is (as Van Ruiten notices)[27] the old-
est source that gives Adam and Eve named daughters ('Awan, in
4:1, who will become the wife of Cain in 4:9, and Azura in 4:8,
who will become the wife of Seth in 4:11) as a solution to this prob-
lem. Pseudo-Philo *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* called this first daugh-
ter *Noaba* (1:1), and mentions also further "fillios duodecim et filias
octo" (1:2) whose names are detailed as explanations of the "sons
and daughters" of Gen 5:4, though the list of names which follows
in *LAB* 1:3–4 contains only nine male names (the number of chil-
dren given by *Jub* 4:10) and seven female. The question of the names
of the sons and daughters is rather complicated; Jacobson[28] has a

---

[26] See also L. Teugels' contribution to this volume, pp. 47–56.

[27] J.A.T.G.M. van Ruiten, *Primaeval History Interpreted. The Rewriting of Genesis 1–11
in the Book of Jubilees* (JSJS 66; Leiden, 2000) p. 136, n. 42; cf. also his contribu-
tion to this volume, above, pp. 3–26, esp. p. 15.

[28] Howard Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum.
With Latin Text and English Translation* (AGJUC 31; Leiden, 1996) pp. 282–83, discusses

very detailed account of all variations, but this question need not distract us here, since neither Pseudo-Jonathan nor the other Targumim gave a name to the twin sister. What is interesting is precisely this silence on the matter of names. Since Pseudo-Jonathan is fond of giving names to the characters he introduces, the omission of the daughter's name is a telling indication, in my view, that the meturgeman in this case is only summarizing a well-known interpretation.

Equally interesting (and traditional) is the exegetical method followed by the targumist in order to insert this tradition into his translation. The Hebrew text has a double את, before "his brother" and before "Abel" (את אחיו את הבל), and this is the peg on which the Aramaic translation is hung: ית תיומתיה וית הבל. Since, to our targumist, Cain and Abel are not full brothers, he cannot afford a literal translation of the Hebrew text and translates the Hebrew "his brother" as תיומתיה "his twin sister." Since the meturgeman has retained the third person masculine pronoun present in the Hebrew word for brother, the resulting sentence is rather ambiguous. In the Aramaic text, the nearest referent for the suffix is "Adam her husband," but obviously, the daughter cannot be a twin sister of his father. James Kugel's translation of the Aramaic phrase[29] takes the referent as Cain, inserting his name between brackets, but no reason is given for this interpretation. Jacobson also understands our targum in the same way, and suggests that Noaba may even be Cain's twin sister, but his reasons are not compelling.[30]

---

the various names of Adam's daughters and suggests that the name could have been Noama, taken over from the attested name of the wife of Tuval-Cain of Gen. 4:24. On the names of Eve's daughters see A. Marmorstein, "Die Namen der Schwestern Kains und Abels in der midraschichen und in der apokryphen Literatur," *ZAW* 25 (1905) pp. 141–144, and S. Poznanski, "Zur den Namen der Frauen Kain's and Abel's," *ZAW* 25 (1905) pp. 340–342.

[29] James L. Kugel, *The Bible As It Was* (Cambridge, MA, 1997) p. 87 and *Traditions of the Bible. A Guide to the Bible As It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge, MA, 1998) 148: "And she additionally bore from Adam her husband his [Cain's] twin sister and Abel."

[30] "Though one might understand otherwise, it appears that Targ. Jon (supra) offers a rendition that only gives a twin to Cain. This of course makes sense, not merely because strictly speaking it is only the first-born who needs a female sibling in order to propagate, but also because, since Abel will have no children, the need for the introduction of a sibling/wife is reduced." *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, p. 283. But these arguments overlook the fact that many other texts explicitly assign siblings to both brothers. His argument to consider Noaba as a twin sister of Cain is solely based on the order in which the names

It seems more straightforward to me to understand the masculine suffix as proleptic, and to consider the unnamed girl as Abel's twin sister, who is named after her. In fact, considering her as Cain's twin sister seems positively ruled out by the fact that the targumist has asserted in the previous verse that the father of Cain is Samael. For Pseudo-Jonathan, Cain and Abel are not full brothers, and the Aramaic word used to designate the girl תיומתא/תיומא, "twin", can only refer to full brothers, such as Esau and Jacob in Gen 25:24, or Peretz and Zerah, the twin sons of Judah and Tamar in Gen. 38:27, where the same word is used in the targum.[31] This point is of some significance to the further development of the story, as we will see below.

As described above, the meturgeman's exegetical peg was again the repetition of את in the Hebrew text of Genesis 4:2, which indicated for him a double birth. This exploitation of repetition in the biblical text is very common in rabbinical exegesis, and *Genesis Rabbah* 22:2 gives us a perfect example, since in this passage the את which appears in Genesis 4:1 is also understood as implying that a twin sister was born together with Cain:

> *And She conceived and bore Cain* (4:1). R. Eleazar b. Azariah said: Three wonders were performed on that day: on that very day they were created, on that very day they cohabited, and on that very day they produced offspring. R. Joshua b. Karhah said: Only two entered the bed, and seven left it: Cain and his twin sister, Abel and his two twin sisters.[32]

Cain having only one twin sister while Abel has two is the direct conclusion of the use of one את in 4:1 and of two את in 4:2. Joshua b. Karhah (as is stated in *Genesis Rabbah* 22:3) interpreted the *watosef* "and again" of the biblical text as referring to "an additional birth, but not to an additional pregnancy," implying that Abel and Cain were conceived simultaneously and were, thus, twin brothers,

---

appeared in LAB. Having noted that LAB, after having said that Adam and Eve had *tres filios et una filiam*, mentions Noaba in second place and not last as expected, it concludes: "This likely means that Noaba is in her proper chronological order, born after Cain, and perhaps even Cain's twin." *Ibid.*

[31] These are the only occurrences of the word in Pseudo-Jonathan, according to E.G. Clark *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch: Text and Concordance* (Hoboken, New Jersey, 1984) p. 600.

[32] Freedman, *Midrash Rabbah. Genesis*, p. 180; see also the dicussion by L. Teugels, below, pp. 48 f.

as is stated explicitly by Rabbi Joseph in the *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* 21.[33] Hence, the seven leaving the bed in *Gen. Rab.* To our targumist, "and again" is a completely new pregnancy with a different father, this time Adam, and therefore his conclusion is that only four left the bed at that instance (Adam, Eve, Abel and his sister). The exegetical procedure followed is identical in all these cases.

This solution to the problem of Cain and Abel's marriages presented fundamental problems to the Rabbis in light of the prohibition of incestuous unions in Leviticus 20:17.[34] This do not seem to have bothered our meturgeman particularly in this case, which is rather strange since, in the translation of Lev. 20:17, both Neofiti and Pseudo-Jonathan add a gloss in which the first humans are explicitly exempted from the prohibition of incest in order to fill the world.[35] In our text, instead, the translator simply ignores the necessarily incestuous character of the relationship. But the daughter (or the daughters) of Eve will play an important role in some of the texts which deal with the motives for the dispute between Cain and Abel, the third point of this paper.

---

[33] Friedlander, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, 152: "Rabbi Joseph said: Cain and Abel were twins, as it is said, 'And she conceived, and bore (with) Cain'" (Gen 4:1) At that hour she had additional capacity for child-bearing (as it is said), "And she *continued* to bear his brother Abel." The same conclusion is already stated in *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezzer* 11: "at the ninth (hour) they went up to (their) couch as two and descended as four." Friedlander, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, p. 78

[34] Friedlander, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, p. 152: "Rabbi Miasha said: Cain was born, and his wife, his twin sister, with him. (The Oxford MS adds: Abel was born, and with him his twin sister). Rabbi Simeon said to him: Has it not already been said, 'And if a man shall take his sister, his father's daughter, or his mother's daughter, and see her nakedness, and she see his nakedness; it is a shameful thing?' (Lev. 20:17) From these words know that there were no other women whom they could marry, and these were permitted to them, as it is said, 'For I have said, The world shall be built up by love.'" (Ps. 89:2).

[35] Neofiti Lev. 20:17 reads "And any man who takes (as wife) his sister, his father's daughter, or his mother's daughter, and sees her nakedness, and she sees his nakedness, this was a favour I did the first (men) for the building of the world. But since them, all who do so shall be blotted out before the eyes of the children of their people. He has dishonoured the nakedness of his sister; he shall receive (the punishment of) his sin." Pseudo-Jonathan is even more precise, giving a double translation of חסד and introducing a reference to the giving of the Law: "And any man who has a sexual relation with his sister, his father's daughter or his mother's daughter and he despise her nakedness, and she despise his nakedness, it is a shameful thing; because I did a favour to the first men so that the world would be fill with them before the law was given; but after the law has been given to the world, all who do so shall be exterminated by a plague and the children of their people shall see his punishment. Since he has despised the nakedness of his sister, he will receive (the punishment of) his own sin."

3. *The Dispute between Cain and Abel*

The Biblical text of Genesis 4:8 says: "Cain said to Abel," but fails to record what Cain actually said to his brother. All the old versions fill in this omission, of course.[36] However, since the biblical text also fails to explain why Abel's offer was more acceptable to God than Cain's offer, it is not surprising that the Palestinian Targumim insert at this point a theological debate between the brothers in which this omission is clarified and in which Cain's mistaken theological opinions are explained. The conclusion of the debate is the death of Abel, and the Targumim suggest that Cain killed Abel because of their differing theological opinions, thus exculpating the Almighty of all possible blame. Some scholars see in the debate a reflection of the theological disputes between different schools at a particular moment (a polemic against those who believed there were two powers in heaven, an attack against the Epicureans, against the Sadducees and Pharisees' disputes on the world to come, and so on) while other scholars believe that the different targumic versions represent different polemic situations in different epochs. This theological debate, concentrated on targumic glosses to Gen 4:7–8, has been studied so intensely that there is no point in researching it again here.[37] I will only underline that it has considerably helped the trans-

---

[36] LXX: Διέλθωμεν εἰς τὸ πεδίον "Let us go out into the plain;" Vulgata: *egrediamur foras* "let us go out outside;" Neofiti: איתה תרינן לאפי ברא "Come, let the two of us go out into the open field;" Pseudo Jonathan: איתא תיפוק תרוין לברא "Come, let the two of us go out to the field."

[37] Among the most important studies on the passage, see P. Grelot, "Les targums du Pentateuque: Etude comparative d'après Gèse IV, 3–16," *Semitica* 9 (1959) pp. 59–88; R. Le Déaut, "Traditions targumiques dans le corpus paulinien?" *Biblica* 42 (1961) pp. 28–48; G. Vermes, "The Targumic Versions of Genesis IV 3–16," *The Annual of Leeds University Oriental Society* 3 (1961–62) [Leiden, 1963] pp. 81–114, reprint in *Post-Biblical Jewish Studies* (Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 8; Leiden, 1975) pp. 82–126; M. McNamara, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch* (AnBib 27; Rome 1966) pp. 155–160; J. Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature* (Cambridge, 1969) pp. 32–140; S. Issenberg, "An Anti-Sadducee Polemic in the Palestinian Targum Tradition," *HTR* 63 (1970) pp. 433–444; G.J. Kuiper, "Targum pseudo-Jonathan: A Study of Genesis 4:7–10:16," *Augustinianum* 10 (1970) pp. 533–570; E. Levine, "The Syriac Version of Gen. IV 1–6," *VT* 26 (1976) pp. 70–80; B. Chilton, "A Comparative Study of Synoptic Development: The Dispute between Cain and Abel in the Palestinian Targums and the Beelzebub Controversy in the Gospels," *JBL* 101 (1982) pp. 553–562; J.M. Bassler, "Cain and Abel in the Palestinian Targums. A Brief Note on an Old Controversy," *JSJ* 17 (1986) pp. 56–64. M.L. Klein, *Genizah Manuscripts of Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch* (Cincinnati, 1986), published for the first time two new tosefta fragments of the dispute: J.T.S.

formation of Cain and Abel respectively into symbols of good and evil, righteousness and wickedness. The different textual witnesses each accent a different element: Targum Neofiti emphasizes Abel's righteous deeds, the Epistle to the Hebrews, his faith, Pseudo-Jonathan, his mercy. For other witnesses, such as the Leningrad manuscript,[38] the partiality is the central topic; for Onqelos, that Cain can be forgiven, for other texts, that justice and just reward will come in the future world, etc. All of these interpretations contribute to the mythologizing of this first crime in human history, transforming it into a symbol of the perennial conflict between good and evil, a development already anticipated in Pseudo-Jonathan's making Cain the son of Samael.

But not all rabbinic traditions focus on these high theological problems. Sometimes, more earthly reasons are given as explanation for the brothers' dispute. The *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* 21 reads:

> Rabbi Zadok said: A great hatred entered Cain's heart against his brother Abel, because his offering had been accepted. Not only (on this account), but also because Abel's twin-sister was the most beautiful of women, and he desired her in his heart. Moreover he said: I will slay Abel my brother, and I will take his twin-sister from him, as it is said, "And it came to pass when they were in the field" (Gen 4:8) "In the field" means woman, who is compared to a field.[39]

In this text, Cain's desire for Abel's twin sister is brought to the fore in conjunction with the only possible biblical motive for the hatred between the brothers (Cain's offerings not being accepted by God). It is clear that in the opinion of Rabbi Zadok, only one woman was available for the two brothers, and this was what provoked the dispute and its fatal end: the first human crime was the result of a fight for a woman. The exegetical peg used to bring this motive into the text is rather contrived and far fetched in this case, but by introducing this motive, R. Zaddok avoid the pitfalls of theological discussions and excludes divine responsibility for this first murder, making it a very human affair. Perhaps for this reason, the same explanation is found in several other texts. In *Gen. Rab.* 22:7 it comes in

---

[605] (ENA 2578), f. 26b (pp. 10–11, plate 101) and C.U.L. T-S NS 184.81r (pp. 10–11, plate 154), but they do not add anything substantial to the other witnesses.

[38] The manuscript Leningrad Antonin 739, published by P. Kahle, *Masoreten des Westens* II (Stuttgart, 1930) pp. 6–7.

[39] Friedlander, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, p. 154; cf. also L. Teugels, below, p. 56.

two different forms; as a quarrel to possess the first Eve,[40] and as a quarrel to possess the only daughter of Adam and Eve.[41]

> *And Cain spoke unto Abel his brother, etc.* (Gen 4:8). About what did they quarrel? "Come," said they, "let us divide the world." One took the land and the other the movables. The former said, "The land you stand on is mine," while the latter retorted, "What you are wearing is mine." One said: "Strip"; the other retorted: "Fly [off the ground]." Out of this quarrel, *Cain rose up against his brother Abel, etc.* R. Joshua of Siknin said in R. Levi's name: Both took land and both took movables, but about what did they quarrel? One said, "The Temple must be built in my area," while the other claimed, "It must be built in mine." For thus it is written, *And it came to pass, when they were in the field.* Now "field" refers to nought but the Temple, as you read, *Zion [i.e. the Temple] shall be plowed as a field* (Micah 3:12). Out of this argument, *Cain rose up against his brother Abel, etc.* Judah b. Rabbi said: Their quarrel was about the first Eve. Said R. Aibu: The first Eve had returned to dust. Then about what was their quarrel? Said R. Huna: An additional twin was born with Abel, and each claimed her. The one claimed: "I will have her, because I am the firstborn"; while the other maintained: "I must have her, because she was born with me."[42]

The spectrum of motives presented in this text is more diversified, and the authorities disagree fundamentally among them. The first argument reflects the quarrel between farmers and herdsmen (Cain was "tiller of the land" and the Abel "keeper of the sheep" according to the biblical text), and the division of possessions between the two sons. R. Levi denies that one brother had taken all the land and the other all the movables, and since they divided both among themselves there should have been no economic grounds for quarrel.

---

[40] Understood either as Lilith, Adam's first wife according to some traditions, or as Eve in the process of being created, whose sight made Adam flee, according to the interpretation of Gen 2:23 found in *Gen. Rab.* 18:4 "*And the man said: This is now (zoth ha-pa'am) etc.* R. Juda b. Rabbi said: At first He created her for him and he saw full of discharge and blood; thereupon He removed her from him and recreated her a second time. Hence he said: *This time she is bone of my bone.*" (Freedman, *Midrash Rabbah. Genesis*, 142). The tradition of the two Eves is exegetically grounded on the expression used in the Biblical text: זאת הפעם, understood as "this time" and implying consequently that the other time the Eve created by God was not the same as this one.

[41] In these two texts, the fight occurs in a three person context, but as we shall see, this motive appears even within traditions with a four persons context, in which two women are available for the two brothers.

[42] Freedman, *Midrash Rabbah. Genesis*, 187; the last part of this text is also quoted by L. Teugels, below, p. 53.

R. Aibu denies that the first Eve was still alive, excluding this shad-owy figure as a motive. There remains, therefore, as sole motive the right of ownership of the future temple and Abel's unnamed twin sister. God is totally absent, and the acceptance or refusal of the brothers' offerings is kept totally silent.

In Klein's edition of the *Geniza Manuscripts of Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*, there is a series of *toseftot*[43] which give a more devel-oped version of the discussion.[44] It seems fitting to close with this text, because there the protagonists are not only Cain and Abel but also their twin sisters.[45]

The first seven lines of the recto of the manuscript (Oxford Bodleian Ms. Beb. c 74), after quoting the opening of Gen 4:8 "And Cain said," combine elements known from the other targumic disputes, both over justice and retribution and over the two brothers' offerings, which result in the death of Abel. In line 7 a new *tosefta* begins with a quotation from Gen 4:7, but almost directly reverts to the dispute between Cain and Abel, summarizing the second part of the classical dispute on retribution and the future world:

> Cain answered and said to his brother Abel: There is neither Justice nor Judge, nor is there any world besides this one. Abel answered him [and said:] There is Jus[tice, and there is] a Judge, and there is another world, for the requiting of the evil and the good (lines 7–8)

But instead of finishing the dispute with the murder of Abel, as in Neofiti or Pseudo-Jonathan had done ("Cain rose up against Abel his brother and drove a stone into his forehead and killed him"), this *tosefta* continues with a text which retells in great detail the divi-sion of the possessions between the two brothers, recalling the already quoted text of *Gen. Rab.* 22:7:

---

[43] A *tosefta* is an expansive passage of aggadic midrash which has its source in the Palstinian-Targum tradition, but has been preserved either in separate collec-tions of *tosaftot* under the title "Tosefta" or "additional Targum," or has been inserted into Onqelos manuscripts at the biblically correct point.

[44] The *tosefta* was already partially published by Ginsburger, *Das Fragmententhargum* (Berlin 1889) pp. 71–72 and was also partially transcribed in M.L. Klein, "Targumic Toseftot from the Cairo Genizah," in D. Muñoz León (ed.) *Salvación en la Palabra. Targum—Derash—Berith. En memoria del profesor Alejandro Díez Macho* (Madrid 1986) pp. 409–418 (note 14, pp. 414–415). Klein, *Genizah Manuscripts of Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*, pp. 10–15, plates 118–119 provides the full edition of the manuscript, Oxford Bodleian Heb c 74.

[45] The text is quoted in the translation of Klein, *Genizah Manuscripts of Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*, p. 11.

> At that moment [Cain] considered what he might do to him, but found nothing [suitable]. Afterwards his wrath subsided, and he said to Abel: Now, let there not b[e a quarrel] between me and you; separate from me and take the flock as your lot. Said Abel to him: [All that] I desire is a f[air] division. [After] Abel had gone to his sheep and departed from Cain, Cain thought it over and said: What have I done? The summer [month] will pa[ss], and [I] will have no milk to drink and no wool to wear. He began to pursue him, and he overtook him, and said [to him: This is not] a fair division. You take half of the flock and half of the land; and I will take half of the flock and ha[lf] of the land. Said Abel to him: Do as you please. [And] they made the division at that moment. Abel said to him: This is an equal division which is done in fairness; [and] Abel went on his way. Cain [then] tried to graze his portion of the she[ep]. But found he was unable to graze sheep, and [thereby] neglect working the land. He [then] went to Abel, and said: There is another fairer [division] than this; you take the flock as your lot and I shall take the land as my lot. Abel agreed to go along with Cain's desire. (lines 9–18)

The story has now arrived back at the first point. Abel went along with every one of Cain's proposals: the three tentative divisions of the common possessions, land and flock, are not presented as alternatives (as in *Gen. Rab.*) but as successive proposals from Cain to which Abel agreed in any case. The matter seems resolved in a satisfactory way for everybody. However, the text goes further and brings up an old grudge of Cain's against Abel:

> Now, Cain had been bearing a grudge against Abel from before this, because Abel's [twin] sister was Cain's wife, and she was not as good looking as Cain's [twin] sister who was Abel's wife. When Cain recalled what was in his heart, he said: Now I have fou[nd] an opportunity for my hatred (?). He ran after him, and sai[d] to him: Get off my land, which I have taken as my lot. Abel could not find any place to go to. (lines 18–21)

The real motive, therefore, for Cain's hatred was not a theological dispute, nor even the deception, because his sacrifices were not agreeable to God, as in the Biblical text, but the "old grudge," the jealousy for the beauty of his brother's wife, his own twin sister. The author of the *tosefta* believes that each brother has his own twin sister and in order to minimize the incest, he makes each brother marry the twin sister of the other. There should be no need for a quarrel, since each brother has his own wife. But the beauty of Eve's daughters is the core of the matter, as in Gen 6:2. Like a writer of modern detective fiction, the author of the *tosefta* "cherche la femme"

in order to uncover the source of the conflict. By using the very earthly motive of coveting his brother's wife as the source of Cain's hatred for Abel, he is able to avoid all the theological pitfalls associated with why the offerings of one were accepted and not the sacrifices of the other. Besides, the author is a good writer, who, with a keen sense of drama, partially reverses the roles of the biblical characters. In the biblical text the curse of Cain is "a fugitive and a vagabond shall you be on the earth" (Gen 4:12 and 14); by casting Abel now, the future victim, in the role of one who "could not find any place to go," he prepares the reader for the coming punishment. But, for the moment, we have an Abel errant, yet very much alive; his death is still to come. However, since Cain's crime is supposed to be the first death on earth, he cannot describe him as already expert in killing. He could have made recourse to the stone of the Targumim, but its use would also need to be explained. The author was ingenious enough to also find an original solution to this problem:

> And he (Cain) did not know where to strike him. He looked about here and there, until he saw two birds fighting; and one rose up against the other, and struck it on its mouth, and its blood spurted out until it died. Cain took a lesson from it, and did the same to Abel [his] brother. Then seeing that he was dead, he feared that his father would demand [Abel] from him; and he did not know what to do. Looking up, he saw the bird that had killed its fellow putting its mouth to the ground; and it dug [a hole], and buried the other dead one, and covered it with earth. At that moment, Cain did the same to Abel, so that [his father] might not find him. (lines 21–26)

The drama is closed, but in a minor tone. The figure of Cain that comes out of this Aramaic *tosefta* is quite different from the one we have gleaned from Targum Pseudo-Jonathan. Cain is no son of the devil, nor a personification of evil itself. He comes across from the narrative as a clumsy character, more stupid than really bad, one who does not really know what he wants, nor how to proceed once he has decided to let his old hatred guide his actions. He is, like Abel and the two twin sisters, simply a child of Eve.

This page intentionally left blank

THE TWIN SISTERS OF CAIN AND ABEL: A SURVEY OF THE RABBINIC SOURCES

Lieve M. Teugels

Adam and Eve's firstborn twins, Cain and Abel, are the subject of many a rabbinic commentary.[1] Cain, the first biblical brother-murderer, especially intrigued the ancient Jewish interpreters. With regard to Cain's birth, it is related that either Satan conceived him; or the serpent that visited his mother in the Garden of Eden.[2] It is also taught that he was born as a full-grown male. These interpretations are based on indications in the biblical text. They come to explain why Genesis 4:1 has Eve say: "I have gotten a man with the Lord". To a close reader, this exclamation by the young mother raises several questions: Why does she call her newborn baby "a man"? And why does she explicitly state that she got him "with the Lord"? One of the possible answers to the first question—not found in a rabbinic source but in another early Jewish text—is that Cain looked and acted like a grown-up man.[3] A popular answer to the second question, found in several rabbinic sources, is that "with the Lord"

---

[1] "Rabbinic" refers to the literature composed by the rabbinic Sages in about the 3rd–10th century c.e. This is the formative literature of Judaism up to this day. It consists of the Mishnah, the Tosefta, the Palestinian and the Babylonian Talmudim and various Midrashim. The various Targumim, i.e. the authorative interpretative translations of the Hebrew Bible into Aramaic, are usually not reckoned as rabbinic literature in the strict sense but are closely related to the rabbinic sources, especially with regard to the aggadic (= narrative) traditions included in them. Therefore they are also treated in this paper. For an introduction to rabbinic literature, see G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 2nd English edition, Edinburgh 1996. For an introduction to Targum, see e.g. Ph.S. Alexander, "Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scripture", in M.J. Mulder (ed.), *Mikra. Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, (CRINT II,1), Assen-Maastricht, 1988, 217–253. For general overviews and references to the various rabbinic and other ancient Jewish and Christian commentaries dealing with Cain and Abel see L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, Philadelphia 1909–38, Vol. 5, p. 138 and 145; V. Aptowitzer, *Kain und Abel*, Wien & Leipzig, 1922, and, more recently, J.L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible. A Guide to the Bible As It Was at the Start of the Common Era*, Cambridge (Mas.) 1998, pp. 146–169.
[2] Cf. David M. Eichhorn, *Cain: Son of the Serpent*, New York, 1957, esp. 27–29.
[3] *Life of Adam and Eve* 21:3 Latin and Armenian version (Cf. G.A. Anderson & M.E. Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*. Second Revised Edition, Atlanta (GA) 1999, 24).

should be read as shorthand for "with the angel of the Lord", i.e. Satan.[4]

Twin Sisters

More remarkable are the rabbinic interpretations that accumulate the amount of children borne by Eve at her first birthing. The following passage is taken from the classical and well-known rabbinic Midrash[5] on Genesis, *Genesis Rabbah*:[6]

> *And she conceived and bore Cain* (Gen 4:1). R. Elazar b. 'Azariah said: Three wonders were performed on that day: on that very day they were created, on that very day they cohabited, and on that very day they produced offspring. R. Joshua b. Karhah said: Only two entered the bed, and seven left it: Cain and his twin sister, Abel and his two twin sisters.
>
> (*Genesis Rabbah 22:2*)

A variant to this midrash, in BT Sanhedrin 38b, reads that "on the eighth day, they ascended as two and descended as four".[7] This most

---

[4] E.g. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Gen 4:1; *Pirke Rabbi Eliezer* 21; cf. the discussion by F. García Martinez, above, pp. 28–35.

[5] I use "midrash" in the lower case for the "genre" of rabbinic interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, and for a unit or a passage of such biblical interpretation contained in a rabbinic work. "Midrash", with a capital, refers to an entire work of midrash, such as *Genesis Rabbah*. For an introduction to the phenomenon "midrash" and the various rabbinic Midrashim, I refer to Stemberger, *Introduction* (note 1), 233–359. See also my "Midrasj in, en, op de bijbel? Kritische kanttekeningen bij het onkritische gebruik van een term", *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 49 (1995) 273–290. For more examples of midrash and its reading, see my "The Creation of the Human in Rabbinic Literature", in G.P. Luttikhuizen (ed.), *The Creation of Man and Woman* (Themes in Biblical Narrative, 3), Leiden 2000, 107–127, esp. 107. In this paper I use the following abbreviations: GenR = Genesis Rabbah; BT = Babylonian Talmud; PT = Palestinian Talmud; Tg. = Targum; PRE = *Pirke Rabbi Eliezer*.

[6] For *Genesis Rabbah*, I give the so-called Soncino translation: H. Freedman – M. Simon, *The Midrash Rabbah*, London, 1961. The text is also quoted by García Martinez, above, p. 38.

[7] The whole passage in the Bavli reads as follows: "R. Joḥanan b. Ḥanina said: The day consisted of twelve hours. In the first hour, his [Adam's] dust was gathered; in the second, it was kneaded into a shapeless mass. In the third, his limbs were shaped; in the fourth, a soul was infused into him; in the fifth, he arose and stood on his feet; in the sixth, he gave [the animals] their names; in the seventh, Eve became his mate; in the eighth, they ascended to bed as two and descended as four; in the ninth, he was commanded not to eat of the tree, in the tenth, he sinned; in the eleventh, he was tried, and in the twelfth he was expelled [from Eden] and departed, for it is written, *Man abideth not in honour* (Ps. 69:13)." See my

probably just refers to the conception and possibly the birth of Cain and Abel. The Tosafot, however—these are medieval commentaries to the Babylonian Talmud, printed in the standard editions of the Talmud—state that this refers to Cain and his twin-sister, and that Abel and his twin-sisters were only born later. We will return to this explanation when discussing the continuation of our text in *Genesis Rabbah*.[8]

The Ways of the Midrash[9]

Either way, no twin sisters of Cain and Abel are mentioned in the biblical account. They are entirely the product of midrashic creativity. Their "calling into life", is, as is the rule in midrash, based on two factors: hermeneutics and homiletics. First, midrash is based on indications in the biblical texts that serve as "triggers" or "pegs" for its interpretation. This is sometimes called the "exegetical" aspect of midrash. The exegetical or hermeneutical function of midrash is crucial and should not be overlooked, as interpretation of the Hebrew Bible is what midrash itself claims to be.[10] Admittedly, the rabbis had different ideas than present-day academic exegetes about the nature, aims, and norms of biblical interpretation. This is no reason, however, to downplay—as is done by many scholars in the past and today—the principal hermeneutic purpose of midrash.[11] Midrash is based on a whole arsenal of hermeneutic techniques, some explicit and some implicit, some unique to midrash and some shared with Hellenistic or early Christian interpreters.[12] One needs to become

---

discussion of this passage in "The Creation of the Human" (above, n. 5), p. 116. All translation from the Babylonian Talmud in this paper are according to the Soncino Translation: J. Epstein, e.a. (eds.), *The Babylonian Talmud*, 34 vols., London 1935–1952.

[8] See note 18.

[9] See the following note.

[10] Cf. Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*, Bloomington 1990, p. 4: "midrash is encoded as biblical interpretation". Boyarin refers here to the ideas of Isaac Heinemann, *Darkhe ha-Aggadah* (Lit.: The "ways" or "methods" of the Aggadah), Jerusalem 1949 (see also note 27 infra). Boyarin gives his own, similar, ideas on the matter on p. 5: "I am asserting that we will not read midrash well and richly until we understand it first and foremost as *reading*, as hermeneutic."

[11] See Teugels, "The Creation of the Human", 120–121.

[12] About rabbinic hermeneutic techniques and rules, see e.g. Stemberger, *Introduction*, 15–30; "Hermeneutics" in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 8, 366–372; "Hermeneutics, Early Rabbinic" in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* Vol. 3. 154–155. About the affinities between

familiar with these techniques, and the intricacies of midrash in general, to learn to recognize and appreciate them.

The second factor that determines midrash are its didactic, philosophical and homiletic concerns. Besides, or rather simultaneous with, its hermeneutic enterprise, midrash has the function of educating, comforting and stimulating its audience, whether students in the *bet midrash* or a general audience in the synagogue.[13] It answers questions that people ask when reading the Bible. Especially in rabbinic times when the Bible played a very central role in every day life, biblical interpretation was a means of educating and exhorting people. This side of midrash entails interpretations that, from a present-day perspective would be considered "eisegetical" rather than exegetical. This should, of course, not be taken in any derogatory way. In view of the idiosyncrasy of midrash, it may therefore be safer to avoid all definitions of midrash in anachronistic, modern terms such as "eisegesis" and "exegesis" and just take midrash for what it is, a unique form of ancient Jewish reading of Scripture.[14] The hermeneutic and the homiletic aspects of our midrash about the twin-sisters of Cain and Abel will now be treated.[15]

Jewish, Hellenistic , and Christian hermeneutics, see e.g., Ph. S. Alexander, "Quid Athenis et Hiersolymis? Rabbinic Midrash and Hermeneutics in the Graeco-Roman World", in P.H. Davies – R. White (eds.), *A Tribute to Geza Vermes*, (JSOT Supplements, 100), Sheffield, 1990, 101–124; B. Visotzky, "Jots and Tittles. On Scriptural Interpretation in Rabbinic and Patristic Literature" in his *Fathers of the World. Essays in Rabbinic and Patristic Literature*, Tübingen 1995, 28–40; and the various contributions in the following collection: L.V. Rutgers, H.W. Havelaar, P.W. van der Horst & L. Teugels (eds.), *The Use of Sacred Books in the Ancient World*, Leuven 1998.

[13] The discussion about the *Sitz im Leben* of midrash, whether scholarly or popular, designed for the synagogue or for the school is extensive and will probably never be decided in one way or another since there are arguments in favor of both theories. I think, however, that it is important to consider each midrashic work separately: some show traits of homiletical use, others seem to be designed for educational purposes; some show clear characteristics of literary compositions while others seem to have preserved traits of oral transmission (which is yet another topic that is highly debated today). I discuss the question of the *S.I.L.* of midrash, among other things, in my "Two Centuries of Midrash Study: A Survey of Some Standard Works on Rabbinic Midrash and its Methods", *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 54 (2000) 125–144 (see there for more titles), and the issue of oral vs. written transmission in my "Textual Criticism in Late Rabbinic Midrashim: The Example of Aggadat Bereshit" in Wim Weren/Dietrich-Alex Koch (eds.), *Recent Developments in Textual Criticism: New Testament, Early-Jewish and Early-Christian Writings* (Studies in Theology and Religion), Assen 2003 (also with many references).

[14] About these two aspects of midrash, see also Teugels, "Midrasj in, en, op de bijbel?".

[15] Aptowitzer, *Kain und Abel*, 20–26 treats, besides the rabbinic sources, also early Christian and Islamic variants of these traditions.

Hermeneutics: "And Again She Bore"

What indication is there in the biblical text that could possibly justify such a daring interpretation as that Cain and Abel were only two out of a birth of five as stated in GenR 22:2? The answer is given in a midrash found a little further in the same text:

> *And again* (wa-tosef) *she bore his brother Abel* (Gen 4:2). This supports what R. Joshua b. Korḥah said: They ascended the bed two and descended seven, for "*and again* (wa-tosef) *she bore*" implies an additional birth, but not an additional pregnancy.

> (*Genesis Rabbah 22:3*)

For the rabbinic Sages no word or even letter in the biblical text is superfluous, because it is the divine word and God would never repeat Himself without implying an additional meaning or a special message.[16] Moreover, it is the task of the rabbinic scholar—and even his religious duty—to interpret the text and search for its meaning, or multiple meanings.[17] Therefore, the double verbal forms used in both verses 1 and 2 of Genesis 4 must bear a special meaning. Gen. 4:1 literally reads: "and she conceived and she bore Cain". Verse 2 reads: "and she added and she bore Abel". Why were four verbal forms needed when it would have sufficed to say that "she bore Cain and Abel". The answer the midrash gives, implies that: she conceived—both Cain and Abel, and she bore—Cain and his twin sister, she added—one more twin sister for Abel, hence two twin sisters, and bore—Abel and his twin sisters.[18] This interpretation was, however, not accepted by all rabbinic Sages.

---

[16] See e.g. A. Samely, "Scripture's Implicature. The Midrashic Assumptions of Relevance and Consistency", *JSS* 37 (1992) 167–205; Visotzky, "Jots and Tittles".

[17] In the "rabbinic mind", especially were it regards *aggadah*, i.e. narrative interpretations, there is no such thing as the "one and only true interpretation of Scripture". Therefore rabbinic literature is essentially discursive, i.e. it mainly consists of discussions, often without decision or conclusion. Even though there may be a greater tendency to obtain definite conclusions with regard to *halakhah*, i.e. legal issues, the Babylonian Talmud, which contains the bulk of halakhic material, more often than not leaves the conclusion as to the *halakhah* to be followed, open. Cf. D. Kraemer, *The Mind of the Talmud. An Intellectual History of the Bavli*, New York 1990, p. 6 and passim.

[18] So also GenR 61:4. This reasoning is also implied in the explanation of BT Sanh 38b ("on the eighth day they went to bed as two and left as four") by the Tosafot, as stated above: Abel and his sister were only born later.

In the Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Yevamot 62a* we find the following variant. Interpreting the Mishna, which reads:

> A man shall not abstain from the performance of the duty of the propagation of the race unless he already has children. [As to the number]. Beth Shammai ruled: two males and two females, and Beth Hillel[19] ruled: a male and a female, for it is stated in scripture, *male and female created he them*,

the Gemara—that is the part in the Talmudic discussion that elaborates the Mishnah—reads:

> It was taught: R. Nathan stated: Beth Shammai ruled: Two males and two females; and Beth Hillel ruled: A male and a female. Said R. Ḥuna: What is the reason which R. Nathan assigns for the opinion of Beth Shammai? Because it is written, *And again she bore his brother Abel* [which implies:] Abel and his sister; Cain and his sister.

In this version, the double verbal form in Gen 4:2, which literally reads "and she added and she bore", merely implies that "she added a twin sister to Abel", thus resulting in one female counterpart for each brother.[20] As we will see further, still other sources hold that only Abel had a twin-sister, whom Cain later married.[21] The tradition that Abel never married, which seems to be implied in these sources, is more developed in Christian commentaries. It is probably based on the fact that no children of Abel are mentioned in the Bible.[22]

Homiletics: A Generation without Females?

Complicated hermeneutic moves such as that just described are quite common in rabbinic midrash. They often serve to state pre-established answers. This is the homiletic or exhortatory side of midrash.

---

[19] These are two important rabbinic "houses" or "schools": the followers of Hillel and the followers of Shammai. Both were rabbis/Pharisees living in the first century C.E.

[20] Cf. also Tg. Pseudo-Jonathan to Gen 4:2; PRE 11 and 21.

[21] Sifra Kedoshim 11:11 and BT Sanh. 58b.

[22] In Christian sources, Abel's celibacy and virginity are seen as expressions of his prototypical virtue, as he is represented as the predecessor of Jesus. This is in line with the idealisation of Abel as an innocent man, which is already present in Philo and Josephus. Also Islamic sources show an idealised picture of Abel. According to Aptowitzer, the rabbinic sources avoided such an idealisation of Abel because they were aware of the Christian imagery. Cf. Aptowitzer, *Kain und Abel*, 7–8 and 23–24.

The fact that the two first naturally born human siblings were male raises an important question: How were they going to procreate? The only solution at that moment was that they would impregnate their own mother. This possibility is, by the way, suggested in the same Midrash *Genesis Rabbah*, where it reads that Cain and Abel were fighting over the "first Eve".[23] To prevent this shame from happening, the above-stated midrash about the twin-sisters—in its many variants—offers the two brothers an equally incestuous but less compromising solution. Many rabbinic sources take it for granted that these sisters—or sister—served at the same times as (one of the) brothers' wives. Depending on the number of sisters, additional problems rise. If the number of sisters was not even, this must have been the reason for intense strife between the brothers. Thus we read in *Genesis Rabbah*:

> *Cain rose up against his brother Abel* (Gen 4:8). Said R. Ḥuna: "An additional twin was born with Abel, and each claimed her. The one claimed: "I will have her, because I am the firstborn", while the other maintained: "I must have her, because she was born with me".

> (*Genesis Rabbah* 22:7)

Ethics: Forbidden Relations or "The Building Up" of the World?

Another problem is, of course, the morality and lawfulness of a marriage between a brother and a sister. Well aware of this problem, the rabbinic Sages hastened to say that in this early state of human existence such marriage was allowed. To state this view, they introduce a prooftext: Ps. 89:3. The following text comes from the Babylonian Talmud. It deals with the laws of forbidden relations (Lev. 20), and especially whether non-Jews are also supposed to keep these laws.

> Come and hear: Why did not Adam marry his daughter? So that Cain should marry his sister, as is written: *For I said, The world shall be built up by grace* (Ps. 89:3). But otherwise, she would have been forbidden

---

[23] GenR 22:7. It is not entirely clear whether "the first Eve" refers to Eve or to a possible predecessor of hers. Most probably "the first Eve" just parallels "the first Adam", the latter expression being rife in rabbinic literature. I discussed this passage in "The Creation of the Human in Rabbinic Literature", 114, note 22. See also Aptowitzer, *Kain und Abel*, 26, and García Martínez, above, pp. 41–5.

[to Cain]—Once however that it was permitted, it remained so. R. Ḥuna said: A heathen may marry his daughter. But should you ask, If so, why did not Adam marry his daughter?—In order that Cain might marry his sister, that the world would be build up by grace. Others give this version: R. Ḥuna said: A heathen may not marry his daughter, the proof being that Adam did not marry his daughter. But that proof is fallacious: The reason was that Cain could marry his sister, so that the world should be built up by [Adam's] grace.[24]

(BT *Sanhedrin* 38b)

Ps. 89:3, the verse that is adduced here as a prooftext, contains several exegetical difficulties. It is not uncommon that rabbinic interpretation focuses on anomalies in the biblical text (elipses, *hapaxes* etc.), and that it shows extraordinary creativity in the interpretation of such words and verses.[25] This is, again, an example of the blurring of exegetical concerns with homiletics in midrash. The translation of the *Jewish Publication Society* renders Ps. 89:3 as: "Your steadfast love has been confirmed (*yibane*) forever (*olam*)". Other modern translations render the verse in a similar way. Problematic in this verse is that *olam* comes without a preposition. The verse literally reads: "Eternity grace has been established". Besides filling in this "gap" in the biblical text,[26] the midrash draws on the difference between biblical and rabbinic Hebrew, a hermeneutic means that is very often applied by the rabbis and that renders multiple possibilities for "creative philology" (Isaac Heinemann).[27] Whereas in Biblical Hebrew

---

[24] In the Tosafot to this passage in BT Sanh. 38b it is explained that Eve had died as a result of eating the apple.

[25] See also notes 32 and 33.

[26] The procedure of "gap filling" in midrash is discussed extensively Daniel Boyarin, in *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*. Boyarin defines a "gap" as "*any* element in the textual system of the Bible which demands interpretation for a coherent construction of the story; that is, both gaps in the narrow sense, as well as contradictions and repetitions, which indicate to the reader that she must fill in something that is not given in the text in order to read it" (p. 41). Asserting the presence of many gaps in the Hebrew Bible, Boyarin defines "gap-filling" as one of the main functions of midrash. I discuss this function of midrash at length in my "Gap Filling and Linkage in the Midrash on the Rebekah Cycle", in A. Wenin e.a. (eds), *Studies in the Book of Genesis. Literature, Redaction and History* (BETL 155), Leuven 2001, 585–95.

[27] In his *Darkhe ha-Aggadah*, Heinemann distinguishes the two main functions of midrash (which he confusingly calls aggadah) as "creative philology" and "creative historiography". The use of the shifts in meaning between Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew is an aspect of "creative philology". "Creative historiography", refers, rather, to what we have called the homiletic side of the midrash. About Heinemann, his influence and his successors, see my "Two Centuries of Midrash Study".

olam means "eternity" or "forever", in rabbinic Hebrew it can also mean "world". Further, in Biblical Hebrew the form *yibane* refers to a past tense, whereas in rabbinic Hebrew such form as a rule has a future meaning. Hence the reading: "The world will be built up by grace". The use of the verb "to build" for procreation is common. It is e.g. found in Gen 16:2 where the childless Sarah asks Abram that he consort with her servant Hagar so that she perhaps "will be built up through her".

The text in the Talmud applies Ps. 89:3 to Adam's goodness. He leaves his daughter to Cain so that his son can "build up" the world together with her. Other sources apply this verse to God's goodness: Without God's goodness, this would be forbidden by the law;[28] but in view of the propagation of the human race, an exception was made.[29] The moral-didactic concerns of midrash are clear: an explanation of this deviant behavior is needed; but this should in no way serve as an example!

To Conclude

Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, a late rabbinic work (8th or 9th century) that as a genre holds the middle between a Midrash and a "Rewritten Bible",[30] contains an interpretation of the Biblical account of Cain and Abel that touches on several of the points that have already been mentioned. Since this work is one of the later in the chain of the rabbinic tradition, it serves as an appropriate conclusion for this

---

[28] Lev. 20:17.

[29] Sifra Kedoshim 11:11 (Cf. J. Neusner, *Sifra. An Analytic Translation* Vol. III, Atlanta (GA) 1988, 151); Tg. Pseudo-Jonathan and Tg. Neofiti to Lev. 20:17 (Cf. R. Le Déaut, *Targum du Pentateuque*, Tome II (Sources Chrétiennes 256) Paris 1979, 454–455); PRE 21; PT Yevamot 11, 1(Krotochin edition p. 11d); PT Sanhedrin 5, 1 (Krotochin ed. 22 c and d), and 9, 1 (Krotochin ed. 26d). Some of these sources imply that Abel also married a sister. All these texts refer to Lev. 20:17.

[30] This is the genre that is often found in the much older Jewish works from the Second Temple Period, such as *the Book of Jubilees* or the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*. The term "Rewritten Bible" was first used by Geza Vermes in his *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism. Haggadic Studies* (Studia Post-Biblica 4) Leiden 1961, 95; 124–126. In contradistinction to the midrash, these works interpret the Bible while at the same time rewriting it, whereas in midrash, the distinction between the Bible (the primary text) and commentary or interpretation (the secondary text) is usually kept. The most obvious feature of midrash is that it introduces its interpretations with explicit quotations from the Bible, whereas this is not the case in Rewritten Bible. About *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, see Stemberger, *Introduction*, 328–330.

"history of the rabbinic interpretation of a biblical motif". Note that in this account, both brothers seem to have twin sisters that at the same served as their wives.[31]

> Rabbi Miyasha said: "Cain and his twin were born together, and Abel and his twin together". Rabbi Ishmael said to him: "Was it not already said: *If a man marries his sister . . . it is a disgrace* (Lev. 20:17)". He said to him: "From these accounts you should know that there were no other women on earth with whom they could marry; therefore it was allowed to them." About this it is stated: *The world has been established by grace* (Ps. 89:3). Until the Torah was given, the world was created by grace. Rabbi Jose said: Cain and Abel were twins, as is stated: *She conceived and bore Cain* (Gen 4:1). In that hour she added one birth, as is stated: *and she added and bore his brother Abel* (Gen 4:2).

The account of how Cain's offering was rejected and Abel's offering accepted then follows in the Midrash. I omit that part here. At the end of the passage, the hatred of Cain towards Abel is partly explained in terms of the first's coveting of the latter's wife:

> Rabbi Zadok said: "A great hatred and envy entered in Cain's heart, because the offering of Abel was found acceptable. And not only this, but because Abel's twin-wife was the most beautiful of the women. He said: 'I will kill my brother Abel and take his wife', as is stated: *Cain said to his brother Abel . . . this was when they were in the field* (Gen 4:8)."[32] And "the field" always means "the woman", who is likened to a field, as is stated: *Because a man is a tree of the field* (Deut. 20:19).[33]

> (*Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* chapter 21)

---

[31] By lack of a complete critical edition of *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, the following translation is my own, based on the popular edition of *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, Jerusalem, Eshkol 1983. See, for a somewhat different translation G. Friedlander (ed.), *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, London 1916, 152–155.

[32] Also this verse is a typical exegetical *crux*, because of its elliptical character. Therefore it lends itself especially for "creative philology".

[33] The interpretation of this verse disagrees with most modern translations. These translate the phrase as a question: "Are trees in the field human beings?". Again, Rabbinic interpretation uses the ambiguity of the Hebrew phrase to read it in a different (equally possible) way that states their point. Moreover, atomistic, a-contextual interpretation is a well- known feature of rabbinic midrash that clearly surfaces in this reading. The identification of "a man" with "a tree" and "a woman" with "a field" is sexual in character.

EVE'S DEMONIC OFFSPRING
A JEWISH MOTIF IN GERMAN LITERATURE

Marcel Poorthuis

As the mother of all living, Eve gave birth to numerous offspring. The Hebrew Bible mentions only her three sons by name, Cain, Abel and Seth, but post-biblical literature supplies quite a few names of female descendants, necessary for the propagation of the human race. Likewise, the origin of a variety of skills and habits, whether good or bad, is somehow connected to the first generation after Adam and Eve. In addition, the origin of evil poses a special problem in the different strands of post-biblical literature, especially in those adhering to the monotheistic faith.[1] On the one hand, the persuasion of a good Creator God does not allow the origin of evil to be contributed to the Creator himself and, as a consequence, man is held responsible. On the other hand, some metaphysical principle or ontological nature is often assumed to underlie man's ability to choose. The tension between the monotheistic framework on the one hand, and the acknowledgement of the metaphysical or ontological nature of evil on the other, characterises much of post-biblical literature, whether Jewish or Christian. Although the biblical account of Adam and Eve transgressing God's command has been the single most influential story of the origin of evil—this more so within Christianity than within Judaism—many other accounts of the origin of evil occur both in Christianity and in Judaism. By attributing the origin of evil to the second generation, to Eve's children, the rewritten accounts of Genesis seem to explain both the actual existence of evil and its secondary nature. Evil was not there "from the beginning", but only came into being afterwards. It was human freedom to choose the wrong way rather than an ontological determinism that brought sin into the world. However, the different accounts cannot avoid a certain ambiguity in this respect. Even if one of Eve's children, for

---

[1] As gnostic and other dualistic religious systems do not adhere to the monotheistic framework, they solve the problem of the origin of evil differently.

example Cain, is held responsible for the existence of evil in the
world, the question of what or who induced him to do so arises.
Somehow the non-human origin of evil seems to be an unavoid-
able side effect of interpreting Genesis, even within the monotheis-
tic framework. In this light, Eve's non-human, or more precisely
demonic offspring deserves consideration. This motif should be seen
in the perspective of the origin of evil, while maintaining the monothe-
istic religious standpoint. Although the motif of Eve's demonic chil-
dren is rather modest in Rabbinic tradition, it developed substantially
in Kabbalistic writings and subsequently influenced some German
writers. In order to assess this influence, the Talmudic and Zoharic
accounts of Eve's non-human children will be examined, followed
by two German writers from the Romantic and Expressionist peri-
ods respectively.

1. *Talmudic Accounts of Eve's Demonic Offspring*

According to Rabbinic tradition, the existence of demons does not
infringe upon the monotheistic framework of Rabbinic Judaism. On
the contrary, according to Rabbinic lore, the demons were created
by God only at the last moment of the first week of creation, and
only started their careers afterwards.[2] The following Rabbinic text
establishes the antediluvian origin of demons, explaining their actual
existence and their influence upon everyday life.

In a comment upon the Biblical verse: "Because she (Eve) is the
mother of all living" (Gen 3:20), the Midrash notes that this verse
seems to imply a rather wide motherhood: not merely of human life,
but of *all* life, i.e. including demons.[3] It continues: Rabbi Simon said:
Throughout the whole 130 years during which Adam separated him-
self from Eve, the male spirits ("ruhot hazekarim") were made hot
by her and she bore; and the female spirits ("ruhot nekebot") were
made hot by Adam and they bore (Gen Rabbah 20:11).

---

[2] Although hesitantly, Abot 5:9 numbers the harmful spirits ("mazikin"), among
the ten things created at the twilight of the first Sabbath, i.e. nearly outside the
creational realm. Cf. Gen Rabbah 7:5.

[3] Note that Noah takes with him in the ark "from all living", which, according
to midrash, includes demons (Gen Rabbah 31:13). Rabbi Simon may have applied
the hermeneutic rule of "ribuy" here, according to which every seemingly superfluous
word (in this case "kol" = all) refers to something specific.

In a comment upon the Biblical verse: "This is the book of the generations of Adam", a similar idea emerges: "These are descendants but the earlier ones (i.e. before Seth) were not descendants. What were they? Spirits ("ruhot")." (Gen Rabbah 24:6). Then the same Rabbi Simon is quoted to account for the origin of demons. This text is by no means simple. It probably wants to explain the origin of demons but by doing so presupposes their existence. Eve produces demonic offspring by having intercourse with demons. In addition, not only Eve produces demonic offspring, but Adam as well. This text preludes the distinction between incubus and succubus, a male demon thought to visit his lust upon women, and a female demon attending to men, respectively.[4]

Apparently Adam has intercourse with female demons and not he but they give birth to additional demons. Whereas Eve as the mother of demons seems to fit as an explanation of the Biblical verse calling her "mother of all living", Adam as the father of demons derived from the Biblical verse: "This is the book of the generations of Adam". In short, what we have here is a kind of aetiological story of the demons.[5]

Implicitly, the Midrash yields some information about the whereabouts of these demons. They came into existence as a result of the presumed separation between Adam and Eve.[6] Rabbinic tradition assumes that they abstained from sexual relations for 130 years after the expulsion from Eden, out of grief for the loss of their son Abel. After that period, Adam begot a son in his image and likeness, Seth (Gen 5:3), which implies, according to Rabbinic interpretation, that before that Adam did beget children, but not in his image, hence demons. "All those years during which Adam was under the ban,[7]

---

[4] *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*, London 1974, 228; cf. Augustin, *De Civitate Dei* 15:23, where he discusses the possibility of intercourse between angels and women. M. van der Lugt, *Le ver, le démon et la vierge*, Les théories médiévales de la génération extraordinaire (dissertation), Utrecht 1998, offers a comprehensive overview of the Christian ideas of demonic intercourse. See for *incubus* and *succubus*, pp. 157ff.

[5] Whether influence by creation myths of a cosmic couple can be attested here requires additional investigation.

[6] Possibly this midrash counters ascetical tendencies. Jerome relates how the desert father Paul meets an *incubus* (Vita sancti Pauli 8). Other desert fathers are tempted by demons in the guise of beautiful women. Cf. M. van der Lugt, *o. c.*, 154ff.

[7] Or: "in isolation".

he begot ghosts ("ruhin") and (male?) demons ("shedim") and (female?) demons ("lilin")" (BT Erubin 18b). This lavish production of demons is explained by the semen that Adam emitted accidentally during his sleep while abstaining from sexual relations.

This last quoted explanation focuses merely upon Adam and his demonic offspring without even explicitly assuming demonic intercourse, whereas the saying of Rabbi Simon does refer to demonic intercourse by dividing the different genders of demons over Adam and Eve in cross reference. In spite of these differences, both explanations view sexuality—or rather its suppression—as the incentive for demonic intercourse, undoubtedly referring to nightly erotic dreams. One is reminded of the well-known figure of Lilith. In the Talmudic period, she is held accountable for man's nightly erotic dreams (cp. BT Sabbath 151b) and for killing babies in the cradle. Certain midrashic traditions assume that it was Lilith who visited Adam during his separation from Eve.[8] In the *Chronicles of Jerahmeel* (11th–12th century), a composition drawing upon a variety of sources, the beginning of chapter 23 is obviously dependent upon the Talmudic statement in BT Erubin 18b, quoted above, but with an important difference. Whereas these *Chronicles* agree with the Talmudic statement by describing Adam but not Eve during their period of 130 years of abstention, the *Chronicles* know of a demonic visitor, identifying her with Lilith.

> He slept alone and the first Eve—*that is, Lilith*—found him and, being charmed with his beauty, went and lay by his side, and these were begotten from her: ghosts, male demons and female demons in thousands and myriads, and whomever they lighted upon they injured and killed outright, until Methuselah appeared and besought the mercy of God.[9]

Likewise, in the post-Talmudic *Alphabeth of Jesus Sirach*, Lilith is held responsible for killing new-born babies and for engendering demons.[10]

---

[8] Cf. G. Scholem, "Lilith", *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 11, 246 and L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Philadelphia 1954, II, 141; V, 165.

[9] M. Gaster (transl.), *The Chronicles of Jerahmeel*, with a prolegomenon by Haim Schwarzbaum, New York 1971, 35 (prolegomenon), p. lxxi (introduction), 48–49 (text). I have changed the translation according to the Hebrew quotation in E. Yassif, *Sippurei Ben Sira*, Jerusalem, Magnes 1984, 65, assuming that he quotes the original manuscript.

[10] See the text-critical edition and commentary by E. Yassif, *o. c.*

Nevertheless, one should note the crucial difference between all these elaborations of Lilith and the dictum of Rabbi Simon about Adam and Eve's demonic offspring, referred to above. Lilith does not belong to the demonic offspring of either Adam or Eve but, preceding the latter and not having any sexual contact with her afterwards, Lilith is not involved at all in the topic of Eve's demonic offspring. It seems that traditions about a demonic Lilith and about Adam's demonic offspring have been brought together, although their original independence still remains discernible. This process of harmonizing originally independent traditions can be traced further in Kabbalistic literature. It is only then that a certain correlation is forged between Lilith's and Eve's demonic encounters.

2. *The Kabbalistic Interpretation of Eve's Demonic Children*

Again Adam is depicted as separated from Eve, whereupon two female demons approach him. "Their offspring were demons and were called plagues of mankind". (Zohar Gen 54b; Zohar Lev 76b). This can be considered as an elaboration of the Talmudic text from BT Erubin 18b, quoted above, where only Adam's offspring is considered. But what about Eve and her demonic offspring? The Zohar does not connect Eve's demonic offspring with this period of sexual abstention but rather with her "intercourse" with the serpent, known from Talmudic tradition (e.g. BT Abodah Zarah 22b). The Zohar continues: "Eve bore Cain from the filth of the serpent and from him were descended all the wicked generations, and from his side is the abode of spirits and demons". By combining the motif of demonic offspring with Cain, he becomes the father not only of evil human offspring but of demons as well. Cain produced the offspring of Tubal-Cain and Naamah. The latter issued other spirits and demons, both male and female. These hover in the air and have intercourse with humans. The spirits they engender are brought up by the ancient Lilith (Zohar Lev 76b).

   Even before the composition of the Zohar (around 1300 C.E.), in a Kabbalistic treatise from the end of the 12th century, Samael and Lilith are brought into interplay. In his "Treatise on the Left Emanation", Isaac Cohen (c. 1200s C.E.), states: "Samael takes on the form of Adam and Lilith the form of Eve. They were both born in a spiritual birth as one, as a parallel to the forms of Adam and Eve

above and below: two twin-like forms. Both Samael and [Lilith, called] Eve the Matron—also known as the Northern One—are emanated from beneath the Throne of Glory (. . .)".

They not only share their birth, but cohabit as well: "Samael, the great Prince and great king over all the demons, cohabits with the great Matron Lilith (. . .)". Already at birth, they were intertwined in each other: "Samael and Lilith were born as one, similar to the form of Adam and Eve, who were also born as one, reflecting what is above. This is the account of Lilith which was received by the Sages in the Secret Knowledge of the Palaces. The Matron Lilith is the mate of Samael. Both were born in the same hour in the image of Adam and Eve, intertwined in each other."[11] Samael and Lilith appear as demonic partners and as demonic counterparts of Adam and Eve, born at the same time and cohabiting with each other. Again by combining originally separate motifs, Kabbalistic teaching holds Lilith and Samael responsible for Adam and Eve's demonic offspring.[12]

The Zohar pursues this track further, stating: "The male is called Samael and his female is always included with him. Just as on the side of holiness there are male and female, so on "the other side" there are male and female, included one with the other." (Zohar I, 148a–148b, Sitrei Torah).[13]

Three distinct moments of demonic intercourse, Adam while alone with Lilith,[14] Eve with the serpent conceiving Cain, and both with unnamed demons during their abstention after Abel's death, have now been brought into correlation. Without attempting an in-depth treatment of Zoharic demonology, which is not necessary for our

---

[11] J. Dan/R.C. Kiener, *The early Kabbalah*, New York 1986, 165–182.

[12] Boyarin's allegation that the Talmudic period describes both male and female demons whereas the Medieval period only knows nightly female demonic visitors ("A gender-neutral statement of how demons exploit celibates has become by a subtle shift a representation of demonic female sexuality", *Carnal Israel*, Berkeley 1993, 96), is countered by texts such as these about Samael. I owe this observation to Sil Timmermans.

[13] Quoted after David Goldstein's translation of I. Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, II, Oxford 1969, 538; cf. 464–468. According to Tishby, the female element is Lilith.

[14] Leaving aside the fact that "the first Eve" had been created from dust (Gen Rabba 17:7; 22:7) and was identified with the demonic Lilith only in the Alphabet of Ben Sirah, i.e. in post-Talmudic times. "The first Eve" may have had nothing to do with demons originally.

purpose, a short comment about the Zohar's method is appropriate. It ingeniously interconnects different stories from Rabbinic tradition, transforming them into a new and coherent narrative pattern that is deeply stamped with demonology. These Jewish backgrounds will allow us a clear view of the wanderings of the motif of Eve's offspring in German literature.

3. *The German Romantic Writer Clemens Brentano*

The first writer to be considered is the Romantic writer Clemens Brentano (1778–1842). He immersed himself in folklore and in mystical literature. Whereas his collection of folk songs under the name of Des KnabenWunderhorn gained international reputation, his mystical writings did not bring him the same success. In his Romanzen vom Rosenkranz, written between 1802 and 1812, i.e. before his conversion to Catholicism, or rather to a more rigorous form of it, he undertook a poetical rendering of the Creation story, incorporating a great number of post-biblical Jewish motifs.[15]

The contents of his library show that he was familiar with a substantial number of Jewish and Christian mystical writings. However, the way he dealt with them betrays his creative genius. He describes how Samael copies for himself a heavenly book in Adam's possession that contains all secrets of Creation. Afterwards, Eve sees Samael approaching, riding upon a camel and pretending to possess heavenly wisdom. She conducts him to the tree and he manages to have her taste from it. Eve eats from the fruit and sees the angel of death approaching. She decides that it would be better for her to die together with Adam, so that no other woman will get him. This motif is ultimately derived from the Rabbinic Midrash Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, chapter 13, as is the camel.[16] Both Adam and Eve leave Paradise and:

---

[15] See Clemens Brentano, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, Band 10, Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln, 1994.

[16] It will be clear further on that Brentano's sources were not the midrash as such but Eisenmenger's *Entdecktes Judentum*. Cf. I, 830: "Als Sammael vom Himmel herunter kam, und des Adam's herrlichkeit sahe, daß ihm die dinstbare Engel bey seiner hochzeit dieneten, mißfiel es ihm. Was that er? Er nahm eine Schlange, welche die gestalt eines Kamels hatte, ritte auf derselben und kam herab und verführete denselben, biß daß er den befehl seines Schöpffers übertreten hatte". The

> Wo er Hundert Jahre bleibet
> Lilith drang da zu ihm her
> Und mit diesem bösen Weibe
> Zeuget Zwerg und Riesen er. (IX,421)[17]

Meanwhile Eve is involved in her own relationship with Samael:

> Heva lebt im tiefern Kreise
> Mit dem Geiste Samael,
> Zeugt mit ihm in gleicher Weise
> Geister und Dämonen schnell. (IX,425)[18]

The demonic offspring of Adam and Eve during their abstention are explained by interconnecting disparate motifs. Adam had already encountered Lilith before Eve was created but Lilith had flown away because she was not prepared to recognize Adam's lordship. Now, after the expulsion, Adam encounters Lilith again and engenders dwarves and giants. Likewise, Eve had already encountered Samael riding upon a camel,[19] but now she has (once more?) intercourse with him and brings forth spirits and demons. The difference in offspring is noteworthy. Whereas Adam engenders dwarves and giants, i.e. more or less earthly creatures, Eve brings forth spiritual creatures. This difference is in harmony with the respective partners; Lilith, according to Brentano's poem, was concocted from harmful elements from the earth,[20] whereas Samael is a spirit. The motif of earth-made Lilith harks back to the Rabbinic stories about the first Eve taken from earth, although later Rabbinic traditions suppressed this motif by making Lilith queen of the demons. Brentano brings the earthly Lilith to the fore again, and by doing so throws a special

---

Kabbalistic idea that the camel-like snake was in fact Lilith is not used by Brentano. Cf. Eisenmenger, II, 779.

[17] Where he stayed for a hundred years,
  Lilith intruded upon him,
  With this woman so depraved,
  Adam begot dwarves and giants.

[18] Eve lives deep down in orbits,
  With the spirit Samael,
  And brings forth in a similar way,
  Ghosts and demons in a rush.

[19] According to the midrash, this meeting occasioned Eve's pregnancy with Cain whereas Brentano leaves this in the middle.

[20] The idea of Lilith consisting of seven noxious elements may have been derived from misogynistic folkloristic motifs; cf. V. Michels' recension of Max Morris's edition of the Romanzen, *Euphorion, Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte*, XI (1904), 776.

light upon the gender roles of Adam and Eve, the former being more earthbound than the latter.

The juxtaposition of Samael and Lilith in Brentano's poem is clear. As the partners of Adam and Eve, both Lilith and Samael engender non-human creatures. However, juxtaposing Samael and Lilith as such is obviously not Brentano's own device. This had already occurred long before him, as we have noted earlier, in the writings of Medieval Kabbalists.[21]

Brentano's knowledge of these writings may at first seem amazing, but can be explained by pointing to the occurrence in his library of a collection of Kabbalistic writings and anthologies. Whereas in previous Romanzen the work of the Christian Kabbalist Knorr von Rosenroth, Kabbala Denudata, served as an important source, in the ninth Romanze, Eisenmenger's Entdecktes Judenthum (1700) served as the storehouse of Talmudic and Kabbalistic quotations.[22] This two-volume book, with over 2,000 pages, wanted to demonstrate the foolishness of Rabbinic tales and legends. To that purpose, Eisenmenger collected Hebrew texts from Talmud, Midrash and Medieval Jewish writings, interspersed with anti-Semitic invectives of the desecration of hosts, blood libels and the poisoning of wells.[23] The demonic stories were a special target of Eisenmenger's criticism. In several places in his book he mentions Adam and Eve's demonic offspring.[24] Eisenmenger quotes Rabbi Simon's dictum about their demonic offspring as well:

> In allen denjenigen hundert und dreißig jahren, in welchen sich der Adam von seiner frau abgesondert hat, seynd die weiblein der geister von ihm erhitzet und beschlaffen worden, und haben männlein gebohren, die männliche geister aber seynd von der frauen (der Eva) erhitzet worden und haben weiblein gezeuget (Entdecktes Judentum I, p. 374).

---

[21] Cf. as well G. Scholem, "Peraqim hadashim me-Inyaney Ashmoday we-Lilit", *Tarbiz* 19 (1948), 160–175; J. Dan, "Samael, Lilith and the Concept of Evil in the Early Kabbalah", *AJS Review* 5 (1980), 17–40.

[22] Cf. V. Michels, ibid., 773–780. Cf. M. Vordermayer, *Antisemitismus und Judentum bei Clemens Brentano*, Bern 1999, 122. See the useful annotations of the Romanzen in Clemens Brentano, *Werke* I, München 1968, 1231ff.

[23] M. Vordermayer, *Antisemitismus und Judentum bei Clemens Brentano*, 127, 169.

[24] J.A. Eisenmenger, *Entdecktes Judenthum*, I, 364–377, 460, 820, 827, 830, 854; II, 417.

Eisenmenger's approach is not chronological but groups together texts from Midrash, Talmud, and Medieval authors.[25] Eisenmenger availed himself of quotations from Midrash and Talmud as well as from harmonizing Kabbalistic readings, often introducing them with strongly derogatory qualifications such as: "Die unsinnigen Juden lehren" ("those mad Jews teach"). This explains the harmonizing of different motifs from Rabbinic and Kabbalistic literature in Brentano's poem.

However, one element in Brentano's use of Eisenmenger might seem amazing. Whereas Eisenmenger was convinced of the absurdity and danger of the Jewish tales he had collected in such abundance, Brentano seems to take these stories as they were originally intended: as esoteric knowledge of the highest order. Eve's contact with Samael had offered her a glimpse of secret lore as well. She dictates to Adam, who is rewriting the now lost heavenly book, the spell and fortune of the spirits:

> Wenig hat ihr großer Meister
> Samael vor ihr verhehlt.
>
> Alles in das Buch er schreibet,
> Alles in dem Buche steht
> Und das hohe Buch es bleibet
> Als er stirbt, dem Sohne Seht (IX,447).[26]

According to this Romanze, Eve's knowledge of the wisdom of the spirits is more profound than Adam's. In spite of a traditional dichotomy of gender that consigns woman to nature/earth, and man to culture/spirit, in Brentano's description Eve is far more involved

---

[25] In addition to the Zohar, an important source is the Kabbalistic *Emek Ha-Melekh*, ("The valley of the King"), written by Naphtali Herz ben Jacob Elhanan (Amsterdam 1648). This work, an introduction and commentary to parts of the Zohar, utilises earlier Kabbalistic writings. Cf. Eisenmenger, I, 461, where this work is quoted referring to the giants as Adam's offspring and to Adam's intercourse with Lilith. Brentano incorporated the motif of the giants in his Romanze, as we have noted earlier. Another of Eisenmenger's sources is *The Alphabet of Ben Sirah*, where Lilith is introduced as Adam's first wife.

[26] Few things had been hidden for her,
By her master Samael
In that book he wrote down all,
In that book is written all.
And that lofty book inherits
His son Seth after he dies.

in spiritual matters than Adam, who is even dependent upon her for his knowledge. Adam entrusts Eve's dictation to a book to be bequeathed to Seth and to be handed down from generation to generation. However, Brentano's perspective of esoteric knowledge is not devoid of a diabolic tinge. In the Romanzes, Eve's role is rather demonic—she even leads Samael to the tree instead of being seduced by him—but on the other hand her knowledge, admittedly received from Samael, exceeds Adam's. In a blend of mysticism and Romanticism, Brentano succeeds in creating a highly ambiguous image of the woman, typical of that period.[27] In typically Romantic fashion, Brentano introduces several reduplications of perspectives that complicate an unambiguous judgement, and bring him closer to Eisenmenger's outlook than may have seemed at first sight. First, a certain Moles tells this whole Creation story to the philosopher Apo. This Moles is a kind of Mephistopheles,[28] a widely learned devil, "a man of wealth and taste", if you like. This fact certainly enhances the demonic perspective of this story. In addition, the heavenly book that is copied by Samael makes a gruesome journey through history, described in a way not devoid of anti-Semitic overtones. A Jew hands over the book to a Moorish sorcerer in exchange for consecrated wafers (!).[29] Thereupon, a monk steals it out of the latter's grave, but is killed himself.

The result of this horrendous chain of events is a highly ambiguous attitude to Kabbala.[30] The Kabbalistic truth gets mingled with demonic, anti-Jewish and even anti-feminine overtones (after all, it is Eve who relates Samael's wisdom to Adam). It seems that Eisenmenger influenced Brentano more deeply than by merely providing him with a set of Talmudic and Kabbalistic material. It should not

---

[27] Cf. M. Praz, "La belle dame sans merci", *The Romantic Agony*, Cleveland 1968.

[28] Like Mephistopheles in Goethe's Faust, Moles has the appearance of a black poodle. Cf. already Eisenmenger, I, 848, where Samael is described as a dog. The dog features in Jewish magic, as is attested in the so called *Testament of Solomon*. Cf. H.D. Betz, "Jewish magic in the Greek Magical Papyri", P. Schaefer & H. Kippenberg (eds), *Envisioning Magic*, Leiden 1997, 60–61.

[29] This is undoubtedly an allusion to the highly anti-Semitic charge against Jews of desecrating the host, a motif widespread in the Middle Ages and featuring in Eisenmenger's book as well.

[30] Rightly observed by Gunnar Och, "'Gewisse Zauberbilder der jüdischen Kabbala'". Zur Aneignung kabbalistischer Stoffe bei Achim von Arnim und Clemens Brentano"; E. Goodman-Thau/G. Mattenklot/C. Schulte, *Kabbala und die Literatur der Romantik. Zwischen Magie und Trope*, Tübingen 1999, 194; cf. 256, n. 106.

surprise the reader that in the end Moles turns out to be a descendant of Eve and Samael, whereas Apo stems from Adam and Lilith (Romanze X, 490–495).

From German Romanticism to German Expressionism is not such a great step. However, this literature goes further by interpreting demonic phenomena as descriptions of the soul.

4. *The German Writer Paula Winkler*

The writer now under consideration was the wife of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, Paula Winkler, better known under her pseudonym Georg Munk (1877–1958). Of non-Jewish descent, she appreciated Buber's Zionism as a genuine expression of a people ("Volkstum").[31] Her book: *Geister und Menschen. Ein Sagenbuch*, contains a collection of lives of saints, legends and folklore.[32] The book opens with an enigmatic piece: *Die unechten Kinder Adams*. ("Adam's unreal [illegitimate?] children"), first published in 1912 in her first book under the same title.[33] This short story is a blend of esoteric Judaism and "pagan" irrationalism, couched in expressionist idiom. In long winding sentences, Paula Winkler describes how after the expulsion, Adam and Eve were blind to each other due to sorrow and earthly labour.

"So it happened that man often turned away from the big woman, who, with earthly colours and broad power like the hated land itself, for which he strained himself with his fists, lay down next to him in the cold nights. With arms of desire he clasped the thick air and snatched away from darkness one of her white supple daughters to force her upon his bed. In this way he begot children from the nightly, who brought them forth for him and for his element".

Likewise, Eve brings forth children, but under widely different circumstances: "When in the heat of the afternoon Eve the woman rested from weeding upon the torn soil of the land, earthly demons came up from the cracks of the field, rustling through the stalks on

---

[31] See H. Kohn, *Martin Buber. Sein Werk und seine Zeit*, Köln 1961, 25–26, 292; G. Wehr, *Martin Buber in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten*, Hamburg 1968, 25.

[32] Georg Munk, *Geister und Menschen*. Ein Sagenbuch. Vorwort von Martin Buber, München 1961.

[33] See Martin Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten*. Bd 1, Heidelberg 1972, 35.

bright sickles instead of upon feet. They laid down with her between sleeping and waking and made her womb carry untimely fruit".

Special emphasis is put upon Adam and Eve's different orientations. Adam's encounters take place during the night, but Eve's hour is at midday. In folklore, both times were believed to be especially prone to demonic visitors. Adam hankers after the spiritual realm whereas Eve's intercourse is earth-oriented. The colour of her skin likewise betrays her affinity to the earth, in contrast with Adam turning away from inimical earth toward the heights. In this respect the story differs from Brentano's, where Adam pairs with Lilith, there made of earthly elements, and where Eve cohabits with the angelic/demonic Samael. Moreover, this story does not specify the partners of Adam and Eve, as both the Kabbalistic accounts and Brentano do. On the contrary, the multiple demonic partners remain anonymous, as they were in early Rabbinic tradition. Hence, the source of this part of the story should be sought in the dictum of Rabbi Simon, as quoted in the midrash Genesis Rabba, and not in later Kabbalistic elaborations.[34]

In what follows, the narrator apparently has recourse to a folkloristic motif, best known from *Grimm's Kinder und Hausmärchen*, N.180: *Die Sage von den ungleichen Kindern Evas* (The legend of Eve's unequal children). It tells how God wishes to see Adam and Eve's children. However, Eve shows only her beautiful children, hiding her plain ones. God chides her, stating that all her children will have a trade and rank appropriate to their looks and abilities. This aetiology knows of Eve's different offspring—although all of them human—and uses it to account for hierarchical relations within society. In Norse variants of this tale, Eve had not managed to wash all her children and decided to hide her dirty ones behind hills and in clefts. God states that what is hidden from God will be hidden from men. From that moment on, they became the invisible inhabitants under the earth.[35]

Shame is an essential feature in Paula Winkler's story. Undoubtedly this ultimately harks back to the story of Genesis itself where Adam

---

[34] Against H. Kohn, *Martin Buber*, 26: "sie gehen von einer kabbalistischen Legende aus . . ."

[35] Cf. O. Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* I, Sagen zum Alten Testament, Leipzig 1907, repr. Hildesheim 1983, 247 and 354. The origins of monkeys, trolls and demons are connected to this folkloristic motif. A different motif describes fallen angels as the ancestors of demons.

and Eve discover before God that they are naked. However, folk-
lore is again the direct source of this topic within the narrative,
although in this case shame is attributed to Eve only. Grimm's leg-
end describing Eve being ashamed of her ugly looking children and
deciding to hide them has still more variants: Eve is ashamed of her
great number of children, fearing that this might be interpreted as
an indication of her sexual desire. In this story, shame is unam-
biguously reconnected to sexuality, as it is in many interpretations
of the transgression of Adam and Eve at the beginning of Genesis.[36]
In other variants, the occurrence of shame is explained in a more
innocent vein: some of the children had not been properly washed.
But whatever the reasons for Eve's shame are, the consequences for
Eve's children explain existing phenomena: the division of labour,
hierarchical relations, differences between nobility, farmers and citi-
zens, and so on.

In addition to the stories that account for social differences, Norse
versions relate how God turned the hidden children into demons,
dwarves or elves.[37] This happened because Eve had been hiding her
children in places where demons can be found nowadays. Hence
these stories offer a kind of aetiology for the existence of demons.

In Paula Winkler's story, the two elements of shame and demonic
offspring are combined but in a very peculiar way. The couple's
offspring do not become demonic by God's curse but are demonic
from the outset. The first couple are ashamed of their *demonic* offspring,
hiding them behind bushes and abyss. God manages to discover
these hidden children and, while blessing the first couple's "real"
children, He banishes the "unreal" (illegitimate?) children to the very
places where their parents had hidden them.

Paula Winkler has ingeniously woven together two aetiologies of
demons, one stemming from Rabbinic literature, the other belong-
ing to a stratum of European folklore. The first story attributes the
origin of demons to Adam and Eve's sexual abstention. Paula Winkler
retained that idea and integrated the motif of shame and of hiding
the children, attributing them to Adam and Eve alike, thus increas-
ing the universal mythical potential of the story.

---

[36] J. Bolte/G. Polivka, *Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmaerchen der Brueder Grimm*,
III, Hildesheim 1963, 309, referring to the storyteller the monk Baptista Mantuanis
from the 15th century.
[37] Ibidem, 321; O. Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* I, 247.

Winkler describes the precise reason for their shame as follows:

> They were struck by fear, as they should lead to the Lord, who had given them to each other, the offspring of their own flesh and blood.

Apparently, the demonic offspring would immediately bring to light the couple's adulterous behaviour. Shame, sexuality and transgression are here intrinsically connected, even more so than in the story of Genesis itself.

The admittedly highly suggestive results in this story still betray their different provenance. As the children are demonic from the outset, there is no need for God to turn them once more into demons. Hence, the writer had to dispense with God's curse as the reason for the existence of demons. However, she could retain the aetiology of the *location* of demons. Instead of turning the children into demons, God assigns them to their proper place, under the earth, in clefts and behind bushes. The conclusion of the story is superb:

> The night is their time. Broad daylight is forbidden to them, except for the zenith of midday when the eyes are blinded. They resemble the creatures of the day that fear and avoid them. However, if one of their kind stealthily enters life through an earthly womb, mingling with the children of Adam and Eve, then he has to wander to and fro and he will never find rest, until after many sorrows he will find the idiosyncratic path that leads him out.

This ending of the short tale contains a Romantic creed in a nutshell. In it, the experiences of curse and shame are turned upside down. The demonic and cursed existence, related in folklore and mysticism, turns out to be the "condition humaine" itself, more precisely, the condition of the Romantic artist. The "doomed poet" who, as a fallen angel, wanders over the earth, searching for a way out, is yearning for redemption. His home is neither with the mortal humans nor with the angels. Curse, shame and marginalization, originally intended as negative characteristics, are transformed into the hallmark of Romantic existence. In this story, the demonic element is not so much linked with the problem of good and evil, but rather serves to express the turmoil of the soul. As such, the story forms an antidote to rationalism. In addition, by transgressing the boundaries between man and the divine in this exploration of demonic existence, this story expresses a religiosity that aims to shatter the narrow confines of institutional religion with its perceived traditional ideas about sexuality and its chasm between God and man.

In Jewish circles around 1900, the need for a new and free approach to body and sexuality was felt, in combination with religious ecstasy, for which "pagan thinking" was considered an important incentive.[38] The presumed "pagan-elementary traits" (heidnisch-elementare— Züge) in Paula Winkler's stories were considered the hallmark of her expressionist style.[39] Still, the Jewish antecendents of this story, mingled with folklore, are obvious. In a certain sense, Martin Buber's rediscovery of the Chassidic stories with their demonology and irrationalism testifies to the same climate of Romanticism. The struggle between the earthly ("tellurische") and spiritual elements in the person of the Baal Shem Tov and the way earthly voices speak to him from the earth upon his journey to Jerusalem are creative innovations by Martin Buber and by Paula Winkler. The latter was deeply involved in Buber's interpretation of Chassidism.[40] In Buber's own words, the story of *Die unechten Kinder Adams*, is "a poetical testimony of the innerworldly secret of man, that can only be expressed in plural (. . .) It exists in the world, independent of man, but only through him capable of receiving a form, when it encounters him and arouses in him the ability to shape and to write poetry".[41]

Buber is prepared to acknowledge the real existence of demons as for him "the secret of man" can only be expressed in plural. The existence of demons should not be countered by arguments of rationalism or rejected as magic or idolatry. Here, the Romantic and the religious merge to form a unique blend.

5. *Literary Trajectories beyond Eve*

The theme of a female hero being visited by an unearthly being and made pregnant that lies behind the Jewish stories about Eve has numerous literary guises. The experience of stemming not from one's natural parents but, as it were, "from the stars", was a well-known topic in expressionist poetry. One may relate this motif to the feeling of being different from others and elected for a special mission

---

[38] Consider the popularity of the philosopher Nietzsche in German-Jewish circles around 1900.

[39] Grete Schaeder, "Martin Buber: ein biographischer Abriß", *Briefwechsel* I, 39.

[40] Idem, 38. Part of the legends may have been written by Paula.

[41] M. Buber, "Vorwort", in Georg Munk, *Geister und Menschen. Ein Sagenbuch*, 7.

as an artist or as a spiritual reformer. In this way, the motif of not being born of earthly parents can be connected to certain Messianic aspirations. This motif perhaps owes more to an imitation of the birth of Christ from the Virgin Mary than to Eve's offspring.[42] Nevertheless, as we have noticed, the blurring of the distinction between the divine and the demonic is characteristic of Romantic expressionist literature. Hence we should not separate the demonic and the Messianic births too sharply. Precisely as a doomed poet, the artist realizes his unearthly provenance, combining it with his artistic election.

Curiously, the topic of a female protagonist made pregnant by a demonic visitor seems to be far more widespread than that of a male hero and knows many different developments. Ira Levin's well-known novel *Rosemary's Baby*, and its less successful follow-up *Rosemary's Son*, tell of a woman who is visited by the devil at night and becomes pregnant with a demonic child. Horror movies like *The Omen* likewise exploit this theme. Science fiction literature tells of aliens visiting earth and impregnating female earthlings with cosmic seed. Meanwhile, reports of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) know of women who are convinced they have been sexually "visited" by aliens. This is strangely reminiscent of the numerous gnostic accounts of Eve's rape. The seduction of Eve in gnostic sources is attributed to Yaldabaoth, the first Archon, to the devil, to all of the Archons, to the serpent or to the Demiurge Samael.[43] It is hard to tell why the motif of Eve's demonic offspring is so persistent, capable of transforming itself into all kinds of modern literary disguises. Should one assume an archetypal structure common to the Jewish stories about Eve's demonic offspring and modern fiction?[44] Or should one suppose

---

[42] The demonic birth of the Antichrist—descending from Cain!—as a perversion of the Virgin Birth of Christ deserves attention as well. Cf. B. McGinn, *Antichrist. Two Thousand years of Human Fascination with the Devil*, San Francisco 1994; R.K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages. A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art and Literature*, Manchester 1981; M. van der Lugt, *Le ver, le démon et la vierge*, pp. 163ff. Cf. the curious motif in some so-called "minor midrashim", according to which the Antichrist is engendered by intercourse between a man or a devil and a marble stone in the shape of a woman. Cf. *Jewish Encyclopedia* 2, c. 119 s.v. "Armilus".

[43] This motif in gnostic literature may be an offshoot of the Jewish theme of Eve's demonic intercourse. Cf. G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed. Studies in Gnostic Mythology*, Leiden, 40–53.

[44] Studies such as O. Rank, *Der Mythos von der Geburt des Helden*, Leipzig/Wien 1909, presuppose such an archetypical universal structure for the divine birth of a hero.

a connection in whatever way with the problem of sexual abuse, the ramifications of which have become apparent only in recent times?[45] A team of psychiatrists, folklorists, anthropologists and philologists would be needed to answer these questions.

---

[45] The question of gender, in this case male versus female authorship of these texts, seems indispensable in this context as male descriptions of Eve's demonic offspring may reveal more about men than about women.

CAIN AND ABEL

This page intentionally left blank

BROTHERS AND FRATRICIDE IN THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN: ISRAEL, GREECE AND ROME

Jan N. Bremmer

After the expulsion of the first mortals from Paradise, the author of Genesis immediately continues with the story of Cain and Abel. This story is, so to speak, the very first fratricide. Curiously, though, the great commentaries by Westermann and Seebass on Genesis have little or nothing to say on this aspect of the episode.[1] Yet its place in Israel's *Urgeschichte* and the event itself raise several questions.[2] Firstly, what does the story say about the relationship between brothers in ancient Israel? Secondly, why did the Israelite imagination think up fratricide as the very first crime and not, for example, patricide or matricide? I will look at these interrelated questions in comparison with two other ancient Mediterranean cultures, Greece and Rome, but also bring in some modern anthropological material. In this way, we will perhaps be able to gain a better understanding of the role of brothers in these cultures. That does not mean to say that a comparison is easy. About Israel we have only the Old Testament, regarding Rome we have hardly any mythological examples, and in the case of Greece we are confronted with an embarrassing amount of sources, from epic to comedy, which all pose different problems regarding the nature of the evidence. Any picture, therefore, can be only sketchy. Subsequently we will look first at the importance and nature of fraternal relations in Israel (§1), Greece (§2) and Rome (§3), then at the tensions and fratricides in these cultures (§4–6) and finally look at fratricide in connection with parricide and matricide (§7).

---

[1] Cf. C. Westermann, *Genesis I*, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1974, 428–30; H. Seebass, *Genesis*, 4 vols, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1996–2000, 1.142–64; see further E. Noort's contribution to this volume, below, pp. 93–106.

[2] I note here in passing that the studies mentioned in note 1 are unpersuasive in their treatment of the opposition farmer/shepherd. For a good bibliography see P. Horden and N. Purcell (eds.), *The Corrupting Sea*, vol. 1, Oxford, 2000, 551f.

1. *Brothers in Ancient Israel*

What did the ancient Israelites consider to be the ideal relationship between brothers?[3] A good illustration of the behaviour expected between brothers is given by Abraham's words to Lot, when their shepherds started to quarrel: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my shepherds and thy shepherds; for we are brothers" (Gen 13:8). Remarkably, this text seems to have been in the mind of a fourth-century Egyptian, when he wrote in a letter on a dispute about herds: "there is no difference between us and you, as we are brothers".[4] The feeling of unity recurs in a different form in God's prescription to Moses: "thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart" (Lev 19:17). Unity among brothers is clearly the ideal situation, as the well-known Psalm 133 so eloquently extols. Possible causes for discord among brothers should therefore be avoided, and it was thus forbidden to brothers to lend one another money upon usury (Deut 23:19–20). This love extended to difficult situations: his brothers came to comfort Ephraim after his sons had been killed during a cattle raid (1 Chron 7:22), and those without brothers were considered to be extremely vulnerable (Eccl. 4:8). Not surprisingly, then, Gideon killed the kings of Midian, because they had killed his own brothers (Judg 8:19).

On a metaphorical level, the term "brother" was used to indicate somebody extremely close: David mourned Jonathan as his brother (2 Sam 1:26), as did the prophet for the Man of God slain by a lion (1 Kgs 13:30). At the beginning of our era, Jesus himself called his audience and pupils "brothers" (Mark 3:33; Matth 25:40, 28:10 etc.) and the apostles addressed their audience as "brothers" (Acts 2:29, 3:17 etc.): a kind of affective language that made these groups feel like a real family.[5]

---

[3] For brothers in Israel see the not quite satisfactory H. Ringgren, "'*Ah*", in C.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds.), *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, vol. 1, Stuttgart, 1973, 205–10.

[4] Or do we find here an age-old theme among shepherds? Cf. P. Maraval, *ZPE* 71 (1988) 97–8.

[5] See the perceptive observations of W. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (New Haven and London, 1983) 86–9; note also G.H.R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, Macquarie, 1987, 250–5.

2. *Brothers in Ancient Greece*[6]

The same situation could be found among the ancient Greeks.[7] It is surprising how often Homer mentions brothers and continuously stresses their solidarity and, regularly, shared death;[8] brothers also had to avenge the murder of brothers and it was an eternal disgrace not to do so (*Odyssey* 24.433–6). This solidarity supposedly extended even towards matricide: according to one version of the story, Alcmaeon killed his mother Eriphyle with the cooperation of his brother, thus avenging the betrayal of their father Amphiaraos (Apollod. 3.7.5). The close relationship is also reflected in names of Homeric heroes: the names of Aga*memnon* and *Mene*laos both stress the ideal of steadfastness in battle, and those of Castor and Polydeukes, the Dioskouroi, that of "excellence, brilliance".[9]

Both examples apply to only two brothers and it is indeed striking how often Homer speaks of only a couple of brothers. Not only do we find twins such as Krethon and Orsilochos (V.541–60) as well as Aesepos and Pedasos (VI.21–8), who are all killed by the same warrior, but in the famous Catalogue of Ships of the second book of the *Iliad* many communities are commanded by a couple of brothers, such as Orchomenos by Askalaphos and Ialmenos (511–6), the Phocaeans by Schedios and Epistrophos (517–26), Kos and surroundings by Pheidippos and Antiphos (676–80).[10] The phenomenon

---

[6] Regarding the Greek material, I update, abbreviate and amplify my remarks in "Why Did Medea Kill Her Brother Apsyrtus?", in J.J. Clauss and S.I. Johnston (eds.), *Medea*, Princeton, 1997, 83–100 at 87–92.

[7] For Greece see especially M. Huys, 'Twistende broers bij Euripides', *Kleio* 14 (1984) 32–48; S.C. Humphreys, "Kinship Patterns in the Athenian Courts", *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 27 (1986) 57–91 at 73–5; M. Golden, *Children and Childhood in Classical Athens*, Baltimore, 1990, 115–21; S. Saïd, "Couples fraternels chez Sophocle", in A. Machin and L. Pernée (eds.), *Sophocle. Le texte, les personnages*, Aix-en-Provence, 1993, 299–328; C.A. Cox, *Household Interests*, Princeton, 1998, 108–20.

[8] Solidarity: *Iliad* XI.15, 456, 709–10; XIV.484–5; XVI.675, XXIV.792. Death: *Iliad* V.148–58 and 541–60; VI.421; XI.101–2, 122–47, 329–34; XVI.317–29; XX.460–62; XXIII.636–9; XXIV.603–9; P. Walcot, *Greek Peasants. Ancient and Modern*, Manchester, 1970, 79; L. Hopkins, "The Iliad and the Henriad: epics and brothers", *Class. Mod. Litt.* 19 (1999) 149–71.

[9] For the etymologies, see J.L. García-Ramón, *Die Sprache* 34 (1988–90) 53.

[10] See also *Iliad* II.729–33 (Podaleirios and Machaon), 864–6 (Mesthles and Antiphos), 876–75 (Nastes and Amphimachos); IV.273–4 (the two Aiantes), V.592–5 (Ares and Enyo), XII.94 (Helenos and Deiphobos), 196 (Hector and Poulydamas).

of two leaders is indeed well attested for groups of warriors and youths, and probably goes back to Indo-European times.[11]

On the other hand, we can also note here the phenomenon of refraction as it has recently been called.[12] Myth as well as oral tradition does not only reflect the world of everyday life, but it also simplifies and exaggerates everyday life in order to concentrate on a few, symbolically productive characteristics. Regarding brothers, this process is particularly clear in the rich Greek tradition, since not only in Homer but also in Attic tragedy and comedy (below) there is a clear preference for pairs of brothers.[13] The preference must be old, considering the Indo-European usage of the dual for brothers, such as *Aiante* for Aiax and Teukros or *Castores* for Castor and Pollux.[14] The "simplification" also enabled the story-tellers to picture contrasting brothers, such as Epimetheus and Prometheus: Hesiod's "dumb" and "clever" brother. The oscillation between "realistic" and "symbolic" portraiture can also be found in the older traditions of Israel with its many pairs of brothers: Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, Simeon and Levi who avenge the honour of their sister Dinah,[15] Joseph and Benjamin, Moses and Aaron.

In historical times, our fullest evidence naturally comes from Athens, but this city is unlikely to have been highly atypical in this respect. We are particularly fortunate in that fourth-century forensic speeches supply various examples of what Athenian males, who constituted the juries, expected of such relationships. One man claimed that he would not conceal even his mother's mistreatment of his brother (Demosthenes 36.20) and another man claimed that he and his half-brother never quarrelled (Isaeus 9.30). This unanimity and closeness between brothers was evidently the general expectation, since one brother might be sued as the heir of another ([Demosthenes] 35.3)

---

[11] H.W. Singor, *Oorsprong en betekenis van de hoplietenphalanx in het archaïsche Griekenland*, Diss. Leiden, 1988, 138–9.

[12] R. Buxton, *Imaginary Greece*, Cambridge, 1994, 87f.

[13] Huys, 'Twistende broers'; Saïd, "Couples fraternels chez Sophocle".

[14] As was shown by J. Wackernagel, *Kleine Schriften* I, Göttingen, 1953, 538–46; note also J. Puhvel, *Analecta Indoeuropaea*, Innsbruck, 1981, 386–8 (Castores); R. Janko on *Iliad* XIII.46.

[15] In Greece, too, brothers were supposed to guard the honour of their sisters, see J. Alaux, "Sur quelques pièges de la parenté. Soeurs et frères dans la tragédie athénienne", *Annali Scuola Normale Pisa* III 25 (1995) 219–42; Bremmer, "Why did Medea", 93–99.

or asked to provide information regarding his dead brother's financial affairs (Lysias 32.26–7). Opponents could dismiss testimony by arguing that it came from a brother ([Demosthenes] 47.11, 46) or they could state that damning testimony had to be true because it came from a brother (Demosthenes 29.15, 23). This expectation regarding the brother's role was so strong that, when his brother Pasicles did not join him in prosecuting Phormion, Apollodorus insisted that he was not really his father's son (Demosthenes 45.83–4). The feeling that brothers should be very close and supportive of one another is also reflected in the proverb "let a brother help a man", which is quoted by Plato (*Rep.* 362d).[16] In his *Nicomachean Ethics* (8.12), Aristotle also dedicates a few observations to the fraternal relationship. He observes the close friendship between brothers and even notes that brothers are "in a sense the same identity in different bodies" (tr. Barnes). In Greece, we find this feeling also reflected in the fact that closed groups of males and warriors called themselves *phrateres*, the inherited Indo-European term for "brothers";[17] the normal Greek word for "brother", *adelphos*, was an innovation, but stressed the origin from the same womb.[18] As often, the playwright Menander (fr. 810 K.-A.) well sums up the ideal: "passion (*erôs*) for concord is a sweet thing among brothers".

3. *Brothers in Ancient Rome*

It will hardly be surprising to find the same situation in ancient Rome.[19] Unlike Israel and Greece, Rome had preserved only a few traditions from before its first centuries. Our material therefore mainly derives from the last centuries B.C., when the many civil wars gave plenty of opportunity to brothers to demonstrate their mutual affection

---

[16] The proverb also is cited by Diogenianus 3.29; Apostolius 1.36; Macarius 1.29 (a slight variant).

[17] For the etymology see now V. Blažek, "Indo-European Kinship Terms", in O. Šefcik and B. Vykypel (eds.), *Grammaticus. Studia linguistica Adolfo Erharto quinque et septuagenario oblata*, Brno, 2001, 24–33 at 24f.

[18] For these terms see E. Benveniste, *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes*, 2 vols, Paris, 1969, I.212–5; differently, but not wholly persuasively, J.-L. Perpillou, *Recherches lexicales en grec ancien*, Leuven, 1996, 137–51.

[19] C.J. Bannon, *The Brothers of Romulus. Fraternal* Pietas *in Roman Law, Literature, and Society*, Princeton, 1997).

or hatred. One of the oldest testimonia is at the same time one of the most illuminating. Gellius (13.10.4) relates that Nigidius Figulus, the most learned Roman after Varro in the first century B.C., "explains the word "brother" (*frater*) with a no less clever and precise etymology: a brother is nearly a second self (*fere alter*)". In other words, similarity was the constituting factor of the Roman fraternal identity. Good brothers had and did everything in common. This feeling was even translated into law. According to the jurist Papinian, "the more thoughtful people recognize the natural affection between fathers and sons and among brothers as a basis for good faith in dealings" (*Dig.* 17.1.54.*pr*).

Brothers were expected to share social (§6), political and military obligations. From politics it is sufficient to mention the names of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus and to notice that there were two pairs of brothers among the conspirators against Caesar.[20] Given the militaristic nature of Roman society, it is not surprising to find several examples of brothers of, presumably, more or less the same age, who went together on campaign or even shared the highest commands. Three brothers Fabii fought together against Veii in 479 B.C. (Livy 2.46.5–7); in the Second Punic War, Scipio Africanus was accompanied by his younger brother Asiagenus, and Titus and Lucius Flaminius defeated the Achaean League in 198–7 B.C.[21] As Romans told in horror, if not necessarily truthfully, in the same war, Hannibal pitted prisoner brothers against brothers—an interesting, if neglected testimony to the occurrence of brothers in wars (Valerius Maximus 9.2.ext.2). In his *Aeneid*, Vergil imitates Homer, but probably also reality, by letting many brothers be slain in the wars between Trojans and their opponents "for rhetorical or pathetic effect".[22] At first sight, though, the most pathetic example is that of the civil war of 89 B.C. when a soldier unwittingly killed his brother on the other side. When he recognized his brother, "he let loose a loud cry of grief. Then, after he built a funeral pyre for his brother, he stabbed himself over

---

[20] F. Hinard, "Solidarités familiales et ruptures à l'époque des guerres civiles et de la proscription", in J. Andreau and H. Bruhns (eds.), *Parenté et stratégies familiales dans l'antiquité romaine*, Rome, 1990, 550–70 at 560.

[21] Livy (40.8.15) mentions several other fraternal couples whose *pietas* led to their own glory and that of Rome, such as T. and L. Quinctius Flaminius, P. and L. as well as their father and uncle Cn. and P. Cornelius Scipio.

[22] S.J. Harrison, *Vergil, Aeneid 10*, Oxford, 1991, 94.

the pyre and was burned with the same fire" (Livy, *Epitome* 79). Unfortunately, the anecdote is of doubtful authenticity,[23] although it is still indicative of what was expected of the fraternal relationship. And indeed, several anecdotes told how brothers perished together in the civil wars.[24] The support of brothers is still attested in the first century A.D. when during Tiberius' reign M. Scribonius Libo Drusus appeared at his treason trial leaning on his brother's arm (Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.29) and the Secundi brothers were abandoned by everybody except themselves (Tacitus, *Ann.* 5.8, 6.18).

4. *Tensions and Fratricide in Israel*

When we compare what we have seen so far, it seems clear that in all three societies discussed there was a strong stress on and praise of harmony and solidarity between brothers. At the same time, though, it is impossible to overlook the fact that we find a large amount of ideology in our sources. The extent to which we can also speak of a description of real fraternal relations is much more difficult to establish. Yet common sense suggests that ancient brothers must also have known their less harmonious moments, and it is indeed possible to identify possible causes of discord. In Israel, the inheritance must have been a frequent source of friction, since the first born received double the amount from the others (Deut 21:17; see also 1 Chron 5:1–2). Esau's selling of his birthright is a nice example of the importance of this factor (Gen 25:29–34), although the episode also serves to picture Esau in a negative way. Another factor could be the special affection of the father for one of his sons, as in the case of Jacob's love for Joseph, the "son of his old age" (Gen 37:3). To avoid such deadly rivalries there was a possibility, though: Abraham sent his concubine Hagar and her son Ishmael away into the wilderness, and the sons of his other concubines "eastward, unto the east country" (Gen 21:14, 25:7).

In some cases, rivalry could end in fratricide. In addition to the example of Cain and Abel, such a murder is mentioned in the Old Testament only in very serious circumstances or as a characterisation of an extremely bad person. After the Israelites had started to

---

[23] A.J. Woodman, *Tacitus Reviewed*, Oxford, 1998, 13.
[24] Appian, *Civil Wars*, 4.22.

worship the Golden Calf, Moses ordered the Levites to kill the wor-
shippers, even their own brothers (Ex 32.27, 29), Abimelek consorted
with "light and vain persons" and murdered his seventy (!) brothers
(Judg 9:5, 24), and Absalom, a man who did not shrink from revolt
against his own father David (2 Sam 15), had his brother Amnon
murdered, a case of "soft" fratricide, in order to revenge the honour
of his sister Tamar (2 Sam 13). In royal families the struggle for
succession could also be deadly, as is illustrated by the struggle for
the throne at the end of David's life between Solomon and his elder
half-brother Adoniah, which ended in the latter's execution (1 Kgs 1–2),
just as Jehoram murdered his brothers after succeeding Jehoshaphat
(2 Chron 21:4, 13). In these cases, as so often in world history, the
rise of a new king went hand in hand with the killing of the brothers
as possible rivals.[25]

Rivalry between brothers is virtually inevitable between twins, who
immediately have to compete for their mother's milk and later in
life must compete for succession to their father's position.[26] In many
societies, therefore, twins are a symbol of rivalry and in various com-
munities they are expelled altogether.[27] It is this symbolic position
that explains their prominence in the mythologies of various cultu-
res, another clear case of refraction. In Israel we have of course the
famous example of Jacob and Esau, who were already quarrelling
even in the womb, like Jacob and Esau—another dramatisation of
the rivalry (Gen 25). Another nice example is Tamar's twin of whom
the first was marked with a scarlet thread, but then pulled its hand
back and reappeared only after its twin brother (Gen 38:27–30), thus
surely guaranteeing a future conflict on the question of primogeniture.

It is noteworthy that fratricide and hatred against brothers is also
the typical characteristic of the breakdown of society in Oriental and
Jewish prophecies of doom.[28] The Egyptian *Prophecy of Neferti* (*ANET*

---

[25] For other cases see, for example, A. Davis, "Fraternity and Fratricide in Late
Imperial China", *Am. Hist. Rev.* 105 (2000) 1630–40; A. Blok, *Honour and Violence*,
Cambridge, 2001, 282f.

[26] Unfortunately, we cannot reconstruct the plot of the various comedies entitled
"Twins", cf. Kassel and Austin on Xenarchus' *Didymoi*.

[27] For a full bibliography, see J.M. Schoffeleers, "Twins and Unilateral Figures
in Central and Southern Africa: Symmetry and Asymmetry in the Symbolization
of the Sacred", *Journal of Religion in Africa* 21 (1991) 345–72; A. Meurant, *L'idée de
gémellité dans la légende des origines de Rome*, Brussels, 2000, 275–322; J.-P. Mayelle Ilo,
Statut mythique et scientifique de la gémellité, Brussels, 2000.

[28] Similarly in ancient Germanic societies, cf. R. Schneider, "Brüdergemeine", in

445: beginning second millennium B.C.) gives as an example of the topsy-turvy situation of the land: "I show thee thy son as a foe, the brother as an enemy, and a man killing his (own) father". The *Admonitions of Iwuper* (1.5, 5.11: *ca.* 1300 B.C.) mentions as a sign of societal dissolution: "A man regards his son as his enemy . . . A man strikes his maternal brother". In the Babylonian poem of *Erra and Ishum* (V: *ca.* eighth century B.C.) Erra pictures total chaos, in which "tribe shall not spare tribe, nor man man, nor brother brother, and they shall slay one another".[29] In Micah's apocalyptic picture (7:2), "the good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood: they hunt every man his brother with a net". According to the Hellenistic *Oracle of the Potter*, in the final generation "there will be [war and . . . murder?] between brothers and spouses".[30] The same gruesome picture recurs in Jesus' sketch of future persecutions in Mark (13:12) where "the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son, and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death" (cf. Matt 10:12).

5. *Tensions and Fratricide in Greece*

In Greece, the most important source of trouble will have been the division of the inheritance, just as among the modern Greek Sarakatsani shepherds the strictly equal division of the inheritance was "a severe test of brotherly love".[31] Small plots of land must have caused many worries. It is understandable that Hesiod, in his *Works and Days* (376–9), advises men to have only one son, as he himself had had a quarrel with his brother Perses over their inheritance. Among the Berbers, as well as in western and northern Europe, this problem is solved by the indivisibility of the land, and the same approach

---

H. Beck et al. (eds.), *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde* 3, Berlin and New York, 1978, 580–1.

[29] S. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, Oxford, 2000², 308.

[30] For the text of the *Oracle* see L. Koenen, *ZPE* 2 (1968) 178–209, 3 (1968) 137–8, 13 (1974) 313–9, 54 (1984) 9–13 (on the date) and his 'Die Apologie des Töpfers an König Amenophis oder das Töpferorakel', in A. Blasius and B.U. Schipper (eds.), *Apokalyptik und Ägypten: eine kritische Analyse der relevanten Texte aus dem griechisch-römischen Ägypten*, Leuven, 2002, 139–87.

[31] J.K. Campbell, *Honour, Family and Patronage*, Oxford, 1964, 81.

sometimes took place among the Athenians.[32] Another strategy of minimizing conflict, which is also found in modern Greece, was to divide up the patrimony into shares agreed to be equal and then allocate them by lot; in this way Kronos' sons already divided the universe.[33] A third possibility was to let one brother divide up the property and the other choose his portion first ([Dem]. 48.12). Sometimes, one brother even agreed to accept a smaller portion.[34] We may perhaps add in this respect the agreement struck by the sons of Oedipus, as described in Euripides' *Phoenissae*, whereby Eteocles and Polyneices would rule during alternate years.[35] Complete prevention of rivalry was impossible, however, and in speeches from the Athenian law-court we hear of one brother depriving the other of his patrimony (Lysias 10.5) and even of a fatal assault over the division of property (Isaeus 9.17).[36] These examples will hardly have been exceptions to the rule, as Plato proposed detailed legislation on the subject in his *Laws* (868c, 869cd, 873ab).

Other factors also played an important role in creating rivalry between brothers. First, in Archaic Greece, as in early Israel, there must have been competition between legitimate and bastard sons: Odysseus spins a tale in which he relates how after his father's death the legitimate sons cast lots for the patrimony, whereas he was fobbed off with very little (*Odyssey* 14.207–11). Then there is the difference between the older and younger brother(s).[37] The older had certain

---

[32] Berbers: Bourdieu, *Outline*, 64. Europe: see the bibliography in Cox, *Household Interests*, 106 note 1. Athenians: A.R.W. Harrison, *The Law of Athens* I, Oxford, 1968, 239–44; R.L. Fox, "Aspects of inheritance in the Greek world", in P. Cartledge and F.D. Harvey (eds.), *Crux. Essays presented to G.E.M. de Ste. Croix*, Exeter, 1985, 208–32 at 211–4.

[33] *Iliad* 15.184–99, cf. W. Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution*, Cambridge Mass., 1992, 88–93 for the dependence of this passage on the Akkadian epic *Atrahasis* (but note the reservations of M.L. West, *The East Face of Helikon*, Oxford, 1997, 110); *Odyssey* 14.208–9; Stesichorus F 222 (b). 220ff Davies, cf. J.M. Bremer *et al.*, *Some Recently Found Greek Poems*, Leiden, 1987, 167–8; Apollod. 2.8.4; H.L. Levy, "Property Distribution by Lot in Present-day Greece", *Tr. Am. Philol. Ass.* 87 (1956) 43–6; E. Friedl, *Vasilika*, New York, 1962, 60–4; M. Herzfeld, "Social Tension and Inheritance by Lot in Three Greek Villages", *Anthr. Quart.* 53 (1980) 91–100; P. Demont, "Lots héroïques: remarques sur le tirage au sort de l'*Iliade* aux *Sept contre Thèbes* d'Eschyle", *Rev. Et. Gr.* 113 (2000) 299–325 at 309–15.

[34] Pindar, F 52d Maehler; Lysias 16.10.

[35] This is a relatively late version of the myth, cf. A. Moreau, *Mythes grecs I: Origines*, Montpellier, 1999, 53–61.

[36] For more examples see Cox, *Household Interests*, 109–14.

[37] For primogeniture in Greece see L. Beauchet, *Histoire du droit privé de la République athénienne*, vol. 3, Paris, 1897, 450–7.

advantages. Like the eldest sister (below), he could marry first and register his name on a stone immediately after the name of his father (Thuc. 6.55). Moreover, his younger brother was expected to treat him with respect, as Polyneices insisted that Eteocles should do in Sophocles' *Oedipus in Colonus* (1422–3) and Smicrines did in Menander's *Aspis* (172, 255). And in Athenian mythology, Sophocles (F 24.2 Radt) portrayed Aegeus' father as giving him the best part of Attica because he was the eldest son. This inequality of privileges must also have occurred outside of Athens, since in his *Politics* (5.5.2) Aristotle mentions that certain states forbid an elder and a younger brother from holding office simultaneously. Rivalry, then, must have been endemic, and "Brothers"—that is to say, "Quarrelling Brothers"—was a favourite title for New Comedy plays,[38] although the genre itself of course usually provided a happy ending, unlike tragedy which liked to wallow in the dreadful consequences of this rivalry.[39] Around the end of the first century A.D., Plutarch's essay *On Brotherly Love* still noted that the disparity between an older and a younger brother's rights and roles could be a source of rivalry.[40]

We can note another strategy for avoiding such kinds of fraternal rivalries by observing that the Dioskouroi are described as "Kastor, tamer of horses, and Polydeukes, good with his fists" (*Il.* 3.279 = *Od.* 11.300), Hector and Poulydamas, who had been born on the same day, as "man of the spear and man of speech" (*Il.* 18.249–52), and the founders of Thebes, the brothers Amphion and Zethus, as a musician and an athlete.[41] Plutarch (*Mor.* 486B–D) already interpreted these cases of differentiation as conscious attempts at preventing rivalries between brothers. And indeed, such strategies can be paralleled in modern times. Like the Berbers, the Sarakatsani tried to discourage rivalry between brothers by encouraging them to

---

[38] See the enumeration by Kassel and Austin on Diphilus F 3.

[39] Unfortunately, the entry on fratricides in Hyginus (*Fab.* 236: *qui fratres suos occiderunt*) has been lost.

[40] Plut. *Mor.* 478A–492D, cf. H.J. Klauck, *Alte Welt und neuer Glaube*, Fribourg, 1994, 83–98 ("Die Bruderliebe bei Plutarch und im vierten Makkabäerbuch").

[41] Tragedy liked to play with this last opposition, cf. *LIMC* I.1 (1981) s.v. Amphion (F. Heger); M. Schmidt, "Lydische Harmonie", in J.-P. Descoeudres (ed.), *Eumousia. Ceramic and Iconographic Studies in Honour of Alexander Cambitoglou*, Sydney, 1990, 221–6; S.R. Slings, "The Quiet Life in Euripides' *Antiope*", in H. Hoffmann (ed.), *Fragmenta dramatica*, Göttingen, 1991, 137–51; Z. Ritoók, "Amphion and Icarus", *Acta Ant. Hung.* 36 (1995) 87–99.

pursue different vocations: for example, by making one a muleteer and the other a cheese-maker.[42]

Hostile brothers are well known from Greek mythology: the myths of the deadly consequences of the struggle between Atreus and Thyestes or between the sons of Oedipus are arguably the most important myths of the archaic era: there clearly is a warning message in these myths. Yet actual fratricide is mentioned relatively rarely in Greek myth, and hardly at all in reality.[43] Tydeus killed his brother Olenias (Pherecydes FGrH 3 F 122a = F 122 Fowler) or, according to another version, Melanippos (Hyginus *Fab.* 69) during a hunt, just as Bellerophon accidentally killed his brother Deliades (Apollod. 2.3.1), and Peleus and/or Telamon their half-brother Phocus.[44] It seems significant that these killings are accidental, just as Oedipus killed his father inadvertently. Apparently, Greek mythical imagination found it hard to imagine an intentional fratricide, just as it found it impossible to imagine an intentional parricide (§7). In the case of the already mentioned notorious brotherly quarrel between Atreus and Thyestes, myth relates the dishing up of Thyestes' sons during a banquet as a consequence of the fratricide: cannibalism was also a terrible crime, but it could be more easily imagined.[45]

Finally, it is not surprising that Greek mythology had its sets of warring twins as well, such as Pelias and Neleus (Apollod. 1.9.9) or Danaus and Aegyptus (Apollod. 2.1.4). The twins Proetus and Acrisius (Apollod. 2.2.1) and Panopeus and Krisos (Hesiod, fr. 58 MW; Lycophron 939–40) were already quarrelling even in the womb, like Jacob and Esau. Is this an example of literary dependency or is the motif more widespread?

6. *Tensions and Fratricide in Rome*

In Rome, we sometimes have a glimpse of fraternal dissent, as when Valerius Maximus (7.8) tells an anecdote about a Transalpine Roman

---

[42] Campbell, *Honour, Family and Patronage*, 174–6; a similar specialisation among the Berbers, P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Praxis*, Cambridge, 1977, 63.

[43] Plutarch, *Mor.* 478C notes the rarity of the theme, but see J. Alaux, "Fratricide et lien fraternel: quelques repères grecs", *Quaderni di Storia* 23 (1997) 107–32.

[44] Phocus: Moreau, *Mythes grecs* I, 130.

[45] For cannibalism see most recently Moreau, *Mythes grecs* I, 201–19.

who was disinherited by his brother and then read out in public his own testament which showed that he himself would have left most of his possessions to that brother. Yet, precisely regarding inheritance, the Romans had already at an early stage developed legal arrangements that made the sharing of the inherited property, the so-called *consortium*, a social ideal.[46] The largest strain on fraternal harmony, though, proved to be the difficult political circumstances in the last century B.C. This century knew a number of bloody civil wars and led many brothers to take different sides. We are well informed about the relationship between Cicero and his brother Quintus, who chose the opposite sides of Pompey and Caesar.[47] Lepidus and Plancus even had their brothers proscribed, since they had been the first to vote Lepidus and Marc Antony enemies of the people. The proscription made their soldiers mockingly sing during their triumphal procession: *de germanis* ("Germanic peoples" but also "brothers"), *non de Gallis duo triumphant consules*.[48] The fraternal strains in the Roman imperial family are also well documented, as with the sometimes deadly rivalries between Drusus and Tiberius (Suetonius, *Tib.* 17), Nero and his half-brother Britannicus, and Titus and Domitian (Suetonius, *Tit.* 19).

Fratricide was a very popular theme in the first century B.C. during the already mentioned civil wars.[49] Actual fratricide is not attested very often, but the theme loomed large in the contemporary Roman imagination, and was clearly considered one of the most nightmarish aspects of the civil war in the eyes of the last generations of the first century B.C. Poets often alluded to it,[50] and Romulus, the celebrated founder of Rome, now became a suspicious figure who would never again manage to lose the blemish of fratricide.[51]

---

[46] Bannon *Brothers of Romulus*, 12–61.
[47] Bannon, ibidem, 101–16.
[48] Velleius Paterculus 2.67.3.
[49] Hinard, "Solidarités familiales", 558.
[50] Catullus 64.399; Lucretius 3.72; Vergil, *Georg.* 2.496, 510 and *Aen.* 7.355 with Horsfall ad loc.
[51] See, especially, H. Wagenvoort, *Studies in Roman Literature, Culture and Religion*, Leiden, 1956, 169–83; R. Schilling, *Rites, cultes, dieux de Rome*, Paris, 1979, 102–20.

7. *Conclusions*

Having looked at fraternal relations in Israel, Greece and Rome, we will now first formulate two conclusions and then return to the question of why the first crime was a fratricide. First, why do we find this frequent stress on fraternal cooperation in these societies? The answer is probably to be looked for in the following direction. In pre-state and proto-state societies such as Israel, Greece and Rome, the state had not yet fully acquired the monopoly on violence. Males, therefore, had to be able to depend unreservedly on their brothers and, possibly, on the rest of their family in order to survive in an unstable and highly competetive world. The phenomenon is still largely underresearched, but we may note that early Germanic sources are also reticent in portraying fratricide.[52] This view of the importance of solidarity among brothers as the guarantee for a succesful life could still be found in modern Greece, where the Sarakatsani attached great value to the solidarity of brothers and promoted it by treating brothers as absolutely equal. They had to take an equal share in avenging the family honour and received an exactly equal share of the patrimony.[53] Similarly, the Dutch anthropologist Anton Blok, one of the foremost authorities on the history of the *mafia*, notes that, among family relationships, "in particular, sets of brothers have always been very common in *mafia* families, both in the city and in the countryside" a phenomenon he explicitly connects with the absence of a strong public authority.[54]

Secondly, according to a recent survey, about 10% of homicides in agrarian societies involve fratricide.[55] There is no reason, then, to suppose that Israelites, when hearing the story of Cain and Abel, would not have related to the theme. But why is fratricide so common and vicious? The already mentioned Anton Blok has recently published an interesting article on "the narcissism of minor differences".[56] People who are very close often exaggerate their differences in order

---

[52] F. Geissler, "Bruder", in Beck, *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde* 3, 552–5.
[53] Campbell, *Honour, Family and Patronage*, 174–6; Walcot, *Greek Peasants*, 52–4, 78f.
[54] A. Blok, *The Mafia of a Sicilian Village 1860–1960*, Oxford, 1988², 179; idem, *Honour and Violence*, 88 (quote).
[55] M. Daley and M. Wilson, *Homicide*, New York, 1988, 25.
[56] Blok, *Honour and Violence*, 115–35.

to maintain their own identity. The result is a more intense confrontation than would be the case with less familiar enemies, as Euripides already noted regarding brothers (F 975 Nauck²). This cross-cultural mechanism has led to terrible civil wars—one need to think only of Ruanda or former Yugoslavia—but also, although not mentioned by Blok, to many bitter schisms in Dutch Protestant churches. Another anthropologist noted that "among men, coexistence of amity and lethal agression has been ethnographically documented in a number of politically decentralized societies, particularly those with strong norms of harmony and cooperation",[57] precisely the situation we have found in the Mediterranean.

Finally, having seen the great stress on cooperation as well as the association of fraternal discord and fratricide with apocalyptic prophecies, we can perhaps better understand why the author of Genesis thought it fitting to demonstrate the dire consequences of man's expulsion from Paradise by immediately following up that expulsion with the first fratricide. Cain's killing of Abel must have always reminded them of the fragility of their fraternal relationships and the loss of a world without violence.

Admittedly, it could be objected that the author of Genesis might also have used patricide or matricide instead of fratricide to denote the beginning of a life outside Paradise. However, this does not seem very probable as regards Israel. In the Old Testament we nowhere find any mention of those two heinous crimes, and they seem to have been almost beyond imagination. This was somewhat different in Greece and Rome. In Greece, patricide was also hardly imaginable. There are no representations of the crime, and the Athenians found it even emotionally difficult to pronounce the word "patricide".[58] When it happened in mythology it is always described as having happened accidentally, as in the case of Oedipus and Leucippus, or as being justified, as in the case of the savage Perrhaebian Triopas.[59] Matricide was somewhat different. Early mythology knew the famous

[57] B.M. Knauft, *Good Company and Violence: sorcery and social action in a lowland New Guinea society*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1985, 337.

[58] Bremmer, "Oedipus and the Greek Oedipus Complex", in Bremmer (ed.), *Interpretations of Greek Mythology*, London, 1988², 41–56 at 49.

[59] Oedipus: Bremmer, "Oedipus". Leucippus: Parthenius 5, cf. J. Lightfoot, *Parthenius of Nicaea*, Oxford, 1999, 398f. Triopas: Scholion T and Eustathius on *Iliad* IV.88

cases of Alcmaeon and Orestes, and it is striking that in the end these matricides do not seem to have suffered lasting punishments for their killings.[60] In Rome, on the other hand, matricide seems to have been unimaginable, whereas patricide must have always been a possibility.[61]

In modern Western society we no longer depend on our brothers and, consequently, fratricide is becoming rare. In fact, it seems that "brother", used as a way to address people who are not family, is rapidly losing ground, except perhaps among Afro-Americans; the term "brotherhood" is no longer used for new societies, and "brethren" has become distinctly archaic-sounding. A modern author would surely have chosen a different murder than fratricide to indicate man's loss of Paradise.[62]

---

[60] M. Delcourt, *Oreste et Alcméon. Étude sur la projection légendaire du matricide en Grèce*, Paris, 1959, to be read with the critique by C. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Theseus as Son and Stepson*, London, 1979, 11–7; R. Parker, *Miasma*, Oxford, 1983, 377 (Alcmeon), 386–8 (Orestes).

[61] For the crime and its peculiar punishment see most recently F. Egmond and P. Mason, *The Mammoth and the Mouse*, Baltimore and London, 1997, 133–56; D.G. Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, London and New York, 1998, 216f.

[62] For various suggestions and corrections I am most grateful to Peter van Minnen and Eibert Tigchelaar. Richard Buxton kindly corrected my English.

GENESIS 4:1–16. FROM PARADISE TO REALITY: THE MYTH OF BROTHERHOOD

Ed Noort

1. *A Trial*

Let's take Cain to court. Let's forget for a moment that we are deal-ing with a myth that is closely related[1] to the Creation and Paradise narratives which precede it, and represents the first man *born* into the real world. Let's go to court and call a murder a murder. Let's assume for a moment that all the later laws about killing, murder-ing, and shedding blood are in the minds of the storytellers. But is it murder or manslaughter?

Here, the interpretation of 4:8 is decisive. The MT reads:

8a	ויאמר קין אל־הבל אחיו
8ba	ויהי בהיותם בשדה
8bb	ויקם קין אל־הבל אחיו ויהרגהו

The first problem is the ויאמר in V.8a. Normally the sentence would be translated: "And Cain said to Abel, his brother:" . . . followed by direct speech. This is how all the versions thus far have understood the expression. LXX completes: διέλθωμεν εἰς τὸ πεδίον = נלכה השדה, Syr: *nrd' lpw't'*, V: egrediamur foras. The addition "let us go out to the field", missing here, is fed by V.8ba, where Cain and Abel are in the field. On the other hand, however, there is no need for them not to be there already. The offering in vv.3f does not need a shrine or a temple, only an altar in a field. The addition wants to stress Cain's guilt, for the sentence "Let us go out to the field" implies a plan to kill Abel secretly in the field, where, in the words of Gunkel: "Abel keinen Helfer und der Mord keine Zeugen hatte".[2] Thus the

---

[1] W. Dietrich, '"Wo ist dein Bruder?". Zu Tradition und Intention von Genesis 4"', in: H. Donner, R. Hanhart, R. Smend (Hrsg.), *Beiträge zur Alttestamentlichen Theologie: Festschrift für Walther Zimmerli zum 70. Geburtstag*, Göttingen 1977, 94–111 (98): Gen 4:7//3:16; 4:9//3:9; 4:10//3:13.14; 4:11//3:14.17; 4:14//3:24; 4:16//3:24. Again used by H. Seebass, *Genesis I: Urgeschichte (1,1–11,26)*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1996, 147.

[2] H. Gunkel, *Genesis*, Göttingen 1969[8] (1901), 44.

addition[3] to the versions may be to stress the fact of murder. The
first question here must be, is it possible for the Hebrew Bible to
use ויאמר without following direct speech? Westermann excludes the
possibility,[4] Deurloo chooses MT on stylistic grounds,[5] Jacob also
uses stylistic arguments: "Die Verumständung wird durch die fol-
genden Worte geschaffen und solche Breite entspräche nicht dem
gedrängten Stil des Kapitels".[6] Jacob refers to Exod 19:25 and 2
Chr 32:24, where ויאמר is indeed used without following direct speech.

This opens the floor to various interpretations of what Cain said
to Abel, varying from Cain repeating to Abel everything that YHWH
had said to him in the verses before, lulling Abel into thinking that
he, Cain, was no longer angry, to Cain quarrelling with Abel about
the offering and killing him during the quarrel.

Thus, reading V.8 in the MT without the addition of direct speech
and arguing that this is possible, as Jacob has shown, means that
both possibilities are still open—manslaughter and murder. The
decision must be based on the last combination of V.8 ויהרגהו . . .
ויקם אל. It has been deduced from the combination of קום and הרג
that V.8 means murder, as is the case in the parallels in Deut 19:11;
22:26; Judg 9:18.[7] But the case is not as simple as it looks at first
sight. Deut 19:11 certainly describes murder, and denies that fleeing
to a city of refuge can save the murderer. The murderer is described
as one "who hates his neighbour, lies in wait for him, stands up
against him and wounds him mortally so that he dies". Thus, mur-
der "in the first degree" is described as a combination of שׂנא ("to
hate"), ארב ("to lie in wait for"), קום ("to rise"), נכה Hif. ("to strike"),
with the additional specification ומת נפשׁ, "so that he dies", which
means there is also a נכה Hif. where the victim does not die. It
needs three verbs more in this text than the combination of קום and

---

[3] Gunkel, *Genesis* 44, also interprets the reading of the versions and the Targum
as additions, but he proposes an emendation, either imp. hif. from מרה, "to behave
rebelliously" or imp. qal from מרר, "to be bitter".

[4] C. Westermann, *Genesis* (Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament I/1), Neukirchen-
Vluyn 1974, 411.

[5] K.A. Deurloo, *Kain en Abel. Onderzoek naar exegetische methode inzake een 'kleine lite-
rarire eenheid' in de Tenakh*, Amsterdam 1967, 116. He refers to 2 Chr 1:2; 24:8 and
Ps 105:31.34 for the use of ויאמר without following direct speech if the content of
the supposed saying is clear in the following narrative.

[6] B. Jacob, *Das erste Buch der Tora: Genesis*, Berlin 1934, 140.

[7] Deurloo, *Kain*, 116.

הרנ in Gen 4 to describe real murder. It is only the addition of the *versiones* in V.8 that make Cain a murderer in the sense of Deut 19.

The same can be said of the predecessor to Deut 19, the Book of the Covenant Exod 21:12f. Here there is a clear distinction between murder and manslaughter by accident. The general verdict is made by a מות יומת construction: "Whoever strikes a man so that he dies, he will surely die". Two cases follow this general statement: "If one does not lie in wait (צדה) for him, but Elohim lets him fall into his hand . . ." then he is allowed to go to the altar of refuge (21:13). The alternative is the wilful attack: V.14: "But if one acts presumptuously/becomes heated (זיד Hif.) against his neighbour and murders (הרנ) him treacherously (בערמה) he is not allowed to flee to the altar of refuge" (21:14). Here the case is even clearer. Although the murder is described explicitly, the verb קום is not used at all. Even הרנ is not enough on its own, "treacherously" must be added. Thus, again, the combination of קום and הרנ is not sufficient to describe murder.

The second text mentioned is Deut 22:26, the case of the rape of an engaged woman in the field. Here, rape is equated with murder. The guilty one is the man, not the woman, she is given the benefit of the doubt: "the woman may have cried for help but there was no one to rescue her" (22:27). For the man the punishment is the same as in the case of murder and the formulation is the same as in 19:11. Thus the arguments used there also apply to this text. The third case is the speech by Jotham in Judg 9:18: "You have risen up (קום) against my father's house this day and you have slain (הרנ) his sons, seventy men on one stone and have made Abimelech . . . king". Here, although the same two verbs are again used, it is in a different function. The rising up against Jotham's father's house is specified in two ways. First by the killing of the seventy sons and secondly by making Abimelech king, which may well have been the more severe sin in the eyes of the narrator.[8] Here again the proof of the combination as a demonstration of murder fails. We must therefore conclude that in the Cain case, the charge is still open: manslaughter without intent or murder. If we had to pronounce judgement now, it would have to be *discharged for lack of conclusive evidence*. Although

---

[8] P.J. van Midden, *Broederschap en Koningschap. Een onderzoek naar de betekenis van Gideon en Abimelek in het boek Richteren*, Maastricht 1998, 226.

this may be unimportant for the story, it is crucial for the judge-
ment at the end of the story.

2. *The Curse*

So here we have Cain, charged with killing his brother. While we
do not learn anything new from reading only Gen 4:8, theoretically
both the options of Exod 21 are open—the first, when the murderer
can flee to a place of refuge,[9] and the second, when the מות יומת
sentence will be executed. The killing, however, took place in the
field, which means there are no witnesses who can testify at the trial.
At this level there is only one juridical possibility: the curse. Deut
27:24 ארור מכה רעהו בסתר, "cursed be he who slays his neighbour
in secret", seems to cover this situation,[10] a killing without witnesses.
The curse[11] brings justice where normal proceedings fail due to lack
of proof concerning the identity of the evildoer. Although a magi-
cal understanding can never be completely excluded, the Hebrew
Bible argues that YHWH is the arbiter of values, and that the curse
derived its power from the deity.[12] YHWH's superintendence makes
curses come true. Even in this mythical narrative, YHWH is the
guarantor of the curse and he is free to choose the consequences.
If we can assume that the storyteller of Genesis 4 lives in a world
where the curse is part of the juridical system, the case of Cain and
the consequences of his deed are still open. His fate lies in the hands
of YHWH.

3. *A Witness*

Although there was no human being present, there is one unex-
pected witness which plays an important role in the narrative: the
blood of the victim. In Gen 4:10 the blood of Abel cries out to
YHWH from the אדמה. The plural of דם, blood, here in the con-

---

[9] C. Houtman, *Het altaar als asielplaats. Beschouwingen over en naar aanleiding van
Exodus 21:12–14* (Kamper Cahiers 70), Kampen 1990.
[10] H. Seebass, *Genesis I. Urgeschichte (1,1–11,26)*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1996, 45.
[11] W. Schottroff, *Der altisraelitische Fluchspruch* (WMANT 30), Neukirchen-Vluyn
1969, 125f.
[12] 1 Sam 17:43 "And the Philistine (Goliath) cursed (ויקלל) David *by his gods*".

struction connected with "your brother", דמי אחיך, always means spilt blood. The cry with the *terminus technicus* צעק not only has a magical function—unatoned blood does have a voice—but also a juridical one. It was an instrument in the declaration of not guilty in the case of the raped woman in the field (Deut 22:24.27). צעק with the divine address, אלי, is the last possibility for seeing justice done. The crying blood with its magical connotations is often understood as a very old concept in the religion of Israel. That these concepts had a very long life, however, is shown by Ezek 24:8, the judgement about those inhabitants of Jerusalem who did not go into exile in 597. In this addition to V.9.10a, YHWH is already at work with his judgement because the blood has not been covered: "To make anger flare up, to call down vengeance, I have set the blood on the bare rock, so that it may not be covered". The most direct parallel with Gen 4, however, is the outcry by the post-exilic Job, in Job 16:18 "O earth, cover not my blood and let my cry (צעק//זעק) find no resting place".

The statement that "life is in the blood", the presupposition of the role of the blood, comes from the Holiness Code in Lev 17:11, whereas the juridical reflection of the unatoned blood of a victim found in a field, which pollutes the ground of the neighbouring settlement, is worked out in Deut 21:1–9. Here, with the ritual of breaking the neck of the heifer (21:4), it is the priests who suddenly play an important role in "purging the guilt of innocent blood from the midst of Israel" (21:9). The rituals, and the interpretations around them, are probably old, but they appear here all together in rather late, priestly coloured texts. For the moment, let us imagine that the body of Abel has been found. Following Deut 21:1ff, an already organized, urban-oriented juridical system has to send its elders and judges to measure the distance to the nearest cities. The city nearest to the slain body is responsible. The ritual with the heifer will be performed. Two points are important in the text of the ritual. First, the role of the Levitical priests, who have the exclusive right to settle every ריב and every נגע, the former word used for the process, the latter for hurting someone. This means that their competence by far exceeds normal cultic conflicts. On the other hand, in this view, a murder with an unknown murderer also has a cultic aspect. After a declaration of innocence in the form of a cleansing oath—"our hands did not shed this blood" (V.7)—the role of the blood is stressed again in the prayer for atonement in V.8:

8aa	כפר לעמך ישראל	Do atonement for your people Israel
8ab	אשר־פדית יהוה	whom you have redeemed, YHWH,
8ac	ואל־תתן דם נקי	and do not give innocent blood
8ad	בקרב עמך ישראל	in the midst of your people Israel
8b	ונכפר להם הדם	Then the blood will be atonement for them

The prayer itself and the conclusion are most instructive. In the case of unjustified murder, there must be atonement for Israel in the sight of innocent blood. Unjustified murder is not only a case between victim and offender, in addition to the wrongdoer there is *blood guilt*, here expressed by the "innocent blood" which lies on Israel until the moment that atonement is achieved. Even if many exegetes[13] are right in stating that the prayer itself (V.8a) comes from a Deuteronomic or Deuteronomistic hand, the Deuteronomist who declares that YHWH is the only institution which can effectuate atonement after the ritual explicitly formulates what is at the core of juridical thinking in Ancient Israel. It is YHWH himself who guarantees the balance of justice. It should be noted that in this case it is not YHWH but Israel who receives the atonement: "Diese Stelle spricht entschieden gegen die weitverbreitete Meinung, dass Jahwe der Empfänger der Sühne sei, er ist vielmehr der eigentlich Handelnde bei dem Sühnegeschehen, denn er wendet den von dem Mord verursachten Heilsbann ab. Der Empfänger der Sühne ist Israel".[14] But Cain has nothing to fear from Deut 21:1–9. It is not the wrongdoer himself who is the object here, but rather the blood guilt which is poisoning the land and the people.

4. *The Avenger of Blood*

The case is different when we read the Cain and Abel story in relation to the Avenger of Blood, the גאל הדם. The idea behind this is that spilt blood, in which is life, belonged to the group, to the family (בית אב), to the clan (משפחה), and had to be returned in the event of a member of the family or clan being killed. Throughout all the jurisdiction and lawgiving of the Hebrew Bible, it can be seen that

---

[13] B. Janowski, *Sühne als Heilsgeschehen. Studien zur Sühnetheologie der Priesterschrift und zur Wurzel KPR im Alten Orient und im Alten Testamen* (WMANT 55), Neukirchen-Vluyn 1982, 163ff.

[14] B. Janowski, *Sühne*, 166.

vengeance, especially blood vengeance including the basic concept of the *ius talionis*, is regarded in a positive way, as the only possible form of doing justice in a world where the legal system has not developed far enough to enable state or society to take over the role of the judge. The main role of the *ius talionis* is to restrict unlimited (blood) vengeance.

In the narrative parts of the Hebrew Bible, blood vengeance plays an important role.[15] In 2 Sam 2:12ff, 3:20ff, and 1 Kgs 2:28ff, a spiral of violence is the result of the death of Asahel, the brother of Joab, by the hand of Abner the general of Saul. "Then Abner called to Joab, 'Is the sword to keep devouring forever? Do you not know that the end will be bitter?'" (2 Sam 2:26). The end result is that Abner is killed by Joab in a treacherous way (2 Sam 3:27). Here, David does not take the responsibility; on the contrary, he explicitly states: "May the guilt fall on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house!" (V.29). It is a biblical demonstration of a never-ending story of blood vengeance. The biblical narrators, however, were well aware of the fact that blood vengeance could lead not to justice but to cyclical retaliation and a never-ending drama. In 2 Sam 13, the sister of Absalom, Tamar, is raped by Amnon, her half-brother. Absalom kills Amnon and flees to the king of Geshur, trying to escape blood vengeance. Then a wise widow from Tekoa appears on the stage and tells David a story about her two sons. "They quarrelled with one another in the field; there was no one to part them, and one struck the other and killed him" (2 Sam 14:6). Now the whole family longs for the murderer to be executed. If this happens "it will leave to my husband neither name nor remnant upon the face of the earth" (V.7). David then decides: "Not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground" (V.8). An alternative is offered for a situation where the original aim of blood vengeance—protecting life—becomes meaningless, because in this situation blood vengeance would mean that the widow would lose everything which was left to her after the tragedy.

---

[15] E. Noort, "Vengeance is Mine. Some Remarks on the Concepts of Divine Vengeance and Wrath in the Hebrew Bible". In: R. Kessler, P. Vandermeersch (eds.), *God, Biblical Stories and Psychoanalytic Understanding*, Frankfurt/M 2001, 155–169; W. Dietrich, Chr. Link, *Die dunklen Seiten Gottes I: Willkür und Gewalt*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1995; B. Baloian, *Anger in the Old Testament*, New York/Bern 1992; W. Dietrich, "Rache: Erwägungen zu einem alttestamentlichen Thema", *Evangelische Theologie* 36 (1976), 450–472.

The story of the woman from Tekoa, "I had two sons. They quar-
relled with one another in the field; there was no one to part them,
and one struck the other and killed him", has exactly the same struc-
ture as the Cain and Abel story: two sons quarrelling in the field,
the one killing the other. But here the גאל הדם wants his pound of
flesh. Remarkable is that the king has indeed the right to intervene
here and stop the blood vengeance in the story of the widow of
Tekoa as a mirror of the Absalom case, which he did not or did
not want to do in the Joab/Abner case.

If we reflect the circumstances of the Tekoa narrative back to
Genesis 4, the question is who is the avenger of blood here? If there
is jurisdiction in the case of blood revenge within a family, and not
only between the clans and wider circles, only Adam can fulfil the
duty, acting as a representative of the micro-community. But in that
case we would have the same situation as in the story of the widow
of Tekoa. Thus the Cain narrative will point in another direction,
as it does indeed.

Gen 4:10 reads: דמי אחיך צעקים אלי, "the spilt blood of your
brother is screaming *to me*". The spilt blood *does have an address*. It
knows where to find the avenger of blood: YHWH. YHWH here
plays the role of the avenger of blood. And from that position the
question is: will he kill, a life for a life, will he exercise the *ius talio-
nis*. Or will he find another solution? The problem is an urgent
one because the whole juridical tradition excludes the possibility of
making financial or other arrangements in the case of murder. In
taking up a מות יומת case, "he will surely be executed" from the
Book of the Covenant, Num 35:31 explicitly forbids accepting כפר,
"ransom", for the life of a murderer. This stipulation suggests that
a praxis had grown in which ransom was accepted. But the official
law does not allow that possibility. So what will the divine avenger
of blood do?

5. *YHWH's Questioning and Sentence*

In Gen 4:10, the divine speech starts with מה עשית. It is not a demon-
stration of divine lack of information, it is the opening of the charge
against the suspect[16] preceding the summing up of the witnesses and

[16] H.J. Boecker, *Redeformen des Rechtslebens im Alten Testament* (WMANT 14),
Neukirchen-Vluyn ²1970, 67.

the charge itself, before judgement is pronounced. Here, the judge-
ment of V.11 is the curse "And now, it is you who is cursed away
from the land, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's
blood from your hand". Though the verdict comes from YHWH,
there is another agent active here: האדמה, the land. The crime of
Cain against his brother was not the only one, he has also polluted
the land, forcing the אדמה to drink the slain person's blood, as Gunkel
has already pointed out: "Cain had tilled the land. He had offered
the fruit of the land, and given the land his brother's blood to drink;
but from the land the blood cries against him, for which the land
refuses him its fruit, so he is banned from the land".[17] Cain cannot
be a farmer any longer. The *ius talionis* is executed by the אדמה. The
visible result of the curse is that for the rest of his life Cain will be
נע ונד, "a fugitive and a wanderer". The final solution will work with
these two polarities: farmer against fugitive. It is not the semi-nomadic
existence that is meant here but rather an expulsion from the fam-
ily. Cain literally becomes an outlaw. Expulsion could thus be an
alternative punishment in the case of conflicting fraternal loyalties.
Absalom may be safe at the court of the king of Geshur after mur-
dering his brother Amnon (2 Sam 13:28ff, 37ff) and his escape to
Geshur, Cain in the presupposed community of the narrative is not.
Once he is an outlaw, he is anxious to be killed himself: והיה
כל־מצאי יהרגני (V.14b). The divine answer in V.15, followed by the
famous sign, however, does not mean that YHWH shows mercy.

Many exegetes have supposed this to be a divine reaction to the
"confession" of Cain in V.13. LXX reads μείζων ἡ αἰτία[18] μου τοῦ
ἀφεθῆναί με and Vulgata "maior est iniquitas mea quam ut veniam
merear", "too great is my iniquity to be forgiven". If this is the
meaning of the MT, it looks like a confession of sin[19] and the reaction

---

[17] H. Gunkel, *Genesis*, 8. Auflage, Göttingen 1969, 45. Thus also B. Jacob, *Das
erste Buch der Tora: Genesis*, Berlin 1934, 141: "Die adama ward getäuscht und gezwun-
gen Sonst lässt sie sich willig mit Regen und Wasser tränken , welch grausige Ver-
kehrung, dass sie Bruderblut hat einnehmen müssen! Damit hat Kain sie «vergiftet»."

[18] The expression is a hapax in the Pentateuch.

[19] Seebass, *Genesis*, 157f explains the two ways of translating the text: "too great
is my iniquity a) to be forgiven b) to bear" as intended by the author: "Beide
Interpretationen haben ihre Vorzüge und ganz schlimme Folgen wenn man
sie gegeneinander ausspielt. . . . Man muss die Unbestimmtheit des hebräischen Ausdrucks
für gewollt halten." Jacob, *Das erste Buch*, 143 sticks to the rabbinic tradition and
translates the expression as an interrogative sentence: "Is my iniquity too great to
be forgiven?" In this way he reaches the same conclusion as some of the other

of YHWH could be understood as an act of grace. This, however, seems not to be the intention of MT, which reads נדול עוני מנשא.[20] The phrase נשא עון,[21] "to carry iniquity/punishment", used for human beings, presumes that they pay the penalty for their supposed sin,[22] as is most clear in Num 5:31 from the law on jealousy: "the woman shall bear her iniquity" (תשא את־עונה) if she is guilty. If YHWH, however, is the subject of נשא עון, as in Exod 34:7, it can also mean "forgiving iniquity".[23] The most important texts besides Exod 34:7 are Num 14:18; Mic 7:18; Hos 14:3; Lev 10:17 and Ps 85:3. Remarkable is the formulation of Ps 32:5c ואתה נשאת עון חטאתי "Then You did forgive the guilt of my sin", because YHWH takes away the consequence of sin: guilt. In the field between the two possibilities there is room for the priests and the Levites. They can bear the iniquity and take it away from Israel (Exod 28:38; Lev 10:17; Num 18:1.31). Now it is completely clear that in Gen 4:13 it is Cain who is the speaker, not a priest and not YHWH. Thus Gen 4:13 is a complaint by Cain about the burden of the curse, not a glimpse of divine forgiveness nor a glimpse of repentance.[24] The follow-up in V.15, with the sevenfold punishment as a full, divine reaction for anyone who kills Cain, is not a lightening of the curse but a reconfirmation of it. "Cain is sentenced to life, not to death",[25] but that is not a reduction of the sentence.

After the first part of the narrative, with the choice between manslaughter and murder, we asked whether Cain is found guilty of murder? We had to plead not guilty due to lack of evidence. Now that we have read the narrative to the end, we must acknowledge that there was a witness, the אדמה and the spilt blood. Aggravating circumstances arise from the fact that later lawgiving, developed in

---

versions: "Dadurch wird die Rede Kains wieder eine Frage, aber zugleich ein reuiges Bekenntnis und Gott eine Anknüpfung darbietend" (143).

[20] For the construction see Gesenius.-Kautzsch §141m.

[21] D.N. Freedman, B.E. Willoughby, H.J. Fabry, נשא, *ThWAT* V, 626–643; K. Koch, עון, *ThWAT* V, 1160–1177.

[22] G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* (WBC), Waco 1987, 108.

[23] Wenham, *Genesis*, 108.

[24] Versus E. van Wolde, The Story of Cain and Abel: A Narrative Study, *JSOT* 52 (1991), 25–39 (36).

[25] F.W. Golka, Keine Gnade für Kain (Genesis 4,1–16), in: R. Albertz, H.-P. Müller, H.W. Wolff, W. Zimmerli (Hrsg.), *Werden und Wirken des Alten Testaments. Festschrift für Claus Westermann*, Göttingen/Neukirchen-Vluyn 1980, 58–73 (69).

Ancient Israel, presents sharp definitions of killing by accident and murder, as can be seen in Deut 19 and Num 35. If the suspect uses a tool in the killing, a stone or a wooden weapon, if he kills from malice or after lying in wait, if he strikes him down with his hand while he was his enemy, then he is a murderer and will be executed (Num 35:20–21). But if one of these cases happen by accident, without hatred, without being the slain person's enemy, without seeking his harm, then the congregation shall protect the murderer from the hand of the avenger of blood (Num 35:22–25). If Cain is tried under these conditions, his chances are not so good. With V.5b ויחר לקין מאד "So Cain was very angry (and his face fell)", with the divine warning in V.6, the killing and the lie to YHWH in V.9 "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" it would be very difficult to prove that there was no enmity, no hate, and it was only an accident. In accordance with Deut 19 and Num 35, Cain would have been handed over to the avenger of blood. There is no grace and no asylum for Cain. Has Cain been found guilty of murder? Yes . . . and no.

If we take a look at the canonical sequence, murder, and what's more even shedding blood, is forbidden in Gen 9:6 after the stories of the flood, at the dawn of a new world: "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by a man his blood shall be shed, because in the image of God he made man". The priestly text forbids every form of shedding human blood because of the creation in the image of God (Gen 1:26ff). Every killing—no matter where or how—hurts the image of God. It is the most radical formulation found in the Hebrew Bible because of the non-existent differentiation of the form of shedding blood and because of who is being addressed: the whole human race. Following Gen 9:6, Cain would not have had any chance of escaping death. But maybe that is the reason why the wise hands of the compositor of Gen 1–11 place the chiastic formula

שפך דם האדם – אדם דמו ישפך

after the story of Cain and Abel.

In the narrative structure, this means that Cain could not have known about Gen 9:6. We have seen that only according to the later strict laws can Cain's deed be called a murder. After reading the other judicial texts, there were always some ambivalent feelings about the possibility of other interpretations. Thus it was possible for YHWH to curse Cain, to send him away from the אדמה, *but*

keeping him alive, not executing the מות יומת sentence. It is not a pre-supposed divine mercy that is at work here, but rather the possibil-ity of expulsion related to the situation.

6. *Reading Genesis 4*

Reading Gen 4 against the background of the judicial texts is tak-ing it out of its own context and organizing a public trial with later laws. There is one good reason for doing so. This narrative was told in a context where the avenger of blood, the blood itself, the wit-nesses, and the proof of guilt, together with the differentiation between manslaughter and murder, were trying to stabilize a society still orga-nized along tribal lines.[26] It illuminates the role of YHWH and his possibilities, the blood, the ground and the curse. On the other hand, the narrative is set in Primeval Times, i.e. beyond history with its social systems and laws.

But that brings us back to the basic question of Gen 4. Why is this story with its ambivalent character being told at all? Murder and punishment, the divine decision to curse a man, sentencing him to the life of a fugitive and a wanderer, preventing him from being killed by the avenger of blood, a narrator providing a lineage where craftsmen, musicians and the builder of the first town descend from a murderer, where the clan of the Cainites is revealed, where unlim-ited revenge is formulated in a taunt song, where the new son Seth replaces the second son Abel, who—as indicated by his name—did his duty: being murdered, and where the last verse after all this human confusion makes the most remarkable statement: "At that time people began to call on the name of YHWH" (4:26).[27]

I shall restrict myself to the few verses I discussed in relation to the judicial texts of the Hebrew Bible and the problems we met there. The first aim of the narrative follows on from the close con-nection between Gen 2 & 3, the literary and content parallels between

---

[26] Tribal organization forms existed long after the monarchy became the official state form. See: E.J. van der Steen, *Tribes and Territories in Transition. The central east Jordan Valley and surrounding regions in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Ages: a study of the sources*, Diss. Groningen 2002.

[27] Is it purely by accident that the narrative, in which the first worshippers of YHWH appear on the horizon, ends with "the beginning of calling on the Name of YHWH" (4:26)?

the story of Gan Eden and Cain and Abel.[28] In Gen 4, mankind is
in the real world, away from the mysterious Paradise. The relation
focussed on is not man-woman as in Gen 2, but brothers earning
their bread outside Paradise. They are herders of livestock and farm-
ers, not necessarily in natural hostility, but rather two exemplary
groups that may have contradictory interests. The message from the
connection between Gen 3 & 4 is clear and simple: a human being
who does not trust God (Gen 3), is a potential רשע (Gen 4), who
may kill his brother contrary to all the laws of early and later Israel:
homo homini lupus. The first man who was really naturally born into
this real world is a murderer. Violence between individuals and
groups has belonged to this world from the very beginning.

The second connecting theme comes from the narrative itself. The
theme is brotherhood,[29] not only between real brothers but also
between families and clans, between tribes and peoples. Brotherhood
not in Paradise but in the real world where unexplainable fortune
or failure, envy, jealousy, hate, rivalry between economically deter-
mined groups play a role in everyday life. It is no accident that Abel
plays a minimal role in the whole story. "His brother Abel" only
appears four times (V.2.8 [2x].) before the questioning by YHWH.
Then his name disappears, he is only the (slain) brother: "my brother"
(V.9), "your brother" (V.10.11). The focus is now on Cain and his
relationship with his brother. The narrative passes Abel's voice over
to the spilt blood and to YHWH himself. In YHWH's questioning,
responsibility is the central issue. Responsibility for the brother, here
the crux of the narrative, will remain a central item in the reflections
about society in Ancient Israel.

In certain layers, the *magna charta* of Israel in times of crisis, the
book of Deuteronomy, presents a theology of brotherhood[30] in which
the רע,[31] the neighbour, is replaced by אח, the brother. Here the
concept of "brother" is changed: "In Dtn 15 ist der Bruder nicht
der Blutsverwandte, Freund oder Kollege, sondern der Nächste, der

---

[28] For the parallels see footnote 1.
[29] Van Wolde 1991, 38: "It is difficult to overlook the main theme of this text:
the theme of brotherhood."
[30] L. Perlitt, «Ein einzig Volk von Brüdern». Zur deuteronomischen Herkunft
der biblischen Bezeichnung «Bruder», in: D. Lührmann, G. Strecker (Hrsg.), *Kirche.
Festschrift für Günther Bornkamm zum 75. Geburtstag*, Tübingen 1980, 27–52 = L. Perlitt,
Deuteronomium-Studien (FAT 8), Tübingen 1994, 50–73.
[31] E. Noort, «Nächster», *TRE* XXIII, 1994, 713–716.

Arme, der Hebräer, kurz: der Mitmensch".[32] With this, both emotional and social claims for the poor are made in this theoretical programme. In Gen 4, the first murderer was made a brother, a physical brother, to demonstrate that violence does not stop at the doors of the family. In Deut 15, the neighbour is turned into a brother in order to have a stronger social claim. Reflections on the role and the position of the brother did not stop at the killing of Abel and the cry of the blood.

---

[32] L. Perlitt, Ein einzig Volk, 34.

CAIN AND ABEL AS CHARACTER TRAITS: A STUDY IN THE ALLEGORICAL TYPOLOGY OF PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA[1]

Hindy Najman

The writings of Philo of Alexandria contain three extensive treatments of the Cain and Abel narrative: *On the Sacrifices of Abel and Cain, The Worse Attacks the Better*, and *On the Posterity and Exile of Cain*. This paper will argue that Philo's interpretation of Cain and Abel is typological, and that the types in question are both cosmological and psychological. The types of Cain and Abel are presented as two aspects of the human soul, representing the human capacity for good and the human capacity for evil. Consequently, reflection on these two types can be a source of moral teaching.

My argument may sound controversial. For Philo is sometimes said not to practice typological interpretation at all, but rather allegorical interpretation, and the two kinds of interpretation are sometimes thought to be mutually exclusive. Before turning to the details of Philo's interpretation of the Cain and Abel narratives, then, I will first discuss the nature of typology and its relationship to allegory. As I will argue, the idea that they are mutually exclusive arises from particular theological presuppositions and has unfortunate consequences for the study of the history of ancient biblical interpretation. I will also question the claim that Philo does not engage in typological interpretation by considering Philo's interpretations and terminology. Philo's interpretation of the story of Eve's children, I will argue, is at once *both* typological and allegorical, and it provides an important illustration of what is theologically and historiographically at stake.

I

Allegory and typology have often been contrasted as two fundamen-
tally different ways of interpreting Scripture. While allegorical inter-
pretation has been said to focus on the cosmic and the spiritual,
typological interpretation has been characterized as more historical
and literal.[2] However, although it is true that allegorical interpreta-
tion tends to be cosmological and that typological interpretations
tend to be oriented towards history, the distinction between the two
is less clear-cut than one might think. Since the reformation, scholars
have denigrated allegorical interpretation (e.g., in the writings of Philo
of Alexandria and of Origen) because it appeared far removed from
the literal sense of Scripture. Instead, typological interpretation (e.g.,
in the writings of Paul) was celebrated.[3] The focus on the literal
sense of Scripture—and, since the enlightenment, on historical study
of the Bible—produced anti-allegorical polemics that still find their
way into current scholarship.

Philo himself uses the term "*tupos*" throughout his writings, so one
would think that there is good reason to call his interpretations typo-
logical.[4] Still many scholars deny that Philo engages in typological
exegesis at all. For example, Goppelt writes:

> Philo's exposition of patriarchal history contains no typological inter-
> pretation at all. Whenever the historicity of the patriarchs has not been
> completely destroyed by allegory, they are presented as ethical "types,"
> or ideals, and do not fit our definition according to which a type must
> point to something greater in the future.[5]

In this passage, typological interpretation is restricted to a particu-
lar kind of historical typology that can be found in the New Testament.
Central use of the term "*tupos*" in an interpretation is insufficient,
according to Goppelt, for classification of that interpretation as typo-
logical. It is also required that the interpretation operate within the

---

[2] J. Danielou, *From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers*,
London 1960 and Jon Whitman, *Interpretation and Allegory: Antiquity to the Modern Period*,
Leiden 2000, esp. 33–45; K.J. Woolcombe, "The Biblical Origins and Patrisitic
Development of Typology", in *Essays on Typology*, Naperville, 1957, 39–75.
[3] See Thomas H. Luxon, *Literal Figures: Puritan Allegory and the Reformation Crisis in
Representation*, Chicago, 1995, 34–76.
[4] E.g., *De Opif. Mundi* 19, 34, 71; *Leg.* 1.61, 1.100, 3.83; *Sacr.* 135, 137; *Det.*
76–78, 83; *Post.* 94, 99; *Deus* 43–44; *Mos.* 2.76; *Decal.* 101.
[5] L. Goppelt, *TYPOS: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*,
Grand Rapids 1982, *TYPOS*, 46.

framework of salvation history. It is in this sense of historicity[6] that typology is said to be historical, whereas allegorical exegesis is said to be symbolic, spiritual and interested only in the cosmic and the eternal, not in the narrative of Scripture.

It seems an odd policy to apply the term "typological interpretation" only to interpretations with particular theological presuppositions. Indeed, others use such presuppositions to distinguish different *species* of typology instead. Thus, for example, Woolcombe writes:

> There is no *theological* similarity whatever between the typology of Philo and that of St Paul. The only point of contact between the two writers is their common use of the typological vocabulary. But whereas in St Paul the vocabulary is harnessed to the exposition of God's redemptive work in history, in Philo it is harnessed to allegorism. It is in fact hardly possible to separate typology from allegorism in Philo, and if the word typology must be used of certain aspects of Philonic exegesis, it should always be qualified by the adjective *symbolic*, in contradistinction to the *historical* typology of the New Testament.[7]

However, the extreme language in this passage—"no *theological* similarity whatever", nothing more than a *lexical* "point of contact"—suggests that it has the same underlying motivation as the outright denial that Philo practices typological interpretation: to enforce the sense of a radical distinction between Jewish and Christian modes of exegesis. From a scholarly viewpoint, such motivations should be suspect. For they are all but bound to lead to the effacement of the profound exegetical and theological continuities between ancient Judaism and early Christianity.[8]

Nevertheless, Woolcombe is right to say that, it is "hardly possible to separate typology from allegorism in Philo". Philo's typological interpretation should be seen as a species of allegorical interpretation. Indeed, as the term "allegorism" suggests, Philo is interested in explaining the cosmic significance of biblical texts. This interest should not, however, be misrepresented as incompatible with respect for the

---

[6] See Luxon, 53: "The real reality signified in typology turns out to be every bit as ahistorical, spiritual, eternal, timeless, ever present (and so, historically speaking, ever absent) as God and his majesty, the very things typology was first defined as prohibited from figuring."

[7] Woolcombe, "The Biblical Origins and Patristic Development of Typology", 65.

[8] On the deep connections between Jewish and Christian interpretive traditions, see James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as it was at the start of the Common Era*, Cambridge, 1998, and Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: Hybrids, Heretics, and the Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*, Philadelphia 2004.

literal meaning of the biblical text, whether narrative or legal. As
Goppelt writes:

> He [Philo] retells and explains biblical history and the very details of
> patriarchal and Mosaic history. Above all, he insists that the literal
> sense of the Law must be fulfilled, quite apart from its deeper mean-
> ing (Migr. Abr. 89–93; Exsecr. 154).[9]

For Philo, the narrative of Israel is the story of a community that
strives for perfection by observing Mosaic Law. But observance of
Mosaic Law requires not only attention to the laws in the Torah
but also use of biblical narratives within a moral pedagogy rooted
within a deep account of the complexity of the human soul. Indeed,
as I will argue, Philo's typological analysis of the Cain and Abel nar-
ratives should be understood as an exercise not only in cosmology
but also in moral psychology and *paideia*.[10]

II

It is not difficult to show that the term *tupos* plays an important role
in Philo's exegesis. For example, in *De Opificio Mundi* 18, *tupoi* are
implemented by the creator from the archetype or paradigm of the
overall plan for the cosmos:

> Thus after having received in his own soul, as it were in wax, the
> *figures* of these objects severally, he carries about the image of a city
> which is the creation of his mind. Then by his innate power of mem-
> ory, he recalls the images of the various parts of this city, and imprints
> their types yet more distinctly in it: and like a good craftsman he
> begins to build the city of stones and timber, keeping his eye upon
> his *pattern* and making the visible and tangible objects correspond in
> each case to the incorporeal ideas.

In another example from *De Decalogo* 10–11, Philo describes trans-
gressions upon the soul as *tupoi* and suggests that re-educating the
soul is a precondition for receiving the law:

> He who is about to receive the holy laws must first cleanse his soul
> and purge away the deep-set stains which it has contracted through

---

[9] Goppelt, *Typos*, 48.
[10] Cf. John Chrysostom, *On Vainglory*, 39 where the Cain and Abel narrative is
taken to be an important text for moral pedagogy. See also L. Kovacs, "Divine
Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher according to Clement of Alexandria", JECS 9
(2001), 3–25.

> contact with the motley promiscuous horde of men in cities. And to
> this he cannot attain except by dwelling apart, nor that at once but
> only long afterwards, and not till the *marks* which his old transgres-
> sions have imprinted on him gradually grown faint, melted away and
> disappeared.

As in the above two examples, Philo's writings are replete with ref-
erences to *tupos*. In fact, "*tupos*" is a prominent member of a chain
of words that appear in Philo's interpretations. Other members of
the chain include "*eikon*" (image or copy), "*character*" (stamp, stan-
dard, or figure of letters, but also character type) and "*phantasia*"
(impression or appearance). Perhaps it is helpful to think of *tupos* as
character[11] or, more specifically, character trait. The English or Greek
word "*character*" like "*type*" has a meaning with two dimensions.

1) A *tupos* or *character* is a legible imprint. It is a mark left by
something else, which the mark now resembles as an image resem-
bles an original. I will call this the copying dimension of the mean-
ing of *tupos*. A *tupos* is a copy or *eikon* of some original, which Philo
calls an *archetupos* or *paradigma*. For example, according to Philo the
archetype of evil is Cain, so every self-lover shares in Cain's sin and
in the murder of Abel:

> Wherefore let every lover of self, surnamed "Cain," be taught that he
> has slain that which shares Abel's name, the specimen, the part, the
> *impression* stamped to resemble him, not the original, not the class,
> not the pattern, though he fancies that these, which are imperishable,
> have perished together with the living beings. Let some one say, taunt-
> ing and ridiculing him: What have you done, poor wretch? Does not
> the God-loving creed, which you imagine you have annihilated, live
> with God? You have proved to be your own murderer, having slain
> by guile that which alone had the power to enable you to live a guilt-
> less life. (*Det.* 78)

Thus according to Philo, types are less perfect than the originals,
yet they imitate the originals and resemble them as copies of those
originals.

2) A *tupos* or character trait is a disposition to act in a particular
way, a virtue or a vice. It is a disposition that a human being may
acquire through habit or education. I will call this the psychological
dimension of the meaning of *tupos*. Here it is important to note that,
as with a piece of wax, a character trait imprinted upon a human

---

[11] See, e.g., *Leg.* 1.61 where *character* is a synonym for *tuposis*.

soul may be effaced, and the soul may be restamped with a different, even opposite character trait. Hence the fragility of virtue. For there is no guarantee that a soul will retain the good character with which it has been imprinted. As Philo writes:

> The mind, like wax, receives the impress and retains it vividly, until forgetfulness, the opponent of memory levels out the *imprint*, and makes it indistinct, or entirely effaces it. (*Deus* 44)

But the wax analogy also implies the possibility of repentance. For a bad character trait, just like a good one, may be replaced. Here Philo is perhaps reworking Plato's discussion of the waxen imprints upon the soul in *Theaetetus* 191c ff. However, Plato is concerned with the apprehension and retention of knowledge, while Philo focuses on the moral formation of the soul through action.

Philo seems to believe, not only that all human beings have the capacity for virtuous behavior, but also that everyone is actually born in a state of goodness. It is then left to each individual to reinforce this innate goodness through good action, or else it will be compromised through transgression. Notably, not every place is conducive to virtuous behavior. Most famously, Philo insists that the city is a place of corruption. That is why Israel must leave Egypt and receive the law in the desert (*Decal.* 11).

It is helpful to compare Israel's need to leave the city with the philosopher's need to leave the cave in Plato's *Republic*, Book VII. The philosopher returns to the cave to facilitate the enlightenment of his fellows, and to put in order the city and its citizens as well as themselves (*Republic* 539e–540b). Similarly, the Israelites must sojourn in the wilderness so that they may eventually constitute a new more perfect city in accordance with the law received in the wilderness.

In order to bring together the cosmological and psychological dimensions of Philo's typology, it is helpful to note that the laws themselves are described as *tupoi*, images or impressions which the Israelites are told to stamp upon their hearts. Cosmologically speaking, the law of Moses is a copy of the law of nature.[12] To live in accordance with the law of Moses is to live in accordance with the cos-

---

[12] See my article "A Written Copy of the Law of Nature: an Unthinkable Paradox?" *StPhA* 15 (2003) forthcoming.

mic order created by God. Psychologically speaking, to observe Mosaic law is to efface the evil that results from transgression and foolishness, and to restamp one's soul with the character of goodness and virtue. Consider Philo's discussion of how ceasing from work on the seventh day enables a soul to live in accordance with the great archetype:

> Let us not then neglect this great archetype of the two best lives, the practical and the contemplative, but with that pattern ever before our eyes engrave in our hearts the *clear image and stamp* of them both, so making mortal nature, as far as may be, like the immortal by saying and doing what we ought. (*Decal.* 101)

According to Philo, Cain exemplifies the *type* of wickedness, while Abel exemplifies that of holiness. In a sense, these biblical characters *are* types. For every detail related about them in the biblical narrative—their names, their chosen professions, their conceptions of God and their actions—every single detail contains a moral lesson about the impression of vice or virtue upon the human soul. I suggest that the reason for this is that Cain and Abel exemplify character traits, and their conflict exemplifies the conflict between these traits in every human soul. The conflict between Cain and Abel becomes an allegory of psychic conflict within the soul of every human being. Moreover they are to be understood as two aspects of a single soul.

According to Philo, Cain's deepest problem is his flawed conception of God, which is reflected in his very name. For Cain believes himself to possess all things. In contrast, Abel's "name means one who refers (all things) to God." (*Sacr.* 2).

The brothers' chosen professions reflect and reinforce their fundamental differences. Philo emphasizes that Cain's chosen profession involves him with earthly and inanimate objects. So he does not choose to prepare for a future life and to pay attention to living things. Similarly, Philo points out that Cain is called a tiller of the soil because he refers all things to himself and to his own mind (*Sacr.* 51). In fact, it is Cain's lack of understanding that the land is really foreign and belongs only to God that misleads him in the direction of a self-loving character trait and ultimately causes the destruction of his soul. In contrast, Abel chooses to tend living beings. Thus:

> Abel's choice of work as a shepherd is understood as preparatory to rulership and kingship (*QG* 1.59)

The praiseworthiness of shepherding and its connection to leadership is developed further in *Life of Moses* and again in the essay on the Sacrifices of Abel and Cain:

> With good reason then is Abel who refers all that is best to God called a shepherd. (*Sacr.* 51)

Unlike Cain, Abel is prepared for a future life:

> So then when God added the good conviction Abel to the soul, he took away the foolish opinion, Cain. So too, when Abraham left this mortal life, "he is added to the people of God," (Gen 25:8), in that he inherited incorruption and became equal to the angels, for angels— those unbodied and blessed souls—are the host and people of God. (*Sacr.* 5)

The birth of Abel only worsens Cain's negative disposition. For Abel's disposition is preferable to Cain's, and so Cain's soul abandons him when Abel is born.

> It is a fact that there are two opposite and contending views of life, one which ascribes all things to the mind as our master, whether we are using our reason or our senses, in motion or at rest, the other which follows God, whose handiwork it believes itself to be . . . Now both these views or conceptions lie in the womb of the single soul. But when they are brought to the birth they must be separated, for enemies cannot live together forever. Thus, so long as the soul had not brought forth the God-loving principle in Abel, the self-loving principle in Cain made her his dwelling. But when she bore the principle which acknowledges the Cause, she abandoned that which looks to the mind with its fancied wisdom. (*Sacr.* 2–4)

As Philo goes on to say, the two opposite views of life represented by Cain and Abel cannot coexist in peace. Like Jacob and Esau, Cain and Abel must be separated:

> She had conceived the two contending natures of good and evil and considered earnestly, as wisdom bade her, received a vivid impression of each, when she perceived them leaping and as in a skirmish preluding the war that should be between them. And therefore she besought God to show her what had befallen her, and how it might be remedied. He answered her question thus: "two nations are in the womb." That was what had befallen her—to bear both good and evil. But again "two peoples shall be separated from thy womb." This is the remedy, that good and evil be separated and set apart from each other and no longer have the same habitation. (*Sacr.* 4)

Note that, by the time of Jacob and Esau, the *philautos* (the self-lover) has become a type of a whole character and not just a character trait or type. However, according to Philo, Cain and Abel may represent character traits, but not complete characters.

The types of Cain and Abel do not live in sufficient separation, and they come into conflict as a result of their different conceptions of worship. Reinforcing through his daily actions his misconceived sense of his own importance, Cain's type is that of self-lover: the *philautos* (*Sacr.* 3). Consequently, he is in no hurry to thank God for what he takes to be the fruits of his own labor. And, when he gets around to it, he selfishly fails to offer the first of his crops to God. Instead, he keeps the first and the best for himself. Again, Cain understands the land to be his, while in fact it belongs to God. For Cain, humanity comes first and his sustenance is more important than the acknowledgment of God:

> There are two charges against the self-lover (i.e., Cain): one that he made his thank-offering to God "after some days"[13] instead of at once; the other that he offered of the fruits and not of the earliest fruits, or in a single word the first fruits. (*Sacr.* 52)

> Those who assert that everything that is involved in thought or perception or speech is a free gift of their own soul, seeing that they introduce an impious and atheistic opinion, must be assigned to the race of Cain, who, while incapable even of ruling himself, made bold to say that he had full possession of all other things as well. (*Post.* 42)

These charges are not directed only at Cain. They are directed at every self-lover—that is at anyone who allows the type of Cain to become the dominant character trait in one's soul. Abel's sacrifice, however, illustrates further his God-loving nature:

> But Abel brought other offerings and in other manner. His offering was living, Cain's was lifeless. His was first in age and value, Cain's but second. His had strength and superior fatness, Cain's had but weakness. For we are told that Abel offered of the firstlings of the sheep and of their fat (Gen 4:4). (*Sacr.* 88)

---

[13] Philo is referring to Gen. 4:3.

Again, of Abel's sacrifice Philo writes:

> Abel offers the firstlings not only from the first-born, but from the fat,
> showing that the gladness and richness of the soul, all that protects
> and gives joy, should be set apart for God. (*Sacr.* 136)

Again, Philo is not writing only about Abel, that is, the character
in the Genesis narrative. For Philo, the narrative is about the char-
acter trait in the soul. The character trait of virtue is imprinted upon
the soul in the form of grateful, joyous acknowledgement of God.
Of course, God prefers Abel's sacrifice. And it is in jealous response
to God's preferential treatment that Cain kills Abel. But this evil act
does not solve Cain's problem. It only exacerbates his problem by
removing the possibility that Cain will come under Abel's virtuous
influence:

> It would have been to the advantage of Cain, the lover of self, to have
> guarded Abel; for had he carefully preserved him, he would have been
> able to lay claim only to a mixed "half and half" life indeed, but
> would not have drained the cup of sheer unmitigated wickedness.
> (*Det.* 68)

Thus vice is self-destructive. Indeed, Philo argues that it is prefer-
able to die like Abel than to live like Cain, in a state of eternal
death:

> But in my judgement and in that of my friends, preferable to life with
> impious men would be death with pious men; for awaiting those who
> die in this way there will be undying life, but awaiting those who live
> in that way there will be eternal death. (*Post.* 39)

Immediately after Cain's fratricide, God asks him, "Where is your
brother?" According to Philo, the point of God's question is to offer
Cain an opportunity to confess his sin and to repent:

> Why does he who knows all ask the fratricide, 'Where is Abel, your
> brother?' He wishes that man himself of his own will shall confess, in
> order that he may not pretend that all things seem to come about
> through necessity. For he who killed through necessity would confess
> that he acted unwillingly; for that which is not in our power is not to
> be blamed. But he who sins of his own free will denies it, for sinners
> are obliged to repent. Accordingly he [Moses] inserts in all parts of
> his legislation that the Deity is not the cause of evil. (*QG* 1.68)

Cain rejects the offer to repent. Still, God's question, as interpreted
by Philo, is of great significance. For it shows that repentance is
always possible, even for someone whose vicious character is inscribed

in his very name. Consequently, although God created everything, including the archetype of evil, only man is responsible for the evil impressed upon his soul and realized in the world.

The murder of Abel certainly does not succeed in exterminating virtue from biblical history. For Seth, who is born after Abel's death, continues to exemplify the type of goodness and holiness exemplified by his dead brother.[14] Later, all those who are deemed righteous are considered to be from the "seed of Seth," while all those who are deemed evil are said to be from the "seed of Cain."[15]

> Those who assert that everything that is involved in thought or perception or speech is a free gift of their own soul, seeing that they introduce an impious and atheistic opinion, must be assigned to the race of Cain, who, while incapable even of ruling himself, made bold to say that he had full possession of all other things as well. But those who do not claim as their own all that is fair in creation, but acknowledge all as due to the gift of God, being men of real nobility, sprung not from a long line of rich ancestors but from lovers of virtue, must remain enrolled under Seth as the head of their race. (*Post.* 42)

This passage brings out two points to which I want to give special emphasis. First, in Philo's view, theology is the root of all good and of all evil. For it is first and foremost one's conception of God, and of one's own relation to the cosmos created by God, that impresses either the type of virtue or the type of vice upon one's soul. It is from one's theology that choices and actions flow, actions that tend to reinforce the initial impression of good or evil. And it is one's theology that determines whether one belongs to the race of Cain or to the race of Seth—although, as I have said, Philo thinks that repentance is always possible. Second, the story of Cain and Abel is important because they exemplify the ways in which the archetypes of virtue and vice—the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil—may come to leave their copies upon the human soul. In Philo's view, our situation is fundamentally that of Cain and Abel. We inhabit the same cosmos, and the formation of our souls is no less dependent on our theological convictions, on the choices we make, on the actions we perform, and on the influences to which

---

[14] Although the biblical text implies that Seth is a replacement for Abel, Philo explicitly rejects the idea that one person can replace another.

[15] For further discussion about the descendents of Cain and Seth see the contributions of J. Tubach and G.P. Luttikhuizen to this volume, below, pp. 187–201 and 203–17.

we expose ourselves. So we have much to learn from Cain and Abel.
For they pioneered the kind of life that each of us must live. And
their tragic story exemplifies the pitfalls we must all seek to avoid.

Since Cain and Abel exemplify types—at once cosmological and
psychological—it is not surprising that they are echoed by their suc-
cessors in the biblical narratives. Thus Philo compares Abraham,
Jacob, Isaac and Moses with Abel. And he compares Esau and Laban
to Cain. In this way, Philo's typological interpretation of the Cain
and Abel story enables him to use that story as a lens through which
to read other biblical narratives.

At the same time, however, Philo also reads the Cain and Abel
narrative through a lens provided by other biblical passages. In par-
ticular, Philo repeatedly connects Cain and Abel with *laws* that are
given only later in the biblical story. This is because, I suggest, Cain
and Abel represent the problem for which the law of Moses is the
solution. As the story of Cain and Abel shows, we are all highly
impressionable and therefore capable of great good or great evil,
and each of us is responsible for the effects upon our soul of every
choice or action. However, as I said earlier, the laws of Moses are
images or impressions, which the Israelites are told to stamp upon
their hearts. The laws provide, as it were, solutions to the problems
exemplified by Cain. They are designed to implant healthy theo-
logical convictions, to efface evil impressions and to reinforce good
ones. Thus, for example, the tiller of soil is commanded to bring
the first fruits as an offering to God, and to profess God's domin-
ion over a land to which the farmer is ultimately foreign. Philo's
analysis of Cain brings out the wisdom of this law, which manifests
a deep understanding of the human soul.

I have argued, then, that Philo's interpretation of the Cain and
Abel narrative in Genesis 4 may justly be called typological, and
that his typology has both cosmological and psychological dimen-
sions. Indeed, the children of Eve have a special importance within
Philo's biblical exegesis as a whole. For their story illustrates—in an
exemplary fashion—some of the central presuppositions of Philo's
exegetical endeavor: the impressionability of the human soul, which
can be horrifying or sublime; the responsibility of each individual
for himself or herself, which is endless; and the intimate relationship
between cosmic structures and Mosaic laws, which both stem from
a single creator and from a perfect paradigm.

ABEL'S SPEAKING IN HEBREWS 11.4 AND 12.24

Ton Hilhorst

The text which occupies us in this contribution, the Letter to the Hebrews, is surrounded by mystery. It begins as a sermon but ends as a personal letter. Yet, in spite of its personal ending, it is hard to establish where, by whom, and to whom it was written. It is quite unlike other early Christian writings. Indeed, we might well apply to it the qualification which, in chapter 7 verse 3, it applies to Melchizedek: 'He is without father or mother or genealogy, and has neither beginning of days nor end of life'. True, we can be slightly more confident about its date. The author mentions the addressees' leaders as persons from the past (13.7), so the apostolic period seems to have ended. On the other hand, there is a *terminus ante quem* in Clement's letter to the Corinthians, written in Rome probably about A.D. 96; and Clement uses phrases so unmistakably reminiscent of Hebrews that we must conclude he has used it.[1] Consequently, Hebrews was known in Rome before the middle of the last decade of the first century. Thus, a date between A.D. 60 and A.D. 90 seems reasonable. It has been argued that the letter must predate A.D. 70 because it mentions the sacrificial cult as being extant. However, since it consistently alludes to the tabernacle, and not to the temple, we cannot assume that an historical situation is meant to be discussed at all.[2] The author seems to have received a good literary education and, stylistically, he is regarded as the best of the New Testament writers.[3] On the other hand, at times he clearly lacks the perceptiveness we are accustomed to in the principal writers of Greek literature.

---

[1] Cf. D.A. Hagner, *The Use of the Old and New Testaments in Clement of Rome* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 34), Leiden 1973, 179–95; A. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe* (Handbuch zum Neuen Testament 17), Tübingen 1992, 17–20; G. Schneider, *Clemens von Rom: Epistola ad Corinthios: Brief an die Korinther. Übersetzt und eingeleitet* (Fontes Christiani 15), Freiburg etc. 1994, 26–9. H.E. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief: Übersetzt und erklärt* (Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern 2), Göttingen 1998, 52–6, explains the agreements by the use of common traditions.

[2] Cf. H. Conzelmann – A. Lindemann, *Arbeitsbuch zum Neuen Testament* (Uni-Taschenbücher 52), Tübingen 2000¹³, 405.

[3] See N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, IV, *Style*, Edinburgh 1976, 106–8. This was already the view of the church fathers, cf. Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 6.25.11 (quoting Origen); Jerome *Vir. Ill.* 5.10–11.

The letter displays impressive biblical learning. Everywhere, literal citations appear, most often from the Psalms, Genesis and Deuteronomy, but also from the Prophets, 2 Samuel, 1 Chronicles, and Proverbs. Furthermore, the author shows himself familiar with deuterocanonical and apocryphal books. There are echoes from the books of the Maccabees, Wisdom, Jesus Sirach, the Psalms of Solomon, 1 Enoch, the Martyrdom of Isaiah, and the Testament of Levi.[4] It is a plausible assumption that he acquired this erudition in a Jewish milieu, either as a Jew by birth or as a proselyte; but it is also possible that he was a second generation Christian of Gentile origin who simply absorbed this body of Jewish literature. We just don't know. In any case, his biblical quotations are from the Septuagint, and there is no indication that he knew Hebrew. In this respect, he has been compared to Philo of Alexandria. For our interpretation of the Letter to the Hebrews this means that in case of disagreement between the Masoretic text and the Septuagint we should base ourselves on the latter.

This rule is of consequence for our subject, because the Cain and Abel story in Genesis 4, on which verses 11.4 and 12.24 in Hebrews comment, is not quite the same in both versions.[5] The following are the most important differences. The Masoretic text does not make it clear why the Lord had regard for Abel's offering but not for Cain's. Did he take more pleasure in cattle than in agricultural products? Did Cain merely use some ordinary fruit of the earth whereas Abel offered choice sheep? We can only speculate.[6] But it is unsatisfying, for both ancient and modern readers, not to know what prompted the Lord's different reactions which led to such ill-fated consequences. Here in principle the Septuagint creates some clarity. Possibly this begins in verses 4 and 5. Whereas the Masoretic text calls the sacrifice of both Cain and Abel a *minḥā*, the Septuagint speaks of 'his gifts', τὰ δῶρα αὐτοῦ, in the case of Abel and 'sacrifice', θυσία, in the case of Cain.[7]

---

[4] Cf. Nestle-Aland's *Novum Testamentum Graece*, Stuttgart 1993[27], 800–5.

[5] Cf. M. Harl, *La Genèse: Traduction du texte grec de la Septante, Introduction et Notes* (Bible d'Alexandrie 1), Paris 1986, 112–15; J.W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis* (Septuagint and Cognate Studies 35), Atlanta, Georgia 1993, 51–7; K.H. Jobes and M. Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint*, Grand Rapids, Michigan and Carlisle, Cumbria, 2000, 206–15.

[6] As has, of course, abundantly been done, cf. e.g. L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, I, Philadelphia 1909 (= Baltimore and London 1998), 107–8, and V, Philadelphia 1925 (= Baltimore and London 1998), 136–7.

[7] Cf. S. Daniel, *Recherches sur le vocabulaire du culte dans la Septante*, Paris 1966, 209–10.

But a much clearer case occurs in verses 6 and 7. God is talking to Cain, and in the Masoretic version seems to leave undecided whether Cain actually offered a wrong sacrifice. 'Why are you angry', it reads, 'and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door.' The Septuagint, however, replaces these options by a twofold formula which makes it clear that Cain's fault is not in the offering itself but in its division: 'Why have you become very sorrowful and why has your countenance fallen? Have you not sinned if you have brought it rightly, but not rightly divided it?' It is hard to know exactly what 'divided' means here,[8] but it seems clear that, whether or not it was of a ritual nature, Cain did indeed made a serious mistake.

Hebrews 11.4

And this is what the author of Hebrews took for granted when he made his statement on the sacrifices of Cain and Abel in 11.4 The text reads as follows:

> Πίστει πλείονα θυσίαν Ἄβελ παρὰ Κάιν προσήνεγκεν τῷ θεῷ, δι' ἧς ἐμαρτυρήθη εἶναι δίκαιος, μαρτυροῦντος ἐπὶ τοῖς δώροις αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ δι' αὐτῆς ἀποθανὼν ἔτι λαλεῖ.

> By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he received approval as righteous, God bearing witness by accepting his gifts; he died, but through it he is still speaking (RSV, adapted).

I should make some preliminary comments on this verse. First, the author shows that he is using the Septuagint version: the expression ἐπὶ τοῖς δώροις αὐτοῦ stems from the Septuagint, which diverges here from the Masoretic text.

Furthermore, the pronouns ἧς and αὐτῆς are ambiguous, since they might refer either to πίστει or to θυσίαν. As for ἧς, it is not critical whether it means Abel's faith or his sacrifice, since his sacrifice is

---

[8] Cf. J. van Ruiten, 'De interpretatie van Genesis 4,6–7 in de Septuaginta', in P.H.M. Welzen – M.C.N. Deckers-Dijs – J.F.M. Smit- C.M.L. Verdegaal (eds.), *Exegeten aan het werk. Vertalen en interpreteren van de bijbel. Opstellen van leden van het Bijbels Werkgenootschap St. Hiëronymus*, 's Hertogenbosch and Brugge 1998, 25–33 at 28–9. For patristic views, cf. J.B. Glenthøj, *Cain and Abel in Syriac and Greek Writers (4th–6th Centuries)* (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 567, Subsidia 95), Louvain 1997, 23–4, 113–14, 226–7.

prompted by his faith. The other pronoun, αὐτῆς, probably refers to πίστει and in any case cannot be taken to refer to θυσίαν if ἧς already refers to πίστει.

We should take the comparative adjective πλείονα as an expression of quality, which is what the Revised Standard Version does by rendering it with 'more acceptable', and not as an expression of quantity, as if faith were manifested simply by giving more. Abel's sacrifice is 'more acceptable' than Cain's, that is, Abel's is acceptable while Cain's is not,[9] because Abel's, unlike Cain's, is inspired by faith. This idea represents a departure from the Genesis narrative, both in its Hebrew and Septuagint forms.[10]

It has been asked, in ancient and modern times, how exactly God bore witness to Abel's faith; and there are traditions suggesting that heavenly fire consumed Abel's sacrifice, as happened with Aaron's sacrifice in Leviticus 9.24 and Elijah's in 1 Kings 18.38. The earliest example is provided by Theodotion, who reads ἐνεπύρισεν as 'he lighted a fire' for the Septuagint's ἐπεῖδεν, 'he looked upon'.[11] But I am uncertain whether the author concerned himself with this question; just as, for instance, in the Acts of the Apostles during Peter's speech at Caesarea, we find that 'the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word' but without comment on how it happened or was observed. Besides, the author merely expresses in his own words what was equally indefinable in the Genesis account, where all we learn is that 'God looked upon Abel and his gifts, but Cain and his sacrifices he regarded not' (4.4–5 LXX, trans. Brenton).

God's acceptance of his gifts marks Abel as righteous. Readers of parabiblical Jewish writings and the New Testament, and those familiar with the canon of the Latin Mass, may encounter a familiar idea here, 'righteous' in these texts being the standard epithet applied to Abel.[12] It is important to stress, therefore, that the Genesis account

---

[9] On this use of the comparative, cf. F. Blass, A. Debrunner and F. Rehkopf, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, Göttingen 1990[17], § 246.2.

[10] E. Gräßer, *An die Hebräer: 3. Teilband Hebr 10,19–13,25* (Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament XVII/3), Zürich and Neukirchen-Vluyn 1997, 111.

[11] Cf. F. Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt*, I, Oxford 1875 (= Hildesheim 1964), 17–18; Ginzberg (n. 6), V, 135–6; Harl (n. 5) 113.

[12] Matthew 23.35 Ἄβελ τοῦ δικαίου; 1 John 3.12. Cf. G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford 1961–1968, s.v. δίκαιος B2; Gräßer (n. 10) 111; H. Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl: Eine Studie zur Geschichte der Liturgie*, Bonn 1926[1] (= Berlin 1967[3]), 91–2; J. Hennig, 'Abel's Place in the Liturgy', *Theological Studies* 7 (1946) 126–41 at 130–2; J.A. Jungmann, *Missarum Sollemnia: Eine genetische Erklärung der römischen Messe*, Vienna, Freiburg and Basle 1962[5], I 67, 72 n. 25; II 284 n. 8.

does not contain this idea in either its Masoretic or Septuagint version. In Hebrews it appears to arise from a simple argument. Cain's sacrifice was not regarded by God because it was offered wrongly. Abel's sacrifice was regarded. Therefore it must have been offered righteously, and anyone able to offer righteously is ipso facto righteous.

This brings us to the concept of faith, πίστις. It may seem obvious that the righteous have πίστις, but what exactly does the term mean here? Isolating the relevant verse, and bearing in mind Paul's powerful views on the subject, we may be tempted to think of faith as a trusting acceptance of God's act of salvation. But we cannot ignore the fact that the author here has just given his own definition, which runs: 'Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen' (11.1). And he expresses the same thought in chiastic order in 11.6: 'For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.' Faith thus seems to comprise a double conviction: that the invisible God exists and that he has in store an eternal reward for the righteous.

Both components appear to play a role in Heb. 11.4. In the first sentence of the verse, which evokes the offering, 'the conviction of things not seen' is prominent. That is, the invisible God, the one who is *par excellence* entitled to be worshipped, exists. Therefore, Abel's faith drives him to offer God the sacrifice due to him. Abel's offering, however, is not inspired by the prospect of things hoped for, as if he acted out of self-interest. In the second sentence, concerning Abel's speaking after death, 'the things hoped for' become prominent. This needs some explanation. In Gen 4.10, after Cain murders Abel, God says to Cain: 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries to me out of the ground.' Clearly Abel's blood is crying for vengeance. This makes a natural impression in the Genesis context, where the speaking occurs immediately after the murder and there is no hint of its unlimited continuance. The Hebrews author takes up the blood's crying but transforms its tenor. From the fact that Abel's blood was crying after the murder he infers that it keeps on crying up to the present, and he interprets the cry for vengeance as a claim for final justice. Abel's crying testifies to his faith in things hoped for, his conviction that in the end all evil will be punished and all righteousness rewarded.

Because the view given here is not generally accepted, it may be important to discuss the matter a little further. If Abel is still speaking, what he is speaking about and to whom? Is it to God or to us?

Some exegetes have argued that Abel's posthumous words are addressed not to God but to us. '῎Ετι λαλεῖ means', Moffatt suggests, 'that he is an eloquent, living witness to all ages (so, recently, Seeberg).' 'The witness is that πίστις may have to face the last extreme of death (12⁴), and that it is not abandoned by God; ἀποθανών is never the last word upon a δίκαιος.' In addition, λαλεῖν 'is never used of speaking to God'.[13] This view is old, as Moffatt points out. Thus, the sixth-century author Primasius stated that Abel, by his example, still admonishes others to be righteous. Similarly, Chrysostom said that Abel still speaks μνημονευόμενος, that is, through the fact that he and his exemplary behaviour are on everybody's lips.[14] Recently, William L. Lane repeated Moffat's position in the following exposition:[15]

> The further statement that δι' αὐτῆς ἀποθανὼν ἔτι λαλεῖ, "through [faith] he is still speaking, although he died," is distinguished from the Jewish tradition about Abel because it reflects no interest in the act of fratricide nor in Abel as the protomartyr (in contrast to *Jub.* 4:2–3; *1 Enoch* 22:6–7; *T. Benj.* 7:3–5; 4 Macc 18:11; Matt 23:31; Luke 11:50–51; 1 John 3:12, for example; cf. Heb 12:24 below). All of the emphasis falls on the fact that it is *by his faith* (and not by his blood) that Abel continues to speak. The allusion is thus not to Gen 4:10, which speaks of the cry of Abel's blood from the ground for retribution or reconciliation (cf. Spicq, 2:343), but to the record of God's approval of his integrity and his sacrifice in Gen 4:4. It is significant that the writer does not use the verb βοᾶν, "to cry out," as in Gen 4:10 LXX, but the verb λαλεῖν, "to speak," which in Hebrews is never used of speaking to God. The writer affirms that Abel's faith continues to speak *to us* through the written record of his action in Scripture, which transmits to us the exemplary character of his offering (Moffatt, 164).

However, if his exemplary behaviour is meant, this 'speaking after death' might be applied to any of the Old Testament figures paraded in chapter 11. Why, then, should it be applied just to Abel? Also the statement on Abel concerns the Cain and Abel narrative in Genesis 4. If this is clear about the offering, why should it not be

---

[13] J. Moffatt, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (International Critical Commentary), Edinburgh 1924, 164–5. This view was rejected by, among others, C. Spicq, *L'Épitre aux Hébreux. II. Commentaire* (Études Bibliques), Paris 1953, 343, and O. Michel, *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament 13), Göttingen 1975⁵, 384–5.

[14] Chrysostom may have read λαλεῖται (which certainly does not mean 'er spricht (nur) zu sich selbst, er ist mit sich im Gespräch', as Gräßer (n. 10) 110 asserts).

[15] W.L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13* (Word Biblical Commentary 47B), Dallas, Texas, 1991, 335.

clear for the speaking? The interpretation given above does much more justice to the specific case of Abel. As for λαλεῖν never being used of speaking to God, nor is it here. What Abel does is to speak *tout court*; it is up to readers to take this as referring to Abel's plea addressed to God.

The Hebrews author was not the first to voice this view of Abel's continuous appealing to God. In 1 Enoch 22.5–7, we read the following passage concerning Enoch's otherworldly voyages:

> ⁵τεθέαμαι ἀνθρώπους νεκροὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας, καὶ ἡ φωνὴ αὐτοῦ μέχρι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ προέβαινεν καὶ ἐνετύγχανεν. ⁶καὶ ἠρώτησα Ῥαφαὴλ τὸν ἄγγελον ὃς μετ' ἐμοῦ ἦν, καὶ εἶπα αὐτῷ Τοῦτο τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐντυγχάνον τίνος ἐστίν, δι' ὃ οὕτως ἡ φωνὴ αὐτοῦ προβαίνει καὶ ἐντυγχάνει ἕως τοῦ οὐρανοῦ; ⁷καὶ ἀπεκρίθη μοι λέγων Τοῦτο τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν τὸ ἐξελθὸν ἀπὸ Ἄβελ ὃν ἐφόνευσε Κάϊν ὁ ἀδελφός, καὶ Ἄβελ ἐντυγχάνει περὶ αὐτοῦ μέχρι τοῦ ἀπολέσαι τὸ σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ προσώπου τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ σπέρματος τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀφανισθῇ τὸ σπέρμα αὐτοῦ.

> ⁵I saw dead people appealing, and his voice was reaching unto heaven and appealing. ⁶And I asked Raphael, the angel who was with me, and said to him, 'This spirit, which is appealing, whose is it that its voice with its appeal thus is reaching unto heaven?' And he answered me, saying, 'This is the spirit which had left Abel, whom Cain, his brother, had killed, and Abel is appealing in regard to him until his seed is exterminated from the face of the earth, and his seed has disappeared from among the seed of the people.'[16]

Abel's spirit is a permanent accuser here. And, as in Hebrews, the fact that his voice is even now still reaching heaven should not be considered as proof of failure but, on the contrary, as a warrant of final justice.

The suggestion has been made that Abel in Hebrews 11.4 with his enduring speech is a 'typos Christi', that is, prefiguring Christ 'in being both sacrificer and victim'.[17] This idea seems to be inspired by Hebrew's next statement on Abel in 12.24, where he is associated with Christ (we will consider this passage presently). However, it is hardly sound method to read into the text features still unknown to the reader. And also in 11.4 Abel is not acting as a prefiguration of

---

[16] My translation. The plural object in the first sentence is a corruption. The Ethiopic translation has the appeal ascending 'until this very moment', cf. E. Isaac in J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Volume 1: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, London 1983, 25. For ἐντυγχάνειν see C. Spicq, *Notes de lexicographie néo-testamentaire* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 22/1), Fribourg Suisse and Göttingen 1978, 245–9. The same idea occurs in Philo *Deter.* 48 and 70.

[17] Gräßer (n. 10) 112.

Christ because it is not in the nature of Christ to act 'by faith' (notwithstanding Mark 9.23). Finally, whereas Christ is sacrificer and victim together in one and the same sacrificial act, this does not apply in Abel's case.

In short, Abel's spoken words in Hebrews 11.4 are a trusting, and trust-inspiring, plea for justice.

Hebrews 12.22–24

The second passage on Abel's speaking in the Letter to the Hebrews is 12.22–24. It runs as follows:

> [22]ἀλλὰ προσεληλύθατε Σιὼν ὄρει καὶ πόλει θεοῦ ζῶντος, Ἰερουσαλὴμ ἐπουρανίῳ, καὶ μυριάσιν ἀγγέλων, πανηγύρει [23]καὶ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρωτοτόκων ἀπογεγραμμένων ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ κριτῇ θεῷ πάντων καὶ πνεύμασι δικαίων τετελειωμένων [24]καὶ διαθήκης νέας μεσίτῃ Ἰησοῦ καὶ αἵματι ῥαντισμοῦ κρεῖττον λαλοῦντι παρὰ τὸν Ἄβελ.

> [22]But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the innumerable angels, to the festal gathering [23]and the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, [24]and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel (RSV, adapted).

Again several comments can be made here. First, we notice that the author, who in 11.4 made Abel speak, is well aware that, more precisely, it was Abel's blood that spoke. Strictly speaking, we should render this 'more graciously than Abel', but, in view of the mention of Jesus' blood, Abel's blood must also be meant here. Grammatically, it is a compendious comparison. This strengthens our argument that in 11.4 Abel's speaking links with the crying of his blood in Genesis 4. Furthermore, comparing the speaking of Jesus' blood with that of Abel's blood may shed more light on the nature of Abel's utterance. The expression 'sprinkled blood', αἵματι ῥαντισμοῦ, is a reference to Jesus' act of purification from sin.[18] This blood speaks more graciously or, we might say, better than Abel's blood. And understandably so, because, whereas Jesus by his blood effectively delivers us from damnation, Abel's crying was simply a sign of the coming salvation.

---

[18] For the idea and lexical form, cf. Heb. 9.13 and Numeri 19.9 LXX; Gräßer (n. 10) 322.

Broadly speaking, two features of Abel's image stand out in Hebrews. First, the letter joins a trend current among Jews and Christians to make Abel both righteous and a prophet of future justice and salvation. Also he is used as such in a characteristic construction of Hebrews which opposes the Old Testament as a period of foreshadowing to the New Testament as the superior period of fulfilment. The former feature is prominent in 11.4, the latter in 12.24.

This page intentionally left blank

AUGUSTINE ON CAIN AND ABEL

Rick Benjamins

Two different lines of exegesis had a strong hold on early Christian interpretations of the biblical story of Cain and Abel. Philo's exegesis was an important source already at hand to draw from.[1] In addition, an original Christian way of typological exegesis arose that developed parallels between the Old Testament story and the Gospel, reading the story from the Old Testament as a prefiguration of future events. This typological interpretation does not seem to stem directly from the New Testament, which portrays Abel as a martyr whose blood, like the blood of prophets, will come upon hypocrite scribes and Pharisees (Mat 23:29–36). In Johannine literature, Cain is pictured as a child of the evil one (1 John 3:12, cf. John 8:44) opposed to the children of God. In the Letter to the Hebrews the blood of Jesus is compared to the blood of Abel (Hebr 12:24). Typological interpretations on the basis of these New Testament texts are initiated by later theologians such as Irenaeus,[2] Methodius of Olympus[3] and Melito of Sardes.[4] According to this interpretation, the death of Abel usually foreshadows the crucifixion of Christ. Consequently, Cain prefigures the scribes and the Pharisees or Pilate, who killed Jesus. Yet various typological explanations were still possible. Origen, for example, notes that Paul takes Eve as a type of the Church (Eph 5:31ff) and therefore makes Cain refer to its fallen members.[5]

Allegorical and typological interpretations

Detailed studies of the story of Cain and Abel in Greek patristic literature enable us to give a general outline of its interpretation in

---

[1] On Philo's interpretation of the Cain and Abel narratives, see the contribution to this volume by Hindy Najman, pp. 107–18.
[2] *Adv. Haer.* IV.14.1; IV.18.3.
[3] *Symposium* XI.2.
[4] *Hom. on Passover* 428–430.
[5] *De Princ.* IV.3.7.

Christian circles.[6] These interpretations usually mingle allegorical and typological exegesis, albeit with different emphasis.[7] Eve gave birth to Cain and Abel. It is likely that she also gave birth to a daughter after Cain and Abel.[8] They may have been twins, but if this was not the case, as most exegetes seem to think, Abel was not much younger than Cain.[9] Cain was born first because he represents the wickedness of the human soul, which comes first in the development of human nature. Abel symbolises virtue. His occupation as a shepherd is honourable, since it refers to the mind controlling the senses, or to a shepherd leading his people. Cain's working of the ground denotes mean interests like love of the body or the search for earthly wealth.[10] These interpretations clearly depend on Philo.

Typologically, the first-born Cain prefigures Israel whereas Abel is a type of the Church. Cain did not bring the proper offerings, nor did he bring them with good intentions or the right manners. The sacrifices of Cain and Abel reflect the differences between the offerings of hypocrites and the virtuous.[11] Typologically, the offering of Cain refers to the earthly sacrifices of Israel through blood, prescribed by the law. The offering of Abel is taken to be either a symbol of Christ offering himself to God as the first-born of the rational sheep, or of the spiritual sacrifice of the Church through Christ.[12] The acceptance and rejection of the offerings is demonstrated by a fire from heaven coming down upon Abel's gifts but not on Cain's offerings.[13] God was patient with Cain and therefore asked him why he was angry, but Cain did not improve himself and killed Abel. Abel is a type of Christ whose blood cries out against the murderer, i.e. against the cruelty and ungratefulness of the Jews.[14] Cain is cursed and he is not even allowed to be killed, since death would be a deliverance

---

[6] V. Aptowitzer, *Kain und Abel in der Agada, den Apokryphen, der hellenistischen, christlichen und muhammedanischen Literatur*, Wien, Leipzig 1922; J.B. Glenthøj, *Cain and Abel in Syriac and Greek Writers (4th–6th centuries)*, CSCO vol. 567, Leuven 1997.

[7] Didymus of Alexandria, for example, mainly uses the allegorical method (P. Nautin and L. Doutreleau, *Didyme l'Aveugle, Sur la Genèse*, Tome I, SC 233), in Cyrill of Alexandria (*Glaphyra in Genesis*, Migne PG 69.32–50) typological interpretations are prevalent.

[8] See Glenthøj, op. cit., 58, Aptowitzer, op. cit., 19–26.

[9] See Glenthøj, op. cit., 69, Aptowitzer, op. cit., 1–7.

[10] See Glenthøj, op. cit., 73.

[11] See Glenthøj, op. cit., 84, Aptowitzer, op. cit., 37–41.

[12] See Glenthøj, op. cit., 85, 89.

[13] See Glenthøj, op. cit., 97–100, Aptowitzer, op. cit., 41–43.

[14] See Glenthøj, op. cit., 93, 153, 175.

to him. His curse was a memory to himself of his impious act and a deterring warning to everybody else.[15]

Interpretations of Seth, the son born in the place of Abel (Gen 4:25), occur less frequently and seem to be of minor importance in early Christian exegesis.[16] Nevertheless, there are various allegorical and typological interpretations of Seth. Didymus of Alexandria explains that Seth was less perfect than Abel. Whereas Abel offered prayers and spiritual sacrifices to the Lord, Seth, whose name stands for "the one who gives to drink", offered to God those men he instructed by giving them to drink from divine doctrines. "He came instead of Cain, who was an obstinate and a self-centred person".[17] This remarkable interpretation, saying that Seth replaces Cain, not Abel, should be interpreted according to Philo's allegory of the vice of the soul (Cain) which is removed by virtue (either Abel or Seth). Cyril of Alexandria makes Seth refer to the resurrection. "See, that after the death of Abel once again a son is born, namely Seth, similar to him who was created in the image and after the likeness of God, i.e. similar to Adam. For after the Emmanuel had died according to the flesh, another seed of Adam was risen immediately, enlarging in himself the supreme beauty of the image of God."[18]

Augustine's interpretation in Contra Faustum

In Latin patristic literature the aforementioned interpretations were familiar. Ambrose of Milan, for example, wrote a treatise *De Cain et Abel* in which he mainly followed Philo's *De Sacrificiis* and occasionally added some typological remark to the earlier interpretation.[19] However, a novel organisation of well-known exegetical ideas was accomplished by Augustine. In *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, Augustine was still developing a rather traditional typological interpretation, but in *De Civitate Dei* he made the story about Cain and Abel fit in with his concept of a terrestrial and a heavenly city. Both interpretations deserve discussion.

---

[15] See Glenthøj, op. cit., 186ff.

[16] On Seth see A.F.J. Klijn, *Seth in Jewish, Christian and Gnostic Literature*, Leiden 1977.

[17] Didymus of Alexandria, *Sur la Genèse* IV.25 (144), SC 233, 330.

[18] Cyrill of Alexandria, *Glaphyra in Genesis*, Migne PG 69.44C. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* XV.18, also says that Abel and Seth typify the death and the resurrection of Christ.

[19] Cf. Hervé Savon, *Saint Ambroise devant l'exégèse de Philon le juif*, Paris 1977, 87–139.

The Manichaean Faustus rejected the Old Testament and denied that
it predicted Christ. In his reply to Faustus, Augustine tries to show that
it does contain prophesies and prefigurations of Christ and he explains
that Christ can be found in the Old Testament, for instance in the
story about Cain and Abel. Because he tries to save the Old Testament
as a book of the Church about Christ, Augustine automatically con-
flicts with Jewish interpretations. But even after paying full attention
to a situation of discord and controversy, the modern reader may feel
awkward with Augustine's explanation. It seems his discussion has a
rather stronger anti-Jewish flavour than an answer to the Manichaeans
would have required. Augustine sets the tone right from the start of
his interpretation. As Cain's sacrifice is rejected and Abel's sacrifice
is accepted, so the faith of the New Testament is preferred to the
earthly observances of the Old Testament. If Cain had obeyed God,
he would have ruled over his sin. Likewise, the Jews "of whom all
these things are a figure" would have ruled over their sins. But
instead, ignorant of God's righteousness, they are proud of the works
of the law and have stumbled. "Abel, the younger brother, is killed
by the elder brother; Christ, the head of the younger people, is killed
by the elder people of the Jews. Abel dies in the field; Christ dies
on Calvary" (*Contra Faust.* XII.9).[20]

God asked Cain where his brother was and Cain replied that he
did not know. "And what answer can the Jews give at this day, when
we ask them with the voice of God, that is, of the sacred Scriptures,
about Christ, except that they do not know the Christ that we speak
of?" Next, God tells Cain that the voice of his brother's blood is
crying from the ground. "So the voice of God in the holy Scriptures
accuses the Jews. For the blood of Christ has a loud voice on the
earth . . ." (XII.10). Then, Cain is cursed from the earth. "So the
unbelieving people of the Jews is cursed from the earth, that is, from
the Church . . .". Cain is cursed from the earth and he must keep
tilling it, although it shall no longer yield to him its strength. "That is,
the Church admits and avows the Jewish people to be cursed, because
after killing Christ they continue to till the ground of an earthly cir-
cumcision, an earthly Sabbath, an earthly passover, while the hidden
strength or virtue of making known Christ, which this tilling con-

---

[20] Translations are from the *Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers*, first series vol. IV, "Reply
to Faustus the Manichaean" (155–345) by R. Stothert.

tains, is not yielded to the Jews, while they continue in impiety and unbelief, for it is revealed in the New Testament" (XII.11).

Cain shall be groaning and trembling on the earth. "Here no one can fail to see that in every land where the Jews are scattered they mourn for the loss of their kingdom, and are in terrified subjection to the immensely superior number of Christians" (XII.12). Cain fears being slain, which shows that his carnal mind fears death more than being hidden from the face of God. However, no one is allowed to kill the Jews since Cain's death shall be avenged sevenfold. "Not by bodily death shall the ungodly race of carnal Jews perish. For whoever destroys them in this way shall suffer sevenfold vengeance, that is, shall bring upon himself the sevenfold penalty under which the Jews lie for the crucifixion of Christ" (XII.12). At least Augustine prevents anti-Jewish thoughts being turned into action. God set a mark on Cain. This gives Augustine the opportunity to note a striking fact. Whereas all the nations that are subjected to Rome adopt its worship, the Jewish nation never lost the sign of their law. "No emperor or monarch who finds under his government the people with this mark kills them, that is, makes them cease to be Jews, and as Jews to be separate in their observances, and unlike the rest of the world. Only when a Jew comes over to Christ, is he no longer Cain, nor goes out from the presence of God, nor dwells in the land of Nod, which is said to mean commotion" (XII.13).

It is hard not to be dissatisfied with the results of these interpretations. Augustine not only does not consider the susceptibilities of the modern reader—which are obviously only a problem for the modern reader—but also falls short of his own objective. Augustine is not really explaining how the story about Cain and Abel prefigures Christ, but rather showing that it foreshadows the fate of the Jews, "of whom all these thing are a figure", as he put it himself. Only in an artificial way can Augustine turn his interpretation against the Manicheans. The Manicheans "and all who oppose the truth by their various heresies, leave the presence of God, like Cain and the scattered Jews, and inhabit the land of commotion, that is, of carnal disquietude, instead of the enjoyment of God" (XII.13). Anti-Jewish thought is thereby extended to all the heresies. It would have been necessary, though, as was Augustine's initial aim, to prove the presence of Christ in Jewish scripture.

Augustine's interpretation in De Civitate Dei

Augustine did not withdraw the interpretation in *Contra Faustum* and
he even refers to it in *De Civitiate Dei* (XV.7). Nevertheless, the inter-
pretation of Cain and Abel in *De Civitate Dei* is utterly different from
his earlier exegesis, for the fact that Cain founded a city whereas
Abel did not is now the centre of Augustine's interest. This aspect
was completely left out in *Contra Faustum*, and in fact was never paid
much attention by the Fathers of the Church.[21] This is noteworthy,
since Philo treated it to a certain extent in *The Posterity of Cain*.
Augustine develops the subject in an original way.

In *De Civitate Dei*, books XI–XIV,[22] Augustine writes about the ori-
gin of two cities, that is of two races of men, who live according to
man or according to God. "At present", he says at the start of book
XV, "as we have said enough about their origin whether among the
angels . . . or in the two first human beings, it seems suitable to
attempt an account of their career . . ." (XV.1.58). The story of Cain
and Abel is the first account of the manifestation of the two cities in
history. "Cain was the first-born and he belonged to the city of men;
after him was born Abel, who belonged to the city of God" (XV.1.58).
Scripture tells us that the citizen of this world, Cain, was born first.
This reflects the truth that each man is first of all born of Adam, evil
and carnal, and only becomes good and spiritual afterwards, when
he is grafted into Christ by regeneration. Then, after the citizen of
this world, the citizen of the city of God was born, "predestined by
grace, elected by grace, by grace a stranger below, and by grace a
citizen above" (XV.1.59). "Not indeed", Augustine adds hereafter, "that
every wicked man shall be good, but that no one will be good who
was not first of all wicked" (XV.1.59). "Accordingly", that is according
to their citizenship, "it is recorded of Cain that he built a city, but Abel,
being a sojourner, built none" (XV.1.59). It is obvious that Augustine
borrows from the traditional philonic interpretation which says that
Cain, symbolising vice, precedes Abel in the course of human growth
to virtue. On the other hand, characteristic of his theology, Augustine
also transposes this interpretation from virtue to grace and from the
moral qualities of the soul to the citizenship of different cities.

---

[21] Cf. Glenthøj, op. cit., 225.
[22] References are to G. Bardy and G. Combès, *La Cité de Dieu* Livres XV–XVIII,
bibliothèque augustinienne vol. 36 (texte de la 4ᵉ édition de B. Dombart et A. Kalb),
translations are from the *Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers*, first series vol. II by M. Dods.

In subsequent chapters, 2–4 of book XV, Augustine makes some remarks about the heavenly and the terrestrial cities that do not concern the interpretation of Gen 4. In chapter 5 he resumes his interpretation of Cain and Abel. "Thus, the founder of the earthly city was a fratricide. Overcome with envy, he slew his own brother, a citizen of the eternal city, and a sojourner on earth" (XV.5.64). According to Augustine, it is not surprising to see that this archetypical crime was repeated at the foundation of Rome, which was to be the head of the terrestrial city. At the foundation of Rome, Remus was killed by his brother Romulus. "And thus there is no difference between the foundation of this city and of the earthly city, unless it be that Romulus and Remus were both citizens of the earthly city" (XV.5.64). Romulus and Remus both aimed at the glory of ruling the city, which would be diminished by sharing it with a partner. Cain and Abel, however, did not strive for the same glory, since Abel sought that kind of goodness which is not diminished by sharing it but rather increases in proportion to the goodness and charity of each of those who share it. "The quarrel, then, between Romulus and Remus shows how the earthly city is divided against itself; that which fell out between Cain and Abel illustrated the hatred that subsists between the two cities, that of God and that of men" (XV.5.65). Thus, the wicked fight against the wicked, and the wicked fight against the good, but the good cannot fight against the good. The same fight of the good against the wicked is fought in each and every individual, just as Paul says that the desires of the flesh are against the spirit, and the desires of the spirit are against the flesh (Gal 5:17).

By a treatment of grace, those who improve themselves will be healthy and attain final victory (XV.5.65). Many prescripts are given in the scriptures so that man can improve himself. Exhortations such as "bear another's burdens", "warn them that are unruly", "let not the sun go down upon your wrath" and other prescripts describe "how the citizens of the city of God are healed while still they sojourn in this earth and sigh for the peace of their heavenly country. The Holy Spirit, too, works within, that the medicine externally applied may have some good result" (XV.6.66). By the inward grace of God the soul can convert from its own evil and selfish desires (XV.6.67).

These rather general reflections are chiefly preparations for Augustine's next question concerning the story of Cain and Abel. God spoke to Cain in a healing way but what good influence had it on Cain? When God neglected Cain's sacrifice but regarded Abel's, which was doubtless made known by some visible sign, Cain was very angry and

his countenance fell. "And the Lord said to Cain: why are you angry,
and why has your countenance fallen? If you offer rightly, but do not
rightly distinguish, have you not sinned? Calm down, for his turning
shall be to you and you shall rule over him" (Gen 4:6–7). Augustine
discusses the meaning of these admonishing and healing but ineffective
words to Cain. He notes that the saying, "that Cain offered rightly
but did not rightly distinguish", was interpreted differently by several
authors. Next, he explains that a sacrifice is rightly offered when it
is offered to the true God, to whom alone we must sacrifice. It is
not rightly distinguished when we do not rightly distinguish the places
or the times or the materials of the offering, or the person to whom
it is presented, or the person who is allowed to eat from the offering.
"In which of these particulars Cain displeased God, it is difficult to
determine" (XV.7.68). But it follows from the words of John (1 John
3:12), who says that Cain was of the wicked one and his works were
evil, that Cain did not distinguish rightly in this, "that he gave to
God something of his own but kept himself to himself" (XV.7.68).
Cain did not dedicate himself fully to God, but he offered a sacrifice
in order to win God's favour, not with the intention of being cured
of his evil passions but to gratify them. This is characteristic of the
earthly city. "The good use the world that they may enjoy God; the
wicked on the contrary would gladly use God that they may enjoy
the world" (XV.7.68–69).

   Cain should have regarded Abel as an example but took him for
a rival. He became angry and his countenance fell. A human spec-
tator might interpret Cain's looks as grief for his own wickedness
which displeased God. God, though, saw clearly that he envied his
brother and showed Cain that hate towards his brother was worse
than offering with bad intentions. He advised Cain: "calm down, for
his turning shall be to you and you shall rule over him".[23] Of course,
this unclear admonition is not urging Cain to rule over his brother
but over sin. The "turning" of sin to man may be understood as a
command: Man ought to rule over his sin. It is also possible to inter-
pret the saying as a prediction. If man does not act upon an irrational
impulse, the impulse will disappear. But either way, taken as a com-
mand or as a prediction, the healing counsel of God was neglected
by Cain since he received it "in the spirit of one who did not wish

---

[23] This reading is according to the Septuagint, not to the Hebrew text.

to amend. In fact, the vice of envy grew stronger in him; and, having entrapped his brother, he slew him. Such was the founder of the earthly city" (XV.7.71).

The historical truth of the story

At this point Augustine had already developed a well-rounded interpretation of Cain and Abel.[24] Abel stands for the city of God, the race of men who improve themselves by grace; Cain represents the terrestrial city of men who do not wish to amend. Nevertheless, Augustine still continues his discussion of the story by setting another objective in chapter 8. "At present I aim at defending the history, that Scripture may not be reckoned incredible when it relates that one man built a city at a time in which there seem to have been but four men upon earth" (XV.8.71). In chapters 8–17, Augustine chiefly supports three theses in order to defend the historical truth of the biblical story. Firstly, the authors of the biblical narrative did not mention all men who were alive at that time. Secondly, the great age that men attained allowed them to spread rapidly within one generation. Thirdly, it was not immoral to marry within the family at that time.

The design of the author of the biblical narrative was to trace the descent from Adam to Abraham and then from Abraham to the Christian people of God in whom was prefigured and predicted all that relates to the eternal city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem. Therefore, it was not necessary to mention all the children who were born from Adam, Cain, Seth or others. It suited the purpose of God to distinguish two generations of men from Adam to Noah. It is described how these men, the sons of Cain and the sons of Seth, representing the terrestrial city and the heavenly city, are first distinguished, then mingled because the sons of God married the daughters of men (Gen 6) and therefore deserved to be swept away by the flood. This purpose of the biblical narrative does not demand a full description of all men that were born at that time and there can be no doubt that during their long lifetimes, antediluvian men so multiplied that they could build several cities (XV.8).

---

[24] This is confirmed by what seems to be a concluding remark at the end of chapter 7: "Such was the founder of the earthly city. It was also a figure of the Jews . . . I forbear to explain it now . . . I have made some remarks upon it in writing against Faustus the Manichaean."

"Perhaps", Augustine seems to expect, "some sceptic may take excep-
tion to this very length of years which our authors ascribe to the
antediluvians and deny that this is credible" (XV.9.74). These people
probably also deny that men's bodies were larger then than they are
nowadays. Well, it is possible to prove that men's bodies were larger.
Virgil indicates it;[25] the younger Pliny maintains that the older the
world becomes, the smaller will be the bodies of men;[26] Homer seems
to lament the same decline,[27] and Augustine himself claims to have
once found an enormous tooth on the shore at Utica, about a hun-
dred times the size of our teeth. If we can be assured that people
were larger then, why not believe that they lived longer as well?
Pliny knows of a nation where men live for 200 years.[28] If people
live longer there, "why should we not believe the same of times dis-
tant from our own?" (XV.9.76).

In spite of this evidence, Augustine still has some problems to
solve because the Latin manuscripts based on the Septuagint differ
from the Hebrew in the number of years assigned to the age of
antediluvian men (XV.10). These differences seem to be rather futile,
since both versions accept the great age of antediluvians. But the point
is that the Latin version admits the theory that antediluvian years
were about one tenth of the duration of our year. This computation
would annul Augustine's argument about the rapid spread of humanity
within one generation. The Hebrew version does not support the
theory of short antediluvian years, because in that case we would
have to accept that Adam begot his first son at the age of eleven, Seth
begot Enos before he was eleven and Cainan begot Mahalaleel at the
early age of seven (XV.11–12). Now it seems reasonable to accept
the Hebrew version, but Augustine has to deal with the objection that
the Hebrew version was believed to have been forged by the Jews.

Augustine replies that the differences between both versions are
probably due to a mistake of the first copyist of the Septuagint. Such
a mistake is likely, since numbers are often carelessly transcribed and
still more carelessly emended. But Augustine also notes that this mis-
take cannot explain every difference since there is a systematic shift
of a hundred years in the enumeration of generations in the Latin

---

[25] *Aeneid.*, XII.899–900.
[26] *Hist. Nat.*, VII.xvi.
[27] *Iliad.*, V.304.
[28] *Hist. Nat.*, VII.xlix.

version which cannot have arisen inadvertently. This systematic shift was probably contrived by someone who wanted to make the Latin version admit the theory of short antediluvian years. This person used the shifts to prevent the improbability of begetting children before the age of 160 antediluvian years, that is before the age of 16 according to our computation. "But whatever may be thought of this . . . we do well to believe in preference that language out of which the translation was made into another by translators" (XV.13.85). Only then does Augustine develop his decisive argument against the theory of short antediluvian years, based on Gen 7:10–11 which says that the waters of the flood were upon the earth in the second month, the twenty-seventh day of the six hundredth year of Noah's life. A short antediluvian year of about thirty-six days would make nonsense of a twenty-seventh day in the second month, unless you accept a ridiculous division of the year (XV.14).

It is remarkable that Augustine does not simply settle the dispute from the start by a reference to Genesis 7:10–11. But his elaborated exegetical discussion arises from the fact that he stands in awe of the Latin translation that is based on the Septuagint.[29] The Septuagint was considered to be inspired scripture and therefore, Augustine says, no one ventured to emend the Septuagint from the Hebrew text (XV.15; XVIII.43).[30] Even though Augustine does not follow the Latin version based on the Septuagint (XV.14), he still affirms that this version is not wrong by mistake, but prompted by the divine Spirit (XV.15). In book XVIII of *De Civitate Dei* he further explains the subject. The divine Spirit inspired the authors of the Hebrew version and later inspired the translators of the Septuagint, but wanted

---

[29] Augustine was familiar with the differences between both versions because Jerome translated the Hebrew text whereas he himself used the Latin translation of the Septuagint. Augustine obviously lacked the philological skills to treat these differences properly and became embarrassed. In a letter to Jerome (Letter 72), he wrote: "I wish you would have the kindness to open up to me what you think to be the reason of the frequent discrepancies between the text supported by the Hebrew codices and the Greek Septuagint version. For the latter has no mean authority, seeing that it has obtained so wide circulation, and was the one which the apostles used, as is not only proved by looking to the text itself, but has also been, as I remember, affirmed by yourself" (72.6).

[30] This is not true. Origen, for example, was concerned about a correct text of the scriptures and did not suppose that the text of the Septuagint was definitive or could not be improved. Augustine, usually not afraid to emend tradition where Christian doctrine is concerned, probably lacks the self-confidence to emend tradition in the field of textual criticism. See also the "notes complémentaires" 3, 4, and 5 in G. Bardy and G. Combès, *La Cité de Dieu* Livres XV–XVIII . . ., 695–699.

to communicate different things at different times (XVIIII.43). The
Hebrew version, for example, says that Jonah prophesied the over-
throw of Nineveh in forty days, the Septuagint on the other hand
mentions the overthrow in three days. According to Augustine, both
versions are inspired and agree in the same meaning under a different
significance (XVIII.44). Obviously, this argument will not hold in
case of the enumeration of the age of antediluvian men, for Augustine
rejected the Latin version based on the Septuagint since it intended
to defend a wrong concept of an antediluvian year. But even here
Augustine does not reject the inspiration of this version. He explains
that the Septuagint interpreters sometimes want to arouse us from
sleep by passing down difficulties to make us search into the depths
of the prophecy for a hidden meaning (XVIII.44). This is an old
argument Augustine is using, it reaches as far back as Origen,[31] in
order to defend the literal inspiration of a text without accepting its
absurdities. It clearly shows Augustine's respect for a translation he
has to reject and it accounts for his exegetical efforts to discard the
theory that an antediluvian year was of short duration.

Having established that an antediluvian year was as long as our
year, the question remains why it took antediluvian men a hundred
or two hundred years before they begat children. Seth, for example,
is reported to have been 105 years old when he begat Enos. There
seem to be two possible reasons. Either antediluvian man abstained
from sexual intercourse for a long period, or puberty was as much later
as the whole life was longer. Augustine, however, prefers another ex-
planation. The author of the biblical narrative only wanted to describe
two races of men, the sons of Cain, representing the terrestrial city,
and the sons of Seth, representing the heavenly city. "And from this
we may understand that the antediluvians who are mentioned were
not the first-born, but those through whom the order of the succeeding
generations might be carried on to the patriarch Noah" (XV.15.91).
Now that it has been settled that at that time there were more men
alive than scripture mentions and that population spread rapidly
within one generation because of men's great age, there is no reason
to doubt the historical truth of the story about Cain and Abel. The
only problem left is the subject matter of marriage between blood
relations, for even if there were enough people to build a city, as
Cain did, these people still had to marry relatives.

---

[31] See *De Principiis* IV.3.

Marrying relatives was an act "which was as certainly dictated by necessity in these ancient days as afterwards it was condemned by the prohibitions of religion" (XV.16.91). Augustine explains that the ban on marriage between blood relations is of social interest. For the sake of concord, man's relationships should be distributed over several people. When, for example, a brother marries his sister, his father and father-in-law are the same person, whereas marriage should have extended his relationships to a larger number of persons by making another man his father-in-law. Of course, this was not possible from the start but, as soon as it became possible, man ought to marry outside the family. Thus, the ban on marrying relatives is of social origin, but nowadays it has been internalised to such an extent that an offence is felt to be repulsive. "And we see that, since the human race has increased and multiplied, this is so strictly observed even among the profane worshippers of many and false gods, that though their laws perversely allow a brother to marry his sister, yet custom, with a finer morality, prefers to forego this license; and though it was quite allowable in the earliest ages of the human race to marry one's sister, it is now abhorred as a thing which no circumstances could justify" (XV.16.92). This custom also rightly restrains concupiscence, Augustine notes, for without any law it even prevents a man from marrying his cousins, since cousins are so closely related that they are like brothers and sisters. Augustine admits that the ancient fathers preferred marriage within the stock for fear of a watered-down sense of relationship, but there is no doubt "that the modern prohibition of the marriage even of cousins is the more seemly regulation" (XV.16.93).[32] Finally, Augustine places his discussion of marriage somewhat superficially in the context of his major theme of the terrestrial and heavenly cities. "The sexual intercourse of man and woman, then, is in the case of mortals a kind of seedbed of the city; but while the earthly city needs for its population only generation, the heavenly needs also regeneration to rid it of the taint of generation" (XV.16.93).

In further chapters of book XV, Augustine discusses the genealogical table of the sons of Cain and the sons of Seth, representing the terrestrial city and the heavenly city. The descendants of Cain and Seth were distinguished, but mingled because the sons of God married

---

[32] Concerning law and custom in respect to the marriage of blood-relatives, see "note complémentaire" 6 in G. Bardy and G. Combès, op. cit., 699–702.

the daughters of men (Gen 6) and therefore deserved to be swept away by the flood. The discussion of the story of Cain and Abel, however, came to a conclusion in chapter 16, where Augustine finished his support of the historical truth of the biblical narrative.

To be sure, Augustine's discussion of the historical truth cannot inspire any modern interpretation of the story of Cain and Abel but merely illustrates the gap between early Christian and contemporary exegesis. From a modern point of view, much learning is wasted on irrelevant questions. On the other hand, Augustine's interpretation in *De Civitaite Dei* by far surpasses the former allegorical and typological explanations of Cain and Abel. In my opinion, Augustine grasps an important dimension of the story, hitherto neglected. The allegorical interpretation applied the story to psychological and moral truth; the typological interpretation mainly established an intertextual link between the Hebrew Bible and the Christian scriptures of the New Testament. Augustine uncovered the meaning of the story for the history of mankind and demonstrated that the denial of our neighbour stands at the basis of our cultural activities. Since the story of Cain and Abel lacks an historical base, this tragic truth of the terrestrial city can only be denoted, but not thereby discarded, as "mythical".

MILK AND BLOOD, HEREDITY AND CHOICE: BYRON'S READINGS OF GENESIS

Bernard Beatty

I. *Introduction: Byron, Walter Scott, and the Patterns of History*

Goethe said that Byron should have lived "to execute his vocation . . . to dramatise the Old Testament".[1] Goethe based this statement on his reading of Byron's two plays with Biblical subjects—*Cain* and *Heaven and Earth*—both of which were written in 1821, three years before Byron's death. Byron had, in the same year, dedicated *Sardanapalus*, one of his secular tragedies, to Goethe but he dedicated *Cain* to Sir Walter Scott, who accepted the dedication and stood bravely by the play when it met a torrent of abuse for its alleged blasphemy on its publication in Britain. Byron commented that "the parsons are all preaching at it from Kentish Town, and Oxford to Pisa".[2] They did so because Cain himself and Lucifer, whom Byron introduces as a Mephistophelis figure into the Biblical action, produce intellectual arguments against the justice of God which go unanswered by any satisfactory counter-arguments. This sequence takes up the whole of Act II where Lucifer takes Cain into Space. Byron commented wryly that "You may suppose the small talk which takes place between him and Lucifer upon these matters is not quite canonical".[3] Given Byron's reputation for unorthodoxy, it was natural to assume that he endorsed Cain's and Lucifer's arguments. Walter Scott understood Byron better, commenting that "The fiend-like reasoning and bold blasphemy of the fiend and of his pupil lead exactly to the point which was to be expected,—the commission of the first murder and the ruin and despair of the perpetrator".[4] Scott understood Byron and vice-

---

[1] Henry Crabb Robinson (ed. By Thos. Sadler), *Diary, reminiscences and correspondence*, London 1869, ii, 45.

[2] Leslie Marchand (ed.), *Byron's Letters and Journals*, London 1979, IX, 111.

[3] Ibid., vii, 216.

[4] See Scott's letter accepting the dedication quoted in: E.H. Coleridge (ed.), *The Works of Lord Byron*, London 1905 V, 206. Byron's depiction of an intellectual argument preceding the murder of Cain echoes rabbinic tradition at least as recorded in Bayle's articles on Cain, Manicheism, the Cainites, and kindred subjects with

versa because both were passionately interested in reading and writ-
ing history, in processes, balancings and outcomes, rather than think-
ing schematically. Byron himself was a life-long reader of the Scriptures,
quotes all parts of them constantly, and was profoundly influenced
by the structures of Biblical writing in his own poems.[5] Why did he
write these plays and do they call attention to features of *Genesis* which
we might overlook?

Scott grasped the point that the reader of Byron's play, like the
reader of the Scriptures, must not over-attend to any particular pas-
sage but must cross-refer synchronically but especially diachronically.
What happens next? is a believer's question as much as it is the
irreplaceable attitude of a true reader. An unforeseen but guessed-
at future will reveal the full meaning of the present moment in Life
and in the text. Towards the end of his life, Byron became inter-
ested in the parallels between the readers' entrustment to the truth
of a fiction and the faith of believers.[6] Scott would have noticed that
the end of Byron's play re-works one of the only two concluding
formal endings that Scott ever allowed himself. Scott, before Hegel
or Marx, understood history as generated by the clash of antitheses.[7]
The synthesis which results is always something other than the one
that antithetical forces have struggled for but it can only come about
through their energies. Scott regularly signals this in his novels by
allowing a moderate hero, nominally attached to one of the anti-
thetical groups but caught up in the action of both sides, to marry
a woman from the opposite grouping.[8] In this way, Scott's novels,
like the Scriptures, usually end their delineation of any particular
history with a thrust forward into a new future. In *The Bride of
Lammermoor* (1818), however, Scott reverses the pattern. There is no
moderate figure. The dark aristocratic Romance hero, Ravenswood,
should marry the rising bourgeoisie heroine, Lucy Ashton, but both

---

which Byron was familiar. Byron owned an English translation but probably had
read it in French. See Peter L. Thorslev, Jr., "Byron and Bayle: Biblical Skepticism
and Romantic Irony", in: Wolf J. Hirst (ed.), *Byron, the Bible and Religion*, Cranbury
NJ., 1991, 58–76.

[5] See my discussion of this point in "Byron and the unsecular Scriptures", in
Salzburg Studies in Studien zur Englischen Romantik, Essen 2000, 86–99.

[6] I discuss this extensively but especially in the last chapter of my *Byron's Don
Juan*, London 1985.

[7] See Georg Lukacs' discussion of Scott in *K istorii realizma*, Moscow 1939, trans-
lated into English as *The Historical Novel* by Hannah and George Mitchell, London
1962, 30–63.

[8] See Alexander Welsh "Scott's Heroes" in: D.D. Devlin (ed.), *Walter Scott: Modern
Judgements*, London 1968, 63–70.

are killed off horribly by their author and, with them, he kills off
the possibility of a new Scottish future based on this kind of rec-
onciliation. Scott formed Ravenswood from his reading of Byronic
heroes and Byron was, in turn, deeply influenced by Scott's novel.

When Byron's Cain finally exits the play to begin his life as a
Wanderer and Exile, he stops to address the corpse of his brother
and imagines the possible bright ending of a Walter Scott novel as
an alternative ending to the dark end of his and our play. It is
important, as we'll see, that Cain exits on his wife's instructions to
"carry forth" their two children. Byron's play emphasises especially
Cain and Adah's small baby which is on stage and addressed. It is
this which prompts him to imagine a lineage for Abel:

> And *he* who lieth there was childless! I
> Have dried the fountain of a gentle race,
> Which might have graced his recent marriage couch,
> And might have tempered this stern blood of mine,
> Uniting with our children Abel's offspring![9]

Byron sees the story of Cain and Abel partly as the archetypal Scott
novel. One is a tiller of the soil, the other is a keeper of sheep. Con-
flict between the antitheses is inevitable and might be settled by the
sort of intermarriage that Cain imagines. Scott would have kept to
this and done wonders with it. But Byron is not much interested in
the division of the labour that interests Scott and Marxist tradition,
but in the clash between the two siblings which will constantly be
repeated in the Scriptures. He is interested too in juxtaposing the
choices of Cain and Abel with the choices of God. Scott understands
and intelligently records the importance of religion in human history
but never gives a religious reading of history. Byron, I think, does so.
The mingling of human and divine choices, open future and controlling
heredity, disclose patterns which govern us, which we can dramatise,
but never fully explicate.

II. *The Separation of Lineages*

Byron's scriptural plays were written in Ravenna. He had gone there
to sustain the most permanent of his love affairs with an Italian
Countess, a believing Catholic, which was to last for four/five years.

---

[9] III, I, 556–60. All quotations from Byron's poetry are taken from J.J. McGann
(ed.), *The Complete Poetical Works*, Oxford 1980–93.

For this, and other more complex reasons, his sympathetic interest in Catholicism and of Catholicism's much greater iconic and theological interest in Mary and hence, of the importance of the feminine in Christian Revelation than that of Protestantism, had deepened. There are clear signs of this in both plays. Cain and Abel are given sisters, Adah and Zillah (the names taken from Cain's later descendant, Lamech's, two wives), who have become their wives. In another, not dissociated, way the plays revisit some of the problems which had haunted Byron since his early Calvinist upbringing in Scotland. Judaism, Christianity, and especially Reformation Christianity emphasise chosen and predestined separation of individuals and groups. The very intermarriage between antithetical groups that Scott's novels and human history depend upon is customarily the sign of infidelity to the Covenant in the Hebrew Bible and can be transferred metaphorically to the necessary separation of the Elect in some Protestant thinking. Adam and Eve both sin but their children are distinguished into innocent and criminal modes of being. The criminal line is then literally separated by exile and an undisclosed physical mark from the righteous line proceeding from Abel's replacement, Seth. This separation fascinates Byron's imagination even though his liberal and rational sympathies are anti-separatist.

Byron's second Scriptural play, *Heaven and Earth*, is concerned with tracing the line of this separation of saved and criminal lineages. In doing so, he is following something insisted upon in the Scriptures but not literally so in this instance. Genesis clearly contrasts the truncated line of Cain, which begins and ends in violence and is never directly referred to afterwards in the Scriptures, with the fruitful line of Seth in whom both the image of God and the instruction to multiply indefinitely is still evident. In Byron's *Heaven and Earth*, the line of Cain has persisted down to the Flood and is doomed to extinction. Heredity governs salvation and predisposes choice. Byron was Sixth Lord Byron, acutely conscious of his lineage, both appalled and in a way proud of his dreadful ancestors. His mother's father and grandfather committed suicide.[10] His unbalanced father deserted his wife and may also have committed suicide,[11] and his eccentric [great] uncle who was the Fifth Lord had murdered his neighbour

---

[10] Leslie Marchand, *Byron: a Portrait*, London 1971, 6.
[11] *A Portrait*, 12.

and cousin in a duel in a darkened room.[12] Cain's literal lineage is
truncated in Genesis but Byron found Cain and Abel in his own
immediate ancestry. The first Lord Byron received his title for his
support of Charles I in the English Civil War—another case of pro-
longed fratricide. From Byron's point of view, Cain and Abel are
the first to have ancestors, a controlling heredity, traceable genes. They
are the first to have a lineage, to receive their bad blood from others
as he had done. They are the first recipients of a story, an already
existing pre-history into which they are born and which is retold to
them. They are the first recipients of narrative or, more precisely,
of a retrospective narrative representing an unwelcome truth since
the serpent in the garden is first teller of a future fictional narrative
which is untrue but welcomed. All narratives for Byron tend to be
versions of the Fall which, for him, is a truth. Since the narrative
of the Fall which the children of Eve receive both unfolds a sequence
and is aetiological in that it explains and implicitly justifies the main
characteristics of human existing, there arises for Cain and Abel, the
possibility of there being a discrepancy between what they see and
what they hear. Cain says explicitly "I never could/Reconcile what
I saw with what I heard". By the same token, Cain and Abel are
in the same position as we are in relation to faith. They can choose
to give priority to what they hear as told by a tradition of witnesses
or they can choose to accept only what they can see. Byron's Cain
lives by sight and is contrasted in this with Abel and more espe-
cially with his wife Adah who live by faith. Byron associates this dis-
tinction between living by faith and living by sight with the distinction
between Love and Knowledge. This, at any rate, is the main structure
of things in *Cain* but in *Heaven and Earth* he reverses the pattern.

   In his second Scriptural play, Byron follows the Biblical sequence
carefully. Genesis goes straight from the story of Cain and Abel, via
genealogies, to the story of the Sons of God desiring the daughters
of men, and the Flood. Genesis implies a connection between the
last two stories which Byron makes explicit. He sees the story of Cain
and Abel as a repetition and completion of the story of the Fall. There
is some ground for this in the parallel formulas used by God in Genesis
to both Adam and Cain after their offence. Similarly Byron sees the
binary distinction between bad Cain and good Abel replaced by

---

[12] *A Portrait*, 4.

good Seth as repeated in the salvation of Seth's line and the drowning of Cain's line in the Deluge. But he complicates this by making a further parallel between the action of spirits. Cain is led astray by Lucifer in his acts of knowing. This is an echo and repetition of Eve's undoing by the serpent whom Byron insists, in his preface to the play, was not Satan but simply a serpent. Similarly the daughters of men—Anah and Aholibamah—who are descendants of Cain, are led astray by two Sons of God, that is to say, angels.

Byron normally follows the emphases of Pierre Bayle in his *Dictionaire Historique* but does not do so here. Bayle, like Calvin, Chrysostom and Aquinas, scorned the idea that the Sons of God are angels. On the contrary they are simply "the righteous" who should not mingle with "the daughters of men" who are the unrighteous. Byron insists, following Philo, rabbinic and Alexandrian patristic tradition that the "Sons of God" are angel spirits. This means that in *Heaven and Earth*, the temptation from above is not to a perversion of knowledge, as it is in *Cain*, but to a perversity of loving. Instead of following Bayle, Byron here follows the Book of Enoch which gives him too the names of his angels. Byron conflates two traditions. He accepts the idea of Angels or Spirits encountering humans because both have a common ancestry. He used this idea earlier in *Manfred*[13] and it always fascinated him. But he takes the notion, generated from those opposed to this idea, that there is an opposition of destiny and yet a possible intermarrying between the descendants of Cain and Seth.[14] To further complicate things therefore, Byron's main character, the Biblical Japhet, a descendant of Seth and therefore necessarily saved in Byron's version of Biblical genealogies, is in love with one of the Cainite daughters of men who is in turn in love with an Angel, a Son of God. Byron eliminates Ham and Sem in order to keep the patterns clear.

The complexity here is roughly that of a classical tragedy. Byron admired this form in self-conscious contradistinction to his Romantic contemporaries. He is careful to make the action of both his biblical plays occur within twenty-four hours and he experiments with a chorus of sorts in *Heaven and Earth*. What he is trying to do, as classical tragedy does, is to illumine the relationship between choice and determination in human affairs. They are determined by God's unex-

---

[13] *Manfred* III, iv, 116–19.
[14] The rabbinic tradition that Naamah, one of the descendants of Cain married Noah is mentioned in Harold Fisch's *Byron's Cain as Executioner* in Hirst 31.

aminable choices and by heredity yet remain capable of choice in
some sense. Where classical tragedy uses Fate and the Furies, Byron
is much more interested in the parallel, but quite different, emphases
of the Scriptures on human responsibility and divine insistences. In
the case of *Cain*, Byron goes out of his way to juxtapose human and
divine choosing:

> CAIN: What shall I do?
> ABEL: Choose one of these two altars.
> CAIN: Choose for me: they to me are so much turf
>   And stone.
> ABEL: Choose thou!
> CAIN: I have chosen.[15]

This highlighted human choice of something apparently indifferent
is followed by God's unexplained choice of one of the two altars as
acceptable. In *Heaven and Earth*, on the other hand, it is the freedom
of the, as yet, unfallen two angels that is emphasised whereas human
beings are saved or doomed through their lineage. They are either
seed of Seth or seed of Cain. Byron normally uses the Biblical word
"seed" rather than "children" and can activate its metaphorical res-
onance. Thus Cain complains that Adam "sow'd the seed of evil
and mankind/In the same hour" (I, I, 443–44). Seed in its origin
belongs to the third day of Creation—"plants yielding seed accord-
ing to their kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each
according to its kind. And God saw that it was good". (Gen 1:12)
Choice as such is not present here. Multiplicity and fecundity embody
undifferentiated blessings. But choosing to eat the fruit of the tree
of knowledge differentiates good and evil. Adam's seed is similarly
differentiated into good Abel and bad Cain which is continued to
the Flood in the seed of Cain and the seed of Seth. These are male
blood lines proclaimed in the genealogies of Genesis but the Scriptures
don't use the word "blood" in this context. Byron merges and con-
trasts the two words. Byron's Cain presents the fruits of the earth
as his sacrifice which are scattered on the ground by God's whirl-
wind. Cain remarks "Their seed will bear fresh fruit ere the summer"
(111,283). Cain's seed, however, will die out in Byron's Deluge. Abel
brings a blood offering which is accepted. When Cain murders Abel,
he says "thy God loves blood then look to it" (310) and, taking a
brand from the altar, in effect he sacrifices Abel there. The ground,

---

[15] III, 209–11.

we are told by the angel whom Byron substitutes for God, "open'd late
her mouth/To drink thy brother's blood" (III, 472–73). And thus
the earth, which gives "the fruit in which is their seed", refuses to
yield its fruit for Cain and his seed. Working with and against this
intercalation of seed and blood is a pronounced interest in milk and
a fascination with their intermingling. The normal use of the word
"blood" in the Scriptures is in the context of slaughter or sacrifice.

There are only three such clusters of usage in Genesis. One is the
slaughter of Abel, the second is the prohibition after the Deluge on
eating blood and shedding human blood for "of every man's brother
I will require the life of man" which refers back to the death of
Cain, and the third is the use of goat's blood to suggest the death
of Joseph—again a reference back to the primal fratricide. Byron
normally uses the word in this way in the two plays. Blood is life
and sacred to God. The slaughter of a brother is the ultimate sign
of a malign differentiation between brothers who are of the same
seed. We are not plants, of course, but mammals. Human seed is
nurtured by the blood and then the milk of a woman's body. Byron
has a remarkable passage in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* in which he
combines the two. He is describing the Caritas Romana in which,
according to the story, a daughter sustains her aged father in prison
by breast-feeding him. The details are significant:

> I see them full and plain—
> An old man and a female young and fair,
> Fresh as a nursing mother, in whose vein
> The blood is nectar:—but what doth she there,
> With her unmantled neck, and bosom white and bare?
>
> Full swells the deep pure fountain of young life,
> Where *on* the heart and *from* the heart we took
> Our first and sweetest nurture, when the wife,
> Blest into mother, in the innocent look,
> Or even the piping cry of lips that brook
> No pain and small suspense, a joy perceives
> Man knows not, when from out its cradled nook
> She sees her little bud put forth its leaves—
> What may the fruit be yet—I know not—Cain was Eve's.
>
> But here youth offers to old age the food,
> The milk of his own gift:—it is her sire
> To whom she renders back the debt of blood
> Born with her birth.[16]

---

[16] *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* IV, 1328–1345.

Byron seems at pains here to bring milk and blood together but uses "blood" in the unBiblical sense of genealogy. Blood comes from the "sire" or father whose gift is transformed into her female gift of milk returned to him. Milk comes from the centre of blood—the heart—in a literal sense (we feed from the bosom) and metaphorically—milk is given from the heart as a source of loving. This feminine collusion of blood and milk here is presented positively. What horrifies Byron is a masculine fusion of the two via slaughter. Doubtless there is something primordial and pre-conceptual in all this but we can translate it into the patterns of choice and heredity, of the later differentiation of seed that is created in original undifferentiated goodness on the third day into Seth's good and Cain's bad seed.

The notion of brother is crucial to this explication. Brothers share the same milk. Byron strikingly emphasises this in *Cain*. Lucifer points out to Cain that he loves his sister "who shared thy mother's milk, and giveth hers/Unto thy children".[17] The angel upbraids Cain: "Did not the milk of Eve give nutriment/To him thou now see'st besmear'd with blood?"[18] Here the mingling of blood and milk that Byron applauds in the Caritas Romana becomes an image of horror. An ironic image too since Cain's indignation at Abel's s sacrifice is caused in part by just such a mingling. He protests bitterly at Abel's altar "with its blood of lambs and kids,/Which fed on milk to be destroy'd with blood."[19]

If we try to connect this rich and original chain of images, seed, fruit, blood, and milk with our earlier emphases on choice and heredity we can only do so by calling attention to the undifferentiating character of nurture. Byron is interested in the Caritas Romana because the daughter's milk is repaying a debt of blood. The blood line makes the demands of a specific and differentiated history. We descend from Seth or Cain, Jacob or Esau. We are Jew or Gentile. We are in debt to what has generated us. In debt for our blood, which is our life, but also in debt to a blood-stained history whose first full event is Cain's slaughter of Abel.

Byron's version of human history is always a dark one, he writes *Cain* after the bloody carnage of Waterloo which appalled him, and he sees Cain's murder of Abel as the initiating act of that long blood-stained history. Yet that primal story, which leads into the differentiated

---

[17] II, ii, 306–07.
[18] III, 490–91.
[19] III, 292–93.

dark histories of separated peoples, presupposes a common nurturing
which does not distinguish between Cain and Abel. They are brothers.
Byron was proudly conscious of his blood line but he could have been
wet-nursed by anyone. Milk, unlike blood transfusions and genealogies,
makes no differentiated enquiries of its recipients. In this primal dou-
bleness, brilliantly orchestrated by Byron, is the echo of the Biblical
doubleness of the undifferentiated blessings of Creation set against the
differentiation brought about by sin and the subsequent insistence
upon salvation as consequent upon lines of descent.

III. *Typology and Drama*

Very briefly, but at the most significant moment in the play, Byron
introduces the different idea of typological and spiritual genealogy
into the complex ideas of nurture and lineage that we have outlined.
As Abel dies, he says:

> ABEL: Oh, God! receive thy servant and
> Forgive his slayer, for he knew not what
> He did.[20]

Byron here activates the Patristic claiming of Abel as prototype of
Christ who is Abel's spiritual heir and could have a mystical rather
than literal heredity in believers. Inevitably this carefully placed ref-
erence invites us to re-align our understanding of the two customary
Scriptural usages for blood (slaughter and sacrifice) with the death of
Christ. Byron insisted that his plays were not meant for theatrical
performance but for, what he called, a "mental theatre", yet he was
a man of the theatre and his dramas clearly envisage theatrical effects
and space. Thus the third and last Act of the play begins with a
dialogue between Cain and Adah over their sleeping baby, Enoch.
This is followed by the sacrifice and fratricide leaving Abel's blood-
stained body on stage until the end of the play in the place where
the baby had been sleeping.

   The most moving moment in the drama is in the penultimate stage
direction *Adah stoops down and kisses the body of ABEL* just before she and
Cain, carrying their children, go into exile. In this dramatic image
is the essence of Christian iconography which has always privileged

---

[20] III, 318–20.

two images: the Incarnation, which is represented by the Mother and Child, that is to say, milk nurturing flesh, and Redemption, which is represented by the Crucifix, that is to say a blood-stained body with a Mother standing under it or, in the Pietà, holding it. Did Byron intend this explicitly? Probably not as explicitly as this, but I am not making it up. Byron writes movingly in his *Don Juan* about the statue of the Virgin and Child enthroned above the ruined church of his own ancestral house, Newstead Abbey, and his Cain, looking at his sleeping child, talks about "his little cheeks,/In their pure incarnation"[21] which must be a pun. But there are even deeper channels.

God's prohibition on eating "flesh with its life" is because "that is its blood". Cain's crime is against his brother, it is also against Life itself which is the blood, and it is against God to whom life and blood belong. Byron commented very perceptively on the motivation of his Cain:

> the object of the Demon is to *depress* him still further in his own estimation than he was before, by showing him infinite things and his own abasement, till he falls into the frame of mind that leads to the Catastrophe, from mere *internal* irritation, *not* premeditation, or envy of *Abel* (which would have made him contemptible), but from the rage and fury against the inadequacy of his state to his conceptions, and which discharges itself rather against Life, and the Author of Life, than the mere living.[22]

Byron sees God as Author of Life but Life is both a benediction and a curse, Creation and Deluge. This is the charge brought against God by Cain, Lucifer, Japhet, and Aholibamah. The arguments of Adam and Noah in defence of God are no more viable here than those of Job's Comforters. This is why early readers of the drama thought it blasphemous. But what matters in the play as a whole rather than in our reaction to what is said in it, is whether we consciously entrust ourselves to life, and thereby its Author, in the way that we unconsciously entrusted ourselves to the primal gift of mother's milk. Human beings separate here by choice and by lineage. Men, in particular, find both an echo of and a threat to this primal entrustment in their relationship to women. *Cain* dramatises the echo and *Heaven and Earth* dramatises the threat. We are called upon to find meaning in the whole rather than in the part just as we are when reading the Scriptures.

---

[21] III, I, 10–11.
[22] *Byron's Letters and Journals* IX, 53–54.

Hence Byron places his Cain between his mother, Eve, mother of all the living, who has nurtured him and Adah, his wife, and milk-sister, who nurtures his child. Eve says "may all the curses of life be on him" as her parting words to her own son for she is the embodiment of that transmitted cursed life. Adah, on the contrary, still transmits the gift of life in faith, entrusting herself to Cain and God ("Lead! Thou shalt be my guide, and may our God/Be thine! Now let us carry forth the children" III, 554–55). The figures of Adah and Eve shadow the double aspect of God as Man conceives Him.

This is not the end of a Walter Scott Novel. Drama as a form, can participate more directly in the form of the Scriptures than the telling of tales such as Gessner's eighteenth-century prose *Der Tod Abels* or Thomas Moore's *The Loves of the Angels* published a few months after *Heaven and Earth* which is also about the Sons of God marrying the daughters of men. Both these texts seem shockingly unScriptural if read after Byron's plays. He called *Cain* "A Mystery" in conscious allusion to the mediaeval plays which are the most impressive and sustained attempts ever made to represent and further the narrative of the Scriptures. Those mystery plays were performed not by actors but by children of Eve, for children of Eve, in public town spaces, contemplating the narrated but unnarratable history of their own completed but yet to be achieved salvation. Byron's mental theatre is also addressed to the withholding minds and entrusting hearts of Eve's children who still stand in relation to that history; that is why he wrote these plays. Such has been the surviving force of early reactions to Byron's work that I think we have only recently been able to take this possibility seriously.

THE SYMBOL STORY OF THE HUMAN SOUL: CAIN AND ABEL IN STEINBECK'S *EAST OF EDEN*

Barend van Heusden

> The gifts of Cain and Abel to their father and his rejection of one and acceptance of the other will I think mean a great deal to you but I wonder if it will be understood by other readers. We will have to see.[1]

John Steinbeck wrote *East of Eden*[2] in 1951, when he was 49 years old. The book was published the next year (1952). He was already, by that time, the acclaimed author of, among other books, *Cannery Row* (1945) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939). In 1962, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. One year after his death in 1969, the letters that Steinbeck, while working on *East of Eden*, wrote almost daily to his editor Pat Covici, were published under the title *Journal of a Novel*.[3]

Genesis 4:7

"And the Lord said unto Cain, 'Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, sin lieth at the door. And until thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.'".[4] At the end of the second of the four parts of *East of Eden*, that is, right at the center, chapter 4 of the book of Genesis is the object of an intense discussion between the three main characters in the book. The scene is situated on the ranch of Adam Trask, in the Salinas Valley in California, around 1901. The three characters involved are Adam Trask, the father of the twin brothers Cal and Aron, his Chinese servant Lee, and Steinbeck's grandfather, the farmer Samuel Hamilton. All three are immigrants—Samuel Hamilton has fled Ireland, Lee's

---

[1] Steinbeck in a letter to his editor Pat Covici. J. Steinbeck, *Journal of a Novel; The East of Eden Letters*, London 1970 (1969).
[2] J. Steinbeck, *East of Eden*. London 1998 (1952).
[3] Cf. above, note 1.
[4] Genesis 4, 7 (Quoted after Steinbeck, *East of Eden*).

parents were brought to America to build railroads, and Adam Trask
moved to California from the East Coast. Not all three have been
able to rebuild a life. Lee and Samuel have, but not Adam Trask,
although he had the best opportunities: both land and money.

Each of the three men is a good person, but each is so in a very
different way. Samuel Hamilton is good in a naive, childlike, but at
the same time very practical way. Lee is good in a rational way—
he has a sharp analytical mind. Adam Trask is good in a very ide-
alistic way. He builds images, but has no eye for the reality surrounding
him. Reality is threatening and it disturbs him. The three have come
together on Trask's ranch because his two sons, already more than
one year old, still haven't got a name. Their father has ignored them
since their mother left the family immediately after the boys' birth.
Lee now takes care of them—acting both as their mother and father. It
is Lee who has asked Samuel to come to the ranch to wake up Adam
Trask. Samuel agrees, as he is sincerely outraged by the fact that
Adam ignores his children. After Samuel has brought Adam back
to life at least a little, they sit down to find a name for the boys.

It is Adam's own name that brings the conversation round to Cain
and Abel. As Samuel asks: " 'Have you thought of your own name?'
'Mine?' 'Of course. Your first-born—Cain and Abel.' Adam said,
'Oh, no. No, we can't do that'. 'I know we can't. That would be
tempting whatever fate there is. But isn't it odd that Cain is maybe
the best known name in the whole world and as far as I know only
one man has ever borne it?' "[5] Samuel's reflection provides a key to
the book: " 'Two stories have haunted us and followed us from our
beginning,' Samuel said. 'We can carry them along with us like invis-
ible tails—the story of original sin and the story of Cain and Abel. And
I don't understand either of them. I don't understand them at all,
but I feel them. Liza [his wife] gets angry with me. She says I should
not try to understand them. She says why should we try to explain
a verity.' "[6] Lee replies: " 'I think I understand the Fall. I could per-
haps feel that in myself. But the brother murder—no. Well, maybe
I don't remember the details very well.' Samuel said: 'Most people
don't read the details. It's the details that astonish me. And Abel had
no children. (. . .) I take a pleasure in inquiring into things.' (. . .)
'This oldest story. If it troubles us it must be that we find the trouble

[5] *East of Eden*, 295.
[6] *East of Eden*, 296.

in ourselves.' (. . .) 'Such a little story to have made so deep a wound.' "[7]
Samuel then reads the chapter on Cain and Abel aloud. " 'Sixteen verses, no more. And oh, Lord! I had forgotten how dreadful it is—no single tone of encouragement. Maybe Liza is right. There's nothing to understand.' "[8] And Lee comments: " 'No story has power, nor will it last, unless we feel in ourselves that it is true and true of us. What a great burden of guilt men have!' "[9] According to Samuel, what the story says is that Cain got mad. It does not say he was condemned, or that he had no faith. It is just about his temper. When a man's feelings are hurt, he wants to strike at something, and Abel was in the way of his anger.[10] Cain got the dirty end of the stick, says Adam. " 'Maybe he did,' said Samuel, 'But Cain lived and had children and Abel lives only in the story. We are Cain's children.' "[11] And Lee adds: " 'People are interested only in themselves. If a story is not about the hearer he will not listen. And here I make a rule—a great and lasting story is about everyone or it will not last. The strange and foreign is not interesting—only the deeply personal and familiar.' "[12]
Samuel asks Lee to apply this to the Cain and Abel story. " 'I think I can,' Lee answered Samuel. 'I think this is the best known story in the world because it is everybody's story. I think it is the symbol story of the human soul. I'm feeling my way now—don't jump on me if I'm not clear. The greatest terror a child can have is that he is not loved, and rejection is the hell he fears. I think everyone in the world to a large or small extent has felt rejection. And with rejection comes anger, and with anger some kind of crime in revenge for the rejection, and with the crime guilt—and there is the story of mankind. I think that if rejection could be amputated, the human would not be what he is. Maybe there would be fewer crazy people. I am sure myself there would not be many jails. It is all there—the start, the beginning. (. . .) The human is the only guilty animal. Now wait! Therefore I think this old and terrible story is important because it is the chart of the soul—the secret, rejected, guilty soul.' "[13]

---

[7] *East of Eden*, 296–297.
[8] *East of Eden*, 298.
[9] *East of Eden*, 298.
[10] *East of Eden*, 299.
[11] *East of Eden*, 300.
[12] *East of Eden*, 300.
[13] *East of Eden*, 300–301.

In the end, they decide themselves upon the names Caleb and Aaron. Caleb, who reached the Promised Land (with Joshua—but Joshua was a soldier, and Adam doesn't like soldiering), and Aaron, who did not enter the Promised Land, but Adam "always liked him." The two boys will live up to their names. And what's in a name! His father will like Aron, not Cal. Aron will never reach the Promised Land (of maturity), Cal will. Aron will die in France, in the Great War. Cal will survive and become a grown-up person. It's important to note, at this point, that the boys are not called Cain and Abel, but Cal and Aaron, and that there is a reminiscence of both Cain and Abel in Caleb, and even more so in Cal, and also in Aron (first and last letters).

In 1911, approximately ten years after the naming, the three men meet again on the Trask ranch. Samuel has decided to leave his farm to his son and to move in with his children. Before moving to the town of Salinas, he wants to say goodbye to Adam and Lee. This is certainly the funniest part of the book. It starts with a short conversation between Lee and Samuel about Lee's queue. Lee has cut it off. He explains that China is free, the Empress has gone, and they do not have to wear queues any longer. Then Samuel talks to Adam, who has still not planted his land. He says he has not changed. " 'Do you take pride in your hurt?' Samuel asked. 'Does it make you seem large and tragic?' [Adam answers:] 'I don't know.' "[14] Samuel reproaches Adam for the fact that he has never really let go his wife Cathy. Adam's reaction is characteristic: " 'You make me doubt myself, he said fiercely, you always have. I'm afraid of you. What should I do Samuel? Tell me!' "[15]

Then the discussion about the Cain and Abel story is taken up again. The men sit down at the table, and Lee tells the others how he pondered over the verses in Genesis, and that he has asked the elders in his family to interpret the Hebrew text. " 'The story bit deeply into me and I went into it word for word. The more I thought about the story, the more profound it became to me. Then I compared the translations we have—and they were fairly close. There was only one place that bothered me. The King James version says this—it is when Jehovah has asked Cain why he is angry. Jehovah says, 'If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his

---

[14] *East of Eden*, 329.
[15] *East of Eden*, 331.

desire, and *thou shalt* rule over him.' It was the 'thou shalt' that struck me, because it was a promise that Cain would conquer sin. (. . .) Then I got a copy of the American Standard Bible. It was very new then. And it was different in this passage. It says, '*Do thou* rule over him.' Now this is very different. This is not a promise, it is an order. And I began to stew about it. I wondered what the original word of the original writer had been that these very different translations could be made.' "[16] Lee offers them Ng-ka-py, a very symbolic Chinese beverage: it tastes really bad, but has a strong beneficial effect on the drinkers. He then goes on: " 'Well, it seemed to me that the man who could conceive this great story would know exactly what he wanted to say and there would be no confusion in his statement.' "[17]

He tells them about the Chinese scholars of his "clan" in San Francisco. They are fine old men, smoking their two pipes of opium a day. He asked them about the story and they started studying Hebrew. And so did Lee himself. They even engaged a rabbi. And what they discovered was that the word translated in different ways is *timshel*—which they translate as "thou mayest". "Thou mayest rule over sin". " 'Why that makes a man great, that gives him stature with the gods, for in his weakness and his filth and his murder of his brother he has still the great choice. He can choose his course and fight it through and win.' "[18]

"Lee said, 'These old men believe a true story, and they know a true story when they hear it. They are critics of truth. They know that these sixteen verses are a history of humankind in any age or culture or race. (. . .) It cuts the feet from under weakness, cowardlliness, and laziness.' "[19] " 'This is not theology. I have no bent towards gods. But I have a new love for that glittering instrument, the human soul. It is a lovely and unique thing in the universe. It is always attacked and never destroyed—because 'Thou mayest.' "[20] The old Chinese scholars have found out what is the true kernel of this old story, and they believe it.

---

[16] *East of Eden*, 336. [Intrigued, I looked up the passage in my Catholic Bible, where the text again reads a little different. Instead of the "thou shalt" or "do thou", it asks a question: "*Will thou* be able to govern it?" ("Zult gij hem meester kunnen blijven?"). *De Bijbel*, Willibrord vertaling, Boxtel 1984.

[17] East of Eden, 337.

[18] *East of Eden*, 339.

[19] East of Eden, 339.

[20] *East of Eden*, 339–340.

Two Families

East of Eden is the exemplification of the thesis presented at its center.
The book begins with a lyrical description of the Salinas Valley in
Northern California, near San Francisco, where Steinbeck was born
in 1902. He is the omniscient narrator, who takes us by the hand to
introduce us to his beloved country. He is also present in the story as
a minor character, which must necessarily limit his view and knowl-
edge. This is not uncommon, however, in the oral tradition. "I must
depend on hearsay," he tells us, "on old photographs, on stories told,
and on memories which are hazy and mixed with fable in trying to
tell you about the Hamiltons."[21] Mountains surround the valley: the
Gabila Range to the East, friendly and hospitable, and the dark and
hostile Santa Lucia Mountains in the West. Steinbeck's sense of time
is remarkably strong, and, in a sense, "vertical". History is not some-
where "behind" us, but is hidden in the soil underneath our feet:
"And it seemed to me sometimes at night that I could feel both the
sea and the redwood forest beneath it."[22] The Salinas Valley was
inhabited first by Indians, then by Spaniards and, finally, by the new
Americans form Northern Europe.

"And this is about the way the Salinas Valley was when my grand-
father brought his wife and settled in the foothills to the east of King
City."[23] His grandfather, Samuel Hamilton, comes from Ireland around
1870, together with his wife Liza, who is "humourless as a chicken."[24]
Samuel Hamilton is a creative and energetic man, big, but delicate
and friendly. As a farmer, blacksmith and carpenter, he is always in
search of new and better techniques and instruments. He bores wells,
though mainly on the land of others, and he is a well himself, where
others come to hear songs, stories and wisdom. Being an androgynous
character, like the Chinese Lee, he delivers all his nine children
alone. Liza reads her Bible, and that is enough. "In that one book she
had her history and her poetry, her knowledge of people and things,
her ethics, her morals, and her salvation."[25] "It was a well-balanced
family with its conservatives and its radicals, its dreamers and its
realists."[26]

---

[21] *East of Eden*, 9.
[22] *East of Eden*, 4.
[23] *East of Eden*, 8.
[24] *East of Eden*, 10.
[25] *East of Eden*, 47.
[26] *East of Eden*, 49.

About the poor people that came to California in those days, the narrator tells us: "They had a tool or a weapon that is also nearly gone, or perhaps it is only dormant for a while. It is argued that because they believed thoroughly in a just, moral God they could put their faith there and let the smaller securities take care of themselves. But I think that because they trusted themselves and respected themselves as individuals, because they new beyond doubt that they were valuable and potentially moral units—because of this they could give God their own courage and dignity and then receive it back. Such things have disappeared perhaps because men do not trust themselves anymore, and when that happens there is nothing left except perhaps to find some strong sure man, even though he may be wrong, and to dangle from his coat-tails."[27]

A second narrative line through the book is the life-story of Adam Trask. He is born in Connecticut, in 1862 (he is therefore considerably younger than Samuel Hamilton). His father Cyrus was a would-be soldier who despised his mother, a silent and introvert woman. When she commits suicide, Cyrus has a new wife within two months and, "within two weeks Cyrus had wooed, wedded, bedded and impregnated her."[28] The second child is Charles, Adam's younger brother. Charles is jealous of Adam, whom he feels is loved more by their father, and nearly kills him a number of times. When Adam leaves home for the army, Charles stays on the farm. After many years Abel returns to the ranch. Then the girl Cathy turns up, and Abel falls in love with her. Cathy is marked physically by an accident, as is Charles. The history of Cathy/Kate/Eve is the third main narrative thread in *East of Eden*. She betrays Adam with Charles. Adam leaves for California with her and settles in the Salinas Valley. There, two twin sons—but not identical twins!—are born. Cathy leaves Adam immediately after the birth of the boys. Lee, the Chinese servant, brings them up. The same story is lived through once again: Cal craves for the love that Aron so easily gets. But Cal will learn to look at the world and at himself. Aron will never be able to do so, which will cause his death.

Reflecting on the story of Charles and Adam, Steinbeck refers to the experience of the child who discovers that his parents are not omniscient or omnipotent. He describes this experience as traumatic.[29]

---

[27] *East of Eden*, 14.
[28] *East of Eden*, 17.
[29] *East of Eden*, 21.

"When this happens, his world falls into panic and desolation. The gods are fallen and all safety gone. (. . .) And the child's world is never quite whole again. It is an aching kind of growing."[30] This is remarkable, insofar as the experience is traumatic only in case the child thought his parents to be omnipotent and omniscient, or when he is not allowed to let the parents know that he knows they are not. The analysis, which is of course meant to relate the child's experience to the story of the Fall (the child has eaten from the Tree of Knowledge), fits a pre-Spock pedagogical climate.

Adam Trask en Sam Hamilton learn to know each other when Adam, having arrived in Salinas, wants to know whether there is any water under the land he intends to buy. Hamilton discovers that there is more than enough of it. It is then that Samuel Hamilton meets Lee. Their encounter is an event full of consequences. Lee is the son of Chinese railroad workers. His tragic life-story will be told to us only much later. He is curious, intelligent and, in a sense, androgynous. The dialogue about Lee's Pidgin English is very comical, and revealing.[31] Lee assures Hamilton that he is not understood if he speaks English instead of Pidgin. The incident also shows that Hamilton is a good observer, who is not easily caught in prejudices. Also, Lee's argument about being a servant is interesting: "I don't know where being a servant came into disrepute. It is the refuge of a philosopher, the food of the lazy, and, properly carried out, it is a position of power, even of love."[32]

When boring for water, Samuel Hamilton finds, thirty feet under the ground, a meteorite blocking the way. It will have to be removed. The situation is highly symbolical. He has to leave behind his youngest son at the place where they are digging, and gives him William James' *Principles of Psychology* to read.[33] This tells us something about Hamilton's worldview (and Steinbeck's as well), which is firmly based on a scientific attitude. Thus the mythical stories of the Bible are analysed, if not to say dissected, from a scientific, that is anthropological and psychological perspective. It will never be possible to tell them in the same old way again. Samuel Hamilton is the one who brings the new life into the world: he will deliver Adam's sons. Lee

---

[30] *East of Eden*, 21.
[31] *East of Eden*, 181.
[32] *East of Eden*, 184.
[33] *East of Eden*, 210.

takes care of the further education. Together, Hamilton and Lee represent a world in which individuality, freedom and love are the basic values of humanity. But in order to build such a world, the old millenarian stone, that load of guilt and fear, will have to be removed. The dynamite required for such a task consists of a mixture of thorough perception, a rational mind and a very much love.

The Chautauqua

East of Eden, which counts more than 650 pages, is certainly not a novel.[34] There is no main character, nor is there a real plot. Instead, the book presents us with an inquiry into values. It does so by telling a chronicle, and a story, while at the same time reflecting upon both. This undertaking reminded me strongly of *Zen an the art of motorcycle maintenance* (1974) by Robert Pirsig, subtitled *An Inquiry into Values*.[35] Pirsig calls it his Chautauqua, a concept we encounter in Steinbeck's book too. "She's got us tickets for the Chautauqua season," Samuel tells his wife Liza, when their daughter Molly invites them for a stay at her house in Salinas. The Hamilton children have decided that their parents have become too old to live on the farm. So they will invite them to stay with them in turn. "Billy Sunday's going to wrestle with the Devil and Bryan is going to make his Cross of Gold speech. I'd like to hear that. It's an old fool of a speech but they say he gives it in a way to break your heart."[36]

The parallels with Steinbeck's own project are clear: his story too is "an old fool of a speech", that is, at least as old as the Bible, but he too will try to tell it in a way so as to break his reader's hearts. The traveling tent-show Chautauquas that used to cross America were "an old time series of popular talks intended to edify and entertain, improve the mind and bring culture and enlightenment to the ears and thoughts of the hearer."[37] And Pirsig adds: "The Chautauquas were pushed aside by faster paced radio, movies and TV, and it seems to me the change was not entirely an improvement. Perhaps

---

[34] Cf. also *Journal of a Novel*: "I think it can properly be called not a novel but an history." (17) and: "This is my big book. And it has to be a big book, and because it is new in form although old in pace it has to be excellent in every detail." (33)

[35] R. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry into Values*, New York, 1974.

[36] *East of Eden*, 323.

[37] *Zen*, 7.

because of these changes the stream of national consciousness moves faster now, and is broader, but it seems to run less deep. The old channels cannot contain it and in its search for new ones there seems to be growing havoc and destruction along its banks."[38]

But it is not just a matter of speed. The Chautauqua reflects a cultural consciousness that allows entertaining and teaching at the same time. It is this consciousness which has slowly disappeared. With it, a form of telling has disappeared—the telling of stories, as we know it from what is left of oral narrative. It is this kind of telling which Steinbeck practices in *East of Eden*. And it is mostly because of this type of narration, that his book is not a novel. It is not a search for (self-) knowledge of an individual, but for *wisdom*. In fact, it is not really a search at all, but an exemplification—a kind of narrative treatise about how people are, and more specifically about what it means to live a good life.[39] The narrative perspective is that of one who knows, not of one searching for knowledge.

Walter Benjamin, in a beautiful essay on the Russian author Ljeskov, titled "The narrator" ("Der Erzähler")[40] has analyzed the decline and gradual disappearance of the storyteller, caused by the rise of the novel. Whereas the story, according to Benjamin, is a tale about life in general, which addresses everybody, and teaches us something about life in an experiential way, the novel is about the search, by single individuals, for (self) knowledge. The main character in the novel is lonely, whereas the characters in the narration are members of a community and, in the end, of the community of mankind. Narrators have an authority which novelists have not. The wisdom of their stories has to be experienced, not understood. They derive their authority within the community they address either from their being rooted in this community, or from travels abroad. Steinbeck is a narrator of the first type. He knows the land, and he knows the people: "And it never failed that during the dry years the people forgot about the rich years, and during the wet years they lost all memory of the dry years. It was always that way."[41]

---

[38] *Zen*, 7–8.
[39] The story is thus a tale about what it means to live a "good life", as analysed by Charles Taylor in his *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*, Cambridge 1989.
[40] W. Benjamin, "Der Erzähler. Betrachtungen zum Werk Nikolai Lesskows", in: R. Tiedemann & H. Schweppenhäuser (Hrsg.), *Gesammelte Schriften*, II, 3, Frankfurt 1980, 438–465.
[41] *East of Eden*, 6.

A major theme in traditional narrative is the passing by of time. And with time comes death, like in the story told by Herodotus (also referred to by Benjamin), about king Croesus, who asked Solon the Athenian: "Do you consider me lucky?" And Solon answered: "How can I tell? You aren't dead yet."[42] Now death and the passing by of time loom large also in *East of Eden*—in the succession of the generations, for instance, in the death of Samuel's children, and in Aron's and Kate's deaths. Death brings life to the point where it can be valued—was it a good life or a bad life; was he or she loved or not loved? And that is, in the end, what a narration is always about. And so is *East of Eden*: it is a story about good and evil, and about the good life.

This also points to an important formal aspect of this book, which is its quasi-oral style. Steinbeck has taken great pains to write the book in a colloquial, unpretentious style. It is the style of the oral narrator, who addresses his audience. With his many generalizations about people and the world, he creates a distance—the distance of the wise man, the preacher, the grandfather ("a great and lasting story is about everyone"). But then he is not just retelling the old Cain and Abel story. He is also interpreting it in a new, rational, scientific way. In a sense, therefore, he lifts it out of the tradition of telling (and believing) in which it stands and analyzes it from a new perspective. This perspective is anthropological and humanistic:

"When our food and clothing and housing all are born in the complication of mass production, mass method is bound to get into our thinking and to eliminate all other thinking. In our time [1951] mass or collective production has entered our economies, our politics, and even our religion, so that some nations have substituted the idea of collective for the idea God. This in my time is the danger. There is a great tension in the world, tension towards a breaking point, and men are unhappy and confused. At such time it seems natural and good to me to ask myself these questions. What do I believe in? What must I fight for and what must I fight against? Our species is the only creative species, and it has only one creative instrument, the individual mind and spirit of a man. Nothing was ever created by two men. There are no good collaborations, whether in music, in art, in poetry, in mathematics, in philosophy. Once the miracle of creation has taken place, the group can build and extend it, but

---

[42] *East of Eden*, 459.

the group never invents anything. The preciousness lies in the lonely mind of man. And now the forces marshaled around the concept of the group have declared a war of extermination on that preciousness, the mind of man. By disparagement, by starvation, by repression, forced direction, and the stunning hammer-blows of conditioning, the free, roving mind is being pursued, roped, blunted, drugged. It is a sad suicidal course our species seems to have taken. And this I believe: that the free, exploring mind of the individual human is the most valuable thing in the world. And this I would fight for: the freedom of the mind to take any direction it whishes, undirected. And this I must fight against: any idea, religion, or government, which limits or destroys the individual. This is what I am and what I am about. I can understand why a system built on a pattern must try to destroy the free mind, for that is one thing, which can by inspection destroy such a system. Surely I can understand this, and I hate it and I will fight against it to preserve the one thing that separates us from the uncreative beasts. If the glory can be killed, we are lost."[43]

The Myth of Eden

But let us come back to Cain and Abel. One of the difficulties in the interpretation of *East of Eden*, if one takes the Cain and Abel per-spective, is to determine whether a character is a Cain or an Abel. This is the case with both Charles and Adam and with Cal and Aron Trask. In fact, it must have been Steinbeck's intention to make it clear to us that each of them is both Cain and Abel.[44] A certain education breeds Cains and Abels, and the two are in fact always present together.[45] Adam Trask and his son Aron are the dreamers, whereas Charles and Cal are not. They tend to distort reality, which is in part the reality of their own bad temper. But one cannot simply say that Adam and Aron are good, whereas Charles and Cal are bad. Good and evil are here equally non-realistic in their absoluteness.

   Which is why the letter Charles writes to his brother is so important

---

[43] *East of Eden*, 146–147.
[44] Cf. also Meyer, "Finding a New Jerusalem: The Edenic Myth in John Steinbeck", in: D. Bevan (ed.), *Literature and the Bible*, Amsterdam—Atlanta GA 1993, 95–117.
[45] I do not agree with Meyer that "Adam and Cyrus are obvious Cain/Abel parallels" ("Finding a New Jerusalem", 108). This is precisely what they are not.

(as Steinbeck stressed in his Journal)[46] Charles writes to the brother whom he twice almost killed: "Seems like to me there's something not finished. Seems like when you half finished a job and can't think what it was. Something didn't get done. I shouldn't be here. I ought to be wandering around the world instead of sitting here on a good farm looking for a wife. There is something wrong, like it didn't get finished, like it happened too soon and left something out. I never thought like this before."[47]

Why does Adam/Abel survive? Or is he actually dead while alive? And why is he the one who raises his brother's children? Mainly, I would suggest, because Adam and Charles are in fact two sides of one person—the absent-minded, idealist father and the cynical husband who cannot see women but as saints or whores. Which is what they are attracted to in Cathy. Cathy is both: she "fits" both brothers. Together, Adam and Charles (and Aron and Cal) represent a basically dichotomous way of thinking: the thinking in opposites—of us and them, heaven and hell, good and evil. This dichotomous thinking is characteristic of a (moral) worldview that is blind to details, to logic, and to others—that is, blind to reality. It is the worldview underlying most ideologies, and certainly a dogmatic kind of religious thinking. It is this worldview that is criticized in *East of Eden*, and for which the author offers an alternative.

Eden, he seems to say, is a dream, dreamt by those who have been badly hurt by life. But to the east of Eden lies reality, where one has to cope with the harshness of life, with badness and guilt. Eden is a fantasy, but a strong one. And as a fantasy, it can be lethal for those who, like Adam and Aron Trask, are unable to brake away from it. According to Michael J. Meyer, *East of Eden* is "perhaps the fullest assessment of Steinbeck's fascination with the Biblical allusion [the Eden myth]."[48] For Steinbeck, he says, America, in 1952, had become a fallen Eden that he felt he desperately had to restore.[49] I cannot but disagree with this interpretation. Steinbeck was not naive: Eden, in his eyes, is not realistic. On the contrary— the Edenic myth is a dangerous myth, both for individuals and for

---

[46] *Journal of a Novel*, 28: "The letter written by Charles to Adam is a very tricky one and it has in it, concealed but certainly there, a number of keys."
[47] *East of Eden*, 40.
[48] "Finding a New Jerusalem", 106.
[49] "Finding a New Jerusalem", 107.

society. It is a dream that serves a purpose, certainly, but one that restrains us from living life in its fullness.

Meyer's interpretation of the fate of the two families is not very adequate either. The Hamiltons are not, as he contends, in a constant struggle to overcome the fallen nature of man—there is no fallen nature, and their struggle is "simply" to live a good life, in the sense of a life of freedom, curiosity and creativity. Nor do the Trasks "succumb to its demands" (that is: of fallen nature). If anything, they succumb to the myth of the Fall itself.[50]

Steinbeck's interpretation of the Cain and Abel story is a critique of mythological thinking. In this myth, father is God. And where father is God, there is little room left for the mother. No woman can live next to a God, who does not see her. The women in the Trask family commit suicide, get ill, or die. Nor can a child love a father he or she is scared of, or cannot trust. But not all men are gods. They can also be real fathers. And then the women they live with can survive, Liza beside Samuel, Molly beside Steinbeck's father, and Abra beside Cal, once he has chosen the road for maturity. The father-God can also be a cultural figure. In a culture of father-Gods, the individual is doomed. Life is no longer taken at face value, but abstractions and ideals reign. Good and bad become absolute—good is what we make up, bad is whatever threatens our fantasies—traumatic reality, the passing by of time, and death.

For Steinbeck, the individual is the highest form of humanity, and *East of Eden* is a hymn to that humanity. The freedom to choose, to investigate and to create makes us human. He thus fights the idea that we are determined by birth, or by our history. He fights determinism, using an older narrative form, and basing himself, at the same time, on psychological insights of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Thus Samuel, for instance, does not believe in "blood". " 'But their blood'. 'I don't very much believe in blood', said Samuel, 'I think when a man finds good or bad in his children he is seeing only what he planted in them after they cleared the womb.' 'You can't make a racehorse of a pig'. 'No, said Samuel, but you can make a very fast pig.' "[51]

What is goodness in the world "east of Eden?" Goodness has to do with freedom—and with love. Love's goodness, the love for and

---

[50] "Finding a New Jerusalem", 107.
[51] *East of Eden*, 291–292.

between individuals, is what must replace a dogmatic goodness based on ideals and fear. Thus Steinbeck tries to answer this question, which according to him is the basic moral question of all times: how to live? "I believe that there is one story in the world, and only one, that has frightened and inspired us, so that we live in Pearl White serial of continuing thought and wonder. Humans are caught—in their lives, in their thoughts, in their hunger and ambitions, in their avarice and cruelty, and in their kindness and generosity too—in a net of good and evil. I think this is the only story we have and it occurs on all levels of feeling and intelligence. Virtue and vice were warp and woof of our first consciousness, and they will be the fabric of our last, and this despite any changes we may impose on field and river and mountain, on economy and manners. There is no other story. A man, after he has brushed off the dust and chips of his life, will have left only the hard, clean questions: was it good or was it evil? Have I done well—or ill?"[52] It is a question which is only seldom asked in our material and scientific age, but which has recently been put on the philosophical agenda by philosophers like Charles Taylor, Alastair MacIntyre, and Martha Nussbaum. "We only have one story. All novels, all poetry, are built on the never-ending contest in ourselves, of good and evil. And it occurs to me that evil must constantly re-spawn, while good, while virtue, is immortal. Vice has always a new fresh young face, while virtue is venerable as nothing else in the world is."[53]

Steinbeck's Chautauqua thus brings us to the heart of questions concerning good and evil. On the one hand, we find Adam, Charles, Cal and Aron, Cathy. On the other side, the Hamilton family and Lee. On the one side: dichotomies which are cherished and defended—the dichotomies of good and evil, of we and them, of here and there, of moral and immoral, of whores and saints. On the other side: no dichotomies, but only concrete details, and interesting inquiries and thoughts—as well as a strong love for reality in all its variety. On the one side: Eden and Hell, on the other: East of Eden, the land of Nod.

Although Steinbeck covers the whole spectrum, his perspective is that of his own family, the Hamiltons. Therefore, the dichotomy on which the book itself seems to be built (that between the Trask story and the Hamilton chronicle) must be broken down—an absolute

[52] *East of Eden*, 459.
[53] *East of Eden*, 461.

dichotomy between good (the Hamiltons) and evil (the Trasks) would deconstruct the meaning of the book. And in fact the dichotomy is broken down—not only when Cal, helped by Abra and Lee, breaks loose of the chains of the myth, but also in the form of the book itself. More and more the two narrative threads become one, mostly so in the characters of Lee and Samuel, but also in Liza and Abra. Nor can the tale and the reflections be kept apart—the narrative thus illustrates the intrinsic powerlessness of a dichotomous way of thinking. Dichotomies are dangerous things, particularly so in matters of good and evil . . .

The magic circle, of belief and religion, of thinking in opposites, of not seeing reality, is broken by Lee and Hamilton, who represent the human faculties of thinking and perception, the two faculties that Trask, who puts his faith in ideals, has neglected. Lee and Hamilton, and the girl Abra, save Cal—they bring him back to reality, which is also the reality of his own personality. From the perspective of Hamilton and Lee, action is choice, not fate. The divinity of human nature is not found in obedience to a godly command, but in the freedom of choice. We are not determined by sin or by conventions and rules. Cal is able to free himself from the curse. As Lee says, "This not theology. I have no bent toward gods. But I have a new love for that glittering instrument, the human soul. It is a lovely and unique thing in the universe."[54] It is apparent that Meyer has not heard, or did not want to hear, the deep anti-biblical tone of this book. Maintaining the hope for Eden is not, as he states in his conclusion, "essential".[55] On the contrary, it is highly detrimental to a good life and a stable society. And this seems to be equally true for the American Dream, into which the Edenic myth was incorporated.

East of Eden, The Movie

The same reluctance to follow Steinbeck in his critique of American mythology is found in the adaptation of the book for film in Elia Kazan's *East of Eden* (1955), starring James Dean, Julie Harris, Raymond Massey en Jo van Fleet. Only a very small part of the

---

[54] East of Eden, 339–340.
[55] "Finding a New Jerusalem", 116.

book is used in the film. Whereas the written narrative covers a period of roughly 60 years (from 1860 to 1920), the film tells a story which takes place within about a year. The period corresponds to that described in the last chapters of the book, in which the story of the two sons of Adam Trask, Cal and Aron, reaches its climax.

The reader of the book, at this point, has read about the youth of Adam Trask and his brother Charles, about their father Cyrus Trask, about Cathy, the woman who marries Adam, but betrays and leaves him almost immediately after the birth of their two sons. He has read about Adam's Chinese servant Lee and about Samuel Hamilton, his wife Liza and their nine children, among which is Molly, married to a man named Steinbeck, and mother of the author/narrator John. He has read about Adam Trask's fights with his brother, his moving from Connecticut to the Salinas Valley in California, and his being shot in the shoulder by his wife when she left him. He knows that Cathy (Kate) owns a brothel in Salinas, which is known for the extreme forms of sexual amusement practiced. So he knows the context of the chronicle in which the story of the two boys gets its meaning. This reader may wonder about the way in which the film renders the last scenes of the book.

The film narrative is about Cal Trask, played by James Dean. There is a single line of plot: Cal's attempt to buy the love of his father with money. Once the situation is set, the main characters are presented, and the potential source of conflict is made clear, the film focuses on the lettuce-anecdote. Cal and Aron are the sons of Adam Trask and Kate, whereas this is not the case in the book, where Charles is the father.—This has to do with Kate's position: Kate is definitely a different character in the film. She is not evil but, like Cal and Aron, a victim of Adam's blindness. Whereas in the book it is Lee who gives Cal the 5000 dollars needed to go into business, in the film the money is given to him by his mother, which is psychologically acceptable only if Kate is not that bad after all. The film seems to suggest that Kate was driven into the business by her husband and is now an independent woman, whereas in the book she is, more "simply", an evil character . . . It is telling, for instance, that in the film Kate's place is said to be "the finest along the coast, having the best clientele".

The Hamiltons have no place in the film, nor have the narrator's reflections (his Chautauqua). Also absent from the film is Lee—the

Chinese intellectual, an immigrant like Hamilton, and also his friend. One may certainly ask why this character has been left out. In the book, Lee is the one who functions as a bridge, as a hinge between the Hamiltons and the Trasks—he is a Hamilton-like person, but stays with the Trasks to serve them. It is difficult not to hear, in this Chinese servant, the voice of the narrator/author. The more so as it is Lee who brings up the story of Genesis, and who asks the elders of his family to answer the questions the text poses. In the final scene of the film, Abra takes over the role of Lee in the book—which is an understandable device, as Abra and Lee come very close to each other in the book too.

Some minor elements, which are not found in the book, are introduced in the film for the sake of the visual entertainment. The fair, for instance, which is a classical cinematic device, takes the place of the picnic, where Abra tells Cal she loves him. Another invention of Kazan are Cal's nightly train rides (through dark tunnels!) from Salinas to Monterey, where his mother lives. A very remarkable fragment is the film's opening. In this "Overture", which is the film's counterpart to Steinbeck's lyrical introduction, we see a (Californian?) bay, and we listen to modernist symphonic music. After some three or four minutes, however, the music changes, and the film starts with the titles, and with the image of a young man (Cal), spying on a woman (his mother).

For those who see the film without having read the book, its theme is probably quite clear. Here we have a father who is too good and pure. He lives outside reality, unable to really see his wife and sons. It is clear that he loves one of his sons (Aron) more than the other, because this son lives up to his (biblical) ideals. This son is actually his mirror image. Facing death, he is forced to admit his faults, and to really see his other son Cal, who is not bad, but good. The film shows what a child may become when he is not loved: furtive, shy like a hunted animal, aggressive and insecure, almost hysterical. The fact that this kind of boy is attracted by, and attracts "dark, but beautiful girls" is a questionable supplement not found in the book, which certainly tells us something about the ideology of the time. As is the case in the book, Cal psychologically "kills" his brother by confronting him with the truth about his mother. But in the end, we have to believe that what really kills Aron is his inability to cope with reality—as he was not able to cope with is brother, with his girl, and with is mother.

The film thus concentrates on the psychological interpretation of the Cain and Abel story. Kazan does not burn his fingers on the broader cultural implications of Steinbeck's book, nor does he venture into the discussion on the biblical text. Whereas the book is a sharp humanist and pacifist critique of psychological and anthropological patterns underlying our contemporary culture, the film presents "only" a case of excessive zeal, which will not, in itself, threaten the basic values of society.

This page intentionally left blank

PART THREE

SETH

This page intentionally left blank

SETH IN SIRACH (BEN SIRA 49:16)*

Eibert Tigchelaar

1. *The Oldest Extra-Biblical References to Seth*

Seth, the son of Adam and Eve, is mentioned in Genesis 4 and 5, and in the genealogical list in 1 Chron 1:1. Outside of the Hebrew Bible, the first reference to Seth is probably found in *Sir* 49:16. Other candidates for the oldest non-biblical mention of Seth are *Instruction* and perhaps, but less likely, *Jubilees* 4.[1] Yet, the date of *Instruction* is not established (I think it is more or less contemporary to Ben Sira), and the reading and meaning of the בני שית ("sons of Seth"?) or בני שות in 4Q417 (4QInstruction^c) 1 i 15 are disputed.[2] For the theme of this volume it is interesting that *Instruction* perhaps has the oldest preserved mention of "the children of Eve": 4Q418 (4QInstruction^d) 126 ii 9, reads either כול בני חוה, "all the children of Eve", or כול בני חיה, "all the children of life", or even, "all the children of wild animals". However, the context is damaged, and one can not be sure how to read and understand the phrase.[3]

---

[1] Scholars generally date *Ben Sira* in the first third, and *Jubilees* in the middle of the second century B.C.E. *Jubilees* may therefore be slightly older, but the opposite is more likely.

[2] See discussions in A. Lange, *Weisheit und Prädestination. Weisheitliche Urordnung und Prädestination in den Textfunden von Qumran* (STDJ 18; Leiden, New York, Köln 1995) 82–88; J. Strugnell, D.J. Harrington, and T. Elgvin, *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XXXIV. Qumran Cave 4 XXIV. Sapiential Texts, Part 2. 4QInstruction (Mûsār lᵉMēvîn): 4Q415ff. with a Re-edition of 1Q26* (Oxford 1999) 163; J.J. Collins, "In the Likeness of the Holy Ones: The Creation of Humankind in a Wisdom Text from Qumran", in D.W. Parry, E. Ulrich (eds.), *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Technological Innovations, New Texts, and Reformulated Issues* (STDJ 30; Leiden, Boston, Köln 1999) 609–618; C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam. Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 42; Leiden, Boston, Köln 2002) 113–118.

[3] See text and comments in *DJD XXXIV*, 349–357, especially 354–355.

2. *Scholarship on Seth in* Sirach

On the whole, scholars have given little attention to Seth in *Sir*
49:16.[4] Seth seems to be no more than a name in a list of several
ancient figures mentioned in Genesis. Discussions of this verse deal
with the text-critical relation between the extant textual witnesses,
the literary relation of *Sir* 49:14–16 to 44:1–49:13 and 50, the rela-
tion between the figures mentioned in *Sir* 49:16 or 14–16 and the
semantics of נפקד and תפארת אדם.

2.1. *The Text of* Sir *49:16*

We have the following textual witnesses:
Geniza MS B: ‏ושם ושת ואנוש נפקדו ועל כל חי תפארת אדם.‏
LXX: Σημ καὶ Σηθ ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἐδοξάσθησαν καὶ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ζῷον
      ἐν τῇ κτίσει Αδαμ
Vulgate: Seth et Sem apud homines gloriam adepti sunt et super
        omnem animam in origine Adam
Peshitta: *šyt wšym wᵓnwš bᵓnwš ᵓtḥryw wᶜl kwlhyn hlyn tšbwḥt dᵓdm*

The Vulgate is essentially a translation of the LXX. Vulgate and
Peshitta switch the names of Shem and Seth. The Peshitta seems to
combine the variant readings ואנוש (Genizah MS B) and באנש (LXX:
ἐν ἀνθρώποις).[5] *ᵓtḥryw* is not a translation of נפקדו or ἐδοξάσθησαν,
nor a paraphrase of ἐν τῇ κτίσει, but perhaps influenced by *ᵓtḥryw*
from 49:14 (MS B נוצר). *kwlhwn hlyn* betrays an interpretation of the
text. *tšbwḥt dᵓdm* corresponds to Hebrew תפארת אדם.

The basic variants are between MS B and LXX. The first colon
of the LXX verse seems to be a rendering of שם ושת באנוש נכבדו,
"Shem and Seth were honoured among men", whereas in the sec-
ond colon ἐν τῇ κτίσει, "in the creation", is found instead of Hebrew
תפארת, "glory".[6] Some scholars tend to adopt the Hebrew MS B

---

[4] An extreme example is A.F.J. Klijn, *Seth in Jewish, Christian and Gnostic Literature*
(Supplements to Novum Testamentum 46; Leiden 1977) 20 note 27, who mentions
this reference in a footnote: "In Eccl[esiastic]us 49, 16 Seth is mentioned among
those who are honoured. With him are Shem and Enoch, "but above every living
thing was the beauteous glory of Adam". Klijn adopts the translation, including the
typo, of G.H. Box, W.O.E. Oesterley, "Sirach", in R.H. Charles, *APOT I*, 506
(reading Enoch in stead of Enosh).

[5] A. Caquot, "Ben Sira et le messianisme", *Semitica* 16 (1966) 43–68 at 66 favours
the text of the Peshitta as being more coherent text than either the Hebrew or the
Greek.

[6] For the relation between the versions, see also S.D. Fraade, *Enosh and His*

reading, whereas others emend נפקדו to נכבדו corresponding to LXX ἐδοξάσθησαν, "they were honoured".[7] The use of the *nipʻal* of פקד in three subsequent verses (49:15, 16; 50:1) is regarded suspect, and it has been argued that נפקד in 49:16, and perhaps in 50:1, may be scribal errors influenced by 49:15. However, Yahalom and Kister prefer נפקדו, both in 49:15 and 16, in the sense of "being visited by death" (cf. Num. 16:29), above the Greek ἐδοξάσθησαν.[8]

2.2. Sir *49:14–16 Inbetween* Sir *44:1–49:13 and* Sir *50*

Sir 44–49 form a "praise of the fathers of old" (44:1), starting with Enoch (44:16) or Noah (44:17) and ending with Zerubbabel, Jeshua son of Jozadak, and Nehemiah (49:11–13). *Sir* 49:14–16 reverts to Enoch (49:14), Joseph (49:15), and Shem, Seth, Enosh, and Adam (49:16). *Sir* 50:1–24 is a praise of the high priest Simon, high priest in Hellenistic times.

   Sir 49:14–16 is an addition to or conclusion of the Praise of the Fathers, but the catchword תפארת, "glory", in 49:16 and 50:1 links these verses to the Praise of Simon. However, *Sir* 49:14–16 interrupts the chronological sequence of 49 to 50 (from Nehemiah to Simon), and it is not clear why the figures of 49:14–16 were placed here in this particular order. Of these figures Enoch is mentioned here for a second time (the first time in 44:16), but the others for the first time. Yet, on the basis of the Masada Ben Sira scroll which seems to omit 44:16, Yadin has argued that the Masada scroll reflects the original text which only referred to Enoch in 49:14.[9]

Generation. Pre-Israelite Hero and History in Postbiblical Interpretation (SBLMS 30; Chico 1984) 12–16.

   [7] P.W. Skehan, A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira. A New Translation with Notes* (Anchor Bible 39; New York:1987) 541. More or less similarly Box and Oesterley, *APOT 1*, 506; T.R. Lee, *Studies in the Form of Sirach 44–50* (SBL Dissertation Series 75; Atlanta 1986) 232. R. Smend, *Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach hebräisch und Deutsch* (Berlin 1906) 57 and 89 reconstructed a composite text: "Sem und Seth wurden unter den Menschen geschaffen".

   [8] J. Yahalom, "Angels Do Not Understand Aramaic: On the Literary Use of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic in Late Antiquity", *JJS* 47 (1996) 33–44, at 38–39; M. Kister, "Some Notes on Biblical Expressions and Allusions and the Lexicography of Ben Sira", in T. Muraoka & J.F. Elwolde (eds.), *Sirach, Scrolls, and Sages. Proceedings of a Second International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Ben Sira, and the Mishnah, held at Leiden University, 15–17 December 1997* (STDJ 33; Leiden, Boston, Köln 1999) 160–187, at 179–181; see also G. Sauer, *Jesus Sirach/Ben Sira* (ATD Apokryphen Band 1; Göttingen 2000) 335 interpreting נפקד in 49:15 and 16 as "bestattet werden".

   [9] Y. Yadin, *The Ben Sira Scroll from Masada*. Revised edition incorporated in *Masada VI. Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963–1965. Final Reports* (The Masada Reports; Jerusalem:

We may therefore have here an addition to 44–49 mentioning some figures which were not included in the original Praise of the Fathers, in which case there need not be any connection between the figures. Box and Oesterly referred to the ancestorial function of those figures. Shem and Seth "represent the ancestors of the pious part of the post-diluvian and antediluvian world respectively".[10] But then one should favour the variant באנוש, "among mankind", because ואנוש, "and Enosh", would disrupt this scheme. Yet, it is not clear at all that this verse deals with ancestorial aspects. Other commentators do not try to find a connection between the figures: "[a]s a transition from the Praise of the Ancestors of Old to the praise of Simon (50:1–24) Ben Sira inserts here a minipoem on the most famous of Israel's forebears (49:14–16)".[11] Lee claims that *Sir* 44–50 is an *encomium*, a composition in praise of the feats and lineage of Simon, and that *Sir* 44–49 "provides us with two groupings of the persons who are of Simon's heritage. The first group is that of his "immediate" heritage, Noah to Nehemiah, while the second is that of those heroes who are the most remote".[12]

Yahalom does not consider 49:14–16 as the conclusion of 44–49, but as a prelude to the praise of Simon: "Adam, Seth, Enosh and Shem are mentioned just before Shimon ben Yoḥanan, apparently since they were considered priests at a time when sacrifices were still made by the first-borns (בכורות)".[13] He refers to Aramaic eulogies which "bring a kind of catalogue of the Jewish patriarchs, in order to show that the Angel of Death could not be stayed, and argues that the very first example is in *Sir* 49:14–16: by means of פקד these priests are linked to the death sentence.[14] Yahalom's interpretation is interesting, but depends on a specific interpretation of פקד, and implies that the praise of Simon is in reality his eulogy.

Israel Exploration Society & The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1999) 196. See also P.C. Beentjes, "The 'Praise of the Famous' and its Prologue. Some Observations on Ben Sira 44:1–15 and the Question on Enoch in 44:16", *Bijdragen* 45 (1984) 374–383, at 380–382.

[10] Box and Oesterley, *APOT 1*, 507, quoting Edersheim.
[11] Skehan and Di Lella, *Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 545.
[12] Lee, *Sirach 44–50*, 233.
[13] Yahalom, "Angels", 38.
[14] Yahalom, "Angels", 38; see also Kister, "Lexicography", 181 n. 89.

2.3. *The Glory of Adam*

The meaning of תפארת אדם, "the glory of Adam", in 49:16b is dis-
puted: some scholars think that it refers to the eschatological state
of Adam. Kister, in contrast, claimed that תפארת אדם in Isa 44:13
means no more than the parallel phrase תבנית איש, "human form",
and that this is also the meaning in *Sir* 49:16b.[15] In this same vol-
ume Aitken argues that in Sirach תפארת, other words from √פאר, as
well as כבוד, "glory", are mainly used in references to the temple
or to priests.[16] Yet, he also allows for the possibility that one has in
Sir 49:16 the first attestation of the idea of the garments of light
with which Adam was clothed. These two associations are not in
conflict: other Early Jewish texts conceive Eden as a sanctuary and
Adam as priest.[17] In other words: in the present context 49:16b may
juxtapose Adam as the first high priest to Simon the high priest.

Aitken also considers other possible allusions in the text, and sug-
gests that Psalm 8 has influenced Ben Sira. See especially Ps 8:5–6:

> What is man (אנוש), that you should remember him
> mortal man (בן אדם) that you should be mindful (√פקד) of him.
> Yet, you have made him little less than God (*or*: the angels; אלהים)
> With glory (כבוד) and honour (הדר) you crown (√עטר) him.

Aitken points out that both *Sir* 49:16 and Ps 8:5 have אדם ("man";
"Adam") in parallelism with אנוש ("man"; "Enosh"); second, that Ps
8:5 says that God has been mindful (√פקד) of man, whereas *Sir*
49:16a uses the same verb פקד; third that Ps 8:6 says that God
crowned man with glory and honour, כבוד והדר, terms which are
used in *Ben Sira*, just like תפארת, to express the glory of the priests.[18]

---

[15] Kister, "Lexicography", 180 n. 18, 181. Two translations of the clause are
offered, but neither of them convinces me.

[16] J.K. Aitken, "The Semantics of "Glory" in Ben Sira—Traces of a Development
in Post-Biblical Hebrew", in *Sirach, Scrolls, and Sages*, 1–24, at 6–10. J. Marböck,
"Henoch—Adam—der Thronwagen. Zu frühjüdischen pseudepigrafischen Traditionen
bei *Ben Sira*", *BZ* NF 25 (1981) 103–111, at 108, relates the תפארת אדם to the כבוד
אדם in 1QS IV, 23; CD III, 20; and 1QHᵃ IV, 27 (= Sukenik IV, 15), but the
eschatological connotation of כל כבוד אדם in these Dead Sea Scrolls does not seem
to be implied in the תפארת אדם of Ben Sira. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*,
97 (*et passim*), connects the Qumran statements to *Sir* 49:16 in his all-encompassing
recent study of the recovery of the originally divine humanity in the liturgy, espe-
cially the priesthood.

[17] See, for example, the discussion in J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, *Primeval History
Interpreted. The Rewriting of Genesis 1–11 in the Book of Jubilees* (SJSJ 66; Leiden, Boston,
Köln 2000) 86–89.

[18] Aitken, "Semantics", 9–10.

These observations are valuable, but do not explain the first colon of the verse.

3. *Shem, Seth, and Enosh?* (Sir *49:16)*

What does the list of names in *Sir* 49:16 (Shem, Seth, Enosh) have to do with Ps 8 where אדם and אנוש are words for "man" or "mankind"? First, one may note that Ps 8:5 does not have Enosh and Adam in parallelism, but Enosh and בן אדם, "the son of man". Is it possible that Ben Sira played with the ambiguity of the words, and understood בן אדם in Ps 8:5 as "the Son of Adam", that is, Seth, and אנוש as Enosh?[19] According to this interpretation of Ps 8:5 God remembers Enosh, and "takes care of" (פקד) Seth. This is rephrased in *Sir* 49:16a: Shem, Seth and Enosh "are taken care of" (נפקד).

Aitken points out that two key words of Ps 8:6, כבוד, "glory", and עטר, "crown", are applied to priests in Ben Sira. Both terms are even used together in *Sir* 45:25 המעטר אתכם כבוד, "who has crowned you [the priests] with glory".[20] In other words, the allusion to Ps 8:5–6 in *Sir* 49:16 also implies an allusion to the priesthood. The text refers indirectly to the priesthood of Seth, Enosh and Shem, whilst stating that the glory of Adam surpasses these all. The motif of the priesthood of Seth, Enosh, and Shem, is not explicitly attested in Early Jewish literature, but the Book of Jubilees seems to regard all ante-diluvian patriarchs as priests.[21]

In short: the references to Seth (son of Adam) and Enosh, who were "taken care of" (פקד), in combination with the priestly connotations of the תפארת אדם, in a verse immediately before the praise of the high priest Simon, strongly suggests that Seth and Enosh are mentioned here because of Ben Sira's interpretation of Psalm 8, not because, for example, Seth "represents the righteous in the antediluvian world".[22]

Yet, there is a problem with the mention of Shem in this verse. First, one wonders why Shem, the son of Noah, should be men-

---

[19] For the interpretation of Ps 8:5 as referring to specific figures, see *3 Enoch* (*Sefer Hekhalot*) 5:10 ("It does not say here 'What is Adam?', but 'What is Enosh?' "), NumR 19:3, PesR 14:9 (discussing the "first Adam"). See also Heb 2:5–9 which applies Ps 8:5–7 to Christ.

[20] Aitken, "Semantics", 12–14.

[21] See also Yahalom, "Angels", 38.

[22] Skehan and Di Lella, *Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 545.

tioned together with the first three generations Adam, Seth, Enosh.[23] Second, the order Shem—Seth—Enosh is not chronological. Third, unlike Seth and Enosh, Shem cannot be related to Psalm 8.

I therefore tentatively suggest an alternative reading of the verse, by omitting one or two conjunctions of the Hebrew text. In the Bible and in Hebrew manuscripts we see many variants with regard to the addition or omission of the conjunction *waw*. In the Hebrew manuscripts of *Ben Sira* there are several such variants concerning the presence versus absence of *waw* at the beginning of a stich.[24] A different kind of case is the enumeration of items in lists, where normally each item is joined to the preceding one by the conjunction. Yet, there are also some cases where the conjunction is missing. Compare Gen 9:18 שם וחם ויפת, "Shem and Ham and Japheth", with Gen 10:1 שם חם ויפת, "Shem, Ham and Japheth". I suggest that *Sir* 49:16 originally read (ו)שם שת ואנוש, and that a copyist who thought these were three names mechanically added a *waw* before שת.

In this emended text, שם is not Shem the son of Noah, but שם, "name", or "memory". The copyist's and translators' error is understandable: in light of all the names of ancient figures, it is not strange to interpret שם as Shem. The kind of genetival construction in שם שת ואנוש, "the memory of Seth and Enosh" (the construction: "the X of A and B" in stead of "the X of A and the X of B"), is attested in Standard Biblical Hebrew, and more frequently in Late Biblical and Qumran Hebrew.[25] In the Qumran texts we even have the phrase שם ישראל ואהרון, "the name of Israel and Aaron" (1QM III, 13–14; see also V, 1).

The emended text gives a nice parallelism between "the memory of Seth and Enosh", and "the glory of Adam". In the Hebrew Bible שם and תפארת are used together a number of times,[26] but, more importantly, the introduction to the Praise of the Fathers, uses these terms together (*Sir* 44:7–8)

---

[23] The case of *Jub* 19:24 which lists Shem, Noah, Enoch, Mahalalel, Enosh, Seth and Adam as ancestors of Abraham is different.

[24] Such variants between Genizah MS B and the Masada Scroll in 40:17a; 41:1d, 18d, 19d; 42:4a, 25b (?); 43:1b; between Genizah MS B and 11QPsᵃ: 51:17a, 17b.

[25] See W. Gesenius, E. Kautzsch, A.E. Cowley, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910) §128a; P. Joüon, T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (SubBi 14/I–II; rev. ed.; Rome 1993) §129b; A. Kropat, *Die Syntax des Autors der Chronik verglichen mit der seiner Quellen. Ein Beitrag zur historischen Syntax des Hebräischen* (BZAW 16; Giessen 1909) 55.

[26] For example, Deut 26:19; Jer 13:11; 33:9; 1 Chron 22:4.

> all these were honoured in their generations
> and had glory (תפארת) in their days
> some of them have left a name (שם)
> to tell among their inheritance

In the Praise of the Fathers the terms שם and זכר, "memory", are
key concepts. שם is also used in *Sir* 44:14 "their bodies are buried
in peace, but their name lives for ever", and *Sir* 49:1 "the memory
of Josiah is fragrant as incense". In that case we have in *Sir* 49:16
the following statement:

> The memory of Seth and Enosh is "taken care of" (נפקד),
> and above all human beings is the glory of Adam

One may voice some objections. First, is it legitimate or sensible to
emend the text, if all textual witnesses attest the reading of the proper
name Shem, and a conjunction between Shem and Seth? The Masada
Scroll shows that Genizah MS B basically represents the original
Hebrew version, but that there are numerous variants of all possi-
ble kinds. Some of these variants are early errors shared by the
Greek and MS B.[27] It cannot be judged whether both the copyist
of the *Vorlage* of MS B and the Greek translator made the same
interpretational error, or whether at an early stage the presumed
error of ו before שת entered the textual tradition.

Second, if one reads שם שת instead of שם ושת then one should
also read a singular נפקד instead of נפקדו. It is, however, easy to
imagine that the first change (the addition of *waw* before שת) brought
about a subsequent change of singular to plural in the verbal form.

Third, genetival constructions like "the name of A and B" usu-
ally occur if A and B are regarded as belonging closely together.
We have, to my knowledge, no sources which regard Seth and Enosh
as a pair, but then, of course, they are father and son.

Fourth, the combination of פקד and שם is not attested elsewhere, and
the exact meaning is not at all clear. One may argue that in Ps 8:5
and other passages[28] the verbs זכר, "remember", and פקד are used
in parallelism, and that the combination of נזכר and שם is attested.[29]
The verses where זכר and פקד are used together include examples
of care as well as punishment. The exact meaning of נפקד is prob-
lematic both in 49:15 and 16. Perhaps one may interpret "take care

[27] Yadin, *Ben Sira Scroll*, 160–168, especially 160 and 165.
[28] Jer 3:16; 14:10; 15:15; Hos 8:13; 9:9; Ps 106:4; 4Q380 1 i 9.
[29] Jer 11:19; Ps 83:5.

of the name", parallel to "take care of the body" of *Sir* 49:15, that is, keep in permanent honour or remember.

The fifth, and in my view the most important objection: is this emended reading compatible with the hypothesis that Ben Sira alludes to Psalm 8? After all, תפארת, "glory", as parallel to שם, "memory", seems different to the תפארת of the priests,[30] and it is not clear why שם should be related to priests. Also, God's taking care (פקד) of man in Psalm 8, is not entirely the same as the taking care (פקד) of a name or memory.

One has to assume that the emended text שם שת ואנוש נפקד com-bines two different aspects. First, and most clearly, the remembrance of certain ancestors, as repeatedly expressed in the preceding Praise of the Fathers, where we find both שם and זכר. Second, the glorious, priestly character, of these figures, which is indirectly suggested by means of the second colon (תפארת אדם), and the allusions to Ps 8:5–6. In this sense, *Sir* 49:16 forms a nice transition from *Sir* 44–49 which deals with the ancestors, to *Sir* 50 which praises the high priest Simon.

4. *What About Enoch and Joseph? (*Sir *49:14–15)*

This brings us to the place of *Sir* 49:16 within the unit of 49:14–16. Even though the exact meaning of 49:14 and 15 is not clear,[31] it seems that Enoch and Joseph are bracketed because of what hap-pened to their bodies: Enoch was taken up alive, whereas Joseph's dead body was transported from Egypt to Shechem. It is not clear whether or how Seth, Enosh, and Adam are related to Enoch and Joseph, or even whether *Sir* 49:14–16 was meant to be a unit. It is clear, however, that these verses display interest in the themes of the Praise of the Fathers, the memory and physical remains of the fathers.

Lee tried to make sense of the unit and to impose the genre of encomium upon the text by suggesting that the real subject of נולד in *Sir* 49:15 is Enoch: "if he (Enoch) had been born a man like Joseph",[32] instead of נבר, "another (man) like Joseph was never

---

born",[33] or Joseph himself. This interpretation is very forced, but Lee is correct in observing the odd place of Joseph in the midst of a series of ante-diluvian heroes, all preceding the post-diluvian fathers of *Sir* 44:17–49:13. The removal of *Sir* 49:15 from 49:14–16 would leave us with four ante-diluvian heroes, all four of which may be related to an interpretation of Ps 8:5–6 or 5–7.

Ps 8:6 mentions that "you have made him little less than the אלהים', the "gods" or "angels". It is well-known that this is related to the creation account which states that God created Adam in the image of אלהים (Gen 1:27), whereas both in Gen 1:28 and Ps 8:7ff the creation of man is followed by dominion over the animals of the earth. About Enoch we know that he walked with אלהים, and afterwards was taken up to heaven. Neither Adam nor Enoch has a real angelic nature, but Adam is created like the "angels", and Enoch elevated amidst the angels. The priestly function and almost angelic status of Adam and Enoch is apparent from *Jubilees* and other texts, and the placement of these figures here may have a purpose: Simon is juxtaposed to Adam and the other antediluvian priests.

The verse on Joseph in *Sir* 49:15 interrupts this nice scheme. Either this verse was a later interpolation, probably added after Enoch because of the motif of the body. Or, the relation suggested above between 49:14 and 49:16 is not intended, which leaves us only with *Sir* 49:16.

In either case, Seth is not mentioned in *Sir* 49:16 because of his ancestorial function. Likewise, other aspects which were attributed to Seth in later times are not relevant to his inclusion in this text. The mention of Seth and of Enosh is based on Sirach's reinterpretation of biblical texts and traditions. The point of interest here is that Sirach combines data and traditions from different texts, to wit Genesis and Psalm 8. Genesis, as well as the 2nd century B.C.E. interpretation of Genesis, provided Ben Sira with the idea that Adam (and Enoch) had a priestly function and a semi-angelic nature. Psalm 8 which is clearly related to the Genesis creation account talks about this semi-angelic nature, and supplies the name of Enosh and the reference to the son of Adam, that is Seth.

---

[33] For example, W.Th. van Peursen, The Verbal System in the Hebrew Text of Ben Sira (diss. Leiden, 1999) 348.

SETH AND THE SETHITES IN EARLY
SYRIAC LITERATURE

Jürgen Tubach

In the tradition passed on by the Old Testament, Seth plays only a very secondary role. Apart from the primeval history (Gen 1–11), he is mentioned only in the genealogical listing of I Chron 1:1 and in the prophecy of Balaam in Num 24:17. While it is clear that it is Adam's son Seth who is meant in the Chronicles genealogy, the Numbers reference does not appear to be connected with him. The "sons of Seth" are apparently a nomadic people who periodically invade the cultivated land. They are threatened with destruction.

The Yahwistic source (J) and the priestly code (P), the two most important source layers of the Pentateuch, are interested in Seth only in the context of their family trees for the generations preceding the Flood. The mentions of Seth are brief, if not pale and colourless. If we compare the information offered by J and P about Lamech or Enoch, we are given the impression that Seth is a minor figure, even though he acts as a replacement for the two firstborn children of the first couple. When Adam and Eve are in effect left childless following the death of Abel and the departure of Cain, Eve gives birth to another son, whom she names Seth. The Yahwistic source suggests to the reader that there is a connection between the proper noun Šēt and the verb šāt (root: šyt). It has Eve exclaim joyfully, "God . . . hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew" (Gen 4:25). This would mean that Seth's name signified "replacement". According to the Yahwistic source, the veneration of Yahweh begins with Seth, or after the birth of Seth's son Enosh, ("then began men to call upon the name of the Lord", 4:26b). The priestly code makes no mention of Cain and Abel and begins its "*Sepher Toledoth Adam*" (5:1) with Seth. However, P emphasises that Adam's likeness to God is passed on to Seth.

In the biblical primeval history, Seth does not have a prominent position. He is the legitimate descendant of Adam and Eve. Reading between the lines, we gather that he is a worthy replacement for his older brothers who vanish so tragically from the lives of the first

couple. According to J, veneration of Yahweh begins with Seth and
his son Enosh. It is not impossible that the group of people who
preserved the oral tradition, including the editor of Genesis, had
access to further information about individual figures in the primeval
history, but they saw no need to give a more clearly defined profile
to individuals. It is only in post-biblical literature that more emphasis
is placed on the individuals. This applies to the Life of Adam and
Eve, which circulated in various different versions.[1] This Adam lit-
erature, which was denied access to the canon, was popular in Jewish
and Christian communities. Together with numerous other non-bib-
lical traditions, it was included in the *Spelunca thesaurum* (mʿarraṯ
gazzē, Cave of Treasures),[2] which its preface ascribes to Ephrem the

---

[1] A.-M. Denis, *Introduction à la littérature religieuse judéo-hellénistique (Pseudépigraphes de l'Ancien Testament)* I, Turnhout 2000, pp. 3–58, cf. van Ruiten's contribution to this volume, above, pp. 3–26, esp. pp. 15–19.

[2] Syriac text: C. Bezold, *Die Schatzhöhle* I. Aus dem syrischen Texte dreier unedirter Handschriften in's Deutsche übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen versehen (Leipzig 1883), II. Nach dem syrischen Texte der Handschriften zu Berlin, London und Rom nebst einer arabischen Version nach den Handschriften zu Rom, Paris und Oxford (eb. 1888) > Die Schatzhöhle. „Mĕʿārath Gazzē" (The Cave of Treasures/La Caverne des Trésors). Eine Sammlung biblischer Geschichten aus dem sechsten Jahrhundert jemals Ephraem Syrus zugeschrieben. Syrischer Text und arabische Version, her-ausgegeben nach mehreren Handschriften zu Berlin, London, Oxford, Paris und Rom mit deutscher Übersetzung und Anmerkungen, Amsterdam 1981/Su-Min Ri, *La Caverne des Trésors. Les deux recensions syriaques* (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 486/487. Scriptores Syri 207/208) Louvain 1987; Georgian version: C. Kourcikidzé, *La Caverne des Trésors. Version géorgienne* (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 526. Scriptores Iberici 23) Louvain 1993/J.-P. Mahé, *La Caverne des Trésors. Version géorgienne* (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 527. Scriptores Iberici 24) Louvain 1992; Arabic tradition: Bezold/M. Gibson, *Apocrypha Arabica* I. Kitab al-Magall; or, the Book of the Rolls, one of the books of Clement [or rather the work generally known as "Me'ârath Gazze; or, the Cave of Treasures," ascribed in the Syriac text to St. Ephraim]. The Arabic version, edited, with an English translation (Studia Sinaitica 8.1) London 1901/A. Battista − B. Bagatti, *La caverna dei tesori. Testo arabo con traduzione italiana e commento* (Studium Biblicum Franciscanum. Collectio minor 26) Jerusalem 1979; Ethiopic tradition: S. Grébaut, Littérature pseudo-clémentine III, in: *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* 26 [= 2. sér. 16] (1911), pp. 73–84, 167–175, 225–233; 27 [= 2. sér. 17] (1912), pp. 16–31, 133–144; translation of the Syriac text: Bezold/Su-Min Ri/E.A. Budge, *Book of the Cave of Treasures. A history of the patriarchs and the kings their successors from the Creation to the Crucifixion of Christ translated from the Syraic text of the British Museum MS. Add. 25875*, London 1927/P. Rießler, *Altjüdisches Schrifttum ausserhalb der Bibel*, Augsburg 1928 (Repr. Heidelberg ²1966. ³1975, Darmstadt ²1966, Freiburg im Breisgau − Heidelberg ⁴1979, ⁵1984, ⁶1988), pp. 942–1013.1326f; fur-ther important studies: A. Götze, *Die Schatzhöhle. Überlieferung und Quellen* (Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse Nr. 4) Heidelberg 1922; Ders. A. Götze, Die Nachwirkung der Schatzhöhle, in: *Zeitschrift für Semitistik* 2 (1924) 51–94, 3 (1924) 53–71, 153–177; Su-Min Ri, *Commentaire de la "Caverne des trésors." Étude sur l'histoire du texte et de ses sources* (Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium 581. Subsidia 103 Louvain 2000.

Syrian, but which can hardly have been written by him, as the material relating to the Lives is not used in his commentary on Genesis. This commentary shares some of the basic views expressed in the Cave of Treasures. They are of a general nature and show only that there was a tradition which had told the narrative of the primeval history in a different way. Both Ephrem and the compiler of the Cave of Treasures go back to this tradition.[3] The latter, who may have come from the school of Ephrem, collected the material on the lives of biblical figures and put it together into a book in the 5th (or 6th)[4] century, or possibly earlier.[5] The Cave of Treasures is a re-telling of the history of salvation, which makes a close connection between the protoplast and Christ in an overall look at biblical history.

Ephrem

But before we come to talk about the *Spelunca thesaurum*, we must return to Ephrem and his Genesis commentary. The biblical primeval history contains two family trees of Adam's descendants. In the first, the descendants of Cain are listed. The list ends with the seventh generation (Gen 4:17–22 = J). The second succession of generations contains the descendants of Seth. It starts with Adam and ends with Noah (Gen 5 = P). Some of the names in the family trees of the Cainites and the Sethites are identical. According to the biblical text, Cain and his children and grandchildren lived in the land of Nod,

---

[3] Cf. Su-Min Ri, La Caverne des Trésors et Mar Éphrem, in: *Symposium Syriacum VII. Uppsala University, Department of Asian and African Languages, 11–14 August 1996* edited by René Lavenant (Orientalia Christiana analecta 256) Pontificio Istituto Orientale, Roma 1998, pp. 71–83.

[4] I. Ortiz de Urbina, *Patrologia Syriaca* (Pontificium Institutum Biblicum) Roma 1958 (Repr. ²1965 = ³1983), p. 95 §31; 5th or 6th century: C. Leonhard, Observations on the Date of the Syriac *Cave of Treasures*, in: *The World of the Aramaeans* III. *Studies in language and literature in honour of Paul-Eugène Dion* edited by P.M. Daviau, J.W. Wevers and M. Weigl (Journal for the study of the Old Testament. Supplement series 326) Sheffield 2001, pp. 253–293; 6th century: A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur mit Ausschluß der christlich-palästinischen Texte*, Bonn 1922 (Repr. Berlin 1968) p. 95; S.P. Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature* (Mōrān 'Eth'ō 9), [SEERI], Kottayam, Kerala 1997, p. 47 §39; 6th century as final redaction of the text: Götze, Schatzhöhle, p. 40.90.

[5] 3rd century: Su-Min Ri p. XXIIf (traduction); Idem, La caverne des trésors: Problèmes d'analyse littéraire, in: *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984. Literary Genres in Syriac Literature (Groningen – Oosterhesselen 10–12 September)*, H.J.W. Drijvers, R. Lavenant, C. Molenberg and G.J. Reinink (eds.) (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 229) Pont[ificium] Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, Roma 1987, pp. 183–190; «Urschatzhöhle» ca. 350 AD: Götze, Schatzhöhle, p. 91.

somewhere in the East, beyond the Garden of Eden. As there is no report of any intermarriage between Sethites and Cainites, the tradition concluded that the descendents of the original murderer Cain lived separately from the children of Seth. This separation is seen as a positive thing. The Cainites retained the stigma of their ancestor. Evil was more likely to find a home with them than with the Sethites. Since according to Gen 4:26 Yahweh had been venerated since the days of Seth and of Enosh, and this could only be traced back to the Sethite line, the latter was accorded particular respect. Ephrem calls the Sethites "the righteous people of God ('ammā zaddīqā dMāryā)".[6] He justifies this honorary title with their veneration of Yahweh and their separation from the Cainites. Elsewhere, however, Ephrem assumes that there were contacts between the Cainites and Sethites, after they had avoided each other for six generations. The Cainite Lamech marries Adah and Zillah, who were of the "daughters of Seth",[7] which the Bible does not mention. After Cain's death the "daughters of Cain" take a liking to the "sons of Seth". Thanks to the two sons of Lamech, Jabal and Jubal, who are described in Gen 4:20f as the fathers of nomads and musicians respectively, feasts are arranged.[8] The nomad Jabal supplies animals from his herd, while his brother, the inventor of the *kithara*, provides the musical background. Although the Sethites have given their father a promise, they do not keep it, and leave their home. They are so fascinated by the inventions of Jubal and the meat products of Jabal that marriages result.[9] Lamech had killed Cain. He hoped that Sethites and Cainites will intermarry. The Cainites had more daughters than sons and Lamech feared that the male line of Cain's descendants will die out in near future. Furthermore the Cainites needed peasants as sons in law. The land was uncultivated, because they lacked ploughmen.[10] These descendants of Seth who break their promise are identical with the "sons of God" of Gen 6:2, who married "daughters of man". Ephrem

---

[6] *Sancti Ephraem Syri in Genesim et in Exodum commentarii* edidit/et interpretatus est R.-M. Tonneau (Corpus scriptorum Christianorum orientalium 152–153. Scriptores Syri 71–72) Louvain 1955/1955 (repr. 1965), p. 55,2f/p. 43, cf. p. 56,2/p. 44; *St. Ephrem the Syrian. Selected prose works. Commentary on Genesis, Commentary on Exodus, Homily on our Lord, Letter to Publius,* translated by E.G. Mathews and J.P. Amar, (The Fathers of the Church 91) Washington, D.C. 1994, p. 132.

[7] Tonneau, p. 53,8f/p. 41.

[8] Tonneau, pp. 52,30–53,2/p. 41.

[9] Tonneau, p. 54,14–18/p. 42.

[10] Tonneau, p. 54,1ff/p. 42 and p. 56,9–12/p. 44.

justifies the fact that they are taken to be the same people in the same way as in the passage already mentioned: Seth's descendants, the "sons of Seth", are named as "the righteous people of God".

It is easy to understand the identification in theory: the individual representative of the whole of the people of God would according to the Semitic or Aramaic feeling for language be a "son of the people of God" or, in a shortened form, a "son of God". Several individual representatives are then "sons of God, God-sons". Ephrem uses the latter term. He naturally has to avoid the singular, because it already has a meaning in the context of the New Testament, so that a different use of the term was no longer possible. The "Son of God" was a set term. The listener or reader associated it with Christ. If the "sons of God" mentioned in the Genesis passage were Sethites, there was little choice remaining for the "daughters of men": they could only belong to the tribe of Cain. They are beautiful, attractive and seductive, as already mentioned in Gen 6:2. The "sons of Seth" separated themselves from the wives they had already married, which Ephrem regarded as an outrage. This was not recorded in Genesis, but with a little imagination it could be inferred from the text, when a few verses later it says that "all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Gen 6:12). From the joining of the Sethites and the Cainites, the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men", come the giants, though they are not counted as part of the true family of Seth. The powers held by the "sons of Seth" (due to their better food) are passed on to their children, who for this reason are taller than normal. The soil was cursed (Gen), the harvest small and the food had no strength. So the Cainites were short, while the Sethites had food in abundance. Ephrem emphasises at this point again that the Sethites are "sons of the praised one (bnay brīk̲ā)" and that they live right next to paradise (pardaysā).[11] With the giants comes an increase in the evil on earth, eventually leading to the Flood, which only Noah survives, because of his uprightness. Noah "was an example to his sons by his virtue, for he had preserved his virginity for five hundred years". Ephrem gives no further thought to the fate of the giants. All the Cainites and giants drown in the Flood. While Cain's descendants spread surprisingly quickly across the earth, the number of Sethites apparently remains limited. Ephrem

---

[11] Tonneau, p. 57,14f/p. 45.

takes the comment in Gen 6:1 that "men began to multiply on the face of the earth" to refer only to the Cainites. He does not explain to the reader why the descendants of Cain increase so dramatically, while the Sethite clan apparently remains small.

Aphrahat

Ephrem's older contemporary Aphrahat († after 345) already identified the "sons of God" referred to in Gen 6:2 with the descendants of Seth. This is clear from a passage in his 13th *Demonstratio*, which is entitled "On the Sabbath". According to Aphrahat, when Noah sees that "the generation of Seth had mingled with the cursed ones of the house of Cain",[12] he intends not to get married at all, for fear that his children will marry into the cursed tribe of Cain. Noah's "heart was pure and honest".[13] God is pleased with him and does not want to allow him to drown in the Flood. Noah's family is to be the beginning of a new human race to which the errors of the old race are no longer attached.[14] When God tells Noah of his plans and commands him to build an ark, Noah is 500 years old. Since, as we all know, Noah was to take a pair from every kind of animal into the ark, and he is seen as a starting-point for a new human race, he is forced to give up his life of bachelorhood. So he marries a "woman of the daughters of Seth". He impresses upon his three sons not to take any "women of the daughters of Cain",[15] Aphrahat would certainly have preferred Noah to scorn marriage and lead an ascetic life, like the "sons of covenant".[16] That Noah began building the ark 100 years before the

---

[12] XIII.5: I. Parisot (ed.), *Aphraates Sapientis Persae Demonstrationes I–XXII* (Patrologia Syriaca 1.1), Paris 1894, pp. 549,17–21/550; W. Wright, *The Homilies of Aphrahat, the Persian Sage. Edited from Syriac Manuscripts of the fifth and sixth Century, In the Bristish Museum, with an English Translation* Vol. I. *The Syriac Text*, London-Edinburgh 1869, p. 234,19–23 (§4); P. Bruns *Aphrahat. Demonstrationes. Unterweisungen. Aus dem Syrischen übersetzt und eingeleitet* I.II (Fontes christiani 5.1/2), Freiburg 1991, II, p. 318.

[13] XIII.5: Parisot pp. 549,22; Wright p. 234,23.

[14] XIII.5/XIV.33: Parisot pp. 549,22–24/550 and p. 656,22f/656; Wright p. 234,23f (§4) and p. 277,17 (§17); Bruns II, p. 318.365.

[15] XIII.5: Parisot p. 551,13–17; Wright p. 235,12–15.

[16] A.J. Wensinck, "Qejâmâ und Benai Qejâmâ in der älteren syrischen Literatur", in: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 64 (1910), pp. 561–564; C.F. Seybold, "Weiteres zu Qejâmâ und Benai Qejâmâ", in: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 64 (1910), pp. 810–813; G. Kittel, "Eine synagogale Parallele zu den Benai Qejama", in: *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 16 (1915), 235–236; M.M. Maude, "Who are the B'nai Q'yâmâ?", in: *Journal of Theological Studies* 36 (1935), pp. 13–21; S. Jargy, "Les fils et filles du

Flood is a deduction by Aphrahat or his source. Genesis relates nei-
ther that God announced the Flood to Noah in the 500th year of his
life, nor that Noah wanted to lead an unmarried life as a matter of
principle. His inclination towards an ascetic way of life is deduced
from Noah's great age when he married, or is taken from the source
used. According to Aphrahat, marriage belongs to this age, but "vir-
ginity" is to be regarded more highly, because it anticipates the age
to come. During his "virginity" Adam led a life which was pleasing
to God. It was only after Eve was produced from him that he broke
God's commandment. The "sons of Seth" also lead a blameless life
as long as they devote themselves to the ideal of "virginity". It is
their marital union with the Cainites that leads to their downfall.
With the exception of Noah, they are all carried off by the Flood.

The observations of Ephrem and Aphrahat about Seth do not appear
to be the result of their own exegetic studies, but seem to have been
taken from a written or oral tradition to which they both had access.
The two Syrian theologians share the basic conviction that the Sethites
are the "sons of God" of Gen 6:2. Their marriages with daughters
of the house of Cain cause the Flood. Ephrem also knows that the
Sethites live near Paradise. There is a strict separation between the
two tribes.

The Cave of Traesures

These interpretations leave more questions open than they answer. It
is only against the background of the tradition on which it is based
that the exegesis of Ephrem and Aphrahat becomes clearer and eas-
ier to understand. This background film that illuminates the facts
and makes them appear more vivid is the *Spelunca thesaurum*. It does
not matter whether or not Aphrahat and Ephrem already had access
to the work in written form. The Cave of Treasures is a collection
of different traditions that were put together by a compiler. The

---

pacte dans la literature monastique syriaque", in: *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 17
(1973), pp. 304–320; P. Nagel, "Zum Problem der Bundessöhne", in: *Forschungen
und Fortschritte* 36 (1962), pp. 152–154; A. Vööbus, "The Institution of the Benai
Qeiama and Benat Qeiama in the ancient Syrian Church", in: *Church History* 30
(1961), pp. 19–27; Idem, "Figli e figlie del Patto", in: DIP III (1976), pp. 1494–1497;
M. Breydy, "Les laïcs et les Bnay Qyomo dans l'ancienne tradition de l'Église syri-
enne", in: *Kanon. Jahrbuch für das Recht der Ostkirchen* 3 (1977), pp. 51–75; G. Nedungatt,
"The Covenanters of the Early Syriac Speaking Church", in: *Orientalia Christiana
Periodica* 39 (1973), pp. 191–215, 419–444.

related elements of the tradition handed down date back to well before the time of Aphrahat and Ephrem. It is sufficient that both theologians were familiar through the oral tradition with the essential features of the re-tellings of the biblical primeval history recorded in the Cave of Treasures.

The Cave of Treasures covers the primeval history in great detail. After the Fall, Adam and Eve have to leave the garden of Paradise.[17] But God comforts Adam and reveals to him that one day His own Son, who will have a virgin for his mother, will bring the longed-for redemption.[18] Although Adam has to leave paradise because he has disobeyed the commandment, he is not burdened by a curse. Things aren't as bad as all that. None of the other participants in the Fall have got off so lightly: the earth has been cursed, the snake has had its legs shut inside its belly and Eve has to suffer under the yoke of subservience.[19] Besides, he and his descendants are allowed to remain in the immediate vicinity of Paradise for a while.[20] God tells Adam that he will receive a cave there which is also to serve as his burial place. When the time has come when his descendants have to leave the place near paradise, they are to take his body with them and bury it "in the centre of the earth" (bamṣaʿtāh darʿā).[21] It is made clear in other parts of the book that the centre of the earth, the navel of the world, is identical with the Golgatha hill where God once formed Adam out of clay and breathed life into him. Adam is to be buried there until the time of his redemption. After these words of comfort from God, Adam takes with him gold, myrrh and incense from a place that is right next to paradise. He takes these treasures to a cave on a mountain in the immediate vicinity of Paradise.[22] The cave serves as a place of prayer (bēt ṣlōtā)[23] and later also as a burial place for the patriarchs.[24] Because of the three materials stored there, the cave is called the "Cave of Treasures".[25]

---

[17] Bezold p. 28,8–10/p. 7; Su-min Ri p. 36.37/p. 17.18 ch. 5,1.

[18] Bezold p. 28,11ff/p. 7; Su-min Ri p. 36–41/p. 16–19 ch. 5,2–13.

[19] Bezold p. 28,14ff/p. 7; Su-min Ri p. 38.39/p. 16.17 ch. 5,4–6.

[20] Bezold pp. 30,7ff, 31,1ff/p. 7; Su-min Ri pp. 38–41/p. 18.19 ch. 5,10.14.

[21] Bezold p. 30,12–14/p. 7; Su-min Ri p. 40.41/p. 18.19 ch. 5,11.

[22] Bezold p. 32,4ff.7ff/p. 8; Su-min Ri pp. 40–43/p. 18.19 ch. 5,15.17.

[23] Bezold p. 32,9f; Su-min Ri p. 42.43 ch. 5,17.

[24] God comforts Adam: Bezold p. 30,8–10/p. 7; Su-min Ri p. 38.39/p. 18.19 ch. 5,10; Adam gives Seth a last order: Bezold p. 38,16f/p. 9; Su-min Ri p. 50.51/22.23 ch. 6,11; Seth buries Adam: Bezold pp. 40,16f and 42,1f/p. 9f; Su-min Ri p. 54.55/22.23 ch. 6,19.21.

[25] Bezold p. 32,10/p. 8; Su-min Ri pp. 42,6+43,7 ch. 5,17.

As we all know, the feud between the brothers Cain and Abel has a fatal outcome. Cain, the older brother, is banished by God to the land of Nod,[26] which is somewhere on the plain near the paradise mountain.[27] However, completely different reasons are given for the quarrel than those cited in Genesis. Cain is envious of his brother, but not so much because God did not accept his sacrifice. That is mentioned, but no detailed interpretation is made of it. The reader learns that Cain and Abel each have a twin sister.[28] Cain does not agree with the decision of his parents that he should marry Abel's twin sister and Abel should marry his, because Cain's twin sister Lḇūḏā is more beautiful than Qlīmtā,[29] who was born at the same time as Abel.[30] After the brothers have offered sacrifices to God together with their father on the "holy mountain" (ṭūrā qaddīšā), where the above-mentioned Cave of Treasures is, Satan enters Cain. Cain then kills his brother Abel at the foot of the mountain, and goes into exile with Lḇūḏā.[31] Adam and Eve mourn Abel for 100 years.[32] They have now in effect become childless, until Eve gives birth to Seth. Seth is "a handsome man" (šappīrā gaḇrā) and "as perfect as Adam" (mšamlyā aḵ Āḏām),[33] meaning that Adam's likeness to God has been passed on to him. There seems to be no reason for the statement that Seth was a giant and all the giants (gabbārē) who lived before the Flood were descended from him. This implies that all Seth's descendants, including Noah, were giants. When Adam senses his approaching death, he warns Seth to keep away from the descendents of the murderer Cain and to live a holy and pure life in the fear of God. He says that his body is to be embalmed and laid in the cave.[34] When his children one day have to leave the mountain, they are to take his body to the centre of the earth.[35] This warning speech is repeated in a similar way at the death of all the patriarchs. Although Adam names Seth as the "leader of the sons of your people" (mḏab-

---

[26] Bezold p. 36,12–14/p. 8; Su-min Ri p. 46.47/p. 20.21 ch. 5,31.

[27] Bezold p. 42,3–8/p. 10; Su-min Ri p. 54.55/p. 24.25 ch. 6,23f.

[28] Cf. the discussion of the twin sisters by F. García Martinez and L. Teugels in this volume, above, pp. 36–39 and 47–56.

[29] Other forms of the name: Qlīmaṯ, Qlīmā etc. (Su-Min Ri, p. 18 [translation]).

[30] Bezold p. 34,1ff/p. 8; Su-min Ri pp. 42–45/pp. 18–21 ch. 5,19–26.

[31] Bezold p. 36,8–14/p. 8; Su-min Ri p. 46.47/p. 20.21 ch. 5,28–32.

[32] Bezold p. 38,1/p. 8; Su-min Ri p. 48.49/p. 20.21 ch. 6,1.

[33] Bezold p. 38,2f/p. 8; Su-min Ri p. 48.49/p. 20.21 ch. 6,2, cf. Šēṯšappīrā: Su-min Ri p. 62.63/p. 26.27 ch. 7,21.

[34] Bezold p. 38,8–17/p. 9; Su-min Ri pp. 48–51/pp. 20–23 ch. 6,6–11.

[35] Bezold p. 38,18ff/p. 9f; Su-min Ri p. 50.51/p. 22.23 ch. 6,12.

brānā dabnay 'ammek),[36] the threefold office (king, priest and prophet [malkā, kāhnā, nbīyā]) held by Adam[37] is not passed on to him and his successors. It is reserved for the second Adam, Christ, with whom Adam shares the day and the hour of death.[38]

After Adam's burial in the Cave of Treasures, the Sethites separate from the Cainites.[39] As required by family duty, Cain and his family come to the side of his dying father, but do not receive Adam's blessing. We must conclude from the separation mentioned in the text that this blessing is reserved for Seth and his children. From then on the Cainites live on the plain, while the Sethites withdraw to the holy mountain near paradise, which is here referred to as the *mons victorialis* (ṭūrā naṣṣīḥā, var. ṭūrā dneṣḥānā).[40] The Sethites live "on the mountain a life in all purity (dakyūtā), holiness (qaddīšūtā) and fear of God".[41] For this reason they "received a name that was more distinguished than all other names, so that they were named the "children of God",[42] together with their wives and children."[43] Each morning they climb to the summit of the "holy mountain" and praise God by joining in with the singing of the angels in paradise, whose voices they hear constantly. From the mountain they can see into the garden of paradise. They do not have to concern themselves with keeping alive, as the mountain is a kind of paradise in miniature. They live on the many different kinds of fruit growing on the trees there. The scent of flowers and trees rises up from paradise and refreshes them. And every day in the life of the Sethites is like this. They lead an almost angel-like life. There is neither lying, nor cursing, nor envy, anger or enmity among them. The girls and women

---

[36] Bezold p. 40,3; Su-min Ri p. 52.53 ch. 6,14; "leader of the sons of his people: Bezold p. 42,9; Su-min Ri p. 56.57 ch. 7,1.

[37] Bezold p. 14,6.12f/p. 4; Su-min Ri pp. 18–21/p. 8.9 ch. 2,18.23 and with an altered order: Bezold p. 254,3–5/p. 63; Su-min Ri p. 404.405/p. 156.157 ch. 48,29 [kāhnūtā, malkūtā, nbīyūtā].

[38] Bezold p. 40,11–15/p. 9 and p. 252,1ff/p. 62f; Su-min Ri p. 52.53/p. 22.23 ch. 6,17 and p. 396ff/p. 152ff ch. 48,11ff; cf. J. Thekeparampil, "Adam-Christus in den Passionssedrē und in der Schatzhöhle", in: *IIIᵉ Symposium Syriacum 1980. Les contacts du monde syriaque avec les autres cultures (Goslar 7–11 Septembre 1980)* édité par René Lavenant (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 221) Pont[ificium] **Isti**tutum Studiorum Orientalum, Roma 1983, pp. 323–232.

[39] Bezold p. 42,3–8/p. 10; Su-min Ri pp. 54–57/pp. 22–25 ch. 6,22–24.

[40] Bezold p. 42,6f; Su-min Ri p. 54.55 ch. 6,23.

[41] Bezold p. 42,13f/p. 10; cf. Su-min Ri p. 56.57/p. 24.25 ch. 7,3.

[42] Literally: sons of God (bnay 'alāhā).

[43] Bezold p. 42,11–13/p. 10; Su-min Ri p. 56.57/p. 24.25 ch. 7,2.

are chaste and demure. No-one, whether man or woman, has any vices.[44] In short, although the Sethites are outside paradise, they live as if their forefather Adam had never had to leave the garden.

As in the Masoretic text, Seth lives to the age of 912.[45] He dies on the 27th of Ab (August) in the third hour.[46] His last words to his assembled family begin with the swear words "by the pure blood of Abel",[47] which was the only oath allowed by the Sethites. Like Adam, Seth warns the family members against leaving the "holy mountain". After blessing everyone, in particular Enosh, he dies and is buried in the Cave of Treasures.[48] Enosh succeeds him as "leader of the people". Although each of the patriarchs warns against contact with the house of Cain, in the days of Enoch's father Jared the ban is no longer strictly observed. When Jared is 500 years old, the supposedly idyllic life on the mountain comes to an end.[49] The appeal of going down to the plain is stronger than all the warnings that have gone before. The reason is that Jubal and Tubal-cain, who have been quick to learn from Satan,[50] have made an invention that is to change the lives of the Cainites and the Sethites. The two half-brothers have invented the first musical instruments. The music produces an ominous, magical effect that draws both Cainites and Sethites under its spell. The Cainites now live in cheerful anarchy.[51] Everything is completely chaotic. Fornication gets out of hand. Despite the strong warning of Enoch, 100 Sethite men go down the mountain and are captivated by the beauty of the daughters of Cain. As Enoch has predicted to them, they are unable to climb back up the mountain. It turns into fire before their eyes.[52] After Enoch has departed, only the family of Noah's brother Methuselah, Lamech and Noah live on the *mons victorialis* (ṭūrā naṣṣīḥā).[53] The rest of the Sethites have migrated down onto the plain. Because of the sins of the Sethites, Noah "preserves his soul in virginity" for 500 years and remains unmarried.[54] At God's

---

[44] Bezold p. 42,9ff/p. 10; Su-min Ri pp. 56–61/pp. 24–27 ch. 7,1–14.

[45] Bezold p. 46,1ff.14–17/p. 11; Su-min Ri p. 60–63/p. 26.27 ch. 7,15.21.

[46] Bezold p. 46,14–17/p. 11; Su-min Ri p. 62.63/p. 26.27 ch. 7,21.

[47] Bezold p. 46,6/p. 11; Su-min Ri p. 62.63/p. 26.27 ch. 7,20.

[48] Bezold p. 46,17ff; Su-min Ri p. 62.63 ch. 7,22.

[49] Bezold p. 58,5–9/p. 14; Su-min Ri p. 80.81/p. 32.33 ch. 10,14–16.

[50] "disciples of Satan" (talmīḏaw dSātānā): Bezold p. 58,12/p. 14; Su-min Ri p. 80.81/p. 34.35 ch. 11,1.

[51] Bezold p. 58,11ff/p. 14f; Su-min Ri p. 80ff/p. 34ff ch. 11,1ff.

[52] Bezold p. 64,16ff/p. 15; Su-min Ri pp. 92–97/p. 38.39 ch. 12,11–21.

[53] Bezold p. 72,12–14/p. 17; Su-min Ri p. 104.105/p. 42.43 ch. 14,1.

[54] Bezold p. 72,14–16/p. 17; Su-min Ri p. 104.105/p. 42.43 ch. 14,2.

express command, Noah then marries Enoch's granddaughter Haikal (which means "shrine" or "temple" in Syriac). Her mother has a similar symbolic name. She is called Nāmōs(ā) [from the Greek *nomos*, meaning "law"].[55] After the marriage, God informs Noah, the last male descendant of Seth who deserves to be called pure and holy, of his plans.[56] Lamech and Methuselah die in time to miss the Flood.[57]

The beautiful daughters of Cain who have become involved with the Sethites bear children who grow up into giants, as tall as towers.[58] They are destroyed by the Flood together with the Cainites. The author of the Cave of Treasures was aware that the usual interpretation of Gen 6:1–3 was different. In the Book of Enoch, the disaster begins with 120 angels leaving their places in heaven and marrying "daughters of man". Without explicit mention of the Book of Enoch, this interpretation is rejected vehemently as "false" and "absurd".[59] Non-corporeal beings cannot join together with human beings. Demons love adultery, but for them there is neither man nor woman.[60] If this were the case, their number would by now have increased considerably, but it has remained the same. "If demons could copulate with women", there would not be a single virgin left anywhere on earth.[61] The latter argument concludes the case. The author of the *Spelunca thesaurum* probably also found the corpus of the Enoch writings suspicious because the second part of it had been adopted into the canon of the Manicheans.

The Sethites and the Paradise Mountain

Neither Aphrahat nor Ephrem discusses the theory that the Sethites are identical with the sons of God of Gen 6:2. It is apparently crystal-clear that no other interpretation is worth considering. Neither demons nor angels can enter into marriage with human beings. Flesh and spirit are two completely different entities and cannot cross their natural boundaries. If Aphrahat presents Noah as a "son of the covenant", he

---

[55] Bezold p. 72,16ff/p. 17; Su-min Ri p. 106.107/p. 42.43 ch. 14,3: „Marry Haykal, the daughter of Nāmōs(ā), the daughter of Enoch, the brother {var. father} of Methuselah."
[56] Bezold p. 74,1ff/p. 17; Su-min Ri pp. 106–111/p. 42.43 ch. 14,4–14.
[57] Bezold p. 76,9–15/p. 18; Su-min Ri pp. 110–113/p. 44.45 ch. 14,16f.
[58] Bezold p. 78,1–3/p. 18; Su-min Ri p. 112.113/p. 44.45 ch. 15,3.
[59] Bezold p. 78,3–7/p. 18; Su-min Ri pp. 112–115/p. 44.45 ch. 15,4.
[60] Bezold p. 78,7–12/p. 18; Su-min Ri p. 114.115/p. 44.45 ch. 15,6f.
[61] Bezold p. 78,12–14/p. 18; Su-min Ri p. 114.115/p. 44.45 ch. 15,8.

may have come to this exegetic solution himself. However, it is easier to assume that the two theologians either knew the tradition that was later recorded in the *Spelunca thesaurum*, or knew the present book in its original form. If Aphrahat was relying on a pre-determined tradition, he naturally knew that all Sethites devotedly followed the *vita angelica*. He then only cites Noah as a particularly outstanding example. He was at least the only Sethite who had almost followed the example of the sons and daughters of covenant and remained unmarried.

Once the angelic interpretation of Gen 6:2 had been rejected, the Sethite hypothesis was almost the only possible remaining option. If the sons of God cannot have been angelic beings, they must have been people who for some reason were given a particularly honourable name. The only possibility is the line of the descendants of Adam, who went back to Seth because he was the first worshipper of Yahweh. The Sethites could therefore be assumed to be particularly pious, which earned them the name of "children of God". There is then only one possible explanation for the term "daughters of men" in Gen 6:2: they must have belonged to the house of the murderer Cain, and represented all bad qualities.

The view that Adam settled on a mountain near to the Garden of Eden is foreign to the biblical tradition.[62] The name of the mountain leads us one step further. The *mons victorialis* is mentioned in the context of another tradition. In the *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum*, a work allegedly written by Seth, the "holy mountain" is in the homeland of the Magi, who visit Christ in Bethlehem. Each year after the hay harvest the Magi climb a mountain that is called the "mountain of victory" in their language.[63] They watch there for three days for the star of the Redeemer, absorbed in silent prayer. On this mountain there are springs, beautiful trees and a cave. The mountain is to some extent a garden of paradise.

The chronicle of Zuqnin is also familiar with the basic elements of the same tradition.[64] In this source, the Magi climb the *mons victorialis*[65]

---

[62] Accoding to Ezek 28,12–18 „Eden, the garden of God" is identical with „the holy mountain of God", but this is a fusion of elements of the Jahwistic paradise story with non-israelite material.

[63] MPG 56, p. 638.

[64] J.-B. Chabot, *Incerti auctoris Chronicon Pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum I edidit/interpretatus est* (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 91/121. Scriptores Syri 43/66) Paris 1927. Repr. Louvain 1953/Louvain 1949, I/II, pp. 57–91.3/45–70; TULLBERG, p. 73.10–114.10.

[65] Chabot, *Chronicon Pseudo-Dionysianum* I/II, p. 59.8, 60.7f.27/46.47.48 u.ö.; TULLBERG, pp. 76.5, 77.8., 78.5 u.ö.

on the 25th day of each month and watch the night sky for the star
of the Redeemer. The mountain, which is described as a garden of
paradise, produces a fragrant scent. The mountain has a cave with
treasures including the gifts for the Child in Bethlehem. During their
stay on the mountain the Magi read the writings of their ancestor
Seth, who recorded in writing the revelations made to Adam. The
books are also stored in the Cave of Treasures. The *mons victorialis*
is in the land of Šīr, somewhere in the *oriens extremus*, East of the
land of Nod, where Adam once lived. The mountain itself is occa-
sionally also referred to as Šīr. The Magi return from Bethlehem with
a promise from the Child that He will one day send one of His
apostles to them. After the Resurrection, the Apostle Judas Thomas
travels to their homeland.

If we assume that the story of the Magi was part of a written source
that was circulating in Seth's name, it must like the Cave of Treasures
have included a large section on the primeval history, as long as the
Sethites lived on the holy mountain. The author of the Cave of
Treasures apparently did not wish to grant the Magi such an honour
and suppressed the information about the relationships. The story
of the journey of the Magi to Bethlehem to a great extent follows
the New Testament model.[66] The story of what happens before and
after this journey is missing. The background story has shrunk to a
brief note that the Magi collect the three gifts in the mountains of
Nod near their eastern homeland.[67] The journey is made on the basis
of the traditions handed down to the Magi from their forefathers.
In principle the Magi should have taken with them as presents the
gold, incense and myrrh once deposited by Adam in the Cave of
Treasures. Because the author of the *Spelunca* cut down and short-
ened the section on the Magi, this part of the story hangs in the
air. The confused reader does suspect that there is a mysterious con-
nection between the gifts of the Magi and the materials stored by
Adam in the cave, but learns nothing specific about it.

Some aspects of the story of the Magi and the primeval history
belong clearly to the Iranian world, in terms of the history of tra-
dition; these are the mountain with its *Paradeisos* and the cave. The
kings and princes of Persia owned gardens containing all kinds of
precious trees and streams. Mountains play a role in the Persian leg-

---

[66] Bezold p. 230,14ff/pp. 56–59; Su-min Ri pp. 360–383/pp. 140–149 ch. 45–46.
[67] Bezold p. 234,9–13/p. 57; Su-min Ri p. 366.367/p. 142.143 ch. 54,12.

end of the king. The cave refers to the God Mithra. In the back-
ground is the expectation of the birth of a king and saviour of the
world, who will bring a better time than the current one. This hope
for the future was woven into the re-telling of biblical stories in the
Christian context and linked to Christ. This must have happened in
eastern Syria or in Mesopotamia or East-Tigrisland, where there was
a more direct contact with the Iranian religion than in the West.

The interest of the Christian and Jewish world in Seth is con-
nected with the problems of theodicy and the change to a monothe-
istic image of God that neither wanted nor was able to make the
same originator responsible for good and evil. When people con-
cerned themselves with the origin of evil in the world, it was inevitable
that they paid more attention than before to the biblical primeval
history, including the creation story. Adam, Eve, Cain and Seth were
therefore favoured objects for a narrative theology that investigated
the cause of evil in the world under the premise of a strict monotheism.

This page intentionally left blank

GNOSTIC IDEAS ABOUT EVE'S CHILDREN AND THE SALVATION OF HUMANITY

Gerard P. Luttikhuizen

Valentinian Christians referred to Cain, Abel, and Seth as the biblical representatives of three types, or "natures", of human beings: the sarcic or material type, the psychical or "soulish" type, and the pneumatic or spiritual type. We know this from Irenaeus's report of Valentinian doctrines in the first book of his *Adversus haereses*,[1] and also from one of the fragments of the Valentinian teacher Theodotus quoted by Clement of Alexandria.[2] While it is not immediately clear from the Valentinian text preserved by Clement what was the exact meaning of the reference to Cain, Abel, and Seth in connection with three human "natures", Irenaeus's report is very definite on this point (I 6–7; cf. II 29).

A Heresiological Cliché

According to the heresiologist, the Valentinians claimed that the three natures constitute three different races of humans, and, furthermore, that these races, the lineages of Cain, Abel, and Seth, are fixed and unchangeable. Accordingly, being saved or being doomed would depend on whether one belonged to one of these lineages. The material people, who are Cain's descendants, would certainly perish ("for matter is incapable of salvation", I 6,1–2; 7,5). The pneumatics, the offspring of Seth, i.e. the Valentinians themselves, could be completely certain of their future salvation ("for the spiritual cannot be damned", I 6,2; 7,5). Irenaeus adds to this that the certainty of the

---

[1] I 7,5. As indicated in the preface to book I, this report deals with the doctrines of the Valentinian teacher Ptolemy and his school. A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau, *Irenée de Lyon, Contre les Hérésies I*, vol. 1 (Sources Chrétiennes 263), Paris 1979, 116, 171.

[2] *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 54. Otherwise, the distinction between better and worse types of humans was relatively commonplace in philosophical and religious traditions in the ancient world. Cf. M.A. Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism". An argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category*, Princeton 1996, 189, who refers to Philo and Paul.

Valentinians about their own salvation induced them to maintain that moral behaviour was of no concern to them ("it is impossible for the spiritual to suffer corruption whatever the kinds of behaviour in which one is involved", I 6,2).[3] The middle group of the psychicals, those belonging to the class represented by Abel, i.e. non-Gnostic Christians such as Bishop Irenaeus, were a special case inasmuch as they were said to have some freedom of choice: if they did good works their final destination would be the intermediate region of the demiurge (the highest part of the cosmic world). If they did not practice good works, they would share the fate of Cain's lineage.[4]

There is no hint in Irenaeus's report that the Valentinians considered the possibility of conversion or transition from one category to another. The Valentinians are depicted by the orthodox bishop as determinists and profiteers from their supposedly safe position. Interestingly, Irenaeus points to an inner contradiction in the soteriological teaching of the Valentinians as he describes it. In *Adv. haer.* II 29 he states that they "are inconsistent with themselves": if nature and substance are the means of salvation, how then, he argues, could they believe that only those psychicals who had lived righteously could attain to their destination in the intermediate world? But this observation does not cause the heresiologist to doubt his interpretation of the relevant Valentinian teaching. He explains to his readers that the fatalistic doctrine allegedly advanced by these heretical Christians would not only make righteous conduct useless, but that it also rendered the Christian faith and the descent of the Saviour into the world superfluous.[5]

Irenaeus's portrayal of the Valentinians strongly influenced later perceptions of the anthropological and soteriological ideas of these and other Gnostic Christians.[6] Clement of Alexandria, who had direct access to Gnostic texts and teachings, was familiar with Irenaeus's work.[7] The charge of determinism originally addressed by Irenaeus

---

[3] Having made this point, Irenaeus proceeds to describe in some detail their supposed lascivious and libertine conduct (6,3).

[4] I 6,4 shows that, in particular, the supposed idea that psychicals, "the people of the church", had to do good works and to live in continence while pneumatics could do whatever they wished, aroused the bishop's anger.

[5] II 29,1; cf. II 14,4. W.A. Löhr, "Gnostic determinism reconsidered", *Vig. Chr.* 46 (1992), 381–90, esp. 382.

[6] It is difficult to find the charge of determinism in Justin Martyr, Hippolytus, and Plotinus. Irenaeus is quite likely the instigator of this anti-Gnostic cliché. Löhr, "Gnostic determinism", 386.

[7] A. Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque IIe–IIIe siècles*, vol. II: *Clément d'Alexandrie et Origène*, Paris 1985, 409ff; Löhr, "Gnostic determinism" 388, n. 15.

to Valentinians was reused by Clement and applied to other Gnostics as well.[8] Thus Clement contributed to developing Irenaeus's anti-Valentinian criticism into a heresiological cliché. Origen knew the works of both Irenaeus and Clement.[9] He adduced more sophisticated theological arguments against allegedly deterministic models of salvation history,[10] and he included Marcion among the champions of such a doctrine.[11]

The clue to this understanding of Gnostic soteriology is the Valentinian notion of "being saved by nature (φύσει σῴζεσθαι)".[12] However, it is questionable whether the Valentinians understood this notion to mean that they possessed the pneumatic element or nature on account of their belonging to the natural lineage of Seth, and that this inherited possession was the one and only cause of their being saved. It is noteworthy that, according to Clement, their speaking of "being saved by nature" did not prevent the Valentinians from believing that salvation can result from obedience and repentance.[13] Furthermore, in one of the fragments quoted by Clement, the Valentinian teacher Theodotus states that the psychic and spiritual components of humanity are not transmitted ("sown") in the same way as its material part, for, he comments, in that case "all humans would be equal and righteous and in all there would be the teaching" (i.e. the teaching of the Gnostic truth).[14]

The common heresiological portrayal of Valentinian and other Gnostic Christians as determinists (and libertines), coined by Irenaeus and refined by the two Alexandrian theologians, underlies modern

---

[8] Cf. *Strom.* II 10–11; III 3,3 (with regard to the Basilidians: because they believed they belonged to the elect race they felt free to sin); IV 89,4; V 3,3. L. Schottroff, "Animae naturaliter salvandae, zum Problem der himmlischen Herkunft des Gnostikers", in: W. Eltester, *Christentum und Gnosis*, Berlin 1969, 65–97, esp. 67f.

[9] A. Le Boulluec, "Y a-t-il des traces de la polémique antignostique d'Irenée dans le *Péri Archôn* d' Origène?", in: M. Krause (ed.), *Gnosis and Gnosticism* (Nag Hamm. Studies 8), Leiden 1977, 138–147.

[10] *De princ.* III 1,2–4; *In Joh.* XIII 10, 64; cf. E. Junod's introduction to Origen's *Philocalie 21–27, Sur le libre arbitre* (Sources Chrétiennes 226), Paris 1976, 73–90 and 110–20; A. Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, II, 510f, n. 242; Ph.J. van der Eijk, "Origenes' Verteidigung des freien Willens in De Oratione 6,1–2", *Vig. Chr.* 42 (1988), 339–351; Löhr, "Gnostic determinism", 385 with n. 28; H.S. Benjamins, *Eingeordnete Freiheit. Freiheit und Vorsehung bei Origenes*, diss. Groningen 1993.

[11] A. Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, II, 510f with n. 243; Löhr, 385.

[12] Cf. Clement, *Exc.Theod.* 56,3: Τὸ μὲν οὖν πνευματικὸν φύσει σῳζόμενον.

[13] *Strom.* II 115; L. Schottroff, "Animae naturaliter salvandae", 84f.

[14] *Exc. Theod.* 56,2; M.R. Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, Atlanta 1990, 35. We already noticed above that it is unclear how in these fragments, Cain, Abel, and Seth are connected with the supposed sarcic, psychic, and spiritual aspects of humanity.

understanding of Gnostic anthropology and soteriology. It is repeated in scholarly discussions[15] as well as in more popular presentations.[16] However, as recent studies have demonstrated, the authentic Gnostic texts rediscovered in the last centuries, in particular the Nag Hammadi writings, do not confirm this widespread picture.[17] We find in these texts, among other things, a preference for a strict ascetic lifestyle,[18] ethical exhortation,[19] awareness of the need for outside redemption,[20] summons to spread the Gnostic truth in the world,[21] attitudes, issues, and concerns that are hardly compatible with a deterministic model of salvation.

Two Gnostic writings, *The Apocryphon (Secret Book) of John* and *The Hypostasis (True Nature) of the Archons*, deserve closer examination because they speak in more detail about Cain, Abel, and Seth. *The True Nature* also refers to a daughter of Eve, Norea. In both texts, the stories form part of a narration of the creation and the earliest history of humanity. The contents suggest that we are dealing with an early non-Valentinian type of mythological gnosis.[22] In our discussion of the relevant texts, we will pay special attention to the ques-

---

[15] Notably in the works of leading scholars such as Rudolf Bultmann (cf. e.g. his *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, Göttingen 10th ed. 1964, 41, 96f n. 5, 114 n. 2) and Hans Jonas (*Gnosis und spätantiker Geist*, I, Göttingen 1934, 236, II/1, 1954, 29–31).

[16] Michael Williams: this widespread picture is "a treasured caricature that has provided countless hours of intellectual satisfaction", *Rethinking "Gnosticism"*, 189.

[17] Cf. in particular the publications by Schottroff, Löhr, Desjardins, and Williams mentioned above, S. Pétrement, *Le dieu séparé: les origines du gnosticisme*, Paris 1984 (ET: *A Separate God. The Origins and Teachings of Gnosticism*, San Francisco 1990), A.H.B. Logan, *Gnostic Truth and Christian Heresy. A Study in the History of Gnosticism*, Edinburgh 1996, M.A. Williams, *The Immovable Race*, Leiden 1985, and *Rethinking Gnosticism* (above, n. 2).

[18] But F. Wisse, "Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt", in: B. Aland, *Gnosis. Festschrift für Hans Jonas*, Göttingen 1978, 431–40, argues that asceticism is not a feature of Gnosticism in general but of the Nag Hammadi collection of Gnostic and other books which was used by Pachomean monks.

[19] Cf. e.g. the concluding words of *Orig. World* (Nag Hamm. Cod. II,5) 127,16f: "by his *praxis* and his *gnosis* each one will make his *physis* known"; *2 Log Seth* (Cod. VII,2) 61f.

[20] According to *Tract. Trip.* (Nag Hamm. Cod. I, 5) 124,32–125,11, a Valentinian text, everybody in this world needs redemption through Christ. Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism*, 85.

[21] An interesting case is the *Letter of Peter to Philip* (Nag Hamm. Cod. VIII,2), esp. 132,20–133,1; 137,6–9 and 22–25.

[22] In scholarly literature, the non-Valentinian mythological gnosis of *The Secret Book* and related texts is designated in various ways. My preference is for the term "demiurgical Gnostic". A significant feature of this type of gnosis is the highly negative view of the creator of the physical world. In Valentinian texts we find a less negative view of the demiurge.

tions of how Eve's children are related to later generations, and what these stories tell us about the soteriological ideas of the Gnostics.

The Secret Book of John

The Secret Book claims to contain a revelation granted by the exalted Christ to his disciple John.[23] In the first main part, the Saviour reveals to John the Gnostic truth about the Invisible Spirit, the fully transcendent God, and about the tragic events leading to the coming into existence of an inferior cosmic Godhead who is called Yaldabaoth. This inferior God is imagined as the head of many cosmic powers. In the first quotation below he is designated by the Gnostic Christ as "the Chief Ruler".

In the second part of his revelation, Christ speaks about the creation of Adam and Eve, about the birth of Eve's children, and about some episodes in the history of the first generations. In this part of the text we find frequent references to biblical narrative materials, mainly from the first chapters of Genesis. What is striking is that the allusions to biblical traditions are alongside serious criticism and even explicit rejection of these same traditions.[24] This critical approach first of all concerns the biblical God. In *The Secret Book* he is not identified with the Invisible Spirit but with the inferior demiurgical God Yaldabaoth.

> (*Cain and Abel*)
> The Chief Ruler saw the virgin who stood by Adam, and that the luminous Reflection of life had appeared in her. And Yaldabaoth was full of ignorance.[25] And when the Providence of the All noticed it, she sent some (angelic powers) and they snatched life out of Eve. And the Chief Ruler defiled her and begot in her two sons; the first and the second (are) Eloim and Yave. Eloim has a bear-face and Yave has a

---

[23] We know this writing from no less than four Coptic manuscripts. The Nag Hammadi collection includes three copies (II,1; III,1; IV,1). A fourth copy is contained in the so-called Berlin codex (*BG*). *BG* and III,1 have a shorter, II,1 and IV,1 a longer version of the text. An early Greek version of the first part of *The Secret Book* is quoted or summarized by Irenaeus in his *Adv. Haereses* I 29. This version is not of direct relevance to us because the stories about the first generations of humankind are found in the second part of the text. The Greek version is important, however, for the dating of *The Secret Book*. Irenaeus composed his anti-heretic work around the year 180. We can be sure, therefore, that the original Greek text was written several decades at least before the end of the second century.

[24] Cf. the recurring formula, "It is not as Moses said . . . but . . ." (*BG* 45,8–11; 58,16–19; 59,17–19; 73,4–7 and parallel passages).

[25] The short version adds: "so that he wanted to raise up a seed from her".

cat-face. The one is righteous, but the other is unrighteous. Yave he set over fire and wind, and Eloim he set over water and earth. These he called with the names Cain and Abel with a view to deceive.

Up to the present day, sexual intercourse continued due to the Chief Ruler. He planted sexual desire in her who belongs to Adam.[26] And he produced through intercourse the copies of the bodies (. . . .). And the two rulers he set over powers so that they might rule over the tomb.[27]

In this Gnostic revision of the biblical stories, Eloim-Cain and Yave-Abel are sons of the demiurgical God, "the Chief Archon" Yaldabaoth. Their mother is not Adam's consort, the spiritual Eve,[28] for we are told that representatives of the true God had removed Life[29] from Eve when Yaldabaoth approached her. Her sarcic and psychic aspects were left.[30] Eloim-Cain and Yave-Abel were born from an illicit union between the demiurgical God and the sarcic-psychic Eve.

According to ancient views about human procreation, the contribution of the male parent to the formation of the child is more important than that of the mother.[31] If the cosmic archon Yaldabaoth was the father, it should therefore not surprise us that the children were cosmic powers. Yaldabaoth set them over the four elements and, consequently, over the "tomb", the cosmic world, perhaps more in particular the human body, made from these elements.[32] Note

---

[26] Cf. below, n. 39.

[27] Nag Hamm. Cod. II, 24,8–34; apart from a few minor alterations I adopt the translation by M. Waldstein and F. Wisse, *The Apocryphon of John, Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1; III,1; and IV,1 with BG 8502,2*, Leiden 1995, 136–141 (= synopsis 63–65).

[28] According to *The Secret Book*, Eve was created from the spiritual light power that the demiurgical God had breathed into Adam. *BG* 58,10–60,16 and parallels (Waldstein and Wisse, synopsis 59–62). Cf. my article "The creation of man and woman in *The Secret Book of John*", in: G.P. Luttikhuizen (ed.), *The Creation of Man and Woman. Interpretations of the Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions* (TBN 3), Leiden 2000, 140–55, esp. 151–55.

[29] The association of Eve with "life" may reflect Gen. 3:20 LXX: Adam called his wife "life (ζωή)" because she was the mother of all the living.

[30] According to the preceding narrative of the creation of humanity, human beings not only have a sarcic but also a psychic body. The spiritual element ("the power of the Mother", Sophia) was breathed into the psychic body (the soul) of Adam.

[31] Aristotle taught that the male parent provides the form, the mother the matter of the child (*Gen. anim.* 729a–730a). This idea was widely accepted in antiquity. Cf. I.S. Gilhus, "Gnosticism: A Study in Liminal Symbolism", *Numen* 31 (1984), 106–28, esp. 112.

[32] Cf. *BG* 54,11–55,13 and par. passages (Waldstein-Wisse, synopsis 55–56) for the creation of Adam's sarcic body from the four elements. The story ends with the exclamation: "This is the tomb of the form of the body with which they (II 21,11: "the robbers") clothed the man as the fetter of matter (ὕλη; or λήθη, forgetfulness)!"

that *The Secret Book* does not mention that Abel was killed by his brother. This prominent feature of the Genesis account is omitted in the Gnostic story, apparently because Abel-Yave is seen as a cosmic power who, together with his brother Cain-Eloim, is still controlling the "tomb" of the sublunary world.

The first names of the two cosmic sons of the Demiurge are Eloim and Yave.[33] The long version suggests that it was Yaldabaoth who gave them the names Cain and Abel, and that he did so with a view to deceiving humanity: those who did not understand their demonic nature ran the risk of being exposed to their enduring power. The theriomorphic description of the two cosmic rulers—Eloim-Cain is bear-faced, Yave-Abel cat-faced[34]—is in line with the earlier description of their father as a lion-faced serpent.[35]

Sexual intercourse between divine males and human females was a well-known topic in Greek tradition, but it is quite possible that the words spoken by the biblical Eve after the birth of Cain (Gen. 4:1), "I have gotten a man through the Lord (or: through God; LXX: διὰ τοῦ θεοῦ)", and Jewish speculations about this statement, contributed to the idea that Cain was a son of the demiurgical God.[36] Incidentally, the story of Eve's being raped by a superhuman figure (the Devil disguised as a serpent or the demonic Demiurge) has some features in common with the biblical story of the intercourse between heavenly beings (sons of God or angels) and "the daughters of men" (Gen 6:1f). Both traditions speak of an intercourse between superhuman and human beings, and, in both cases, this illicit union causes moral decay in humanity.

The qualification of Eloim-Cain and Yave-Abel as righteous and unrighteous might reflect Jewish speculations about the divine names

---

[33] In II 10, 34–36, Cain and Abel are mentioned among the rulers of Zodiacal constellations.

[34] In the shorter version, Eloim has the cat-face and Yave the bear-face. In *The True Nature* (II 87, 29) the archontic rulers also have animal faces.

[35] II 10,8–9 (Waldstein and Wisse, synopsis, 25). Cf. H.M. Jackson, *The Lion that Became Man. The Gnostic Leontomorphic Creator and the Platonic Tradition*, Atlanta 1985, 34–39.

[36] See L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, I, 105–7, V, 132–5; A.F.J. Klijn, *Seth in Jewish, Christian and Gnostic Literature*, Leiden 1977, 7–10, 16, 21, 28–30; G.A.G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology*, Leiden 1984, 47–49; B. Pearson, "The Figure of Seth in Gnostic Literature" and "Cain and the Cainites" in: id., *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity*, Minneapolis 1990, 52–83 and 95–107. See further the contributions to the present volume by Van Ruiten, García Martínez, Teugels, and Poorthuis.

Elohim and Jahweh, God and Lord.[37] But whereas in Jewish tradition, Elohim and Yahweh are different names of the one and only God (or designations of two powers or qualities of the one God), the Gnostic authors of *The Secret Book of John* refer to two separate cosmic powers, who, as is often the case in Greek mythology, are related to a superior cosmic God as sons to a father. It is possible, finally, that Eloim-Cain's association with the elements earth and water was derived from his biblical description as an agricultural farmer, offering fruits of the earth, and Yave-Abel's connection with fire and wind from his description as a herdsman who brought a burnt offering of sheep and their fat.[38]

The purpose of the second paragraph of the section quoted above is to give a mythological explanation of the sexual desire in human beings. Sexual desire is the moving force behind human procreation. In the view of Gnostics, the result of procreation is that the divine light substance given to Adam is scattered over ever more human beings. According to the above quotation from *The Secret Book*, sexual desire was planted in the first humans by the Demiurge.[39]

Several features of this Gnostic text are reminiscent of the Genesis story of Cain and Abel. First of all this applies to their names (Eloim and Yave as well as Cain and Abel) and to their birth from Eve. It is possible, as we have noted, that the words of the biblical Eve (or speculations about these words) contributed to the idea that Cain's father at least was not Adam but the demiurgical God Yaldabaoth. Also, their qualifications as righteous and unrighteous may reflect a biblical tradition. On the other hand, the story line and the basic

---

[37] In Jewish tradition, the name Yahwe was sometimes associated with God's mercy, the name Elohim with his judgement. In Philo's allegorical explanations the name "God" is supposed to represent God's creative and beneficent power, the name "Lord" his royal and punishing power. Cf. N.A. Dahl and A.F. Segal, "Philo and the Rabbis on the Names of God", *JSJ* 9 (1978), 1–28; R. van den Broek, "Jewish and Platonic Speculations in Early Alexandrian Theology: Eugnostos, Philo, Valentinus, and Origen", in: B.A. Pearson and J.E. Goehring (eds), *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, Philadelphia 1986, 190–203, esp. 193. M. Tardieu, *Écrits gnostiques. Codex de Berlin*. Paris 1984, 328, suggests that Cain-Eloim is considered righteous because his sacrifice was unbloody.

[38] Tardieu, ibid. In codex IV 38,4–6, these connections are reversed (Waldstein-Wisse, synopsis 64). According to Tardieu we are dealing here with an adaptation to the biblical text (Cain unrighteous and Abel righteous).

[39] "in her who belongs to Adam" (i.e. Eve) according to cod. II, 24, 28f; in Adam according to the three parallel texts (Waldstein-Wisse, synopsis, 65,8f). Cf. K. King, "Sophia and Christ in the *Apocryphon of John*", in: id. (ed.), *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism*, Philadelphia 1988, 158–176, esp. 170f.

convictions about God and humanity—the negative attitude towards the biblical God and the view of man as a *compositum* of matter, soul and divine spirit—are radically different. Within the scope of this study, our most important conclusion is that Cain and Abel—unlike Adam, Eve, and Seth (see below)—are not regarded as human ancestors or related to special types of human beings. Their connection with humanity is of a different order: Eloim-Cain and Yave-Abel are supposedly demonic rulers over the "tomb" in which humans are forced to dwell.[40]

I shall now proceed to the brief passage devoted to Seth.

> (*Seth*)
> He (Adam) knew his essence (*ousia*) which was like him. He begot Seth. And just as the race which is above, in the aeons, thus the Mother sent down the one who is hers: the Spirit came down to her to awaken the essence which is like him (i.e. like the Spirit), after the model of the perfection, in order to awaken them from forgetfulness and the wickedness of the tomb.[41]

Seth was essentially different from Cain and Abel. It is possible, once again, that words of the biblical Eve suggested this idea to the Gnostic myth-tellers. Gen. 4:25 reports that when Eve had given birth to her son Seth, she said: "God has raised up for me "another seed" (LXX: σπέρμα ἕτερον) instead of Abel." The reference to Eve as Adam's "essence (οὐσία) which was like him", means that the child was born from a union of spiritually equals. Seth belonged "essentially" to the Invisible Spirit, whereas Cain and Abel shared the nature of the demiurgical God Yaldabaoth.

The report of the coming down of the Spirit is of prime importance when we try to ascertain *The Secret Book*'s model of salvation. Here we read that although the spiritual or divine "essence" which Seth received from his parents, is in him, it still has to be awakened from outside. In the short version quoted above, it is stated explicitly that this not only applies to the spiritual element of Seth himself but also to that of his posterity: "The Spirit came down (. . . .) in order to awaken them (note the plural) from forgetfulness."[42]

---

[40] Cf. M.A. Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism"*, 195.
[41] *BG* 63,12–64,3 (III 32,7 wrongly has *anomia* instead of *ousia*). The longer version of this part of the text is more elaborate and complex (II 24,35–25,9; IV 38,15–39,7; Waldstein-Wisse, synopsis 65–66).
[42] Cf. BG 64,3–8 and parr. passages (Waldstein-Wisse, synopsis 68,10–13): Those upon whom the Spirit of life descends (. . .) will be saved.

According to *The Secret Book of John*, all human beings are descendants of Seth and they all inherit his light substance. But not all will develop this potential. It is precisely on this point that human beings differ. The subsequent section of *The Secret Book* which speaks about various types of souls, makes this more clear.[43] In line with the above quotation no reference is made there to "natural" differences in humanity. What is more, the Gnostic Christ reveals that sooner or later everyone—also the souls that are ruled by the forces of evil—will be called.[44] But souls react differently to the revelation of the Gnostic truth. Those that react positively acquire knowledge, realize to whom they belong, and will flee from evil; those that do not will go astray and run the danger of falling into forgetfulness. We are far removed here from a deterministic type of soteriology.

The True Nature of the Archons

The text of *The Hypostasis* (or: *True Nature*) *of the Archons* is known from only one Coptic manuscript, codex II of the Nag Hammadi library. This codex also contains a copy of the long version of *The Secret Book of John*. It is generally assumed that *The True Nature of the Archons* was composed later than *The Secret Book*, probably sometime during the first half of the third century.[45]

The stories about Eve's children in *The True Nature* differ from those in *The Secret Book of John*. First of all, *The True Nature* keeps closer to the biblical text in having Abel attacked (and killed?) by his brother. In agreement with the biblical tradition, Seth occupies his place. But this does not mean, as we shall see, that he has the same descent. Furthermore, in this writing the biblical God is split up into two figures, the unrighteous ruler of Chaos who—in conformity with *The Secret Book*—is called Yaldabaoth, and the righteous ruler of the astral and planetary regions who is called Sabaoth, "the God of the forces". As a result, *The True Nature* has three different

---

[43] Waldstein-Wisse, synopsis 70,16–18; 71, 8; 72, 7–9. Cf. Williams, *The Immovable Race* (above, n. 17), 166–9; *Rethinking "Gnosticism"*, 196–8.

[44] Waldstein-Wisse, synopsis, 72,7–9. Williams, *Rethinking*, 196: "in one way or another, sooner or later, *all* souls will have *access* to revealed knowledge. The differentiating factors are how quickly this takes place and whether the knowledge is finally accepted or rejected."

[45] R.A. Bullard in: B. Layton, *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7* (Nag Hamm. Stud. 20), Leiden 1989, 222.

Gods (as well as many cosmic powers): the wicked cosmic God Yaldabaoth, the righteous cosmic God Sabaoth, and the hyper-cosmic God, the Father of Truth. We shall see that in some way or another, the three Gods are related to three children of Eve: Cain, Seth, and Eve's daughter Norea (or Orea).[46]

(*Cain and Abel*)
Then the authorities (the archontic rulers) came up to their Adam.[47] And when they saw his female counterpart (i.e. the spiritual Eve) speaking with him, they became agitated with great agitation; and they became enamored of her. They said to one another, "Come, let us sow our seed in her", and they pursued her. And she laughed at them for their foolishness and their blindness; and in their clutches, she became a tree,[48] and left before them her shadowy reflection resembling herself, and they defiled [it] foully. And they defiled the stamp of her voice, so that by the form they had modelled, together with [their] (own) image, they made themselves liable to condemnation. (89,17–31)
        (. . . .)
Afterwards she bore Cain, their son; and Cain cultivated the land. Thereupon (? ⲠⲀⲀⲒⲚ)[49] he knew his wife; again becoming pregnant she bore Abel; and Abel was a herdsman of sheep. Now Cain brought in from the crops of his field, but Abel brought in an offering from among his lambs. God (the God Sabaoth?) gazed upon the offerings of Abel; but he did not accept the offerings of Cain. And sarcic Cain pursued Abel his brother. And God said to Cain, "Where is Abel, your brother?" He answered saying, "Am I, then, my brother's keeper?" God said to Cain, "Listen! The voice of your brother's blood is crying up to me! You have sinned with your mouth. It will return to you: anyone who kills Cain will let loose seven vengeances, and you will exist groaning and trembling upon the earth." (91,11–30)

(*Seth and Norea*)
And Adam [knew] his female counterpart Eve, and she became pregnant, and bore [Seth] to Adam. And she said, "I have born [another] man through God,[50] in place [of Abel]."

---

[46] The names Norea and Orea are used alternately, apparently for the same figure, who is Seth's sister as well as Noah's wife. Cf. B. Pearson, "The Figure of Norea in Gnostic Literature", in: *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity*, 84–94, and I.S. Gilhus, *The Nature of the Archons*, 77–95.

[47] Adam was created by the cosmic archons, cf. below, n. 55.

[48] Cf. the mythological story of the transformation of the virgin Daphne into a tree (a laurel), retold by Ovidius, *Metamorphoses* I, 548–557. Christian authors and artists were familiar with this pagan motif. A. Hermann, "Daphne", *RAC* III, 585–93.

[49] Cf. below, n. 53.

[50] "Through God (*hm pnoute*)" is an addition to the biblical text (Gen. 4:25; cf. 4:1). The Gnostic author wishes to make it clear that not Cain's but Seth's birth was according to the will of the true God.

> Again Eve became pregnant, and she bore [Norea]. And she said, "He has begotten on [me a] virgin as an assistance [for] many generations of humankind." She is the virgin whom the powers did not defile. Then humankind began to multiply and improve. (91,30–92,4)[51]

Note that the short report of the birth of Eve's son Cain does not immediately follow the story of her being raped by the archontic powers (in the passage about Cain and Abel, I omitted *The True Nature*'s version of the Paradise story, pp. 89,31–91,11). It is therefore not fully clear to whom the pronoun "their" ("she bore *their* son", Cain) refers: to Adam and Eve, the protagonists of the preceding Paradise story, or to the archontic rulers who raped the sarcic Eve. With most commentators, I prefer the latter interpretation, chiefly because otherwise the story of the rape of the sarcic Eve by the demonic rulers would have no sequel.[52]

There is some obscurity, too, about the father of Abel. It may seem obvious that "he" ("thereupon[53] he knew his wife; again becoming pregnant she bore Abel") refers to Adam, but after the report of the birth of Cain from a union of Eve and the demonic rulers one would expect a more explicit mention of Abel's father.[54] If we assume that Adam is meant, the reference is to the sarcic-psychic Adam.[55]

---

[51] With some minor adaptations I adopt the translation by B. Layton, *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7*, 241f and 245f.

[52] B. Layton, "The Hypostasis of the Archons", *Harv. Theol Rev.* 69 (1976), 60, and *Gnostic Scriptures*, 72, B. Barc, *L'Hypostase des Archontes*, Louvain 1980, 97f and 104f; B. Pearson, "The Figure of Seth", 58, Gilhus, *The Nature of the Archons*, 79. Differently R.A. Bullard, *The Hypostasis of the Archons*, Berlin 1970, 92.

[53] The Greek time adjunct ⲡⲁⲗⲓⲛ can be understood in different ways. If it means "once again" ("once again he knew his wife", cf. R.A. Bullard, *The Hypostasis of the Archons*, 29; M. Krause in: W. Foerster, *Die Gnosis* II, Zürich 1971, 57) the implication would be that "he" (Adam) knew his wife earlier, to wit before the birth of Cain. If we understand ⲡⲁⲗⲓⲛ as "thereupon" (with Layton, cf. B. Barc, *L'Hypostase des Archontes*, 61: "ensuite"), it is not implied that Adam knew Eve before the birth of Cain.

[54] According to Barc, *L'Hypostase des Archontes*, 105f, the "he" is the God Sabaoth.

[55] That reference is made to the *sarcic-psychic* Adam can be inferred from the previous story of the creation of Adam and Eve: We are told that Adam was made by the archontic rulers as one wholly of the earth (87,26–27); then "he" (Yaldabaoth or rather Sabaoth) breathed into his face (Gen 2:7a LXX) and he came to be a "psychical" (a sarcic being with a soul; 88,3–4); finally, the Spirit saw the psychic human being, it descended and came to dwell within him so that he became a *living* soul (Gen 2:7b LXX; 88,11–16). But now *The True Nature* goes on to tell how the archontic rulers caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, opened his side and took the living woman (Eve) out of it and closed his side with flesh (cf. Gen 2:21). When the woman had left him, Adam was once again without spirit. Abel's father was the sarcic-psychic Adam, his mother was the sarcic Eve (the "shadowy reflection" of the spiritual Eve; cf. 89, 26–27, quoted above).

The other two children, Seth and Norea, however, were not born from the sarcic Eve but from her spiritual prototype.[56] This is clear from the designation of their mother as Adam's female "counterpart" or "other half". This same expression was used earlier to denote the spiritual Eve (89,18–19, quoted above).[57] No doubt Seth's father was the spiritual Adam. But it remains unclear who was the father of Norea.[58]

The spiritual Eve announces that Norea will be "an assistance for many generations of humankind". The textual basis of this statement is Gen 2:18, where it is said that Eve was created as a "helper" (LXX: βοηθός) to Adam. The idea might be that what she, the spiritual Eve, is to Adam, Norea will be to later generations of humankind. Indeed, both female figures are envisaged as bringers of true spiritual life.

The story goes on to relate that after the births of Seth and Norea, humankind began to multiply and improve (cf. Gen 6:1). This aroused the anger of the archontic rulers who decided to cause a flood and to obliterate all human and animal life (Gen 6:7). The distinction between Yaldabaoth and his dark powers on the one hand, and the righteous ruler Sabaoth on the other, is carried through in *The True Nature*'s revision of the biblical Flood story.[59] The flood was allegedly caused by Yaldabaoth's demonic forces but "the ruler of the powers", i.e. Sabaoth, attempted to save Noah, a descendant of Seth, and his children, advising him to make an ark and to set it upon Mount Sir.

The story is interesting to us because it shows how the Gnostic myth-teller is enlarging upon the concept of Norea/Orea as a spiritual helper of (Sethian) humankind. Norea wished to board the ark but initially Noah did not admit her. Thereupon she set the ark on fire and Noah had to make the ark once more. Here the story ends rather abruptly. We do not hear about later generations of "Sethians". The important thing in the present connection is that Norea is depicted

---

[56] The spiritual Eve is the living woman who left Adam when the archontic rulers opened his side (89,7ff). Cf. the preceding note.

[57] According to *The True Nature*, the father of Seth (the spiritual Adam) was not the same as the father of Abel (the sarcic-psychic Adam). It is somewhat easier to understand this idea on the basis of the LXX-version of Gen. 4:25 than on the basis of the Hebrew text since the Greek text does not report that Adam knew his wife *again* before the birth of Seth. Cf. Gilhus, *The Nature of the Archons*, 24.

[58] Barc, *L'Hypostase des Archontes*, 109; Gilhus, *The Nature of the Archons*, 80.

[59] For a discussion of this story see my article "Biblical narrative in Gnostic revision", in: F. García Martínez and G.P. Luttikhuizen, *Interpretations of the Flood* (TBN 1), Leiden 1999, 109–23.

as a helper to Noah and his children, the posterity of Seth. The story suggests that descendants of Seth are free to choose between admitting and refusing the bringer of the Gnostic truth.

Another aspect of the story about Norea deserves our attention. After the Flood, Yaldabaoth and his dark forces try to delude Norea, just as they tried earlier to attack her mother, the spiritual Eve. When she cries up to the true God for help, "Rescue me from the unrighteous rulers and save me from their clutches", an angelic representative of the divine world, who is called Eleleth, appears to her and informs her of her "root", i.e. of her divine provenance, and of the nature of the dark rulers. Apparently, her divine provenance does not make Norea immune to the threats of the forces of evil, and her divine origin does not yet ensure full spiritual knowledge. She has to receive the truth about God, about herself, and about the nature of the archontic rulers through revelation. Actually, the revelation granted to her by the angel Eleleth does not yet convey the complete Gnostic insight. The angel explains to her that the full truth is reserved for her "children" who, after three generations, will receive the revelation of "the perfect Man" (Jesus Christ).[60]

Conclusions

In *The Secret Book of John*, we do not find the idea that salvation is restricted to a closed and fixed group of human beings to the exclusion of others. What we do find is the idea that in the end the innermost centre of all human souls will be saved because this element is of divine origin and nature.

According to this writing, all human beings inherited the divine nature (usually designated as "the power of the Mother", i.e. Sophia) through Seth. On the other hand, this divine element is supposedly given to Seth and to all his children as a power or potential ($\delta \acute{\upsilon} \nu \alpha \mu \iota \varsigma$).[61] Only after the Spirit came down to Seth was the divine potential in him awakened. The same will happen to his posterity. The Gnostic

---

[60] In 91,2 he is called "the perfect Man", in 96,33f "the true Man".

[61] In particular in cod. III, the Greek term $\delta \acute{\upsilon} \nu \alpha \mu \iota \varsigma$ is used to denote the spiritual element in humanity ("the power of the Mother"): 15,24 (also II 10,21); 18,14.18; 22,17; 23, 20; 24,6.10 (also in II 19,29); 25,2 (also in II 20,11 and IV 31,6); 29,1.18; 34,2.7 (also in II 26,12f and IV 40,29).14. In these cases *BG* always uses the Coptic equivalent. Cf. the index of Greek words in Waldstein-Wisse, 235.

Christ of *The Secret Book* emphasizes that human souls should react positively to the call from above (the coming of the Spirit to them). If they do not, they run the risk of relapsing into forgetfulness. The spiritual power or nature is not a sufficient condition for salvation. Salvation is also dependent on grace (the grace of the divine call) and choice (the wish to develop one's spiritual potential).

The story of Eve's children in *The Secret Book* is meant, too, as a warning to John's fellow-spirits (the Gnostic readers): their light power is constantly endangered by Eloim-Cain and Yave-Abel, the supposed rulers over the physical environment in which they are forced to live (their "tomb").

In *The True Nature of the Archons*, the process of salvation is presented in a similar way. Although there is more interest here in the different descents of Cain, Abel, Seth, and Norea, this idea is not elaborated into a soteriological paradigm. The children of the sarcic and the spiritual Eve, respectively, are not depicted as the natural ancestors of different generations.[62] As far as Norea is concerned, even she was endangered by the forces of darkness and she, too, was in need of revelation and redemption.[63]

In *The Secret Book* and in *The True Nature*, the light power in human beings is imagined as a potential that has to grow and develop and to be brought to perfection.[64] According to these texts, Gnostics should live lives in accordance with their spiritual nature and therefore resist the temptations of the archontic rulers. Seth and, in *The True Nature*, Norea, "the woman whom the powers did not defile", were their models.

---

[62] Gilhus, *The Nature of the Archons*, 115, finds in the text "an aversion for developing fixed salvation categories dependent on birth", and argues that descent from the sarcic or the pneumatic Eve is a question of choice rather than of natural birth. Indeed on this point *The True Nature* does not deviate substantially from the pertinent views of Philo (all virtuous people are descendants of Seth, *De post. Caini* 42) and John's gospel (cf. esp. 3:3 and 8:44).

[63] But this does not mean that we are entitled to see in Norea a "saved saviour" figure, as Pearson, "Revisiting Norea", in: K. King (ed.), *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism*, 274f, proposes. Rather she is presented as the prototype of true humanity in the way she preserved and developed her spiritual potency.

[64] The Valentinians used other terminology to express basically the same idea: the pneumatic "seed" that was "sown" in the souls had to grow and to be "formed". Cf. *Exc. Theod.* 53, 3–5; 57,1; Schottroff, "Animae naturaliter salvandae", 91.

This page intentionally left blank

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RECENT STUDIES
(1980–2002)

Annemieke ter Brugge

Studies of Genesis 4

Alvarez Valdés, A., "Cain y Abel y el pecado original 'social'", *RevBib* 58 (1996) 237–243.

Azevedo, J., "At the Door of Paradise: A Contextual Interpretation of Gen 4:7", *BN* 100 (1999) 45–59.

Baloian, B., *Anger in the Old Testament*, New York/Bern 1992.

Basset, L., "Où est ton frère 'souffle'", *ETR* 73 (1998) 321–331.

Ben Yashar, M., "Zu Gen 4:7", *ZAW* 94 (1982) 635–637.

Benzoni, G., "Abele e Caino: fratelli per sangue, fratricidi per scelta", *Servitium* 31/2 (1997) 97–102.

Bledstein, A.J., "Was Eve Cursed? [or Did A Woman Write Genesis?]", *BiRe* 9 (1993) 42–45.

Boecker, H.J., *Recht und Gesetz im Alten Testament und im Alten Orient*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1984.

Boyer, F., "'Depuis le sang d'Abel . . .': fraternité, violence et transcendance", in: P. Beauchamp, P. Bovati & R. Meynet (eds.), *Ouvrir les Ecritures: mélanges offerts à Paul Beauchamp à l'occasion de ses soixante-dix ans*, Paris 1995, 53–64.

Brandscheidt, R., "Kain und Abel: die Sündenfallerzählung des Jahwisten in Gen 4,1–16", *TThZ* 106 (1997) 1–21.

Brocke, E., & E.W. Stegemann, "'Soll ich meines Bruders Hüter sein?' Bibelarbeit über Gen 4,1–16", in: A.H. Friedlander (ed.), *"Das Leben leise wieder lernen": jüdisches und christliches Selbstverständnis nach der Schoah*, Stuttgart 1997, 35–45.

Bryan, D.T., "A Reevaluation of Gen 4 and 5 in Light of Recent Studies in Genealogical Fluidity", *ZAW* 99 (1987) 180–188.

Calloud, J., "Caïn et Abel: l'homme et son frère", *SémBib* 88 (1997) 3–25.

Ceccherelli, I.M., "Caino; storia di una vita che abbraccia millenni", *BibOr* 34 (1992) 93–112.

Chevillard-Maubuisson, A., & A. Marchadour, "Cain et Abel: lecture et relectures", in: J. Delorme (ed.), *Le temps de la lecture: exégèse biblique et sémiotique*, Paris 1993, 267–291.

Choi, Ch.-M., "The Structure and Meaning of the Cain and Abel Story in Genesis 4", *Theological Thought* 95 (1996) 139–160.

Craig, K.M., "Questions outside Eden: Yahweh, Cain and their Rhetorical Interchange", *JSOT* 87 (2000) 3–12.

Davies, P.R., "Sons of Cain", in: J. Martin & P. Davies (eds.), *A Word in Season: Essays in Honour of William McKane*, Sheffield 1986, 35–56.

Deurloo, "Tesuqah 'dependency', Gen 4:7", *ZAW* 99 (1987) 405–406.

———, "The Scope of a Small Literary Unity in the OT. Introduction to the Interpretation of Genesis 4", in: M. Kessler (ed.), *Voices from Amsterdam. A modern Tradition of Reading Biblical Narrative*, Atlanta 1994, 37–51.

Diaz Mateos, M., "'Sangre de tu hermano me está gritando', en torno a la pena de muerte", *Páginas* 18/122 (1993) 21–30.

Dietrich, M., & O. Loretz, "Hurritisch-ugaritisch-hebräisch *tbl* 'Schmied'", *UF* 22 (1991) 87–88.

Dietrich, W., & Chr. Link, *Die dunklen Seiten Gottes I: Willkür und Gewalt*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1995.

Dijkhuis, H., *Kaïns kinderen. Over Kaïn en de oorsprong van het kwaad*, Amsterdam 1999.

Eichhorn, D.M., *Cain, Son of the Serpent*, New York 1986.

Ellul, J., "Technique and the Opening Chapters of Genesis: Essays in Christian Analysis and Exegesis", in: C. Mitcham & J. Grote (eds.), *Theology and Technology*, Lanham 1984, 123–137.

Fox, E., "Stalking the Younger Brother. Some Models for Understanding a Biblical Motif", *JSOT* 60 (1993) 45–68.

Garrone, D., "Abele il giusto", *PSV* 34 (1996) 11–23.

Gilbert, P., "Le premier meutre de l'humanité", *MoBi* 105 (1997) 7–11.

Girard, R., "How Can Satan Cast out Satan?", in: G. Braulik, W. Groß & S. McEvenue (eds.), *Biblische Theologie und gesellschaftlicher Wandel: Für Norbert Lohfink SJ.* Freiburg im Breisgau 1993, 125–141.

Golka, F.W., "Keine Gnade für Kain", in: R. Albertz, C. Westermann & H.-P. Müller (eds.), *Werden und Wirken des Alten Testaments: Festschr. für Claus Westermann zum 70. Geburtstag*, Göttingen 1980, 58–73.

Görg, M., "Kain und das 'Land Nod' ", *BN* 71 (1994) 5–12.

Heck, J.D., "Was Cain's Offering Rejected by God Because it was not a Blood Sacrifice: no", in: R. Youngblood (ed.), *The Genesis Debate*, Nashville 1986, 130–147.

Herion, G.A., "Why God Rejected Cain's Offering; the Obvious Answer", in: A.B. Beck & D.N. Freedman (eds.), *Fortunate the Eyes That See. Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman*, Grand Rapids 1995, 52–65.

Hobbs, H.H, "Was Cain's Offering Rejected by God Because it was not a Blood Sacrifice: yes", in: R. Youngblood (ed.), *The Genesis Debate*, Nashville 1986, 130–147.

Hogan, K.M., "The Exegetical Background of the 'Ambiguity of Death' in the Wisdom of Solomon", *JSJ* 30 (1999) 1–24.

Huffmon, H.B., "Cain the Arrogant Sufferer", in: S. Iwry, A. Kort & S. Morschauser (eds.), *Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry*, Winona Lake 1985, 109–113.

Hughes, J., *Secrets of the Times. Myths and History in Biblical Chronology*, Sheffield 1990.

Jacobson, H., "The Land of Nod", *JTS* 41 (1990) 91–92.

Janowski, B., *Sühne als Heilsgeschehen. Studien zur Sühnetheologie der Priesterschrift und zur Wurzel KPR im Alten Orient und im Alten Testamen*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1982.

Kabasele Mukenge, A., "Relecture de Gn 4,1–16 dans le contexte africain", *RAT* 21 (1997) 149–170.

Kahl, B., "And She Called His Name Seth . . .: The Birth of Critical Knowledge and the Unread End of Eve's Story", *USQR* 53 (1999) 19–28.

Kikawada, I.M., "A Quantitative Analysis of the 'Adam and Eve', 'Cain and Abel', and 'Noah' stories", in: E. Conrad & E. Newing (eds.), *Perspectives on Language and Text: Essays and Poems in Honor of Francis I. Andersen's Sixtieth Birthday*, Winona Lake 1987, 195–203.

Kim, A.Y., "Cain and Abel in the Light of Envy. A Study in the History of the Interpretation of Envy in Genesis 4,1–16", *JSPE* 12 (2001) 65–84.

Kimelman, R., "The Seduction of Eve and the Exegetical Politics of Gender", *Biblical Interpretation* 4 (1996) 1–39.

Klemm, P., "Kain und die Kainiten", *ZThK* 78 (1981) 391–408.

Klein, J.P., "How Job Fulfills God's Word to Cain", *BiRe* 9 (1993) 40–43.

Knut, J., "Then Began Men to Call Upon the Name of Yawheh. An Idea [Gen 4,26 should follow 3,24]", in: B. Otzen, *In the Last Days. On Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic and its Period*, Aarhus 1994, 158–163.

Krasovec, J., "Punishment and Mercy in the Primeval History", *EThL* 70 (1994) 5–33.

Kufeldt, G., "Were there People Before Adam and Eve: no", in: R. Youngblood (ed.), *The Genesis Debate*, Nashville 1986, 148–165.

Kunert, G., *Kain und Abels Brüderlichkeit: eine Rede*, Pongratz 1984.

Kuntzmann, R., "Frères dans le Proche Orient ancien", *MoBi* 105 (1997) 21–24.
Lee, N.C., "Exposing a Buried Subtext in Jeremiah and Lamentations: Going after Baal and . . . Abel", in: A. Diamond, K.M. O'Connor & L. Stulman (eds.), *Troubling Jeremiah*, Sheffield 1999, 87–122.
Lehmann, K.P., "Die Ohnmacht des Gerechten und die Macht der Religion. Eine Auslegung von Gen 4,1.25–26", *TeKo* 16,3 (1993) 3–24.
Lescow, T., "Gen 4,1.25; zwei archaische Geburtsberichte. Ein Nachtrag", *ZAW* 105 (1993) 19–26.
Levin, S., "The Abel Syndrome", *JBQ* 20 (1991) 111–114.
———, "Genesis and Genetics", *JBQ* 27 (1999) 45–48.
Lewis, J.P., "The Offering of Abel (Gen 4:4). A History of Interpretation", *JETS* 37 (1994) 481–496.
Lim, J.T.K., *Grace in the Midst of Judgement: Grappling with Genesis 1–11*, Berlin 2002.
Lowe, W., "The Bitterness of Cain: [Post]modern Flight from Determinancy", *JLT* 12 (1998) 379–389.
Maccoby, H., *The Sacred Executioner: Human Sacrifice and the Legacy of Guilt*, London 1982.
Manicardi, L., "L'omicidio è un fratricidio (Gen 4, 1–16)", *PSV* 32 (1995) 11–26.
Matthes, K.-H., "Schöpfung und Sündenfall: von Kain und Abel bis Lamech: umgestaltete Überlieferungen", *Theologie* 13 (1997).
Mellinkoff, R., *The Mark of Cain*, Berkeley 1981.
Meyers, C., *Discovering Eve. Ancient Israelite Women in Context*, Oxford 1988.
Michel, D., "'Warum' und 'Wozu'? Eine bisher übersehene Eigentümlichkeit des Hebräischen und ihre Konsequenzen für das alttestamentliche Geschichtsverständnis", in: J. Hesse (ed.), *"Mitten im Tod vom Leben umfangen". Gedenkschrift für W. Kohler*, Frankfurt a.M. 1988, 191–210.
Moster, J.B., "Cain: Why is He Featured So Prominently in the Bible?", *JBQ* 24 (1996) 233–240.
Nakarai, T.W., "LMH and MDU in the TANAK", *HebStud* 23 (1982) 45–50.
Neusch, M., "Du sacrifice d'Abel à celui du Christ", *MoBi* 105 (1997) 46–48.
Noort, E., "Vengeance is Mine. Some Remarks on the Concepts of Divine Vengeance and Wrath in the Hebrew Bible", in: R. Kessler & P. Vandermeersch (eds.), *God, Biblical Stories and Psychoanalytic Understanding*, Frankfurt/M 2001, 155–169.
Oded, B., "The Table of Nations: a Socio-Cultural Approach", *ZAW* 98 (1986) 14–31.
Paul, M.J., "Genesis 4:17–24: a Case-Study in Eisegesis", *TynB* 47 (1996) 143–162.
Pirani, A., "Cain and Abel; a Case for Family Therapy?", in: B. Krondorfer (ed.), *Body and Bible; Interpreting and Experiencing Biblical Narratives*, Philadelphia 1992, 145–158.
Poorthuis, M., "Moses' Rod in Zipporah's Garden", in: A. Houtman, M.J.H.M. Poorthuis, J. Schwartz (eds.), *Sanctity of Time and Space in Tradition and Modernity*, Leiden 1998, 231–264.
Pospísil, L., *Anthropologie des Rechts. Recht und Gesellschaft in archaischen und modernen Kulturen*, München 1982.
Radday, Y., "Humour in Names", in: Y. Radday & A. Brenner (eds.), *On Humour and the Comic in the Hebrew Bible*, Sheffield 1990, 59–97.
Ramsey, G.W., "Is Name-Giving an Act of Domination in Genesis 2:23 and Elsewhere?", *CBQ* 50 (1988) 24–35.
Ratner, R.J., "Cain and Abel, and the Problem of Paradox", *JRefJud* 37,4 (1990) 9–20.
Reis, P.T., "What Cain said: a Note on Genesis 4.8", *JSOT* 27 (2002) 107–113.
Rudman, D., "A Little Knowledge is a Dangerous Thing: Crossing Forbidden Boundaries in Gen 3–4", in: A. Wénin (ed.), *Studies in the Book of Genesis: Literature, Redaction and History*, Leuven 2001, 461–466.
Savasta, C., "Gen. 3,20–24; 4,1–4a,26g", *BeO* 38 (1996) 65–77.
———, "I 'Cainiti'; discendenti di Caino?", *BeOr* 35 (1993) 15–20.
Scalise, P.J., "'I have Produced a Man with the Lord' [Gen 4,1]. God as Provider

of Offspring [and their upbringing] in Old Testament Theology", *RExp* 91 (1994) 577–589.

Schwartz, R.M., *The Curse of Cain: the Violent Legacy of Monotheism*, Chicago 1997.

Seaford, H.W., "Were there People Before Adam and Eve: yes", in: R. Youngblood (ed.), *The Genesis Debate*, Nashville 1986, 148–165.

Seidel, H., "Genesis 4,19–21 und der Ursprung der Kultur", in: G. Wallis (ed.), *Überlieferung und Geschichte*, Halle 1990, 23–34.

Seters, J. van, "The Primeval Histories of Greece and Israel Compared", *ZAW* 100 (1988) 1–22.

Shipp, R.M., " 'Let Us Make a Name for Ourselves': Human Innovation and Technology in Genesis 1–11", *Christian Studies* 17 (1999) 17–29.

Sirat, R.-S., "Si vous voyez mon fils aîné", *MoBi* 105 (1997) 32–34.

Spina, F.A., "The Ground for Cain's Rejection (Gen 4): 'Adamah' in the Context of Gen 1–11", *ZAW* 104 (1992) 319–332.

Steinmetz, D., "Vineyard, Farm, and Garten: The Drunkeness of Noah in the Context of Primeval History", *JBL* 112 (1993) 193–207.

Vattioni, F., "Gen 4,10; vox sanguinis fratris tui clamat ad me de terra", *Sangue* 8 (1991) 265–304.

Vermeylen, J., "La descendance de Caïn et la descendance d'Abel", *ZAW* 103 (1991) 175–193.

Vogels, W., "Caïn; l'être humain qui devient une non-personne", *NRT* 114 (1992) 321–340.

Waltke, B.K., "Cain and his Offering", *WThJ* 48 (1986) 363–372.

Wénin, A., "Adam et Eve: La jalousie de Caïn, 'semence' du serpent. Un aspect du récit mythique de Genèse 1–4", in: *RevSR 73* (1999) 3–16.

West, G., "Reading 'the Text' and Reading 'Behind-the-Text': the Cain and Abel Story in a Context of Liberation", in: D. Clines, S.E. Fowl & S.E. Porter (eds.), *The Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield*, Sheffield 1990, 299–320.

———, "Two Modes of Reading the Bible in the South African Context of Liberation", *JTSA* 73 (1990) 34–47.

Westbrook, R., *Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Law*, Paris 1988.

Westermann, C., "Kain und Abel, die biblische Erzählung", in: R. Albertz & C. Westermann (eds.), *Erträge der Forschung am Alten Testament. Gesammelte Studien III*, München 1984, 39–53.

Wiesel, E. & A. Martin, "Cain & Abel: 'He Who Kills, Kills his Brother' ", *BiRe* 14 (1998) 20–21.

Wiesel, E. & M.L. Hauptman, "Seth: The Ancestor of Us All", *BiRe* 15 (1999) 16–17.

Wilson, R.R., "The City in the Old Testament", in: P. Hawkins (ed.), *Civitas: Religious Interpretations of the City*, Atlanta 1986, 3–13.

Wittenberg, G., "Alienation and 'Emancipation' from the Earth: the Earth Story in Genesis 4", in: N.C. Habel & S. Wurst (eds.), *Earth Story in Genesis*, Sheffield 2000, 105–116.

Wolde, E. van, "The Story of Cain and Abel. A Narrative Study", *JSOT* 52 (1991) 25–41.

Wölfl, E., *Jenseits von Kain und Abel: Wege aus gewaltsamer Männlichkeit*, München 2000.

Wöller, U., "Zu Gen 4:7", *ZAW* 96 (1984) 271–272.

Ancient Receptions

Alexandre, M., *Le commencement du livre Genèse I–V: La version grecque de la Septante et sa réception*, Paris 1988.

Anderson, G.A., & M. Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*, Atlanta 1994.

Bassler, J.M., "Cain and Abel in the Palestinian Targums. A Brief Note on an Old Controversy", *JSJ* 17 (1986) 56–64.

Bonneau, G., & J. Duhaime, "Angélogie et légitimation socio-religieuse dans le livre des Jubilés", *Église et Théologie* 27 (1996) 335–349.

Bork-Qaysieh, W., *Die Geschichte von Kain und Abel in der sunnitisch-islamischen Überlieferung. Untersuchung von Beispielen aus verschiedenen Literaturwerken unter Berücksichtigung ihres Einflusses auf den Volksglauben*, Mainz 1993.

Böttrich, C., *"Die Vögel des Himmels haben ihn begraben". Überlieferungen zu Abels Bestattung und zur Ätiologie des Grabes*, Göttingen 1995.

Brandscheidt, R., "Two Syriac Dialogue Poems on Abel and Cain", *Le Muséon: revue d'études orientales* 113 (2000) 333–376.

Caquot, A., "Deux notes sur la géographie des Jubilés", in: G. Nahon & C. Touati (eds.) *Hommage à Georges Vajda. Études d'histoire et de pensée juives*, Louvain 1980, 37–42.

———, "Suppléments qoumrâniens à la Genèse", *RHPhR* 80 (2000) 339–358.

Cerbelaud, "Caïn et Abel: le renversement", *RSR* 85 (1997) 167–175.

———, "Caïn et Abel—Les interprétations des Pères de l'Église", *MoBi* 105 (1997) 43–45.

Chilton, B., "A Comparative Study of Synoptic Development: The Dispute Between Cain and Abel in the Palestinian Targums and the Beelzebul Controversy in the Gospels", *JBL* 101 (1982) 553–562.

Collins, J.J., "In the Likeness of the Holy Ones: The Creation of Humankind in a Wisdom Text from Qumran", in D.W. Parry & E. Ulrich (eds.), *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Technological Innovations, New Texts, and Reformulated Issues*, Leiden/Boston/Köln 1999, 609–618.

Colpe, C., "Sethian and Zoroastrian Ages of the World", in: B. Layton (ed.), *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, March 28–31, 1978, II*, Leiden 1981, 540–552.

Delaney, D.K., *The Sevenfold Vengeance of Cain: Genesis 4 in Early Jewish and Christian Interpretation*, Virginia 1996.

Erffa, H.M. von, *Ikonologie der Genesis. Die christlichen Bildthemen aus dem Alten Testament und ihre Quellen*, München 1989.

Fletcher-Louis, C.H.T., *All the Glory of Adam. Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Leiden/Boston/Köln 2002.

Fournet, J.-L., "Une éthopée [exercice de rhétorique] de Caïn dans le Codex des Visions de la Fondation Bothmer", *ZPE* 92 (1992) 253–266.

Fraade, S.D., *Enosh and His Generation. Pre-Israelite Hero and History in Postbiblical Interpretation*, Chico 1984.

Glazer, B., & J. Fossum, "Seth in the Magical Texts", *ZPE* 100 (1994) 86–92.

Glenthoj, J.B., *Cain and Abel in Syriac and Greek Writers*, Leuven 1997.

Goldberg, A., "Kain: Sohn des Menschen oder Sohn der Schlange?" in: M. Schlüter, P. Schäfer & A. Goldberg (eds.), *Mystik und Theologie des rabbinischen Judentums. Gesammelte Studien I*, Tübingen 1969/1997, 275–288.

Grattepanche, J., "Caïn et Abel dans les légendes islamiques", *OLP* 24 (1993) 133–142.

Gutmann, J., "Cain's Burial of Abel. A Jewish Legendary Motif in Christian and Islamic Art", *EI* 16 (1982) 92–98.

Halpern-Amaru, B., *The Empowerment of Women in the Book of Jubilees*, Leiden 1999.

———, *Rewriting the Bible. Land and Covenant in Post-Biblical Jewish Literature*, Valley Forge 1994.

———, "The First Woman, Wives, and Mothers in *Jubilees*", *JBL* 113 (1994) 609–626.

Harl, M., *La Bible d'Alexandrie: La Genèse*, Paris 1986.

Hayward, C.T.R., "Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan", *JJS* 42 (1991) 215–246.

Hughes, R.A., "The Cain Complex and the Apostle Paul", *Soundings* 65 (1982) 5–22.

Hurst, A., & J. Rudhardt, *Papyri Bodmer XXX–XXXVII. Codex des Visions. Poèmes divers. Édités avec une introduction générale, des traductions et des notes*, München 1999.

Janson, A.G.P., & L. van Rompay, *Efrem de Syriër. Uitleg van het boek Genesis*, Kampen 1993.

Klauck, H.J., "Brudermord und Bruderliebe: ethische Paradigmen in Joh 3,11–17", in: H. Merklein (ed.), *Neues Testament und Ethik*, Freiburg 1989, 151–169.

Kourcikidzé, C., *La Caverne des Trésors*, Lovanii 1993.

Kraft, R., "Philo on Seth: Was Philo Aware of Traditions which Exalted Seth and His Progeny?", in: B. Layton (ed.), *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*, vol. II, Leiden 1981, 457–8.

Kruif, T.C. de, "Nicht wie Kain (der) vom Büsen war . . . (1 Joh 3,13)," *Bijdragen* 41 (1980) 47–63.

Kruisheer, D., "Reconstructing Jacob of Edessa's Scholia", in: J. Frishman (ed.), *The Book of Genesis in Jewish and Oriental Christian Interpretation*, Lovanii 1997, 187–196.

Kugel, J.L., "Cain and Abel in Fact and Fable", in: R. Brooks & J.J. Collins (eds.), *Hebrew Bible or Old Testament?*, Notre Dame 1989, 167–190.

———, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as it was at the Start of the Common Era*, Cambridge MA 1998.

Kvam, B.O.G., " 'Is Cain Among the Forsaken Firstborns?' Some Remarks on the Rendering of Genesis 4,8b in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan", in: E. Wardini (ed.), *Built on Solid Rock. Studies in Honour of Professor Ebbe Egede Knudson on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday April 11th 1997*, Oslo 1997, 174–186.

Landman, C., "The Etymological and Allegorical Functioning of Cain, Abel and Seth in the Exegetical Methods of Philo and Augustine", *EkklPh* 65 (1983) 17–26.

Layton, B. (ed.), *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism. Proceedings of the International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, March 28–31, 1978, vol II: Sethian Gnosticism*, Leiden 1981.

Lemaire, A., "Le pays d'Eden et le Bît-Adini: aux origines d'un mythe", *Syr.* 58 (1981) 313–330.

Leonhard, C., "Observations on the Date of the Syriac *Cave of Treasures*", in: P.M.M. Daviau, J.W. Wevers & M. Weigl (eds.), *The World of the Aramaeans* III. *Studies in Language and Literature in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion*, Sheffield 2001, pp. 253–293.

Levison, J.R., *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism. From Sirach to 2 Baruch*, Sheffield 1988.

Lieu, J.M., "Biblical Theology and the Johannine Literature", in: S. Pedersen (ed.) *New Directions in Biblical Theology: Papers of the Aarhus Conference, 16–19 September 1992*, Leiden 1994, 93–107.

Lifschitz, D., *Caino e Abele; l'Aggadah su Genesi 4 e 5*, Rome 1993.

Lipscomb, W.L., "Foreign Influences on the Armenian Apocryphal Adam Books", in: T. Samuelian (ed.), *Classical Armenian Culture: Influences and Creativity*, Atlanta 1982, 102–112.

Mack, B.L., "Decoding the Scripture: Philo and the Rules of Rhetoric [Gen 4:2]", in: F. Greenspahn, E. Hilgert & B. Mack (eds.), *Nourished with Peace*, 81–115.

Magnelli, E., "Sui nuovi poemetti del Codice delle Visioni (*PBodmer* 31.43,62; 32.15; 35.64–65)", *ZPE* 132 (2000) 151–6.

Maher, M., *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, Edinburgh 1992.

Maori, Y., *The Peshitta version of the Pentateuch and Early Jewish Exegesis*, Jerusalem 1995 (hebr.).

Mathews, E.G., "Armenian Commentary Attributed to Ephrem", in: J. Frishman & L. Van Rompay (eds.), *The Book of Genesis in Jewish and Oriental Christian Interpretation: a Collection of Essays*, Leuven 1997, 150–151.

Messana, V., "L'esegesi tropologica presso i padri e le bibliche figure di Abele e di Caino in Ambrogio ed Agostino", in: E. Livingstone (ed.), *Papers Presented to the Seventh International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 1975*, Berlin 1984, 185–195.

Mirecki, P.A., "The Figure of Seth in a Coptic Magical Text", in: D. Johnson (ed.), *Acts of the Fifth International Congress of Coptic Studies: Washington, 12–15 August 1992*, Roma 1993, 313–327.

Muñoz León, D., "El derás sobre Caín y Abel en 1 Jn y la situación de la comunidad Joánica", *EstB* 53,2 (1995) 213–238.

Najman, H., "Interpretation as Primordial Writing. *Jubilees* and its Authority Conferring Strategies", *JSJ* 30 (1999) 379–410.

Onasch, C., "Der ägyptische und der biblische Seth", *APEF* 27 (1980) 99ff.

Pearson, B.A., "The Figure of Seth in Gnostic Literature", in: B. Layton (ed.), *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*, vol. II, Leiden 1981, 472–504.

———, "Revisiting Norea", in: K. King (ed.), *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism*, Philadelphia 1988, 265–275.

———, "Cain and the Cainites", in: B. Pearson (ed.), *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity*, Minneapolis 1990, 95–107.

Peels, H.G.L., "The blood 'from Abel to Zechariah' (Matthew 23,35; Luke 11,50f.) and the canon of the Old Testament", *ZAW* 113 (2001) 583–601.

Perani, M., "Abele nella tradizione ebraica", *PSV* 34 (1996) 113–133.

Plaut, W.G., "Genesis 4:1–16: Cain and Abel: Bible, Tradition, and Contemporary Reflection", in: F.C. Holmgren (ed.), *Preaching Biblical Texts; Expositions by Jewish and Christian Scholars*, Grand Rapids 1995, 11–16.

Reeves, J.C., "Manichaica Aramaica? Adam and the Magical Deliverance of Seth", *JAOS* 119 (1999) 432–439.

Reim, "Joh. 8:44—Gotteskinder-Teufelskinder: wie antijudaistisch ist 'die wohl antijudaistischste Ausserung des NT'", *NTS* 30 (1984) 619–624.

Ri, Su-Min, *La Caverne des Trésors. Les deux recensions syriaques*, Leuven 1987.

———, *Commentaire de la 'Caverne des trésors'. Étude sur l'histoire du texte et de ses sources*, Louvain 2000.

Romilly, J. de, "Frères ennemis dans la Grèce antique", *MoBi* 105 (1997) 25–27.

Rook, J., "The Names of the Wives from Adam to Abraham in the Book of *Jubilees*", *JSP* 7 (1990) 105–117.

Rösel, M., *Übersetzung als Vollendung der Auslegung. Studien zur Genesis-Septuaginta*, Berlin 1994.

Rouillard, H., "Et si Caïn voulait que l'oeil le regardât: étude des transformations de Gen 4,14 à travers la LXX et Philon d'Alexandrie", in: A. Caquot, M. Hadas-Lebel & J. Riaud (eds.) *Hellenica et Judaica*, Leuven 1986, 79–83.

Royse, J.R., "Cain's Expulsion from Paradise: the Text of Philo's *Congr* 171", *JQR* 79 (1989) 219–225.

Rüger, P., "Das Begräbnis Abels. Zur Vorlage von Sure 5:31", *BN* 14 (1981) 37–45.

Ruiten, J. van, "De interpretatie van Genesis 4,6–7 in de Septuaginta", in: P.H.M. Welzen, M.C.N. Deckers-Dijs, J.F.M. Smit & C.M.L. Verdegaal (eds.), *Exegeten aan het werk. Vertalen en interpreteren van de bijbel. Opstellen van leden van het Bijbels Werkgenootschap St. Hiëronymus*, 's Hertogenbosch 1998, 25–33.

———, *Primaeval History Interpreted: The Rewriting of Genesis 1–11 in the Book of Jubilees*, Leiden 2000.

Ruzer, S., "The Cave of Treasures on Swearing by Abel's Blood and Expulsion from Paradise: Two Exegetical Motifs in Context", JECS 9 (2001) 251–271.

Sawyer, J.F.A., "Cain and Hephaestus: Possible Relics of Metalworking Traditions", *Abr-Nahrain* 24 (1986) 155–166.

Shinan, A., "Folk Elements in the Aramaic Targum Pseudo-Jonathan", in: I. Ben-Ami & J. Dan (eds.), *Studies in Aggadah and Jewish Folklore*, Jerusalem 1983, 139–155 (Hebr.).

———, "The Angelology of the 'Palestinian' Targums tot the Pentateuch", *Sef.* 43 (1983) 181–198.

Stone, M.E., *The Penitence of Adam*, Leuven 1981.

Stroumsa, G., *Another Seed. Studies in Gnostic Mythology*, Leiden 1984.

Tromp, J., "Cain and Abel in the Greek and Armenian/Georgian Recensions of

the 'Life of Adam and Eve'", in: G. Anderson, M. Stone & J. Tromp (eds.), *Literature on Adam and Eve. Collected Essays*, Leiden 2000, 277–296.

Turner, J.D., "The Gnostic Seth", in: M. Stone, & T.A. Bergren (eds.), *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible*, Harrisburg 1998, 33–58.

———, "To See the Light: a Gnostic Appropriation of Jewish Priestly Practice and Sapiential and Apocalyptic Visionary Lore", in: R. Berchman (ed.), *Mediators of the Divine: Horizons of Prophecy, Divination, Dreams and Theurgy in Mediterranean Antiquity*, Atlanta 1998, 63–113.

Uebele, W. "Der zweite Sündenfall und die Frommen der Urzeit: Kain und Abel, Henoch und Noach im Spiegel der alttestamentlich-frühjüdischen und urchrist-lichen Literatur", in: M. Öhler (ed.), *Alttestamentliche Gestalten im Neuen Testament. Beiträge zur Biblischen Theologie*, Darmstadt 1999, 40–53.

Uthemann, K.H., "Ein Nachtrag zu Seth in der patristischen Literatur", *VigChr* 36 (1982) 287–291.

VanderKam, J.C., "Das chronologische Konzept des Jubiläenbuches", *ZAW* 107 (1995) 80–100.

Waskow, A., "Brothers Reconciled", *Sojourners* 28 (1999) 42–46.

Zilio-Grandi, I., "La figure Caïn dans le Coran", *RHR* 216 (1999) 31–85.

Modern Receptions

Balmas, E., "La Tragédie de Cain de Thomas Lecoq", in: J. Delumeau, H. Weber & A. Michel (eds.), *Mélanges à la mémoire de V.L. Saulnier*, Geneva 1984, 651–662.

Bastian, T., & M. Hilgers, "Kain. Die Trennung von Scham und Schuld am Beispiel der Genesis", *Psyche* 12 (1990) 1100–1111.

Beck, J.H., "Michelangelo's Sacrifice on the Sistene ceiling", in: J. Monfasani & R.G. Musto (eds.), *Renaissance Society and Culture*, New York 1991, 9–22.

Blaicher, G., "Byron's Cain: vom 'negativen' Typus zum Prototyp der Moderne", in: F. Link (ed.), *Paradeigmata: literarische Typologie des Alten Testaments I*, Berlin 1989, 375–391.

Boone, B.W., "The Skill of Cain in the English Mystery Cycles", *Comparative Drama* 16 (1982) 112–129.

Bowen, J.R., "Elaborating Scriptures; Cain and Abel in Gayo Society", *Man* 27 (1992) 495–516.

Cantor, P.A., "Byron's 'Cain': A Romantic Version of the Fall", *KenyR* 2 (1980) 50ff.

Carroll, M.P., "Genesis Restructured", in: B. Lang (ed.), *Anthropological Approaches to the Old Testament*, Philadelphia/London 1985, 127–135.

Fisch, H., "Byron's Cain as Sacred Executioner", in: W.Z. Hirst (ed.), *Byron, the Bible, and Religion: Essays from the Twelfth International Byron Seminar*, Newark Delaware 1991, 25–38.

Friedman, N., "Bridging Science and Spirit: Common Elements in David Bohm's Physics, the Perennial Philosophy and Seth", *JPsT* 23 (1995) 60–62.

Goedegebure, J., "Rebel Without a Cause; het beeld van Kain in de literatuur", in: C. Verdegaal & W. Weren (eds.), *Stromen uit Eden. Genesis 1–11 in bijbel, joodse exegese en moderne literatuur*, Boxtel 1992, 253–263.

Hagenbüchle, H., "Die Kainsgeschichte in East of Eden: John Steinbecks Plädoyer für Selbstverantwortung und Selbstverwirklichung", in: F. Link (ed.), *Paradeigmata: literarische Typologie des Alten Testaments II*, Berlin 1989, 629–650.

Hirst, W.Z., "Byron's Lapse into Orthodoxy: An Unorthodox Reading of Cain", *Keats Shelley Journal* 29 (1980) 151ff.

———, "Byron's Revisionary Struggle with the Bible", in: W.Z. Hirst (ed.), *Byron, the Bible, and Religion: Essays from the Twelfth International Byron Seminar*, Newark Delaware 1991, 77–100.

Hoeper, J.D., "Cain, Canaanites, and Philistines in Sam Shepard's 'True West'", *Modern Drama* 36,1 (1993) 76–82.

Janik, "Das Kains-Motiv in spanisch-amerikanischen Romanen des 20. Jahrhunderts", in: F. Link (ed.), *Paradeigmata: literarische Typologie des Alten Testaments II*, Berlin1989, 577–589.

Kelly, W., "Melville's Cain", *AL* 55 (1983) 24ff.

Kimball, J., "Lui, c'est moi: The Brother Relationship in Ulysses", *James Joyce Quarterly* 25 (1988) 227ff.

Kneller, J.W., "Anteros, Son of Cain", in: M.A. Caws & H.M. Peyre (eds.), *Writing in a Modern Temper: Essays on French Literature and Thought in Honor of Henri Peyre*, Saratoga 1984, 91ff.

Leach, E., "Anthropological Approaches to the Study of the Bible during the Twentieth Century", in: G. Tucker, D.A. Knight (eds.), *Humanizing America's Iconic Book: Society of Biblical Literature Centennial Addresses 1980*, Chico 1982, 73–94.

Lestringant, F., "L'errance de Caïn: D'Aubigne, Du Bartas, Hugo, Baudelaire", *RSHum* 245 (1997) 13–32.

Liebler, N.C., "Shakespeare's Medieval Husbandry: Cain and Abel, Richard II, and Brudermord", *Mediaevalia: a Journal of Medieval Studies* 18 (1995) 451–474.

McEntire, M., "Cain and Abel in Africa: an Ethiopian Case Study in Competing Hermeneutics", in: G.O. West & M.W. Dube (eds.), *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories, and Trends*, Leiden 2000, 248–259.

McVeigh, D., "In Caines Cynne: Byron and the Mark of Cain", *MLQ* 43 (1982) 337ff.

Mellinkoff, R., "Cain's Monstrous Progeny in *Beowulf*: Part 2, Post-Diluvian Survival", *Anglo-Saxon England* 9 (1981) 183–197.

Meyer, M.J., "Finding a New Jerusalem: The Edenic Myth in John Steinbeck", in: D. Bevan (ed.), *Literature and the Bible*, Amsterdam/Atlanta 1993, 95–117.

Plank, K.A., "Scripture in a Sealed Railway-Car: A Poem of Dan Pagis [Eve, Cain, Abel, and Holocaust language]", *JTL* 7 (1993) 354–364.

Plantinga, C., "Murder, Envy, and the Harvest Princess", *ChrTo* 35 (1991) 26–28.

Quinones, R.J., "Byron's Cain: Between History and Theology", in: W.Z. Hirst (ed.), *Byron, the Bible, and Religion: Essays from the Twelfth International Byron Seminar*, Newark Delaware 1991, 39–57.

———, *The Changes of Cain. Violence and the Lost Brother in Cain and Abel Literature*, Princeton 1991.

———, "Ulysses' Brother: The Cain and Abel Theme in Dante's *Commedia*", *Renaissance Studies in Honour of Craigh Hugh Smyth*, Florence 1985.

Schulte Herbrüggen, H., "Wo ist dein Bruder Abel? Brudermord: ein biblischer Motivtypus und seine Variationen in der englischen Literatur bis Shakespeare", in: F. Link (ed.), *Paradeigmata: literarische Typologie des Alten Testaments I*, Berlin 1989, 181–202.

Schwartz, M.B., "The Blood of Thy Brother: Antigone Suicides, Cain doesn't", *Journal of Psychology and Judaism* 18,4 (1994) 315–322.

Smeets, J.R., "L'arme et le signe de Caïn dans les traductions de la bible en vers ancien français", *Romania* 459–560 (1997) 552–562.

Thorslev, P.L., "Byron and Bayle: Biblical Skepticism and Romantic Irony", in: W.Z. Hirst (ed.), *Byron, the Bible, and Religion: Essays from the Twelfth International Byron Seminar*, Newark Delaware 1991, 58–76.

Ulrich, A., *Kain und Abel in der Kunst. Untersuchungen zur Ikonographie und Auslegungsgeschichte*, Bamberg 1981.

Williams, D., *Cain and Beowulf: A Study in Secular Allegory*, Toronto 1982.

This page intentionally left blank

INDEX OF ANCIENT TEXTS

I. GREEK AND LATIN PAGAN TEXTS

II. JEWISH TEXTS

1. Hebrew Bible

2. Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

3. Dead Sea Scrolls

4. Targumim

III. CHRISTIAN TEXTS

1. NEW TESTAMENT

2. EXTRA-CANONICAL EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITINGS

3. Patristic Texts

THEMES IN
BIBLICAL NARRATIVE
JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS