

R. MOSES THE PREACHER AND THE TESTAMENTS OF THE TWELVE PATRIARCHS

by

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R. Moses the Preacher in eleventh-century Narbonne was the compiler of an early example of the genre of biblical commentary to which the later *Yalqut Shim'oni* belongs, the anthology drawn from a wide range of rabbinic sources. *Bereshit Rabbati* (henceforth, *BR*), *Midrash Aggadah*, and *Bemidbar Rabbah* to *Bemidbar* and *Naso* are the surviving remnants of this work.¹

R. Moses' use of nonrabbinic traditions as well, including some from the pseudepigrapha, has often been noted.² The appearance of these traditions

1. On R. Moses, see Abraham Epstein, *R. Mosheh ha-darshan mi-Narbonah* (Vienna, 1891; reprinted in *Kitvei R. A. Epstein*, ed. A. M. Habermann [Jerusalem, 1950], pp. 213–244); Hanokh Albeck, ed., *Midrash Bereshit Rabbati* (Jerusalem, 1940), introduction; and S. W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 17 vols. to date (New York and Philadelphia, 1958–), 6:171–172, 410–411.

On the relationship of the preserved works to each other, see Albeck, introduction, pp. 5–21.

2. In addition to the studies mentioned in note 1, see Epstein, "Le livre des Jubilés, Philon, et le *Midrasch Tadsche*," *Revue des études juives* 21 (1890): 80–97; 22 (1891): 1–25; and Samuel Belkin, "Midrash *Tadshe*; or, The Midrash of R. Phineas b. Ya'ir: An Early Hellenistic Midrash" (Hebrew), *Horev* 11 (1951): 1–52, who goes much further than Epstein in discerning Philo's influence on *Midrash Tadshe*. The attribution of *Midrash Tadshe* to R. Moses is speculative. Albeck rejects it (*Bereshit Rabbati*, introduction, p. 16).

in his work is part of a little-studied process of reclamation of literature of the Second Temple period by Jews in post-talmudic times, beginning with *Pirquei de-Rabbi 'Eli'ezer* in perhaps the eighth century.³ With the emergence of rabbinic Judaism, most of that literature was abandoned by Jews. The works of Philo, the Apocrypha, and the pseudepigrapha all owe their preservation to Christians.⁴

The nature of the reclamation varies. Complete Hebrew and Aramaic versions of many books of the Apocrypha circulated in the Middle Ages, but the influence of pseudepigrapha is more often in motifs, themes, or citations embedded in larger works.⁵

It is much more difficult to explain how medieval Jews came to know the pseudepigrapha than the Apocrypha, which had become part of the Chris-

3. Yosef Dan, *Ha-Sippur ha-'ivri bi-yemei ha-baynayyim* (Jerusalem, 1974), pp. 134–135, calls the reappropriation of texts and traditions from the Second Temple period a characteristic of medieval reworkings of biblical stories.

4. The Apocrypha are those books that were included in the canon of the Greek Bible used by Jews but not in the Hebrew Bible. They are all of Jewish origin.

The corpus of the pseudepigrapha, on the other hand, has been defined by modern scholars. The term has the value of convenience, but there are no clear-cut criteria for membership in the corpus. The various texts contained in the collections have in common their attribution to heroes of the Hebrew Bible, but they are extremely diverse in content and in provenance. The standard English-language collection has been R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1913). The new collection edited by J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (Garden City, N.Y., 1983), is much larger in scope. Both collections include works undoubtedly written by Christians. Distinguishing a Jewish work retouched by Christian transmitters from a Christian work that draws on Jewish traditions raises a variety of methodological problems.

5. For the Apocrypha, see the introductions to individual books in Avraham Kahana, *Ha-Sefarim ha-hisoniyim*, 2 vols. (Tel Aviv, 1956). For examples of the influence of the pseudepigrapha, see Dan, *Ha-Sippur ha-'ivri*, pp. 133–141, and M. E. Stone, *Scriptures, Sects and Visions: A Profile of Judaism from Ezra to the Jewish Revolts* (Philadelphia, 1980), pp. 109–111. On specific topics, see, for example, Martha Himmelfarb, "A Report on Enoch in Rabbinic Literature," in *Society of Biblical Literature: 1978 Seminar Papers*, ed. P. J. Achtemeier, 2 vols. (Missoula, Mont., 1978), 1:259–269 (on motifs from 1 Enoch and Jubilees); and W. L. Lipscomb, "A Tradition from the Book of Jubilees in Armenian," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 29 (1978): 149–163 (on lists of wives of the patriarchs dependent on Jubilees, including some in medieval Hebrew works).

It should also be noted that entire medieval works drawn largely from traditions of the pseudepigrapha exist in the Hebrew Testament of Naphtali (in S. A. Wertheimer, revised by A. Y. Wertheimer, *Batei midrashot*, 2 vols. [Jerusalem, 1969], 1:187–203) and *Midrash Va-yissa'u* (critical editions by J. B. Lauterbach, "Midrash Va-yissa'u; or, The Book of the Wars of the Sons of Jacob" [Hebrew], in *Abhandlungen zur Erinnerung an Hirsch Perez Chajes* [Vienna, 1933], Hebrew sec., pp. 205–222; and Yosef Dan and Tamar Alexander, "The Complete Midrash Va-yissa'u" [Hebrew], *Folklore Research Center Studies* 3 [1972], Hebrew sec., pp. 67–76; each edition contains MSS unknown to the other).

tian Bible and thus was widely available in Europe in the Middle Ages. The possibility that Jews borrowed pseudepigrapha from Christians cannot be ruled out, but many of the pseudepigrapha were not known to the Christians of Europe. For example, the Book of Jubilees, which leaves traces in several post-talmudic works, including R. Moses', was preserved not by European Christians but by the Ethiopic church. Thus it appears that there are grounds for supposing internal Jewish transmission of Jubilees, although the process of transmission cannot yet be described.⁶ In some instances medieval Jewish works seem to reflect knowledge not of the pseudepigraphic texts that have come down to us, but of works on which those texts drew. That is, the authors of the medieval works seem to have had access to the sources of the surviving texts.⁷

Further, the designation "pseudepigrapha" should not mislead us into assuming a common history of transmission for texts thus labeled. Unlike the Apocrypha, the pseudepigrapha were collected by modern scholars. Thus it is certain that there is no single explanation for the transmission and reemergence of traditions from pseudepigraphic texts. Even different instances of knowledge of a single text require separate explanations.

In his edition of *BR*, Ḥanokh Albeck identifies almost twenty passages in

6. For Jubilees in the work of R. Moses, see Albeck, *Bereshit Rabbati*, introduction, p. 17; Epstein, "Le livre des Jubilés"; and Himmelfarb, "Enoch," pp. 262–263.

In addition to the Ethiopic and a few Greek fragments, the Book of Jubilees is preserved in Latin fragments which cover about a fourth of the book. This does not suggest wide circulation in the West. The question of whether a Syriac version ever existed has not been answered conclusively. See Eugène Tisserant, "Fragments syriaques du livre des Jubilés," *Revue biblique* 30 (1921): 55–86, 206–232, who argues in favor of the existence of a Syriac version on the basis of passages in a Syriac chronicle; S. P. Brock, "Jewish Traditions in Syriac Sources," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 30 (1979): 224, who rejects Tisserant's view of the passages in the chronicle; and Lipscomb, "Jubilees in Armenian," who shows that the Syriac list of wives of the patriarchs is translated from Greek. Lipscomb also concludes that there must have been internal Hebrew transmission of the list of wives of the patriarchs.

7. T. Korteweg, "The Meaning of Naphtali's Vision," in *Studies on the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, ed. Marinus de Jonge, *Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha* 3 (Leiden, 1975), argues at length that the Hebrew Testament of Naphtali preserves the content of the visions used in the Greek Testament of Naphtali better than the Greek text. Thus the author of the medieval Hebrew Testament of Naphtali must have had access to one of the sources of the Greek testament. Korteweg does not concern himself with the process of transmission by which this source reached a medieval Jew.

It has long been noted that *Midrash Va-yissa'u* appears to preserve a source common to Jubilees and the Testament of Judah. See, for example, R. H. Charles, *The Greek Versions of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Oxford, 1908), p. li, or Marinus de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Study of Their Text, Composition and Origin* (Assen, 1953), pp. 70–71.

BR and *Midrash Aggadah* that he takes as evidence of use of the pseudepigrapha. Many of the parallels are too vague to indicate dependence. Others involve traditions found in rabbinic literature as well as in the pseudepigrapha. But the six parallels to the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs fall into neither of these categories.⁸

The Testaments, however, can no longer be taken as a Jewish text. Although it undoubtedly draws on Jewish traditions, recent scholarship regards it as an early Christian work.⁹ If the Testaments never existed as a Jewish document, Albeck's belief that R. Moses drew on the original Hebrew of the Testaments has to be discarded. In any case Albeck's argument for a Hebrew original is weak.¹⁰

8. All references to *BR* are to page and line of Albeck's edition (see n. 1 above).

For Albeck's list of instances of R. Moses' use of the pseudepigrapha, see *Bereshit Rabbati*, introduction, p. 17. An example of the first category, parallels too vague to indicate dependence, is Albeck's comparison of *BR*, p. 51, l. 4, which says that the earth is divided into three parts, a third inhabited, a third water, a third wilderness, to 4 Ezra 6:42, 47, where the world is described as six-sevenths land and one-seventh water. (This example could equally be considered in the second category, passages paralleled in rabbinic works as well as in the pseudepigrapha, because *BR*'s tripartite division appears also in *Midrash Konen* [in Adolf Jellinek, *Beit ha-midrash*, 6 vols. (Leipzig, 1853–77) 2:27] and in R. Bahya's commentary to Num. 10:35, as Albeck notes.)

An example of the second category is *BR*, p. 51, ll. 15–16, which says that man's dominion over animals was lost after the fall. Albeck's own note and Louis Ginzberg's note in *Legends of the Jews*, 7 vols. (Philadelphia, 1909–38), 5:119–120, n. 13, indicate so many parallels in rabbinic literature that the Life of Adam and Eve 37–38 (or Apocalypse of Moses 10–11) seems an unlikely source.

For a listing of the instances of use of rabbinic works in *BR*, see *Bereshit Rabbati*, introduction, pp. 24–36. It seems to me that Albeck lists so many doubtful cases of use of the pseudepigrapha because once he had become convinced that R. Moses used some pseudepigrapha, he assumed that he had had access to all of them as easily as to rabbinic texts. Thus if a tradition appears both in a rabbinic text and in a pseudepigraphon, there was no reason to prefer the rabbinic text as R. Moses' source.

Unlike the other parallels, which are elements of larger units, most of the parallels to the Testaments constitute independent units. The traditions discussed in sections 2 and 3 below are parts of larger units, but 1, 4, 5, and 6 are independent. So too is the extract from Bel and the Dragon, also discussed below.

The three parallels to Jubilees in *Midrash Aggadah* that Albeck identifies also merit further investigation. I had originally planned to discuss them together with the parallels to the Testaments in *BR*, but the nature of the relationship between the two midrashim and their pseudepigraphic sources turns out to be very different.

I follow the common practice of abbreviating the titles of the individual testaments within the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs as T. Levi, T. Judah, T. Naphtali, etc.

9. The most important work for setting the tone of recent scholarship is de Jonge, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Study*.

10. While his view is probably based on more general considerations, the only evidence that Albeck presents is a single passage in which he believes *BR* to preserve the original Hebrew

But R. Moses' knowledge of the Testaments could not have come from his Christian neighbors in eleventh-century Narbonne. The Testaments seems to have been known widely among Greek-speaking Christians throughout the Middle Ages, but it was not known to Christians in Western Europe until about 1235, when Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln, imported to England from the library of Michael Choniates (Acominatus) in Byzantium the single manuscript from which the Latin and all descendant vernacular versions derive.¹¹

I shall argue that the conclusion that R. Moses knew the Testaments as transmitted by Christians cannot be avoided despite the difficulties that it involves, and I shall try to suggest a way in which R. Moses might have come to know a Christian work that was not available in Latin Europe. The differences between the passages in *BR* and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs seem to me to represent revision of the Testaments for R. Moses' exegetical purposes.

Our discussion of the transmission of the pseudepigrapha and similar works into the Middle Ages raises another possibility that must be considered. It is clear that the Testaments drew on Jewish traditions and indeed on actual Jewish texts. There exist a number of Aramaic and Hebrew fragments from Qumran related to the Testaments. An Aramaic work closely related to T. Levi was found in the Cairo Geniza. The medieval Hebrew Testament of Naphtali, which contains material that seems to stand behind T. Naphtali, gives us reason to believe that some such texts did circulate among Jews in the Middle Ages. So does *Midrash Va-yissa'u*, which seems to reflect a source of Jubilees and T. Judah.¹² It is possible, then, that R.

where the Greek of T. Judah is corrupt (*Bereshit Rabbati*, introduction, p. 17, and text, p. 180, note to 1. 8). The passage is discussed below in section 6.

11. H. J. de Jonge, "La bibliothèque de Michel Choniates et la tradition occidentale des Testaments des XII Patriarches," in *Studies on the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.

12. Aramaic Levi fragments from Qumran and the Cairo Geniza as well as the related passage in Greek MS e of the Testaments make it clear that a Jewish document that contained much of the material of T. Levi existed in Second Temple times. This text probably took the form of one of a series of visions of Levi, Qahat, and Amram, the progenitors of the priestly line, rather than of a testament. See J. T. Milik, "4Q Visions de 'Amram et une citation d'Origène," *Revue biblique* 79 (1972): 77–79; and Marinus de Jonge, "The Main Issues in the Study of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," *New Testament Studies* 26 (1980): 513–514.

In 1956 Milik announced the discovery of a Hebrew fragment from Qumran of a genealogy of Bilhah more extensive than the one in T. Naphtali ("'Prière de Nabonide' et autres récits d'un cycle de Daniel," *Revue biblique* 63 [1956]: 407, n. 1). The fragment is still unpublished, but de Jonge has expressed doubts about Milik's assumption that the original context of the genealogy was a testament of Naphtali ("Main Issues," p. 513).

Moses knew not the Christian Testaments but its Jewish sources. The differences between *BR* and the Testaments in that case would reflect his use of these earlier texts. (If the Testaments took over its sources without significant change, it would of course be futile to attempt to make such a distinction. But where the early Jewish sources are extant, as for T. Levi, it is clear that a considerable amount of adaptation has taken place.)

With these possibilities in mind, let us turn to the passages from *BR*, treated in the order of their appearance.¹³

I

BR, p. 119, ll. 12–18

T. Naphtali 1:9–12

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | And someone says: | |
| 2 | The father of Bilhah and Zilpah | My mother is Bilhah, |
| 3 | | the daughter of Rotheos, |
| 4 | was the brother of Deborah. | the brother of Deborah, |
| 5 | Rebecca's nurse | Rebecca's nurse, |
| 6 | and 'Ahotay was his name. | |
| 7 | | who was born on the very same day
as Rachel. |
| 8 | | Rotheos was Abraham's kin, a
Chaldean, pious, free, and noble. |
| 9 | Before he married, | |
| 10 | he was taken captive, | Having been taken captive, |
| 11 | and Laban sent and ransomed
him | he was bought by Laban, |
| 12 | and gave him his maid for a wife. | who gave him Aina his maid for a
wife. |

Milik has recently published some fragments that he identifies as parts of a testament of Judah and a testament of Joseph ("Ecrits préesséniens de Qumrân: d'Hénoch à Amram," in *Qumrân: Sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu*, ed. Mathias Delcor, Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium 46 [Louvain, 1978], pp. 99–103).

For the medieval Hebrew Testament of Naphtali and the similarities between Jubilees and the Testaments suggesting a common written source, see n. 7 above.

13. The translations of the passages below are my own. For the text of the Testaments I used Marinus de Jonge, ed., *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text*, Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece 1:2 (Leiden, 1978), and I consulted the translation of R. H. Charles, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (London, 1908). References to Charles's notes in the body of this article are to the commentary found in this work.

13 She bore him a daughter,
 14 and he called her Zilpah
 15 after the name of the city
 16 to which he had been taken as a
 captive.

17 She bore another daughter,
 18 and he called her Bilhah,
 19

20 for when she was born,
 21 she was eager [*mitbahelet*] to
 suck.

22 He said,

23 How eager [*behulah*] my
 daughter is.

24 And when Jacob went to
 Laban's,

25 'Aḥotay their father was dead.

26 Laban took Ḥavah his maid and
 her two daughters

27 and gave Zilpah, the older, to his
 older daughter Leah as a maid,

28 and Bilhah, the younger, to his
 younger daughter Rachel.

She bore him a daughter,
 and she called her Zilpah
 after the name of the city
 in which he had been a captive.

Next she bore Bilhah,
 saying,

My daughter is eager for what is
 new [*kainospoudos*].

For as soon as she was born,
 she was eager [*espeude*] to suck.

The difference in the way the two passages begin is a result of their different contexts. "Someone says" (1) is a rabbinic formula for introducing a saying. The genealogy in T. Naphtali is part of a first-person narrative.

Some details of the account in T. Naphtali (7, 8) are lacking in *BR*. As Charles notes (to T. Naphtali 1:9–11), the purpose of the genealogy is to show that the sons of the concubines are descended from Abraham on their mother's side as well as on their father's. *BR* fails to make this point.

Some of the details of *BR* appear at first glance to be independent of T. Naphtali, but turn out not to be. *BR* (9), which places the captivity of the father of Bilhah and Zilpah before his marriage, only makes explicit what is implicit in T. Naphtali. T. Naphtali gives the name of the mother of Bilhah and Zilpah as Aina (12). *BR* does not mention a name at this point in the narrative, but later calls the mother Ḥavah, Eve (26). Albeck suggests reading Ḥannah, which is a reasonable Hebrew equivalent for Aina. Graphically

n and *v* are very close in Hebrew; since Ḥavah too is a common Hebrew name, such an interchange could easily take place in the course of transmission in Hebrew.

The rest of *BR* (24–28), while independent of T. Naphtali, is drawn from Gen. 29:24, 29. The addition of this material seems to be the result of the desire to link the passage more firmly to the biblical verse on which it is offered as a comment. The only detail not found in Genesis, the death of the father before Jacob's sojourn with Laban (24–25), can be understood as an exegetical response to his absence from Genesis. If he was already dead when Jacob arrived at Laban's, the silence of the biblical text about this ancestor of Israel is easier to understand.

Another minor difference between *BR* and T. Naphtali suggests revision in *BR* to conform to contemporary Jewish practice. According to T. Naphtali (11), Laban bought the captive Rotheos; according to *BR*, Laban ransomed him. Knowledge of the duty of ransoming fellow Jews, codified in the Talmud and widely practiced by the Jewish communities of the premodern period, might have led a medieval Jew to understand Laban's action as performance of this religious duty.

The two elements of the etymological explanation of Bilhah's name (19–23), the description of the baby's behavior and the parent's exclamation, are not given in the same order in the two passages. The etymology obviously has a Hebrew background. The phonetic similarity between the root "to be eager" and the name Bilhah is lost in Greek. Yet this does not necessarily mean that the Greek is based on a Hebrew text. Philo provides etymologies for Hebrew names, as do Christian onomastica.¹⁴ Nor does the passage in *BR* require a Hebrew source; realizing that a play on words is involved, someone translating T. Naphtali into Hebrew might guess that *spoudein* represents the Hebrew root *b-h-l*.¹⁵

Albeck suggests in his notes that the name 'Aḥotay is a corruption of 'Arotay, the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek Rotheos.¹⁶ Given his view that

14. See Franz Wutz, *Onomastica Sacra: Untersuchungen zum Liber Interpretationis Nominum Hebraicorum des hl. Hieronymus*, Texte und Untersuchungen 41 (Leipzig, 1914–15).

15. It is worth noting that Charles's attempt at retroversion (note to T. Naphtali 1:12) yields *nivhalah* for *espeude*. *BR* reads *mitbahelet*.

16. Graphically, *h* for *ro* is easily explained in Hebrew. Hebrew *-y* for the Greek ending *-os* is common. Samuel Krauss, *Griechische und lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud, Midrasch und Targum*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1898), explains the Hebrew ending as derived from the Greek vocative (1:74). Although Albeck seems to view the Hebrew's addition of the ' as standard practice (notes to p. 119, ll. 12–16), Krauss gives no examples of ' before *r* in his discussion of prothetic vowels in Hebrew transliterations (1:136–40). M. E. Stone has suggested to me that the ' takes the place of the rough breathing that accompanies initial Greek *r*, a phenomenon with parallels in Armenian.⁶

BR preserves the original Hebrew of the Testaments, this suggestion is a little surprising. One might have expected him to argue that Rotheos is the Greek version of a Hebrew name, especially since Rotheos is a rare Greek name. As far as I can tell it appears nowhere else.¹⁷ The name 'Aḥotay is also rare. The only other occurrence I know is in B.T. *Keritot* 13b, where it is spelled 'Aḥot'ay.

The passage in *BR* is so similar to the passage from T. Naphtali that some literary relationship must exist, but it is difficult to offer conclusive evidence about the direction of dependence. Is *BR* a Hebrew translation and revision of T. Naphtali, or does *BR* preserve an early Hebrew text on which the author of the Testaments drew? We have seen that T. Naphtali's etymology of the name Bilhah requires a Hebrew background but not necessarily a Hebrew *Vorlage*; the corresponding passage in *BR* could represent a Hebrew translation, with some revision, of T. Naphtali. In this passage from *BR* and in the others considered here, personal and place names from the Bible appear in their original forms, not in Hebraized versions of the Greek. Yet this need not be taken as evidence for use of Hebrew documents that stand behind the Testaments rather than of the Testaments itself; familiarity with the Masoretic text is enough to account for it.

The two names in the passage that are not taken from Genesis 29 demonstrate the complexity of questions of *Vorlage*. *BR*'s Ḥannah is a common Hebrew name found in the Bible. It is the equivalent of T. Naphtali's Aina, a name not found in Greek, which looks like an effort to provide a Greek form of Ḥannah. *BR*'s Ḥannah may preserve the Hebrew of the tradition behind T. Naphtali, but it could also represent an attempt at retroversion of T. Naphtali's Aina, an attempt that perhaps succeeds in recovering the name in the tradition behind the Greek.

In the case of the other names, 'Aḥotay/Rotheos, neither the Greek name nor the Hebrew is common. The form of the Hebrew name suggests Hebraization of a Greek name, but that does not mean that the name is only a Hebrew equivalent for a name in a Greek text. Dostay, for example, a name of the same form as 'Aḥotay, derived from the Greek Dositheos, becomes a Jewish name. It would certainly be helpful to know the names of the parents of Bilhah in the unpublished Qumran genealogy.¹⁸

I have noted elements of *BR* that seem to mark it as a revision. While T. Naphtali contains details found neither in *BR* nor in Genesis, everything in

17. Charles suggests no parallels, and the name does not appear in the Liddell-Scott *Greek-English Lexicon* or in Friederich Preisigke, *Namenbuch* (Heidelberg, 1922).

18. See n. 12 above.

BR can be explained on the basis of T. Naphtali and Genesis. *BR* (24–28) serves to make the relation of the passage to Genesis more explicit in accordance with the exegetical needs of *BR*. A different kind of revision, this time toward medieval Jewish practice, is in evidence in the use of the verb “ransom” for T. Naphtali’s “buy.” Both types of revision could reasonably be attributed to the hand of R. Moses.

But in light of the difficulties involved in assuming that R. Moses knew the Testaments, it is worth considering the other possibility. It is clear that an early Hebrew work related to T. Naphtali once existed. The medieval Hebrew Testament of Naphtali lacks much of the material found in T. Naphtali, but contains a longer and more coherent version of the visions that cannot be explained as depending on the Greek. Rather, both versions go back to a common source, which is preserved better in the Hebrew.¹⁹

The medieval Hebrew Testament of Naphtali does not contain any mention of Bilhah, but it is possible that the source document contained material that does not appear in the medieval Hebrew testament. If the unpublished genealogical fragment from Qumran resembles T. Naphtali 1:9–12, a case could be made for viewing a form of this passage as part of that source document.

It appears that the redactor of the medieval Hebrew Testament of Naphtali somehow had access to a text of the Second Temple period. Perhaps R. Moses too was able to draw on it. In that case *BR* would represent a revision of the source of T. Naphtali rather than a revision of T. Naphtali. Although an explanation built on a hypothetical source is rarely to be preferred to one based on an actual text, there are great historical difficulties involved in attributing knowledge of the Testaments to R. Moses. If the passage just discussed was the only example of such knowledge, the theory of dependence on a Hebrew document of Second Temple times would be appealing. But that passage must be considered together with those that follow.

II

BR, p. 156, l. 23–p. 157, l. 1, comments on Gen. 35:21, “Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent.”

19. See n. 7 above.

It is written, “her tent.” [The consonants *’hlh*, vocalized “his tent” in the Masoretic text, as the context requires, would ordinarily be vocalized “her tent.”] This is Bilhah’s tent. When Rachel died, he brought Bilhah into Rachel’s tent, and she took her place and nursed Benjamin. Even though she had ceased giving birth several years before, her milk came in, and she nursed him.

The view that Bilhah took Rachel’s place in Jacob’s tent is found in several rabbinic sources.²⁰ The only other place where Bilhah is said to have nursed Benjamin, however, is T. Benjamin 1:3.

III

According to the version of the story of the ten martyrs in *BR*, Zebulun pitied Joseph and did not want to sell him (p. 178, 1. 10). But because he and Reuben, who was not present when the sale was made, also pitied their other brothers²¹ and did not tell Jacob the truth about Joseph’s fate, they were punished by having one of their descendants included among the ten martyrs, one for each of the brothers who participated in the crime against Joseph.

There is no mention of Zebulun’s feelings toward Joseph in any rabbinic source, but T. Zebulun 4 describes Zebulun as so sorrowful that he could not eat while Joseph was imprisoned in the pit.

IV

In relation to Gen. 38:6, “And her name was Tamar,” *BR*, p. 178, 1. 27–p. 179, 1. 1, reports first the standard rabbinic view that Tamar was the daughter of Shem.²² As in the genealogy of Bilhah and Zilpah, the motive seems to be the desire to provide honorable ancestry, Semitic rather than Canaanite-Hamitic, on the female side.

After offering this view *BR* goes on to say, “Our rabbis of blessed memory said: Judah took her from among the women of Aram Naharayim,

20. See Albeck’s note ad loc. and Ginzburg, *Legends*, 5:319–320, n. 312.

21. I follow Albeck, note ad loc., in reading *hasu* for *hanu*.

22. See Albeck, note ad loc., and Ginzburg, *Legends*, 5:333, n. 79.

and he brought her father and her mother and her three brothers with her. And further Judah did not allow them to return to Aram Naharayim, but gave them a city named Shiqron, and they lived there." Aram Naharayim is Laban's hometown (or country) according to Gen. 24:10.

Albeck compares this to T. Judah 10:1, "Er took Tamar as his wife, from Mesopotamia, a daughter of Aram," and to Jub. 41:1, "Judah took for his first-born Er, a wife from the daughters of Aram, named Tamar."²³

These three passages are closer than the translations suggest. *Benot*, which I have translated idiomatically as "women" in the *BR* passage, is literally "daughters."

Ginzberg understands T. Judah and Jubilees to be speaking of Aram, the son of Shem (Gen. 10:22). But T. Judah's mention of Mesopotamia (Naharayim means "two rivers") and Jubilees' plural "daughters of Aram" (like the "women" of *BR*) suggest the possibility that Aram is a place rather than a person. The hostility of Bat-Shua²⁴ and her sons to the non-Canaanite Tamar, an important theme in both T. Judah and Jubilees, requires Semitic lineage for Tamar, but either descent from Aram or Shem or birth in the Mesopotamian town of Aram would provide it.

Thus *BR* seems to share with T. Judah and Jubilees a version of Tamar's Semitic lineage based on geography. But neither T. Judah nor Jubilees can account for the further information of *BR*: that with Tamar Judah brought her parents and three brothers, whom he then settled in a city called Shiqron and did not allow to return home. The proximity of Tamar's parents may be exegetical revision, an attempt to explain how this Mesopotamian woman could return to her father's house (Gen. 38:11) and still be in a position to hear about her father-in-law's sheep-shearing expedition (Gen. 38:13). The name of the town, Shiqron, and the number, or even the existence, of the brothers, are more difficult to explain. It seems reasonable to suppose that they are drawn from a tradition in which they have some function, but I do not know such a tradition. I cannot locate the name Shiqron ("falsity," from the root *sh-q-r?*) anywhere else. Perhaps it is suggested by Chezib ("deception," from the root *k-z-b?*), the town associated with the story of Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38.

23. This and all subsequent references to Jubilees are to the translation and notes of R. H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees; or, The Little Genesis* (London, 1902).

24. Genesis never gives Judah's wife a name, but refers to her as *bat-shua*, "the daughter of Shua" (Gen. 38:12). Both Jubilees and T. Judah take this designation as a name, on the order of *Bat-sheva*, Bathsheba.

V

BR, p. 179, 11. 7–10, agrees with T. Judah in attributing the death of Judah's wife to Judah's curse.

"And the daughter of Shua died" [Gen. 38:12]. Why did she die? Our rabbis of blessed memory said: When Shelah grew up, his mother went and married him to another woman, for she feared that he too might die on account of her [Tamar], and Judah did not know of this. When Judah found out, he cursed her for disobeying his words and transgressing the commandment of levirate marriage. She died immediately.

T. Judah 11:3–5 reads,

While I was away, she [Bat-Shua] went and took for Shelah a wife from the land of Canaan. When I found out, I cursed her out of my soul's grief, and she died through the evil of her sons.²⁵

In T. Judah, Bat-Shua's motive for preventing the marriage of Shelah to Tamar is apparently her Canaanite hostility toward Tamar the Mesopotamian. The narrative of T. Judah has already developed the theme of the hostility of Bat-Shua and her sons toward Tamar. In the exegetical framework of *BR* the incident of the curse has no such narrative context. According to *BR*, Judah's wife prevents the marriage of Shelah to Tamar because she is afraid that Tamar will cause the death of her last son. This is the same motive that the biblical text attributes to Judah when he sends Tamar back to her father's house (Gen. 38:11).

Again *BR* can be viewed as a revision. It exchanges the motive of T. Judah, which requires a larger context, for one drawn from Genesis. But while the biblical motive is adopted, the reluctance to marry Shelah to Tamar is attributed to Bat-Shua rather than to Judah. Thus the blame for violating the law of levirate marriage is shifted from Jacob's son to his Canaanite wife. The revision succeeds in accomplishing two purposes: it brings *BR* closer to the biblical text, and it absolves Judah.

25. In the parallel passage in Jub. 41:7, Bat-Shua prevents Shelah from marrying altogether. "... Bêdsû'èl, the wife of Judah, did not permit her son Shelah to marry. And Bêdsû'èl, the wife of Judah, died in the fifth year of this week." While Bat-Shua's death is reported immediately after the notice that she did not permit Shelah to marry, no causal relationship is spelled out.

VI

Commenting on Gen. 38:15, “And he thought her to be a prostitute,” *BR*, p. 180, ll. 8–13, offers an account of Judah’s encounter with the disguised Tamar very much like the one in T. Judah 12:1–3.

BR, p. 180, ll. 8–13

T. Judah 12:1–3

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 Our rabbis of blessed memory
said:</p> <p>2 When Judah left Chezib to go to
Timnah,</p> <p>3 while he was on the road, he ate
and drank and became drunk.</p> <p>4 Tamar, when she found out
about this,</p> <p>5 went and dressed in bridal
garments</p> <p>6 and stood at the gate of Enaim.</p> <p>7 When he saw the hill and saw
Tamar,</p> <p>8 the wine confused him, and he
thought in his heart</p> <p>9 that she was a cult prostitute
[<i>ishah qedeshah</i>] sitting for prosti-
tution [<i>zenut</i>].</p> <p>10 For such was the custom in the
land of the Amorites:</p> <p>11 when a woman dedicated [<i>me-
qaddeshet</i>] herself to prostitution
[<i>zenut</i>],</p> <p>12 she would sit at the crossroads
for seven days</p> <p>13 for everyone to know her.</p> <p>14 And therefore he thought her to
be a prostitute [<i>zonah</i>].</p> <p>15</p> | <p>After these things, while Tamar was
a widow, after two years,</p> <p>when she heard that I was going up
to shear my sheep,
she adorned herself in bridal attire</p> <p>and sat in the city of Enan at the
gate.</p> <p>For it is the custom of the Amorites
for the bride to sit in fornication
for seven days at the gate.</p> <p>Since I had gotten drunk at the
waters of Kozeba,</p> |
|---|---|

- 16 I did not recognize her because of
the wine,
17 and her beauty deceived me through
the arrangement of her adorn-
ment.

Genesis does not mention drunkenness in the story of Judah and Tamar, but it is an important theme in T. Judah. Drink is the cause not only of the incident with Tamar but also of Judah's marriage to a Canaanite woman (T. Judah 8:2, 11:2, 13:6). With fornication, drunkenness is perhaps the most prominent of the sins against which Judah warns in the paraenetic passages of the testament.

Chezib, Kozeba in T. Judah, is the name of the town in which Gen. 38:5 left Judah and his family. T. Judah (15), "I had gotten drunk at the waters of Kozeba," suggests a play on the Hebrew root *k-z-b*, "deceive," that is lost in Greek.²⁶ As I argued in relation to the etymology of Bilhah, such a play on words does not necessarily mean that the Greek is drawing on a Hebrew text. The play on Chezib does not appear at all in *BR*.

The passage from *BR* includes details of the biblical text absent from T. Judah. *BR* (2) names Judah's destination as Timnah (Gen. 38:12). The hill (*ma'aleh*) of *BR* (7) seems to reflect the verb *'-l-h* in Gen. 38:12, 13, as does the verb "go up" of T. Judah (4).

According to both T. Judah and *BR*, Tamar dresses herself as a bride in order to deceive Judah. But Gen. 38:14 in the Masoretic text says only, "She took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil, and wrapped herself." The Septuagint reads slightly differently: "She took off her widow's garments, wrapped herself in a veil, and beautified herself."²⁷

While the Septuagint's "beautified herself," *kallōpizein*, may have suggested T. Judah's "adorned herself," *kosmein*, neither the Septuagint nor the Masoretic text mentions bridal attire. Perhaps the idea was suggested by the veil of both the Masoretic text and the Septuagint, which is not found in T. Judah or *BR*.²⁸ Tamar's method of disguise is most appropriate, since her

26. For examples of this play on Chezib in rabbinic sources, see Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:334, n. 81.

27. Similarly the Peshitta, Onqelos, and Jub. 41:9. See Charles's note to Jub. 41:9.

28. The association of veils with brides is very ancient. In Gen. 24:65 Rebecca veils herself upon approaching her bridegroom. Laban's deception of Jacob presupposes the custom. On veils and brides in ancient Israel, see L. M. Epstein, *Sex Laws and Customs in Judaism* (New York, 1948; reprinted New York, 1967), pp. 36–39.

trick is intended to right the wrong done her in preventing her from becoming a bride again. Laban's use of the veil in his deception of Jacob may have suggested this stratagem to the author of T. Judah.

According to T. Judah there is a good reason why Tamar dressed as a bride in order to accomplish her plan: it was the Amorite custom for a bride to act as a prostitute for seven days. While the Amorites probably practiced this custom nowhere but in the author's imagination, Charles (note to T. Judah 12:2) compares it to an Assyrian practice described by Herodotus.

In the situation described in *BR*, however, Tamar's bridal attire, rather than signaling that she was available for prostitution, would have appeared most eccentric. According to *BR* (10–13), the custom of the Amorites was that a woman *who dedicated herself to prostitution* announced her choice of career by sitting at the crossroads for seven days.

To make sense of *BR* we need to return to Genesis 38. According to the Masoretic text, Judah takes Tamar for a *zonah* (Gen. 38:15), an ordinary prostitute. But when his friend Hirah the Adullamite is sent to retrieve Judah's pledges, he asks for the *qedeshah*, or cult prostitute (Gen. 38:21). Later Judah is told that his daughter-in-law has engaged in prostitution, *zantah*, and that she is pregnant by prostitution, *liznunim* (Gen. 38:24). E. A. Speiser suggests that we are to understand Hirah's use of the term *qedeshah* as reflecting what Judah had told him; Judah's choice of terms would have been motivated by a desire to "place the affair on a higher social level."²⁹

In the Septuagint the distinction between ordinary prostitution and cult prostitution is lost. The two different Hebrew roots are translated by the same Greek root, *porn-*.

In Gen. 38:5 Judah mistakes Tamar for an ordinary prostitute; in *BR* (9) he mistakes her for a *qedeshah*. But in its explanation of the Amorite custom that led Judah to believe that Tamar was a prostitute, *BR* (11) speaks of a woman who dedicates (*meqaddeshet*) herself to prostitution (*zenut*). *BR* is playing here on the derivation of the word for cult prostitute from the root that means "to dedicate," "set apart," and thus, "to marry."

BR's version of the Amorite custom may have been motivated to some extent by disbelief: even the Amorites could not have been as licentious as T. Judah claims. But it is also an attempt to resolve the problem of the two different terms for "prostitute" in the Masoretic text. *BR* seems to be suggesting the *qedeshah* in Genesis 38 means a woman dedicated to prostitution, not a cult prostitute. If the author of T. Judah used the Septuagint, he did

29. *Genesis*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, N.Y., 1964), p. 300.

not face the problem, since the Septuagint does not indicate the existence of two kinds of prostitute.

It is these lines that Albeck cites as proof that R. Moses had before him the original Hebrew of the Testaments. According to Albeck, T. Judah represents a mistranslation of a Hebrew original that spoke of the Amorite custom in relation to a woman who decides to devote herself to prostitution, as in *BR* (11). The word “to prostitution” was somehow omitted, and the translator translated *meqaddeshet ‘aşmah*, “dedicated herself,” as “gets married.”³⁰

Albeck’s claim of a Hebrew original for the Testaments as a whole on the basis of this one instance is extravagant. Even if the claim is restricted to this passage from T. Judah, the presence of the bridal attire in both *BR* and T. Judah is a compelling argument against it. If *BR*’s version of the custom is original, there is no reasonable explanation for the bridal attire. If, on the other hand, *BR* represents a revision of T. Judah out of the exegetical needs of an interpreter of the Masoretic text, the presence of the bridal attire, now without a function, can be satisfactorily explained.



What conclusions can be drawn from the parallels between *BR* and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs? The parallels in sections 2, 3, and 4 consist of isolated elements of traditions. Any of these parallels by itself could be explained as coincidence, and even the three sections together without the evidence of the other sections would not be strong grounds on which to base an argument for the dependence of *BR* on the Testaments. But the longer passages from *BR* in 1, 5, and 6 share so many details with the Testaments that some kind of dependence is indicated, and for 1 and 6 the conclusion that the dependence is literary seems unavoidable.

At the outset I suggested two possible explanations for *BR*’s parallels to the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: knowledge of the Testaments itself or knowledge of the sources that stand behind the Testaments. The most important argument for viewing the passages in *BR* as drawing on the Testaments rather than on its sources is that, with a single exception, all of the differences between *BR* and the Testaments can be explained as revisions of the Testaments to serve the needs and interests of a medieval Jew whose Bible was the Masoretic text.

30. *Bereshit Rabbati*, introduction, p. 17, and note to p. 180, ll. 8–11, where Albeck cites B.T. *Ketubot* 22a as an instance of this usage. Normally the subject of the verb *q-d-sh* in the sense of “to marry” is the bridegroom.

The only point at which *BR* seemed likely to reflect independent traditions rather than revision of the Testaments is in some of the details about Tamar's family in section 4. Tamar's parents and brothers and the city that Judah gave them do not appear in T. Judah, nor are they known from any other source. It was suggested above that the parents and their city were introduced for exegetical purposes, but no exegetical explanation seems possible for the three brothers, who have no function in the story as it stands in *BR*.

In addition to the three brothers, one other factor might seem to recommend the view that *BR* draws not on the Testaments but on its sources. Parallels to T. Naphtali and T. Judah make up four of the six passages in *BR*. For both of these testaments, although not for most of the others that make up the Testaments, there is evidence of the existence of written Jewish sources. But when the relationships of these testaments to the Hebrew Testament of Naphtali and *Midrash Va-yissa'u* are compared to their relationships to *BR*, the case for viewing *BR* as drawing on the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs in its final form is strengthened.

The medieval Hebrew Testament of Naphtali, as we have seen, preserves a fuller form of some of the material found in T. Naphtali, while *Midrash Va-yissa'u* offers an account of the wars of Jacob and his sons that clarifies the narrative of T. Judah and Jubilees.³¹ Thus it is not possible to understand the Hebrew Testament of Naphtali and *Midrash Va-yissa'u* as medieval reworkings of the pseudepigraphic works to which they are related. The conclusion seems unavoidable that both medieval works had access to texts used by the pseudepigraphic works, despite the difficulty of explaining the transmission of such texts.³² The passages in *BR* offer no such clarifi-

31. See n. 7 above, Charles's commentaries to the relevant passages of T. Judah and Jubilees, and Samuel Klein, "Palästinisches im Jubiläenbuch," *Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 57 (1934): 8–12.

32. As indicated in n. 7, Korteweg, "Naphtali's Visions," does not discuss the issue of transmission. Klein, in his investigation of the place-names mentioned in the parallel accounts of the war against the Amorites in *Midrash Va-yissa'u*, T. Judah, and Jubilees ("Palästinisches im Jubiläenbuch," pp. 11–12, 15–16), invariably prefers the readings of *Midrash Va-yissa'u*, although they too stand in need of some correction. But he cautions that the Hebrew text cannot be viewed as the Hebrew original but rather as a "translation or reworking" from Greek or Latin. He never makes explicit the grounds for this claim, but it seems likely that it is based on his opinion that some of the place-names preserved in *Midrash Va-yissa'u* are transliterations into Hebrew of a Greek (or Latin) version of a biblical place-name.

Another approach to *Midrash Va-yissa'u*, from an entirely different angle, deserves mention here. Dan's treatment cuts through the problem of transmission by eliminating it altogether (*Ha-Sippur ha'ivri*, pp. 138–140; and Dan and Alexander, "*Midrash Va-yissa'u*"). For

cation of the testaments they parallel. Further, *BR* contains passages parallel to T. Benjamin and T. Zebulun, testaments for which there is no evidence of the use of early Jewish texts. The cumulative weight of the evidence for *BR*'s knowledge of the Testaments as it has reached us probably makes it best to regard the troublesome brothers of section 4 as invented, in Gilbert's words, to lend artistic verisimilitude.³³



It is now clear that R. Moses knew parts of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. How did he come by that knowledge? R. Moses lived in Provence. The place closest to Provence where the Testaments is likely to have been known is southeastern Italy, which then formed part of the Byzantine Empire. Byzantine Italy contained several flourishing Jewish communities. By the mid-ninth century the town of Oria was a center of talmudic study, and after its decline, it was replaced by Bari and Otranto. The glory of Bari's reputation is indicated by the fact that the rabbis of Ibn Daud's story of the four captives came from there. Bari was also the seat of an archbishop, which suggests a certain amount of Christian learning as well, and thus possibly the availability of a manuscript of the Testaments.³⁴

There is evidence for contact between the Jews of Provence and the Jews of Lucca and Rome in the tenth and eleventh centuries,³⁵ and these northern Italian communities may have served to link Byzantine Italy to Provence. Nathan b. Yehiel of Rome, the compiler of the *'Arukh*, was a student of R. Moses the Preacher, and he seems also to have studied with Moses Kalfio of Bari.³⁶ Through such channels a Hebrew translation of the

Dan and Alexander, *Midrash Va-yissa'u* is a Jewish version of the Christian literature of the exploits of knights and crusaders. Since knights were not a feature of contemporary Jewish life, Jewish authors who wished to provide a Jewish equivalent to this Christian literature drew on the great heroes of the biblical past and invented wars for them.

Dan and Alexander's dismissal of the parallels to *Midrash Va-yissa'u* in Jubilees and T. Judah as "isolated hints" on which the author of *Midrash Va-yissa'u* built ("*Midrash Va-yissa'u*," p. 67), is simply wrong, as even a quick comparison of the texts will show. Nevertheless, their remarks about the influences that produced *Midrash Va-yissa'u* can perhaps be applied to the preservation and reworking of the source of chapters 2–3.

33. This is, of course, a disturbing thought with important methodological implications for a source critic. I feel justified in considering it only in relation to Tamar's brothers because I have been able to account for all of the other details in *BR* without recourse to hypothetical sources.

34. Andrew Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry* (London, 1971), pp. 122–123, 163–172.

35. B. Z. Benedict, "On the History of the Torah Center in Provence" (Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 22 (1951): 91, 94–95.

36. Baron, *History*, 7:29–31.

Testaments or of excerpts from the Testaments might have reached Narbonne, for it seems reasonable to suppose that the translation was made by a Byzantine Jew, who would have known Greek better than a Jew from Provence.

I have operated on the assumption that the reviser of the passages was R. Moses. Albeck notes that it is characteristic of R. Moses to revise his sources.³⁷ Still it is certainly possible that the revisions had already been made when the text reached R. Moses.

Why was R. Moses willing to include passages and traditions from a Christian work (or at least a work in Christian hands) in his compilation? Our only clues to R. Moses' attitude beyond the fact that he did include the passages are the formulas he used for introducing them. There are no such formulas for passages 2 and 3, which are elements of larger units. Passage 1 begins, "And someone says," a common rabbinic formula for introducing an opinion. The passages from T. Judah (4, 5, and 6) are all introduced with "Our rabbis of blessed memory said," another stereotyped rabbinic expression.

It might be possible to view the introductory "someone says" as casting doubt on the authority of the opinion, although this is not how the formula functions in rabbinic literature. But the attribution of a tradition to "our rabbis of blessed memory" can be nothing but an endorsement of the value of the tradition, although not necessarily a vote for it against other views presented. In the realm of aggadah, no conclusion need be reached, and contradictory opinions may happily coexist.

But there may be another nuance to R. Moses' attribution of these passages to "our rabbis of blessed memory." Albeck points out that it is R. Moses' practice to cite a passage by the name of the supposed author of the work from which it is drawn. A passage from *Midrash Tadshe* is quoted in the name of R. Phineas b. Ya'ir; from *Pirquei de-Rabbi 'Eli'ezer*, in the name of R. Eliezer; from *Seder 'Eliyahu*, in the name of Elijah.³⁸ Thus the attribution of the passages from the Testaments to "someone" or even "our rabbis" may be an admission of ignorance about authorship. It is worth noting that when R. Moses quotes from *Midrash Va-yissa'u* (*BR*, p. 153, 11. 4–7; pp. 162–163), it too is attributed to "our rabbis."

R. Moses' manner of citing these passages seems to me to suggest that he

37. *Bereshit Rabbati*, introduction, pp. 22–24.

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 18–19.

knew the Testaments only through Hebrew excerpts. Even if he were master enough of Greek to translate the Testaments himself, it is hard to imagine that he would have viewed a Greek work as rabbinic. If he knew the Testaments as a whole, it seems unlikely that he could have avoided noticing its Christian content, although it is possible that the complete T. Judah alone would not have struck him as Christian. Altogether it seems more reasonable to suppose that R. Moses' knowledge of the Testaments was restricted to Hebrew excerpts that he could comfortably view as rabbinic.

R. Moses' citation of a passage from the episode of Daniel and the Dragon in relation to Gen. 37:24 (*BR*, p. 175, ll. 10–16) provides a point of comparison. The story of the Dragon appears together with the story of Daniel and Bel, the idol of the Chaldeans, as part of the Book of Daniel in the Greek Bible. Thus, although the two stories are of Jewish origin, they circulated as part of the Bible used by Christians. While most of *BR* is in Hebrew, the passage from the story of the Dragon is in Aramaic. It is introduced by the formula, "Our rabbis said: We have a tradition . . ."

A complete Aramaic version of Bel and the Dragon, introduced by the same verses and formula found in *BR*, appears in a fifteenth-century Bodleian manuscript that also contains an Aramaic version of the Book of Tobit. According to the manuscript, Tobit and Bel and the Dragon were copied from *Midrash Rabbah de-Rabbah*, which Albeck believes to be a name for the larger work of Moses the Preacher from which *BR* was drawn.³⁹

Adolf Neubauer has identified the Aramaic Bel and the Dragon in the Bodleian manuscript as a transliteration into Hebrew characters of the Peshitta of Daniel 13.⁴⁰ The passage in *BR*, which quotes only verses 40–42, abbreviates them, but preserves the wording of the Peshitta.

Unlike R. Moses, the scribe of the Bodleian manuscript noted the Christian provenance of the work he was copying. He appended the following remarks to his transcription:⁴¹

The Christians include these two stories, that is, the story of Bel, the idol of the Chaldeans, and the story of the Dragon, in the total of twenty-four books of

39. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

40. *The Book of Tobit* (Oxford, 1878), pp. xiii–xiv; text, pp. 39–43. There are a few small differences between the MS and the Peshitta.

41. My translation. The Hebrew is found in Neubauer, *Tobit*, p. 43, with a translation on p. xcii.

the prophets with three other books.⁴² And their translator⁴³ says that he has not found them in the sacred tongue.

The scribe apparently thought it noteworthy that the work he was copying was found only among Christians, but this circumstance did not deter him from copying it.

In Christian Spain in the thirteenth century, Naḥmanides, who used Judith and the Wisdom of Solomon in Syriac,⁴⁴ developed a theory to account for the problems raised by the fact that the Wisdom of Solomon was preserved by Christians.⁴⁵

We have found another book, which is called the Great Wisdom of Solomon.⁴⁶ It is in very difficult Aramaic, and the nations copied⁴⁷ it from that language. It seems to me that the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, did not

42. I do not know what our scribe has in mind here. The total of twenty-four books is common in Jewish tradition for the Bible as a whole, and the three extra books could refer to apocrypha known to the scribe. But the scribe refers to twenty-four books of the *prophets*. Daniel is indeed included among the prophets in the Greek Bible, and there are three additions to Daniel in the Greek and its daughter versions that do not appear in the Masoretic text: Susanna, the Prayer of Azariah, and Bel and the Dragon. But the scribe does not seem to include Bel and the Dragon among the three. The total of twenty-four books of the prophets remains mysterious.

43. The causative of the root *'-t-q* can mean either "copy" or "translate" in medieval Hebrew (see Eliezer ben Yehudah, *Thesaurus*). Perhaps in this context the best translation of *ma'atiq* would be "transliterator."

44. See Alexander Marx, "An Aramaic Fragment of the Wisdom of Solomon," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 40 (1921): 57–69. Naḥmanides quotes Judith 1:7, 8, 11, in abbreviated form in a discussion of the root *'-m-r* in the commentary to Deut. 21:14. He quotes Wis. Sol. 7:5–8, 17–21 again in a sermon entitled, "The Torah of the Lord Is Perfect" (Ps. 19:8).

In explaining why he chose not to use Naḥmanides' quotations from the Wisdom of Solomon as witnesses to the Peshitta text, J. A. Emerton writes that the passages "represent the Peshitta with slight modifications, which are partly dialectal" (*The Peshitta of the Wisdom of Solomon*, *Studia Post-Biblica* 2 [Leiden, 1959] p. xxxiii). For example, the *gar* of Syriac, borrowed from Greek and not found in Jewish Aramaic, does not appear in Naḥmanides' quotations. The list of 7:17–20 is not identical in Naḥmanides and the Peshitta.

45. My translation. The passage comes from Naḥmanides' "Sermon on the Works of Qohelet." A critical edition is found in Charles Chavel, ed., *Kitvei Rabbenu Mosheh b. Naḥman*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem, 1963). Our passage is found on 1:182. Chavel translates the sermon in *Ramban: Writings and Discourses*, 2 vols. (New York, 1978). Our passage appears on 1:154–155. Marx, "Aramaic Fragment," translates the passage on p. 60.

46. This is the title of the book in Syriac.

47. Again, the root *'-t-q*. Does Naḥmanides mean that the nations copied it in their form of Aramaic (Syriac), or that the nations translated it into the various languages in which the work was found in the Middle Ages? I suspect that the first suggestion is correct, since the Syriac version is of special importance for Naḥmanides.

copy it down,⁴⁸ but that it went with them to Babylonia orally. And there they recited it in their language [Aramaic], for it consists of wise sayings, but it was not spoken in inspiration. Scripture hints at this.⁴⁹

Although he accepts it as Solomon's words, Naḥmanides accounts for the fact that Wisdom was transmitted by the nations by placing the work on a lower level than other Solomonic works: it is not inspired. Yet he has sufficient regard for the work to quote it several times, and never for linguistic reasons alone, as for his quotation of Judith.⁵⁰

The scribe of the Bodleian manuscript and Naḥmanides, then, did not hesitate to call attention to the fact that the works they quoted had been transmitted by Christians. This does not make it certain that R. Moses treated the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and the story of the Dragon as rabbinic because he was ignorant of their Christian provenance, but it weighs in favor of that view. It should be remembered that R. Moses' Christian neighbors read *Bel and the Dragon* in Latin rather than in Syriac. It is unlikely that a Provençal Jew would have had access to the Peshitta. It seems more likely that R. Moses had before him a text of *Bel and the Dragon* that had been transliterated into Hebrew characters by Jews who lived among Syriac-speaking Christians. If he was aware that the stories appeared in the Christian Bible, R. Moses might have assumed that he was in possession of their Jewish originals.



The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs is a Christian document, and thus its use by medieval Jews raises some special issues. But the Testaments is based to a considerable extent on Jewish traditions, some of which were certainly written. Any attempt to explain the process of transmission by which a medieval Jew came to know the Testaments must work between the same poles as an attempt to explain the knowledge of a Jewish pseud-epigraphon: internal Jewish transmission, by which the text somehow survived the talmudic period, or borrowing (back) from Christian transmitters.

48. Again the root *'-t-q*. See Prov. 25:1.

49. Chavel (in notes to both works) suggests that Naḥmanides understands Prov. 25:1, "These also are the proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, copied," to imply that the proverbs of Proverbs 25, like those of the first part of the work, were inspired, and thus they were copied by the men of Hezekiah, but that other proverbs of Solomon, not inspired and thus not copied, were also in existence.

50. See n. 44 above.

The passages from *BR* that contain parallels to the Testaments stand at the second pole. They are not the result of independent Jewish transmission of these traditions, but of R. Moses' use of parts of the Testaments as a completed Christian document. There is no reason to assume that R. Moses knew the Testaments as a whole, and he was probably not aware of the Christian provenance of the portions he did know.

The results of this investigation of R. Moses' use of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs should not be generalized to all instances of medieval Jewish knowledge of the Testaments or to R. Moses' use of other pseudepigrapha. The Hebrew Testament of Naphtali and *Midrash Va-yissa'u* are examples of medieval Jewish works that stand in a relationship to the Testaments very different from that of *BR*, and I suspect that further study would point toward internal Jewish transmission as the means by which elements of the Book of Jubilees, for example, reached R. Moses.

There is no single explanation for the reappearance of Second Temple traditions in medieval Jewish works. The clarification of the relationship between *BR* and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs enlarges our knowledge of the possibilities and helps us appreciate the complexity of the situation.

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